

THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION:

**TREATISE**

ON THE  
'DIVINITY'

OF OUR

**LORD JESUS CHRIST;**

Written originally in French,

**BY JAMES ABBADIE, D.D.**

and Dean of Killake, in Ireland.

**A NEW EDITION OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.**

*Revised, Corrected, and in a few places, Abridged,*

**BY ABRAHAM BOOTH, A.M.**

Pastor of the Baptist Church, Goodman's Fields, London.

Great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.  
1 Timothy iii. 16

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.

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## PREFACE BY THE EDITOR..

THE doctrine of our LORD's Eternal Divinity having been, on different grounds, the object of long and violent opposition ; many learned, ingenious, and able pens have been engaged in defence of that capital truth. Few, however, have repelled the adversary with those powers of genius, and that force of argument, which were employed by Dr. ABBADIE in composing this admirable Treatise.—Far from contenting himself with dogmatical assertions, and equally far from amusing his readers with curious metaphysical speculations, on the grand Subject of his inquiries ; he has recourse to the testimony of GOD—to that Revelation which JEHOVAH has made of himself in the Bible, and to those deductions from it, which are natural, clear, and conclusive. Thus he proves that Christ is a DIVINE PERSON, and equal with the Father ; without pretending to know, or attempting to investigate, the MODUS of his Divine Personality. In regard to the *former*, he firmly believes that the Scripture is full, explicit, peremptory ; in reference to the *latter*, he considers the sacred Canon as entirely silent ; and, to dispute what Eternal Veracity asserts, because it is above the power of reason to comprehend ; or to endeavour to discover what God has not revealed of himself, he looks upon as irrational, presumptuous, and highly criminal.

The sentiments and views of our Author, in this respect, are well expressed by another celebrated writer, who says ; ‘ I freely grant, that, had I consulted my own  
‘ reason only, I could not have discovered some myste-  
‘ ries of the gospel. Nevertheless, when I think on the  
‘ grandeur of God ; when I cast my eyes on that vast

‘ Ocean ; when I consider that immense ALL ; nothing  
‘ astonishes me, nothing stumbles me, nothing seems to  
‘ me inadmissible, how incomprehensible soever it may  
‘ be. When the subject is Divine, I am ready to believe  
‘ all, to admit all, to receive all ; provided I be convinced  
‘ that it is God his self who speaks to me, or any one on  
‘ his part. After this I am no more astonished that there  
‘ are three distinct Persons in one Divine essence ; one  
‘ God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost.—Ei-  
‘ ther religion must tell us nothing about God, or what it  
‘ tells us must be beyond our capacities ; and, in discov-  
‘ ering even the borders of this immense Ocean, it must  
‘ needs exhibit a vast extent in which our feeble eyes are  
‘ lost. But what surprises me, what stumbles me, what  
‘ frightens me, is to see a diminutive creature, a con-  
‘ temptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through  
‘ a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the supreme  
‘ Being ; oppose that Intelligence who sitteth at the  
‘ helm of the world ; question what he affirms, dispute  
‘ what he determines, appeal from his decisions, and  
‘ even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines  
‘ that are beyond his capacity—Enter into thy nothing-  
‘ ness, mortal creature ! What madness animates thee !  
‘ How durst thou pretend—thou who art but a point,  
‘ thou whose essence is but an atom—to measure thyself  
‘ with the Supreme Being ; with him who fills heaven  
‘ and earth ; with Him, whom *heaven, the heaven of*  
‘ *heavens cannot contain ! Canst thou by searching find*  
‘ *out God ? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfec-*  
‘ *tion ? High as the heaven, what canst thou do ? deeper*  
‘ *than hell, what canst thou know ?”*

The great principle which the Author aims to establish in the following work, is ; That the Deity of Jesus Christ is *essential* to the Christian Religion. In pursuance of this design he shows, if Jesus the Son of God be not of the same essence with his Father,—That the Mahometan religion is preferable to Christianity, and Christ

inferior to Mahomet.\* That the Sanhedrim did justice, in causing Jesus to be put to death for blasphemy—that he and his apostles have led us into a complicated and

\* It may be thought proper here to observe, that some of the Socinians have not been ashamed to avow a considerable degree of regard for the character and cause of Mahomet. Witness their famous Address to AMETH BEN AMETH, ambassador from the emperor of Fez and Morocco, to CHARLES the Second, King of Great Britain. ‘We, say they to his Excellency, as your NEAREST ZELLOU-CHAMPIONS for those truths—[i.e. truths in which none but they agree with the Mahometans.] We, who, with our Unitarian brethren, were in all ages exercised to defend with our pens the faith of one Supreme God, (without personalities, or pluralities) *As He hath raised your Mahomet to do the same with the sword, as a scourge on those idolizing Christians;—We do, for the vindication of your law-maker’s glory, strive to prove, that such faults and irregularities. [as are found in the Koran] not cohering with the fashion of the rest of the Alcoran building, nor with the undoubted sayings of your prophet, nor with the gospel of Christ (whereof Mahomet would have himself to be but a preacher)—we’ve foisted into the scattered papers found after Mahomet’s death, of which in truth the Alcoran was made up: it being otherwise impossible that a man of that JUDGMENT, that hath proved itself in other things so CONSPICUOUSLY, should be guilty of so many and frequent repugnancies, as are to be seen in those writings and laws that are now-a-days given out under his name. We do, then,—endeavour to clear by whom, and in what time, such alterations were made in the first setting out of the Alcoran.’ See the whole Address in LESLIE’S Socinian Controversy Disc. Pref. p. 3—13. Thus careful were these gentlemen to purge the Koran of every thing supposititious; and thus tender of its Author’s honor!*

Another Socinian writer represents Mahomet, as having ‘no other design but to restore the belief of the unity of God; which, says he, at that time was extirpated among the eastern Christians, by the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation.’—And informs us, That Mahomet meant not his religion should be esteemed a new religion; but only the restitution of the true intent of the Christian religion—That the Mahometan learned men call themselves, *the true disciples* of the Messias, or Christ; intimating thereby, that Christians are apostates from the MOST ESSENTIAL PARTS of the doctrine of the Messias—That Unitarianism has prevailed so greatly, not by force and the sword, —but by that one truth, in the Alcoran the unity of God: that is, as well in *Person*, as in *Essence*. And then he represents the Tartars as acting more rationally, in embracing what he calls, *the more plausible* sect of Mahomet, than they would have done, in receiving the Christian faith of the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. In LESLIE, as above, p. 28.



pernicious error—that there is no agreement between the old and the New Testament—and, that neither the ancient Jewish, nor the Christian religion, is attended with sufficient criteria to distinguish it from imposture.—In proving that these are the necessary consequences of the Socinian and Arian systems, and in answering the principal objections of his opponents; he discovers such fertility of invention, originality of thought, and strength of reasoning powers, as comparatively few enjoy. The generality of writers on this very interesting subject, do little more than collect and retail the thoughts of others, which they express in a different style and method. Not so Dr. ABBADIE. For the reader of this masterly performance, if not possessed of uncommon penetration, is entertained with ideas entirely new, as well as with arguments irrefragably strong, in every section, and in almost every chapter: so that, if he love the adorable JESUS and ‘rejoice in his Highness,’ he finds himself instructed, amazed, delighted.

Though the book be exceedingly scarce, and, at this time, very little known in England; the abilities of the writer and the merit of the treatise have received the honorable testimonies from various pens. Abbé HOUTEVILLE, for instance, when speaking of our author’s work, on *the truth of Christian religion*; of which elaborate performance this is generally reckoned the *third* volume, says, ‘the most shining of those treatises in defence of the Christian religion, which were published by the Protestants, is that written by Mr. ABBADIE. The favourable reception it met with; the praises it received, almost without example, immediately after its publication; and the universal approbation it still meets with, render it unnecessary for me to join my commendations, which would add so little to the merit of so great an author. In the first part he combats the Atheists, the Deists in the second, and the Socinians in the third’\*—VOLTAIRE also, who cannot be suspected of a predilection for ABBADIE on account of his writing in

\* Article ABBADIE, New and Gen. Biograph Dict. Note.

defence of revealed truth ; informs us, that ‘ he was celebrated for his treatise on the Christian religion.’\*—And the Rev. Mr. VENN thus recommends the work ; ‘ It is a book in the highest form for reputation, in all the Protestant countries abroad ; a book in which the horrid absurdities of all, who, under pretence of being *more rational* in religion, reject the counsel of God, are exposed in a most masterly manner.’†—Such is the character of the author among those who know his abilities ; and such the esteem which this performance of his has obtained.

The style of the English translation, which, on account of its many inaccuracies, represented the work to great disadvantage, the editor has attempted to correct ; and, where it did not affect the argument, he has abridged the book, that the size and price of it might be reduced. He has also taken the liberty, in some places, of throwing in an additional thought ; with a view either to elucidate the author’s meaning, or to enforce his argument.—How far his endeavours to render the book more generally known, and the translation of it more agreeable, may obtain the approbation of the religious public, he cannot pretend to say. He is not, however, without a pleasing persuasion, that many will read the work with delight and profit—that many, who ‘ love our LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity,’ will rejoice to see his Divine Dignity so well defended, against the insinuating artifices of pernicious error, and the bold attacks of open blasphemy. And it is his ardent prayer that *God our Saviour*, to whom the author dedicates the work,‡ would condescend to use it as a mean of his own glory, and of the church’s good. To him, therefore, ‘ *who is over all, God blessed for ever,*’ it is once more commended.

\* Age of LEWIS XIV Vol. II. p. 274.

† EXAM of Dr. Priestley’s address on the Lord’s Supper, p. 22, 23. Note.

‡ See the paragraph which concludes the work.

Goodman’s Fields, January 1, 1777.

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THE  
DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST  
ESSENTIAL TO THE  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE capital truths of religion are so closely connected, that, like the principles of geometry, some of them serve, as so many steps, by which to descend to the knowledge of others.

In our examination of the principal evidences on which our faith is established, we were led by the truth of the existence of God, to that of natural religion; by the truth of natural religion, to that of the Jewish religion; and by the truth of the Jewish religion, to that of the Christian religion\*.

The mutual relation which these grand truths have one to another, has led us a step further. We could not carefully examine the foundations of the Christian religion, without being convinced, that the same principles establish the DIVINITY of Jesus Christ—Establish it in such a manner, that he who doubts, whether the Lord Messiah be truly and properly God, ought also to question the truth of the Scriptures, which contain the Christian doctrine; and, that whoever is assured the New-Testament is divinely authentic, ought not to dispute the Deity of Christ. This is the general design of the ensuing Treatise.

But, for the better understanding it, one distinction

\* Referring to the Author's Treatise *On the Truth of the Christian Religion*.

is highly necessary. The divinity of Jesus Christ may be considered, either as a mystery *concealed* from us; or as a truth *revealed* to us. That our Lord is really a Divine Person, is a truth revealed; but the *modus* of his Divine Subsistence, is an unsearchable mystery; and, so far from attempting to explain it, we ought rather to shew, that it is inexplicable. All the difference between the people and their teachers, in this respect, is, the ignorance of the people is modest and humble; they are not ashamed to own it. But that of their teachers is haughty, and has recourse to scholastic distinctions, in order to conceal itself. We do not, therefore, undertake to *explain* the mystery, but to *prove the fact*. We shall have no recourse to metaphysical speculations, to shew how the thing is; but we shall make it appear, from divine Revelation, that it **REAL-  
LY IS.**

As my general design is to prove, that there is a necessary connection between the Divinity of Christ, and the truth of the Christian religion, I shall make it my principal endeavour to shew, that they must stand, or fall, together. For this purpose, I shall adopt a method which may seem a little new and extraordinary; but such as may, perhaps, be convincing. If Jesus Christ be not the true God, of the same essence with his Father, I shall shew, That the Mahometan religion is preferable to Christianity, and Christ inferior to Mahomet—That the Sanhedrim did an act of justice in causing Jesus to be put to death for blasphemy—That he and his apostles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error—That there is no harmony between the Old and the New Testament—And, that neither the antient Jewish, nor the Christian religion, is attended with sufficient criteria to distinguish it from imposture. Which particulars I shall distinctly consider, in five Sections: to which I shall add a sixth, designed to answer the principal objections against the orthodox faith.

As the DIVINITY of Christ, the INCARNATION, and the TRINITY, are three subjects which may be distinctly handled: it is proper to apprise the reader, that it is the *first* only which I intend here to establish;



it being in some respects fundamental to the other two.

The brevity at which I aim not permitting me to rank the adversaries of the orthodox doctrine in different classes, and to engage the Arians, Semi-arians, and Socinians, separately; I have so managed the argument, that they are generally opposed by the same proofs.

I distinguish, once for all, and request the reader carefully to remember it, between the *persons* of our adversaries, and the *cause* which they plead. Towards the *former* I have all the sentiments of love and compassion, which are due to my erring fellow-mortals. I admire the parts, the learning, and the gifts, which God has bestowed on some of them. And though they do manifest violence to the Scripture, I would not accuse them of speaking contrary to their own light; nor judge them unworthy of toleration in a Protestant state.—As to their *cause*, I ought not to be censured, if I endeavour to represent it in its own colours—in all that deformity which necessarily attends an hypothesis, that is contrary to Divine Revelation and the spirit of true religion. This is my duty, and one end of my ministry. I ought not to omit any thing, which appears to be a lawful and probable mean of convincing them that oppose the truth, and of reclaiming those who have wandered from the path of duty. But it is far from being my design to use hyperbolical expressions and declamatory language, in order to give an hideous description of a disguised doctrine. My intention is, to adduce such arguments from the Scripture as are pertinent and conclusive, and to propose them in a plain manner; having recourse to the Divine testimony and right reason, for the establishment of truth and the confutation of error.—May the WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR enlighten the mind and guide the pen of the writer! that this work may redound to the glory of God MY SAVIOUR and prove a blessing to all its readers. Amen.

## SECTION I.

If JESUS CHRIST be not the true God, of the same essence with his Father, the Mahometan religion is preferable to the Christian religion, and JESUS CHRIST inferior to Mahomet.

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### CHAP. I.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the same essence with his Father, the Christianity we profess is a corruption of the Christian religion, and Mahometanism the re-establishment of it.

THAT there is an infinite distance between the Creator and the creature, is a principle of natural religion. God cannot, therefore, without the most hateful impiety, be treated as a creature : nor can a creature, without damnable idolatry, be treated as a God. If, then, Jesus Christ be the Creator, he cannot be said, without impiety, to be a mere creature : and, if he be a mere creature, he cannot, without idolatry, be acknowledged as God. Consequently, if we who consider him, as of one essence with the Father, and the eternal God, be under a mistake, we cannot be cleared from a charge of idolatry, since it is as such that we worship him.

We could not justify our conduct, by saying : ‘ we sincerely believe him to be God ; so that though there is an error in our judgment, yet there is no infidelity in our hearts, our worship being directed to God only.’ For the same reason might serve to excuse all idolaters past, present, and future. The heathens, who worshipped their Jupiter, really believed him to be God, and their acts of worship were inten-

tionally referred to the Supreme Being ; yet they were not the less idolatrous on that account.

Nor ought we to imagine that a creature, on account of its superior excellence, may become the object of worship, which it would not be lawful to give to one of an inferior order. For they who worship the stars, are as really idolaters, and those that worship wood and stone ; and they who worship angels, as those that worship the stars : because idolatry does not consist, in rendering divine honours to a creature that is *comparatively low* in the scale of dependant existence ; but in addressing them to *a mere creature*.

Here it will be said, ‘ It may be lawful to worship a creature, whom God is pleased to invest with his glory ; as it is lawful to pay extraordinary honours to a subject, to whom the king orders they should be paid.’—But then it must be granted, that it is never lawful to worship a creature, as the true God ; any more than it is to honour a subject, by treating him as the real sovereign. I may venture to assert, that God neither would, nor could part with this character of his glory, in favour of another. He *could* not : for it is impossible that he only should be the true God, and that another, who has not his essence, should be so too. He *would* not : for how could he will a thing, which, being contrary to the truth, is contrary to his nature ?—Suppose, then, that Christ is God’s representative, and that it is as such he is an object of worship ; yet, not being God, he cannot, without manifest idolatry, be worshipped *as God*.

Again : Idolatry is a crime which violates the law of God and destroys the spirit of piety : it is directly opposite to the two great ends of religion ; which are, the glory of God, and the salvation of our souls. As to the *former*, it evidently robs JEHOVAH of his glory, and invests a creature with it. As to the *latter*, the spirit of infallibility has declared, that “ idolaters shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Hence it follows, that the Christianity we profess, is a corruption of the Christian religion ; and that Mahometanism is the re-establishment of it. For if Christian-

ity in its primitive purity, represent and treat Jesus Christ as a mere creature ; we corrupt and subvert it, when we consider and worship him, as the true God. If, then, the religion of those who worship him as the Supreme Being, be a corruption of Christianity ; the Mahometan religion, which represents God as infinitely superior to Jesus Christ, must be, in this respect the re-establishment of it.

We have been told, indeed, by Episcopius, ‘ That the Christian religion is not a science of bare contemplation, but a practical knowledge ; and, that it consists in obedience, rather than in any abstracted speculations on the Deity.’ I grant the principle, but deny that it is pertinently applied in the case before us. What, are those sentiments *mere speculations*, which are of such importance, that we are guilty of idolatry, if they be false, and our adversaries of blasphemy, if they be true !

If our Lord be of the same essence with his Father ; or, in other words, if he be God by nature ; he ought to be adored as such : and our opponents cannot, without the greatest impiety, refuse to acknowledge and worship him under that most exalted character. But if he be not of one essence with the Father, we cannot consider and address him as the true God, without being guilty of idolatry. So that the great question here is, How may we avoid impiety, on the one hand ; and idolatry on the other ? consequently, it is practical and of the highest importance.

The learned Arminian just mentioned, labours much, therefore, to little purpose, when he endeavours to prove, ‘ That it is not essential to salvation to know, whether Jesus Christ be a divine person, by eternal generation ; or whether, being a mere creature, he be called God, on account of his ministry.’ For, to prove that the knowledge of these things is not essential, he must not only shew, that the Socinians may, without being idolaters, worship one whom they *believe* to be a mere man, by nature ; but also, that we, without the guilt of idolatry, may adore Jesus Christ as God, though he be not so in reality. If our belief of the eternal generation and consubstantiality of the Son of God, betray us into

idolatry : nothing can be more fundamental, or more necessary, than a knowledge of those questions which respect his generation and consubstantiality. But it is certain, that our doctrine, upon this subject, does lead us into idolatry, if we be in an error, as to the doctrine itself. For if Christ be not of the same essence with his Father, he is not God : and if so, we cannot place him on the throne of God, by paying divine honours to him without manifest idolatry.

Nor have we any excuse, by which to extenuate the impiety of our conduct. For, were we to say, ‘ That we worship him as the Supreme Being, because we verily believe him to be so ;’ the heathens, as before observed, might, on the same principle, justify the worship which they addressed to Jupiter.—Were we to plead, ‘ We are not to be blamed for worshipping him as God, because, though he be not so, he deserves our adoration ;’ we should only change the state of the question. For the question here, is not, whether he deserves adoration : but, whether we may adore him as God, though he be not God.—Were we to assert, ‘ That nothing is absolutely necessary to be believed, performed, or avoided, in order to our salvation, but what is most evidently commanded, or prohibited in the Scripture ;’ it would only serve to condemn us. For what is more expressly contained in the Bible, than those precepts which require, that we should ascribe the glory of God to none but God ? Or, what is prohibited on more dreadful pains than idolatry, which puts the creature in the place of God ?—Were we to imagine, ‘ That God would not condemn our worship, because he assumes to himself all the honours that are paid to his Son ;’ a little reflection would convince us of a great mistake. For if Christ be a mere creature, he cannot be called the Son of God, but in an improper and very remote sense. Consequently, however highly exalted he may be above other creatures, yet the disproportion between him and God is greater, immensely greater, than that which subsists between Gabriel and a worm. If, then, a very excellent creature would take it deservedly ill, to have the

honours which are due to himself transferred to one that is mean and vile ; with much greater reason will God be offended, that the worship which is due to himself only, is addressed to Jesus Christ.

But it is said, ‘ JESUS CHRIST represents God.’ True : it is, however, certain, that to *represent* God, is one thing ; to *be* God, is another.—‘ But he is the Son of God.’ Granted : Notwithstanding, on the Socinian principles, he bears that character only in a figurative sense ; consequently, there is a greater distance between him and God, than there is between the meanest insect and the most glorious angel. So that though it were proper to invest the vilest creature, with the titles and glories of the most exalted ; it would not be lawful to pay to Jesus Christ those honours which are due to none but God.

## CHAP. II.

If JESUS CHRIST be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was a teacher raised up of God to instruct mankind.

It appears, then, that Mahometan religion is, in some respects, the re-establishment of Christianity, if Christ be not the true God. But I shall here be told, ‘ That the religion of the Arabian prophet, is replete with fiction and imposture.’ Granted : Yet I beg leave to inquire, How it came to pass that truth and error made so strict an alliance in it ? That Mahomet was an impostor, is acknowledged : that he abolished idolatry, must also be allowed ; and thus two opposite characters are united in him. If he turned a great part of the world from Christian idolatry ;—for so I call that worship which Christians pay to Jesus Christ, if he be not God ;—by what spirit performed he so great a work ? by the Spirit of God, or the spirit of the devil ? If by the *latter*, how came he to abolish idolatry ? If by the *former*, how could he be an impostor ?

It may be objected, ‘ Mahomet condemned the

‘ worship of the pagan idols, and so the dilemma may be retorted.’ But there is a difference between the principles which he supposed, and those which he established. The knowledge of the true God had been introduced among the heathen, and pagan idolatry was destroyed, before he appeared in the world. It was not Mahomet, but JESUS CHRIST, by the preaching of his apostles, who produced these great effects : and Mahomet, by what spirit soever he is supposed to have been inspired, neither durst have attempted to introduce, nor could have established, a religion in the world, contrary to them.

But the case is not the same, in regard to the true knowledge of Christ and the destruction of Christian idolatry. It was Mahomet who taught mankind, that Christians, in worshipping Jesus Christ as God, were guilty of idolatry. It was his chief design to rectify the mistakes of those, who, as he thought, worshipped several gods under the name of a TRINITY ; for so he speaks in his Koran. As, therefore, Christ and his apostles were the reformers of the heathen world, by destroying pagan idolatry ; so Mahomet ought to have the honour of reforming the Christian world, if it be true that he really destroyed the Christian idolatry.— But, as we should have had abundant cause of astonishment, if the apostles had destroyed the pagan idolatry and converted the heathen world, by preaching fables ; so we should have equal reason to be surprised if Mahomet abolished the Christian idolatry by imposture.

Besides, Jesus Christ declares, that teachers are “ known by their fruits.” This maxim must be true, because it was spoken by truth itself. If, then, we apply this principle to the case before us, we cannot but conceive an high opinion of Mahomet, and acknowledge him to have been a great prophet. It is no more than justice to his character, if he was the person who taught mankind the iniquity and the danger of confounding God with a creature. For he has enlightened many nations and many ages. Like a wise and sincere worshipper of his Maker, and the friend

of mankind, he has placed God on the throne of God, and the creature in the rank of a creature. What more lawful, what more holy, than such a design? What could be nobler, what greater, than such a work? If Mahomet have indeed enlightened the world, by asserting the rights of the Deity, and overturning the Christian idolatry, he deserves those titles of honour which the Mussulmen give him; and we may boldly affirm, that he ought to be considered, as a teacher of truth and a prophet of God—a prophet, greater than any that were under the law, greater than Jesus Christ. These are strange and shocking paradoxes, yet certain and unavoidable truths, if Christ be not the true God.

I said, he is a *teacher of truth*. This cannot be denied, while he teaches mankind such essential truths. This first principle of sacred truth, *A mere creature ought not to be worshipped as God*; is the foundation of natural religion, as distinguished from superstition—of the Jewish religion, as opposed to pagan idolatry—and of the Christian religion, considered in its purity. Mahomet, then, who established his religion on this grand principle, is a teacher of truth, of divine truth; even of that truth which, of all others, is most important and essential to religion.

‘But Mahomet aims at the gratification of sordid passions, and is rather a teacher of the flesh than of the spirit.’ If so, we have reason to wonder that so much truth is attended with so much impurity and vice; for light and darkness have no communion. If, then, he did not act by the Spirit of God, it must have been by the spirit of the world; and if by the *latter*, then not by the *former*. We must, therefore, inquire after the characters of these two spirits in him.—We are told, that ‘He is impure in his maxims and morals.’ This is a character of the spirit of the world; but the fact must be admitted with some restriction. For Mahomet reformed religion, by overturning the Christian idolatry and causing God only to be worshipped, through a great part of the world. This is, undoubtedly, a character of the Spirit of God, and a strong presumption in his



favour. For how should an impostor promote the good pleasure and the honour of God, by enlightening mankind and destroying idolatry? What, has God invested an impostor with the highest character of his own prophets, and with that of his own Son! For the prophets, who predicted the coming of the Messiah, foretold also, as a character of his appearance, that he should destroy idolatry. What, has the most Holy made an impostor the instrument of his mercy and the minister of his glory! What should we have thought of the divine conduct, if God had chosen devils incarnate to be his messengers to mankind and preachers of his gospel? We should certainly have concluded, either that he intended to render the gospel detestable, by putting it into the mouths of devils; or, that he designed to consecrate those apostate spirits, by making them the depositaries of his truth, and ministers of his grace.\* This comparison is the fitter, for its being odious, to illustrate the point. For what we say of the devil, may be said of seducers, his ministers, in general, and of Mahomet, in a particular manner. That is, if he, being an impostor, was chosen of God to re-establish the true religion, by destroying the Christian idolatry; Providence must have designed, either to render religion infamous, or to consecrate the impostor by choosing and employing him in a work so great, so glorious, so divine: both which suppositions are impious and abominable.

\* The Evangelical history and the Acts of the apostles inform us, it must be acknowledged, of attestations that were given to the dignity of our Lord's person and the truth of his gospel, by infernal spirits. But there is a great and manifest difference, between those occasional, transient, and rejected testimonies, and the case which is here supposed. See *Mark* i. 23, 24, 25. *Luke* iv. 33, 34, 35. *Acts* xvi. 17, 18.

## CHAP. III.

IF JESUS CHRIST be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was a great prophet, the greatest of prophets, and preferable to JESUS CHRIST.

**MAHOMET**, on the principles of our opponents, was a great prophet, and superior to any of the prophets under the Old Testament. This will appear, if the following things be considered. The antient prophets spake only to the people of Israel; but Mahomet to the finest and most considerable part of the world. Of them there was a long succession, yet not effectual to preserve a single nation from idolatry; but he had no need of a companion, or successor, to banish idolatry forever, from those countries where his doctrine has been received. They were raised up in an extraordinary manner, and wrought various miracles, in order to destroy idolatry; but he delivered a great part of the world from the Christian idolatry, without the assistance of one miracle. Moses, though the greatest of the antient prophets, did not know God as he is; Jesus Christ, and he only, knew him perfectly and made him known to men. But if the doctrine of our adversaries be true, Mahomet has made him known much better than Jesus Christ: which leads us to shew, that the *former*, according to their hypothesis, ought to be considered as a greater prophet than the *latter*.

This appears from his doctrine, and the success of his ministry. As to the *success of his ministry*, the thing speaks for itself. Jesus, indeed, caused his gospel to be preached and received throughout the world, but then he has hardly destroyed one kind of idolatry, before his followers lapse into another: for they are no sooner delivered from pagan, than they fall into Christian idolatry. But Mahomet established his religion on firmer foundations. He took wiser and juster measures, to preserve his disciples from relapsing into idolatry, in future; nor have they ever discovered an inclination so to do. The disadvantage of Jesus Christ, upon

the comparison. arises from this: the doctrine of Mahomet has in it a natural character which is more opposite to idolatry, than the doctrine of Christ. The reader, in order to be convinced of this, need only to consider the language of Jesus, in the writings of the New Testament, and compare it with the language of Mahomet, in his Koran.

Jesus tells us in his New Testament, “That he was  
“before John the Baptist, and before Abraham—That  
“he had a glory with his Father, before the world was  
“created—That he was in the beginning; that he was  
“with God, and was God—That all things were cre-  
“ated by him, whether they be visible or invisible—  
“That all things were not only created by him, but  
“for him; and that by him all things consist—That he  
“laid the foundations of the earth, and that the heavens  
“are the works of his hands—That he is the Alpha and  
“Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and  
“the Last—And, that there is one LORD, Jesus Christ,  
“by whom are all things, and we by him.”—In the  
same sacred rule of our faith and practice, he is called,  
“The Son of God—his own Son—and his only begot-  
“ten Son.” He is further called, “The LORD—  
“LORD and GOD—GOD with us—GOD manifest in  
“the flesh—The TRUE GOD—The GREAT GOD and  
“SAVIOUR.”

And, that we might not be at a loss for the sense, in which these names and characters are given to him, we find him applying to himself many oracles of the prophets, which undoubtedly speak of the true God, and contain the characters of his peculiar glory.—Solomon, for instance, addressing himself to the God of Israel, at the dedication of the temple, said: “Thou,  
“even thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of  
“men.” Jesus claims this Divine prerogative, in the most solemn manner, as that which shall engage the fear and wonder of all his disciples. “All the churches  
“shall know that I AM HE WHICH SEARCHETH THE  
“REINS AND HEARTS; and I will give unto every one  
“of you according to your works.”—It is written in the law, according to the exposition of Jesus Christ:

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only  
“shalt thou serve.” Yet an infallible writer assures us,  
that when God brought his First-begotten into the world  
he said, “Let all the angels of God worship him.”  
—Concerning JEHOVAH the psalmist sings; “Of old  
“hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the  
“heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall  
“perish, but thou shalt endure: thou art the same,  
“and thy years shall have no end.” That these things  
are asserted of God none can doubt; and that they are  
applicable to none but Him, is, I should think, equally  
evident. Yet it is past denial that this text is expressly  
applied to Jesus Christ. “Unto the Son he saith, Thy  
“throne, O God, is forever and ever—And, thou LORD,  
“in the beginning, has laid the foundation of the  
“earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.  
“They shall perish, but thou remainest—thou art the  
“same, and thy years shall not fail.”—It is of JEHO-  
VAH those words were spoken; “The chariots of God  
“are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The  
“Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.  
“Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity  
“captive; thou hast received gifts for men.” God  
only has legions of angels under his command and at  
his disposal. God only can dispense heavenly dona-  
tives to rebellious men. And yet Jesus Christ, by the  
pen of his apostle, applies this passage to himself, in the  
most direct manner. “Wherefore he saith, When he  
“ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and  
“gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what  
“is it but that he also descended first into the lower  
“parts of the earth?”—Once more: It is God, the  
Infinite, eternal JEHOVAH, who speaks in the following  
sublime passage; “I have sworn by myself, the word  
“is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall  
“not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every  
“tongue shall swear.” This text also is applied to  
Jesus Christ, by his faithful servant Paul. “We shall  
“all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it  
“is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall  
“bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”—

Quotations of a similar kind might be easily multiplied ; but these may suffice to shew, how Jesus Christ speaks of himself, and taught his apostles to speak of him. I shall now proceed to shew, in the following Chapter, how Mahomet speaks of himself, and how carefully he guards against idolatry.

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## CHAP. IV.

**IF JESUS CHRIST** be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was more true, more wise, more concerned for the good of mankind, and more zealous for the glory of God, than he.

**WE** have seen that Jesus Christ equals himself with God, by saying of himself such things, and applying to himself such oracles, as cannot belong to any but the Supreme Being.—Thus did not Mahomet. For he declares, in almost every page of his Koran, that none but the eternal Father is God. He indeed, calls himself a prophet, a man divinely sent ; but he lays no claim to Divinity. He acknowledges that Jesus Christ had a divine mission ; but will not allow him to be called God, nor the Son of God. There is not the least ambiguity in his language, on this important subject. He plainly asserts that they who say, ‘The Son of Mary is God, are infidels.’ And avers, ‘That Christ, the Son of Mary, is no more than God’s envoy.’ That the ‘Christians are infidels, by making *three* gods, ‘when there is but *one*.’ Nay, he thus represents God as complaining to Jesus Christ ; ‘O, Jesus, Son of Mary, dost thou persuade mankind to put thy Mother and Thee in the place of God, and to worship you, as if ye were Gods ?’ To which he represents Jesus as answering ; ‘God forbid that I should say any thing contrary to the truth ! Thou knowest whether I have taught that doctrine, or no. Thou knowest the secrets of all hearts.’—He requires that men should worship God, the Creator of heaven and earth ; who made the light and the darkness.’ And he calls those ‘infidels, who set up Christ as equal to God.’

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Hence it appears, on the principles of our adversaries, that Mahomet was more *true*, more *wise*, more *concerned for the good of mankind*, and more *zealous for the glory of God*, than Jesus Christ. This conclusion we abhor, as full of blasphemy; and yet we cannot but consider it as unavoidable, if the sentiments we oppose be true.

If Christ be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was more *true* than he; at least, in those things which regard the fundamentals of religion and the glory of God. This will appear if you recollect the manner in which our Lord speaks of himself, and how, by the direction of his own Spirit, his apostles represent him, in the Scripture-testimonies adduced in the preceding chapter; and compare them with the declarations of Mahomet, which are directly contrary, as is manifest, from the quotations just now produced from his Koran. In the *former*, Jesus is described as bearing divine characters and possessing divine perfections; as performing divine works, as being the true God; but in the *latter*, as a mere creature, and infinitely inferior to Jehovah. The language of the Bible, therefore, and the language of the Koran, cannot be both true, because they are contradictory. But that of the Koran, which expressly asserts that Christ is a mere creature, and ought not to be considered as the Supreme Being, is not false, if he be indeed a mere creature. The inference, then, is plain and unavoidable, though shocking and horrid; it is the language of the Bible, the language of Jesus Christ, that is void of truth.

It will be said; ‘The expressions of Mahomet are proper and literal, but those of Christ figurative and hyperbolical; so that, though contrary in appearance, yet not in reality.’ But what proof is there, that the language of Christ is figurative? Besides, it is unlawful, it is highly criminal, to make use of such figures as are injurious to the glory of God. We could not, without profaneness, say; Such a man is equal to God, in wisdom and power, in greatness and grandeur. And it would be but a poor apology for the use of such expres-

sions, were we to endeavour to defend them by saying ; They were applied, and are to be understood, in a hyperbolical, and not a literal sense. For we should soon be told, that some figures are impious ; and that such hyperboles as equal the creature with the Creator, are to be detested, as absolutely unlawful.—If in the style of the world, mortal beauties be called *adorable* ; if they be spoken of as so many *divinities* ; the language, though figurative, is manifestly profane ; though nobody can be so far deceived by it, as to mistake a beautiful woman for a divinity. For if these figures, either directly, or indirectly, imply a want of reverence for God, it is enough to denominate them impious. If, then, in human language, we ought not to suffer such figures as indicate a want of respect for the Deity ; much less ought such expressions to be used in a language sacred and divine, as is that of the Bible. And if such hyperboles be insufferable, when doing honour to mortal beauties, whom we cannot possibly mistake for the true God ; how much more dangerous and iniquitous would they be, when used concerning a subject who might, as the event has shewn, in respect of Christ, be easily taken for the Supreme Being !

Again : If Jesus Christ be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was much *wiser* than he. As wisdom consists in choosing the best means for obtaining a proposed end : we need only examine, What was the *end* of each, in establishing his religion ; and then inquire, What *method* the one and the other took, to succeed in their designs.—Mahomet's design was, as he declares, to make known the true God, as exalted far above all creatures—to make him known, as the only object of religious worship ; who ought to be distinguished from all other beings, even from Christ himself : maintainin that Jesus is far from partaking with his Father in the glories of the Deity. Of these things Mahomet endeavours to persuade mankind. And for this purpose he makes use of plain, and strong, and proper expressions. He loudly and vehemently declares, that they who treat Jesus Christ as God, are idolaters ; which is the direct way to accomplish his



design.—It is supposed also, that the great end of Jesus Christ is to glorify God. *To glorify God*, is, according to the language of inspiration, to exalt him far above all other beings. The ancient prophets foretelling that God should be glorified, in an extraordinary manner, in the latter times, express their ideas in the following words: “The lofty looks of men shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the LORD ALONE SHALL BE EXALTED in that day.” But Christ debases God, at the very time he professes to exalt him; for, by his expressions, he puts himself in the place of God. This he does, when he calls himself God; when he claims divine perfections; when he attributes to himself the work of creation; and when he applies to himself those oracles of the prophets which display the essential characters of the Supreme Being.

If it be said, ‘It is sufficient that Christ declares, *his Father is greater than he* ;’ I answer, It would be a haughty kind of modesty for a mere creature to say, The Former of all things is greater than I. Neither Moses nor Isaiah, nor any of the prophets, ever used such language. A loyal subject never affects to say, The king is greater than I. That is taken for granted. Nor will a holy creature make use of such language, concerning his Creator; because it would be, in some sense, to compare himself with the infinite God.—Besides, what would it avail for Jesus, *once* in the course of his converse on earth, to say, “My Father is greater than I;” when in the general tenor of his conduct and language, and in the language he taught his disciples, he speaks and acts as if he were the true God?

It may, perhaps, be replied, ‘Here you beg the question: for those expressions, from which your conclusion is drawn, require a very different interpretation.’ When, for instance, Jesus is called God, our adversaries will have the name to signify, that he was sent from God and represents God. When he is said to have “made the world;” the meaning is, that he made the happiness of the age to come, or the

kingdom of the Messiah, which was so eagerly expected by the antient Jews. When it is said, "He was in the beginning," and "all things were made by him;" the expressions mean, that he was from the time of John the Baptist, is the author of the gospel, and of all that is done under that dispensation. When he is called, "God manifest in the flesh;" the character signifies a creature that represents God. And when it is said, that "he laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his hands;" the expressions are used and the works ascribed to him, by way of accommodation, and not in a literal and proper sense.—A small share of common sense is quite sufficient to shew how unnatural and violent these interpretations are. But, supposing they were to the purpose, it could not be denied, that these expressions of Scripture, if they must be taken according to these explanations, are very obscure and equivocal. It could not, I say, be denied; since the far greater part of the Christian world has been ignorant of their meaning for so many ages; and since the first impression they naturally form on our minds, suggests the propriety of a very different interpretation. This evinces, if I may say it without blasphemy, that Christ was not so *prudent* in the choice of his language as Mahomet. For that pretended prophet always speaks in a clear, strong, peremptory manner, in order to shew, that it is not lawful, on any consideration, to represent a creature as possessed of the characters and properties of God. Whereas Christ and his apostles have used many expressions that are obscure and equivocal: such as, in their most common acceptation, seem to invest a creature, a mere man, with the glories of the Deity: we being obliged to understand the terms of which a discourse consists, in their common and natural signification, and not in one that is uncommon and forced. Consequently the language of Mahomet is more proper to glorify God, than the language of Christ; and, therefore, if the design of the *latter* was to honour and exalt God, he has not succeeded in it so well as the *former*.

Further: If the sentiments of our adversaries be true, Mahomet was more *concerned for the good of mankind* than Jesus Christ. This appears from hence. A prudent and diligent endeavour to preserve men from idolatry, is one of the greatest marks of a sincere regard to their happiness; because idolatry destroys their souls, by excluding them from the kingdom of heaven. If, then, Jesus Christ be not a divine person, of the same essence with his Father, he has not taken proper measures to preserve men from the dreadful evil of idolatry, while Mahomet has done it effectually: for he has abolished the Christian idolatry in a great part of the world, and laid such foundations of his own religion, that a man cannot be guilty of idolatry, without first ceasing to be his disciple. But as for Christ, he has given occasion to it; he has laid a foundation for it. For he does not only permit and direct his disciples to give him the titles of the Supreme Being; but also to ascribe to him the perfections and works of the Deity, and to apply to him many of the sublimest oracles of the Old Testament, which relate to the God of Israel.

It was, for instance, a very surprising thing, that Jesus, when he appeared to Thomas, after his resurrection, should suffer him to cry out, "MY LORD, AND MY GOD!" without saying a word to him about the impiety and blasphemy of an exclamation, which treats the creature as if he were the Creator. Thomas, before, was an unbeliever; now he is an idolater. Till that instant he would not believe that Jesus was risen; he considered him as a man laying under the power of death; but now, on a sudden, he addresses him as God; he bows and adores. Of the two extremes, the latter is most condemnable: for unbelief is not so criminal as idolatry. *That* dishonouring Jesus Christ; *this* usurping the throne of God. Better for Thomas, therefore, to have persisted in this unbelief, than, by renouncing it, to fall into idolatry. And yet—strange indeed! strange to astonishment! who can account for it? Jesus upbraids him only with the *former*; not at all with the *latter*.—Besides, as our Lord could not but know what

an impression these words of his amazed and adoring apostle would make on the minds of men : as he knew that the Jews, deceived by expressions less acceptable than these, had accused him of blasphemy ; and as he knew that these very expressions would give occasion to Christians in succeeding ages, to treat him as the true God ; it is evident that he ought, from a concern for the good of mankind, to have strictly prohibited all expressions, which tended to make such a dangerous impression. And yet he not only permits his disciples to *speak* after this manner ; but directs them to *record* the expressions, for the perusal of all future generations ; and that without giving the least hint, that the terms are used in a new and uncommon sense, though they appear so impious and blasphemous.

Once more : If Jesus Christ be not of the same essence with his Father, Mahomet was *more zealous for the glory of God* than he. The essential glory of God consists in the eminence of his perfections, by which he is infinitely exalted above all other beings ; and his manifestative glory, or the honour he receives from his rational creatures in the acts of religion, by which he is distinguished from every creature. Now Mahomet has glorified God, by distinguishing him from all other beings ; but it does not appear that he has been thus honoured by Jesus Christ ; since his own expressions and conduct, and the language of his apostles, have a natural tendency to make us consider a mere creature as the Great Supreme. All expressions, which attribute to a creature the characters of God's glory, are sacrilegious. Nay, though they might receive a sense which is not impious ; yet they are unlawful, if their ambiguity be such as renders them liable to be misinterpreted, to the dishonour of God, by an impartial searcher after truth. For if, in civil commerce, equivocal language, which, without any force upon the expressions, may be so understood as to injure a lawful sovereign, would be accounted criminal ; and if, when the dignity of majesty is deeply interested, we consider the silence of some and the equivocations of others, who ought to speak clearly for their master's honour, as so many implicit acts of treason ;

have we no reason to condemn equivocations in the case before us, of impiety and blasphemy, though there were nothing else to induce us to do it? But a man must be wilfully blind, who does not see, that there is something more than mere ambiguity, in a language which is little short of a perpetual application of the characteristics of God's glory to Jesus Christ.

Hence I conclude, if Christ be a mere creature, that Mahomet has spoken conformably to truth and prudence; to a concern for the good of mankind, and a zeal for the glory of God. While Jesus—detested be the thought!—while Jesus has spoken imprudently and falsely; while he has spoken cruelly, in regard to us; and impiously, in respect of God.—But if Jesus Christ be of the same essence with his Father, then it is evident, that when he attributes to himself the names and perfections, the works and honours of God, he speaks agreeably to *truth*, because he is God: he speaks *wisely*; for he uses the fittest expressions to convey his own ideas, and to obtain the end intended: he speaks like one *concerned for the good of mankind*; because he appears unwilling that we should be ignorant of a truth so capital and fundamental: and he speaks as one that is *zealous for the glory of God*; because we cannot neglect our duty to him, without offending JEHOVAH. Consequently, Mahomet has not spoken conformably to *truth*: for he has maintained that Jesus Christ is not, what he really is: nor consonant to his *own design* of glorifying God; because, by dishonouring Christ he injures God himself: nor yet agreeably to a *concern for the happiness of men*; seeing he teaches them to blaspheme Jesus Christ, which exposes to a divine curse.

To the tenour of my arguing several objections, I am aware will be made. It will be said, for instance; 'Mahomet is chargeable with not having formed sufficiently high ideas of Jesus Christ.' Be it so; the injury which religion has sustained, in that respect, is very inconsiderable; compared with the advantage it has received from him, by destroying those extravagantly exalted notions which men had formed of the Son of Mary. For there is no very great harm in representing

a mere creature as less excellent than he really is ; especially if that creature be the idol of mankind ; which, on the principles of our opponents, was the case here. But effectually to teach men, not to confound the creature with the Creator, is a capital branch of religious instruction. Mahomet looked upon Christ as a mere man. yet as a man sent from God ; and it is, principally, under this view that our adversaries would have us consider him. If, then, the author of the Koran abolish idolatry, and by so doing exalt God, as much as men had before debased him ; he may very well be pardoned the small fault, of not sufficiently honouring a mere man.—‘ But supposing Mahomet had an advantage, in some respects ; this does not hinder Jesus Christ from having a far greater, in others.’ As the two great ends of religion are, the glory of God and the happiness of men : and as Mahomet has succeeded better than Jesus Christ, in his design of glorifying God and preserving men from idolatry : it follows, that he ought to have the preference. For, on the hypothesis which we oppose. Christ is so far from honouring God, that he robs him of his glory, and Mahomet restores it to him.—‘ Mahomet only *pretended*, never sincerely designed, the advancement of God’s glory.’ I reply, according to the maxim of Jesus Christ, “ teachers are “ to be known by their fruits.”—‘ He wrought *no* “ miracles ’ Granted : but it is not essential to a true prophet to work miracles, as appears by the example of John the Baptist. Besides, the law teaches us, not to judge of a doctrine by its miracles, but of miracles by the doctrine.—Christ was *foretold* by the antient ‘ prophets : but Mahomet could never boast of any such ‘ thing.’ But can any substantial reason be assigned, why the antient oracles should not foretell the coming of Mahomet, who destroyed idolatry in the most considerable part of the world ; when they foretold the appearance of a man who has been the idol of the Christians for so many ages ? Of a man, who, by his own doctrine, and that of his apostles, gave occasion to this dreadful idolatry, to the dishonour of God and the ruin of millions ? Were the coming and ministry of a mere

man, that would equal himself with the eternal Sovereign, a proper subject of prophetic eloquence and transporting joy ? Had Isaiah, for instance, any reason to lift up his voice and say to Zion ; “ Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ? ” — The *morals*, however, of Jesus Christ, ‘ greatly excel those of Mahomet.’ But what real excellence can there be in those morals, which do not prevent Christians from being guilty of blasphemy and idolatry ; which leave Mahomet the honour of being more zealous for the glory of God, and more careful of the interests of men, than Jesus Christ ? — ‘ Mahomet, it is well known, propagated his religion by *craft* and *force* ; but Christ by upright and gentle methods.’ Granted : but yet I beg leave to ask, in whom are the marks of a proud and worldly spirit most evident ? in one that is a man, like ourselves, who attributes to himself the titles, perfections, and honours of God ; or in a man who, in the establishment of his religion, endeavoured to exalt God, by shewing that no creature ought to be associated with him ? — ‘ Mahomet flatters the *sordid appetites* of men, by promising them a sensual paradise, replenished with carnal delights.’ Not now to inquire, whether his disciples do not spiritualize their Koran, and take the gross expressions in a mystical sense ; it may be sufficient here to observe ; That those vices which arise from the sensual appetites are not so dangerous, as those which proceed from the pride and impiety of the mind. The morals of Mahomet, therefore, are less dangerous, in this respect, than the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

To conclude, so long as it is supposed that Jesus has given occasion to Christian idolatry, and while the Arabian prophet is considered as having turned so many millions from it ; the advantages of the *former* will be very few and small, and those of the *latter* many and great : because there is nothing so essential to religion, as the glorifying of God ; nor any thing so contrary to it, as the practice of idolatry. — Thus it appears, that the TRUTH of the Christian religion, and the DI-

VINITY of Jesus Christ, are so united, that we cannot establish the one, without maintaining the other; nor give up the *latter*, without renouncing the *former*. But this will appear with still greater evidence, in the further prosecution of my subject.

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## SECTION II.

IF JESUS CHRIST be not the true God, of the same essence with his Father, the Sanhedrim did an act of justice in causing him to be put to death; and the Jews had sufficient reason to reject the preaching of his Apostles, when they called them to believe on him.



### CHAP. I.

JESUS CHRIST is called God.

As the opinion of those who believe Jesus Christ to be a mere man, consecrates the Mahometan religion; so it also justifies the Jews in the most execrable parricide that ever was committed; that is, the MURDER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Fully to vindicate the conduct of the Jews in this respect, on the principles of our opposers, we need only to shew; That the Sanhedrim had authority to judge Jesus Christ—That they had sufficient cause to condemn him—That they had a right to put him to death—And, that the common people had reason to adhere to the sentence of their Sanhedrim, and to reject the preaching of the apostles, when they called them to believe in the crucified Jesus.

The authority of the Sanhedrim to *judge* Jesus Christ, is incontestible: it being the proper business of that grand court of judicature, to take cognizance of all capital affairs, which regarded the tranquillity of the state, and the preservation of religion.—It is equally clear that they had a right *to put him to death*, on a conviction of blasphemy; and *to reject the preaching*

*of the apostles, if he was justly put to death. So that the whole difficulty lies in this ; Whether they could convict him of blasphemy. He is no longer on earth. The Jews, therefore, cannot bring him again to the bar, and proceed to a new trial ; but they may easily know his doctrine, by those writings which his disciples have left ; for all agree, that they spake and wrote by his order and inspiration.*

Now it appears, from the writings of the apostles, that Jesus Christ was called God—That the perfections of God were attributed to him—That he received Divine adoration—That he was equalled with God—And, that the oracles of the Old Testament, which express the glory of God, were applied to him. But can all this honour be given to a mere man ; can all these glories be ascribed to the most exalted of mere creatures, without the guilt of blasphemy ?—Let us, for a moment, put ourselves in the place of the modern Jews ; and see whether, supposing the principles we oppose to be true, we are not obliged to persevere in our infidelity. To induce us to renounce it, we must be persuaded, either, that Christ was *not* called God—that he did *not* receive Divine adoration—that he did *not* pretend to be equal with his Father—and, that he did *not* apply, nor suffer to be applied to him, those oracles of the Old Testament which express the glory of God :—Or else we must believe, that a mere creature may take upon him the name, God, with those ideas which that august name conveys, without being guilty of blasphemy.

The *former* is not possible. For Christ is called God, and the *true* God, in the apostolic writings. Thomas, after the resurrection of Jesus, said to him ; “ My Lord, and my God ! ” John begins his gospel thus ; “ In the beginning was the Word—and the Word was “ God.” Paul calls him, “ God manifest in the flesh.”—It is of no importance whether this name was given to him in Greek, or in Hebrew : for, in all languages, the term signifies an essence greatly superior to ours. Besides, as the apostles apply to Christ so many of the antient oracles, which speak of the Supreme Being ;

they must have given to him the names of God in general—those names which were of known, established use in the sacred language.

Here it is worthy to be remarked, that the several heads of accusation, which the Jews may form against Christ, mutually support each other. ‘ We cannot doubt, they might say, that he took on him the name God, since he received Divine worship : nor can we question but he was worshipped in a *proper sense*, being adored under a Divine character. We have not the least reason to doubt, but the sublime character was attributed to him, as it *expresses the glory of God* ; seeing it was applied with the idea of those perfections which are naturally signified by it : for he is said to be equal with God, after having divine perfections ascribed to him. We cannot but conclude that he is *really equalled* with God ; because those oracles which speak of God only, are applied to him.’ —But these things deserve a more particular consideration.

Every one knows, that we all naturally scruple to take upon us the name, God. This backwardness must arise, either from the reverence we have for the Deity, or from some other principle. If the *latter*, what is it ? If the *former*, it must be either from the regard we have for the Supreme Being, or from the respect we have for some subordinate divinity. It cannot be out of respect for a subordinate deity ; for they who deny the existence of any such being, will not dare not, call themselves by the name, God. If out of regard for the Supreme Being, it must be because we are fully persuaded, that we should injure him, and be guilty of a capital crime, were we to call ourselves by the name, God ; or by any other name that is peculiar to him. If so, we cannot but consider him as an impious wretch, who, not being God, dares to take that name upon him.

The names, JESUS CHRIST, SAVIOUR, and REDEEMER OF THE WORLD, are not more peculiar to the Son of Mary, than is the name, God, to the Supreme Being. For as no Christian will give those names to any

but the Son of the Virgin ; so no Jew dares to apply the name, God, to any but the Great Supreme. And as Christians no sooner hear this gracious and glorious name, JESUS CHRIST, than they think of Him that was conceived in the womb of Mary : so the adorable name, God, is no sooner pronounced among the Jews, than they have an idea of Him that created heaven and earth ; except there be some intimation given of its being used in an improper sense. As, therefore, a man who should now call himself JESUS CHRIST, and desire to be treated as the Saviour of the world, would be justly condemned of horrid impiety : so, if Jesus took upon him the name, God, without being God, the Jews might justly accuse, condemn, and punish him for blasphemy.

It will not avail to say, ‘ Though Jesus took upon him the name, God ; yet he gave sufficient notice that he was not God.’ For it does not appear that he gave any notice of it ; at least, not *sufficient* notice. The contrary is evident from his language and conduct. But, if he be not God, why does he take a name which had been long consecrated to that Supreme Being ? If he be not God, why does he permit men to adore him ? adoration being due to God only.—Besides, as it would be absurdly impious for a man who confesses, that he is not Jesus Christ, to take upon him the names and receive the honours which are due to that Divine Saviour only ; so it is a compound of absurdity and blasphemy for one who is not God, to take upon him the names and attributes of God ; and, by receiving adoration, to usurp the honours which are due to none but God.

If Moses, when returning from the mount with his face shining, by reason of his intimate converse with JEHOVAH, had presumed to call himself God ; to attribute to himself Divine perfections ; and to demand the adoration of the people, though he was known to be a mere man ; the chosen tribes would have had sufficient ground to reject, condemn, and punish him as a seducer, notwithstanding the wonderful miracles that were performed by him. For, by such a conduct,

he would have violated the first command of the law, at the very time in which it was given. Jehovah had said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and yet he would have put himself in the place of God.—If, then, the antient Israelites would have done well to reject Moses, in the case supposed; the Sanhedrim had reason to reject the pretensions of Jesus Christ, and to condemn him for blasphemy, when he either required, or permitted, Divine honours to be addressed to him. For when the names and glory of God are usurped, neither miracles\* nor the dignity of the person accused, can, in the least, vindicate his conduct. *Not miracles*: because they cannot authorize blasphemy. Nay, blasphemy is a sufficient ground of utterly rejecting those works, however wonderful, which are wrought in favour of it. *Not the dignity of the person*: because robbing God of his glory is a crime, by so much the more heinous, by how much the more excellent the person is that commits the horrid act.

Should the head of a family, for instance, call himself king; under a pretence that he possesses authority over his children: should he frequently so call himself, without any restriction, or explanation, and also require to be honoured as a king; he would involve himself in much guilt. But the crime would be more aggravated, if a magistrate should usurp the name and the honours of majesty, among his fellow-citizens; because it would be of more dangerous consequence to the state. And it would be still greater, if the governor of a province were to do so; and greater yet, in proportion to the dignity of the guilty person.—Thus the name, God, being, by a most antient and holy use, appropriated to Him who made heaven and earth; the application of it to any other is so far from being justified, by the excellence of the creature who dares to assume it, that he is, on that very account, so much the more guilty of impiety and blasphemy.

The name, God, in our language, and Θεός, in Greek,

\* Admitting, for the sake of argument, that such an usurper could perform real miracles.

answer those august and venerable names which the Supreme Being appropriates to himself, in the Old Testament : names which ought to be sacred to Him, because he took them on himself, and because they were to distinguish Him from all his creatures. One of them signifies, **HE THAT IS SUFFICIENT** ; to denote, that all other beings have need of God, but that He has no need of them. Another signifies, **I AM** ; or, **I AM THAT I AM** ; to indicate, that God is self-existent and independent, unchangeable and eternal. I omit several others, which might be mentioned ; but it may be observed of them in general, that they express such an eminence of perfection and glory, as cannot agree to any but the Most High.

In the language of the New Testament, and in that of the Septuagint, are two names, *Θεός* and *Κόσμος* ; intended to express what is signified by the various characters which our Maker assumes, in the Hebrew oracles. And, certainly, we ought not to imagine that the names, which God hath set apart for himself in the New Testament, are less sacred, or less proper to him, than those by which he revealed himself in the Old. For if it was then necessary, that God should be distinguished from all his creatures ; and if, on that account, he took on him such names as express his essential glory ; there must be the same propriety, and an equal necessity, now. Nay, it is more necessary now, that the grand, the infinite distinction between God and his noblest creatures should be displayed and asserted ; because this is the time, in which it was foretold, that “ *GOD ALONE should be exalted* .”—so that, as there would have been evident and abundant reason, to condemn and punish a man for blasphemy, who, under the Old Testament, should have usurped the name **Jehovah**, with the adoration due to him who calls that name his own ; so nothing can be more apparent than the impiety of him, who should now usurp the name, **God**, and receive that worship which has been always paid to the most High only, under that character.

When Herod, making an oration to the people, was smitten by divine vengeance, for receiving this impious

acclamation. "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" neither the people, nor he, could consider it as literally true. Herod, elated as he was, did not believe himself to be God; nor could the multitude suppose that their king was all on a sudden become the Supreme Being; yet his impiety met with exemplary punishment.—If Jesus Christ, therefore, be a mere man, he cannot be acquitted from a charge of blasphemy, by pleading; 'That he declared himself to be a man, and that he acknowledged his Father to be greater than he.' Because a man may be guilty of horrid impiety, in receiving Divine honours, without either believing or declaring, that he is the true God; as appears by the example of Herod. For he who usurps the glory of God, though it be but in part, is guilty of blasphemy; and he who ascribes it to an usurper, is guilty of idolatry.

Have not the Jews, then, sufficient reason to abide by the sentence of their Sanhedrim, and, on the principles of our adversaries, to maintain; That Jesus Christ was justly condemned and put to death, having been convicted of blasphemy? And what can be said in vindication of our Messiah? It may, perhaps, be said; 'There is a manifest difference between the conduct of Herod, and that of Jesus Christ. The former received divine honours out of pride, and contrary to the will of God: but the latter calls himself God, and receives adoration, only because the true God will have it so.'—But where, and by whom, has God declared his will, that Christ should bear his name, and receive his worship? If there be any such revelation, it must have been made, either by the prophets; or by his Son; or by the apostles. If they say, By his Son; the Jews will immediately ask, Whether all the seducers in the world do not pretend to divine authority, for what they say and do? They all affirm, that the names they bear, the works they perform, and the honours they receive, are by the command of God; yet they are easily convicted of falsehood, and their wonderful works, if they perform any, are proved to be imposture; because they usurp the characters and glory of God.—If, by the apostles; they are no

less embarrassed. For they who reject Christ, condemn his apostles ; condemn them of blasphemy, for ascribing the glory of God to a crucified man.—If, therefore, such a revelation have been made, it was by the *prophets*. But if so, Christ is the true God. For all those oracles which represent the Messiah as God, speak of him as the **TRUE GOD**. Nothing can be more express than that command which is given to “ all the “ angels to worship him ;” nor is any thing more certain, than that it is the true God of whom the words are spoken. And as the prophets have so expressly and repeatedly declared, that there is but *one* God, the Creator of heaven and earth ; it is evident that he of whom they speak must be the true, the eternal God.

That sublime Being whom the prophets foretell, as coming into the world ; as sending his messenger before him ; as commanding his servants to “ say to the “ cities, of Judah, behold your God !” is the Creator of heaven and earth. If not, there must be *two* Gods, of whom they speak : but Moses and the prophets unite in asserting, and insist upon it, as a principle essential to that religion which they taught and established, that there is but *one* God. Hear how Isaiah declares the unity and publishes the names of God. ‘ Thus saith ‘ the **LORD** the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the ‘ **LORD OF HOSTS** ; I am the First, and I am the Last, ‘ and besides me there is no God.’ According to these important and sublime expressions. He only is to be called God, whose names are, **JEHOVAH, THE REDEEMER OF ISRAEL, THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE FIRST AND THE LAST**.—Again ; ‘ I am the **LORD**, and there ‘ is **NONE ELSE** ; there is no God besides me—That ‘ they may know from the rising of the sun and from ‘ the west, that there is **NONE BESIDES ME** : I am the ‘ **LORD** and there is **NONE ELSE**, I form the light, and ‘ create darkness ; I make peace, and create evil ; I ‘ the **LORD** do all these things—There is no God **ELSE** ‘ beside me ; a just God and a Saviour, there is **NONE** ‘ **BESIDE ME**—I am God, and there is **NONE ELSE**.’—See, in what a reiterated manner the prophet asserts the important truth ! Hear, with what vehemence of



spirit and force of language, he maintains the supreme dignity of JEHOVAH's character, in opposition to all that are called god, who made not the heavens and the earth, the light and the darkness! Of this the Jews cannot be ignorant. 'On this principle, they will say, 'our fathers condemned your Messiah, He called himself God, and we know there is but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Your Messiah, not being the Former of all things, could not be God; he was, therefore, guilty of blasphemy, and worthy of death.'

How, then, shall we vindicate the conduct of Christ, if we suppose him to be a mere man, and yet allow that he called himself God? Shall we say, that he has nothing of God but the *name*? But if so, any other man might be so called as well as he.—Shall we assert that he is a *metaphorical* God; that he is so called in the sense in which kings bear the name? But the contrary appears, by his receiving adoration. When we call a man who is exceedingly brave, King of the courageous; we do not mean to ascribe any royalty to him. Besides, when we attribute any thing to a person metaphorically, we do not use the name simply, without any limitation or explanation.—Shall we say, then, that Christ is a *subordinate* God? But the Scriptures, by excluding a plurality of gods, exclude also every subordinate god: for they utterly reject every being, as unworthy to be called God, who is not the Creator of all things.—When the Supreme Lawgiver says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" does he mean to exclude *all* persons and *all* things that are not God, or only *some*? If *some* only, then the Israelites were allowed to have *other gods* before him; provided they were but of the right sort. But if *all, all entirely*, then the Jews did right in accusing Christ of blasphemy, when he proposed himself, or was preached to them as a subordinate god.

I may, perhaps, be told, 'When the Supreme Lawgiver said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" he meant to exclude the false gods of the heathen.' But whatever gods he intended, they are ex-

cluded by a general proposition ; which utterly forbids all such objects of worship as are not the true God. The Lawgiver does not abhor the idols of the heathen, because they are the idols of *the heathen* ; but because they are not the TRUE GOD, and yet are worshipped. Suppose it were not wood, or stone, but a man, or an angel ; so soon as you adore him, he becomes a heathen idol : otherwise, one that worships an angel could not be convicted of idolatry, by the first command. It is, then, a general prohibition, and absolutely forbids the worship of any one besides the Supreme Being ; consequently, it must entirely exclude all subordinate gods.—Nor can the meaning be, to exclude a plurality of *supreme* gods. For if so, of all the heathen deities, the worship of none but their Jupiter would be condemned, by this command. Besides, why should it condemn a crime that never did, and, according to all probability, never will exist ? for none ever yet worshipped *two supreme* gods.

Were not the Jews in the right, then, when they complained that Jesus, being a mere man, made himself God ? Or, can we blame their conduct, unless we consider Christ as of the same essence with Him who created the universe ? They affixed the idea of the Supreme Being to the name God ; having been taught, by the prophets, that there is but *one* God, and that all other deities shall perish from the earth. So that if they were under a mistake, in this respect, they were led into it by their prophets ; but if not, they were obliged, on the principles of our opponents, to condemn Jesus for usurping the names and honours of God.—For it should be observed, that names do not *naturally* express these ideas rather than those ; their signification being fixed, either by God himself, speaking in the Scriptures ; or by general consent and custom. We are not, therefore, to consider the *letters* which compose the name God, in English ; Θεός, in Greek ; יהוה, in Hebrew ; as having any thing sacred, or peculiarly significant, in them ; but we must examine what *ideas* are affixed to these names. Now these ideas are not such as any particular person may please

to fix upon them ; but those which have been, and are annexed to them, by the unerring Spirit, in the Bible ; and by the common consent of mankind.—Were a Count of an empire, for instance, to assume the title of *Emperor* ; he would, no doubt, displease the princes ; and it would be but a poor apology to say, ‘ That by the exalted title, he meant no more than a sovereign prince in his own country.’ He would soon be informed, that the common consent of men, not his particular fancy, settles the signification of the term. In like manner, it would be to no purpose for Christians to say ; ‘ Though Jesus assumed the name, God ; yet he did not apply it to himself in that sense in which it is commonly used : for the question is not, What *he* understood by it ; but, What *men ought* to understand by it, when it is given to him.

If, therefore, we would know what Jesus meant, by calling himself God ; or what his disciples intended, by giving him that name ; we must inquire what was the *common acceptation* of the term, in the language of men in general, or in that of the Jews, or of the prophets, or of God himself. If the name agree to Christ, as a mere man, let our adversaries inform us which of these they follow. It is not agreeable to the manner of speaking among men *in general* ; for it never was their custom to call a mere man by the name, God. Much less is it conformable to the current language of the *Jews* ; nor to that of the *prophets* ; nor to that of *God*. The Jews used to affix, to that sacred name, the idea of the Great Supreme ; the idea of him who formed the universe : for they knew of no other God. The same is evident concerning the prophets who had taught them so to believe and so to speak ; and of the Holy Spirit, who had so taught the prophets.

## CHAP. II.

The argument continued.

**T**HE Jews, who lived in the apostolic times, ought not to be blamed for speaking as God and the prophets had taught them. They cannot be justly blamed for not being able to guess, that the name, God, had a signification which had not been heard of till that time; a signification which fully acquitted a man who, without it, would have been convicted of blasphemy. Much less are the modern Jews to be censured for speaking, as their forefathers taught them. But let us consider the various ways, in which the members of the antient synagogue were instructed by their prophets, in this respect.

The prophets frequently reminded them of this precept; “Thou shalt have no other gods before me;” without ever subjoining the least qualification, or restriction, by which they might learn, that this command was not general and obligatory in all ages and places. Were the Jews, then, obliged to believe, without any manner of notice, that a command so inviolable till then, had lost its force in the time of Jesus Christ?

They constantly oppose that God who made all things, to every *created* god. As they assert the unity of God, with great frequency and great solemnity; so they distinguish him by his character, “He made the heavens and the earth.” Nay, they declare that “the gods who made not the heavens and the earth, shall perish from under the heavens.” The Jews could not but consider this assertion, as general; and as teaching them, that no one ought to be acknowledged as God, but him that created the world and is unchangeable.

The prophets taught, that God cannot be *represented* by any picture, or image; because there is nothing in the world fit to represent him. “To whom,” or to what, says God, “will ye liken me?” By which the

Jews were informed, that nothing which might be represented on canvass, or in statuary, ought to be acknowledged as God. Consequently, they must conclude, that a mere man was very far from deserving to be called God.

The name JEHOVAH. with all other Divine titles and characters which our Maker assumes in the Scripture, are names of *distinction*; and were designed to exalt him far above all creatures. “I am JEHOVAH. that is my name. There is no God besides me. Ye shall swear by my name. Whosoever sweareth upon the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.” Now these characters and claims were designed to distinguish God, either from *all* his creatures, or only from *some* of them. If the *latter*, in vain does He say; “There is no God besides me.” Because it might be answered. Though that be thy name, it does not distinguish thee from *every* creature: for there is, or there will be one, that shall bear it with thee. If the *former*, then whoever calls himself God, disowns the condition of a creature; and, consequently, if Jesus Christ assumed that name, or any other expressive of the same glory, the Jews could not but accuse him of blasphemy.

The prophets abundantly assert the *unity* of God. Nor can we consider their extraordinary care, in this respect, as owing to any thing, but the danger there was of men falling into idolatry; by acknowledging, as God, one that was not JEHOVAH. But were the days of the prophets the only time in which men were in any such danger? Were they not exposed to the same evil, when the Sanhedrim judged Jesus Christ? But why do I ask such questions? For, if we believe our adversaries, the event has proved, that it was possible for men, with the writings of the prophets in their hands, to become idolaters; by placing a creature, honoured with the name of God, on the throne of the Deity.—The Jews, then, were obliged to be jealous for the glory of God, as the prophets had been in the times of their fathers. For they might easily foresee, that if a mere man were suffered to *call* himself God, he would soon be put in *the place* of God; and the

event has verified such an apprehension. As the prophets, therefore, had for so many ages constantly declared, that there is but *one* object, to whom the name God belongs, in order to guard the people against idolatry; the same reason required the Jews to withstand a man, who dared to assume the names and titles of God.

Jehovah, by the prophets, declares, “I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images.” The Jews, therefore, had reason to conclude, that He had not given his glory to Jesus Christ. For either this proposition is *general*; and so signifies, that God never gives his glory to any one: or it is *particular*, and imports, that at some times, and on certain occasions, he does give his glory to another. If the *latter*, the assertion is trifling and the reasoning vain. For the meaning must be, God gives not his glory to another, on some occasions, though he does it on *others*. Therefore, he will not give his praise to graven images. If the *former*, as it must undoubtedly be, the Jews were obliged to conclude, that God had not given his glory to Jesus Christ; and consequently, he could not, without manifest impiety, either invest himself with the titles of God, or pretend to Divine honours.

The prophets have so great a respect for the names of God, that they carefully avoid taking any *metaphors* from them; which is a very remarkable difference between human and Divine language. The *former*, being that of men who do not sufficiently reverence the Deity, abounds with metaphors taken from God. Almost every thing is represented, by one or another, as divine, adorable, infinite. Incense and sacrifice, dedication and devotion, with many other expressions that are taken from the worship of God, cost us nothing, and are frequently used. But they are banished from the language of the Holy Spirit; who, speaking of God as God, and of a creature as a creature, avoids those metaphors which would seem to infringe on the rights, or the honours, of the Great Supreme; or as might seem to elevate the creature above a state of dependence. When the Holy Spirit personifies death,

he does not call him the GOD, but the “KING of terrors.” And though the psalmist, speaking of the rulers of this world, says, “Ye are gods ;” yet he immediately adds, “but ye shall die like men.” The figurative application, therefore, of the adorable name, in this passage, cannot possibly injure the glory of God ; because it is given to princes for no other reason, but to form an antithesis to humble them. “Ye are gods—but ye shall die like men.”—If, then, the reverence which the writers of the Old Testament had for the proper names of God, be so great ; and if the same reverential regard be found in the penmen of the New Testament ; who, when speaking of a creature, do not fetch their metaphors from the attributes of God, as the heathen authors did, and as is common at this day ; ought we to censure the Jews of an excessive tenderness, who could not suffer the name, GOD, to be given to a mere man, and given to him in such a sense as requires us to worship him ? For, either the name, GOD, expresses the glory of the *Creator*, or that of the *creature*, or one that is *common to both*. It cannot be a glory *common to both* ; for if it were, the prophets could not have so often declared, that there is but *one* God : besides, every one of us might call himself by the adorable name, without any scruple. Nor can it be the glory of the *creature* ; for no man ever could suppose it. It must, therefore, be the glory of the *Creator* ; a glory peculiar to him. And if so, the Jews could not but accuse Jesus of blasphemy ; who, though a mere man, assumed a name which expresses the Creator’s glory.

Once more : The prophets have two principal ends in view, when they proclaim the characters, perfections, and honours of the Supreme Being. The one is, to *glorify* GOD. by exalting him far above all creatures ; the other, to *save mankind*, by preserving them from idolatry, and by instructing them in the knowledge and worship of the true God. But these high designs are opposed, are destroyed, as to multitudes, if the Jews permit a mere man to assume the names of God. For, as names are given to persons and things, with a design to make them known, and to distinguish one from

another; if a mere man take upon him the names of God, he will, in some degree at least, be confounded with him: and thus the design of the prophets *to glorify God*, by exalting him far above all other beings, is opposed. For as God glorifies himself, by laying a peculiar claim to such characters as do not, as cannot, agree to a mere creature; so the creature impiously dishonours God, by assuming those names which are appropriated to him.—The other great end is no less opposed, by an usurpation of God's names. For when Jesus calls himself God, he must apply the name, either *with*, or *without* an idea. If the *latter*, he acts absurdly. If the *former*, it must be either the same which *men in common* affix to it; or a *particular one* of his own. If the same which *man-kind in general* annex to the term, it must be that of the Supreme Being; and, consequently, he leads men directly into idolatry. If it be a *particular one* of his own, he lays a snare for immortal souls; for he takes a direct step to lead men into error, from error to idolatry, and from idolatry to damnation. He renders language a commerce of deceit and mischief; whereas, by its natural appointment, it ought ever to be an intercourse of truth and benefits. Besides, the signification of the name, God, not depending on the caprice of any particular person; his latent meaning cannot acquit him from a charge of blasphemy.

‘Jesus Christ, it will be objected, did not call himself God, but the Son of God.’ Supposing he did not assume the name, God, in the course of his personal ministry; supposing the Sanhedrim could have produced no evidence of any thing like it, as the ground of that sentence which they pronounced upon him; yet it is beyond a doubt, that his disciples gave him both the names and the praises which are peculiar to God. When, therefore, the Jews are informed, that the evangelists and apostles wrote the New Testament by his authority and under his peculiar direction; they cannot, so long as they understand their own language and read their own prophets, but consider the gospel as impious, and are obliged to approve the sentence which



their fathers passed upon him. For they cannot doubt, but their Sanhedrim had authority to judge him ; that they had good reason to accuse him of blasphemy, because the writings of his disciples (by which only they are able to judge of his own sentiments and claims) invest him with the characters and honours of the true God ; and, that they could not but pronounce a blasphemer worthy of death, without deserting their duty and betraying their trust.

‘ But they who composed the Sanhedrim that condemned Jesus Christ, acted on the principles of envy, malice, and rage.’—Admitting they did, yet the Jews in after-times will reply ; ‘ It is not for us to search *the hearts* of our fore-fathers : our business is to inquire into *the justice* of their sentence. It was never heard that wise and impartial men, laid more stress on surmises conceived, of the ill disposition of a judge on the bench, than on the characters of justice, or injustice, found in the sentence he passed. We cannot penetrate the hearts of men ; but we are taught, by our law, how to distinguish blasphemers. For its first command is, “ Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” By this we are obliged to reject your Messiah, for assuming the titles and honours of God ; though, by your own confession, he is not the God of Israel.’

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### CHAP. III.

The principal Titles and Characters which, in the writings of the Prophets, form the idea of the true God, are applied to JESUS CHRIST.

**T**HAT Jesus Christ assumed the name, God, in a proper sense, appears from his apostles having ascribed to him those perfections, which form the idea signified by the most venerable name. For, as before observed, there is no difference, in this respect, between what he

says of himself, and what his disciples say of him ; they speaking by his authority and his inspiration.

To the name, God, the prophets affixed the idea of an *almighty* Being, who created the heavens and the earth. The work of creation is frequently mentioned by them, as the grand characteristic of the true God. Of this none can doubt.—The formation of the universe is also expressly and repeatedly ascribed to Jesus Christ. “All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible—all things were created by him and for him. He laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his hands.”—That these things are spoken of Christ, is evident ; nor can the words admit of a different sense, without manifest violence, as I shall shew in a following part of this Treatise. Here I shall only observe, that the apostles, having so frequently attributed the creation of all things to Jesus Christ ; and that work being so often mentioned, by the antient prophets, as the effect of omnipotent agency, and the most obvious character of the true God, especially when contending with idolaters ; the writers of the New Testament must have acted a most unaccountable part, and, they being only the amanuenses of Christ himself, he must have been guilty of impious arrogance, if he be a mere creature.

The prophets represent God, as an *omniscient* Being. Perfect knowledge is also ascribed to Jesus Christ. “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,” said Peter to his Divine Master.—Should it be objected, ‘It is no where said, that Christ approved of the honour which is here done him by his apostle :’ I answer, That is little to the purpose. For the expressions must be either false, or true. If *true*, Jesus must approve of them, for he is truth itself ; and they prove the point for which we plead. If they be *false*, they are pregnant with blasphemy : and, if so, the honour of God and the salvation of Peter made it absolutely necessary, that he should have been sharply

reproved for them. What, shall Christ say to that very apostle, “Get thee behind me, satan !” when he only endeavoured to dissuade him from going up to Jerusalem, there to suffer ; and shall he meet with no rebuke from the humble, holy Jesus, when he robs God of his glory and gives it to another, by ascribing a divine perfection to a mere man ! Peter’s fault, for which Jesus rebuked him, arose from his indiscreet zeal for the honour and safety of his Master. He did not perceive, while he was endeavouring to prevent the death of his Lord, that he was attempting to counteract the counsels of heaven ; and to hinder an event, by which the glory of God is more highly exalted, than by any other in the whole administration of Providence.—There is nothing so precious as the glory of God, it being the ultimate end of all things : consequently, so far as any thing is contrary to it, it must be detestable. But, in the passage before us, the apostle not only speaks *unadvisedly*, in regard to the glory of God ; but, if his assertion be false, he is guilty of *blasphemy*. For he not only ascribes to Jesus the knowledge of *all things* in general ; but also that of the *human heart*, in particular. “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I LOVE THEE.” This is a distinguishing character of JEHOVAH’s glory, and a perfection peculiar to the true God. For thus it is written ; “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ? I THE LORD search the heart, I try the reins.” Here the God of Israel attributes to himself the knowledge of the heart, as his own peculiar glory.

To place this momentous truth in a still stronger light, the words of Solomon, in his admirable prayer at the dedication of the temple, may be considered. “Thou, even THOU ONLY, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.” Hence it is evident, that the title, “Searcher of hearts,” is included in that idea which the prophets give of the eternal God ; and that it cannot belong to a mere creature, nor be given to him without blasphemy. Yet it is equally clear, that Jesus takes the Divine title to himself, and that in the most

solemn and remarkable manner. “ All the churches  
“ shall know that I am HE which searcheth the reins  
“ and hearts ; and I will give unto every one of you  
“ according to your works.” It follows, therefore,  
that Jesus not only assumes the name, God ; but also  
asserts his interest in those attributes which form, in the  
writings of the prophets, the most proper and sublime  
idea of the Great Supreme. Consequently, if Jesus  
Christ be not the God of Israel, the Jews are obliged  
to reject his testimony as false, and his high pretensions  
as blasphemous.

It will be said, ‘ Christ does not appropriate this title  
‘ to himself in the *same sense* in which the God of Israel  
‘ claims it, in the antient prophets. When God is said  
‘ to “ know the heart, and to try the reins,” the words  
‘ are to be understood of such a knowledge as is peculiar  
‘ to him ; for he is not beholden to another for it.  
‘ Whereas when Jesus Christ says, “ I search the reins  
“ and hearts ;” the words are to be understood of a  
‘ *derived* knowledge. For he does not know the secrets  
‘ of the heart immediately and of himself, but because  
‘ God reveals them to him.”—But when a person attri-  
butes to himself an eminent quality, or an exalted  
character, which is calculated to raise a suspicion in  
others, that he assumes an honour which does not belong  
to him ; he is obliged to explain himself, by removing  
the ambiguity of the terms ; otherwise, his temper may be  
justly accused of arrogance, and his conduct of robbery.  
So, if a subject should have a desire to be honoured with  
the title of *majesty*, under a pretence of his possessing  
some considerable office in the state : and if he were  
actually so honoured, he would be guilty of a capital  
crime, against the dignity of him whose glory he usurped.  
And though, in his own defence, he should say, That  
he did not desire, nor accept the title in the same sense,  
nor affix to it that exalted idea, which it bears when  
applied to his lawful sovereign, and which is commonly  
annexed to it by other men ; and that he meant no more  
by it than a subordinate and dependent majesty ; he  
would soon be informed, that his excuses are mean and  
his reasons despicable. He would quickly be told, that

the word *majesty*, being, by general custom and the pleasure of ruling powers, appropriated to express the sovereign dignity of kings ; by which they are not only distinguished from all their subjects, but also from other princes : he could not, without giving just and great offence, assume the title in any sense, much less without giving the least explanation of it.—So the title, “ Searcher of hearts,” is, by divine authority and common use, appropriated to express the peculiar and essential glory of God. *By common use* : For no man, if we except our adversaries, ever ascribed it to any but God ; and believers consider it as one of those divine characteristics, by which he is distinguished from all other intelligences, and infinitely exalted above all creatures. *By Divine authority* : For it is God, by the ministry of his prophets, who ascribes it to himself ; who assumes it on different occasions, as belonging to himself only, and as being a peculiar character of his glory. None, therefore, besides God, can assume it without offence ; much less could any mere creature take it on himself, without explaining in what sense he applies it. Yet Christ says, with an air of authority becoming none but JEHOVAH, and with the utmost solemnity, as of a matter of the last importance ; “ All the churches shall know THAT “ I AM HE WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND “ HEARTS ; and I will give unto every one of you “ according to your works.” In which words, the Redeemer connects the idea of *universal Judge*, with the sublime character, *Searcher of hearts* ; as the prophet Jeremiah does, when he speaks of the MOST HIGH. And, indeed, if Jesus were not the *latter*, he would be very unfit for the office of the *former* ; he being but poorly qualified “ to give to every one according to his “ works,” who is not capable of “ searching the heart.”

Nor have we the least intimation in Scripture, that God’s knowledge of the heart is *immediate*, but that of Christ *mediate*, or by revelation. For the apostle does not attribute this knowledge to Jesus Christ, because the secrets of the heart are *revealed* to him ; but because he considers him as *knowing all things*. “ Lord, thou “ knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.”

For a person to know the thoughts of the heart, because God reveals them to him, is to know them only as *man*; but to know them, because he knows all things, is to know them as God. Such is the knowledge which is here attributed to Jesus Christ.—Further: If to know the secrets of the heart, by revelation, were a sufficient reason of the title, *Searcher of hearts*; the apostles themselves might have claimed the glory of it. For they, no doubt, as some of the ancient prophets, on particular occasions, had the thoughts of men's hearts revealed to them. This gift, it is probable, was greater in some than it was in others. Suppose, then, that one individual among them had it in the richest measure and to the highest degree, so that he knew all secrets in general. On such a supposition, I demand, whether he might lawfully have assumed the character, *Searcher of hearts*? To assert that he might, is blasphemous; because it attributes that which is peculiar to God and Jesus Christ, to another. If it be allowed that he might not, it follows, that whoever calls himself *The Searcher of hearts*, means something more than knowing the heart, by revelation.

It may, perhaps, be replied; 'How great soever we suppose the knowledge of this man to be, yet the knowledge of Christ will be found more perfect; which is a sufficient reason why he should not bear the title with him.'—But if the supposed person's knowledge be inferior to that of Christ; the knowledge of Christ must be still more inferior to that of God. If then, it would be unlawful for such an one to assume the exalted title, out of respect for Christ; a regard for the honour of God ought much more to have prevented the man Jesus from ever assuming it. For the honour of God is of infinitely greater consequence than that of Christ, if he be a mere creature. Besides, the knowledge of Jesus, if he be not God, and the knowledge of this man, being both of the same kind, can differ only in degree. But the knowledge of God, and that of Jesus Christ, are essentially different. God's knowledge of the heart is immediate and of himself; but that of Christ, is mediate and by revelation. So that if the

man, supposed to know the heart, cannot say, “All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts,” without usurping the glory of Christ; neither can Jesus claim the power of searching the heart, or adopt the title, without usurping the glory of God.

Again: There is a difference, a very material difference, between *knowing* the secrets of the heart, and being the *searcher* of the heart. He who searches the heart, must be acquainted with its thoughts; but it does not necessarily follow, that he who knows its latent desires and intentions, is possessed of a capacity to search it. It may be said of a man, to whom the thoughts of another are revealed, ‘He knows his heart:’ yet a prudent and pious man would avoid such general expressions, lest he should be suspected of profaneness, and would rather say; ‘He knows his heart by revelation.’ But he will never say, “He *tries* his reins and *searches* his heart;” because that would be false and impious. For when any one is said, to know the thoughts, to search the heart, and to try the reins, the phrases do not signify knowledge obtained from another, *by revelation*; but to know, find out, and discover, by his own understanding, what lies concealed from others.—Once more: When Christ says, “I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts;” he either means, that we should keep to the natural signification of his words, or that we should depart from it. If the latter, he has laid a snare for us; he had a design to deceive us. For what else could be the reason of his talking with such solemnity, so as not to be understood? And how should he be understood, when he affixes an unnatural signification to his words? If the former, we cannot but conclude, that knowing the secrets of the heart, by revelation, and searching the heart, are different things.

The prophets describe the true God, as the *Saviour*, the *only Saviour* of sinners. For thus it is written; “I, even I am JEHOVAH, and beside Me there is no Saviour.” And again: “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and

“there is none else.” There is an allusion, I acknowledge, in these passages, to the idols of the heathen, that were unable to save their deluded votaries: but yet this general truth is plainly and strongly implied, That God only can save the ends of the earth. The immediately preceding verse, in the latter of these texts, puts this beyond a doubt. For thus it is written, “There is no God else besides Me; a just God and a SAVIOUR, there is NONE BESIDES ME.” And yet Jesus Christ not only professes to save sinners, but he calls himself THE SAVIOUR, by way of eminence, and in contradistinction to all others. Is it not manifest, then, that he assumes a character, in the most emphatical way, which the God of Israel had challenged and appropriated to himself?—When the prophets reproved the folly and wickedness of them that put their trust in idols, by saying, there is *no Saviour* but the God of Jacob; they either intended to lay down a principle for the instruction of men in all succeeding ages, or only for the time then present. If the *latter*, the reason that God used in antient times, by which to confound idolatry, is no longer of any force on such an occasion: nay, which is more extraordinary, an oracle becomes false, at the very time in which it is accomplished. For this divinely gracious declaration, “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else;” refers to the calling of the Gentiles, and was not fulfilled till after the Messiah appeared: and yet it is since his appearance, that we hear of a SAVIOUR and LORD, besides the God of Israel, who delivered that oracle. If the *former*, and if this declaration be a perpetual truth, “There is no God besides Me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none besides Me;” then I demand, whether he ought not to be accounted a blasphemer, who, though he be not the God of Israel, yet calls himself THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD?

‘He calls himself, it will be said, a *subordinate* Saviour.’ What, then, does Jehovah mean, when he says, “I am a just God and a Saviour, there is NONE BESIDES ME—I, even I am the LORD, and besides



“Me there is no SAVIOUR !” Does he not exclude, *subordinate* gods and saviours ? Supposing the antient Israelites had considered Moses as a subordinate god and saviour, and worshipped him after his death, because they were delivered by his ministry out of Egyptian bondage ; would they not have acted contrary to the meaning of these declarations ? It is absurd to imagine, that the prophets did not intend to exclude all subordinate gods and Saviours ; because the far greater part of pagan deities were considered, by the dupes of idolatry, under those characters. It is, at the same time, evident, that the penmen of the antient Scriptures teach us to acknowledge but *one* God, and *one* Saviour, even the God of Israel. Consequently, he who calls himself THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, does not only assume the name, GOD ; but also annexes to it one of the most gracious, endearing, and glorious ideas, that are included in it in the antient oracles ; or that can be affixed to it by men or angels.

The prophets, to distinguish the true God from all other beings, call him, “ THE FIRST AND THE LAST.” This character they apply to JEHOVAH, as peculiar to him and incommunicable. Yet, in the Revelation of John, it is repeatedly assumed by Jesus Christ.—It is agreed, on all hands, that this very sublime title was never given to any but the God of Israel, till after the incarnation : it was, therefore, become peculiar to Him by antient and universal custom. Nor can it be questioned, if any creature had dared to apply it to himself, before the Messiah came, but he would have been charged with impiety and blasphemy. And were either man or angel, at this day, to assume it, the same accusation would be laid against him, and his conduct would be detested. Consequently, our adversaries themselves, were it not to serve an hypothesis, would not hesitate a moment to allow ; That as this character was peculiar to God, before the Messiah came, so it is now, and so it must ever be ; and that it is absurdly blasphemous, to think of applying it to any other.—Should it be said, ‘ If any person were to assume this ‘ this title now, he would be guilty of impiety ; because

‘ he would wrong Jesus Christ, to whom it belongs :’— I answer, He would injure God much more, to whom it really appertains. And if any man, who should usurp it at this day, would rob Christ of his honour ; he, who should have dared to assume it before the Redeemer came, would have committed sacrilege on the true God. Hence it appears, that this character is peculiar to the Great Supreme.

Again : This title stands among the praises of the Most High ; even in those passages where he professedly displays his glories, and asserts his sovereign majesty. Now if it be not adapted to answer such a design, why should it stand in connection with those magnificent descriptions of JEHOVAH’s glory ? But if it be fitted to express the eternity and majesty, the grandeur and glory of God, it must be peculiar to Him—so peculiar, that it cannot, without blasphemy, be assumed by any mere creature. It is so connected with other characters and attributes, which are confessedly peculiar to God, that it is impossible, without rendering the finest oracles of the prophets nonsensical, to distinguish it from them. Sometimes, for instance, it is connected with his *power* : “ Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning ? I the LORD, the First and with the Last, I am He.” Sometimes it is joined with the characters of his *grandeur* and *majesty*. “ Thus saith the Lord the king of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts ; I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides me there is no God.” Here it is observable, that after the Most High has taken to himself this truly sublime title, he adds, “ besides Me there is no God ;” to inform us, that none but He possesses the dominion and glory implied in it, and in those which attend it. At other times, he connects the glory of this title with that which attends his character as *Creator*. “ Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called : I am He, I am the First, I also am the Last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth.” Once more : It is used to express the *unity* of God. For thus it is explained ; “ Before Me there was no

“no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.” But if this title were not peculiar to the eternal God, how could it signify his unity ?

Further ; When Jesus calls himself, “ The First and the Last,” he either applies the august character in the *same* sense, in which it was used by the prophets, or in one that is *different*. If the *latter*, he leads men, by ambiguous expressions, into error and idolatry. Nay, on the principles of our opponents, he is guilty of blasphemy ; because he assumes a title, in an absolute manner, which does not agree to him but with a restriction. He alters, by his own authority, the signification of terms, consecrated by a divine use. He does what no honest and sensible man ever did ; for he changes the known and ordinary meaning of words, relating to matters of the greatest importance, without giving us the least notice of it ; and, by so doing, he opens a door for impiety and blasphemy, to the whole world. For as he attributes to himself such titles as are given to the true God, by changing mentally the established signification of words, in the Old Testament ; why may not I, or any other man, after his example, assume the principal characters of the Messiah, by changing mentally, according to my fancy, the most known signification of expressions, in the New Testament ? But if he apply the character in the *same* sense, in which it was used by the prophets ; then he describes himself by a title which they considered as expressing, the eternity and unity, the dominion and glory of God. And, by so doing, he practically declares, that it is not peculiar to the God of Israel, to whom only the prophets applied it ; and, consequently, the language of the prophets is false. For if the God of Jacob be He, before and after whom no God has been formed ; how can Jesus be God, and a God also before whom no God existed, or shall be formed ? The consequence is, either Christ is the true God, or he is guilty of blasphemy ; in attributing to himself a title, which, in the language of the prophets, is peculiar to the infinite God.

If Jesus Christ be a mere man, one cannot imagine

how this title can possibly belong to him. For, either *First* and *Last* must be understood of a priority and posteriority of *time* ; or, of a priority and posteriority of *dignity* ; or, of *both*. If the *first*, the sense will be ; I am the *First* and the *Last* in *duration*. But how could one that was born in the fulness of time, be the *first* in duration ? If the *second*, the meaning must be ; I am the *First* and the last in *dignity*. But how can Jesus be the *last* in dignity, when John the Baptist, who was greater than any of the antient prophets, considered himself as unworthy to loose the latchet of his shoe ? If the *third*, then the signification of the words must either be ; I am the *First* in time, and the *Last* in dignity ; which is manifestly false : Or thus, I am the *First* in *dignity*, and the *Last* in *time* ; which is equally false. For how can Jesus be the *Last*, in *time* ? Was he the last *man* that was born ? That cannot be. Nor was he the last of God's *servants* ; for there have been many who served God faithfully, and were the honoured instruments of his glory, since the ascension of Christ. Or thus, I am the *First* and the *Last*, in *time* and in *dignity* ; which is yet more glaringly false. For if he be not the *First* and the *Last*, in *time* ; nor the *First* and the *Last* in *dignity* ; it is doubly false to say that he is so, in both the one and the other.—But our business here, is not so much with the *truth* of his words, as with the *impression* they were adapted to make on the minds of the Jews, who were taught by the prophets. On hearing Jesus repeatedly and solemnly apply this title to himself, they could not but consider him, as usurping a character peculiar to the eternal JEHOVAH ; and, consequently, as guilty of blasphemy. Either, then, the Jews were to blame for opposing impiety, blasphemy, and idolatry ; or they could not avoid passing sentence of condemnation upon Jesus Christ, if he spake as his disciples wrote, and if they have given a true representation of his claims, his language, and his conduct : at least, they could not avoid rejecting the gospel, the preachers of it being so evidently convicted of blasphemy.

## CHAP. IV.

JESUS CHRIST declared to be Equal with God.

**P**AUL asserts, in the plainest manner, that Jesus “thought it not robbery to be EQUAL WITH GOD.” We shall see in the prosecution of our subject, the vanity of those evasions to which our adversaries have recourse, in explaining this passage, so as to agree with their hypothesis. But, however we understand the text, it must be allowed to attribute to Jesus Christ some kind of *equality* with his Father, who is confessedly the true God.

Some, perhaps, may say ; ‘No conclusion can be drawn from a single expression ; such an one, especially, as ought not to be understood in the strictly literal sense : because there are examples of a similar expression, one of which is found in Homer, where it does not signify a real and proper equality with God.’ —To which I reply ; it is very unbecoming to produce examples of this kind, from Homer, did he afford ever so many. For it is notorious, that the writings of the heathens, and especially those of the poets, abound with impiety and blasphemies. This consideration enhances the value of the Scriptures. For it is their inseparable characteristic, to maintain a wide, an immense distinction, between God and the creature ; by never attributing to the *latter*, what only belongs to the *former* : while, in human writings, men are equalled with God, and God is confounded with men.—It is worthy also of being remarked, that Paul is the sacred penman, who uses this way of speaking ; and he, it is well known, is ever careful to exalt the grace of God, and to refer all to his glory. “We have,” says that ambassador of Christ, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”—Besides, these expressions being of a very peculiar kind, and such as do not readily come into a person’s thoughts, plainly intimate,

that he had a *particular design* in penning them.—‘But here, perhaps, they may be hyperbolical.’ If they be, they intrench on the glory of God. When, upon strict examination, we have nothing to object against an hyperbole, but its want of *truth*, the fault is comparatively small; but there should be no reason to charge it with being *impious* and *blasphemous*. Thus, for instance, the Scripture never says; That a man is as good, as wise, or as powerful, as God; because such expressions and such comparisons are impious, and pregnant with blasphemy. This evil, the writers of the Old Testament have avoided with remarkable care; and they who penned the New, ought to have been still more on their guard against it; because it was foretold as a distinguishing character of the gospel dispensation, that the pride of man “should be abased, and the LORD ALONE exalted.”

Though I might here greatly enlarge, I shall confine myself to the following considerations.—God had repeatedly and solemnly declared, by the prophets, That there is “none like him.” For thus it is written: “To whom, then, will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?—To whom, then, will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One?—To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?”—These expressions were intended, and well adapted, to confound idolatry; and the truth contained in them was made by JEHOVAH the grand principle of his religion; which Paul could not but know, being well versed in the antient oracles. But though he hears, understands, and reveres that voice from heaven which demands, “To whom will ye *liken* me? To whom will ye make me *equal*?” yet he boldly asserts, Jesus “thought it not robbery to be EQUAL with God.”—Again: the apostle could not but know the ground, or, if you will, the pretence, on which Christ was condemned by the Jews; that is, because he asserted his *likeness* to God and *equality* with him. This was a prodigious offence to man who had heard God say, by his prophets; “To whom will ye liken me, and make

“me equal?” Paul does what he can to convert the Jews to the Christian faith; yet he never attempts to justify the religion of Jesus, from the charge of equaling a creature with the Creator; though, on the principles of our opponents, it was highly necessary for him so to have done, for the salvation of men and the glory of God. Nay, so far was he from endeavouring to acquit the cause of his Master from such a charge, that he roundly asserts, Jesus “thought it not robbery “to be EQUAL with God;” which is the very thing for which the Jews were so offended with Christ, and on account of which they considered him as deserving judgment of death. But can it be supposed that he who rent his garments when he was taken for Mercury, who was a subordinate god among the heathens; can it, I say, be supposed, that this very man should equal a mere creature with the INFINITE GOD? If he does, his hyperboles, surely, must be very edifying, and peculiarly well-timed! And does it not highly become him to set up for an orator, at the expense of piety and the glory of God?

The language of the apostles, in other places, is an infallible comment on these expressions. For they not only apply the name, GOD, to their crucified Saviour; but they annex the same ideas to it, which were affixed to the character of JEHOVAH, by the ancient prophets. Seeing, then, the apostles give such titles to Christ as could not belong to him, if he were not a Divine Person and equal with the Father; we ought to question but Paul here uses the term *equal*, in a proper and literal sense.—Further: Either these expressions are adopted by Christians, or they are not. If the *latter*, it must be because they think the apostle spake unadvisedly; which subverts the credit of his writings, and saps the foundation of Christianity itself. If the *former*, then we may safely conclude, that the other apostles spake after the same manner. And if so, we appeal to our adversaries, Whether the Jews, who heard them speak thus, are not to be justified in calling them blasphemers? when, on the one part, they saw

that Christ was a mere creature ; and, on the other, that his disciples asserted his equality with God.

When Jehovah says, “ To whom will ye liken me ? ” he does not mean to exclude a resemblance of *analogy* ; for as he exists, thinks, and acts, so do rational creatures : but his design is to exclude a resemblance of *equality*. Now the one or the other of these, must be intended in the text before us. Not the *former* ; for if you ascribe to Christ a resemblance of *analogy* only, you attribute nothing to him, but what may be affirmed of angels, of saints, and of men in common : and yet neither Gabriel, nor Paul, nor any man living, could say, ‘ I think it not robbery to be equal with God,’ without being guilty of blasphemy. It must, therefore, be a resemblance of *equality*, which is here attributed to Jesus Christ, according to the natural sense of the term. But though the meaning of the adjective *equal*, be sometimes well expressed by the word *like* ; as when God says, “ Who is like to me ? ” Yet, when the term *like*, is taken for *resembling*, or *conformable*, it is never expressed by the word *equal*.—Nor is that equality, which is here attributed to Christ, *metaphorical*. For to consider the apostle as saying, ‘ He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, by a metaphor,’ is absurd and ridiculous. Besides, as before observed, those figures are impious, which convey an idea contrary to the glory of God.

As the Jews were not culpable for speaking like other men, especially like their own prophets, who instructed them ; so they are not to be blamed for concluding, that none can be said to be “ equal with God,” except he be God, or except he wrong God. Nor could they help thinking, that the apostles cordially approved of such language concerning Jesus Christ : for if not, why did they use it ?—‘ But they explain themselves, on other occasions.’ Supposing they did, this proposition ; ‘ Jesus, a mere creature, thinks it not robbery to be equal with God ;’ would still be impious. Besides, by such explanations they would pull down with one hand, what they build with the other.



To conclude ; If Jesus be *not* equal with God, it must be a sin to *think* that he is ; and if so, why should any one *assert* it ? To what end were these expressions needful ? To the glory of God ? No ; they dishonour the Deity. To exalt Jesus Christ ? But cannot he be exalted without setting him on a level with God ? Was it to shew the accomplishment of the antient oracles ? But they frequently declare, that there is only *one* God, and that nothing is *like* him. Was it to edify men ? But is it possible for men to be edified, by hearing of a creature, of one that owes his being to Divine power, and his blessedness to Divine favour, being exalted to an equality with his Maker ? Peter and Paul were not only the disciples, but also the *ambassadors* of Christ, and their characters are justly held in very high esteem, by every lover of sacred truth ; yet if either of them had said, ‘ I think it not robbery to be ‘equal with Jesus Christ,’ we should have called him a blasphemer, and execrated his memory. Now, on the principles of our adversaries, God is infinitely more exalted above Jesus Christ, than Christ is above his apostles. If, then, an apostle would have been justly accused of impiety, had he equalled himself with his Lord ; ought not Christ to be censured for blasphemy, when he claims an equality with God ?

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## CHAP. V.

JESUS CHRIST received Religious Worship.

**T**HAT the apostles and disciples of Christ esteemed and treated him as a truly Divine Person, and that he claimed, in a proper sense, an equality with God, will further appear by considering ; That he received, as a tribute due to his dignity those honours and that adoration, which belongs to none but JEHOVAH.

That God, and none but He, ought to be worshipped,

is a fundamental truth. Whenever, therefore, men have set up themselves as objects of worship, they have pretended to be gods ; and when they have relinquished their claim to divinity, they have ceased to require adoration. So that though we had not been expressly told, by the inspired writers, that Jesus Christ is God ; yet we could not have questioned it when we found them assert, that he received adoration from his disciples, and that the angels were commanded to worship him.—If Jesus Christ be God by nature, he has an undoubted right to Divine honours ; he cannot but require them. But if not, we cannot, without sacrilege and idolatry, address them to him, because they are due to none but JEHOVAH. For though it were possible, on our adversaries' hypothesis, to account for the titles he bears, for the authority he claims, and for the works of creation and providence being ascribed to him ; yet his conduct, in receiving divine worship, would forever remain indefensible, if he were not the true God.

A man, for instance, who should take the name of *king*, where a rightful sovereign is acknowledged, would certainly be very guilty. But his crime would be greatly enhanced, if he dared to assume the titles appropriated to signify the *grandeur* of his sovereign and the *extent* of his dominions. For example, if, in France, he should call himself, King of FRANCE, NAVARRE, &c. If, in Hungary, King of BOHEMIA, HUNGARY, &c. But he would be still more guilty, if he caused himself to be *treated* as a king ; if he demanded the titles of majesty, from those who addressed him ; and required, as some kings do, to be served on the knee. In this case, either the allegiance due to the lawful sovereign must be renounced ; or this pretender must be called an usurper, and be punished as guilty of high treason.—Thus the Jews, on the principles of our opponents had sufficient reason to treat Jesus Christ. The regard which they had to the honour of God, and the obedience they owed to the precepts of his unchangeable law, would not suffer them to connive at the conduct of a man, or of any mere creature,

who received those honours which are due to none but the God of Israel.

To invalidate this conclusion it must be proved, either, that religious worship is *not* an honour peculiar to God ; or, that Christ did not *pretend* to this worship ; or, that he did not mean to be worshipped on the *same ground*, and in the *same way*, as the true God.—It may, perhaps, be said, ‘ Worship is not an honour peculiar to God ; for the angel who appeared to the patriarchs, and to Moses in the burning-bush, was worshipped, though a mere creature.’—This is a great mistake. For that angel was a Divine Person and the true God. This appears from hence. Abraham addressed him, as “the Judge of all the earth,” and acknowledged that he was “but dust and ashes” before him. That angel revealed himself to Moses. out of the burning-bush, as “the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.” From which words Christ himself infers, that “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Consequently, he teaches us to conclude, that He who spake to Moses out of the bush, was more than a creature ; was the true God. For he who is “the angel of the Lord,” in the oracle of Moses, is “the God of the living,” in the language of Jesus Christ, and both according to our hypothesis.

Again : That honour which is peculiar to God, ought never to be given to any but God. Religious worship is such an honour : religious worship, therefore, ought never to be given to any but God.—That honour which cannot be given to a creature, without idolatry, is peculiar to God. But religious worship is such an honour, as appears from the idolatry of the Gentiles, which consisted in paying adoration to objects that were not God.

‘ But worship is two-fold ; that is, *subordinate* and *supreme*. The *former* is paid to subordinate beings ; the *latter* is due to none but God.’—This distinction, were it founded in truth, would be but of little service to the cause, in defence of which it is applied ; because it is easy to shew, that Christ received *supreme* worship. This worship consists, either in thought, in

word, or in action. He, therefore, who requires us to *think* of him, as we do of the true God, would have us worship him as such. But Christ would have us think of him, as we do of the true God. For he attributes to himself the perfections of God, and he claims an equality with him. Consequently, he would have us think of him, as we ought to do of God.—He who speaks of himself, or directs others to speak of him, as of the true God; would be acknowledged and worshipped as such. But Christ speaks, and would be *spoken* of by us, as the true God. This appears from his taking the names, and ascribing to himself the works of God. If not, why does he assume such names, why does he declare that he performed such works, as are proper to God, if he would not have us *speak* of him as God? What, shall *he* speak of himself as God; shall *he* assert, that he created all things and performed the works of God; and, after all, be unwilling that *we* should speak of him, as God? Absurd, to imagine; impossible, to prove.—He who requires we should *do* that for him, which we cannot lawfully do for any but the true God, expects to be worshipped as such. But Christ requires us to do that for him, which we ought not to do for any but God. This appears from hence. We are bound to love God above all things: consequently, an affection so ardent, and a duty so high, are due to none but God. We ought, however, to love Jesus above all things; to love him more than our lives, which, of all things in the world, are the dearest to us. He requires that we should suffer martyrdom for his sake; and, by so doing, enjoins a duty which we do not, which we cannot owe, to any but God. None of the prophets, nor any of the apostles, ever said; “He that forsaketh not wife and children, and houses and lands, yea, and his own life, for my sake, is not worthy of me.”

• But Christ declares, that he acts in the name of his Father, and that the Father is greater than he; which is sufficient to forbid us addressing him with *supreme* worship.—To this I answer; Suppose a minister of state should give orders, under his own seal, for coin-

ing money with his image upon it ; at the same time assuming the names and titles of his lawful sovereign ; would his conduct be justified by declaring once, or twice, ‘ My sovereign is greater than I, and I act in ‘ his name ?’ Should we not, in such a case, have reason to say, He denies by his actions, what he confesses in words, and contradicts himself ?—The application is easy. For as there is a certain idea of royalty, which subjects ought never to apply to any besides their king ; as there are names and titles so appropriated to the person of a sovereign, that they cannot be given to any other without offence ; and as there are particular honours due to a crowned head, which cannot, on any pretence whatever, be paid to others, without being guilty of high-treason ; because the signification of words and actions is not fixed by the caprice or authority of any particular person, but by general consent and custom : so, by a most ancient, sacred, and inviolable use, established by the prophets, established by the eternal Sovereign himself, there are some ideas so appropriated to God, that they cannot possibly belong to any other ; there are some titles so peculiar to him, that it is high-treason, in a divine sense, to give them to any other ; and there are certain honours so peculiarly due to him, that they cannot be given to another, without “ denying the God that is above,” and incurring the complicated guilt of blasphemy and idolatry. Such an honour is religious worship. For, if there be any dispositions of heart, if any language of the tongue, if any actions in life, by which it is possible for us to express a suitable distinction between God and every mere creature, they must be those of a *devotional* kind. And as the most sincere, the most fervent, the most sublime adoration we can pay to JEHOVAH, neither expresses, nor implies any more, than a dutiful desire and endeavour to treat GOD, AS GOD ; so the least degree of that worship, when given to a mere creature, is an alienation of the rights of Deity, and a placing that creature on the throne of the Most High.

‘ *Subordinate* worship is distinguished from that which is *supreme*. The latter belongs to God only, as the

‘source of being and perfection : while the *former* may  
 ‘be given to Christ, though a dependent being; he  
 ‘having received, from the Great Sovereign, peculiar  
 ‘honours and authority.’—But there is abundant reason  
 to conclude, that this *subordinate* worship was not  
 known to the divine Legislator, nor to the prophets,  
 nor to the apostles, nor to angels, nor to Jesus Christ  
 himself; of all which in their order. That the *Divine*  
*Legislator* knew nothing of this kind of worship, appears  
 from hence : He forbids *all worship*, in general, which  
 does not belong to the true God ; and that in a moral  
 precept, the obligation of which is perpetual. This he  
 would not have done, had subordinate worship been  
 lawful ; lest, by ambiguous expressions, he should have  
 led mankind into error. Nor would he have forbidden  
 us, without exception, to worship any besides God ; but  
 only to worship any other with *supreme* worship. If  
 the Divine Lawgiver intended that the promised Messiah,  
 though a mere creature, should be adored when he ap-  
 peared ; why did he, in such general terms, utterly for-  
 bid all manner of worship that is not given to the God  
 of Israel ?—Besides, he evidently designed to discour-  
 age and condemn the Gentile idolatry. But that  
 idolatry principally consisted, in worshipping various  
 divinities with *subordinate* worship : for the antient  
 heathens, no less than the Jews, acknowledged but *one*  
*supreme Being*.

• The law forbids, it will be said, such subordinate  
 ‘worship, as terminates on *idols* ; not that which has  
 ‘Christ for its object.’—But when the law prohibits that  
 kind of worship, it does it in general terms ; in such  
 terms as forbid *all sorts* of subordinate worship, without  
 any exception.—Our adversaries, perhaps, may say,  
 ‘There being idols and these idols becoming the objects  
 ‘of worship, render that worship idolatrous.’ But they  
 should rather say, There is an object worshipped : this  
 worship, being given to an object which does not deserve  
 it, renders the object, though innocent in itself, an idol.  
 The God of Israel expressing himself in a general way,  
 and forbidding to worship any thing in heaven or on  
 earth, after the manner of the heathen ; it is evident

that so soon as we address subordinate worship to any thing in heaven or earth, we make an idol of it. It is worthy to be remarked, that the law does not only say, “Thou shalt have no other gods;” but “thou shalt have no other gods BEFORE ME;” which seems principally to forbid subordinate worship.

The *prophets* were ignorant of subordinate worship. They had no instance of it before their eyes, but what they detested as idolatrous. They never heard, they never speak, of any such thing as lawful; as having any existence among the pure worshippers of Jehovah. Nay, they laugh at, they despise all subordinate gods; because they cannot conceive how any man can worship an object that “created not the heavens,” and causeth not “the rain to descend upon the earth:” which they would not have done, had they known that there was, or ever would be, a subordinate God, to whom adoration should be paid.—‘But the prophets, I shall be told, charge the people with idolatry, because they addressed *supreme* worship to gods who created not the heavens and the earth.’ Quite a mistake: for the heathens did not pay *supreme* worship to their subordinate divinities; because they did not look upon them as the source of being and the original of all good; Jupiter being the only god, whom they acknowledged under those exalted characters.

Nor were the *apostles* acquainted with subordinate worship, as appears from the following considerations. They considered all worship, even that which was only external, and could not be esteemed as addressed to a supreme object, when given to a creature, as doing infinite prejudice to the glory of the Creator.—When Cornelius fell down at Peter’s feet, he did not look upon him as the Supreme Being. Though he worshipped him, it was not, it could not be, as the Original of all good, and the Ruler of all worlds. He knew very well that Peter was but a man; for the angel had told him so, when he commanded him to send for that apostle from Joppa. This worship, therefore, could be no more than *subordinate*, and even that in a very low degree. The devout Centurion could not possibly think

of worshipping a man, called *Simon*, surnamed *Peter*, who had lodged at the house of another *Simon*, a tanner, with the same adoration which he paid to God. And yet, as worship, even *subordinate* worship, was an act determined by custom to express that honour which is due to none but the Great Supreme ; Peter did not so consider the good intention of Cornelius, as to receive it. No ; with an holy emotion he said to his admiring and revering friend ; “ Stand up ! I myself also “ am a man.”—Hence it follows, that it is not lawful to worship any but the true God. For Peter, from a regard to the glory of God, refuses and rejects with abhorrence, that worship which Cornelius was disposed to give him ; by saying, “ I am a man ;” I am not God. Consequently, subordinate worship is contrary to the glory of God.—Hence also it is manifest, that whoever is a mere man by nature, ought neither to require, nor to receive religious worship, whether supreme or subordinate.

More fully to prove and illustrate this conclusion, I would ask ; What is it that hinders Peter, on this occasion, from accepting worship ? It must be, either the respect which he has for God, or that which he has for Jesus Christ. If the *former*, he must consider what is called *subordinate* worship, when addressed to a creature, as injurious to the glory of God : and if so, not only Peter, but Jesus Christ himself, if he be a mere creature, is bound to refuse it. If the *latter*, he should not have said, as the reason of rejecting it, “ I also am “ a man :” because Christ, of whose honour he is so jealous, is also *a man*, and, by nature, no more than a man. But the apostle here tells the Centurion what he is, only to let him know what is *due* to him. He calls himself *a man*, to inform him, that if any mere man should claim, or accept, this kind of worship, he would greatly dishonour God.—And though the character of Peter, as an ambassador of God, deserved extraordinary honours ; though it was under this notion that Cornelius considered him, and under this idea that he attempted to worship him ; yet he rejected it with detestation, as an impious infringement on the rights of



JEHOVAH, without assigning any reason but this, “I also am a man.” It is evident, therefore, and by the conduct of Peter, it is established as a general principle ; That no man, though a messenger of God ; that no mere man, whatever title he may bear, ought to be honoured with religious worship.—In a word, If the regard which Peter has for Jesus Christ, hinder him from sharing in that worship which belongs to the great Redeemer ; the respect which Jesus ought to have for the Supreme Being, should prevent him from partaking in the honours of religion with the true God.

Nor did the *angels* know of any subordinate worship, when John had his prophetic visions in the isle of Patmos. If they had been acquainted with it, at least, if they had considered it as lawful ; that holy intelligence, who conversed with the beloved disciple and shewed him so many wonderful objects, would either not have refused those honours which the apostle was, once and again, desirous of giving to him ; or have rejected them on different principles. For none can suppose that the amazed, delighted, and revering apostle, mistook the angel for the Great Supreme. He would have worshipped his celestial informant, because he was the *angel* of God ; not because he took the servant for the eternal Sovereign. The angel, however, not knowing of any religious worship which might be addressed to a mere creature, says ; “See thou do it not!—Worship God.” Asserting, in the clearest manner, that *all* worship must be paid to God, and to him only.

Once more : JESUS CHRIST himself was not acquainted with this distinction, nor knew any thing of subordinate worship, when he was tempted of the devil. Satan, when he tempted our Lord to worship him, did not pretend to be the true God ; consequently, he did not solicit Jesus to worship him, as such. For he plainly intimated, that there was one superior to him ; one from whom he had received the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. The devil, then, desired to be honoured with subordinate worship. But Christ rejects with abhorrence his blasphemous attempt, and shews the iniquity of it, by adducing that precept out

of the law ; “ Thou shalt worship the LORD THY God, “ and Him ONLY shalt thou serve.” It follows, therefore, that this command forbids us to worship any one besides the God of Israel, either with a supreme, or a subordinate worship : or, rather, that this distinction has no foundation in Scripture ; but is calculated to disguise blasphemy, and vindicate idolatry.

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## CHAP. VI.

The characters of JEHOVAH's glory in the antient Oracles applied to JESUS CHRIST ; and the argument arising from that application illustrated.

THE apostles and evangelists, when asserting the dignity of their Divine Master, made no scruple of applying to him those oracles of the Old Testament, which express the characters of God's essential glory. Of this various instances have been already produced, which we shall examine more particularly hereafter : and our adversaries themselves do not deny it, since they pretend that those oracles are applied to Christ, by way of allusion, or accommodation.—But it is very surprising and absolutely unaccountable, that the apostles should make such applications to him, if he be not the true God. For common sense, one would have thought, was sufficient to inform them, that such things as were spoken only of the Creator, ought not to be applied to a mere creature. For it was never known that such applications were made without being censured, by those that feared God, of impiety and blasphemy. The antient heathens, indeed, were not very scrupulous in this respect : for it was common with them to debase God and to exalt creatures, by attributing to them the glories of the Deity ; and in this the prodigious excess of their superstition principally consisted. Their example, however, ought to have no weight with us ; as it was, we may assure our-

selves, detested by the apostles. For they had been instructed in the school of the prophets ; they, therefore, were incapable of falling into such a mistake. The care of the prophets, in that respect, is very remarkable. Always jealous for the glory of God, they are perpetually cautious that the Creator should not be confounded with any of his creatures. And being thus constantly upon their guard, they never apply the characteristics of Jehovah's glory to any mere creature.

It cannot, I think, be supposed, that those exalted and descriptive characters, which the apostles give of Jesus Christ, are more sacred, or more peculiar to him, than those which the prophets gave of the God of Israel. As, therefore, we should not dare to apply the peculiar characters of Christ, to any of his apostles ; so a similar reason ought to hinder us, ought to have hindered all, from applying the distinguishing characters of Jehovah to Jesus Christ, if he be not the true God.—A man would be justly charged with blasphemy, were he to apply to Peter, for instance, the following names, characters, and works of Jesus Christ. Were he to call him, “ The Lamb of God, which taketh away  
“ the sin of the world—Our king, prophet, and priest ;  
“ the high-priest of our profession, and a priest forever after the order of Melchisedeck—The Prince of  
“ peace—Immanuel—The Word—The Alpha and  
“ Omega, the First and the Last—The Lion of the  
“ tribe of Judah—The Saviour and Redeemer—The  
“ Son of God, his own Son, and his only begotten Son’  
—Were he to proceed and assert, That Peter “ re-  
“ deemed the church with his own blood—That he  
“ bare our sins in his own body on the tree—That we  
“ have redemption through his blood, and are reconciled to God by his death—That there is no name  
“ but that of Peter, by which we must be saved—That  
“ Peter is made unto us of God, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption—That Peter  
“ dwelleth in our hearts by faith—And, that there is  
“ no condemnation to them that are in Peter”—Were any one thus to speak of that great apostle, what would the Christian world say of him ? They would cer-

tainly call him, either a madman, or a blasphemer.—Nor would their indignation against his conduct be much abated, were they to hear him once and again acknowledge ; ‘ That Jesus Christ is greater than Peter.’ For they would boldly tell him, that, by such a declaration, he only contradicted himself, and tacitly acknowledged his blasphemy.—Nor would it avail such an one to say, ‘ That the application he makes of ‘ the characters and attributes, the grace and works, of ‘ Jesus Christ to Peter, is only by way of *allusion* and ‘ *accommodation*.’ For it would quickly be replied ; Such allusions and accommodations are impious ; are absolutely unwarrantable ; are pregnant with blasphemy.

If, then, an application of the principal characters, attributes, and works of our Lord to Peter, would be considered and treated by Christians, as abominable blasphemy ; it must be a much higher degree of that malignant crime, to apply the names and titles, the attributes and works of the Supreme Being, to Jesus Christ, if he be not a Divine Person. Nor is it any wonder that the Jews should so consider it. For if the disproportion between Jesus and Peter be great, that which is between Christ and God is inconceivably greater, according to the principles of our opponents ; the *former* being finite, the *latter* unbounded. Consequently, the blasphemy, in one case, is infinitely greater than in the other.

The impiety of applying the characters of Christ to Peter, will appear in a still stronger light, if, in the case supposed, he who makes the application be considered as knowing, that this question, Is Peter equal to Jesus Christ ? had been debated on very important occasions ; and that he foresaw this error would become general in the world ; so that, for many ages, Peter would bear the names and receive the honours of Jesus Christ. In such a case, he would be guilty of prodigious impiety indeed ; the consequences foreseen being so injurious to the honour of Christ, and so fatal to the souls of men.—This, it is obvious, is applicable to the apostles. For they were not ignorant that this

question, Is Jesus Christ equal with God ? had been debated. Nay, they well knew, that it was under a charge of pretended blasphemy, for claiming an equality with God, that the Jews had persecuted their Master and procured his death. And as they foresaw that false teachers would arise in future ages, and were able to describe their heretical doctrines ; they could not be ignorant, that vast multitudes professing Christianity would so apostatize, as to put Jesus Christ, a mere creature, in the place of God. But if they knew and foresaw these things, ought not a zealous regard for the honour of God, and a tender concern for the souls of men ; to have prevented their applying those oracles of the Old Testament, which express the glory of JEHOVAH, in contradistinction to that of his creatures, to Jesus Christ ?—Who, then, on the principles of them we oppose, can justify the conduct of the apostles, in so doing ; Who can exculpate Jesus himself, by whose command and inspiration they wrote ? Who can justly condemn the conduct of the Sanhedrim, who arraigned him for blasphemy, and caused him to end his life on the cross, as an enemy to God and a deceiver of men ? Or who can blame the modern Jews for continuing in their infidelity ?

## SECTION III.

**IF JESUS CHRIST** be not the true **GOD**, of the same essence with his **Father**, He and his apostles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error.

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### CHAP. I.

The principles which we oppose, obscure, depreciate, destroy, those exalted ideas which **JESUS** gives us of his **Father's Love**, and of his own **Compassion** to sinful men.

**T**HE general reason of the leading proposition in this Section, is, The sacred writers of the New Testament have *not* spoken of Christ, as of a mere creature ; though they were perfectly well informed, as to his true dignity and real character.—But it is necessary that I should be more particular. In order, therefore, to prove and illustrate the proposition, I shall endeavour to shew, That the Socinian hypothesis obscures, depreciates, and destroys, those exalted ideas which **Jesus Christ** gives us of his **Father's love**, and of his own compassion to sinful men—That it so weakens the idea, which is given us in the New Testament, of the greatness of the mystery of godliness, that one cannot help suspecting the apostles of a design to deceive us, by bombastic expressions—That it deprives **Jesus Christ** of his honour, by making him possess, in a metaphorical sense, those titles which are given him in one that is proper—That it supersedes the necessity and vacates the death of Christ—And, that it renders the language of Scripture obscure and false, absurd and impious.

I affirm, then, that the Socinian hypothesis obscures, depreciates, and destroys those exalted ideas which Jesus gives us of his Father's love, and of his own compassion to sinful men. It is manifest, that the grand benefit and the highest evidence of the Father's love consist, in "giving HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON," and in delivering him up to death for us. This gift, according to the Holy Ghost, includes all others. For the apostle says ; "He that spared not his own Son,—how shall he not with him also freely give us ALL things ?"—But if Jesus be by nature a mere man, or a mere creature, the gift must be of incomparably less value than the salvation of mankind : and, so far from wondering that God has purchased our salvation at so *dear* a rate, we have reason to be surprised that he should procure it at so *small* an expense. For however holy and excellent we may suppose Jesus to be, yet we must allow, that an innumerable multitude of immortal beings, who love God with all their hearts and serve him with all their powers, will be, in the day of their consummation, a more delightful object in the eye of Omniscience than Jesus Christ, if he be a mere creature. The salvation of mankind, therefore, is more precious than the life of Christ ; especially when it is considered, that in losing his life, he did not lose his holiness.—But the comparison here, does not only lie between Christ and the multitudes redeemed by him ; it extends also to the *temporal* life which he lost for them, and that *eternal* life which they acquire by him. The result, then, of such a comparison must be, that the gift of Christ, as a mere creature, is of much less value than the salvation of mankind.

But, if Jesus Christ be GOD-MAN, the intimate union of the humanity with his Divinity, may well be conceived to render his life and blood infinitely precious. Of this we may assure ourselves, by reasoning from the less to the greater. A clod of the valleys, for instance, is of no worth or dignity : we do not care how many blows it receives : it makes no difference to us, whether it be preserved or destroyed. But if it be united to a spirit, the union will immediately confer a dignity upon

it ; so as to give a proportional value to its actions. or sufferings, on the behalf of any one. Then suppose it exalted to an union with the Divine essence, and its intimate relation to God will render its vicarious obedience and sufferings of infinite worth.—Or thus ; If the sufferings of a person of quality be of more value than those of a peasant ; if those of a king's son, than those of a person of quality ; and if those of a king himself, than those of his own son ; it follows, if we proceed in this gradation *ad infinitum*, and can find a person whose dignity has no bounds, his sufferings will be of infinite value.—Such, according to our hypothesis, is JESUS CHRIST : for he is “ God manifest in the flesh.” In all his sufferings, and in the depth of his humiliation, he possessed the glories of the GODHEAD ; which ennobled and dignified, beyond conception and beyond bounds, all that he did and all that he underwent for the salvation of sinners. Such a Saviour, being the gift of the Divine Father to miserable men, must be a present of infinite value, and could proceed from nothing short of infinite love.

But, after all that can be said for the contrary sentiment, a man is but a man ; and we should exalt the mercy of God at a childish rate, were we to exclaim ; ‘ Unspeakable love ! unbounded mercy ! which gave ‘ the temporal life of *a mere man*, for the eternal salvation of mankind !’ Nor would an exclamation of this kind be much more pertinent, on the Arian hypothesis. There must necessarily, therefore, be a more exalted meaning in these and similar expressions ; “ In “ this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON into “ the world, that we might live through him—God so “ loved the world, that he gave his ONLY BEGOTTEN “ Son”—There must, I say, be a more exalted meaning in them, than that which is given to them by our opponents.

When Paul says, God “ spared not his own Son ;” the meaning is, that he gave us *the life* of his Son. Then, reasoning from the greater to the less, he concludes, that God will give us all other blessings ; be-



cause the apostle considers the life of Christ, as more valuable and more precious than all things besides. But is there any proportion—let common sense be the judge—is there any proportion between the temporal life of a man like ourselves, or of any mere creature, and the eternal felicity of all the redeemed? Or, can any thing be more weak, inconclusive, and false, than the apostle's reasoning, if the principles of our adversaries be true?

They will say, 'God manifests his love, by giving us eternal life *with* his Son.' I reply, The assertion includes two things; everlasting life, and the way in which it is granted; that is, by the ministry of Jesus Christ. The *former*, being vouchsafed to guilty and miserable creatures, is undoubtedly an evidence of Divine love: the *latter* is but very weakly expressive of any such thing. For it cannot, surely, be considered as a *great* and *wonderful* effort of God's love, to give the temporal life of *one* man, for the eternal life of *millions*.

Let me illustrate the point. In the deliverance of the antient Israelites from Egyptian bondage, two things may be remarked. God redeems them from the slavery under which they groaned; and, previous to their deliverance, he commands them to kill the paschal-lamb, and to sprinkle its blood on the door-posts of their houses. The love of God to the tribes of Jacob, in granting them deliverance, is greatly to be admired; for they were reduced to a sad extremity, and had long desired to be relieved. But we should think ourselves much abused, if any one endeavoured to persuade us; That the love of God to them appeared in a *wonderful* manner, because the blood of a *lamb* was the sign, to the destroying angel, to spare their first-born; or, because the sacrifice of the *passover* was a mean, in the hand of God, of working out their deliverance. Should any one exclaim; 'Behold, how God loved the Israelites! He so loved them, that he put a *lamb*, nay, *many lambs* to death, that he might redeem them from slavery!' would you not think him delirious?—But here I shall be reminded, 'That the life of

‘ Christ, as a mere man, is incomparably more precious than the life of a sacrifice under the law.’ Suppose it be ; yet, ~~the~~ the life of a lamb bears no proportion to the temporal deliverance of the Israelites ; the temporal life of Jesus, as a mere man, or a mere creature, can bear no proportion to the eternal life of mankind. Nay, in the *former* of these two cases there is *some* proportion, and a comparison may be formed ; but none at all in the *latter*. For, as the life of a lamb is temporal, so was the life of an Israelite, which was redeemed by it ; and it must be allowed, that between temporal and temporal there is some proportion. But the life of Christ, as a mere creature, is temporal and of a limited worth ; whereas the life he has purchased for us, is eternal and of infinite value ; between which there is, there can be. no proportion.

‘ The love of God appears, it will be said, not in giving a man, simply considered ; but in giving one that ~~is~~ his *own Son*.’ But is Jesus the Son of God in a *proper*, or in a *figurative* sense ? If the *former*, it must be by eternal generation. which is that for which we plead. If the *latter*, I desire to be informed, Whether it be an extraordinary and an astonishing effort of Divine love, to give a man for our redemption, who is the Son of God only by a *metaphor* ?—Suppose a sovereign were obliged to destroy a great number of his subjects, to assert the rights of justice and maintain the honour of his laws ; except some person be found worthy of being admitted as their substitute, who, by laying down his life, shall deliver them from death. Suppose, further, that this prince, being moved with compassion, should engage to give the life of his own son for their redemption ; you could not but conceive the highest idea of his mercy and love, to his offending subjects. But if, afterwards, you should be well informed, that he did not give his *own* son, and be also assured that he *never had*, properly speaking, a son of his own ; but that all the mystery of this astonishing love, which made such a noise in the world, consisted in this : He adopted one of his subjects ; took him out of a state of extreme indigence ; educated him like the son of a

prince ; determined to give him up to death, as a ransom for his perishing subjects ; and then, if it were possible, to reward his sufferings, by making him the heir of his crown ;—in such a case, it would be immediately said, Though the conduct of this prince is very extraordinary, and though his clemency is worthy of admiration, in pardoning attainted rebels, and in redeeming those who deserve to perish ; yet it is a childish hyperbole to exclaim, ‘ Behold, how he loved his kingdom ! He so loved it, that he gave his *Son*, his *own Son*, his *dearly beloved*, and *only begotten Son*, to die for his offending subjects !’

Still more fully to illustrate the point, we may borrow an instance from the sacred Scriptures. The offering up of Isaac, our adversaries themselves allow, was a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Isaac, the delight of his father and his only son, was bound in order to be sacrificed by Abraham himself, notwithstanding all the yearnings of parental bowels. Thus he became a lively type of Christ ; of Him, who is the only begotten of the Father, and in whom he takes infinite and eternal delight. Him did the Father deliver up to sufferings and sorrows, to agonies and death.—The types, which prefigured the death of Christ, all agree in representing him as suffering in our stead ; as the antient sacrifices were substituted in the place of those for whom they were offered. Every type, notwithstanding, had its particular relation, by which it is distinguished from others. Thus the blood of the paschal lamb, being sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelitish houses, secured the inhabitants from the sword of the destroying angel. So the blood of Christ, being sprinkled on our hearts, preserves us from the stroke of Divine justice. But the offering up of Isaac, being without the shedding of blood, cannot have this resemblance with Jesus Christ. We must, therefore, look for another, which consists in this : As Abraham offered up his only son, so the Divine Father delivered up to death his only begotten Son.—Suppose, then, any one were to persuade and convince you, That Abraham did not offer up his *only* son, nor his *own* son ;

but took the son of Eliezar, gave him the name of Isaac, and, if you will, put on him the clothes of Isaac : you would immediately forbear to wonder at the obedience and faith of the renowned patriarch, in making no scruple to sacrifice his own and only son.—We have been wont to look for the *image* only, in a type, and for the *reality*, in its accomplishment : but, if we believe our adversaries, we must invert this order ; we must look for the *reality* in the *type*, and the *image* in its *accomplishment*. According to this new mode of interpretation, Abraham performed a great and wonderful act of obedience, by which his faith in the promises and his love to God have been rendered illustrious to all generations ; for he offered up his *own son*, his *dear* and *only son* ; and this he did in reality, not in appearance only. But God, in delivering up Jesus to death, gives us only a *servant*, whom he *calls* his Son, that there might be a greater appearance of love in his dying for us : so that these and similar expressions, “ He spared “ not his own Son,” are used with little propriety ; are vain and delusive.

To advance the dignity of Jesus Christ, it may, perhaps, be said ; ‘ He, whom God gave to be our Saviour, ‘ is the heir of eternal life.’ But if he obtained this exalted honour, in consequence of his sufferings, and as a reward of his death ; though it may be said, God crowns his servant to reward his patience ; yet it still remains a truth, that he gave us no other than a *servant*, for the redemption of men ; a servant who was bound to fulfil the Divine law for *himself*, being then but an “ unprofitable servant.”

The sentiment of our adversaries is no less injurious to the love and compassion of Christ, as revealed in the gospel. On their hypothesis, it is depreciated, obscured, lost. If he really suffered in *our* sense, he underwent, for a season, the weight of the Divine curse ; his very soul was penetrated by the sword of eternal justice ; and he felt the desertion of his Father, with a grief proportional to the ardour of his own love. Thus his love to sinners is equal to the terrors of God’s avenging justice ; under the stroke of which he agonized, bled, and died.

But if he suffered only in the sense of our adversaries ; if he suffered, without bearing the sins of men, or sustaining the punishment deserved by them ; there was nothing in his death deserving of our astonishment. in regard of his love to us, nor any thing very heroic*i* in it. On this supposition, Codrus, king of the Athenians, would be as worthy of praise as Jesus Christ. For that prince, putting himself at the head of his army against the enemy, and being persuaded, by the answer of some oracle, that if he himself were not slain in the battle, his subjects could not gain the victory ; threw aside his royal apparel, put on ragged clothes, went into the camp of the enemy, and frustrated their design to save him, by provoking a soldier who slew him. The love which this Athenian prince discovered for his subjects, by this instance of his concern for their welfare, is equal, more than equal, to that of Christ for believers. The *former* freely gave up his life, with a view to preserve his country from slavery, though uncertain as to a future state of existence : but the *latter* lays down his life in absolute certainty of living again after three days, and of reigning forever with his redeemed.

On the hypothesis opposed we have more reason to admire the love of God to Jesus Christ, than that which the Father has manifested to us, by him. God, indeed, in the forgiveness of our sins and the salvation of our souls, manifests his love and mercy to us ; and this we ought to acknowledge with gratitude and joy. But in the recompense he makes to Jesus Christ, for having suffered death, by making him the depositary of all spiritual gifts ; by granting him the power of bestowing eternal life, and of inflicting eternal death ; and by conferring upon him names of the highest dignity and expressive of Divine authority ; he manifests his love to him in an unparalleled way—in such a manner and to such a degree, that Christ has no reason to grudge the pains he underwent and the blood that he shed, in order to arrive at such a state of honour and happiness. Nay, he could not have done so well for himself in any other way, nor so much to his own advantage. So that instead of saying, ‘ God so loved *the world*, that he gave

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‘his only begotten Son;’ we must say, ‘God so loved *Jesus Christ*, that, after he had honoured him with the title of *his Son*, he gave him the world, and put all things in subjection to him.’ Instead of saying, “He that spared not *HIS OWN SON*,—how shall he not with him also freely give us all things;” we must say, ‘It is no wonder that he who promises to give us *eternal life*, has given us the life of *Jesus Christ*.’

‘But *Jesus Christ*, they will say, is the *master* and we are the *servants*: it must, therefore, be an extraordinary act of love, for a master to give himself up to death on purpose to ransom slaves; and such slaves as were his enemies.’—Here it is necessary to consider the love of the Father, and the love of the Son, in a separate view. The Father gives, not himself, but *Jesus Christ*, to die for us; and *Christ*, it is manifest, cannot be called *master*, with regard to God. In that respect, he is as much a servant as any of us; he being God’s own creature and subject to his laws. God, therefore, does not give a master, but his own *servant*. He is, indeed, the most perfect of all that ever bore the character, yet he is but a servant, and must be so forever. So that though the love of God is manifested in saving his enemies from deserved ruin; yet the excellence of that love is far from appearing in the gift of a *servant*—A servant, that owes his existence to a sovereign act of Divine power, and all his blessedness to the communications of Divine favour—A servant, who, in the redemption of sinners, loses neither his holiness, happiness nor glory: who loses his life but for three days, by which loss he obtained the empire of the universe; and who, consequently, sacrifices no great matter on his part. For if he be a mere creature; if, in suffering, he have nothing to fear but death itself; if, by his sufferings, he obtain eternal felicity for those he redeems; and if he is to be highly exalted after his abasement, where is the mighty effort of his love? They who devoted themselves for the preservation of their country, in the certainty of dying, and the uncertainty of living after death: obtaining for a recompense only an imaginary glory, which could not abate the horrors of dissolution:

offered much greater violence to themselves than Jesus Christ did, in all that he underwent. Nay, there are few men in the world who would not be ready to suffer a similar death on the same conditions. Where is the man who, if it were in his power, would not be willing to purchase eternal happiness for innumerable millions of his fellow-creatures, by suffering the pains of crucifixion; if he were sure to rise again the third day, and to enjoy, as the reward of his sufferings, immense felicity, everlasting honours, and dominion over all creatures? It must therefore, be granted, that Jesus Christ is *not* a mere man, and that he did *not* suffer death like that of other men, who have fallen martyrs to the truth: but that he is really a Divine Person, and, being incarnate, died under the stroke of eternal justice, as the substitute of the guilty, that he might redeem the wretched and save sinners from the wrath to come. For, let our adversaries make use of what evasions they will, they cannot overturn the doctrine of our Saviour's Divinity, without essentially altering the Christian religion; destroying the true sense of the antient types; and so depreciating the love of God to sinners, in the gift of his Son, and the compassion of Jesus in dying for them, as to render the strongest and finest expressions of Scripture, respecting Divine love, little better than arrant bombast, or mere flights of imagination.

Of this they seem to be conscious, when called to explain themselves on the subject of our heavenly Father's love, which so strongly characterizes the covenant of grace. 'God, say they, was the Father of just men under the Jewish economy; but he did not appear to be so. This is the reason why he is seldom called *Father*, in the Old Testament. Nor is he so called there, because he designs to give us eternal life; but because he created us, and bestows upon us the good things of time.'—The Socinians make the wonderful love of God to consist, in his giving us *eternal life*; and, in so doing, they speak agreeably to their own sentiments. But the writers of the New Testament speak a different language. They represent the infinite greatness and astonishing excellence of God's

love, as appearing in the gift of **HIS OWN SON**. This they consider as the *grand evidence* that God loves mankind. For thus they speak, and thus the Redeemer himself speaks; “God so loved the world, that he **“gave HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON—In this was manifested the love of God, because he sent HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON—He that spared not HIS OWN SON.”**—This, on the principles of our opposers, is an insurmountable difficulty. When they prove God’s love to men, by his giving them *eternal life*, we understand them very well; but when they endeavour to prove it, by the Father giving to us *his Son*, we can discern but little propriety, or truth, in what they say.

They, indeed, tell us, ‘That God, in giving his only Son to be a sacrifice for our sins, engages himself to us by a pledge of inestimable value; and promises, not only to forgive our transgressions, but also to give us eternal life. And by the manifestation of this great love to us, when we were his enemies, he effectually draws and reconciles us to himself. And, as he will not forgive our sins but by means of his Son, who gives himself for them; he thereby engages and subjects us to his Son: and at the same time declares how much he abhors those sins, which must be expiated by his Son’s blood; and what an aversion we also ought to have for them.’—Such reasoning is only calculated to conceal the weakness of the cause it is intended to defend. For, not being able to prove the greatness of God’s love to mankind, in that way which the apostles take to exalt it; that is, “by the gift of **“HIS OWN SON;”** our adversaries prudently collect such considerations as are, exclusive of its *grand evidence*, best fitted to discover the Father’s affection for us. These considerations are, the remission of sins and eternal life; our being enemies to God, when he formed the design of saving us; and those inducements to holiness, which are drawn from the method in which our sins are forgiven. But these considerations, however great and noble in their proper places, leave the difficulty before us in its full force. For our inquiry is, Whether God presents us with a great, a wonderful, an



incomparable gift, when he gives the life of a *mere man* for our salvation? *This* is the question before us; nor will the followers of Socinus ever be able to satisfy either themselves, or others, upon it.

‘God, say they, in giving his Son, engages himself, ‘by a pledge of inestimable value, to give us eternal ‘life.’—But can it be said of a mere man, how holy soever he be, that he is a pledge of *inestimable value*? Or, can the gift of his *temporal* life, which he parts with only for three days, be considered as a perfect security, that believers shall enjoy *eternal* happiness?—Nay, supposing Jesus to be, by nature, the most exalted of all mere creatures; would it be logical, would it be rational, thus to argue? If God, in his great love, delivered up *one* mere creature to death, we may safely conclude he will deliver *millions* from it. If he delivered up one to *temporal* sufferings, he will certainly deliver vast multitudes from *eternal* torments. If he gave a person *infinitely inferior* to Himself, to indure the pains of crucifixion for us: he will undoubtedly grant us *the enjoyment of Himself*, to make us completely and everlastingly happy. How different the apostle’s manner of arguing, in a passage before cited! “He that spared not HIS OWN SON, but delivered him “up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely “give us all things?” Whoever duly considers how Paul speaks of *God’s own Son*, of *us all*, and of *all things*; cannot but observe he supposes it quite evident, that there is *no proportion* between Jesus Christ and all the redeemed, though taken collectively; nor between the gift of Him, and the grant of all other blessings. But such a way of speaking is absolutely unaccountable, is highly absurd, on the hypotheses supposed.—‘God engages himself, by a pledge of inestimable value, to give us eternal life.’ What, was it the capital design of the death of Christ, that it should be a *pledge* of our future felicity! As if God had caused Moses to die, many years before he did, that his dissolution might be a pledge to the Israelites, of their departure out of Egypt and settlement in the land of Canaan!—By his great love to us, when we were his

‘enemies.’ But where is this *great* love? Is the life of a *mere man* so precious? especially of one who, by dying, exchanges a state of sufferings and sorrows, for a state of honour and joy, which he obtains for himself and all his disciples.—‘And as he will not forgive us our sins, but by means of his Son, who gives himself for them; he thereby engages and subjects us to his Son.’ This very nearly discovers, what our opponents are ashamed to own, and yet would be obliged to confess, were they to reason consequentially from their own principles. The consequence I mean, is, That the death of Christ is more beneficial to himself, than it is to us; and, that God has done more for him, on *that account*, than he does for us. We ought, therefore, no longer to say; “God so loved *the world*, that he gave his Son;” but, “God so loved *his Son*, that he gave him the world.” For they will by no means allow, that the death of Christ *redeems us to God*. They peremptorily affirm, and insist upon it, that God is not reconciled to sinners by Jesus Christ. Hear their words: ‘It is not true, that God, being provoked against mankind, was reconciled by Jesus Christ: for quite the contrary may be asserted. That is, God being appeased towards mankind, reconciles to himself, by Jesus Christ, men who were provoked against him.’ If, then, Jesus does not reconcile us to God, does not make our peace with him; we might, for aught that appears to the contrary, have done tolerably well without him. For as to our natural aversion to God, he could easily have removed it, by the operation of his grace on our hearts, without the mediation of Christ. But as for Jesus, being a mere man, he could not have expected, nor would have enjoyed, a supernatural glory and power, if he had not signalized his obedience by his death. The fruit, therefore, which we reap from his sufferings, is very small; but the benefits which he receives from them, are very great; because it is in virtue of his obedience to death, that he becomes the head of men and angels.—‘He, at the same time declares, how much he abhors those sins which must be expiated by his Son’s blood; and what an aversion

‘ we also ought to have for them.’ But if Christ be a mere man, or a mere creature, his death can have but little force to convince us, how much sin is the object of God’s abhorrence. The inference, in this case, will rather be ; There is no reason that we should make any great scruple of committing sin ; seeing it may, with so much ease and at so small an expense, be expiated : for the blood of *one* man is sufficient to atone for the sins of *millions*.

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## CHAP. II.

The doctrine of our adversaries destroys the idea which the Scriptures give us, of the Greatness of Gospel-mysteries, and the Nature of true Faith.

As the principles which we oppose, exceedingly depreciate the love of God and the compassion of Jesus to sinful men ; so they are equally unfavourable and irreconcilable to what the Scripture says, about the *greatness* of gospel-mysteries, and the *nature* of true faith. For, if Jesus Christ be a mere man, who can understand the apostle when he says ; “ Without controversy, GREAT IS THE MYSTERY of godliness : GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory ?”

The mystery of the incarnation, as we profess to believe it, is great and sublime. Such it is, whether we consider the ineffable union of the human nature with the Divine ; or the marvellous condescension and love which are manifested by it ; or the important consequences of such an union. But we do not, we cannot see, how the birth of a mere man, who is born in flesh, because he could not be born otherwise, can be reckoned *a great mystery*.—To speak accurately and to reason justly, on the hypothesis of our opposers, we should rather look for mysteries in the *terms of Scripture*, than in the *objects of religion*. So that we should not

say, "Great is the mystery of godliness ;" but, Great is the mystery of the *language* which is used by the apostles. For the chief difficulties found in our divinity, lie in the *objects* of it ; whereas those which principally affect their scheme, lie in the *terms* of Scripture.—But, as the Holy Scriptures were intended by a gracious God, to be the rule of faith and practice, to the most illiterate ; its *language* ought not to be the chief source of difficulties. Yet, as the *objects* of the gospel are sublime and incomprehensible, it is no wonder if they occasion the principal part of that obscurity which we find in the Sacred Volume.

Let us now consider this passage a little more attentively. By the *mystery of godliness*, we must here understand, the doctrine of the gospel. This is evident from the following enumeration of particulars, which constitute the great subject of the gospel-ministry. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."—Now I demand of those who believe that Jesus Christ is a mere man by nature, what is the meaning of these words ; "God was manifest in the flesh ? If it be this, 'The man Jesus conversed among men ;' the mystery, certainly, is not great. It is, indeed, surprising, that Enoch and Elijah were translated into heaven, and that Christ was received up into glory ; because heaven is not, naturally, a place for bodies : but that a mere man was seen upon earth, and conversed among other men, was never wondered at by any.—Besides, who does not perceive that these words, "God was manifest in the flesh ;" imply a distinction, point out an opposition, between *God*, whom we cannot see ; and a *body*, which we can see—between God, who is *spiritual* ; and flesh, which is *sensible* ? But what will become of this opposition, and of the reality of this mystery, if the true God was not manifest in the flesh ?

'Jesus Christ, they will say, though a mere man by nature, is called God, because he represents Him.'—But will this justify the expressions before us ? Kings are called *gods*, because they, in some sense, represent

God ; yet whoever said of a sovereign prince, ‘ Without controversy, *great is the mystery of royalty* ; God was manifest in the flesh ? ’—The gentlemen with whom we contend are not aware, that they make a ridiculous match of *real* flesh and a *true* manifestation, with a *metaphorical* God : whereas they should unite one that is *properly* called God, with *real* flesh and a *true* manifestation. For that which makes, I will not say, the *greatness* of the mystery, but the *truth* of it, is, the *opposition* implied, between what is signified by the term *God*, and what is intended by the word *flesh*. Now there is an opposition between *flesh* and one that is properly called God ; but there is none at all between a *metaphorical* God, and *real* flesh.—In what, then, does the greatness of this mystery consist ; “ God was manifest in the flesh ? ”

Perhaps they may answer, ‘ In the glory of Divine power, with which Christ was invested when he conversed upon earth ; which appeared in such miracles and in so great a number, that it seemed as if God himself was come down to inhabit flesh. ’—But if so, the mystery of the gospel has nothing in it more surprising than that of the law ; and we may find, in Moses, as well as in Jesus Christ, “ God manifest in the flesh. ” For Moses appeared invested with a power, which acted on all the parts of nature, as if he had been the Lord of the world.—And did not the apostles work miracles ? Yes ; and greater, in some respects, than those of their Divine Master, in pursuance of his own promise. The glory of God’s power, therefore, was manifest in them. Yet, in what page of the New Testament is it said of any apostle ; “ God was manifest in the flesh ? ” Further : Either the miracles of Christ shewed that the Divine power resided in him, as in its *original* ; and then our opposers must acknowledge that he is the true God : or they were the effects of a *derived* power, and so God himself performed them by his ministry and at his request ; which is true of the apostles : and so we may say of them, as well as of Christ ; “ Great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh. ”

But in what consists the greatness of the mystery, thus understood? — it so uncommon, is it so astonishing, that God should exert and display his power, on important occasions, and for his own glory, at the request of a prophet, or of an apostle? Would it have been proper to say, when Elijah made fire to descend from heaven, to confound the impiety of Baal's worshippers, “God was manifest in the flesh?”—Certainly, as these expressions are so singular and so emphatical, and as they were unknown before the incarnation; they must refer to a very wonderful object, and a very mysterious fact—a most astonishing and important fact, which had no existence till “the Word was made flesh.” For, as language is adapted to the objects it represents, the singularity of expressions indicates, if the writer be honest and wise, a singularity in the object which is represented by them. As the language of the law would have appeared new and extraordinary to the antient Gentiles, so would the language of the gospel to them that lived under the law; because the objects of the law are very different from those of nature, and the objects of the gospel from those of the law. What, then, shall we think of these new and uncommon expressions, “God was manifest in the flesh;” if they do not signify a new and wonderful object, unknown to nature, unknown to the law?

The interpretation which our adversaries put upon this passage, is inconsistent with the language of the apostle. For, according to him, God is manifested, or appears, in flesh; but according to them, *flesh* is manifested, or appears, to be God; the term *flesh*, in the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, frequently signifying the human nature. Socinus teaches, that he who is by nature flesh, is exalted so as to be called God; because he represents God in a wonderful manner: so that we have flesh first and then a manifestation, or representation, of God. But Paul informs us, that he who was God appears in flesh: consequently, he suggests the idea of God, prior to that of *manifestation in the flesh*. This is the first and most natural impression of his words.

When the prophet gives that exalted character, **IMMANUEL**, to Jesus Christ; we immediately conceive of him as possessed of such perfections as cannot belong to a mere man. For so high a title was never given, by the Holy Spirit, to any prophet, or apostle. It is evidently above their state and dignity. And yet, perhaps, our argument from it might not be quite conclusive, if it were the only sublime title which the Scripture gives him. But when we hear an apostle call him, "**GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH;**" the two characters illustrate each other, and we are taught to consider them both in the highest sense the words will bear. To answer the natural import of the former, the true God must be really *with us*: to correspond with the sense of the latter, the true God must be *incarnate*.

Jesus Christ, according to us, is God and man. He existed, not only before he was born of the virgin, but also before Abraham. He was, in the beginning, with God; he was God, and "was manifest in the flesh," having assumed our nature. "He was justified in the Spirit;" having sent the Holy Ghost, to vindicate his character from every unrighteous charge; to assert the efficacy of his death, and the truth of his resurrection. "Seen of angels;" at his birth, in his agony, and in his triumph. "Preached unto the Gentiles;" with great success. "Believed on in the world;" notwithstanding the reproach under which the doctrine of the cross lay. "And received up into glory;" in the presence of a great number of his disciples, where he ever lives to make intercession for his people. And now, what difficulty is there in all this? This is the gospel which we have received from the beginning.—According to the Socinians, Jesus Christ is, by nature, a mere man; but is highly exalted for his obedience; so exalted, as to be called God. Now, in a mere man, I find but three things; a body, a soul, and the compound resulting from the union of both. I demand, therefore, which of these was manifested in the flesh? Not the *soul*; for it would be absurd to call the soul of Jesus, God: and equally so, to talk of its being mani-

festated in the flesh. Besides, we are speaking of a subject that was “received up into glory ;” which is affirmed, not less of the body, than it is of the soul. Nor is it the *body* of Jesus Christ that was manifested in flesh. For it is ridiculous to say, that flesh is manifested in flesh. Nor was the whole *compound*, or the entire man, manifested in the flesh ; for this compound is only the body and soul united.

If the question were about a *quality*, it might be said. That the power, or wisdom, or holiness, or authority of God, was manifested in the flesh. But it is about a *person* ; for those words, “received up into glory,” can be understood of no other. This person, therefore, must be either human, or Divine. Not the *latter* ; for, according to our opposers, there is none but the Father. He must, consequently, be the *former*. But a human person is a man : a man, therefore, was manifest in the flesh. But can it be said, without the greatest absurdity, that a man, consisting of a body and soul united, is manifest in flesh ? It cannot be denied, if Christ be a mere man, that the same nature was thus manifested, which was afterwards received up into glory ; for our opponents will not allow that he has two natures. His human nature, consequently, must have been manifested in the flesh ; the very thought of which is big with absurdity.

But the tenets of our adversaries not only militate against the mystery of God’s manifestation in the flesh ; for they destroy *all* the mysteries at once, by removing whatever is difficult in religion.—The doctrine of the cross, as represented in the New Testament, has some things in it which are sublime and wonderful, difficult and incomprehensible ; things which are contrary to the dictates of depraved reason, and to our natural prejudices. Hence it is called by one who was thoroughly acquainted with it ; “A stumbling block to the Jews, “and foolishness to the Greeks.” But what is there mysterious and incomprehensible in the cross of Christ, if he be a mere man ? Did the Jews never see a man, who was acceptable to God, persecuted by the wicked ? Did the servants of God never suffer death, to signalize



their zeal, or to confirm the truth ? If there be any mystery in the cross of Christ, it must be, either because he is a *righteous* man who suffers ; or a *prophet* ; or *the Son of God*. Not the *first* : for neither Jews nor Gentiles can look upon the death of an innocent man, under the power of his persecutors, as a new, or a strange thing. Not the *second* ; for many prophets had been seen to die for the truth. Nor, according to our adversaries, can it be the *last* ; for, if we believe them, he is the Son of God only by a metaphor : or, at most, as Adam was in his first state ; having been formed immediately by the power of God, and enriched with his gifts and graces.

Paul speaks of “ the foolishness of preaching, by which God saves them that believe.” The gospel is called *foolishness*, because it contains such things as appear incredible, and really are incomprehensible. But what is there of this kind, in the gospel, if the system of our opposers be scriptural ? For they remove, or pretend to remove, all the principal difficulties out of the way. Is not this a strong presumption that their gospel, and their christianity, are very different from those which Paul preached and professed ?—Common sense and a moderate share of impartiality must, surely, allow, that there are more difficulties and greater obscurity in those objects which the gospel reveals, than in those presented to us in the works of creation. And yet, if the hypothesis which we opposed and admitted, there are more mysteries in the smallest insect, in a spire of grass, or in a grain of sand, than in all the Christian religion. —There were many things under the antient Jewish economy that were grand, sublime, and mysterious ; yet they are not denominated *mysteries*, by the Holy Spirit, as those under the gospel-dispensation are. Nor were the objects of the law ever said to be *foolishness*, on account of their being contrary to human prejudices : and yet, if our opponents be in the right, there were greater mysteries under the law, than any we have under the gospel. God, for instance, appearing in the burning-bush, was a greater mystery, than “ God manifested in the flesh.”

The hypothesis which we oppose, supersedes the necessity and destroys the nature of *true faith* : the nature and excellence of which consist, in receiving such truths as lie beyond the powers of reason to discover ; such truths, as we could not receive, but upon the testimony of God who reveals them. Faith and sight are different things. By the *latter* we receive such truths as have a natural relation to our notions and light ; by the *former*, such as are contrary to our prejudices, on the bare authority of God in the Scriptures. Whereas this distinction is utterly destroyed, if the gospel reveal no objects, if the Christian religion contain no truths, but such as are level to our capacities, and as agreeable to them as natural truths. But we shall have occasion to resume the consideration of these things hereafter.

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### CHAP. III.

The hypothesis of our adversaries deprives JESUS CHRIST of his highest honour ; by making him possess those Titles in a metaphorical sense, which the Scripture applies to him in one that is proper. This proved by two instances.

GREATLY diversified and truly sublime are the titles of honour and grace, that are given by the Holy Spirit to the great Redeemer ; but which, on the principles of our adversaries, have little significancy in them. I shall here make choice of two, as a specimen : one of which is most strongly adapted to express his personal dignity and essential glory ; the other, his grace and work as our Mediator. The titles I mean are, THE SON OF GOD, and THE SAVIOUR ; both which are frequently applied to him in the Scripture.

Jesus Christ, it is evident, is frequently and emphatically called, “ The Son of God—His own Son—The begotten of the Father—His only begotten Son—And, “ the Son of the Father in truth and love.”—It must, therefore, be allowed, that God has a Son, who is, in the most emphatical sense, his own ; who is his Son in a higher sense, than those who are so called in virtue

of adoption. It must also be acknowledged that they who are the children of God by adoption, have a claim to the character of *sons* in a stronger sense, than they who are so called only by a metaphor.

But our opponents invert this order. For, according to them, Christ cannot be called **THE SON OF GOD**, but only by a figure : and, on the other hand, believers are the sons of God by adoption, though they be so only in Jesus Christ. But how can a metaphorical son, be more truly a son, than adopted sons ? And how can adopted sons owe their adoption to a metaphorical son ? —For, either Christ is himself adopted by the Father, or he is not. If the *former*, how comes it that the Holy Spirit, though he often speaks of the adoption of believers, should never say a word of his adoption ? Why is this language unknown to the Bible ; ‘ God has *adopted* his Son, Jesus Christ ?’ and so unknown, that it would be looked upon as blasphemous. If the *latter*, he is only a metaphorical son : for he is not so by nature ; our adversaries cannot bear the expression. Nor is he so by adoption ; for the language of Scripture does not allow the thought. It follows, therefore, that he is so only by a metaphor ; and consequently, the sonship of believers is of a superior kind to that of Jesus Christ.

The title, “ Sons of God,” which believers bear, has ever been justly esteemed an eminent proof of their interest in the Father’s love. It is a glorious and wonderful fruit of Divine grace, and as such they acknowledged it with gratitude and joy. But the character, Son, which Jesus bears, ought never to be considered in that light. For it cannot be said, He is the Son of God, because God *loves* him ; but, God loves him because he is *his Son*. The beloved disciple says, “ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God !” But we never hear any of the inspired writers say, ‘ Behold, how God loves Jesus Christ, that he should call him *his Son* !’ The reason is, the exalted character is foreign and accidental to us ; but proper and essential to him. In respect of us, it is matter of mere favour ; in regard of him, it is his eternal right.

Jesus, the Son of God, is said to be “in the bosom of the Father,” and to “sit at the right hand of God.” In the *bosom* of the Father—At the *right hand* of God. Of these two characteristics, the former is more peculiar to the Son of God, as such. It is a mark of superior honour to be seated at the right hand; but of the greatest affection to rest on the bosom. And as it is more natural to love, than to honour, a Son; so, to be “in the bosom of the Father,” is a situation more peculiar to the Son of God, as such, than that of sitting at his right hand.—But we shall have occasion, when answering the objections of our opposers, in the concluding Section of this work, to consider the Sonship of Jesus Christ more at large. I proceed, therefore, and briefly observe,

That the character, SAVIOUR, so frequently and so distinguishingly given to Jesus Christ, entirely loses its gracious and glorious import, on the principles of our opponents. For if he be a mere man; if the whole which he did for us be included, in preaching the gospel, in suffering persecution and death, to set us an example of patience and to confirm the truth which he taught; he has done but little more for us than the apostles and martyrs themselves. On this supposition it is hard to say, what benefit any of the human race, who died before he appeared in the world, could receive from his undertaking. If these were the only, or the principal benefits we receive from him, we may venture to assert, that Moses was more truly the Saviour of the Israelites, than Jesus Christ is of mankind. For Moses *himself* did that, which Christ does principally by his *apostles*. The former *delivered* the chosen tribes out of slavery; the latter is only *called* a deliverer, while he leaves us to save ourselves. Moses, indeed, did not suffer death as Christ did; but then, as to a real and proper atonement, or as a price of redemption, the death of Jesus is as unprofitable to us, as the death of that antient law-giver would have been to the posterity of Jacob. But this particular must be the subject of the next Chapter.

## CHAP. IV.

According to the sentiments of our adversaries, the Death of CHRIST has no real Usefulness in it.

**T**HEY who are acquainted with the gospel of divine grace cannot but know, that the death of Christ is not only useful, but absolutely necessary to our salvation. His vicarious obedience and atoning death, are the grand subject of the ministry of reconciliation. Hence the determination of Paul, “to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified ;” and to glory only in the cross of his crucified Lord.

This interesting truth was clearly taught by the ancient prophets. Witness that famous oracle, in the fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah ; which contains so many illustrious characteristics of the Messiah, depending upon his death ; and that animated description of his sufferings and sorrows, in the twenty-second Psalm.—John the Baptist no sooner sees Jesus than he points him out, as an atoning sacrifice. “Behold,” says that venerable teacher, “behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !”—Christ himself, when discoursing familiarly with his disciples, frequently foretels his own death. And when one of his apostles endeavours to dissuade him from going up to Jerusalem there to suffer, he sharply rebukes him for it : of such importance was it, in his esteem, to the salvation of man and the glory of God. And when he was expiring on the cross he cried, with his last breath, “IT IS FINISHED ;” plainly implying, that his death is of the last importance ; that his death comprehends all.

The propitiatory death of our great High Priest was foretold in the earliest promises, and prefigured in the ancient types. The dying Jesus was represented by the paschal lamb ; which was sacrificed in Egypt, instead of the first born of the Israelites ; the blood of

which, being sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses, secured them from the sword of the destroying angel. For, as the paschal-lamb ransomed the first born, being sacrificed for them ; so Jesus delivers believers from the sword of Divine justice, by dying in their stead. It is necessary, however, to be observed, that as those things which were but imperfectly represented under the law, are fully accomplished under the gospel ; there is this difference between the type and the antitype : The former, though not an equivalent for the life of a man, was accepted of God ; because the design then was, not to *make* satisfaction to God's justice ; but only to *prefigure* that sacrifice which was to make a full satisfaction. But Christ is a worthy ransom ; a substitute, whom we need not fear being rejected, as inferior to those for whom he dies. He is therefore, called, " The " Lamb of God." He is **THE LAMB**, by way of excellence ; the only lamb that can atone for our sins and ransom our souls. Such is the import of the phrase, according to the style of inspiration ; in which it is common to add the Divine name to any thing that is peculiarly excellent, great, or remarkable. As, for instance ; " The mountains of God ; the cedars of God ; the garden of God ;" and here, " The Lamb of God ;"—Our dying Surety was represented by the scape-goat, on the great day of expiation. To fulfil this type, therefore, he must bear our sins ; he must be anathema ; he must be made a curse for us. For if not, why was he represented by this goat ? What was there, in any other view, common between them ?—I might, on this occasion, multiply particulars out of the Jewish ritual, but these may suffice.

That the application we make of these antient types is not fanciful and forced, the sacred penmen of the New Testament abundantly shew. They unite in assuring us, That " Christ our passover is sacrificed for " us—That he is the Lamb of God, which taketh away " the sin of the world—That he himself bear our sins " in his own body on the tree—That he was made sin " for us—That he was made a curse for us—That he " gave his life a ransom for many—That he was deliv-

“ered for our offences—That he hath reconciled and  
 “redeemed us to God by his blood—That his blood  
 “purges the conscience from dead works, and cleans-  
 “eth from all sin.”—These declarations are perfectly  
 conformable to the language of prophecy, in which  
 it is said ; “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity  
 “of us all—He shall make his soul an offering for  
 “sin—The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for him-  
 “self—For the transgression of my people was he strick-  
 “en—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was  
 “bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our  
 “peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are  
 “healed.”—What, now, can we infer from these, and  
 a multitude of similar passages in the Book of God, but  
 that the death of Christ was *vicarious* ; that he died,  
 not only for *our good*, but in *our stead* ; and that his  
 death has procured for us, not some trifling benefit only,  
 but remission of sins and eternal life ? being a full sat-  
 isfaction to the demands of a violated law, and the  
 claims of eternal justice.

But, notwithstanding all this, if Jesus be a mere  
 creature, the doctrine of the satisfaction cannot be de-  
 fended. Of this the Socinians are aware, and therefore  
 they renounce it ; even though it is an article in the  
 Christian faith of the greatest importance ; an article, so  
 often repeated, so variously and so emphatically ex-  
 pressed in Scripture, that we might, with equal reason,  
 renounce Revelation itself, as call it in question. But  
 let us now inquire, what advantage we have by the death  
 of Christ, according to our opponents.

They tell us, ‘That the blood of Christ confirms the  
 ‘new covenant, which God makes with mankind  
 ‘through him.’—But if his death serve only to confirm  
 the covenant, in their sense of the expressions. there is  
 little reason to consider it as the principal object of our  
 believing regards. For of all the events relating to Je-  
 sus Christ, this is the least adapted to confirm the cov-  
 enant. If we consider him as dying in our stead, and  
 as sustaining the punishment deserved by our sins ;  
 there can be no doubt but his death assures us of the  
 love of God, and ratifies his covenant of grace : but,

on their hypothesis, it is not fitted to answer any such design ; his life, at least, is much better adapted to that purpose. For those multiplied and shining miracles which he wrought encourage our faith in him, more than the sorrows and pangs of his death.—‘ But though his ‘ miracles are better calculated to assure us of his power ; yet his death is the greatest evidence of his love, ‘ and best fitted to persuade us of it.’ To persuade us of his love ! But how should an unprofitable death be so well adapted to persuade us of his love ? Was it ever known that a wise man laid down his life for no other end, but to convince another how much he loved him ? Besides, on the principles of our adversaries, the death of Christ is more beneficial to himself than it is to us, as we have before proved.

But in what respect does the death of Jesus confirm the covenant ? Is it on the part of *man*, or on the part of *God* ? Not the *former*, I presume ; it must, therefore, be the *latter* ; but then it is on our principles, not on theirs. That is, the death of Christ gives us the highest assurance that God will perform his gracious promises to the utmost. This we allow ; in this we rejoice, as a most comfortable and certain truth ; because we consider the death of the incarnate Son, as the greatest possible evidence of the Father’s love to our souls. Hence we conclude, that as God has done us this wonderful kindness, he will do us every other that he has promised ; this being such a favour, as is greater than any, greater than all the rest. If it were not so, it would by no means follow, that because he has delivered up Jesus to death, he will give us eternal life. For though it is highly probable, that he who does a greater kindness will do a less : yet it is far from being certain, that he who does a less will also do a greater. If Jesus be a mere man, and if his death be not a satisfaction to Divine justice ; his life cannot be so valuable as the eternal happiness of those he redeems : and, consequently, the gift of the former cannot assure us that we shall have the latter.

‘ The death of Christ is also of use to confirm his ‘ doctrine.’—Suppose it be, yet it cannot be the *grand*



use of it; because the Scriptures never mention it as such, where the benefits resulting from it are enumerated. Besides, if this were its principal use, it would be of much less advantage to us, than his life; the latter being abundantly better adapted to confirm his doctrine. His life is all glorious with great, beneficent, astonishing works, which prove that the doctrine he teaches is truly Divine: because Heaven, by a thousand miraculous facts, gives him an unsuspected testimony. But though his death plainly shews, that he *sincerely believes* his doctrine to be Divine; yet, separately considered, it does not prove that it is so in reality. Nor is he the only person who confirmed the truths which he taught, by suffering a violent death. In this respect there was nothing in his death, but what was common to prophets, apostles, and martyrs.—Again; To whom should the death of Christ confirm the truth of his doctrine? to his enemies or his friends? Not his *enemies*; for the greatest and most dreadful part of his sufferings was unobserved by them. They neither beheld his bloody agony in the garden, nor knew the cause of his bitter cry on the cross. And as to those sufferings which did come under their notice, they looked upon them as the just reward of his supposed blasphemy.—Not his *friends*; for his death was considered by them in a very different point of light. So far from *confirming*, that it *staggered* their faith in his doctrine; and they cried out, “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” Nay, were we to consider the death of Christ, without any reference to an atonement for sin, to his preceding miracles, and subsequent resurrection; it would be so far from confirming his doctrine, that it would prove the strongest confutation of it that malice itself could desire.

But what doctrine is the death of Christ supposed to confirm? Is it that of *forgiveness* with God? That our offended Sovereign will *pardon sinners*? Far, very far from it, on the principles of our opposers. For by what mode of argumentation shall we infer, that because a *perfectly innocent* and righteous person was treated with such severity, by the eternal God; that he will exercise

his pardoning mercy on *criminals*, who deserve to perish? The natural, the unavoidable inference, is of a contrary kind. For if such things were done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry! If judgment began with the holy Jesus, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear! If God spared not his own Son, how much less will he spare his enemies! How should thinking men believe Jesus when he tells them, that God will pity and pardon sinners; while they behold their Maker treating the holy Teacher himself with such alarming severity? The death of Christ, therefore, detached from a consideration of its being satisfactory to the claims of Divine justice, or an atonement for sin; is so far from being a source of hope to the guilty, that it is calculated to raise in their breasts the most awful apprehensions, and to sink them in utter despair.

‘In the death of Christ we have an admirable example ‘of patience’—Granted; but then it is on our principles, not on those of our opponents. He has given such an example of patience as never had, nor ever will have its equal; for he not only endured the fierce torments of crucifixion, but sustained, which was infinitely more dreadful, the wrath of God. “He was made sin—“he was made a curse for us.” Appearing as our substitute, the sword of eternal justice awoke upon him, and he was deprived, for a season, of his Father’s presence; a privation the more keenly sensible, because his love to the Father was fervent, constant, perfect. Yes, Jesus, the dear, the adorable Jesus, underwent those pains and sorrows, those agonies and horrors, which are included in the penal sanction of the law, and which the justice of God inflicts, when satisfaction for sin is required. Who, then, who can forbear to wonder at his patience and fortitude?

But the doctrine of our opponents, gives us a very different view of our suffering Lord. For if he suffered only in their sense, there have been much greater examples of patience and fortitude in multitudes of martyrs. Many of those faithful witnesses suffered for a much longer time, and under a greater variety of keener torments; and yet, instead of being overwhelmed

with sorrow, were transported with joy. This is a certain fact, but quite astonishing, and perfectly unaccountable, on the hypothesis which we oppose. It shocks reason, and staggers faith ; it nonpluses imagination, and glares on the mind as an impious absurdity. What, shall He who is perfect, shall the Lion, of the tribe of Judah, be terrified at the approach of death ; a death in which he suffers no sensations of Divine vengeance, nor any bitterness of the Divine curse denounced against sin ; while his servants, who have all their strength and consolation from him, triumph in the midst of torments ! What, shall he be seized with agonizing sorrows, while they are transported with joy ! What, shall he sweat blood at the approach of death, while they behold a Divine hand wiping off their blood and sweat, for as to tears they do not shed one ! He complains that God has forsaken him, while they rejoice, that everlasting arms embrace and support them !—What could be the reason of this astonishing difference ? It must have been, either on the part of God, or on that of second causes, or on that of the suffering person. It was not on the part of *second causes* ; for the torments of the martyrs were, I will not say *equal* in duration and degree, but in many instances greatly *superior*. Nor on the part of the *suffering person* ; because Christ had incomparably more strength and holiness than the martyrs. It must then have been on the part of *God*, who ministered abundantly more consolation to the martyrs than he did to Jesus Christ. But why so, if he did not look upon him as the sinners substitute ? Considered as the Son of God, he was always, even when he hung on the cross, the object of his Father's infinite love : consequently, if God had viewed him under that character only, he would, in the time of his sufferings, have been a partaker of joys vastly superior to those which the martyrs possessed.

It may, perhaps, be said, ' Christ was perfectly holy and entirely innocent when he suffered death ; not so the martyrs.'—They were, however, innocent with respect to the cause for which they suffered. Besides, the sense of a man's innocence does not use to aggravate

vate his sufferings, but rather to support and comfort him under them. This Jesus himself declares, when he says; “Blessed are they which are persecuted for ‘righteousness’ sake.”—Equally unavailing would it be to say, ‘Jesus was the first in suffering such afflictions; and they who set the example generally suffer ‘most.’ For it is not fact that he was the first martyr. He himself tells us, that the prophets were persecuted before him; and encourages his disciples, by this very consideration. And though this might serve to justify a small difference, between a number of sufferers; yet it cannot possibly account for that amazing disparity which is found, if we only consider external things, between the fortitude of Christ and that of the martyrs.—It was not long after the death of Jesus that Stephen was stoned. The great number of martyrs, therefore, whom he had seen die for the truth, could not have raised his patience and courage to that heroic pitch, which he discovered on the occasion. Yet those virtues shone with a much brighter lustre in him, than they did in his dying Master, if we only regard outward appearances. The latter is immersed in sorrow; the former is elevated with joy. And, when surrounded by his cruel enemies, he cried out; “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God!” One is afflicted beyond measure in his thoughts of God, and says; “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” The other is transported with gladness at the sight of his ascended Lord; and the joy which sparkles in his eyes and shines in his countenance, renders his face like that of an angel. Who, now, on the Socinian hypothesis, can account for this astonishing difference.

Some, indeed, have supposed, ‘That the body of Christ, being formed immediately by the Holy Ghost, was more sensible of pain than the bodies of other men.’—But who is able to prove that a body must be more sensible of pain, because it was formed by the Holy Spirit, and is the residence of perfect holiness? Besides, Jesus did not suffer in his body, when he was in the garden of Gethsemane. His sufferings were

then of a mental kind ; yet so great were they, that he sweat blood. Nay, he expressly declared, that his soul was sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death ; when no human hand was upon him, when no human enemy was near him, and before he suffered the least pain in his body, except what was occasioned by the agonies of his mind. The frowns of his Father, who was then asserting the rights of his violated law, were chiefly sensible to him through the whole of his passion. These penetrated his very soul. It evidently appears, from the history of his sufferings, that his bodily pains did not ruffle the temper of his mind. He had as much command of himself, in that respect, when he hung on the cross, as when in familiar converse with his disciples. Witness that saying to his mother, “Woman, behold thy Son !” and to the beloved disciple. “Son, behold thy mother !” Witness also his glorious promise to the penitent thief ; “Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” — To as little purpose would it be to suppose, • That ‘his overwhelming sorrows were occasioned by the ‘base ingratitude of the Jews.’ For, to publish the word of life to ungrateful men, and to be recompensed with persecution and death, were common to him with multitudes of martyrs. Besides, this was far from being the first time that he experienced the ingratitude of his nation. Nay, he very well knew, long before, that this ingratitude would run so high as to be the death of him ; and of this he had informed his disciples. The ingratitude of the Jews might add to his sorrow ; but it could not be the principal cause of his anguish, neither in the garden, nor on the cross. Unless, therefore, we would make another gospel, we must acknowledge, that the desertion of his Father lay nearest his heart. He considered the time of his passion, as “the hour and power of darkness ;” when insulting tongues and violent hands, the rage of hell and the wrath of God, were all united to plunge him deep in accumulated and consummate woe.—Once more ; If the approbation of God usually comfort them that suffer in a righteous cause, how came it to pass that Christ was

not relieved by it ? And if the certainty of possessing an eternal and blessed life, caused the martyrs to shed their blood with joy ; should not the certainty which Jesus had, not only of living in consummate happiness forever, but also of making others everlastingly blessed, fill him with unspeakable joy ? What, shall men who are accustomed to love the earth, rejoice to leave it ? while Jesus Christ, who is perfectly free from every sordid and sinful passion ; while He who is the perfect pattern of every moral excellence, is seized with a thousand mortal terrors, just as he is going to heaven ! This is, on the Socinian principles, absurd to imagine ; impossible to be true.

To conclude : If Jesus died for us only in the sense of our adversaries, his death and that of the martyrs stand much on a level, in point of advantage to us. And if so, it is unaccountably strange, that the Holy Ghost should put such a difference between the one and the other. “ Was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ? ” We were not, indeed, *baptized* in the name of that apostle ; but, if the doctrine of Socinus be true, Paul and Jesus must have *died for us* in the same sense, and for the same end.

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## CHAP. V.

The sentiments of our adversaries render the language of Scripture obscure and false, absurd and impious.

THIS is the last of those propositions which we engaged to prove in this Section ; and the principal mean to shew, That Christ and his apostles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error, if the sentiments of our opposers be true.

Those passages of Scripture which we shall produce, on this occasion, are such as refer, either to the original state of Jesus Christ, or to his pre-existence, or such

as reveal his eternal Divinity ; of all which in their order.

Of the *first* sort are the following. “What and if  
 “ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he was  
 “before?—I am the bread which came down from  
 “heaven—No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he  
 “that came down from heaven—He that cometh from  
 “above, is above all : he that is of the earth, is earthly,  
 “and speaketh of the earth : he that cometh from heaven  
 “is above all—The first man is of the earth, earthy :  
 “the second man is the Lord from heaven—I came  
 “down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the  
 “will of him that sent me—I came forth from the Fa-  
 “ther, and am come into the world : again, I leave the  
 “world, and go to the Father—I proceeded forth, and  
 “came from God ; neither came I of myself, but he  
 “sent me—Now that he ascended, what is it but that  
 “he also descended first, into the lower parts of the  
 “earth?”

In these, and similar passages, as they are explained by our opponents, we can discern neither wisdom nor propriety, neither truth nor common sense, but quite the reverse. For all that we find in Jesus Christ, considered as a mere man, is, that he had a soul created immediately by the power of God ; that his body was formed in the womb, by the agency of the Divine Spirit ; that he received, in an extraordinary manner, those gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were necessary to discharge the work of his ministry ; and that he was invested with his office and sent of God to perform it among men. But if Jesus may be said, “To have pro-  
 “ceeded from God ; to have come down from heaven,  
 “and to have been with God, in the beginning ;” because his soul was created immediately by the power of God ; the same things may be affirmed of men in general. For every man has a spirit that returns to God, who gave it. Thus it might be said of any man, What and if ye see him ascend where he was before ? And each might say of himself, I came down from heaven—I proceeded from the Father, and came into the world ; and now I leave the world and go to the

**Father.** And so every one might have a share in those privileges and honours, which have been always considered as peculiar to Jesus Christ.—And though the body of Christ was formed by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, yet that is far from being a sufficient reason for these and similar expressions: “I came down from heaven—I came from God.” For Adam’s body was formed immediately by the hand of God; and yet the Scripture is far from speaking of our great progenitor after this manner; so far from it, that the language used is of a directly contrary signification. For the Spirit of inspiration, speaking of Adam, says; “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.”

‘Jesus Christ, it will be said, was not only conceived in a Divine manner, but was also replenished with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; and in that respect he may be said to come from God, and to come down from heaven: because it is the work of God to raise up a man in a supernatural way, and to endue him with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In much the same sense as when it is said, “Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” Or, as in that question, “The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?” and in opposition to the meaning of those words, “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.”—But these passages are far from being parallel, are very unsuitable on this occasion. For there is a vast difference between speaking thus of certain *qualities*, which are not susceptible of local motion; and, consequently, cannot be said, but in a figurative sense, to go or come, to descend or ascend; and speaking thus of a *person*, who may, in a proper sense, be said to descend or ascend. Besides, it is plain from all the circumstances of these texts, that the expressions adduced, as examples, ought to be understood in a metaphorical sense: whereas the very contrary is evident, in relation to those passages which we have just produced, in respect to Jesus Christ. For



who does not see a local ascension, an ascension *properly* so called, in these words : “ What and if ye shall “ see the Son of man ascend where he was before ? ” And if the word *ascend* be literal, must not the immediately following words, *where he was before*, be so too ? When Jesus says, “ I came forth from the Father and “ am come into the world ; again, I leave the world and “ go to the Father ; ” who can reasonably doubt, whether he came from the Father and came into the world, in the same sense in which he speaks of leaving the world and going to the Father ? If, then, he left the world and went to his Father in a proper and literal sense, he must, in the same sense have come down from the Father.—Again : If they who receive the gifts of the Spirit, who are sent of God, and who are the peculiar work of his power, may be said to “ come down from “ heaven ; ” nothing could be more just than to affirm it of the apostles. For they were endued with supernatural and wonderful gifts ; they were divinely sent ; and they, both in regard to their regeneration and their qualifications for the apostleship, were, in a particular manner, the work of God. Yet the Scripture never says, they came down from heaven. John the Baptist also, was holy, in several respects ; and was, in various ways, the work of God ; for he was holy from his mother’s womb, filled with the Holy Ghost, raised up, in an extraordinary manner, and sent of God : yet the evangelists are so far from saying, “ he “ came down from heaven,” that they tell us he “ was “ of the earth.” For thus they represent the Messiah’s harbinger speaking of his Lord and of himself : “ He “ that cometh from above, is above all. He that is of “ the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : He “ that cometh from heaven, is above all.”

The enemies of our Lord’s Divinity, being unable to satisfy either themselves or others, endeavour to extricate themselves out of those difficulties with which they are pressed, by supposing and asserting ; ‘ That ‘ Christ, before he entered on his public ministry, ascended into heaven ; and, having received instructions ‘ relating to his important work, came down to perform

'the various duties of his office.' This they consider as the foundation of those various ways of speaking, by which Jesus is represented, as proceeding from the Father; as coming down from above; and as being the bread which came from heaven. All which is quickly said, and sooner imagined; but let us examine this conjecture, and see whether it be not contrary to truth and probability.

Whence, then, had they this account? From any evangelist, or any of the inspired writers? If so, let them produce the passage. If Jesus did, indeed, ascend bodily into heaven, as they suppose, it was no small miracle; and, consequently, it ought not to rest on the bare assertion of our opponents. Nay, had it been a fact, it ought to have made a considerable figure in the evangelical history; which, nevertheless, is not the case. It must have been, however, of as much importance, as Elizabeth's visit to Mary; as the arrival of the eastern Magi; as the account of our Saviour's journey to Jerusalem at twelve years of age; or of his temptation in the wilderness. It was, at least, as necessary to our edification, that the sacred historians should have informed us, of his being caught up into heaven, by the Spirit of God; as to represent him elevated by the devil, and placed on a pinnacle of the temple. It was, surely of as much importance to tell us, that he had been for some time in heaven; as to inform us, that he sojourned at Nazareth. Was it necessary to mention the opening of the heavens, at his baptism, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him? then, certainly, it could not have been impertinent to have told us, that he was taken bodily into heaven.

Our opponents will have the abode of Moses on mount Sinai, while God was instructing him for his future service; to be a type of this supposed rapture of Jesus Christ, and of his abode in heaven with a similar view. But they do not consider how improbable it is, that the type should be so exactly recorded in the history of the Old Testament; and that its accomplishment, which is of immensely greater importance to

mankind, should lie hid under a veil of silence. To what principle can we attribute this omission, on such an interesting occasion, in historians who relate matters of much less consequence? For, next to three or four grand facts, such as the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; there was no one event in the history of our Lord, of greater importance to us, or more to his honour, than that which is in question before us. I do not accept his transfiguration; an event which the evangelists relate with all its circumstances. Because it was much more honourable to Jesus, and of much greater consequence to us, for him to ascend into heaven, to converse familiarly with his Father; than to converse with Moses and Elijah, on the Mount of transfiguration.

What, then, can be said to excuse the silence of the evangelists, on this occasion? Did they propose to relate only such things as referred to the *humiliation* of Jesus; and, on that account, omitted an event which seemed to regard his glorification? But this is contrary to plain fact. They relate, with great particularity, many glorious and wonderful circumstances which attended the birth and life, the death and resurrection of their Divine Master. What, then, can be said, to justify this extraordinary, unnatural, and incomprehensible silence?

But what necessity was there that Christ should ascend into heaven? for as the opinion of our opposers, in this respect, is not grounded on any report of the evangelists, they must needs establish it on some kind of *necessity*. ‘It was necessary, Socinus says, that Christ should be conformable to Moses, who was his type. As Moses, therefore, was with God on the mount; so it was necessary that Christ should be, for some time, with God in heaven. Besides, it was necessary that Christ should go up into heaven, to receive particular instructions, respecting the truths which he was to teach mankind.’—As to the latter of these assertions, it may be observed, that local motion contributes but little towards our being taught of God. The apostles were perfectly instructed in the truths of the gospel, and

in the mysteries of the kingdom of God ; yet they were not taken up into heaven. in order to learn what they should preach to mankind, or what they should write for the use of the church in succeeding ages. How, then, could such an ascension be necessary for Him who received the Spirit without measure ; and who, being holy from his conception, astonished the Jewish doctors with his wisdom, when but twelve years of age ? Nor did John the Baptist ascend into heaven to learn the will of God, or to receive qualifications for his office ; yet, so soon as he saw Jesus approaching him, he exclaimed ; “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ! ” Which comprehensive words contain an epitome of gospel-truth. But why should the Master be at more pains to receive instruction than the servant ?

‘ There was no necessity, it will be replied, only so far as it behoved Christ to be conformable to Moses, who was his type. For as the latter was a mediator between Jehovah and the Israelites ; so the former between God and believers. As the one informed the seed of Jacob of God’s design to deliver them out of Egyptian bondage ; so the other was to reveal the merciful counsel of God, respecting the redemption of mankind from everlasting damnation.’—Is it not amazing that men of such celebrated parts and learning, should reason after this manner ? If, then, I do but imagine, that there are such and such relations in the antient types, I am fully warranted to make what additions I please to the evangelical history ! I may, therefore, say, Jesus had an *impediment* in his speech, because Moses had : Jesus was a *shepherd*, because Moses was.

To which it will be said, ‘ By no means. Because it is not what Moses was, or did, simply considered ; but what he did, as a *type* that was to be accomplished in Christ. But he was with Jehovah on mount Sinai, as a mediator and as a type.’—But if it be allowable to over-stretch the relations which there are in the types, what is there that may not be maintained ? Moses, for instance, ascended the mountain *twice*, to be instructed

in the law and will of the Lord ; must we, therefore, conclude, that Jesus went up twice into heaven, on a similar account ? Moses, when on the mount, *fasted* forty days and forty nights, and that once and again ; must we from hence infer, that Christ went up into heaven a first and a second time, and that he fasted twice, when there, for an equal space of time ? The former, coming down from the mount, *brake* the tables of the law ; and, descending from it a second time, brought other tables with him, which were preserved ; was there any thing similar in the conduct of Jesus ? When Moses came down from the mount, so great was the *lustre* of his countenance that the Israelites could not steadily behold him, till he had put a veil on his face ; but will any one say, that the countenance of Christ shone, when he came down from heaven, and that he also was obliged to veil his face, before his disciples could converse with him ? None will pretend to carry the parallel so far, between the Jewish lawgiver and his glorious Antitype. Consequently, as the relations of the types ought not to be carried to excess, it is unwarrantable, it is absurd, to ground the truth of a supposed fact, which is otherwise unknown, on such comparisons as may be justly esteemed the flights of imagination.

But were we to admit the conjecture of our adversaries, their cause would receive but little advantage from it ; because it would not be sufficient to justify those expressions which describe our Lord as *coming down* from heaven. For supposing he did ascend into heaven, yet he was there but for a short space of time : he did not ascend thither, as to a place where he fixed his ordinary abode, that being peculiar to his second ascension. Why, then, should the Scripture say, He was to ascend “ where he was before ? ” *Where he was before* : Can this be spoken of a transient abode in heaven for a few days ? Paul was caught up to the third heaven ; but was it proper to say, at his death, His immortal spirit is gone where he was before ? Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the solemn feasts ; could it be said of him, the second time of his going thither, He is gone where

he was before ? Would not such language intimate, that he had been used to make *his abode* at that renowned city, and so convey a false idea ? Or, could it be said of Moses, the second time he went up to the mount, He is gone up where he was before :—Besides, it is not common for the Scripture to say, Jesus *went up* to heaven ; but, “ he *came from* heaven ; he *came down* “ from heaven ; he *came from* God ; he *proceeded from* “ the Father,” and was to go to him, as he came from him. Which expressions plainly shew, that he came down from heaven, as from his natural place ; not that he went up into heaven by a miracle, to be there only for a few days. So, in reference to Paul’s rapture, the Holy Spirit does not say, He came from heaven ; he came down from heaven ; he came from God ; though this was a fact : because it is not so much his *descent from* heaven, as his *ascension thither* that is the object of our admiration. According, therefore, to this peculiarity of our opponents, it would have been much more proper for the sacred writers to have told us repeatedly, that Jesus *went up* into heaven ; than for them so frequently to say, he *came down* from heaven. For, if the former be a fact, the latter cannot be doubted ; because we behold him on earth, preaching the word and performing miracles ; but that he ascended to heaven, is what we did not know, and, therefore, should have been informed of it.—When the heroes of antient Rome were honoured with a triumph, it was common to say, ‘ They *went up* to the capitol ;’ because that was the most remarkable thing in the whole procession. But they never thought of saying, with an emphasis ; ‘ They ‘ *came down* from the capitol ;’ because their descent from it was far from being so considerable as their going up to it.—So of the Jews it used to be said, ‘ They *went* ‘ *up* to Jerusalem every year, from all the parts of their ‘ country, to worship there.’ This was necessary to be known : much more so, than that they *came down* every year from the metropolis, though the latter was equally true ; because it is not the principal thing, to which both Scripture and reason require that we should attend. Thus, if Jesus went up to heaven, and came

down from thence, after having continued there a few days ; it was of incomparably more importance to us, to be informed of his *ascension*, than of his *descension* ; and yet the Scripture speaks frequently of the *latter*, not at all of the *former*.

Still further to confute the ungrounded conjecture and illustrate the point : Suppose we met with a stranger, who should talk after this manner ; ‘ I came from Japan, and I go to Japan. Ye shall soon see me return where I was before. I departed from Japan, and I landed in this country ; not to do my own business, but the business of the king of Japan. Ye are of this country, but I am of Japan. I came from the king of Japan, and landed in this country ; I also leave this country, and go to the king of Japan, for he sent me. Now that I am to return thither, what is it but that I was sent into this country ? He who is of this country, speaks as the men of this country ; but a man who came from Japan, speaks as one of that empire. None of you ever was at Japan, except myself who came from thence, and who reside, or who am in Japan.’—Now I appeal to our adversaries, and I take all mankind to witness, what is the natural impression which these declarations ought to make on our minds. Do they naturally raise in our minds an idea, that he who speaks thus is an *European*, who has been at Japan a fortnight, or a month only, and is quickly to return thither ? Or do they inform us, that he is a native of Japan who had long resided there, and is speedily to return to his own country ? It must, certainly, be proper for such an one to say, ‘ I came from Japan ; I came forth from Japan ; I am of Japan.’ But as for an *European*, who had been there for a few days, or weeks only, he would say ; ‘ I have been as far as Japan ; I have been at Japan ; I have seen Japan.’

Again : It is very observable, that the Scripture exalts Christ above all, because “ he came from above.” This is a pertinent and conclusive reason, if he came from heaven, as from his natural place ; but is far from being so, if he only came down from thence, after having miraculously ascended thither. Or if conclusive,

we may for the same reason assert, that Paul is *above all* ; because he partook in the same honour, having been rapt up into the third heaven.—Nor does Jesus barely say, “I came down from heaven ;” he also gives his reason for it. “I came, says the great Redeemer, not “to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” He expressly gives the reason why he *came down from heaven* ; but says not a word why he *went up thither* ; which, on the principles of the Socinians, is absolutely unaccountable, is highly absurd. For it is as if Moses had said to the Israelites ; ‘I came down from the mount ‘for such, or such a purpose ;’ without ever informing them that he *went up* thither and conversed with God. In such a case they might well have replied ; ‘As the ‘mount was not the place of your abode, we are surprised at your ascending that eminence ; but we do ‘not wonder at your coming down. Tell us first why ‘you went up ; and then you may let us know, if you ‘please, why you came down.’

The apostle forms an opposition between the first and the second Adam. “The first man is of the earth, “earthly ; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” By which it appears, that as the earth was the natural place of the first man, so heaven must be the natural place of the Second. And as these words, “The first “man is of the earth ;” do not merely signify, that Adam was for a few moments in the earth, and was afterwards raised out of it : but that, before he was enlivened by the breath of God, he was in the earth, as in his original, or natural place : so these words. “The “second man is the Lord from heaven,” do not only signify that Christ came from heaven, after having been there a few days ; but that, before he descended to earth, he had been always in heaven, as in his proper and natural place.—From all which it is evident, if Jesus be by nature a mere man, that various passages of Scripture are obscure and unintelligible. Nor will it be any difficult matter to prove, on the same hypothesis, that they are false, absurd, and impious. In order to which I would propose the following particulars to the reader’s consideration.



The passages adduced shew, with others of a similar kind, that Christ existed in heaven, before his conception, as in his natural place. For what else can be the primary import of such expressions as these? “What “and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he “was before? He came from above—He came down “from heaven—The second man is the Lord from “heaven.” But this idea is false, if Jesus be a mere man.—Again: Our Lord has heaven for his original, in a much higher sense than any other man. For the Scripture opposes him to all others, because they are *from below*, but he *from above*: they are of *the earth*, but he is *from heaven*. But this representation is not according to truth, if Jesus be by nature a mere man. For, as such, he cannot be from above, or from heaven, but either because he had God for his original; or because God sent him; or because he was replenished with Divine gifts; or because he was predestinated to the glory of heaven. But all these particulars agree to other men. For God is the immediate cause of their souls. He immediately produced both the body and soul of the first man. He sent the prophets and apostles, and endued them with extraordinary and miraculous gifts. He predestinated his people to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, and fits them, by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, for the fruition of glory in the heavenly world. Consequently, as none of these characters are peculiar to Christ, but common to him with many other men; prophets, apostles, and thousands more, may be said to “come from above; to come “down from heaven; and to come from God.” in the same sense in which those words are applied to Jesus Christ.—So, on the other hand, if we believe our opponents, Christ is *from below*, and *of the earth*, in the same sense that we are. We are said to be *from below*, and to be *of the earth*, either because we have a gross, terrestrial nature; or because our bodies were first taken out of the earth. Jesus has also a corporeal nature, and his body was formed of matter which came originally from the earth, as well as ours. Nor would it avail to say, ‘That it was refined and fashioned by-

‘the Holy Spirit.’ For the matter of which the body of Adam was made, received its human form from the immediate power of God.

In a word, Christ, on the Socinian principles, may be considered, either as man, or as a messenger of God. Under the *latter* of these considerations, he came *from above* ; he came down *from heaven* ; because his call was immediately from God. But then if this were the only sense in which he came from God, he would have no pre-eminence above the antient prophets. If we consider him under the *former* view, he must have come from heaven, either in respect of his body, or in regard to his soul. If the *latter*, because it was brought into existence by the immediate power of God ; he has no advantage above men in general. For it is written, “The spirit shall return to God who gave it.” If the *former*, because it was produced by divine power ; it is common to him with other men. If on account of its being produced in a *miraculous* manner ; it is an honour in which Isaac and John the Baptist shared. If because it was produced *without the intervention* of man ; it is common to him with the first Adam.

This leads me to observe, that those passages of Scripture from which we argue, naturally suggest to our minds, not only that Jesus came from above and came down from heaven, in a much nobler sense than men in general, or than the first man in particular ; but also, that it is in this very respect, that he is incomparably superior to our common parent, the first Adam. According to that saying ; “The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” But, if Jesus be a mere man, this must be false. For, as such, he comes of the earth, as our great progenitor did ; and the first Adam came from heaven in much the same sense, as the Second.—Again : The Scriptures teach us to consider Jesus as humbling and abasing himself, when he came into our world ; because they represent him as coming from heaven, a place of perfect holiness and glory ; to earth, which is the residence of impurity, disorder, and trouble.—Thus it appears that the passages we have examined, are cal-

culated, on the Socinian hypothesis, to raise *false ideas* in our minds.

The above declarations of the Holy Ghost, if understood according to the sentiments of our opponents, present us with a sense which is *absurd* and *ridiculous*. To prove this, we need only consider them in connection with their comment. When explaining these words; “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he was before?” they pretend that this clause, “where he was before;” is to be understood *figuratively*. ‘Jesus means, say they, that the Son of man had been in heaven, before he ascended thither after his resurrection: not only because he was, long before that, continually in heaven, by meditation; but also because he had a knowledge of all celestial things, even the most Divine secrets; and all things which exist and are done in heaven, were so well known by him, that he saw them as clearly as if they had been before him. So that, though he was on earth, yet he was also in heaven.’—But how absurd, how ridiculous, does this text appear, under the disguise of such a comment! What, are *to be* in heaven, and *to think* on heaven, synonymous phrases! Who ever used them as such? Why does Christ make use of a verb which signifies the time *past*, when he ought to express the time *present*? If, when he uttered these words, he intended to signify, that he was in heaven, in regard to his thoughts and meditations; why did he not say, What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he *now* is? What can be the meaning of these words, “Where he was before?” Or what idea are we to affix to the term *before*? By what means are we to learn, that the Wisdom of God, who speaks literally, as all agree, when he says, “If ye see him ascend;” concludes the literal sense in the middle of the sentence, and that the rest must be understood figuratively? even though these two phrases, *to ascend—where he was*—are so closely connected, that all mankind, one would have thought, must have taken them, either both in a literal, or both in a figurative sense. How can they avoid seeing an opposition between the place where

Jesus was, before his incarnation ; and the place where he was, when he uttered these words ? If he was then upon earth, in a proper sense ; he must, according to these words, have been also in heaven, in a proper sense. What honest and sensible man ever expressed himself after this manner ; ‘ I am going to Japan, where I *was* before ;’ when he only meant, ‘ I am going to Japan, where I *was* in my *thoughts* and *desires* ?’—Believers are exhorted to heavenly-mindedness ; to set their affections on things above ; but they are never said to ascend “ where they were before.” For though we may say, ‘ Our hearts are in heaven, if our treasure be there ;’ the metaphor plainly appearing ; yet we cannot, without impertinence and nonsense say, ‘ What and if ye shall see us ascend where we were before ?’ because there is nothing, in these expressions, but what leads us to consider them in a literal sense ; and, therefore, the mind is shocked at the thought of a metaphor.

These words, “ I came down from heaven,” as interpreted by them, are thus to be understood. ‘ My flesh was formed by the wonderful counsel and power of God, and so it came from God himself. When, therefore, it is said, that Jesus Christ “ came down from heaven ;” no more is intended, than that he ‘ came from God.’—But if so, what is the meaning of that saying ; “ The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is THE LORD FROM HEAVEN ?” Adam’s body, as before observed, was formed by the immediate power of God. He, therefore, came from God, in that sense : he, consequently, according to this interpretation, came down from heaven, as well as Jesus Christ.—Besides, who, that is not blinded by prejudice, and whose judgment is not perverted by a sanguine attachment to an unscriptural tenet ;—who, I say, can forbear to see a very different meaning in these words, “ I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me ;” from what is contained in these, ‘ My flesh was formed by the wonderful power of God ?’ For, in the *former*, there is a sending antecedent to a coming down ; and a

coming down, consequent to a sending : but in the latter, not a tittle of all this. The interpretation, therefore, which our opponents put on these passages of sacred writ. renders them absurd and ridiculous.

Once more : The language of Scripture, in the texts before us, according to the Socinian creed, is not agreeable to common modesty, nor to that respect we owe to the Deity ; and, consequently it must be *impious*. For if Jesus be a mere man, he is *of the earth*, as well as the first man. He cannot, therefore, so often speak of “ coming from above :” and of “ coming down from “ heaven,” in contradistinction to the original of other men, without being chargeable with immodesty ; without being guilty of arrogance.—Much less can it be said of him, as a mere man, “ He is **THE LORD** from “ heaven.” We do not use to speak thus of one who naturally belongs to the earth, and obtains the inheritance of heaven and the title of **LORD**. only by grace. On the contrary, truth and modesty require that we should say ; Jesus Christ being of the earth, is, by nature, earthly ; but, by the favour of God, he is the Lord from Heaven. Now, as one cannot be void of modesty, in this respect, without falling into impiety ; because a person cannot assume such honours to himself, without infringing on the glory of God : so it is evident, that the language of Scripture is not only obscure and false, not only absurd and ridiculous, but also *impious* ; if Jesus Christ be a mere a man.—The Arian hypothesis shall be considered, in a following chapter.

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## CHAP. VI.

Evidences of the same truth, arising from those passages of Scripture, which express the Pre existence of JESUS CHRIST.

**T**HE Scriptures inform us, that Christ existed before he was conceived in the womb of Mary ; that he was before John the Baptist ; that the prophets were inspir-

ed by him ; that he was before Abraham ; that he was in the beginning of all things ; and that he was before all ages. The Divine records assert, that he “ was “ in the form of God ;” and, afterwards, “ made himself of no reputation, by taking upon him the form of “ a servant.” He, therefore, must have existed before his humiliation ; and, consequently, before his conception in the virgin’s womb.—The same infallible rule of our faith declares, that he “ was made of the seed of “ David, according to the flesh.” Certainly, then, in his wonderful Person there must be a nature distinct from the human ; a nature, in respect of which, he was *not* made of the seed of David.—An unerring writer calls him, “ God manifest in the flesh.” Which must imply, that he who was thus manifested, existed prior to his appearance in a corporeal nature.—An evangelist informs us, that THE WORD, who was in the beginning, and was God, “ was made flesh :” which necessarily supposes that He existed before that flesh to which he was united.

Again : Jesus himself affirms, with a solemn asseveration, a kind of oath ; “ Verily, I say unto you, before “ Abraham was, I am.” Either, then, he existed before that renowned patriarch was born, or his words convey a false idea ; that being the natural signification of the terms, and the first impression they make on our minds.—Peter, speaking of the antient prophets, represents them, as “ searching diligently what, or what “ manner of time the SPIRIT OF CHRIST which was “ in them did signify, when it testified before-hand “ the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should “ follow.” But if Jesus did not exist in the times of the prophets, they could not speak, they could not write, by his Spirit, or by his inspiration. Hence we learn that the Spirit of Christ was no less really granted to them, under the Mosaic economy, than he was afterwards to the apostles. He existed, therefore, in the times of the former, as well as in those of the latter. For there is no reason to suppose, that the Spirit, by whose direction the Hebrew seers predicted the sufferings and glory of God’s Messiah, is called the “ Spirit

“of Christ,” merely because they prophesied concerning him. The prophets foretold the coming and ministry of the apostles; but is that a sufficient reason to say, that the Spirit of the apostles was in them?—The evangelist John asserts, that Christ “was in the beginning; that he was with God;” and that “by him all things were made.” Consequently, he existed before time commenced, and before the world was formed.—But, not to multiply quotations, I shall only once more observe, that Christ, when addressing his divine Father, says; “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” And, in another place, with great solemnity and with an air of Divine authority, he calls himself, “The Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” Now, if we admit the venerable and august Speaker to talk sensibly and to mean as he speaks, we must conclude, that he existed before the creation, and possessed a Divine glory prior to the birth of time.

To judge of the plain and natural import of these passages, we need only to consider the impression they have made on the minds of men, for so many ages, since the Scripture was penned. The Socinians may choose what arbitrators they please, to determine the direct and natural signification of the expressions. If they suspect, either the judgment or the impartiality, of the orthodox, will they trust the *Arians*; who are not prepossessed in favour of the proper Deity of Jesus Christ, any more than themselves? But if they should consider the disciples of Arius as incompetent judges, will they trust the *Mahometans*; who agree with Socinus in rejecting, not only the eternal Divinity, but also the pre-existence of Christ? Yet the mussulmen will tell them, that they see the same, in the passages adduced, that we do; which obliges them to reject the New Testament, as being, either entirely supposititious, or essentially corrupted. And, indeed, it may admit of a query, whether we have not reason to suspect that this is the secret persuasion of our adversaries; seeing their interpretations of these passages are so various, and

some of them, so contradictory.—Is it probable, for instance, that the natural impression of these words, “Before Abraham was, I am;” suggested to Socinus that interpretation of them, which he says cost him so much labour, and which God did not discover to him till after he had spent several days in prayer? And yet, it is very observable, that his pretended divinely revealed sense of the text, was never adopted by the teachers of his persuasion. Nor is it any wonder that they should unanimously reject it. For if, when our Lord, said, “Before Abraham was, I am;” he only meant, ‘I am, before Abraham was, what the name *Abraham* signifies;’ that is, *The Father of many nations*;—in other words, That Christ existed before the Gentiles became the children of Abraham; if, I say, this be the meaning of Jesus, never any expressions were of a more obscure, fallacious, and ensnaring kind.—But this novel and far fetched interpretation is absolutely void of truth. For these words, “before Abraham was,” do not signify, ‘before that eminent patriarch was *Abraham* ;’ but before he who was honoured with that expressive name had *a being* ; before he was in the world. Even as these words, ‘Before Pompey the Great was;’ do not signify, ‘before Pompey was surnamed, or was really *the great* ;’ but before he *existed*.—Besides, the gloss of Socinus renders the assertion of Jesus absurd. For what mighty wonder was it, that He should exist before the Gentiles became the children of Abraham? The very meanest person, who lived at that time, might have said the same of himself.

But another Socinian writer gives a more plausible interpretation of the text. He supposes, ‘that Jesus was before Abraham, in the same sense in which he is called, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’ In answer to which I observe, That the two passages are far from being parallel. The *latter* is evidently figurative; as appears by the term *slain*, or *sacrificed*, and by other circumstances of the text. But in the *former*, every thing leads to the literal sense. It is an objection purely literal which the Jews make, when they say; “Thou art not yet fifty years old.”



Nor does the text before us, which so strongly denotes the pre-existence of Christ, express any thing, when so understood, but what is contained in great numbers of others. Besides, to render these two passages perfectly similar, we must suppose it recorded in Scripture ;  
 • That Jesus, being in the form of a sacrifice, was afterwards pleased to take upon him the form of a man—  
 • That he came from suffering when he appeared in the world—That he died before Abraham was—That his crucifixion and death were from antient times—That he suffered from the beginning, or ever the earth was—  
 • And that, just before he made his exit on Calvary, he thus addressed his Father ; Behold me, ready to endure the same suffering which I underwent with thee before the world was.’ But would not such language be considered as false, absurd, and ridiculous ? Would not such a way of speaking, concerning Jesus Christ, be detested ; even though it must be allowed, that the Holy Spirit does call him, “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ?”

Further : In the passage quoted from the Revelation, there seems to be one of those transpositions which are common in the Scriptures, and in all sorts of authors ; and if so, it may be thus rendered : “And all that are upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written, from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb slain\*.” These words, “from the foundation of the world ;” being connected with, “written in the book of life.” For eternal predestination to grace and holiness, to happiness and glory, is the thing intended by those expressions ; and that divine purpose, respecting the chosen of God, is represented as the reason why they shall not worship the beast, and perish in their iniquity. Such being the general sense of the text, it does not seem at all necessary to suppose, that the eternal efficacy of our Lord’s atonement made on the cross, is intended by these words ; “Slain from the foundation of the world ;” though we readily allow, that all the people of God, from the beginning, were pardoned and saved in virtue

\* Compare Rev. xvi. 8.

of it.—And though, according to this translation, the term *slain* is transposed; yet, when it is considered that Jesus is represented, in the Revelation of John, not only as a *lamb*, but also as a *lamb slain and sacrificed*; we have no reason to wonder that the names of the elect are said to be written, not only “in the Book of the *Lamb*,” but in that of the *Lamb slain*.

In reference, therefore, to these words, “Before Abraham was, I am;” our adversaries must either say, that Christ was before Abraham in the purpose of God; or, that he was before that illustrious patriarch became the father of many nations. But these interpretations are contemptibly weak, and render the expressions absolutely unworthy of the Divine Speaker. Is it not very surprising, think you, that Christ should have existed in the decree of God, before Abraham was born? There is nothing in this which may not be said of all men, universally, who have lived since that patriarch’s time. Is it not also astonishing, that the Messiah should exist, before the Gentiles were become the children of Abraham? This was true of all the apostles, even of Judas the traitor. And was it to confirm such childish fancies as these, that the Wonderful Counsellor and the Wisdom of God, made use of that solemn asseveration, *verily*? “VERILY, VERILY, I say unto you, “before Abraham was, I am.”

But admitting there was a difficulty in this passage, which, to us, appears so clear, so express and peremptory; yet it would be but reasonable to explain it by many other parallel places, which evidently assert the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. It is an easy matter for a man of learning, of genius, and of a fruitful invention, to find out a number of subtile distinctions; but it is not so easy for him to rest satisfied in them, when they are invented. When they tell me, for instance, ‘That Christ was before the prophets, and before Abraham, ‘in excellence and dignity; and that we understand of ‘a priority in *existence*, what the Scripture speaks of a ‘pre-eminence in *dignity*,’ my judgement cannot acquiesce in it. For the word of inspiration assures me repeatedly, that the Lord Redeemer “is the First and

“the Last.” Here the distinction is of no avail, but rather tends to embarrass them. For he is the first, in that respect in which he ought to be the *last*: for they will not say that he is the last in dignity. It cannot, therefore, be a priority of excellence that is here meant.—And how comes He to be represented to us, as “without *beginning* of days?” We cannot examine all those passages which speak of the pre-existence and eternal Divinity of our adored Redeemer, but we shall consider a few more of them with particular care.

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## CHAP. VII.

The same Truth evinced, from Phil. ii. 5—8.

**PAUL**, in his epistle to the church of Christ at Philippi says; “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”—This emphatical and admirable passage is thus paraphrased by the Socinians. ‘Who being in the form of God; commanding the creatures and controlling the elements when he was upon earth, as if he had been God; did not detain and obstinately insist on an equality with God, as one that is guilty of robbery. But he renounced this equality, to make himself of no reputation; taking the form of a servant, in obeying, though he commanded before, being treated as a slave, and becoming like ordinary men: and this though he was before in the form of God, by the power with which he was invested; and, shewing himself obedient, he submitted to the death of the cross.’—Such is the interpretation of our adversaries. But, it may be observed, that these expressions, “In the form of God—thought it

“not robbery—made himself of no reputation—took the form of a servant”—suffer manifest violence by this explanation. The following considerations may serve to shew the inconsistency there is, between the text and the comment.

When we meet with a singular expression in Scripture, it is natural to explain it by such as are parallel, or, at least, have some likeness to it. Our opponents, therefore, if they consider this phrase, “being in the form of God,” as extraordinary, should compare it with those passages which, in their natural import, signify nearly the same thing. Such, for instance, as the following: “In the beginning was the Word—The Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. The true God—God blessed forever.”—Does Paul inform us, that our Lord was “in the form of God,” before he made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant? Conformably to this John declares, that “the Word was in the beginning, and that the Word was God.” As, according to the one, the Word was God, before he was made flesh; so, according to the other, Christ was in the form of God, prior to his taking the form of a servant, or his appearance in human nature. Thus both express the same thing, and support the same truth.

Whence had our opposers their signification of the phrase, “being in the form of God?” In what language, human or Divine, do they find it signify, *to work miracles*? If the performance of a multitude of miracles were a sufficient ground of saying, that he who wrought them was in the form of God, Moses had a claim to the honour; for he performed astonishing works in the air, the earth, and the waters. Nay, the apostles were in the form of God; for they wrought very wonderful miracles, even greater, in some respects, than those of Christ himself, in pursuance of his own promise.—‘Jesus, it may, perhaps, be said, wrought miracles in his own name and by his own power; but the apostles performed theirs in the name and by the power of their Lord.’ But if Jesus wrought miracles in his

own name and by his own power, our opposers must either give up one of their strongest objections against our sentiments, or contradict themselves in the most palpable manner. For some of the most learned and ingenious among them suppose, that they embarrass our cause exceedingly when they remind us ; “ That Christ “ came not to do his own will, but the will of him that “ sent him—That the doctrine he taught was not his “ own, but the Father’s—And that he who believes, “ does not believe on Jesus, but on Him that sent him.” They insist upon it, that ‘ the Father was the chief ‘ author of those wonderful works which Jesus did : that ‘ the Father was the real author of his resurrection : ‘ that the Father does all things by the Son, and that ‘ the Son can do nothing of himself.’ If, then, Jesus performed miracles, not in his own name and by his own power, but in the name and by the power of the Father ; he was no more independent on God, when he wrought them, than the apostles were when they astonished the world by numbers of miraculous facts. Consequently, if they cannot be said to have been “ in “ the form of God,” because they did nothing but in the name and by the power of their Master ; neither can Jesus be so considered, because he did nothing but in the name and by the power of his Father.

Nor are the Socinians able to fix upon the *time* when Christ was “ in the form of God,” without contradicting themselves, or confronting the Scripture. For, either it was during the thirty years which he lived as a private person ; or after he appeared in a public character, between the time of his baptism and that of his death. Not the *former* ; because in all that space of time we do not find that he wrought any miracles. Nor can it be the *latter* ; for if it were, he must have assumed the form of God at that very time when he began most evidently to *humble* himself ; even when he was tempted of the devil, and began to suffer all the inconveniences of life, and all the outrage of persecution. But is it possible, without the most glaring impropriety and the greatest absurdity, to call a state of extreme poverty, and shame, and affliction, a “ being

“in the form of God?”—The miracles which Jesus wrought, were after he humbled himself; after he was laid in a manger—after he escaped the fury of a tyrant, thirsting for his blood—and after he returned from his exile in Egypt. So that if he was “in the form of God,” because he controlled the course of nature and exercised dominion over the creatures, in the wonderful miracles which he performed; it must necessarily follow, that he was not in that Divine form till after he began to humble himself and to make himself of no reputation; which is a direct contradiction of the sacred text.

Again: To understand these words, “Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” in the sense of our adversaries, is inconsistent with the occasion of them and the scope of the place. Paul, it is manifest, mentions the conduct of Jesus Christ, as a wonderful, astonishing, unparalleled instance of condescension, with a view to enforce his exhortations to humility. But, if Jesus be a mere man, or only an exalted creature, it is no wonder that he ‘did not obstinately insist,’ that he did not so much as *think*, ‘on an equality with God:’ for, in so doing, he would have been guilty of Luciferian pride, and of the most impious robbery.

By considering these two clauses, in their proper connection, “being in the form of God—he thought it not robbery to be equal with God;” we have a further proof of the truth for which we contend. For it is evident, that our Lord’s claim of “equality with God,” is here founded, by the apostle, on his “existing in the form of God;” and not on his performing of any works whatever.—Nor ought the two terms *υπαρχων* and *λαβων*, which stand opposed in the passage, to be overlooked. It is very observable, that the apostle uses the *former*, when he speaks of the “form of God;” asserting, that Jesus *existed* in that Divine form: plainly signifying, that it was not an accidental and transient thing, but a property belonging to his glorious Person, and therefore permanent. But when he speaks of the opposite form, he employs the *latter* of those expressions, and says, he *received* it; evidently denoting, that

it was not essential, but foreign and accidental to him. For he who receives a form, is not supposed to have had it always; nor is it considered as essential to him.— Besides, if Jesus be a mere creature, he never was, nor ever can be, strictly speaking, in any form but that of a *servant*, in respect of the eternal Sovereign.

But as the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scripture, is his own best interpreter, it is proper to compare this passage with others, in order to see its genuine meaning. When the apostle speaks of Jesus Christ, as “being in the form of God,” as being “equal with God;” and yet informs us, that he “took upon him the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation;” we cannot but consider the Lord Redeemer, as existing in two very different states: a state of the sublimest glory preceding, and a state of the deepest humiliation following. So, when we advert to that saying, “He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;” we have the idea of *two natures* in our Divine Saviour. One, in respect of which, he is David’s offspring; the other, such as constitutes him David’s Lord. One, the existence of which commenced at his conception; the other, without beginning and unchangeable.—These two passages, it is evident, are perfectly correspondent. For if Jesus existed before he was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh; it must have been either in the form of man, or in the form of God. Not the *former*, for then he must have existed in flesh, prior to his being made of the seed of David, according to the flesh; which is absurd and contrary to the testimony of the Holy Ghost. It must, consequently, be the *latter*; that is, before his incarnation he existed in the form of God, and in that only.

This will appear in a stronger light, if we consider the following passage; “God was manifest in the flesh.” Christ existed before he was in the flesh. For though he was made of the seed of David, yet not absolutely, but “according to the flesh.” Christ was God; for God was manifest in that flesh which was made of the seed of David.—By comparing this and the two preceding passages together, it appears, That Jesus Christ

existed in the form of God, that he was God ; and might, consequently, be considered as equal with the Father before that flesh which was made of the seed of David, and in which God was manifested, had a being.

Once more : He who is the true and faithful Witness asserts, concerning himself ; “ I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” Before our Lord came into the world, he was not made of the seed of David ; was not flesh, nor manifested in the flesh ; nor was he in the form of a servant. No ; considered in his first state, he was the Son, the only Son of the Father ; that Divine Person who, existing in the form of God, and being God, was to be manifested in the flesh ; was to be the wonderful **IMMANUEL**.

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## CHAP. VIII.

The same truth confirmed and illustrated, from John i. 1—14. The Socinian interpretation of this passage considered and exposed.

**T**HE beginning of the Gospel according to the evangelist John, would be quite unintelligible, were we to deny the pre-existence and eternal Divinity of Jesus Christ. The following expressions, for instance ; “ In the beginning was the word—The Word was with God—The Word was God—All things were made by him—The Word was made flesh—The world was made by him”—These expressions, I say, taken in any other view, are no better, are no other, than incomprehensible nonsense : and men, who are not obliged to understand that which is in itself unintelligible, cannot be culpable for not discovering a sense in them, which is contrary to the natural signification of the terms.

“ In the beginning was the Word.” Our exposition has nothing obscure, nothing perplexed in it ; but that of our opponents is far-fetched and jejune. is forced and



unnatural. They insist upon it, that by “the beginning,” the *commencement* of the gospel-dispensation is intended. But so to interpret the phrase, is to restrain a general expression to a particular and uncommon sense, without the least warrant from the circumstances and scope of the place, and is nothing short of offering violence to the text. It cannot be supposed, with the least shadow of reason, that a *particular* beginning is meant, because nothing precedes it, nothing follows it, so to determine the sense ; or which gives the least intimation that the expression ought to be understood in a signification different from that which it usually has. For these words begin the gospel, and are repeated by the evangelist afterwards, without giving any notice of their being used in a particular sense. To imagine that a mental reservation may determine general expressions to a particular meaning, is a great mistake. Any one, writing the history of Augustus, would be very impertinent if he should say ; ‘In the beginning was Augustus ;’ meaning, that he lived from the time of Julius Cesar. Or, if a man were to write the history of Moses, and the surprising things which the God of Israel wrought by his ministry, and should introduce the wonderful narrative thus ; ‘In the beginning was Moses ;’ meaning, he was from the time that God began to deliver the seed of Jacob from Egyptian bondage. For these mental explanations would not prevent the language from being contrary to good sense, because it would be unintelligible.

If the evangelist’s meaning had been what they suppose, he might have explained himself by saying, ‘Jesus Christ lived from the beginning of the gospel.’ Yet even then his expressions would not have been free from obscurity : because we should have been at a loss to know, from what period, or from what event, this *beginning* of the gospel was to be dated. For if you understand the first glad tidings of the great salvation, which was to be accomplished by Jesus Christ, it is evident, on the principles of our opponents, that He did not then exist ; the prophets having published the salvation of God long before the Messiah’s conception. If,

by this beginning, you understand the time when the prophetic oracles began to be fulfilled ; then. I demand, why it is not dated from the time of Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias, or to Mary ? Or from the time that the father of John the Baptist, being filled with the Holy Spirit, described the honourable and important work of his new-born son, and foretold the immediate appearance of Christ ? Or from the day that Simeon uttered his comprehensive prophecy, with the infant Saviour in his arms ?

To that remarkable character, **THE WORD**, our adversaries give several significations : which appear to be invented only out of necessity to defend their cause. ' It includes, say they, a metaphor, or a metonymy.'— But if they dealt ingenuously, they would fix either upon the one, or the other : for one figure would be sufficient to answer the purpose. But what would suffice, in itself, does not satisfy our opponents ; and the mistrust they have of the one, makes them have recourse to the other. For, we may venture to say, it is not the sense of Scripture they give us, but their own mistakes, which they seem determined to defend.

This appears from their comment on the following clause : " The Word was with God." For if it were lawful to take these expressions in a signification which is not natural to them, several senses might be found equally proper with that which they have palmed upon them. Would these terms, " The Word was with God," bear to be interpreted thus, ' The Word was known of God only : why might we not insist upon it, that their more natural signification is, ' The Word was hid in heaven : ' or, ' The Word was beloved of God ; ' or, ' The Word only knew the counsel of God ? ' These are more probable significations of the text, and yet they fix upon this, ' The Word was known of God only : ' or, according to others, ' He was appointed of God to his office.'

In much the same awkward and unwarrantable manner they interpret the following remarkable and emphatical assertion ; " The Word was God." That is, according to them, ' Every thing in Jesus was Divine ;

‘so that the ministry of the prophets, compared with his, was human.’—Had they been satisfied with this interpretation ; had they not been conscious of its futility, they would not have added ; ‘Jesus is called God, because he sustained, or was to sustain, the person of God.’ Nor can they entirely acquiesce in this ; they, therefore, proceed and assert, ‘That Christ was appointed to a supreme glory and power ; and because he could not fail of enjoying this power and glory, he is called God.’—But what ambiguity is this, to give such different explanations of the same expressions ! Or, how great is that obscurity, which, in a single word, conceals so many things, and renders them so very difficult to be unfolded !

“All things were made by Him—The world was made by Him.” These two clauses are parallel ; yet they find out a way to render them very different. *All things*, is expressed by *the world*—*were made*, by *the world was made*. They, however, have found out the secret to set these expressions at a prodigious distance one from another : understanding by *all things*, all that pertain to the gospel ; and by *the world*, the world to come, heaven, or the society of men : by, *all things were made*, all things were formed, or produced ; and by *the world was made*, the world was renewed. It is plain from this different way of explaining synonymous passages, that their main design is to support their own sentiments ; how perplexed soever they may render the sacred text.

Of this we have a further proof by their asserting, that the term *world* is used in three different and remote senses, in the same verse : that is, for the society of men ; for heaven ; and for carnal or profane men. But if we must take one term in three different senses, in the same place ; who, without a spirit of divination, can be certain that he understands any part of the sacred Records ; or that, in any instance, he has discovered the meaning of the Holy Ghost ? So to treat the inspired writings is, not to interpret, but to accommodate them to our own erroneous opinions.

But besides that variety of interpretations, which

they give to the same expressions, they attribute to the evangelist different *ends* ; so very different as to be sometimes directly opposite one to another. Nor can this proceed from a want of discernment : for we readily acknowledge, that we have to do with writers of great ingenuity ; but from that embarrassment in which the necessity of defending their cause involves them, there being so many express passages of Scripture directly contrary to their avowed sentiments.

If we believe them ‘the design of the Holy Spirit, ‘in the beginning of the gospel according to John, is to ‘obviate an objection which might be made to the dignity of Jesus Christ, from the precedence which John ‘the Baptist had, in respect of time.’ But when they are urged to shew, why Christ is here called God, there being no necessity that he should bear that sublime name to distinguish him from the son of Zacharias ; for every perplexity they have a new evasion. They pretend, ‘that the evangelist, thinking no more of John the ‘Baptist, intends to distinguish Jesus by the name, ‘God, from all the antient prophets ; because their ‘ministry, compared with his, was human.’ Here are several designs ascribed to the inspired writer, let us now examine them.

The evangelist is afraid we should, ‘prefer John the ‘servant, to Christ the master, because the Baptist came ‘before him.’ For the same reason he might have been apprehensive, that we should prefer Moses and the prophets to Him of whom they spake, because they lived before him. But, admitting there was any danger of looking upon the Baptist as the Messiah, when he began to preach the gospel ; yet the danger was entirely over, so soon as John was beheaded and Jesus was risen from the dead.—Supposing, however, the evangelist did apprehend that some would be so simple as to prefer John to Christ, on account of his coming before him, how does he obviate this mistake ? He is entirely silent when he should speak, and he speaks when he should hold his tongue. The *former* : For he does not say, ‘The servants go before their Master : The prophets were before the coming of the Messiah, though

they were less than He; and, therefore, we must not wonder that the venerable Baptist appeared before Jesus Christ, being commissioned to prepare his way and to make his paths straight. The *latter*: For he says. Jesus was from the beginning of John's ministry; which does not remove the objection at all. For though He was from that time, as well as John; yet the Baptist exercised the functions of his ministry, while Jesus did nothing; which is the very difficulty the evangelist should have prevented.

But though we cannot find, in the interpretation of our opponents, such designs as are worthy of the Holy Spirit; yet we meet with such disorder and confusion in it, as can only agree to a spirit who intended, either to lead us into error, or to speak so as not to be understood. For, by these words, "In the beginning," they maintain that the commencement of the Baptist's ministry is intended: even though it is manifest, that the evangelist has not only not yet *mentioned* John, but does not speak of him till he has concluded his sublime encomium on the DIVINE WORD; and then does it in such a manner as plainly to shew, that he means to speak of him for the *first* time, saying, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was JOHN."—Further: In that beginning which is here intended, "the Word was—was with God—and was God." But not a tittle of this agrees to Jesus Christ, according to their hypothesis, and their interpretation of the text. He was not then *the Word*; for he had not, at that time, published the counsel of God. He was not *with God*; at least, not in a proper sense; for, according to them, he was not translated into heaven till after his baptism. Nor was he *God*; for he was not then invested with his offices, in the execution of which he represents God, and bears his name.

It would be but a small matter for the words of the evangelist to want *order*, if they were not destitute of *truth*; but, admitting the interpretation of our adversaries, we can hardly doubt of their falsehood. Certain it is, however, that we may substitute contradictory propositions in the place of those which the sacred

writer has used, which wil' appear much more intelligible, and much more agreeable, in their proper signification, to truth and fact.—For instance : Jesus Christ was *not* in the beginning of the gospel. He was *not* the Word from the beginning. He was *not* then with God. He was *not* God. All things, even all that respect the economy of the gospel, were *not* made by him ; for several of them were made without him, before him, and after him. The world was *not* made by him. The Word was *not* made flesh ; but flesh was made the Word. He is the light, but *not* that light which illuminates every man that cometh into the world.

‘ Jesus Christ was not in *the beginning* of the gospel.’ This proposition, on their hypothesis, is undoubtedly true : the embassy of the angel to Zacharias, giving the true beginning to this gospel ; which was afterwards continued by sending another celestial envoy to the shepherds of Bethlehem, by the preaching of John the Baptist, and by that of Jesus and his apostles.—‘ Jesus was *not* in the beginning, *the Word*,’ neither by a metaphor, nor by a metonymy. Not by a *metaphor* : For it could not then be said, ‘ As a man’s word discovers his thoughts, so Jesus manifests the thoughts and counsel of God.’ Not by a *metonymy* : For he could not borrow that name from words which he had not then spoken, nor caused to be published.—‘ He was *not God*,’ in whatever sense that august name be understood. He could be so called, ‘ because his ministry was ‘ Divine,’ as opposed to that of the prophets ; for he did not then exercise his ministry. Nor ‘ because he sustained the person of God ;’ for he did not then represent God in any wise. Nor ‘ because he was ‘ appointed to the enjoyment of divine power and glory.’ For the ordinary style of Scripture will not admit of it. It is no where said, for instance, ‘ That Saul was an apostle, a light of the church, or a teacher of the Gentiles, in the beginning of the gospel, when he was full of persecuting rage against the disciples of Christ, because he was then appointed to the apostleship. Nor, that Moses was a Mediator between God and the Israelites, in the beginning ; that is, from the time that he fed the

cattle of Jethro. Nor, that the sons of Zebedee were the sons of thunder, from the time they did not nothing but fish with their father.

Yet, if the interpretation of our opponents were just, the high encomium here given of Jesus Christ would be in various particulars, applicable to Moses. As for example: "In the beginning was the Word." Moses was from the beginning that God manifested his design of bringing the posterity of Abraham out of the land of Egypt. And he may be called "the Word," both by a metaphor, and by a metonymy. By a *metaphor*; because as a word serves to express the thoughts of a man, so he was the chosen instrument of making known the counsel of God. By a *metonymy*; because he was the minister of the word; he brought it from the mount, committed it to writing, and made it known to the Levites, who were appointed to instruct the people; and because he may bear the name of that word, of which he was the chief publisher.—Moses was "with God," from the beginning. For, though he was unknown to men and despised by them, he was known of God, and honoured with a Divine revelation.—He "was God;" for he was appointed to represent God, according to those words, which are so often quoted by our adversaries: "Thou shalt be to him instead of God." Yes, he was God in all those three senses, which are mentioned by our opposers. His ministry was *heavenly* and *divine*, in comparison of theirs who went before him. For there was no prophet raised up in Israel equal to him, who beheld God face to face, and talked with him as a man talketh to his friend. He may also be so called, because, as just observed, he *represented* God, was invested with his power, was his ambassador, and spake to Pharaoh on his behalf. Again: He was God, because he was *appointed to a glory* and to the *exercise of a power* truly divine: for he was to perform most astonishing miracles in all the parts of nature.—"All things were made by him;" that is, all things relating to the deliverance of the Israelites, and the establishment of the law.

This conformity will appear the greater, if it be con-

sidered, that as Jesus Christ, on the principle of our opponents, acted only by the power of his Father, in working miracles ; so Moses, in the performance of his wonderful works, acted only by the power of God. And as all the miracles which signalized the gospel, were not wrought by the ministry of Christ ; for he neither sent the angels with the tidings of his birth, nor kindled the star which appeared to the wise men : so all the astonishing works, attending the deliverance of the chosen tribes, were not performed by the ministry of Moses, but the far greater number of them certainly were. Now, so many, so great, and amazingly diversified miracles being performed by his ministry, may it not be said ; “ Without him was not any thing made “ that was made ? ”—Once more : This Old Testament Word “ was made flesh ; ” that is, he was flesh. For Moses was a man, though he acted as God. There can be little doubt, therefore, but this expression belongs to him, as well as the rest.

Here our adversaries are greatly embarrassed. For if they allow, that such language might be used concerning Moses, they must confess, that he was qualified to fill the highest encomium that is given by the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ ; it being certain, that the Scripture never speaks more honourably of him, than in the beginning of the gospel according to John. But if they deny that such language is applicable to Moses, they must necessarily own, that the words of the evangelist contain a much higher and nobler sense, than that which they affix to them.

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## CHAP. IX.

The same Argument continued.

**STILL** further to evince the truth for which we plead, from this important paragraph, I shall now proceed to shew, That there is not one of those remarkable ex-



pressions, which we have under consideration, that will admit the sense affixed to it by our opponents.

The phrase, “the beginning,” or, “in the beginning,” when used so generally, always signifies the beginning of the world. For instance ; “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth—The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old—Thou Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth—He which made man at the beginning—From the beginning it was not so—Ye know Him that is from the beginning—The devil sinneth from the beginning”—These, I say, and similar expressions, must be understood, either absolutely of the beginning of all things ; or, at least with a particular reference to that beginning. Had they a different meaning, they would be unintelligible ; this being the obvious and natural signification of the terms.

“THE WORLD.” understood simply of one who reveals the counsels of God, is without any example in Scripture. Neither the Old, nor the New Testament, is acquainted with it. The prophets made known the counsel of God : Moses, more fully than any of the prophets ; and the apostles, more clearly and delightfully than Moses ; yet neither Moses, nor prophet, nor apostle, is ever called THE WORD.—The only expression our adversaries can produce, which bears any resemblance to this, is that of Isaiah ; who, speaking of John the Baptist, says ; “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness.” But to suppose that the Messiah’s harbinger is here called *the voice* of Jesus Christ, is an egregious mistake. The sacred oracle says no such thing, nor suggests any such idea. In the interpretation of this text, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord ;” the verb *is*, or *is heard*, must be supplied, the sense of the text evidently requiring it. He that *is* in the wilderness, he that *preaches* in the wilderness, and he that *prepares* the way of the Lord, by exhortations to repentance, is John the Baptist. The voice mentioned in the oracle, is the voice of him that crieth, or preacheth in the wilderness, and says ; “Make straight in the

“desert a high-way for our God.” It must, therefore, be the voice of John the Baptist. This voice, then, must be understood, either of the *preaching*, or of the *person* of John the Baptist. If the *former*, the text is impertinently cited by our opposers. If the *latter*, we attribute nonsense and absurdity to the Holy Spirit; for the text will read thus: ‘The person, of John, is, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*’

The following expressions, “He was with God,” as understood by the Socinians, are entirely without example. Where shall we find an instance of these, or similar terms, signifying, ‘He was known of God only?’ They, indeed, refer us to those words, “The Life was with the Father;” supposing them to mean, that it was known of the Father. But how jejune the sense, how absurd the interpretation? For is it credible that the apostle should say nothing more of that LIFE, than might be said of death and the devil, of sin and damnation? for all these were known of God from eternity. Besides, there is a material difference between speaking thus of a *quality*, and using the same language of a *person*. If we should say, for instance, ‘The law was with God:’ and ‘Moses was with God:’ the two propositions must be understood in a very different sense.

“The Word was God,” is, if you will believe our adversaries, another figurative phrase; but you will not be able to find an example of it in Scripture. They pretend that Jesus is called God, because he is Jehovah’s representative. But though various eminent persons have, in some respects, represented the eternal Sovereign; yet we do not find that either of them was ever called God, absolutely; or without some intimation, that he was so denominated only in a figurative sense. It is, indeed, said, “Ye are Gods,” in the plural; but it was never said of any particular person, ‘He was God.’—They will have it that our gracious Redeemer is called God, because his ministry was entirely divine. But so was that of the apostles. They revealed a blessed immortality, and wrought very wonderful works, as well as their Lord; so that, on this principle,

they might have claimed the glory of that Divine character as well as he. Yet we do not read that any of the apostles were so called ; but we find, on the contrary, that they detested the conduct of the people at Lystra, who gave them that name.—‘ But there is a very material difference between Jesus and his apostles. He was ‘the Master, they were the servants.’ True : but though the apostles were servants, in respect of Christ ; yet Christ, our adversaries must allow, is equally a servant, in regard to God. If, then, an apostle could not lawfully call himself LORD, out of reverence for Jesus Christ, that name being consecrated to him ; neither could Jesus assume the name, GOD, because that sacred appellation had been long appropriated to the Supreme Being.

Nor can they, by any example, justify that restriction with which they understand the following words ; “ All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” For the sacred writer appears to have intended, to express himself as *generally* as he possibly could. He, therefore, is not satisfied with saying, “ All things were made by him ;” but he repeats the important truth, in a still more forcible manner, by adding, “ Without him was not any thing made that was made.”—‘ The matter in hand, say they, limits the expressions.’ But this assertion is groundless. Both the foregoing and the following words suggest the contrary ; unless we renounce the natural impression of the terms. In the preceding context he says, “ In the beginning was the Word ;” which is a general way of speaking, and leads us to consider the words, “ All things were made,” in a sense equally general. In a subsequent verse he says, “ The world was made by him ;” where he again speaks in a general way, and teaches us to conclude, that “ all things,” are to be understood of all things entirely ; all, without exception.

Their interpretation of this clause, “ The world was made by him,” is equally void of truth. For whether, by the term *world*, they understand the world to come ; or whether they suppose the meaning to be, that the

world was made *ours* by Jesus Christ; in either case they are utterly at a loss for a similar instance in the Holy Scripture. They, indeed, produce passages to shew that *the world*, sometimes signifies *the world to come*; but the examples alleged are not to the purpose. They pretend that in this passage. “When he bringeth his First-begotten into the world.” that the term *world* signifies eternal life. But the original phrase ought not to be rendered, *the world*; but *the earth*. or the habitable part of the world; for it is τῆς οἰκουμένης, not τὸν κόσμον. Besides, by what arguments will they prove that this habitable earth, means heaven, or a state of bliss to come?—Nor is that other passage, adduced by them\*; where mention is made of “the world to come,” sufficient for their purpose. For, whatever be the meaning of it, there is a manifest difference between those expressions, and this general phrase, *the world*; the latter being in question, and not the former. The two phrases are far from being equivalent. Nothing would be more absurd than to suppose, that *the world*, signifies *the world to come*, wherever the expressions are used, because the latter phrase is once or twice contained in the epistle to the Hebrews.—Neither is the following passage any more to their purpose. “When he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not.” For *the world*, here intended, must necessarily be understood of that which we inhabit, and not of the heavenly state. Nay, the term *world* is so far from being generally used for *heaven*, in the Scriptures, that the two expressions are frequently opposed. To this purpose are the words of our Lord; “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

But in what sense was this world made by Jesus Christ? The world, that is, the world to come, was made by him, because, through him it becomes *ours*; or, by him we have an hope to obtain it, and shall certainly, in the end, enjoy it. But what apostle, what prophet, what writer of common sense and common

\* Heb. ii. 5.

honesty, ever expressed himself in such an awkward, unintelligible and ridiculous manner, as that in which the evangelist speaks, according to this interpretation? —If you insist upon it, that the sense which they affix to the term *world*, is forced and unnatural, and that it signifies the heavens and the earth with all their inhabitants; then they endeavour to persuade you, that ‘the word *made*, here signifies *renewed*.’ The meaning, therefore, of the passage is, ‘The world was *renewed* by Jesus Christ.’ To give this interpretation an air of probability, they produce various passages of Scripture; but the only one that appears at all to the purpose, is the following: “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Here, it is manifest, that the term *created* is limited to a particular sense, and signifies *renewed*; as appears from the following clause, “unto good works.” Had the evangelist said, ‘The world was made, or created by him, in righteousness, or to good works, or to be a new creature; the words, it must be confessed, would have required the sense of our adversaries. But as he says nothing like it, all the rules of sound interpretation require, that we should take the expressions in their obvious and natural signification.—If Paul, in the passage produced, had only said, “We are created by Jesus Christ;” and if, notwithstanding he had meant the same, as is now expressed; he would have used such an obscure and ambiguous way of speaking, that we should have hardly come at his meaning; or, most probably, have attributed a sense to his words which he did not intend. So if John says, “The world was made by Jesus Christ,” after having told us, that “all things were made by him,” and that “without him nothing was made that was made;” and if he say it only to inform us, that our Lord introduced an alteration into the world by his gospel; we have reason to complain of great obscurity in his language, and must either consider his assertion as groundless, or embrace a sense of the terms quite contrary to their natural signification.

Once more: It was never said of any man that appeared in the world, “He was made flesh;” such a way

of speaking being absurd. Yet, if we believe our opponents, this is the meaning of, “The word was made flesh.” That is, “Jesus a mere man, came into the world.” A goodly way of speaking for an inspired writer to use! But was it ever said, The king was made flesh—The emperor was made flesh? Was it ever said, by the Holy Spirit, Such a prophet, or such an apostle, was made flesh?—Nor does it avail the cause to render the text, “He was flesh.” For such a way of speaking is not more proper, and is equally unknown to both human and Divine language.

It follows, then, that all these expressions in the beginning of John’s evangelical history, are without example, if understood according to the Socinian comment. But, supposing it could be proved that each of them was used in Scripture, once or twice, in the sense of our adversaries; yet so many singular forms of speech united, would be entirely without example, and contrary to all reason. For though a single expression, when used in an uncommon, or even an unnatural sense, may pass, in a crowd of other expressions that are clear and pertinent, by which it may be understood; yet if a writer use ten or a dozen of them, in the compass of a few periods, he will render his language obscure and absurd, and himself contemptible.—It is unreasonable to suppose, that the general term, *beginning*, should be here taken, contrary to all use, for the commencement of the gospel. But if you should find an example of its being used in the sense they affix to it, among a multitude of instances to the contrary; it does not, it cannot follow from thence, that it must be understood in such a limited and particular signification here; because all the circumstances of the discourse lead us to consider it in a general sense, as the most natural. But when you offer this violence to that expression, you cannot do so to eight or ten more which immediately follow, without impeaching the wisdom, or the goodness, of the Spirit of God; as if he intended, by connecting so many expressions, which are all to be taken in a particular sense and contrary to their natural use, to lead us into error. Our opposers find their account in considering each ex-

pression by itself; because it is possible, by great application, to imagine some senses that are pretty near those which they affix to the words of Scripture. But when they are obliged to unite all their designs and explanations together, they make an absurd and ridiculous appearance.

Nor would it help their cause to suggest a doubt concerning the *Divine authenticity* of the beginning of John's evangelical history. For, in answer to such an insinuation, we need only observe; That the language of this evangelist expresses nothing, relating to the personal dignity, glory, and works of Jesus, but what is taught us by other apostles. In the writings of Paul, for instance, we have the following assertions concerning Jesus Christ. "Being in the form of God, he thought  
"it not robbery to be equal with God—He laid the  
"foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works  
"of his hands—By him were all things created, visible  
"and invisible—All things were created by him and for  
"him—God was manifest in the flesh"—with many other similar passages.

Equally unavailing would it be for them to philosophize on the *manner how* the writings of the evangelists are the word of God. For whether it be by inspiration of suggestion, or whether by way of superintendency, or by both united, that God influenced the minds, and tongues, and pens of those infallible teachers; yet it cannot be supposed that they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and received miraculous gifts, only to talk as they do, if Jesus Christ be a mere creature. For, only admitting that they possessed a moderate share of common sense, and were honest and good men, though entirely destitute of extraordinary gifts; they could not but take particular care that they gave no occasion to impiety and idolatry, by ascribing the names, properties, and glories of the true God to a mere creature.

Should it be said, 'These grand expressions, concerning Jesus Christ, are no other than the flourishes of rhetoric and the elevated flights of fancy;' I answer, We may be soon convinced of the contrary, by a general reflection on the character of those sacred books, which

constitute the canon of the Scripture. Not a single expression can be found in any of them, to the prejudice of God's glory. No impious metaphor, no hyperbole tending to blasphemy, nor any unbecoming comparison of man with God, is there to be found. The language is humble, modest, religious. It is really surprising that, though other authors can hardly write a few pages without injuring the glory of God, this long series of holy teachers discover, in all their words and ideas, that respect which is due to the Supreme Being. This, as all must confess, is one of those internal characters by which the Bible is known to be the Book of God.

Nor can it be objected, with any greater appearance of reason, 'That the idea of **THE WORD**, taken for the 'Son of God, who is God himself, being new and extraordinary; we are obliged to seek for new and singular senses in the passage.' For, as before observed, one singular expression and new idea, surrounded with other expressions and ideas, that are common and plain, cannot create any very great difficulty; and all the rest of the paragraph is composed of terms and thoughts that are neither uncommon nor obscure, while unembarrassed with forced and unnatural interpretations. Besides, it is well known that the antient Hebrews used these several phrases, The face of God; the majesty of God; the glory of God; and the Word of God, as expressive of the same idea. The Chaldee Paraphrase uses them as synonymous expressions. And Rabbi Jonathan renders these words, "The Lord said unto my Lord;" by, 'The Lord said unto his Word.' In short, it is plain that these words, with which the gospel according to John is introduced, "In the beginning was the Word," carry in them a manifest allusion to the beginning of Genesis: this evangelist beginning the history of Jesus Christ, with the first works of the Son of God; giving us to understand, that he is the first Cause of all things, and that before the creation he was with God; while the other evangelists begin their interesting narratives with his manifestation in the flesh. The beloved disciple informs us, that **THE WORD**, by whom the world was created, was not a mere sound, like the word of



man ; but a Divine person, who existed with God, and was God ; and expressly tells us, that this Person is JESUS CHRIST.

These considerations are sufficient to remove the doubt, which some suggest, about the genuineness of the beginning of this gospel : as if it savoured more of the wild speculations of the Gnostics, than of revealed truth. For it appears from hence, that the ideas are not so new and strange as they imagine.—Besides, to suppose that Cerinthus composed, either the *beginning* of this gospel, or the *Revelation*, is an ungrounded surmise. Not the *former* ; for it ought not to be detached from the rest, nor from John's epistles, nor from his Apocalypse ; in which these phrases, *the Word* ; *the Word of God* ; and Jesus Christ, *the true God*, are used repeatedly. Not the *latter* ; for Cerinthus would never think it advisable to forge and publish books under the name of his avowed opposer ; nor would the churches of Asia have received the absurd imaginations of that heretic, for the gospel of John.—Nor can any two things be more incompatible, than the doctrines of the evangelist, and the dogmas of that heresiarch. Cerinthus believed, that angels created the world ; that a fallen angel gave the law ; and that Jesus was really the son of Joseph. He taught, that *Jesus* was a man, and *Christ* the power of God ; which power came upon him at his baptism, and returned to heaven at his death. He affirmed, that Jesus suffered the inconveniences of life, and the violence of persecution ; but that *Christ* wrought stupendous miracles, and was superior to all opposition.—That *Christ* was impassible, though Jesus suffered ; and that *Christ* fell upon the apostles, at the feast of Pentecost. I pass over the crimes which he authorized, and the extravagant subordination of *Æons* ; which were common to him with other Gnostics. Now these are such notions as have not the least countenance in the gospel according to John. Why, then, these unreasonable doubts and restless inquiries ? If the paragraph under consideration must be suspected of being composed by a Gnostic, because it establishes the pre-existence and Divinity of Jesus Christ ; we may, for the same reason,

suspect the whole New Testament to be the work of those heretics, and reject it all at once.

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## CHAP. X.

The Arian hypothesis equally indefensible.

ON a superficial survey of the Arian system, it seems much more plausible than that of Socinus; because it preserves entire the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, which is a doctrine most expressly and repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament: and, indeed, were we to stop here, the former would undoubtedly have the advantage. But when we more closely consider the subject we find, that the Socinian hypothesis is free from several capital difficulties which attend that of the Arians, those ancient enemies to the cause of truth and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. This will appear if the following things be considered.

The term God, must necessarily be understood, either as a name of *office*, or of *nature*; as denoting *external* qualities and trusts, or *intrinsic* excellence and *essential* perfections. The Arians, therefore, cannot defend themselves, when they are urged with the consideration of the name God, which is given to Jesus Christ, by saying; ‘It is a name of office, and Christ only bears it as an ambassador of the Most High;’ which is the evasion of the Socinians. For as the disciples of Arius confess, that Christ existed, not only before his appearance in the world, but also before the creation; they cannot deny but he was, in some sense, God, before the formation of the universe. Those passages of Scripture, which they explain of his pre-existence, are very express, in this respect. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, “and the Word was God.” But if they allow, that the Word was *with God*, in the beginning; and that he *was God*, before the formation of the world; they

ought also to grant, that he was “in the form of God ;” that he is “the true God ; the mighty God ; the great God ; God blessed forever.” For there is no more reason to allow the one, than there is to acknowledge the other.

But, as they deny this consequence, they will permit me to ask, How the names and phrases, which are appropriated to the Great Supreme, can belong to Christ in his first estate ; in which he neither *represented* God, nor *acted* in his name, nor was his *ambassador* to men ? For if he were a mere creature, however exalted and glorious, it could not be lawful to express his essence and attributes by the name, God. Can it be said, without impiety, of the most excellent creature, “He exists in the form of God, and thinks it not robbery to be equal with God ;” Though the Logos, in his pre-existent state, possessed a Divine glory, in comparison *with us* ; can we, on the Arian hypothesis, attribute a Divine glory to him, when considered as being *with* God ? What, must he bear the name of that incomprehensible Being, who is infinitely more exalted above him, than the most excellent creature is above the meanest insect, or the smallest atom !—Instead, therefore, of saying, “He was in the form of God,” before he humbled himself ; we must affirm, that he was *always* in the form of a servant, in the form of a creature : and that *much more* in heaven, than when upon earth ; much more *before* the creation of the world, than when he conversed with men. For with what perfections soever a creature may be endued, it is much more in the form of a servant, when in the immediate presence of God, than when among men. Instead, therefore, of the sacred writers informing us, that Christ, in his first estate and when with his Father, *was God* ; they should have said, that he was then, comparatively, *nothing*. As a nobleman, whose grandeur is very considerable, when in a country village, loses much of his splendour, when at the king’s court, and in the royal presence.

Again : Jesus Christ, considered in his first estate, and as with God, bears the name, God, either because

he is God, or because he *acts* as God, or because he *represents* God. Not the *first* ; for, on the Arian principles, he is a creature ; and therefore, how excellent soever he be, he cannot, without falsehood, be described by a name consecrated to the Creator. Nor the *second* ; for in his first state, before the creation, he did not act at all ; or, if it were supposed that he did, it was only as the minister of God ; and, consequently, he ought not to bear a name appropriated to the first Cause. Nor can it be the *last* ; for he could not represent God to the inhabitants of the heavenly world, before they had an existence. Nor, when the angels were formed, had they any need of such a representation. For they see God face to face ; that is, as much as is necessary to the plentitude of their holiness, happiness, and glory. Nor could he represent him to men : for, at the time supposed, they were not created. Besides, why, in order to represent God, must he bear his name ? May not a superior be represented, without the person representing bear his peculiar character ?—Here the Arians are greatly embarrassed ; which embarrassment is much increased by considering, that Jesus bears the name, God, with distinguishing and sublime epithets. For he is called, the TRUE GOD ; the MIGHTY GOD ; the GREAT GOD ; and GOD BLESSED FOREVER.

Another difficulty attending the Arian hypothesis, is this : They cannot explain those passages of Scripture which assert, that Christ “made the worlds ;” that he “created all things, visible and invisible ;” that he “laid the foundations of the earth, and that the heavens “are the works of his hands ; and that he upholds all “things by the word of his power ;”—they cannot, I say, explain these, and similar passages, without contradicting themselves ; by acknowledging his Divinity, properly so called, after they have denied it ; or without running on the most evident absurdities. For as they understand those passages literally, which declare that God “made all things by Jesus Christ ;” and that “without him was not any thing made that was made ;” they are obliged to attribute to him the creation of heaven and earth, with all their inhabitants. It, there-

fore, necessarily follows, that the Word either made all things by his *own* power, as the sun enlightens the earth by his beams ; or, having no inherent power for such a work, was the *mere instrument* by which the infinite power of God exerted itself ; as the apostles, who had no power of their own, by which to work miracles, were only instruments in the hand of Omnipotence, to control the course of nature, and to astonish and bless the world. If the *latter*, we have reason to complain of being deceived by the language of Scripture, which says expressly ; “ All things were made by him.” How unaccountable it is, that he should be called God, if he be only the instrument by which Divine power and wisdom display themselves ! And, considering the care which the apostles take, to guard against a supposition that they wrought miracles by their own power ; we cannot but think it exceeding strange, and as tending greatly to mislead our conceptions, in matters of the highest importance to the glory of God and the salvation of men, that they are not equally careful to inform us, That it was not by *his own* power that Jesus formed the universe and wrought his wonderful works. But, so far from it, they repeatedly declare, that their Divine Master is he “ by whom and for whom all things are”—That he “ laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are “ the works of his hands”—That he “ created all things “ visible and invisible ;” from the loftiest angel that surrounds the throne, to the meanest worm that crawls in the dust. Now these, and such like expressions, it must be acknowledged, are very extravagant, if Jesus contributed no more to the production of the universe, than the apostles did to the miracles wrought by their instrumentality.—But if it be said, ‘ Jesus formed the ‘ creatures by his *own* power, which he received from ‘ the Supreme Being ;’ then it follows, that the Father *communicated* to him the power of creating. But that is an *infinite* power ; for it surmounts the infinite distance which is between *being* and *nothing*. Now infinite power is an infinite perfection ; and, it is manifest, that an infinite perfection cannot be communicated to a creature, which is and must be finite in its powers

and capacities. The supposition of the contrary is absurd, as it involves a contradiction : because it implies, that such a creature is both finite and infinite.

Again : If Jesus Christ, being only an exalted creature, did create all things ; he must be considered, either as an *instrumental* cause, or as the *principal* cause. Not the *former* ; for no instrument can act but where there is an object, and such an one to which it is in some measure proportioned. But in the work of creation there is no object on which to act ; the work itself producing the object. If the *latter*, he is the Creator ; he possesses an infinite power ; he is truly and properly God. For if he be invested with infinite power, why not with unerring wisdom and supreme goodness ? Why not with every perfection of the Deity ?

Further : Either Jesus Christ acted *alone*, in the creation of all things, or in *conjunction* with his Father. If the *former*, why is the formation of the world ever attributed to the Father ? If the *latter*, either he exerted the same, or a different power. If the *same*, it was an infinite power ; for such is the Father's. If a *different* power, it was created and finite. But as Omnipotence needs no coadjutor, (to will, and to create, being the same with God) so the supposition of a *finite* power giving existence to the universe, and the idea of a *created* Creator, are the first-born of absurdities. Nothing more offensive, nothing more shocking to common sense, than the thought of a creature *creating* the world ; yet with such inconsistencies is the Arian system attended, and such absurdities do its abettors digest.

Once more : On the Arian hypothesis, it is impossible to defend Moses and the patriarchs, from a charge of idolatry ; in worshipping, as the true God, the angel who appeared to them so often. Because they cannot say, with the Socinians, ‘ That this angel was not worshipped on account of his own excellence, but because he represented God ; and that, detached from his exalted office and ministry, he was not worthy of more honour than any other of those heavenly intelligences.’ For this angel, according to them, was THE WORD ; whom the evangelist teaches us to consider,

as existing from the beginning with God, and as being God. So that all the honours he claimed and received from the antient patriarchs, must be looked upon as due to his own perfections : and, consequently, we are taught to apply to an angel those oracles which had for their object the eternal God—To apply to the servant, what is peculiar to his Lord ; to a subject, what is due only to the Sovereign. But this consideration will be resumed hereafter.

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## CHAP. XI.

The Language of the Holy Spirit, on the Socinian hypothesis, is obscure, absurd, and not consistent with piety.

As to the *obscurity* of Scripture, on the principles of the Socinians, it is so apparent that I need not spend any more time in proving it ; I shall, therefore, only inquire into the occasion of it. The obscurity we find in many passages of sacred Writ, is reducible to one or another of the following heads. Let us now see, whether the darkness and difficulties attending those texts, which are controverted between us and our opponents, be referable to any of them.

In many parts of the Scripture there is an obscurity attending, which arises from *the nature* of the things proposed to us. To this head belong the difficulties with which we meet in those passages of Scripture which relate to the nature of God ; the mystery of the incarnation ; the decrees of election and reprobation ; the satisfaction of Jesus Christ ; the eternity of those torments which await the wicked ; and all those great and sublime subjects, which are incomprehensible by man, except *they* cease to be what they are, or *he* cease to be what he is.—But we cannot reduce to this principle the obscurity which our adversaries find, in the passages before mentioned. For there is not, there cannot be, any great mystery in a creature revealing the counsel

of God. It is no surprising thing for a man to live at the time when the gospel-dispensation commenced, or in the time of John the Baptist; to be known of God only; to be appointed to a more glorious ministry than that of the prophets; or for a man to be made flesh, that is, to partake of a corporeal nature. It was no very wonderful thing, according to the interpretation adopted by our opponents, which Jesus asserted, when he said of himself; ‘I was, in appointment, before Abraham—I possessed a glory with the Father, before the world was; because it was determined, in the Divine decree, that I should possess it.’

Another cause of obscurity in the sacred Writings, is, The *darkness* which was brought on our minds, by the first grand apostacy. “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not—The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them.” We should, therefore, examine ourselves and see, whether the obscurity of which we complain, spring from our own depravity. It might, indeed, be justly suspected to arise from this quarter, in reference to the controverted texts, if *we* were the persons who found them obscure; but as it is chiefly our opposers, *they* ought to acknowledge the obscurity. For in our sense, the *object* is sublime and mysterious, but the *language* plain and familiar: in theirs, the object is well proportioned to our capacities, but the language is obscure and perplexed.—Further: Are we, or our adversaries—let common sense judge—Are we or our adversaries, the persons who are chargeable with a secret desire of giving an unnatural turn to these passages, in favour of our own opinion; and with acting under the influence of evil passions, in finding out entirely new and very extraordinary senses? What mistake, what irregularity can there be in supposing that these expressions, “In the beginning,” are to be understood in a general sense? Or that these, “The Word was God,” include something more exalted and more Divine than the glory of a mere servant? Or that these words, “By him all



“things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made ;” signify something more, than preaching the gospel, reforming the world, and the effects which followed ? Or that these, “Before Abraham was, I am,” include an assertion and commendation of personal excellence, which do not agree to the meanest of rational creatures ? Who, I ask, is able to fix and to prove a charge of mistake upon us, or of any extravagance, for thus thinking of such passages as these ?

Again : The *genius* of the original tongues, which, in some cases, is very different from ours, is another cause of obscurity. It is granted, however, that this is not the source of those difficulties with which we meet in the passages disputed between us. The genius of the sacred language is far from leading us to invest a mere creature with the most glorious characters of the Creator. To this it is quite averse. Other languages have something heathenish and impious in them. They do not scruple to use the terms, *adorable, divine, sacrifice, incense, eternity*, and *supreme good*, when speaking of a creature. But the language of inspiration, being the language of God, never prostitutes terms of such sacred significancy to little or base purposes ; is always sober, religious, and consistent with itself. The penmen of Scripture, it is true, sometimes use hyperboles ; but never such as can injure the glory of God.

Further : The Scripture is obscure in reference to events which are yet in the womb of *futurity*. Great perspicuity, in prophecy, might impede the accomplishment of it. No body wonders, for instance, that things should be involved in enigmatical figures, in the visions of Ezekiel, so as to render his discourses obscure ; because they are the secrets of futurity. But, in the expressions before us, there is no prophecy. They, in general, refer to the time past. Such as, “Before Abraham was, I am. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God.” The obscurity, therefore, of which our opponents complain, cannot arise from this source.

Once more : A *false philosophy*, or a misapplication

of that which is true, is another occasion of obscurity in many passages of Scripture. Various texts, in the Old and in the New Testament, though clear in themselves, have been much obscured by scholastic and philosophical comments. Yet even this cannot be the source of those difficulties which our adversaries find, in the passages controverted between them and us. For the question is not about any obscurity in the words of the Holy Spirit, as explained according to *our* sentiments; but as interpreted according to *theirs*. And they pretend, that their hypothesis is quite free from the cloudy and embarrassing subtilties of the schools; yet, it is on their principles that these passages are so exceedingly difficult and obscure.

This, then, is an obscurity which has none of those causes that are common to difficult passages of Scripture; which is very surprising. But this surprise will increase, when it is considered, that as the obscurity has not its cause in us, nor can be reasonably ascribed to us, it must be attributed to God. But if He be the only cause, it will be impossible for us to account for it, with honour to his character. For his design in it could not be to *glorify* himself. Because an obscurity in his Revelation, which leads us to believe that Jesus, a mere man, is God; that he created the world; and is invested with the essential glories of the Supreme Being, cannot possibly tend to the honour of God.—Nor could his design be to *illuminate* the minds of men. For how should an obscurity enlighten the mind? Besides, was there no other way of communicating heavenly light, without exposing mankind to the danger of so baneful an error?—Nor was it to *try our faith*. For though the greatness of the objects revealed in the Bible, and the contrariety which is in them to our natural prejudices, may serve to exercise our faith; yet it does not appear that ambiguous and obscure expressions, if employed to represent those objects, could answer any such purpose. And though the Holy Spirit had intended to put our faith to the trial; he certainly would have been very far from doing it in such a way, as had a natural tendency to injure the glory of God and hazard our salvation, by

suggesting such ideas as opened a door to blasphemy and idolatry. If, notwithstanding, the Spirit of inspiration really designed, that the passages in question should be understood in the sense of our adversaries, he has been greatly disappointed; for there have been comparatively few that have so considered them, or whose faith has been so exercised by them.

The hypothesis of our opponents not only renders the language of Scripture obscure, but also *false* and *deceitful*. A discourse is generally considered as false, when those ideas which common consent and custom have affixed to the terms of which it consists, are not found to be true; even though the speaker, or writer, should annex, mentally, a signification to each word, so as to render the whole consistent with fact. For equivocations and latent reservations are a species of lies; though, in the sense of those that make them, they may be real truths.—Now it is demonstrable, that the sentiments of our opposers render the language of Scripture deceitful. For if it be lawful to give the sacred Records a sense that is remote from the ordinary signification of the terms which are used, there is no opinion so absurd, no doctrine so monstrous, but may be easily established by the Bible.

Admitting the lawfulness of such a procedure, it would be no hard matter for me to prove, that the true God had no hand in the work of creation; nay, that there is no mention of any such thing in the antient oracles. Even such a sentiment, horrid as it is, I could maintain, without offering greater violence to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, than our adversaries do to those of the New.—I would assert, that he who created the heavens and the earth was an *angel*, the minister of Jehovah; one who is not God, by nature, but merely by office. If reminded of the *names* given him in Scripture; I would answer with the Socinians, He bears them only as he is the minister and representative of the Most High. The epithet *almighty*, which is sometimes given him, would not much embarrass me. I should say, this angel does all things in our lower world, by the will of the Great Supreme, who has committed the administra-

tion of its government to him ; but there other worlds, *ad infinitum*, which do not, in the least, come under his control. And though he is called “ the searcher of hearts ;” yet he bears the august character, only because the Most High God reveals to him every thing that passes in the soul. He is, indeed, said to have “ created all things ;” but these words are to be understood with great limitation : not of all things without exception ; but only of such as respect us, or belong to this visible world. He was I confess *worshipped* ; and worship has been considered as an honour peculiar to the true God : but there is a very important distinction which is here to be made, between *supreme* and *subordinate* worship. And should it be said, This dependence of the angel, who is called God, upon the Supreme Being, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture : I should soon produce instances to the contrary. As for example : “ The Lord rained upon Sodom—brimstone and fire, *from the Lord.*” And those words to Abraham, spoken by him who is called God ; “ Now I know that thou fearest God.” And so when the God of Israel is represented, as the greatest “ among the gods ;” may we not consider him as the greatest among the angels, to whom the Infinite Supreme has committed the government of several parts of the universe ? which would imply, that the God of Israel is not the Supreme God. In vain would it be objected, That the God of Israel is the creator of heaven and earth ; and that the act of creating supposes an infinite power, which cannot belong to any but the Most High. For our adversaries furnish me with a solution of this difficulty, by shewing that the term *creavit* does not always signify *to produce out of nothing* ; but merely *to produce* ; and sometimes, *to fashion, to dispose.*—If it were objected, The God of Israel speaks as the true God when he says, “ I will not give my glory to another ;” it might be answered, The angel who has received the government of this world, has a glory peculiar to himself, exclusive of other intelligences, and possesses this glory in opposition to idols, which are vanity.—It might be further supposed, that the true

God has granted him the power of communicating to another, so much of his empire as he pleases ; and, therefore, he could impart it to Jesus Christ, as the true God did to him.—Now I leave our adversaries to judge, whether it would be easy for them to force me in these entrenchments, which they have prepared ; and to consider, of what vast importance it is, never to deprive the terms of Scripture of their *natural* signification. Because if we once take the liberty of affixing new ideas, to the words *God. worship*, and such like expressions, we destroy all certainty in the analogy of faith and in the sacred Scripture, and abandon ourselves to perpetual skepticism.

As Jehovah is the God of truth, it cannot be supposed, without shocking impiety, that he ever designed to betray us into error, by speaking to us in ambiguous and deceitful language. If then, such a procedure would be considered as contrary to his eternal truth ; it is no less inconsistent with his wisdom, nor less derogatory to the dignity of his Revelation, to speak in language that is absurd and ridiculous. Yet such is the language of the Bible, in many places, if understood according to the principles of our opposers.

What expressions, for instance, can be more ridiculous than these, if Christ be a mere man, honoured with the name, God, on account of his ministry ? “ He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh ? ” What is the meaning of the term, *flesh* ? If you understand it, as opposed to *spirit*, the sense of the passage will be, He was made of the seed of David, according to the *body* ; not according to the *soul*. A goodly way of speaking, this, for Gamaliel’s pupil, for Christ’s apostle to use ! Alexander had a body and a soul ; yet all would unite in pronouncing that man contemptibly weak, who should say ; Alexander was made of the seed of Philip, *according to the flesh*. Nay the language would be absurd in the mouth of one, who believes the conqueror of the world to be the son of Jupiter. For such an one should say ; Alexander was *not* the son of Philip : not, He was the son of Philip, *according to the flesh*.—It may, perhaps, be said, “ These words, “ according to the flesh,” are opposed, not to the

*‘nature of Christ, but to his heavenly offices and divine ministry : and the meaning is, Jesus was made of the seed of David, not as he is God, or as he is honoured with a divine ministry ; but as he is man, or possessed of a corporeal nature.’* But Peter was the son of Zebedee, not as an apostle, but as a man ; his apostleship being a divine office, and coming immediately from God. Yet this proposition, Peter was made of the seed of Zebedee, according to the flesh, would be ridiculous.—*‘The text under consideration may imply, that Jesus Christ had a nobler origin than other men, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit.’* But it is not the power *by which*, but the matter *of which*, he was made, that is intended by these words, “He was made, according to the flesh ;” Again : Jesus was made of the seed of David, and made flesh, by the power of the Holy Ghost. This proposition, therefore, “He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh ;” is, in the sense of Scripture, equivalent to this, He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, by the Holy Ghost. And if so, we are still at a loss for the meaning of, “He was made, according to the flesh.” For if Christ be a mere man, by nature, these expressions, “according to the flesh,” are perfectly ridiculous.

Equally absurd, on the Socinian hypothesis, is that celebrated saying of our Lord’s ; “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” If you expound these words, of the glory which Jesus had in the *Divine decree* ; you render the expressions absurd, being contrary to the common forms of speech. For it is as if a man should say ; ‘Give me, Lord, the health which I had with thee before the world was—Feed me, O Father, with my daily bread, with which I was fed in thy presence before the world was created—Grant, O gracious God, that I may safely arrive at that celestial place, where I was with thee before the foundation of the world.’—Many other instances might be adduced of that ridiculous air which the Socinian sentiment gives to the language of inspiration, but these may suffice.

The same perverse hypothesis renders the language of Scripture *impious* and *blasphemous*. This impiety has various degrees. For instance; The sacred writers, when speaking of Jesus Christ, take no care to avoid such expressions as might give occasion to blasphemy. Of which number are these, *God ; equal with God ; the Creator of all things ; worship*, and others of a similar kind, which were never piously used but to express the glory of the Eternal Sovereign.—Again : They represent Jesus Christ as using these expressions, in connection with others, which imply an excessive and criminal familiarity with God, if he be not of the same essence with him. As when he calls himself, *the Son*, the *only Son*, and the *only Son of God* ; asserting, that God is *his Father*, not occasionally, and so as to intimate that he claims the divine relation only in a figurative sense ; but frequently, in the most solemn discourses, and that without any limitation : saying, *my Father*, when an apostle would have said, *my God* ; plainly signifying, that he assumes the exalted title in a literal and proper sense.—Further : This impiety appears, to a shocking degree, in the writers of the New Testament placing a creature on an equality with the Creator, by such expressions as these, “ He thought it not robbery to be equal with God—Philip, he who hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” As if he who beholds the glimmering of a glow-worm, saw the splendor of the meridian sun ! And by attributing to Jesus, a mere man, the same authority as they do to the Father, in the great commission which was given to the apostles. “ Go ye, “ therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in “ the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the “ Holy Ghost.” As if one should say, Go and enrol the people by the order of the king and his slave !—A still further degree of impiety consists in this ; When the penmen of Scripture express the honour which is due to Jesus Christ, they do it by the general term *worship*, without ever giving the least intimation that it means a *subordinate* worship, or that there is any

such thing : though, on the principles of our opponents, there is as great a difference between supreme and subordinate adoration, as there is between the Creator and the creature ; and though it be certain, that if a man should frequently give the title of *majesty* to any one but the king, he would be highly culpable in the eye of his sovereign, whatever mental distinction he might make between supreme and subordinate majesty ; because terms have their signification principally from general custom, not from the particular fancy of the person who uses them.—Once more : The apostles invest a mere creature with the *qualities*, and attribute to him the *works*, of the great Creator. Nay, which is carrying impiety to the highest degree, if the hypothesis of our opposers be true, they boldly apply to a mere man the *sublimest oracles* of the Old Testament ; those oracles which were intended to express, in the most emphatical manner, the *infinite glories* of the Most High. But this argument shall be the subject of the following Section.



## SECTION IV.

**IF JESUS CHRIST** be not of the same essence with his Father, there is no harmony between the propheis and the apostles, or between the Old Testament and the New.

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## CHAP. I.

**IF JESUS CHRIST** be not of the same essence with his Father, the Prophets, who spake of him, did not foresee things as they were to come to pass.

**As** the religion of Jesus depends on the testimony of the prophets, and on that of the apostles, united ; it is absolutely necessary, for the confirmation of our faith, that these testimonies should agree and mutually support each other. An hypothesis, therefore, which destroys that agreement which ought to subsist between the penmen of the Old, and the writers of the New Testament, saps the foundations of Christianity. Such is the system of those who maintain, that Jesus Christ is a mere creature. For if that sentiment be true, the Spirit, by whose inspiration the prophets wrote, neither foretold, nor foresaw things as they were to come to pass under the gospel-dispensation ; nor did that Spirit, whom the apostles received and by whose direction they spake, understand the oracles of the Old Testament.—To prove the *former* of these propositions, we need only consider, In what manner the prophets describe the true God—How they represent the Messiah—On what fundamental truths they establish the Jewish religion—And with what circumstances they describe the establishment of the New Covenant, and the calling of the Gentiles.

The prophets describe the *true God*, by titles which they give to him, exclusive of all other beings. To distinguish him from all his creatures, and to assert his

infinite superiority over them, those amanuenses of heavenly wisdom call him ; **THE CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH—THE FIRST AND THE LAST—THE KING OF GLORY—THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS—THE SAVIOUR AND REDEEMER—THE JUDGE, LAWGIVER, AND KING—And, THE MOST HIGH.**—Here it is to be observed, that these are not only the characters of the true God, but they are such characters as are *peculiar* to him ; such in which no creature has a share. For *He only* is the Most High : *He only* knoweth the hearts of the children of men : *He only* blotteth out transgression for his own sake : *He only* is the Saviour and the Redeemer of Israel ; for He expressly declares there is *none else*.—It ought also to be remarked, that these characters are such as principally distinguish the Creator from the creature ; and that it would be very difficult, either to invent, or to meet with others in the sacred Records, by which the important distinction could be more strongly marked, or appear with greater clearness. For there is the utmost reason to conclude, that these are the titles which **Jehovah** chose, by which to distinguish himself from all other beings.

Yet these titles are all given to Jesus Christ, in the New Testament. Of Him it is said, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands.” He is called, repeatedly, “The First and the Last.” He expressly claims the prerogative, of “searching the reins and the heart.” He is called by Zacharias, “the Highest,” or the Most High ; before whose face John the Baptist went. He is the “King of kings, and the Lord of lords.” He is “the Saviour,” and he is “our Judge.”

But if these titles belong to Jesus Christ, what was the reason that the prophets gave them to the God of Israel, as *peculiar* to him, and *incommunicable* ? Did not those holy men foresee that they would be applied to a mere creature ; who, how excellent soever, must be considered as infinitely below the eternal God ? What, is there nothing in all those grand characters and sublime descriptions of the Deity, contained in the

Old Testament, but what is equivocal, and was to be applied to Jesus, a mere creature, as well as to the infinite JEHOVAH ! When the Holy Spirit informs us, in the antient oracles, that the Great, the True, the Eternal God, possesses these characters as his own peculiar ; what can we think, but that the Spirit of inspiration either did not *foresee* the glory of Jesus Christ, who was to bear these Divine titles ; or, if he foresaw it, that he intended to betray us into an error, which confounds the creature with the Creator ?

These horrid suspicions will be increased, if we consider the characters of the *Messiah*. If He who inspired the prophets did not foresee what would come to pass, after the appearance of the Messiah ; what the effects of his doctrine would be ; how it would be condemned of impiety, by the Jews ; how they would prosecute Jesus to death, under a charge of blasphemy, for claiming an equality with God ; and that his disciples would make him the object of their worship ;—if, I say, He by whose inspiration the prophets wrote and spake, did not foresee these things, he could not be the Spirit of Him who is omniscient. And if he did foresee them, we have reason to wonder, and it is hard to forbear complaining, that, instead of taking proper precautions to *prevent* the errors and idolatry which he foresaw, he took the most *direct way* to give birth and encouragement to them. For what else could he intend by calling the Messiah, “ GOD WITH US ; THE MIGHTY GOD ; “ JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ; THE GOD AND “ SAVIOUR OF THE WHOLE EARTH ; THE LORD THAT “ SHOULD SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE ?”

‘ But though the Messiah is called, “ God with us,” ‘ and, “ Jehovah our righteousness ;” yet he is not called God, absolutely. Besides, these two characters ‘ only signify, that God, by the Messiah, would be with ‘ men, so as to grant them the special marks of his favour ; and that, by him, he would justify and save ‘ them.’—But we do not here argue from the *force* of the expressions, but from the *wisdom* and the *design* of the Holy Spirit who used them. Though it were not the Spirit of God, but a man of common prudence and

piety, who acted on this occasion ; we cannot imagine, if he foresaw that men would fall into such a mistake as to commit idolatry, by treating a mere creature as if he were the true God, that he would ever think of describing Jesus Christ by such characters as those before us. If our adversaries could put themselves in the place of the prophets, and were, by Jehovah's order, to form an anticipated model of the Christian religion ; *they* would take particular care not to describe the expected Messiah after this manner.

‘ It is not so surprising, perhaps they may say, that the prophets should speak thus of a man, to whom they knew God would communicate his name and glory.’—But if that had been the reason of their conduct, it is unaccountably strange, that they should so frequently inculcate the following truths, as the *fundamental principles* of their religion. “ The gods that made not the heavens, shall perish from the earth—I will not give my glory to another—Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve—He that sweareth on the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.” Truths these, essential to the Jewish religion, and quite inconsistent with the idea of a subordinate and dependent God.

The truth of the proposition we here endeavour to confirm, will be still more evident if we consider, *With what circumstances* the prophets describe the calling of the Gentiles and the establishment of the New Covenant, by Jesus Christ. These grand events are described by the following characteristics. *An universal and exuberant joy.* “ Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create : for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy—Sing, O Heavens, and be joyful. O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains !” And, as if inanimate creatures were suddenly to possess the powers of reason, in order to share in the pleasure and praise, the prophets declare, that the isles and the sea, the earth and the mountains, the forests and the deserts, shall shout for joy.—*God's dwelling among men.* “ Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion ! for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst

“ of thee. saith the LORD. Behold your GOD will  
“ come—He will come and save you. Then the eyes  
“ of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf  
“ shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap  
“ as an hart. and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.”—  
*The exaltation of God.* “ The LORD ALONE shall be  
exalted in that day.” *The destruction of idols.* “ The  
“ gods, that made not the heavens, shall perish—The  
“ idols he shall utterly abolish—From all your idols  
will I cleanse you,

If the Spirit, by whom the prophets uttered and penned their predictions, foresaw things as they were to come to pass ; then he knew very well, that he described the calling of the Gentiles and the establishment of the New Covenant, in such a manner as would never be verified—He knew, that the gospel, while it destroyed one species of idolatry. would introduce another more dangerous. For if we compare the Christian idolatry, which makes an idol of Jesus Christ, by setting him on the throne of the Supreme Being, with the idolatry of the Heathens ; we shall find that the latter has the advantage of being the *less dangerous*, in several respects. The Pagan idolatry was *grossly absurd*, and unworthy of understanding persons ; but the Christian idolatry is *spiritual* and much more plausible. The former sprang from an *abuse* of natural light ; the latter from the most *natural use* we can make of written Revelation. For what use more natural, than to understand its expressions in their common and well-known signification ? The Pagan idolatry was repeatedly and peremptorily *forbidden*, by the Holy Ghost, from age to age ; forbidden under the most awful penalties, and in the most alarming way, both in the Old and the New Testament ; whereas the Christian idolatry is a mischief which the Spirit of prophecy either did not *at all foresee*, or, foreseeing, used *no means to prevent* ; but rather, by various forms of expression, to encourage and authorize. The former did not run so high, as to *equal* their subordinate divinities with Jupiter, their supreme god ; but the latter consists in treating Jesus, a mere creature, as the Most High. Though the

*Heathens* worshipped several gods, yet they did not consider them as possessed of infinite perfection ; whereas *Christians* believe it of Jesus Christ. God's *jealousy* also is sooner provoked, by investing a very excellent creature with his attributes and glory, than by transferring his Divine honours to one that is mean and base ; because the consequences are more dangerous to the interest of men and the glory of God. The *Christian* idolatry, therefore, being a more plausible evil, is more pernicious, than that of the *Heathens*.

Either, then, the Spirit who inspired the prophets, did not foresee things as they were to be ; or he knew that the calling of the Gentiles would not be signalized by the destruction of idols : but, on the contrary, that a more absurd and less dangerous idolatry, would give way to one more refined and more destructive, that would soon overspread the world—that the desire of the nations, would become the idol of the people ; and that the very name, which was to be given among men, and by which they were to be saved, would become, for many ages and over all the earth, a name of blasphemy.—Consequently, God has been so far from being *exalted*, under the new dispensation, by the abasement of men ; that, at its commencement, he himself began to be *abased*, by the exaltation of the man Jesus : because the exaltation of Christ occasioned the apostles to compare him with God, and boldly to ascribe to him an equality with God, by investing him with all the prerogatives and titles of the Great Supreme. The prophets, therefore, had no great reason to rejoice, in the prospect of the gospel and its reception in the world ; since, by its most natural impressions, it betrays men into idolatry.—To which I may add, were the sentiment of our adversaries true, God would be much less present in the Christian church, than he was in the antient sanctuary : for he was there in the cloud of glory over-shadowing the mercy-seat, in a very illustrious manner ; but our opponents will not allow Jesus Christ to be any more than a man. The Spirit of inspiration, therefore, instead of making “ God's dwelling with men,” one of the characteristics of gospel-

times, would have spoken more agreeably to fact if he had said ; under the new covenant, God shall not vouchsafe the illustrious tokens of his intimate presence, to so great a degree, as he did to the ancient Israelitish church.

Thus the characters of the true God, which are drawn by the ancient prophets ; the characters of the Messiah, recorded in the Old Testament ; the fundamental principles of the Jewish worship ; and the circumstances which were to attend the establishment of the New Covenant and the calling of the Gentiles, all conspire to show, that the spirit of prophecy either did not foretel events, as they were to come to pass ; or that the system of our opponents is false.

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## CHAP. II.

IF JESUS CHRIST be not of the same essence with his Father, either the Apostles did not understand the Prophets, or they designed to betray us into error.

AS the hypothesis of those who consider Jesus Christ as a mere creature, casts a foul reflection on the predictions of the ancient prophets ; so, by unavoidable consequence, it obliges us to conclude, That though the apostles made the Old Testament the foundation of their whole doctrine, by constantly appealing to it ; and though they received the Holy Ghost whose province it was to lead them into the true sense of it ; yet, after all, they did not understand it. The truth of this proposition we shall endeavour to prove in the following paragraphs ; by considering a few of those passages in the Old Testament, which the apostles apply to Jesus Christ in the new.

The eloquent Isaiah says, ‘ the voice of him that crieth ‘ in the wilderness, *prepare ye the way of* JEHOVAH, *make ‘ straight in the desert a high-way for our God.*’ Zacharias filled with the Holy Spirit, and applying this oracle to his infant son, cites and expounds it thus : ‘ and thou, ‘ child, shalt be called the prophet of the HIGHEST : for

‘thou shalt go before the face of the LORD to prepare his ways.’ In both these oracles, it is evident, these exalted characters, JEHOVAH, our GOD, the HIGHEST, and the LORD, are applied to the same glorious Person. And it is equally certain, from the constant application of them by the sacred writers, that they are peculiar to God. Consequently, if they belong to Jesus Christ, he must be a Divine Person, of the same essence with his Father, and the Most High.

That all these adorable names really belong to our Lord, appears from their being applied to him by the unerring spirit. For he, before whose face John the Baptist was to go, is Jesus Christ. It must be either He, or God the Father. Not the Father; for either these words, ‘thou shalt go before the face of the Lord,’ are to be understood in a *proper* sense; in such a manner as the Lord was to come properly to men; agreeable to that saying, ‘your God will come—and save you:’ or they are to be taken *figuratively*; and only signify, that God would visit mankind in an extraordinary way, either in justice, or in mercy; and that John should be instrumental in preparing the way to Divine mercy, by bringing them to repentance. If the *former*, the oracle cannot agree to God the Father; for he did not come properly to men. If the *latter*, John did not walk before the face of the Lord; except in the same sense as Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, and denounced the judgments of God on a sinful generation: or as Moses, who spake to Pharaoh that he should let the people go; and to the Israelites, persuading them to believe what was revealed to him; thus preparing the way to God’s mercy, in the redemption of Israel, and to his justice, in the punishment of his enemies. But if so, we must seek the accomplishment of the prediction, not in John, but in Christ. For if the communication of Divine benefits be intended, by God’s coming to his people; he came the most remarkably when he baptized the apostles with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and when, by their ministry, he converted the nations; for then did his ‘law go forth from Zion, and his word from Jerusalem.’ If the inflicting of judgments be



meant; then God came, in the most signal and terrible manner, when he sent the Roman legions to destroy the unbelieving Jews, with their city and temple. But then it was not John, but Christ, who principally prepared the way, in both these respects. For he prepared the way to divine mercy, by his preaching and miracles, his sufferings and death. He revealed the pardoning love of God, and confirmed the everlasting covenant. The ministry of John was of short duration, and the preaching of the apostles produced much greater effects than his. To suppose, however, that Jesus Christ, not John the Baptist, was the forerunner described by the prophet, is absurd to the last degree; yet such is the consequence, if the passage be interpreted in a figurative sense.

If, then, this oracle was not fulfilled by the coming of the Father, it must have received its accomplishment in the appearance of his Son. In the language of the prophets, therefore, Jesus Christ bears those venerable, those truly Divine names, JEHOVAH; our GOD; the HIGHEST; and, the LORD; for such are the characters of Him before whose face John the Baptist went. He is, consequently, the true God.

The next ancient oracle that I shall consider, is that which is quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews; where it is produced to show, what an immense difference there is, between Jesus Christ and the angels. ‘Thou, LORD, ‘in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, ‘and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They ‘shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax ‘old, as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold ‘them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the ‘same, and thy years shall not fail.’ These words were undoubtedly spoken by the psalmist, of the true God; the prophets having so often informed us, that he only made the heavens and the earth. Besides, the preceding words cannot be understood of any but JEHOVAH. Either, then, the inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, did not understand the passage he produced; or he knew that the immutable, the eternal God was described by it: for the sublime characters contained in it are so peculiar

to him, that there is no instance of the prophets applying them to any other. So that when the inspired author applies them to Jesus Christ, he must either consider him as of the same essence with the Father ; or else he speaks against his conscience, to advance his master's honor, and betrays the interests of God's glory.

To say, with the Socinians, ' that he does not apply ' these words to the great Redeemer ; but that, digressing ' from his former subject, he makes a short apostrophe to ' God the Father ;' is to declare, not the meaning of the text, but what they desire it should be. Such an apostrophe would be very awkwardly introduced here. For it is not the design of the sacred writer, in this place, to assert the glory of God the Father. The Hebrews, to whom he wrote, had no doubt of that : their minds were filled with ideas of his dominion and grandeur. Nor does he compare the Father with the Son ; but the Son with the angels. The Hebrews entertained the highest opinion of that Revelation with which Moses and the prophets were honored. The infallible author takes occasion, therefore, to prefer the new Revelation to the old ; representing the *latter* as communicated by the prophets, who were only *servants* in the house of God ; but the *former* as made by the Son, who is lord of the house. See Heb. i. 1—3.

But because it might be objected, that the law was given by the ministration of angels ; he takes occasion to show the vast superiority of Jesus Christ, in comparison with those noble intelligences. He allows, indeed, that they bear the honorable character, ' ministers of God.' As it is written, ' He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.' But then he signifies, that the Son partakes of his Father's authority and godhead. He participates of his *authority*. This he proves by those words of the psalmist : ' thy throne, O God, is for ever ' and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of ' thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated ' iniquity : therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed ' thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' Here we behold our Lord, as mediator, receiving the kingdom from his Father. But because he partakes with him in

the glories of the godhead, or in the essential perfections of the Supreme Being; he afterwards applies to Jesus such oracles as equal him with the Father, and manifestly prove him to be the eternal God. For he adds, without the least intimation that he is speaking of a different person; ‘and thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.’ Which distinction, between the authority he received, and his essential dominion, is contained in a preceding verse: ‘whom he hath appointed heir of all things—by whom also he made the worlds.’ The *former* clause is expressive of that economical kingdom, in respect of which it is said; ‘thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity.’ This kingdom he received from the Father. The *latter* clause indicates his essential glory, his eternal power and godhead; in regard to which this oracle is applied to him: ‘thou, LORD, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.’ This is that participation of the godhead, in reference to which Jesus says; ‘I am in the Father, and the Father in me.’ Hence it appears, that the supposed apostrophe, if admitted, would be of little service to the cause we oppose. For though it might serve to elude the force of these words, ‘thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth’—yet our adversaries could not defend themselves by it against the evidence of these ‘by whom also he made the worlds;’ it being evident, that he who made the worlds, may well be considered as having laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the heavens.

Again: these words, ‘thou remainest—thou art the same—thy years shall not fail;’ are, even in the judgment of our opponents, to be understood of Jesus Christ. Nor could they, with the least shadow of reason, deny it: because the terms are synonymous with those which precede, and are incontestably applied to him. ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.’ The following expressions, ‘as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they

‘ shall be changed,’—they also understand, as relating to Jesus Christ; as expressive of the renovation of all things by the Son of God, at the last day. But then they violently separate these words from those which immediately go before, and with which they are closely connected. They would persuade us, contrary to all the rules of language; contrary to the natural signification of the words, and scope of the discourse; and contrary to common sense; that there are *two* persons spoken of—that He, of whom it is said, ‘ thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth;’ is not the same with Him, of whom it is said immediately after, ‘ thou remainest—thou shalt fold them up.’ They sometimes declare, that they will hearken to nothing but their own *reason*, when they dispute with us; but here we need nothing but our own *eyes*, to dispute with them.

The next oracle we shall consider, is that of Isaiah; which is applied to Jesus Christ, by the evangelist John ‘ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him—Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.’ This passage presents us with an irrefragable argument for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. That the evangelist applies to Jesus that splendid appearance of Divine glory, mentioned by Isaiah; and that it is the glory of **JEHOVAH**, the God of Israel, which he describes; cannot, one would think, admit of a doubt. Or, if any doubt should arise concerning the latter, we need only to peruse the history of that remarkable vision, as it stands in the prophet, in order to be fully satisfied.

That it is the glory of the Supreme Being of which the prophet speaks, appears from the several parts of that description which he gives of it. The majesty of none but the true God can be so great, as to cause the seraphim to veil their faces before it. None but Him, would those princes of heaven thus address, and thus profoundly adore; ‘ *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts! the whole*

*'earth is full of his glory.'* Nor could the presence of any but the Most High, cause the prophet thus to exclaim; *'Wo is me! for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips—for mine eyes have seen the KING, the LORD of hosts.'*—And that the evangelist applies this oracle to Jesus Christ, is equally evident. For it is of Him that he speaks, in the verses preceding; and it is of Him that he continues to speak, in the verses following: which puts it beyond all reasonable doubt, that it is Him also of whom the evangelist speaks, when he says; *'these things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.'* From all which arises this argument. Isaiah saw the glory of the Supreme Being. But, at the same time and place, he saw the glory of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the Supreme Being.

All this is evident, one would have thought; evident beyond dispute. But what cannot subtilty do, when resolved to eclipse the brightest truths? It asserts various things, which are all equally unwarrantable. For instance: It endeavours to persuade us, that the pronoun *him*, does not relate to Jesus Christ, but to God the Father. It refers these words of the evangelist, *'these things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him;'* not to what *immediately* precedes; but to another citation from the prophet, at some distance; *'who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?'* and it maintains, that the prophet, in describing the glory of *God*, described also the glory of *Christ*; because the latter is contained in the former. But these suppositions and assertions are all so wild and unnatural, that a man must be blind not to see through them; and exceedingly fond of error, not to despise them.

As the evangelist, through the whole chapter, treats of Jesus Christ, not at all of God the Father; what reason has any one to believe, that these words must relate to the Father? *'these things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.'* Who does not perceive, and what but a predilection for an unscriptural hypothesis can prevent a man from acknowledging, that the last clause of the sentence is to be understood of the very same person.

that is intended in the immediately following words: ‘nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed ‘on him.’ If Jesus be meant in the *latter* why not in the *former* verse?—the prophet spake of the true God, on every occasion. This the evangelist knew; of this he could not be ignorant. These things, said Esaias, ‘when ‘he spake of God’—*when he spake of God!* why, then, he must say them all his life; say them continually; say them in every page of his prophecies; because, through the whole course of his ministry, he spake of God; proclaiming his glories, revealing his will, and asserting his dominion. ‘But this, they say, is a parenthesis.’ How does that appear? have they nothing to do, but to suppose, or assert, without proving? yet if it were, the pronoun *him*, would still refer to Jesus Christ; because, both in the foregoing and following verses, the evangelist speaks of Christ, and of him only.

Nor is there the least shadow of reason for any to consider these words, ‘these things said Esaias, when he saw ‘his glory, and spake of him;’ as connected with those, ‘Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the ‘arm of the Lord revealed?’ for with what propriety could it be said, that Isaiah saw *the glory* of the Lord, in a chapter where he beheld and speaks of hardly any thing, but the poverty and disgrace, the sorrows and sufferings, of the Lord Messiah? in a chapter which contains very little besides one continued description of his humiliation? the humiliation of Christ is there described by, the meanness of his extraction: ‘He shall grow up, as a root out ‘of a dry ground’—The disgrace which attends him; ‘we hid as it were our faces from him’—The afflictions he endures; ‘He hath borne our griefs and carried our ‘sorrows’—His meekness and patience; ‘He is brought ‘as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before ‘her shearers, so he opened not his mouth’—His death; ‘when he shall make his soul an offering for sin’—And the circumstances attending his burial; ‘He made his ‘grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.’ It is, indeed, said, ‘the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper ‘in his hand—He shall prolong his days—

He shall divide the spoil with the strong ;'—but these promises lie so concealed among the many affecting images of his humiliation and complicated sufferings, that it is to the last degree unreasonable, to call this a vision of *his glory*.

Had the evangelist thus expressed himself, 'These things said Esaias, when he spake of him ;' it might have been supposed, with some little appearance of probability, that the phrase, *these things*, referred to the first passage cited by him ; 'Lord, who hath believed our report ?' Yet even then it would have been much more natural to connect it with the immediately preceding citation. But he expresses himself otherwise ; 'These things said Esaias, *when he saw his glory*, and spake of him.' Now the prophet beheld his glory, in the *sixth* Chapter, not in the *fifty-third* ; for in the latter, he saw very little besides his humiliation.

Equally unreasonable is it to suppose, 'That Isaiah, in beholding the glory of God, saw the glory of Jesus Christ ; because the latter is contained in the former.' For if we may have recourse to such evasions, we may deny or maintain any thing, just as we please. Had that been the meaning, the inspired writer might have applied the oracle to himself and his brethren, as well as to Jesus Christ : because the glory of their character and office, as the children of God and the apostles of the Lamb, was contained in the glory of Jehovah and derived from it. According to this interpretation he might have expressed himself thus ; 'These things said Esaias, when he saw *our* glory, and spake of *us*.' Say not, 'This would have been a profanation.' For if that infinite disparity which is between the glory of Christ, and the glory of Jehovah, do not prevent what was spoken only concerning the glory of the *latter* from being applied to that of the *former* ; then the difference between the glory of Christ, and the glory of the apostles, being finite, cannot hinder an oracle which describes the glory of Christ, from being with much greater propriety applied to them. Again : The glory of Christ, if he be a mere creature, cannot be the same with God's ; nor can the peculiar glory of God, such

as Isaiah describes, be the same with Jesus Christ's. You might, therefore, with much more truth and propriety say, He that sees the king's glory, beholds the glory of his meanest subject; than to affirm, with our adversaries, That Isaiah, by seeing God's glory, saw the glory of Jesus Christ. Because, in the *former* case, the extent of the disparity is easily conceived; but in the *latter* it is inconceivable and unbounded.

Another passage full to my purpose, is the following. 'When he bringeth in the First begotten into the world' he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him.*' It is agreed, on both sides, that the sacred writer applies to Jesus Christ those words of the psalmist, 'Worship him all ye gods,' or, 'all ye *angels*;' as the inspired author teaches us to understand the original word, in this place.

That the psalmist speaks of the true God, when he says, 'Worship him all ye gods, or angels,' appears by only reading the psalm. Thus it begins, 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.' But why should the earth and the isles exult in the glory of this dominion, if their Creator be not the sovereign intended? Besides, the great name JEHOVAH, so often applied to Him whose kingdom and sovereign dominion the sacred penman describes, and accompanied with so many characters of the glory of the Most High, could not be given to any other without manifest impiety.—'Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled.' These, it must be allowed, are the characteristics of His presence, who created the heavens and the earth. These are descriptions of His awful glories, who, whenever he pleases, can shake the pillars of nature; can employ thunder and fire, and all the dreadful artillery of heaven, to destroy rebellious worms, and to render his Divine majesty and sovereign dominion more conspicuous.—'The hills melted like wax, at the presence of the Lord; at the presence



of the Lord of the whole earth.' Nothing is more evident than that, 'The Lord of the whole earth,' is a title peculiar to the Eternal Sovereign. 'Behold, the ark of the covenant of *the Lord of all the earth*, shall go before you over Jordan,' says the magnanimous Joshua. 'These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before *the Lord of all the earth*—And I will consecrate their gain to JEHOVAH, and their substance to *the Lord of the whole earth*,' say the prophetic seers.—The manner also in which the title is given him, in the text before us, is no less remarkable than the title itself. For the Psalmist, designing to raise our attention, or excite our admiration, and to fill us with reverence of that Sublime Being of whom he speaks, redoubles his expressions; and, with a singular emphasis, says; 'The hills melted like wax, *at the presence of the LORD; at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.*' And then he adds, 'The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.' But whose *righteousness* is revealed by the heavens, whose *glory* is beheld by the people, except those of their great Creator and Preserver? 'Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols.' As it is the true God who is opposed to idols; and as it is the true God who is glorified, by the confusion of idolaters; so none but He can be intended in this place.—'Thou, Lord, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods.' If these words do not express the idea of the true God, language is not capable of doing it; for nothing is more evident, than that He only is to be supremely exalted.

If, then, each of these characters be adapted to show, that the true, the great, the infinite God, is intended in this Psalm; certainly such a collection of them must leave no room for doubt. Nay, such is the evidence, in this respect, that if we refuse to acknowledge the Great Supreme, in this devout and very sublime ode; we shall not be able, with certainty, to find his character, nor to behold his glory, in any oracle, or in any part, of the Old Testament. For that immensely glorious Being, whose

perfections are here celebrated, is described by the same characters which are given to the true God throughout the ancient Scriptures ; and especially by his great and terrible name, JEHOVAH : a name, which he appropriated to himself, on a very important occasion—which he signalized by a thousand miracles—which is here connected with the idea of universal dominion, and with the displays of his glory in heaven and earth. So that if it were any other than the true God, who is described by characters so essential and peculiar to Him ; no expression could be used, about an affair of the most solemn importance, more ambiguous, or more deceitful.

Is it not then surprising, that Socinus should apply all these characters to Jesus Christ ; to one whom he considers, as a mere man ? ‘ Since it is evident, says he, ‘ from the confession of all the world, that in this Psalm ‘ there is a prophecy concerning the kingdom of Jesus ‘ Christ ; why might not Christ (a man to whom all power in heaven and earth was given, and being considered ‘ as entering on the possession of his kingdom, prophetically foretold and described) be with propriety called, ‘ *The Lord of the whole earth* ?’ Why, because he who bears that divine title is described by so many other characters, which are peculiar to the true God. Because He who is the subject of this Psalm, is also the subject of that which immediately precedes, whose glory is thus described. ‘ All the gods of the nations are idols ; but ‘ the LORD made the heavens. Honor and majesty are ‘ before him ; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. ‘ Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give ‘ unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD ‘ the glory due unto his name : bring an offering and come ‘ into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of ‘ holiness ; fear before him all the earth. Say among the ‘ Heathen, that the LORD reigneth—Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea roar and the ‘ fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is ‘ therein ; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD ; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge ‘ the earth.’—That these two Psalms are parallel, is very

evident. For they both speak of God's glory, of his coming, and of his kingdom. They both exalt the true God above the divinities of the Heathen. They both require mankind to worship the Lord, the eternal JEHOVAH, as having supreme dominion over all creatures. And they both invite inanimate creatures to rejoice at the presence, and in the government of God.

It is, then, of the true God these words were spoken, 'Worship Him all ye gods;' or, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' But it was concerning JESUS CHRIST that the high command was given. Of this an infallible author assures us. Of this, therefore, we ought by no means to doubt: nor do our opponents themselves deny it. Let them draw the inference, then, and acknowledge with us, that Jesus Christ is the true God, and is described in the ancient oracles as the Supreme Being. For hence we learn, that they who are called gods; or, to adopt their own language, they who are gods by *office*, are here expressly commanded to worship Jesus Christ, as God *by nature*.

Socinus in vain endeavours to solve the difficulty, with which he is here pressed, by saying; 'They who worship Christ, worship the Supreme God; because Jesus represents him in a singular manner, and in a very eminent sense.' For the question is not, Whether, in adoring Jesus Christ, we adore the true God; but, Whether these words, 'Let all the angels of God worship him,' were not spoken of Jesus Christ.

Should any one maintain, that he who loves his brother, loves God, because he loves him only as bearing the image of his Maker; he would say nothing but what is warrantable. But were he to infer from thence, that when the Divine Lawgiver says, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' he speaks of our neighbour, and not of God only; his conclusion would be very extravagant. So, were we to grant, that he who worships Christ, worships, in some measure, the true God; yet we should not be obliged to allow, that he who requires us to adore God, requires us by the same command to adore Jesus Christ; there being no consequence from the

one to the other.—Besides, if in adoring Christ, we worship the true God ; then the passage under consideration might have been applied to all the kings of the earth. For they, in some respects, bear the image of God ; and we honor them as God's vicegerents here below. But are we from hence authorized to say, That he who honors kings, honors God himself ? If we be, we may apply to them the oracle in the ninety-seventh Psalm, as it is applied to Jesus Christ. For if it belong to Christ, though it be meant only of the Supreme Being, because in worshipping the former, we adore the latter ; nothing hinders us from saying, that it belongs also to kings ; because in honoring them, we honor the Eternal Sovereign, whose image they bear.

But the question is not, What subtilty can invent, in order to elude the force of this argument ; but, What is the natural import of the words, as applied in the epistle to the Hebrews ? and, Whether any can be excused from taking them in the sense adopted by us ? seeing, on the one hand, they were spoken of the true God ; and, on the other, that the Infallible Spirit applies them to Jesus Christ.



### CHAP. III.

The apostles did not apply the ancient oracles to JESUS CHRIST, by mere Allusion, or Accommodation.

**C**LEARLY to discern the importance of the argument, which is drawn from that application of the ancient oracles which the apostles have made to Jesus Christ ; we need only to inquire, Whether the Holy Ghost, when speaking by the prophets in the passages just considered, designed to characterize Jesus Christ. For, if that was his design, he certainly intended that we should consider him, as the LORD ; our GOD ; the CREATOR of HEAVEN, and EARTH ; JEHOVAH ; JEHOVAH OF HOSTS ; and the

**MOST HIGH.** But if he did not intend to represent the Redeemer by these characters; if they were designed for the true God, in distinction from Jesus Christ; then we must look upon their application to Jesus, by the apostles, only as an *accommodation* of the ancient Scriptures to present events, founded on some sort of resemblance between the one and the other. But though such accommodation be not without example, in Divine and human language; it has no place here, as may appear from the following considerations.

Some of these passages incontestibly belong to Jesus Christ, by the intention of that Spirit who inspired the prophets; as has been already proved. These, therefore, demonstrate, that Jesus is invested with the peculiar characters of God's glory, by the intention of the Holy Ghost—Nor will the design of the apostles, in citing and applying the ancient oracles to Jesus Christ, permit us to consider that application as merely by way of allusion, or accommodation. For their design is, either to prove his Divine mission, or to condemn the unbelief of the Jews, and to remove the scandal of it by showing that it was foretold; or to declare his infinite excellence, and superiority over all creatures; or to persuade mankind to render him those honors which are his eternal right, by showing that the Holy Spirit requires they should be addressed to him.

The apostles adduce these oracles to prove the *Divine mission* of Jesus Christ. On this account Peter, in his discourse to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, at the feast of Pentecost, cites a prophecy from Joel. 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.' This prediction he afterwards applies to Jesus Christ in the following words. 'This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.'—Hence I infer, that the apostles, designing to prove the Divine mission of their Master from the ancient prophecies, must have lost their reason if

they did not see, that they defeated their own intention, by applying to Christ such oracles as express the peculiar glory of the Deity, if they had not considered Him as a truly Divine Person: because they could not be ignorant, that the great stumbling block of the Jews was, 'That Jesus had made himself equal with God.' Consequently, a small degree of prudence would have been sufficient to show the apostles, that every application of ancient prophecy to Jesus Christ, which was in the least adapted to convey an idea of that kind, would be so far from convincing the Jews that he was the Messiah, that it would strengthen their prejudices and harden their hearts against him; and be considered by them as an additional evidence, that he was an usurper of the glory of God, and suffered death on the cross as the just reward of his blasphemy. Can it be supposed, then, that the apostles, who longed for the salvation of their brethren, would lay an invincible bar before them, by making arbitrary allusions and forced accommodations?

Another end intended by the apostles, in applying the prophecies to Jesus Christ, was, *To condemn the unbelief of the Jews, and to remove the scandal of it*; by showing, that their infidelity and hardness of heart were foretold by the prophets. For this purpose the evangelist thus introduces the following passage from Isaiah. 'Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.'—The reader will remember, that the prophet saw the glory of the true God, as proved already. Now a design to show, that the unbelief of those who rejected the Messiah had been foretold, required the apostles to produce such oracles as *really and properly* respected the time and person of their Messiah; such as were originally intended to be applied to him, and had been so applied by common tradition. So far were they from being obliged to make allusive applications that were unnatural, or accommodations that were

impious, of the peculiar characters of Jehovah ; that so to have done, would have justified the conduct of the Jews, and rendered their unbelief lawful.

A further design of the apostles, in making such applications to their Divine Master, was, To declare his *infinite excellence* ; to assert his *superiority and dominion* over all creatures, without exception. This appears from the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. But arbitrary allusions and accommodations, are by no means suitable to this design. For with what propriety, truth, or honesty, could the author of the epistle just mentioned, attempt to prove, That the Old Testament speaks greater and nobler things of Jesus Christ, than it does of angels ; by passages in which the Spirit of inspiration had the *former* no more in his eye, than he had the *latter* ? If it were a bare accommodation, we need only a turn of thought a little different from his, applying to an angel what he applies to Christ ; and we shall, with equal reason, draw conclusions directly opposite.

Once more : The apostles designed, by these applications, to persuade mankind to *render those honors* to their Lord, which are his eternal right ; by showing that the Holy Ghost requires they should be addressed to him. In pursuance of this intention, they cite such passages as command adoration to be given to him ; and such as declare the purpose of God that it shall be paid. Of which number are the two following. ‘ Let all the angels of God worship him—At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.’ But, as mere allusions and accommodations have their foundation in those resemblances, which our imagination finds between ancient prophecies and present objects ; it is absurd to suppose, that the apostles ground the worship of Christ upon them. Were this the case, they would act just like a man who should endeavour to prove, That a private soldier deserves the titles of majesty, and ought to be honored as a prince and conqueror ; because he had met with some actions, or expressions, in the history of Alexander the Great, which might, by way of allusion or accommodation, be applied to him.

Besides, such accommodations would be impious and blasphemous, if Jesus Christ were not of the same essence with his Father. For if, out of regard to Christ, you would not dare to accommodate to any man living these words, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;’ a reverence for the Supreme Being ought still more forcibly to restrain us, from applying to Jesus, a mere creature, the peculiar characters of the great Creator. Because the disproportion, in the *latter* case, is infinitely greater than that in the *former*: and because the character contained in the words of the Baptist, is not so peculiar to Jesus, as those titles are to the Great Supreme, which are found in the ancient prophets. For, according to our oponents, Christ is in such a manner *The Lamb of God*, that another might have been so as well as he, if the eternal sovereign had so ordained: but the Supreme Being is in such a manner *Jehovah; the Mighty God; the King of Glory; the Creator of Heaven and Earth; and the Lord of Hosts*; that none but He can possibly have the glory. If, then, we could not, without blasphemy, apply to any other man, whether by way of allusion, or accommodation, this *one* character, *The Lamb of God*, which, though peculiar to Christ, has no relation to his essence; how much more impious would it be, to apply to Jesus *so many* grand titles of the Most High, which are not only peculiar to him, but expressive of his essence? In the *former* case, the honor of a creature, highly beloved of God, is prejudiced; in the *latter*, the glory of God himself is injured. In *that*, the only danger is, lest scandal be given by a profane allusion; in *this*, there would be both scandal and seduction; such seduction as would terminate in idolatry and ruin, by confounding the creature with the Creator.

Our opposers, then, may put their imagination upon the stretch and rack their wits; they may labour to render some books of the Holy Scripture suspected, and speculate on the manner how the apostles were inspired, as long and as much as they please; but it will all be to no purpose, while it remains a fact, That the apostles have applied to Christ, whether by way of allusion, or of



accommodation, or otherwise, those oracles of the prophets which characterize the true God. For if Jesus Christ be not a partaker of the Divine essence ; if he be a mere creature, to whom such characters cannot possibly belong ; we must consider the apostles as betraying us into idolatry, by impious witticisms, and blasphemous applications of the prophetic writings.—It necessarily follows, therefore, if the hypothesis of our adversaries be true, that the prophets did not foresee things as they were to come to pass ; and that the apostles, either did not understand the prophets, or they designed to betray us into error ; consequently, that there is no harmony between the Old Testament and the new.

## SECTION V.

If JESUS CHRIST be not the true God, neither the ancient Jewish, nor the Christian Religion, is attended with sufficient criteria to distinguish it from Imposture.

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### CHAP. I.

The proposition proved, in respect of the Jewish Religion.

IN order to prove the proposition, it will be proper to consider, how God was pleased to manifest himself under the old, and also under the New Testament. At the commencement of the Mosaic economy, Jehovah manifested himself to the son of Amram, upon Mount Horeb, in a burning-bush: but it is very observable, that he who appeared to Moses is called, *the angel of the Lord*. ‘And the ANGEL of the LORD, says the sacred historian, appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush—And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight—And when JEHOVAH saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, here am I—And he said—I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ But I forbear to transcribe the whole account of this wonderful vision; the reader may peruse it at his leisure.

It may, however, be remarked, that when Moses discovered a reluctance to obey the Lord, by going to Pharaoh, because he had an impediment in his speech; he was rebuked by him in the following manner: ‘who

‘hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?’ And, Moses inquiring what he should say to the children of Israel, when they should ask who it was that sent him; God gave himself a new name; for he said, ‘I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ At the same time, to obviate any suspicion which might arise in their minds, that Moses spake of an unknown God, the Divine Speaker adds; ‘thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. *This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*’ And, afterwards, with great solemnity adds; ‘I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and it shall come to pass that when ye go, ye shall not go empty.’ And again, ‘when thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.’—He, therefore, who spake to Moses in the bush, must be the same divinely glorious person, who spake to the people of Israel from the top of Mount Sinai, in the following language: ‘I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’ Consequently, the very same who gave the law to Israel, with such solemnity, majesty, and glory.

He, then, who manifests himself to Moses, is, according to our hypothesis; the angel of the Lord; the messenger of the covenant; the eternal wisdom; the son of God; JEHOVAH; *God blessed for ever*; but so soon as you quit this hypothesis, you run into the most glaring and impious absurdities. That He who reveals himself to Moses, is the *angel of the Lord*, we ought not to question, we cannot doubt; because it is expressly declared in the sacred text. Nor can any figure be here suppos-

cd. For, admitting that an angel of God might, by a figure, be called God ; yet we are certain that God the Father cannot, by any figure, be called the *angel* of the Lord.

Here, consequently, according to our opposers, we find a creature investing himself with the names and the attributes, the works and the glory, of the infinite Creator ; so appropriating them to himself, that it is impossible to distinguish him from the true God. For he who appeared to Moses, repeatedly calls himself God, and JEHOVAH. He, once and again, denominates himself, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob* : and, in so doing, assumes the several names which the Hebrews commonly gave to their God ; whether to distinguish him from all his creatures, or to contrast him with the gods of the Heathen, or to express his infinite perfections.—Besides, this angel appropriates these adorable names to himself on such an occasion, as rendered it of the last importance to Moses and the chosen tribes that he should not assume them. For he takes them at a time when he cannot possibly do it, without *imposing* on him to whom he speaks ; so imposing on him, as to betray him, and the Israelites in general, into idolatry ; and this also when Moses was careful not to be deceived ; when he drew near to see who it was that appeared to him ; and at a time when it was of the utmost consequence for him to know, by whose authority he was to speak to the people of Israel, and who it was that sent him.

Again : he who reveals himself to Moses, not contented with those names which the God of Abraham had usually taken, and by which he made himself known to the patriarchs, gives himself a *new* name. Now, admitting that a creature might, on some occasions, lawfully assume one, or more, of the names of God ; yet, certainly, no creature can give himself a *new* name of God, with whatever powers he may be invested, or to whomsoever he may speak. For God says, ‘ I am JEHOVAH ; that is my name—they shall know that my name is JEHOVAH.’ These declarations most emphatically show,

that the great name is not common to the creature with the Creator. They inform us, if any expressions can do so, that it is peculiar to the Supreme Being, and consecrated to his adorable essence ; that it so belongs to the Most High, that it cannot be assumed by any other. How comes it, then, that we hear an angel say ; ‘ I AM ‘ THAT I AM—Say to the children of Israel, I AM hath ‘ sent me unto you ?’ How came he to utter these words ; ‘ THE LORD GOD—the God of Abraham, the God of ‘ Isaac, the God of Jacob—this is MY NAME for ever ; ‘ and this is MY MEMORIAL to all generations ?’

Further : This angel does not only take the *names* of God, but he also attributes to himself the works and the glory of God. The *works* of God. This he does, in a very emphatical manner, in those chiding interrogatories addressed to the procrastinating Moses. ‘ Who made ‘ man’s mouth ? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or ‘ the seeing, or the blind ? Have not I the LORD ?’ these expressions evidently show, that the angel considers and reveals himself, as the Creator of all things. The *glory* of God. This he does when he calls himself, ‘ the God ‘ of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.’ For Abraham’s God was acknowledged, by that illustrious priest Melchisedeck, as the ‘ possessor of heaven and earth ;’ by Isaac, as the object of his worship, for he is called ‘ his Fear ;’ and by Jacob he is adored, as ‘ God Almighty.’ Besides, he says to Moses, ‘ draw not nigh hither ; put ‘ on thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon ‘ thou standest is holy ground.’ In which words he strongly demands that devotional reverence which is due to none but God. And this angel, after he had brought the Israelites out of Egypt (for we have shown that he who spake to Moses in the bush, was the deliverer and lawgiver of the chosen tribes) speaks from the summit of Horeb and says ; ‘ thou shalt have no other ‘ gods before me.’

Now, on the hypothesis of our opponents, it should seem that this was done, to render the Israelites guilty of impiety and idolatry. Of *impiety* : for if the true God be more glorious and worthy of adoration than this angel,

with what propriety could he say, ‘thou shalt have no other gods before me?’—Of *idolatry*: for with whatever characters this angel might be invested, if he was not the Most High, he could not lawfully require such honors as are peculiar to God. In a word, when the law commands us to worship God, and him only, it either speaks of a *supreme* or a *subordinate* worship. If the *latter*, then, as before observed, there is no such thing as supreme worship mentioned in the decalogue. If the *former*, as our adversaries themselves acknowledge, then it follows, that this angel, though inferior to Jehovah, required of the Israelites that supreme worship, which is due to none but the true God; and, consequently, betrayed them into idolatry.

This idolatry is of a remarkable kind, and has various peculiarities attending it which are very surprising. For it is *not criminal*, on the part of the Israelites. They cannot be justly blamed for concluding, that he who calls himself ‘the God of their fathers,’ is the true God; and that he who assumes the great name, JEHOVAH, and claims the honor of ‘making the dumb and the deaf, the ‘seeing and the blind,’ is the Creator of all things. Nor are they culpable for paying to him who reveals himself to them as the Creator and the Mighty God, supreme worship.—Again: this idolatry is, if I may be allowed so to speak, of *divine institution*. Idolatry usually springs from our corruption; but this has its original in Divine Revelation, if that which Moses received deserve the name. For God himself sent the angel who assumed the peculiar characters of Jehovah’s glory; or, at least, the angel pretends to be God, the God of the Hebrews. For when he says to Moses, ‘I am the God of Abraham, ‘the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;’ he either designs to pass for the God of those patriarchs, or he does not. If *not*, his discourse is impertinent from the beginning to the end. If he *does*, it is he himself who betrays the children of Israel into idolatry.—Once more: this idolatry was *unavoidable*. For the ancient Hebrews could not avoid it without maintaining, either that the true God, the God of their fathers, when condescending

to reveal himself to man, was not worthy of that adoration which he requires ; or, that He who manifested himself to Moses in the bush, and to the people on Sinai, was not the true God, the God of the patriarchs.

‘ But this angel speaks in the person of him whom he represents ; and it is as an ambassador of the Most High, that he bears the names of God.’ Then he should have told Moses so, when he anxiously inquired of him, *who* he was ; and desired to be informed, by *what name* he should make him known to his brethren in Egypt. Had that been the case, it was easy, it was natural, it was absolutely necessary for him to have said, ‘ I am the *ambassador*, or the *messenger*, of Abraham’s God.’ But, instead of that, he says, ‘ I am the God of Abraham.’—Various reasons concur to assure us, that he did not consider himself, that he did not reveal himself, as an ambassador. For instance : an ambassador does not give *new names* to his master, when speaking in his person, and standing in his place. An ambassador, who represents his sovereign, cannot say, ‘ ye shall have no other king but me ;’ without forfeiting his allegiance, and deserving to be treated as an enemy to his prince. An ambassador does not attribute to himself the *personal qualifications* of his master ; such as, his wisdom and power, as this angel attributes to himself the perfections of God. Nor can any ambassador assume to himself the *names and titles*, the *works and honors*, of the sovereign whom he represents ; without provoking the jealousy of his master, and being guilty of high treason. For, an ambassador is called to advance the honor of his master ; not to assume his prerogatives and rob him of his glory, as this angel does, if he be only an ambassador.

Our opposers may search for examples as much as they please, to countenance such a conduct ; yet I will venture to say, they can find only one, which is that of the *stage* : on which we behold a private person, assuming all the names and titles of the king he represents ; attributing to himself his works, and requiring his honors. But here it is all fictitious ; there is nothing serious in it : or, if the actor were serious, he would be in dan-

ger, either of being despised for his weakness, or of being punished for high treason. Inexpressibly shocking would it be, to consider the Mosaic religion in the light of a comedy; in which an angel, a mere creature, acts the part of the Supreme being. For that would represent, *man*, as deceived and ruined; God, as dishonored and blasphemed; and both by Divine connivance, both by Divine agency.

Yet, horrid as the thought is, it is countenanced by the hypothesis of our antagonists. For, according to their view of this passage, an angel of darkness, intending to draw mankind from the worship of the true God, and being permitted by Jehovah to practice his wiles and his malice; would have taken the same method, as this angel did, in order to succeed in his malignant designs. What else could he do so likely to answer his end, as to ascribe to himself the names, titles, and works of the Deity; by saying to the Israelites, ‘I am the God of your fathers;—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’—We cannot believe that he who speaks to Moses is a mere creature, without supposing, that a mere creature designs to pass for the God of the Hebrews. For how is it possible to conceive that an angel, who does not design to be considered as the God of Israel, should say to Moses, with a view to inform him who he is; ‘I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob?’ But if he be a mere creature, and yet designs to put himself in the place of God; he is guilty of impiety, and chargeable with a design of leading mankind into idolatry. Thus we must conceive of his conduct. And though we should afterwards find that he performs very wonderful works, yet they may be justly suspected; because the law directs us to judge of miracles by the doctrine, not of doctrine by the miracles.\* Thus the Jewish religion loses its Divine characters; and, instead of being an appointment of God and the practice of it communion with him, we conceive a black

\* Deut. xiii. 1—5.



suspicion, that it is a trick of the spirit of darkness, and an idolatrous commerce.

The supposition is horrid; but, without abandoning the Socinian and Arian hypothesis, we cannot easily lose sight of it. For what criteria will you find in the Mosaic system, to convince you of its divinity; if you once consider it as having its rise in deception and falsehood? Do you mention its *holiness*? but that, more than any thing, is called into question. For what holiness can there be in a religion which originated in imposture, and is maintained by idolatry? If you say, God spake to Moses; it is answered, not God, but an angel, who put himself in the place of God. If you aliege *the miracles* that were performed by Moses; I reply, many and wonderful works were also wrought by Pharaoh's magicians: so that little more can be inferred from thence, than that the spirit of whose agency Moses was the instrument, was more powerful than he who favoured the magicians. For facts, however great and wonderful, ought not to be ascribed to the immediate agency and miraculous interposition of God, if inconsistent with holiness; which is manifestly the case, in the Mosaic religion, on the hypothesis condemned.

That the angel, who reveals himself to Moses, acts inconsistently with the glory of God, supposing that angel to be a mere creature; will further appear, if the following things be considered. It is evident from the Scripture, that God's design was to exalt Jesus Christ above all the angels. For of him it is written, 'he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they—to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Let all the angels of God worship him.' This is the doctrine of the sacred author.—But Christ, according to the Socinians, is exalted above the angels, not on account of his *nature*; for the human is far inferior to the angelic nature; but in virtue of the *offices, trusts, and gifts*, which he received. For, on their principles, it is only on account of these that he is called God. If, then, he was a mere angel who appeared to Moses, and

delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage ; it unavoidably follows, that an angel was more exalted and more honored than Jesus Christ, contrary to God's design.

This appears from hence. Jesus Christ, according to to our opponents, is called God, by a kind of analogy ; but this angel calls himself, ' the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.'—Christ is addressed only with subordinate worship ; but this angel causes himself to be adored, as the Supreme Being. For he says, ' thou shalt have no other gods before me.'—The former attributes to himself the works of God ; so does the latter, in the most explicit manner. ' Who hath made man's mouth ? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind ? have not I JEHOVAH ? I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders—I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt—I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'—Does Jesus bear very high and honorable characters ? so does this angel. For he is called God, and JEHOVAH, repeatedly ; he is also denominated the LORD GOD of the HEBREWS ; the FEAR of Isaac ; and the JUDGE of the whole earth, in whose presence the renowned Abraham was but dust and ashes ; for it is the same angel of the Lord, concerning whom all these things are spoken.

Now as these characters, in the opinion of our adversaries, are too high and grand for Jesus Christ ; they ought, upon their principles, to consider this angel as usurping the glory of God. But if so, he betrays the Israelites into impiety, and becomes their idol. Consequently, the religion which he teaches, the religion which he establishes, has not sufficient criteria to distinguish it from imposture.—You meet, I allow, with many wonderful and supernatural things in the establishment of it ; but then you find them produced by one who usurps the glory of the true God, which is a character of the spirit of darkness. What a blasphemous thought ! what a detestable suspicion ! Does the spirit of darkness concern himself in the holiness and happiness of men, that

he should give them so pure and perfect a law ? Impossible ! We may rest assured, therefore, that the principle which leads to such a monstrous and horrid conclusion, must be false.

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## CHAP. II.

The proposition proved, in respect of the Christian Religion.

**W**HAT has been said of the angel who appeared to Moses, may be asserted of Jesus Christ, if the doctrine of our opposers be true. To prove and illustrate the point, I would offer the following things to the reader's consideration.

The New Testament, it is evident, ascribes the most signal works of God to Jesus Christ : such as, the *creation* of all things, which had always characterized the God of Israel ; the *preservation* of all things, which belongs to the Creator ; and the *redemption* of the world, which the prophets refer to the Supreme Being, and to him only. The same infallible rule of our faith attributes to him the *perfections*, and *names*, and *glory* of God. There he is described, as *equal* with God, as *one* with God, and as *God blessed for ever*.—When, therefore, it is considered, that all these things were said and recorded of him, by *his* direction and under *his* inspiration, we may venture to affirm ; that a proud, presumptuous, rebellious creature, whose intention it was to invade the honor, and to put himself in the place of God, could not have adopted a more promising mode of proceeding, or have better succeeded in his design. But these things deserve a more particular consideration.

The New Testament ascribes to Jesus Christ the most magnificent and signal *works* of God. To begin with the work of *creation*. Could Paul, intending to describe his divine Master as the Creator of all things, have used more emphatical, or more pertinent expressions than

these? 'For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created *by* him, and *for* him. And He is before all things, and by him all things consist.' Of him it is said, 'there is—one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. He laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his hands.'—The *preservation* of the world, or the *conservation* of all things, is also attributed to him. For it is expressly said, 'by him all things consist, 'He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.'—The *administration of Providence*; and, especially, the *care of believers*. 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' A promise this, which Christ could not perform, as man, but only as God: because, as man, he is limited by time and place; as God, he acts independently on both. To say that he is in the midst of our religious assemblies 'by his Spirit,' is not sufficient. For if the Spirit intended be the Spirit of Christ, Christ must be God; because that Spirit is present, with devout worshippers, in all places at the same time. But that Jesus is really and properly God, our opponents will not allow. The Spirit in question, therefore, must be that of the Father, and not of Christ: consequently, not our Lord, but the Divine Father, is present in our assemblies. Nor is Jesus said to be in the midst of his people 'by faith,' which is a gift of the Holy Ghost. Elisha received a portion of the spirit of Elijah, in receiving from God such gifts as were similar to those of Elijah; yet it is never said that Elijah was with the Jews, or in the midst of their assemblies, after his ascension into heaven.—That greatest of all Divine transactions, that most wonderful of all Divine works, REDEMPTION, is attributed to him in a peculiar manner. Hence he is so often, and in the most emphatical sense, called the SAVIOUR and

REDEEMER : and hence the church is represented as his property and purchase. ‘The church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.’ Remarkable words ! They strongly imply, that Jesus, the Redeemer, is God ; and that he is declared to be so, by the work of redemption. They lead us also to reflect on that gracious declaration, by an ancient prophet ; ‘Your God will come —he will come and save you.’—Our *sanctification* is attributed to him. He enlightens our minds and converts our hearts. He quickens the dead in sin, and in his hands the saints are preserved to eternal life. Yet sanctification is a Divine work : ‘for it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.’ The Scriptures attribute the work of *glorification* also to Jesus Christ. ‘He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment ; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life—Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out—To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.’

The *perfections* of God are ascribed to Jesus Christ.—The *power* of God. He ‘upholdeth all things by the word of his power.’—The *knowledge* of God. All ‘the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and heart—Lord, thou knowest all things.’—The *eternity* of God. ‘His name shall be called—The everlasting Father. Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.’—The *immensity* of God. ‘No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven ; even the Son of man which is in heaven.’—The *truth* and *faithfulness* of God. ‘I am the truth—Thus saith the Amen.’—The *mercy* of God : for He pardoneth sin.—The *authority* of God : for he commanded the gospel to be preached in *his own* name ; and sent his disciples to ‘baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;’ and, as the Judge of all, He declares, ‘I will give to every one according to his works.’ He also gave power to the apostles to work miracles in his name, as the prophets wrought miracles in the name of God.—The *justice* of God. For

of Him the Baptist speaks, when he says; ‘He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’

Jesus Christ also bears the most eminent and expressive *titles* of Deity. The Most High, is a character evidently peculiar to the true God. Yet Zacharias, when full of the Holy Spirit, calls our Lord. ‘The Highest,’ or the Most High.—The majesty of God is expressed, in the Old Testament, by the title, ‘King of glory:’ Christ is called in the New. ‘The Lord of glory.’—The God of Israel is called ‘The Holy One;’ Jesus, according to the evangelist John’s application of Isaiah’s vision, is adored by the seraphim as the ‘thrice Holy Lord.’—He is also styled, the Saviour; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; the First and the Last; which are titles of the Supreme Being.

Again: He is declared to be, one with God; equal with God; the same with God. He is *one* with God. ‘I and the Father are *one*,’ says the Amen, the faithful and the true Witness. *ONE*; not in *person*. for they are distinct: besides, the word *ἐν*, is in the neuter gender, and will not bear such an interpretation. Nor in *consent*; for the sense is too low: it asserts nothing of our Divine Lord, but what may be affirmed of every creature that is perfectly holy. All the saints in light, and all the angels in glory, are one with the Father, by a consent of will; they having no inclination, no desire, contrary to his. It must, therefore, be an unity of *essence* that is here intended. And that it is so, appears from the context. For Jesus having declared, in the immediately preceding verses, that ‘his sheep shall never perish,’ and that none shall pluck them, either out of his own, or out of his Father’s hands; adds, to confirm the assertion, and to justify his claim of invincible, Divine power; ‘I and the Father are *one*.’ It is, therefore, an *unity of power* which he means. But he who asserts, that two are one by an unity of power; affirms that they are one by an unity of essence. A Christian, in the present state, may be one with God, by an unity of consent; he having nothing to do, in order to such an unity, but cordially to acquiesce in the methods of Divine providence and

grace : but he could not without blasphemy say ; ‘ These, ‘ or those, shall never perish ; nor shall any one pluck ‘ them out of mine, or my Father’s hand. I and the ‘ Father are one.’ But that which removes every doubt, in this respect, is, these expressions are explained, and our sense of them supported, by other passages perfectly similar.

Jesus Christ is *equal* with God. ‘ He thought it not ‘ robbery to be equal with God,’ says an unerring writer. This equality must include something greater, and something more Divine, than an unity of consent between Christ and the Father. Nothing short of an unity of *essence* can answer the import of the phrase ; for, otherwise, it would contradict that high demand, so often repeated by Jehovah ; ‘ To whom will ye liken me, and ‘ make me equal, and compare me, that we may be ‘ like ?’—Some, perhaps, may say ; ‘ Jesus Christ is ‘ equal with God, because the Father has exalted him to an equality.’ An *equality*, in what respect ? Of *nature* ? Our adversaries cannot suppose it. Of *offices, trusts, and honors* ? But the delegation and grant of these necessarily suppose, that he who receives them is, in *that respect*, inferior to him who confers them. That the Father therefore, should exalt Christ to an *equality* with him, implies a contradiction : because in whatever respect any one is exalted by him, in that very respect he must be *inferior* to him. Jesus Christ we freely allow, is highly exalted by the Father ; but that exaltation regards his person, character, and state, *as mediator* ; under which consideration, though he is the church’s head, yet he is the Father’s righteous servant.—Besides, the glory of the Great Supreme must be incommunicable.

Again : To be *one* with God ; to be *equal* with God ; to be God’s *own Son* ; and, to be *God* ; are, in the language of inspiration, phrases of a similar import, and may be safely explained one by another. So, we find, the Jews understood them. For when our Lord said, ‘ I and the Father are one ;’ they took up stones to stone him. And when Jesus asked them the reason of their

outrageous conduct, they answered; ‘Because that ‘thou, being a man, makest thyself God.’ From whence it is evident, that, in their opinion, to be *one* with the Father, and to be *God*, are the same thing — In the same exalted point of light they considered the character, *Son of God*, as assumed by Jesus Christ. For they looked upon him as appropriating it to himself, in a *proper*, not in a *figurative* sense. No, they would never have made such a stir, nor have laid so heavy a charge against him, if the only cause of complaint had been; That he called himself the Son of God, by a *metaphor*, or by *adoption*. For they considered themselves as the adopted sons of God; saying, ‘We have one Father, even God.’ They, therefore, must mean something very different from this, when they say; ‘We have a law, and by our law he ‘ought to die, because he made himself the Son of ‘God.’ And, in another place, they explain themselves; they let us know more fully what they understood by the august character. For when Jesus, vindicating his conduct in healing the impotent man on the sabbath-day, said; ‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work: ‘they sought the more to kill him; because he not only ‘had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was ‘his Father, making himself equal with God.’ From which it is manifest, that to be ‘God’s own Son,’ and to be ‘equal with God,’ were the same thing in their account. And, indeed, the characters, *own Son*, and *only Son*, naturally signify an *equality*, a *sameness of essence*. — We have no reason, therefore, to be surprised that the Jews, taking his words in their proper sense, should think that he claimed and asserted an equality with God. Nor did our Lord give them any intimation, that they had misunderstood him; nor yet the evangelist, as he does in several other instances of much less importance; which silence is a strong presumptive proof, that they were not under a mistake about the sense of the words: for such a mistake, on the principles of our opposers, might have been an occasion of idolatry in them; and a mistake of that kind, not remarked by the historian, would be calculated to answer the same pernicious purpose in succeeding generations.



Nothing can be more opposite than the conduct of those Jews, who accused Christ of blasphemy ; and that of others, who said of Herod, ‘ It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.’ When, therefore, we justify the one, we must condemn the other. The *former* will not allow Jesus to speak of himself as God, because he is a man : the *latter* will not have Herod to express himself as a man, but ascribe to him the voice of God. Now if providence condemn the impiety of *these*, by punishing Herod in a signal manner, for not rejecting their blasphemous applause ; Heaven, on the hypothesis of our opposers, must approve the language of *those* who exclaim against Jesus Christ, for making himself equal with God. And if their charge of blasphemy had been founded on a mistake, by taking his words in a wrong sense ; he ought, one would think, to have set them right, by explaining the terms he used. But if he refused to correct so dangerous a mistake on *their* account, yet was it not necessary that he should have done it on *ours* ? that when we read his gospel, we might not entertain the detestable thought, that he equalled himself with the Most High. If, however, he thought it proper not to explain himself, at that time ; yet it might have been expected, that his disciples should have given us the true sense of ~~the~~ mysterious words, when they reported them.

But, so far from this, the evangelists and apostles, who undoubtedly knew his meaning ; and who knew also that he was condemned for a design to *abolish* the law of Moses, and for having *blasphemed* the sovereign majesty of God, by claiming an equality with him ; clear him in the *former* case, and leave us perfectly satisfied, by showing in what sense he abolished the law, and in what respects he fulfilled it. But, as to the *latter*, they take no notice of it. Nay, they not only forbear to vindicate him from the charge of blasphemy, but seem to write as if they intended to confirm the accusation. For, knowing what had passed, they give him such titles of grandeur and Divinity after his resurrection, as he never assumed while he was upon earth. What is it, then, on the hypothesis

of our opponents, but to authorize the charge of blasphemy, which the Jews fastened upon him, for Paul to assert ; ‘ He thought it not robbery TO BE EQUAL WITH ‘ GOD ?’

Further : After these invincible reasons to the contrary, for invincible they are on the principles of our adversaries ; the apostles represent their Master as being the same with God ; by saying many sublime things of him, which never were, and which never could be said of any but the true God, without impiety. They call him God ; God, with the highest epithets. For example : They call him **THE GREAT GOD ; THE TRUE GOD ; GOD OVER ALL BLESSED FOR EVER.** In their infallible writings he is denominated, **THE LORD ;** (the expression by which the Seventy render the most august names of God) *the Lord of Glory ; my Lord and my God ; the God of Israel ; the King of kings and Lord of Lords. He who is, and was, and is to come.* Such are the characters given by the apostles to Jesus Christ, by which to justify him against the charge of ‘ making himself equal with ‘ God ;’ and by which to confute the formal and solemn accusation, drawn up against him in the face of the whole world, under which he died !

The genuine import of several of those titles which I have just mentioned, has been already considered : I shall, therefore, only touch upon a few of them. *The Lord God of Israel*, is a title given to Jesus Christ by the angel to Zecharias, when foretelling the honorable and successful work of John the Baptist. These are his words : ‘ And many of the children of Israel shall he ‘ turn to *the Lord their God.* And he shall go before ‘ Him, in the spirit and power of Elias.’ He before whom the Baptist went, was the Lord, the God of Israel. But He before whom he went, was Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, therefore, is the God of Israel.

He is called *the true God.* ‘ 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.’ That interpretation

which refers these words, ‘ This is the true God,’ to the Father, and not to the Son, is sufficiently refuted by producing the passage.

*The Great God*, is another of his Divine titles. ‘ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of *the Great God*, and, or even, our Saviour Jesus Christ.’ The article\* which, in the original, is put before *Great God*, and belongs equally to *Saviour*, is a proof that both these characters are applied to the same Person ; a certain proof that our Lord is here called *the Great God*, as well as *the Saviour*. The adjective *great*, being connected with the term *Saviour*, as well as with the term *God* ; which is the reason why the Greek article is put before the epithet *great* and not before the noun *God*.

The same divinely glorious Person is called, *God over all blessed for ever*. ‘ Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, *who is over all, God blessed for ever*.’ The earnest desire of our opponents, to evade the force of this passage, is evident by their maintaining, that the words, ‘ *who is over all, God blessed for ever*,’ relate to God the Father ; though he is not so much as mentioned in the preceding verses, and though the term *Christ* is the noun, to which the relative *who* naturally and necessarily belongs.

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### CHAP. III.

IF JESUS CHRIST be not the true God, the Christian Religion has not sufficient Criteria, by which to distinguish it from Idolatry and Imposture.

AND now, if the principles of our adversaries be true, it is no very difficult thing to make good of the *Christian*, what we have already proved of the *Jewish* religion : that is, horrid idea ! it is not distinguishable from idolatry and imposture.

\* τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος, Tit. ii. 13.



the charge of covetousness, nor from the guilt of idolatry. —A man who should assume the titles and names of God, with a view to be worshipped, would set himself up for an idol, though he were once and again to confess, That God is greater than he. Or, to vary the comparison, a subject who should ascribe to himself all the works of his sovereign ; assume his titles ; and call himself, the true king, the great king, and the lord of the state, whom all around are bound to obey ;—who should cause himself to be addressed as king, and exact such honors as were never given to any but the real monarch ; would certainly be guilty of high treason, though he might have said, once at least, the king is greater than I.

Again: The Christian religion, according to the Socinian hypothesis, is not distinguishable from *imposture* ; is little better than an impious comedy, which is calculated to dishonor God and deceive mankind. For, shocking to imagine ! Jesus Christ appears in the church much like an actor on the stage ; who takes the names and titles of a king ; who attributes to himself his works, and requires his honors, without being really what he pretends to be. Yet with this difference, a player on the stage, when acting the part of a sovereign, does not pretend that the play is an important reality ; nor that the spectators should pay him the honors of royalty, after the representation ; nor yet that they should be sincerely persuaded he is a king, while the play continues. But here according to the impious genius of the Socinian system, we have a kind of comedy, in which a mere man calls himself GOD ; the GREAT GOD ; the MIGHTY GOD ; and the TRUE GOD ;—who requires Divine honors, and, *as* God, has received them from his most eminent disciples, though he depend on God for his very existence.

That the Christian religion is turned, by the Socinian system, into an empty appearance and mere show, is evident. For you find in it, a *representative* God and a *metaphorical* sacrifice ; an atonement, that is only so in *appearance*, and an *imaginary* hell : for the wicked, according to the Socinians, shall be annihilated.

‘ But the miracles which Jesus wrought were true and  
‘ real ; nor ought they to be compared with the represen-  
‘ tations of the stage.’ This consideration, detached from  
other things, is of little weight. For of what worth are  
miracles performed by one, who attempted to seat him-  
self on the throne of the Deity ? If Jesus usurp the glory  
of God, neither humility, nor justice, nor zeal for God,  
nor love to men, can be found in him. On this supposi-  
tion, all his virtues and all his piety are obscured and lost :  
and in their stead we behold, pride and ambition, injustice  
and sacrilege, blasphemy and seduction. For as miracles,  
accompanied with holiness, are evidently wrought by the  
Spirit of God ; so those works, however amazing, which  
patronize blasphemy and idolatry, ought ever to be con-  
sidered as proceeding from the spirit of darkness.

But I shall not further enlarge on this argument, nor  
any longer defile my paper with such horrid suppositions.  
Enough, I persuade myself, has been said to prove, into  
what a dreadful abyss the principles of our adversaries  
lead. Enough also has been said to evince, that the  
DEITY of Jesus Christ is ESSENTIAL to the Christian re-  
ligion ; which is the grand principle I proposed to de-  
monstrate.

## SECTION VI.

The principal objections answered ; and some Considerations, adapted to relieve the mind respecting the Difficulties which attend this Great Mystery.

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### CHAP. I.

Divine Revelation, not depraved Reason, to be our Guide in all inquiries of this nature.

**H**AVING established the truth, by arguments drawn from the Records of Inspiration ; our next business is, to answer the principal objections, which are made by our opponents. They argue against us both from reason and Scripture ; but while we are firmly persuaded that neither sound reason, nor the Holy Scriptures, rightly understood, will afford any *real* objection against us ; we cannot forbear observing, that our opposers lay more stress on arguments drawn from *reason*, than on those derived from *Divine Revelation*. Strange as this conduct may appear to some, who are not versed in these controversies, we cannot easily question the fact, if we consider the language of their most celebrated writers.—Smaicius, for instance, is not ashamed thus to express himself ; ‘ We believe, that though we should find it, ‘ not *once*, nor *twice*, but *very frequently* and *most expressly* written in the Scripture, *That God was made man* ; it would be much better, as it is an absurd proposition, *entirely contrary to sound reason*, and full of blasphemy, to invent some way of speaking, which ‘ might render it safe to be affirmed of God, rather than

‘to understand it in the literal sense.’\* As if he had said, we are determined to regulate, not our theological sentiments, by the Scriptures; but the Scriptures, by our preconceived opinions. But let us consider this point a little more particularly.

\* These are his words: ‘Credimus, etiamsi non *semel* atque *iterum*, sed SATIS CREBRO ET DISERTISSIME SCRIPTUM extaret, *Deum esse hominem factum*. multo satius esse, quia hæc res sit absurda, ET SANÆ RATIONI PLANE CONTRARIA, et in Deum blasphemæ, MODUM ALI QUAM DICENDI COMMINISCI, quo ista de Deo dici possint, quam ista simpliciter ita ut verba sonant intelligere’ SMAL. *Homil. VIII. ad Cap. I. Joh.*

To these bold assertions of SMALCIUS, in opposition to the doctrine of the incarnation, may be added the no less unwarrantable declarations of SOCINUS and SCHLICHTINGIUS: the *former*, in reference to the substitution and atonement of Christ, the *latter*, relating to the efficacy of Divine grace and the freedom of the human will—‘Ego quidem, saith SOCINUS, etiamsi non *semel* sed SÆPE id in Sacris Monumentis scriptum, extaret, non idcirco tamen rem ita prorsus se habere crederem, ut vos opinamini. Quum ea quæ fieri non posse aperte constat, Divinis etiam Uraculis ea fuisse in speciem attestantibus, nequaquam admittantur; et idcirco sacra verba in ELICUM SENSUM quam ipsa sonant per INUSITATOS ETIAM TROPOS quandoque explicantur’ *De Servat. Part. III. Cap. VI.* That is, Though it [the doctrine of the atonement and satisfaction of Christ] were found, not only *once*, but FREQUENTLY WRITTEN in the Holy Scriptures; I, indeed, would not therefore believe it to be entirely as you suppose. Though the Divine Oracles may attest things to be so, in appearance yet they cannot, by any means, be admitted, because they are very evidently impossible; and, therefore, the sacred words are sometimes explained, EVEN BY UNUSUAL TROPES, to a SENSE DIFFERENT from their literal signification.

The following are the words of SCHLICHTINGIUS; ‘Itaque non quia utrumque Scriptura dicit propterea hæc inter se non pugnare concludendum est; sed potius quia hæc inter se pugnant ideo alterutrum a Scriptura non dici statuendum est.’ *Ad Meissn. Def. Socin* p 20—That is, We cannot conclude, because the Scripture affirms them both, [*i.e.* the *energy* of Divine grace, and the *freedom* of the human will] that therefore they are not repugnant the one to the other; but, as these two things are inconsistent, we ought rather to conclude, that one of them is not mentioned in Scripture.

The above quotations from Smalcus and Socinus, with many judicious remarks on the *Use and Abuse of Reason, relating to the Mysteries of Faith*, may be found in the learned, accurate, and evangelical WITTIUS. See his *Misael. Sac.* Tom. II. Exercit. XVII.



If human reason had not been corrupted by sin, we might have placed a great degree of dependence upon it; yet even then it would not have been rational, to rely more on the powers of our own understanding, than on the light of Divine Revelation, supposing such a Revelation to have been enjoyed: because the knowledge of man, when his reason was unimpaired, was limited; but the knowledge of God is infinite. What a disparity, then, must there be, when the human understanding is not only limited, but *corrupted*; when the unavoidable commerce between a man's thoughts and his depraved passions, fills his mind with a multitude of prejudices, which have a tendency in various ways to disguise, or conceal, the truth!—Were we bound to believe nothing but what appears conformable to reason, in its present state, we might soon reject the great objects revealed in the gospel, in general. For, after all the strenuous efforts of our adversaries, to remove the great difficulties attending the Christian religion; there are, and there always will be, such depths in it, as are unfathomable by the plummet of human reason. On this account, the apostle of the Gentiles calls the gospel *foolishness*. If the doctrines of Christianity had nothing mysterious and inexplicable in them, there would be no difficulty in believing; nor would faith be any more the gift of God, than the persuasion we have of natural truths. Consequently, there would be no more occasion for the agency of the Holy Spirit, in order to our believing the truths of the gospel, than there is to our understanding the problems of geometry.

To act on this principle of our opposers is to treat God, as if he were less worthy of credit than an honest man. A fallible mortal, who has not forfeited his character, as a person of veracity, would take it deservedly ill, if, when speaking of any extraordinary fact, of which he was an eye-witness, he was to say, 'Take my word for it; it is as I assert:' and we should reply, 'We must consider what you say. If we find it agreeable to our reason, we will believe you; if not, we shall entirely reject your testimony.' If, then, such language

would be reckoned indecent towards a fellow-worm : what must we think of a similar conduct, in regard to God, who is equally incapable of deceiving us, as he is of being deceived ?

‘ But all divines have used the same prudence in matters of less importance to the glory of God. They have thought themselves warranted to understand, not in a literal, but a figurative sense, all such passages of Scripture as would otherwise appear inconsistent with the perfection and glory of the Divine Majesty. As for example, when it is said, ‘ God came down ; God was wroth :’ and when such expressions are used, as attribute the members of a human body to the Supreme Being.—To which I reply ; The instances adduced are far from being parallel. The doctrine of the incarnation is not incompatible with the glory of the Divine Majesty, as is the opinion of the Anthropomorphites : for we cannot ascribe to God the parts of a human body, without supposing bounds, mutability, and imperfection in him. But the doctrine of the incarnation infers no such impious absurdities. The Divine nature undergoes no alteration, by its union with the human nature. Nor do the expressions of Scripture, understood in their most natural sense, and compared one with another, impose a necessity upon us of being Anthropomorphites ; or to attribute our weaknesses and imperfections to God. For nature and reason do not speak louder than Divine Revelation, that God is *unchangeable*—That the heaven of heavens *cannot contain him*—That he is *not like a man*, nor any of his creatures.

If reason were to be the rule of our faith, Revelation would be superseded. For, to what purpose should God make known the counsel of his will, if reason were allowed to say ; ‘ This is not the counsel of God. It cannot be, for I do not comprehend it ?’ Thus the conscience would be influenced, not by Revelation, but by the doubt which reason had raised upon it — Besides, if it were lawful for human reason to sit in judgment on Divine Revelation, the darkness introduced on our minds, by sin, could never be dissipated. For how

should reason, proud of her own pretended abilities, and resolved to correct Revelation itself, be enlightened? According to this arrogant and self-sufficient notion, faith in the Divine testimony is entirely set aside; reason being resolved on following her own light, in preference to that of God in the Scriptures. So that, instead of saying, I believe such a proposition, how incredible soever it may seem, because God has revealed it; we must say, though God has revealed it in the most plain and express terms, we will not believe it, because it appears incredible to us.—Again: were we thus to exalt reason, what is usually called Divine faith, would be much inferior to that which is human: because we should not pay so great a regard to the declarations of God, as to those of our parents, masters and tutors; on whose bare authority we receive a great number of truths, relating to the affairs of common life. But, in such a case, where is humility, where is that filial, teachable spirit, which is one of the marks of our adoption and regeneration? What need of submitting to the dictates of Inspiration, because it is the Eternal Sovereign who speaks; when we have nothing to do but convince ourselves of all necessary truths, by their own internal characters; and to reject, or embrace them, in exact proportion as they agree or disagree with the light of our own understanding?

‘Reason, our opponents will say, *reason* is the foundation of faith: consequently, faith cannot be more certain than reason.’—Reason, I confess, leads to Revelation; because we are taught by it, that God is infallibly wise, and that *we* are liable to err; that we cannot, therefore, do better than regard the light of Revelation, in preference to the uncertain conjectures of our own minds. But then, as reason leads us to this infallible rule, which was given by uncontrollable authority; she requires us to receive, with submission, whatever the Great Revealer asserts, as a fact; commands, as a duty; or proposes, as an object of faith.—We may distinguish three things in faith; and these are, the principle, the discretion, and the conclusion of it. That fundamental

maxim and first idea in Revealed religion, ‘ whatever God says is true ;’ I call the *principle* of faith. Its *discretion*, is that examination by which we assure ourselves that God speaks, and endeavour to understand what he means. And the *conclusion* of it, is that assent which we give to the truth of a proposition, because it is contained in the Revelation of God ; and because we are perfectly satisfied, that whatever God says must be true. These things premised, I readily grant, that reason leads us to the *principle* of faith. By the purest light of our understanding we are persuaded, that whatever God says is true. Reason also, I freely acknowledge, makes the *discretion* of faith : because it is that faculty of the mind which is impressed with those characters of Divinity, that are contained in Revelation ; and afterwards inquires, whether such or such a doctrine be revealed, by examining and comparing one passage of Scripture with another. But this is all ; and reason must acquiesce in what God says, without presuming to call into question the truth or the propriety of his words, when once their meaning appears. The contrary disposition is not divine faith, but an intolerable temerity of a kind of reason that would be dependent on God. We may, therefore, safely conclude, without the imputation of rashness, that the language of Smalcus, in the passage produced, is pregnant with blasphemy against the Revelation of God : and in direct opposition to it we should say ; though this proposition, ‘ God was made man,’ appeared much more contrary to reason than it really does ; yet we ought to conclude, that we are under a mistake, and that the proposition expresses a wonderful fact and a capital truth, because it is contained in the WORD of JEHOVAH — These two declarations compared, it will appear, that the *former* is daring and presumptuous ; as it includes a manifest preference of the powers of our own understanding, to the infallible dictates of inspiration ; which is directly contrary to the nature of true faith. But the *latter* is modest, humble, rational ; as it implies a reverence for Divine authority, and an evident preference of the light of God’s Revelation, to

that of our own reason; dispositions these, which are essential to real faith.\*

\* To what is here said by our Author on this interesting subject, I beg leave to subjoin the reasoning of a late elegant and evangelical writer, and the testimony of a great genius in the beginning of the last century, relating to the same truth. The former expresses himself thus: 'We by no means approve of a general and indiscriminate outcry against reason. This would be injurious to our sacred cause, and imply a reflection on our holy religion; as though it could not bear the scrutiny of reason. Whereas it will always appear to be a reasonable system; a reasonable service; reason in its highest refinement.—If indeed reason affects to be self-sufficient, she is an impotent usurper: but if she act in a state of dependence, she is a valuable servant. Does she pretend to be our light, in matters of a spiritual and heavenly nature? she is then a despicable dotard, or an *ignis fatuus*. Does she kindle her torch at the fire of Revelation? she may then be a discernor of doctrines, and we will call her 'The candle of the Lord.' Submitting to her Divine Author, and learning at the feet of Omniscience, she is reason *in her senses*; presuming to be equal with the All-wise: undertaking to comprehend his works, or daring to dispute his word; she is reason *run mad*. In this quality we disclaim and cashier her; in the other we cherish and employ her.—Though I could not, by the powers of my reason discover—though I cannot, by the exercise of my reason fully explain all the articles of my belief; yet I can 'give a reason,' a very satisfactory reason, 'of the hope that is in me.' This is what the apostle requires us to do; and without doing this, we are neither wise nor happy.'

The latter bears his testimony in the following words: 'The prerogative of God comprehends the whole man; and is extended, as well to the *reason*, as to the *will* of man: that is, that man renounce himself wholly, and draw near to God. Wherefore, as we are to *obey his law*, though we find a reluctance in our *will*; so we are to *believe his word*, though we find a reluctance in our *reason*, we give assent to the *matter*, not to the *author*; which is no more than we would do towards a suspected and discredited witness.—Sacred theology is grounded on, and must be deduced from, the Oracles of God; and not from the light of nature, or the dictates of reason.—' TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Lord BACON'S *Advancement of Learning*. p. 458, 469.

## CHAP. II.

An objection from the supposed Silence of the Scripture, answered.

**T**HAT we may not be suspected of weakening the arguments of our adversaries, we shall make use of their words ; and, to avoid prolixity, we contract them a little, the argument, then, which appears to us to be the first in order, and one of the most plausible, is that which they form on the supposed *silence* of the Scripture, as to the mystery of the Incarnation.

‘ We see, say they, that those things which are difficult to be believed, yet absolutely necessary to salvation, are very frequently and plainly expressed in the Scriptures. Such, for instance, as the creation of heaven and earth ; the care which God takes of human affairs ; his knowledge of our thoughts ; the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Various things also of less importance, are clearly and distinctly contained in Holy Writ. For example, ‘ That Jesus Christ is of the seed of David ’— Now, if the incarnation of the Supreme God were a fact, it would be an article of faith absolutely necessary, and at the same time very difficult to be believed. It ought, therefore, to have been very clearly asserted in the Scripture ; and so frequently inculcated, by the sacred writers, who designed to promote and secure our happiness, that none should have had any reason to doubt whether it was a part of Divine Revelation. Yet it appears to us, that there is no such thing contained in their writings. For the passages, produced by our adversaries to prove the tenet, are of such a nature, that they are obliged to draw several consequences from them, before they can infer the incarnation of the Most High God ; or, that he was made man.—Nor is the doctrine of the incarnation mentioned where it should be, supposing it were true. For, when Matthew and Luke wrote the history of the birth of Christ, and relate a variety of particulars, of much less importance than the incarna-

‘ tion of the supreme God ; how is it possible they should  
‘ have omitted, should have entirely passed over in si-  
‘ lence, that wonderful fact, had it been true ? They in-  
‘ form us, that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost ;  
‘ that he was born of a virgin, in the days of Augustus,  
‘ and at the town of Bethlehem, with many other partic-  
‘ ulars ; why then, should they omit the most important  
‘ and wonderful thing, and that which was more necessa-  
‘ ry to be known and believed than any other in the whole  
‘ narration ? Luke has not forgotten the manger, in  
‘ which the new-born Saviour was laid ; yet he has omit-  
‘ ted the incarnation of the supreme God, and says no-  
‘ thing about the hypostatical union of the Divine  
‘ and human nature. How came it to pass, that Mark  
‘ should forget the whole history of Christ’s birth, which  
‘ should have included the incarnation ; and John, whom  
‘ they will have to speak of it, should pass over it so  
‘ slightly, and express himself with so much obscurity ?—  
‘ Again : How came the apostles to make no mention of  
‘ so important a doctrine, when they preached the gospel,  
‘ and exhorted men to believe on Jesus Christ ; and, to  
‘ induce them so to do, set his majesty before their eyes ?  
‘ Read the first sermon that Peter preached to the people,  
‘ after he had received the Holy Ghost ; the success of  
‘ which was so great, that about three thousand souls be-  
‘ lieved on Jesus Christ and were baptized : Consider  
‘ also his second exhortation to the people, and you may  
‘ see, that he makes no mention of the incarnation in ei-  
‘ ther of them. Nor will you find it in any of this apos-  
‘ tle’s discourses concerning Christ ; whether to the  
‘ rulers and elders of the people, or to Cornelius, or to  
‘ others. Paul says nothing of it, in the synagogue at  
‘ Antioch ; in Arcopagus, at Athens ; nor before Felix  
‘ and Agrippa, at Cesarea. Yet, certainly, he had a favour-  
‘ able opportunity at Athens, to have explained this mys-  
‘ tery, when he talked to the Athenians about the unknown  
‘ God.’

In answer to this objection, let the following things be considered. It seems very extraordinary, that they who have so little regard for the Scripture, should improve

its very *silence* into an argument against us. At one time they declare, ‘ Though the Scripture should *expressly* and *repeatedly* say, that God was made man, they would not believe it ;’ at another, they argue against us from the supposed *silence* of that sacred Volume. Such conduct is neither candid nor consistent.

This objection proceeds on a very dubious principle. It supposes that those truths which are absolutely necessary to be known, yet very difficult to be believed, are most expressly and repeatedly mentioned in the Scripture. But if they mean, *every book* of the Scripture, the maxim is false ; if *the body* of the Scripture, the reasoning is useless ; for we maintain, that the mystery of the incarnation is expressly and repeatedly contained in the body of the Scripture. The maxim understood in the former sense is so evidently false, that we need no other examples to prove it, than those which are mentioned in the objection. The resurrection of the dead and eternal life, so expressly revealed in the gospel, are neither so clearly nor so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the work of creation and the conduct of Providence, which are so repeatedly and strongly expressed in the Old Testament, are not so frequently found in the New.—But must an important and essential truth be contained in *all* the books of the Scripture, or in every *part* of the New Testament ? This is neither necessary, nor possible. It is not *necessary* : because, as the Holy Spirit has given us for the rule of our faith, not any particular book, but the whole canon of the Scripture ; it is quite sufficient if the necessary doctrines be found in the volume of Revelation, though they may not be included in every particular book. Nor is it *possible* : for in the Bible there are several epistles and books too much contracted, to contain *all* that is necessary to be known, believed, and performed.

The objection supposes, that a truth is not evidently contained in Scripture, when it must be inferred by consequences. But here the objector is under a great mistake, as appears from the conduct of our Lord ; who proves the immortality of the soul, by a passage in the.



pentateuch ; though that capital truth is not contained in it, in express terms, but was only inferred consequential-ly.—The author of this objection is under an equal mistake, when he supposes that these truths ; Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost—Our Lord was born of a virgin ; are of less importance to be known and believed, than the doctrine of the incarnation, had it been true. For supposing the incarnation to be a *greater mystery*, than the conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit ; yet the latter is no less necessary to be *believed* than the former. That Jesus Christ came not into the world by ordinary means, is a fact so necessary to be known, that without it we cannot be assured, either of the mystery of the incarnation, or of the benefits of his death. For if the humanity of Jesus had not been free from original guilt and original depravity, it could neither have been united to the Divine Person of the Son of God ; nor have suffered a death capable of expiating the sins of mankind. This consideration will be of use hereafter.

But may we not retort upon our adversaries ? May not the silence of the Scripture be improved, with equal force, against the conception of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and his birth of a virgin ? Yet these are truths, essentially necessary truths, by the confession of all the world. Our opponents cannot dispute them any more than we ; because the conception of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, is the first foundation, according, to them, of his august character, **THE SON OF GOD**. Nor will they deny, that ancient prophecy would have been unfulfilled, if Jesus had not been born of a virgin.\* These truths are also absolutely necessary.—Besides, they are difficult to be believed : for there have been few things in the world more surprising, than to hear of a man born of a *virgin*.—We may, therefore, put the same questions to our opposers, on the miraculous conception and birth of Christ, which they do to us, on the incarnation. We ask, then, if the conception of Christ had been as is generally supposed, how it came to pass that Mark should

\* Isaiah vii. 14.

pass it over in silence? why does not John mention it? Why did not the apostles always insist on the very momentous and necessary truth, when they laboured to convert sinners to Jesus Christ? read the first sermon of Peter to the people, after he had received the Holy Spirit; consider also his second discourse, after he had healed the lame man, who lay at the gate of the temple; and you must soon perceive, that he says nothing expressly about the miraculous conception and birth of his Divine Master. The same apostle speaks afterwards of Jesus, to the rulers and elders of the people to Cornelius and others; but says not a word of the astonishing conception and wonderful birth of his Lord. Nor does Paul say any thing of these astonishing facts, in his discourses in the synagogue, at Antioch; in Areopagus, at Athens; nor before Felix and Agrippa. But ought we from hence to conclude, that the miraculous conception of Jesus is not a fundamental article of the Christian faith? of this our opponents themselves will judge.

‘Yes, they will say, but Matthew and Luke are not silent on this particular.’—Granted; nor are *all* the sacred penmen silent concerning the incarnation. We produce the express words of the Holy Ghost, who informs us; that Christ is ‘IMMANUEL; GOD with us;’ that ‘the mystery of godliness is great, *God was manifest in the flesh;*’ and that ‘the word was God, and *was made flesh.*’ To what purpose, then, is that enumeration of particular passages, which the author of the objection has made? If he means, that the incarnation is not to be found in the Scripture, because it is not contained in the passages to which he refers; we reply, his induction of particulars is imperfect, and cannot warrant his conclusion. For he has cautiously omitted those passages which we produce, in order to prove our sentiment. But if he only intended to collect the occasions on which he supposes it was proper, for the honor of Jesus Christ, that the inspired writers should have mentioned the incarnation; we ask in our turn, why, on the same occasions, they did not mention his conception by the Holy Spirit, and his birth of a virgin? For if, according to our

principles, the son of God, by the miracle of his *incarnation*, became IMMANUEL; Jesus Christ, according to their's, became the *son of God*, by the miracle of his *conception*.

The perfect holiness of Jesus Christ is a truth essential to the Christian religion, and a doctrine of the last importance to our spiritual comfort. The unerring writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, makes all our consolation depend upon it. ‘For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s.’ Yet, if you look into the evangelical history, you will find little, very little, indeed, relating to this capital truth. There, to your amazement, you hear Jesus Christ refusing, to appearance, the epithet *good*; when he says to the young man, ‘there is none good but one, that is God.’ You find, indeed, that our Lord says, ‘I am the light of the world;’ but you must reason to know, whether he means the light of holiness, or the light of truth. You hear him saying, ‘I am meek and lowly in heart;’ but you must learn by inferences, whether his meekness and humility be attended with all other virtues; and also, whether those virtues reside in him to perfection. You may hear him ask his adversaries, with confidence, ‘which of you convinceth me of sin?’ and this, I acknowledge, implies, that he is not an offender like men in common; but yet he does not expressly say, ‘I am without sin.’—I conclude, therefore, that it is not necessary the most interesting truths should be contained in the Scripture, in express and formal terms; and that it suffices to infer them by just and reasonable consequence. For though we had not been favoured with the epistle to the Hebrews; though several passages in other epistles, expressly to the same point, had never been read by us; and though we had never heard that those words in Isaiah, ‘He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth,’ related to Jesus Christ; yet we should have been assured that he

was perfectly holy and righteous ; both by the analogy of faith, and by a multitude of texts, from which we might have inferred the important consequence.—Hence also it appears, that there is no necessity for a capital and fundamental truth, to be mentioned in every page of the Scripture, nor yet in every book of which that Sacred Volume consists. For the whole economy of salvation, and all our happiness, depend on the consummate holiness of Jesus Christ ; and yet you may read a great part of the Bible, and not find it so much as once mentioned.

But, more directly to answer this objection, it may be observed ; that the sacred writers keep a mysterious silence, on some occasions, even on matters of great importance ; which silence may be attributed to various causes. Sometimes to the nature of that economy under which they wrote. So Moses and the prophets did not speak so clearly of the life to come, as Jesus Christ ; because the perspicuity of revelation, in this respect, was to be a distinguishing character of the Messiah's appearance ; and life and immortality were to be revealed by him. Nor was it agreeable to the wisdom of God, that Christ, in his personal ministry, should speak so clearly concerning the spirituality, or so fully concerning the mysteries, of his kingdom ; as the apostles did after his ascension, when led into all the truth by the Holy Spirit. —At other times the spirit of wisdom makes use of the clearest and easiest things, to lead us into those which are more abstruse and difficult. The great things which the apostles were called to declare, were *facts* and *doctrines* ; some of which doctrines were very mysterious. The *former* were objects of sense ; the *latter* abstract and spiritual. Now it would have been preposterous for them to have recommended matters of fact, by first recommending mysterious doctrines : because the order of nature and reason requires, that the latter should be recommended, by relating and authenticating the former. If only matters of fact had been necessary to be laid before us, the four gospels would have comprised the whole of the New Testament : they being the history of such facts as are necessary to our salvation. But as, in the grand

scheme of salvation, there are mysterious doctrines, with which it is requisite mankind should be acquainted ; the apostles were inspired to write the other parts of the New Testament, that we might be informed of them. And if so, it is far from being strange that Peter, in his first sermon, after he had received the Holy Ghost, should engage the attention of his auditors, by making remarks on that Divine effusion, the effects of which were so sensible and so wonderful, without saying any thing about the incarnation. Nor is it at all amazing that the same apostle, after he had healed the poor beggar that lay at the gate of the temple, and perceived the astonishment of the people, should take occasion to speak of our Lord's resurrection, in whose name he wrought the miracle ; and that he should insist on the leading circumstances of the life and death of his Divine Master, as being adapted to enlighten their minds and alarm their consciences, to soften their hearts and subdue their pride—much better adapted, to answer these impotent ends, than a discourse on the mysterious hypostatical union would have been. The same remark may be made on the conduct of Paul, on similar occasions.—The silence objected against us is frequently to be ascribed to the marvellous condescension of God, in proportioning his instructions to our capacities. As it is written, ‘ I have ‘ yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear ‘ them now.’ And again, ‘ we have many things to say ‘ and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.’ These assertions, and the reason on which they proceed, show the propriety of Peter's conduct and that of other apostles, when speaking to sinners not yet converted, or to such as had but just received the light of the gospel : whom they treat as infants, in the grace of God and the knowledge of Christ, rather than as adults ; laying before them the plainest truths, and reserving the more abstruse till a fitter season occurred.

The objection boldly suggests, that the Scripture is *entirely* silent, as to the doctrine of the incarnation. But this is a great mistake. For we find hardly any remarkable occasion to make it known, but the Holy Spirit im-

proves it for that purpose. Jesus, at his birth, is called ‘God with us.’ At his baptism he is honored in such a manner as cannot agree to a mere creature. In the history of his life and ministry, by the evangelists, the names and attributes, the works and worship of God, are frequently ascribed to him. And the apostles, in their invaluable writings, act in a similar way, by describing and treating him as the true God.

The objection asserts, that the passages adduced to prove our doctrine are such, that we are obliged to draw several conclusions before they can serve our turn. And what if they were? this would not invalidate the argument formed upon them, provided the conclusions be fairly drawn. But it is a mistake. For the Scripture expressly asserts, that Jesus Christ is ‘God manifested in the flesh’—that he is ‘the word:’ that ‘the word was God:’ and that ‘the word was made flesh.’ Here we need only take the natural sense of the expressions, without any further reasoning, to find the incarnation. For the term *flesh*, is taken, either for the *body*, merely; which cannot be the meaning here, because Christ not only assumed a body, but a body united to a spirit: or it signifies *sin*; but this cannot be intended, because Jesus assumed a holy, not a sinful nature: or it must signify the *human nature*; and this, undoubtedly, is the sense of the term. The obvious meaning, therefore, of the text is; God was manifest in the human nature. If we must reason, it is only for the sense of the terms; not that we may infer, by consequences, a truth which lay concealed. For these two propositions, *God was made man*—*God was manifest in the human nature*—are perfectly equivalent.

## CHAP. III.

An objection from John xvii. 3. answered.

ONE of the principal arguments in favour of the Socinian hypothesis, is formed on those words of our Lord ; ‘ this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent ’— ‘ Nobody questions, says Crellius, but that, by the *true God*, must be understood the Supreme God. When, therefore, Jesus Christ represents his Father to us, as *the only true God* ; it follows, that none but the Father is the Supreme God.’

Before we return a direct answer, it may not be improper to make a few general remarks. Let it, then, be here observed, that as our Lord may be considered, either in a state of the lowest humiliation, or in a state of the highest glory ; so he is variously represented to us, according to these two very different conditions. Accordingly he assumes, in reference to the *former*, such characters as express his abasement ; and, with a view to the *latter*, such as denote his exaltation. In the time of his humiliation, he calls himself ‘ the son of man,’ much more frequently than ‘ the son of God :’ but, after he was glorified, his apostles constantly call him, ‘ the son of God ;’ hardly ever, ‘ the son of man.’ Before his resurrection, his disciples thought they said a great deal in this confession of their faith, ‘ thou art Christ, the son of the living God :’ but their light increasing with his glory, when they saw him risen from the dead, one of them said, ‘ *my Lord and my God !*’ When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he gave them an admirable pattern of devotion in what is called, ‘ the Lord’s prayer ;’ yet in that excellent directory, the name of Christ is not once mentioned. But when the Redeemer is just leaving the world, and is going to be glorified, he says to his disciples ; ‘ whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.’ And, after his exaltation, the church places her hope of Divine acceptance,

in devotional services, entirely in his intercession ; addressing her prayer and praises to the Father, through the hands of her Divine Saviour only. ‘ Unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages—we are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ—If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’—These things considered, it is no wonder that Jesus Christ, when speaking of himself in the time of his humiliation, should speak suitably to that condition ; nor that, in the evangelical history, the Father is more frequently called God, than he ; nor yet that our mediator, on various occasions, should speak of himself, as subject to his Father ; and of the Father, as the Creator of heaven and earth, and the sovereign manager of all events.

Arguments drawn from the silence of the Scripture, are, in some cases excellent ; but in others impertinent and entirely false. Will our opponents assert, for instance, that Christ is not the *redeemer* ; because he taught his disciples the duties of morality, when on the mount, without expressly mentioning the work of redemption ? or, dare they affirm, that he is not an *intercessor* with God ; because, when teaching his disciples to pray, he does not always direct them to ask the blessings they want, in his name ?—Crellius, then, gains no advantage to his cause, by remarking ; ‘ that Jesus Christ, when speaking of himself on various occasions, says nothing greater ; nor yet his apostles, when speaking of him, than that he is *the son of God*.’ For as, on some occasions, Christ spake of himself as a man ; as, on others, he spake of himself as a prophet, without saying any thing of his kingly, or priestly office ; and yet we cannot with any appearance of reason conclude from hence, that he is neither king, nor priest, nor mediator between God and man : so he might speak of himself, and the apostles might represent him, as a priest and a king, as mediator and the son of God, on certain occasion ; without speaking expressly of his Divinity, and yet not militate, in the least, against it.



To answer more directly. If our adversaries mean to prove, from this passage, that Jesus Christ is not God, they act inconsistently; for they acknowledge that he bears the name in the Holy Scriptures. Nay, if they would hence make it appear, that he is not the *true God*, they contradict themselves. For Socinus expresses himself in the following remarkable words. ‘It is very false that we should openly declare, Jesus Christ is not *true God*. We profess to say the contrary, and declare, that **HE IS TRUE GOD**, in several of our writings, as well in the Latin, as in the Polish language.’\*—‘Jesus Christ, says Smaicius, may be called, with a sovereign right, **OUR GOD**, and, **THE TRUE GOD**; and so he really is.’ And, in another place, he assures us, ‘that Jesus Christ is God, in the **MOST PERFECT MANNER**: *perfectissimo modo*.’—If then, Jesus Christ be God, the true God, and God in the *most perfect manner*; and if this be the sentiment of our opponents, what do they mean by adducing and arguing upon this passage? is it their intention to prove, by taking the words in their greatest rigour or signification, that Christ is not the true God, and that the sublime title belongs only to the Father? but this is diametrically opposite to their own declarations. Let them, then, first agree with themselves; after which it will be time enough for us to attempt a coalition with them. It is proper, however, to return a more particular answer to their objection.

Paul says, ‘I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.’ Now, it is evident, if we understand this declaration in the full rigour of its literal sense, that the apostle excludes every object from the doctrine of salvation, besides his crucified Lord; but will our opposers from hence infer, that the Divine Father is excluded from that object which the apostle determined to know, in contradistinction to all other things? no, doubtless. Both they and we must except the Father; because we find, from other passages of Scripture, that the knowledge of Him is absolutely ne-

\* SocIN. ad Wick. p. 49

cessary to eternal felicity. Were we to take the words of Paul in their strictly literal meaning, they would be diametrically opposite to the declaration of his Divine Master, in the text which is now under consideration, and which our adversaries, with so much confidence, object against us. For the apostle says, we must propose nothing to ourselves, as the object of the doctrine of salvation, but the *crucified Jesus* : while his Lord most solemnly asserts the necessity of knowing *the Father*, in order to our future happiness. Consequently, these assertions cannot be both true, if understood in the rigour of their literal meaning ; but they are easily reconciled by supposing that Paul, when he determines ' to know ' nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified,' does not mean to exclude the Father ; who, being one with the Son, is revealed by him, and known at the same time with him. And if our adversaries themselves be obliged to adopt this method of interpretation, when these two passages are to be reconciled ; why will they not admit of it, when we are called to reconcile the text before us, which, according to them asserts, that ' the Father only is the true God ;' with other passages of Scripture which have taught them, ' that Jesus Christ is the true God ?' If, when Paul says, ' I determined not to know any thing, ' save Jesus Christ and him crucified,' we except the Father ; because we are taught, by the same unerring spirit, that life eternal consists, not only in knowing Christ crucified, but also in the knowledge of the Father : is it reasonable, when the Scripture calls the Father ' the ' only true God ;' that we should except Jesus Christ ; there being other passages of Holy Writ which declare, even by the confession of our opponents, that he is the true God ?

It is very remarkable, that the most ingenious of our antagonists, when handling this argument, deprive themselves of all advantage from it, by the concessions which they are obliged to make. Cressius observes, on the passage, ' that the design of Christ was not to deny, that ' the idols, or gods of the Heathens, were really idols, or ' gods of the Heathens ; but only to deny, that they were

the *true God*.' And acknowledges that, if we consider the construction of the words, we ought not to connect the term *only*, with *thee, Father*. 'We would not, says he, have any one charge us with supposing, merely on account of the grammatical construction of the words, that the term *only* ought to be connected with *thee*, or *the Father*; for the article before the adverb *only* will not bear it; and, therefore, we must understand the verb, *to be*. For, otherwise it were as if Jesus Christ had said, *to know that thou only art the true God*; which, though true in itself, is very far from being the sense of this passage.\*

Such concessions, from one who holds the first place among our opponents, are very considerable: nay, they are sufficient to decide the question in our favour. For when we produce a text of Scripture, in proof of any particular doctrine; we reason, either from the bare signification of the words, or from the occasion on which they were uttered. If, then, we here dispute from the occasion of the words, our opposers will prove nothing against us: for they allow that Christ, in this place, contrasts the true God, with the idols of the Heathen; which, though it utterly exclude every fictitious deity, yet does not in the least militate against our Immanuel's claim of Divinity. Nor will our adversaries have any advantage, by attending to the *bare signification* of the words: for they cannot infer from thence, that the Father only, to the exclusion of Jesus Christ, is the true God; without connecting the adverb *only*, with *thee, Father*; which Crellius declares they do not attempt.

The passage before us far from attributing Deity to the Father, in opposition to the Son, evidently ascribes the infinite honor to them both. For the second member of the proposition is equivalent to this; that they may know that he whom thou hast sent is also the true God. And the meaning of the whole text is; that they may know thee, the only true God, *with him* whom thou hast sent.—As if one should say to the emperor; this

\* CRELL. *De Deo uno Patre*. Sect. I. Cap. I. p. 15, 19.

is the welfare of Hungary, that they may know thee to be the only true king, and arch-duke Joseph, whom thou hast appointed over them. Which proposition would be equivalent to this; That they may know thee the only true king, with arch-duke Joseph thy son.

Though we might exemplify this way of speaking, by multitudes of instances in profane authors, yet we shall content ourselves with producing two from the Holy Scriptures. When Christ says to his disciples, ‘Abide in me, and I in you;’ the verb, *abide*, is necessarily understood in the second member of the proposition, thus; Abide in me, and I will abide in you. And when Paul says, ‘Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers,’ for so it is literally in the original; we must also repeat, in the second member of the proposition, what is expressed in the first, after this manner: Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers in Christ. This, it is manifest, is the sense of the passage. So, in these words, ‘That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;’ we must repeat, in the latter part of the proposition, what is expressed in the former, thus: That they may know thee, the only true God, and that Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, is the true God with thee. For when it is said, in the second branch of the proposition, ‘and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;’ it is natural to ask, What of him? To which the answer is, That they may know Him also to be that only true God.

Our opponents allege the following text, on this occasion; ‘Who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords: *ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασία*, the only having immortality.’ But as these last words, when reduced to an ordinary construction, are thus read, ‘Who only hath immortality;’ so our adversaries will have it that these *τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεόν* should be thus read, ‘Who only is the true God.’ But this text and criticism will be of little service to their cause. Nay, they could hardly have produced an instance more unfavourable to it. For it appears from the

context, that JESUS CHRIST is the glorious person here intended. As, therefore, when he is called, ‘the blessed’ and *only* Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who *only* hath immortality;’ the Father is not excluded from an interest in those august titles and the perfections signified by them: so, had the Father been called the *only* true God, it would not have followed, that the Son is excluded from being a Person in the Deity; seeing he bears the same sublime character, with other titles of equal grandeur.

But there is an obvious and essential difference between the two passages. In the example adduced, by Crellius, ‘the only having immortality,’ is a nominative which does not depend on the verb, but the verb depends on the nominative; whereas, in the passage before us, ‘the only true God,’ is an accusative, and depends on this verb, ‘that they may know;’ an accusative, I say, which ought to be connected, not only with *thee*, but also with the following accusative, ‘Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’ This, it is evident, entirely alters the case.—Besides, with what consistency could this author render the text, ‘That they may know thee, who only art the true God;’ after he had confessed, that the adverb *only*, does not relate merely to the pronoun *thee*, as had been observed?

Farther: I demand of our opponents, how they would reduce this proposition; That they may know thee the true God, and Jesus Christ? Would they not, if ingenuous, reduce it thus; That they may know thee for the true God, thee, and Jesus Christ? When I form these propositions; That they may know thee, the only wise, and Jesus Christ—Thee, the only immortal, and Jesus Christ—Thee, the only king, and Jesus Christ—no one would ever suppose, that I intend to exclude the Lord Redeemer from wisdom, immortality, and royalty. On the contrary, every one would immediately see, that I comprehend, in these propositions, the wisdom, the immortality, and the royalty of the one and the other. Why, then, should any person form a different judgment of this proposition, which is perfectly similar? That they

may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ? For these words, ‘whom thou hast sent,’ do not in the least alter the nature of the proposition.

When our opponents express the proposition thus, that they may know thee, who art the only true God,—it is necessary to inquire, whether the term *only* is to be connected with the pronoun *thee*, or with the noun *God*. For if the word *only* be joined with *thee*, that is, the Father; it indicates, that the Father only is the true God: but, if it be connected with the term *God*, it declares the Father to be that God, who is the only true one. To see which of these interpretations ought to be preferred, we need only to consult the original. For there, it is observable, the article does not stand immediately either before *God*, or *true God*; but before these three terms, *only true God*. If the original were, *σε μόνον τὸν ἀληθινὸν Θεόν*, the meaning would be, that they may know thee only, the true God. Which proposition might be reduced to this; that they may know thee, who only art the true God. But the pen of inspiration has recorded it thus; *σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεόν*, ‘that they may know thee, the only true God:’ the signification of which is plainly this, that they may know that thou art the only true God. Now he who says, the Father is that God who is the only true one, asserts nothing inconsistent with our sentiments. For he who says, the Father is *God*; says also, the Father is the *only true God*. And so when we say, Jesus Christ is God, we assert, that he is the only true God; because we have no idea of two Gods. If, then, the Scripture do not militate against the Deity of Christ, in saying, that the Father is *God*; it asserts nothing inconsistent with that capital truth when it affirms, that the Father is the *only true God*.

But the sense of the passage will be more apparent, and its consistency with our doctrine more evident, if we consider, the occasion of the words—a parrallel passage—that equality on which the Father and the Son are here placed—and the principal terms of which the remarkable text consists.—The *occasion* of the words. It was evidently in opposition to the corrupt theology of

the Heathens, that Christ thus expressed himself. As if he had said ; the Gentiles perish, because they have no knowledge of any but false gods : but it is life eternal, to know thee the true God, in opposition to idols, and Jesus Christ thy Son. This is quite consistent with our hypothesis. For who does not perceive, that the words of the text are limited by the occasion of them ? Crellius, indeed, says, ‘ The sense of a discourse is not always determined by the occasion of it : and it frequently happens, that we deliver general expressions on a particular occasion.’—That this is the case in *some* instances, we freely allow ; but that it is *always* thus, our learned opponent dares not affirm. We have several examples of each kind, in the evangelical history. So when Christ says, immediately before he raised Lazarus from the dead ; ‘ I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live’—And when, upon his disciples showing him the temple, he said, ‘ Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’—it is manifest that, on these particular occasions, he delivers general expressions, which are not limited by the subjects of which he speaks. But then this is not *always* the case. For example : When Jesus said to Peter, ‘ Blessed art thou Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven ;’ will Crellius affirm, that the expressions are not limited by the occasion on which they were spoken ? Will he assert, that by *it*, or *these things*, the good confession which Peter had just made, is not to be understood ?

It being certain, then, that the sense of a period is sometimes limited, and sometimes not limited, by the occasion of it ; we must inquire, under which of these two classes the text in question should be placed. That the sense of it ought to be limited to the occasion of the words, is evident to me from this consideration ; there is a *double allusion* in it. The first is in these words, ‘ This is life eternal.’ The second in these, ‘ The only true God.’ In the *latter* of these clauses, Christ speaks in allusion to the false divinities of the Heathens. In

the *former*, he makes eternal happiness consist, in the knowledge of the true God ; in allusion, and in opposition to the state of Heathens ; who were lost, by having only false objects of worship, and by not knowing the true God. A *single* allusion to the occasion on which the words were uttered, would have been sufficient to limit their meaning to that occasion ; and if so, the passage must undoubtedly be understood, according to its *two-fold* allusion, in which the force and spirit of it consist. This double allusion, therefore, limiting the sense of the words, requires us to explain them thus : That they may know thee the only true God, in opposition to the false gods, who have betrayed the Heathens into a fatal error ; for in the knowledge of Thee, eternal life consists.

‘ But, says our opponent, suppose any one should  
‘ imagine, that Peter, James, or John, is of the same  
‘ essence with the eternal Father ; might we not correct  
‘ and confute him by this text ? And could the force of  
‘ the passage be eluded by saying ; The design of Christ  
‘ was only to exclude the fictitious deities of the Hea-  
‘ thens ? ’—I reply ; Peter is far from being in the same  
predicament with Jesus Christ. He is not God ; nor is  
he *called* God, and the true God, in the sacred Scriptures ;  
yet all this is affirmed of the Lord Redeemer, by the  
Holy Spirit : nay, as before observed, our adversaries  
themselves acknowledge him under these Divine charac-  
ters. Peter is far from being invested with the names  
and attributes, the prerogatives and honors of God ; but  
his Lord, as we have already proved, has them all as-  
cribed to him, by the pen of Inspiration.—Again : The  
words were spoken of the Father and of Jesus Christ ;  
not of the Father and of Peter. Nor was it necessary  
that this passage should be adapted to confute every wild,  
and monstrous opinion, that might be embraced on the  
sublime subject of the Godhead. For if Peter, for in-  
stance, should imagine that he is the Father, who, ac-  
cording to our opponents, is the true God, in contradis-  
tinction to the Son ; I demand, whether they could con-  
vince him of his error and blasphemy, by confronting



him with this text ? ‘ It is I, he would say, who am the Father ; and the passage you produce asserts my eternal Divinity—represents me as the true God.’—But were Peter in the same circumstances with Jesus Christ ; did we consider him as having existed before the world began ; as being the Creator of heaven and earth ; as the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last—were he, by unerring writers, called God, the MIGHTY GOD, the GREAT GOD, the TRUE GOD, and GOD BLESSED FOR EVER ; were he represented, as equal with the Father, and as one with the Father ;—could we, in such a case, reasonably refuse him the title of *true God*, while we admitted the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures ?

Our interpretation of this text will be further confirmed, if we compare it with the following *parallel passage*. ‘ 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.’—We shall not spend our time in refuting the criticisms of some of our adversaries, who have maintained that these words ‘ This is the true God, and eternal life,’ ought not to be referred to Jesus Christ, who is mentioned immediately before ; but to God, who is spoken of in the preceding verse. For nothing but an extreme desire to defend their cause, at any rate, could induce them to assert any such thing. Nothing can be more evident, than that He who is called ‘ The true God, and eternal life,’ is the same who is called *true* ; of whom it is said, ‘ We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.’ Socinus does not deny it. Nay, he not only allows, that Christ is here called, ‘ The true God, and eternal life ;’ but he also confesses, that these words are parallel to those which are now in dispute between us. ‘ I am easily induced to think, says he, as the sense of this passage seems to be entirely the same with that of Christ himself, John xvii. 5. that this clause, ‘ This is the true God, and eternal life ;’ ought to be referred, not only to the Father, but also to Christ himself, as much as it can and ought to be referred.’—But here our subtle oppos-

er falls into a contradiction. For if the two passages be not parallel, why does he say, that the sense of the one is the sense of the other? And if they be, how can he maintain, that one of them says, Jesus Christ *is* the true God, and that the other implies he is *not* worthy of any such character?

But it is of still greater importance to consider, that *equality* on which the Father and Son are here placed. They are evidently represented, as being unitedly, as being equally, the *grand object* of spiritual and saving knowledge. It is, indeed, pretended by our opponents, that it behoved Jesus to speak very modestly, when he was praying to his Father. Crellius observes, that it was by no means proper for Christ, on such an occasion, to say, that he was the only true God, with his Father. The reasons which he assigns are; ‘Partly, because he is praying to his Father: and, therefore, ought to speak with the greatest modesty; and, partly, because he considers himself as the Father’s messenger. For it is not to be supposed that he should, when praying to his Father, set himself on an equality with him; by assuming a title so great, that the Father has none superior. And, seeing he here considers himself as his Father’s messenger, we must not suppose, that he attributes to himself the glory and majesty of Him who sent him, which consists in his being the only true God.’—But if Jesus be *not* the true God with his Father, it is so far from being the *greatest* modesty in him not to call himself so, that there is no modesty in it at all. Extraordinary modesty, in a subject, a servant, to say, ‘I am not the sovereign of the state!’ Wonderful modesty, truly, which restrains a worm, an atom, from calling itself THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS; GOD BLESSED FOR EVER! Never was modesty more offended, nor the laws of decorum violated in a more outrageous manner, than by Jesus Christ on this occasion, if he be a mere man, or a mere creature. I, therefore, may return Crellius his own words, and affirm; that neither *modesty*, nor the character of *messenger*, would permit Jesus Christ to associate himself with the Father, as unitedly constituting an object that is the

happiness of mankind, if he were a mere creature. Not *modesty* : For if Jesus be a mere creature, he is not, in comparison with God, so much as a grain of sand, to the firmament ; as a glimmering taper, to the sun ; as the smallest worm, to the Lord of the whole earth. Shail we say, then, that the firmament and a grain of sand support the world ? That the sun and a glimmering taper illuminate our teraqueous globe ! That the lord of the earth and a worm cause great revolutions in states ?—Not the character of *messenger* : for in what empire was a dutiful servant ever known to name himself with his master, and to attribute every honor and act of royalty to himself and the sovereign ? Were a minister of state to issue a proclamation informing the public, that all affairs relating to government must be transacted in the king's and his own name ; were he to cause his name to be stamped, with his royal master's, on the coin, and to be inscribed on public edifices ; and were he to grant pardons in his own name. he would certainly be guilty of high treason. How, then, dared Jesus to assert, that life eternal consists in the knowledge of God and of himself ? How dared he to institute an ordinance, and require it to be administered in this form of words ; ‘ I baptize thee, ‘ in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the ‘ Holy Ghost ?’ With what propriety, truth, and decency, could he say ; ‘ Ye believe in God, believe also in Me ?’ Or how dare we say, ‘ I believe in God the Father almighty, and in Jesus Christ ?’

The principal *terme* of which this text consists, furnish us with a further proof, that the Lord Messiah is not excluded from the Godhead of the Father. Let us consider the word *know*. By this term we must either understand a merely speculative, or a practical knowledge. Not the *former* ; because our adversaries themselves being judges, life eternal does not consist in such a knowledge. For Crellius says, ‘ It is false that ‘ eternal life consists, nor yet the means to obtain it, in ‘ knowing that the Father and his Son Jesus Christ are ‘ the only and true God. This cannot be, if taken according to the letter. Otherwise it would be sufficient,

‘ in order to obtain eternal happiness, to acknowledge the  
 ‘ Father and the Son for the only true God. But if so, all  
 ‘ that are of this opinion would obtain eternal life ; though,  
 ‘ at the same time, they might be guilty of such sins as  
 ‘ exclude them from the kingdom of heaven, according  
 ‘ to the express declarations of Scripture. You will say,  
 ‘ then, all this should be taken in an improper sense ; in  
 ‘ such a manner, that this knowledge may comprehend  
 ‘ faith in Jesus Christ, a faith working by love, and all  
 ‘ sorts of graces.’\*—It must, therefore, be a *practical*  
 knowledge. And if so, to know the true God, must in-  
 clude a reliance on him and love to him ; adoration of  
 him and obedience to his commands. To this our learn-  
 ed opponent agrees. Now, as the term *know*, is applied  
 to the Son, as well as to the Father, in the text before us ;  
 it necessarily follows, that eternal life does not only con-  
 sist in trusting, loving, adoring, and obeying God the  
 Father ; but also in paying the same honors, and in per-  
 forming the same duties, to our Lord Jesus Christ. But  
 if it be our happiness to know Jesus Christ, so as to be-  
 lieve in him and love him, so as to worship and obey  
 him, he must be the true God ; for it is not possible  
 that a rational creature should owe those honors and du-  
 ties to any other. None but the true God ought to be  
 served and worshipped, in a religious way. ‘ Thou shalt  
 ‘ worship,’ says the supreme Lawgiver, commented upon  
 by the teacher come from God ;—‘ Thou shalt worship  
 ‘ the Lord thy God, and HIM ONLY shalt thou serve.’  
 None but the Divine Being, therefore, can deserve those  
 honors, which are presented to the proper object of  
 ‘ faith, and love, and all sorts of graces.’

*Life eternal*, is another expression which deserves our  
 notice. None but an Infinite Being can render the life  
 of a creature eternal. But Jesus is not an Infinite Being,  
 if he be not the true God with his Father : consequently,  
 on that supposition, he cannot give eternal life.—When  
 the passage asserts, that the knowledge of God is eternal  
 life, and that the knowledge of Christ is eternal life ; ei-  
 ther it means, that the knowledge of the latter is eternal

\* CRELL. De Uno Deo Patre, Sect. 1. p. 21.

life, in the same sense in which it is affirmed of the former, or in a different sense. If in a *different* sense, no expressions can be more ambiguous : they are equivocal, and adapted to lead us into a fatal error. If in *the same* sense, Christ must bestow eternal life on the subjects of that spiritual knowledge, for the same reason that the Father does them that know him. But the Father gives life eternal, because he is the true God. So says the text ; ‘ This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God.’ It follows, then, that our Immanuel bestows life eternal, only as he is the true God.—Again : Either the knowledge of Christ is life eternal, because that boundless blessedness *consists* in this knowledge ; or because this knowledge is the *principle* of it. If the *former*, Jesus Christ must be the Supreme Good ; for consummate felicity, or life eternal, is no other than the complete possession of the Supreme Good. If the *latter*, then I demand, whether this knowledge be the source of eternal life ; or only a mean to obtain it ? If the *source* of it, the object of that most beneficial knowledge must be the true God : for it is only the knowledge of Him that humbles, comforts, and sanctifies us ; that produces both holiness and happiness, which are the true grand constituents of that life which is eternal. If only as a *mean* to obtain everlasting felicity, the language of the text, though seemingly strong and big with sense, was intended to express very low and feeble ideas : for if so, there is very little excellence in the knowledge of Christ, which is not found in an acquaintance with other persons and other things. Were this all, it might have been said, with propriety ; ‘ This is life eternal, to know the law—to know the Scriptures. This is life eternal, for the Israelites to know Moses ;’ and, at the commencement of the gospel dispensation, ‘ for the Jews and Gentiles to know the apostles.’ For the knowledge of the apostles, as the messengers of God and ambassadors of Christ, was a mean of obtaining eternal happiness : and the knowledge of Moses, as the honored servant of Jehovah, was a happy mean, by which the Israelites were brought to obey God and obtain everlasting felicity.

Or, if you will, the knowledge of Moses, and of the apostles, being a mean of converting sinners to God, was also a mean of bringing them to eternal life. Whether this mean was greater or less, is not material to my present purpose ; a mean it undoubtedly was, and the argument requires no more.—It must, notwithstanding, be granted, that it would have been impious and blasphemous to have spoken after this manner ; ‘ This is life eternal to know Moses—This is life eternal to know the apostles.’ And it would be the height of impiety, to call Moses and the apostles **ETERNAL LIFE**, as the Scripture calls Jesus Christ : ‘ This is the true God and eternal life.’

Whoever considers this apostolic testimony will find, that the Holy Spirit very closely connects the ideas of ‘ the true God,’ and ‘ eternal life ;’ and that it was his design to inform us, that it is because Jesus Christ is the *former*, that he gives the *latter*. We may, therefore, safely conclude, that as he *bestows* the one, he must *be* the other. For when he is called ‘ eternal life ;’ and when it is said, that eternal life consists in ‘ knowing him ;’ the expressions do not merely signify, that he *promises* everlasting felicity, or that he *bestows* it on his disciples ; but that he is the *author* of it, and that it consists in the *enjoyment* of him. Moses *promised* the land of Canaan to the Israelites, and Joshua put them in *possession* of it ; yet neither the one nor the other is called ‘ the land of Canaan ;’ because such a name, for such a reason, would be ridiculous. But Christ is called ‘ eternal life,’ and that immense bliss is said to consist in ‘ the knowledge of him ;’ to teach us not only that he *promises* that infinite blessedness, not only that he will certainly *bestow* it ; but that he is the *source* of it, and that we need only to know him, in order to be both holy and happy for ever. Jesus, therefore, must be an Infinite Object ; must be the true God. For if he were a mere creature it would be impious to suppose, that everlasting life is infallibly connected with the knowledge of him ; that being the prerogative royal of the Great Supreme. As it is written, ‘ This is life eternal, that they might know thee

‘ the only true God—This is the true God and eternal life.’

Let us now consider the name, *God*. Our oponents labour to persuade us that the term *God* is not a proper name, but an appellative. For this purpose they have written whole treatises : nor need we wonder at it. For if it be certain, that the emphatical term is the proper name of the Supreme Being, they must be obliged to acknowledge Jesus as a truly Divine Person ; because they allow, that he is frequently called *God*, even in such passages as are not supposed to be figurative. They, therefore, will have it, that the sublime name is an appellative ; and that it is frequently given to others, besides the Great Supreme.—Without entering into this dispute, we shall reason with them on their own principles. If, then, the term *God* be an appellative, we may form the same judgment of it, as the name *king* ; which is given to *Jehovah*, by way of excellence, but is also attributed to others. Now I demand of our adversaries, supposing the words of the text were, ‘ This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true *King*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent ;’ whether they would affirm that the expressions, ‘ only true *King*,’ belong to the Father exclusively of the Son ? or whether they would allow them to belong to both ? They would, I am persuaded, understand the words thus ; This is life eternal, to know thee the only true *King* ; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ. Now, as the name *God*, on their principles, is no less appellative than the term *king* ; they ought, if they would act consistently, to understand the words of our Lord thus : This is life eternal, that they might know thee to be the true *God* ; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ.

The adjective *true*, will furnish us with another argument. By the ‘ *true God*,’ our opponents understand, the great *God* ; *God*, by way of excellence ; the Supreme Being. We allow, that the true *God* is the great *God* ; and that the great *God* is the true *God*. But we maintain, that the idea of *true God*, and that of *Supreme Be-*

ing. are two ideas which represent the same Object in different lights. The *former*, opposes the infinite Object to all such as *falsely* bear the name God. The *latter*, contrasts the same eternal and sovereign Object with every other being in the universe ; for all creatures are necessarily and infinitely *inferior* to him. So that though the very same adorable Object is signified by these two Divine characters ; yet, as they convey distinct ideas, they ought not to be confounded. This, however, our opponents constantly do, when they dispute against us from the text under consideration. It would not avail to say, The term *true* conveys the idea of excellence : as, when it is said, ‘ Constantine was a *true* emperor—Alexander was a *true* hero.’ Meaning, the one had all the qualities which an emperor ought to have ; and the other was a great hero. For though the adjective *true*, is sometimes used to indicate the *excellence* of the subject intended ; yet it more frequently signifies the *reality* of it. As when it is said, ‘ Henry the Fourth was the *true* king of France, when he fought against the league, after ‘ Henry the Third’s death.’ That is, he was then *really* king ; he did not *usurp* the crown.—So, in the text before us, the expressions, ‘ only true God,’ carrying in them a manifest allusion to the multitude of Pagan divinities, who falsely bore the name of gods ; the epithet *true*, must signify the *reality*, rather than the *excellence* of Him to whom it is applied.

But if so it is very easy to prove that the phrase, ‘ only true God,’ should be referred to the Son, as well as to the Father. For if the character, ‘ true God,’ ought to be confined to the Father ; it must be, either because it is *not repeated* in the second member of the proposition ; or because it is *too excellent* to belong to the Son. Not the *former* ; for we have already proved, that the analogy of language, as well as the verb *know*, requires that it should be understood. Nor is it the *latter* ; because it is intended to signify, a God that is *not fictitious* ; one that *really exists*. And who can doubt, if Jesus Christ be God, as our opponents themselves acknowledge, that he is, in this sense, *the true God* ?—Fur-



ther : As that God, who is opposed to idols, does not exist merely in the imagination of men, but really and truly ; I demand, whether the epithet *true*, belong to Jesus Christ, or not ? If not, he is, by the confession of our opposers, a false and imaginary God. If it does, he must be the *only true God*.

But, perhaps, the word *only*, connected with ‘ true God,’ may give the title an excellence, so as to render it peculiar to the Father. By no means. For as the term *only*, determines that of *true* ; so the term *true*, limits that of *only*. As the adjective *true*, is opposed to *false* ; so the adverb *only*, is opposed to *many*. ‘ Only ‘ true God,’ therefore, stands opposed to the multitude of false gods worshipped by the Heathens.—Further : ‘ Only ‘ true God,’ is not the epithet of the Father alone ; but of the Father and Son unitedly. As in this passage ; ‘ Or ‘ ! only, and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear ‘ working ?’ Here, it is evident that the term *only*, which, in construction, is the epithet of Paul ; is, in the sense of the words, the epithet of Paul and Barnabas conjointly.—Again : If the term *only*, had been the epithet, not of God, as including both the Father and the Son, but of the *Father* ; if the text had been thus read, that they might know the Father only to be the true God ; yet it would have required some caution, not to overstrain the sense of the word *only* ; which does not always express the idea of exclusion, so much as it may seem to do. This appears by an unquestionable instance. For of whom does the Scripture speak, when it says ; ‘ The blessed ‘ and ONLY Potentate ; the King of kings, and Lord of ‘ lords ; who ONLY hath immortality ?’ We say, it is of Jesus Christ : but, for argument sake, we will suppose ourselves under a mistake, in that respect. Whether our opponents attribute the epithet to the Father, or to the Son, is to us indifferent, as to our present purpose : for they will still find, that the term *only*, which is here repeatedly used, does not limit so much as it seems to do. Can it be said of the Father, to the exclusion of the Son, ‘ That he is the ONLY Potentate ;’ that ‘ He ONLY hath ‘ immortality ?’ No, doubtless ; for both these qualities

belong also to the Son. Can it be said of the Son, to the exclusion of the Father, ‘He is the **ONLY** Potentate; He **ONLY** hath immortality?’ Certainly not; for both eternity and dominion belong to the Father. If, then, the word *only*, when applied to the Father, exclude other objects, but not the Son; and if, when applied to the Son, it exclude not the Father; it follows, that the same term, in the passage before us, if it had been applied directly to the Father, would not have warranted us to say, that the Son is excluded; especially, as the Son is called God, and the **TRUE** God, as well as the Father.—Hence it appears that this passage, which our adversaries produce against us with so much confidence, confirms our sentiment.

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## CHAP. IV.

An objection from 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. answered.

**A** SIMILAR objection is raised, by our opponents, on the following text: ‘We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; as there be gods many, and lords many: but to us there is but one God, the Father; of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.’—On which passage Crellius forms this argument: ‘What could be said more clearly to prove, that there is no God but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Paul, explaining who this one God is, says, he is *the Father*; not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But there was no reason, that he, when his design was to show, who this one God is, should mention only the Father; if it be true, that this one God is not only the Father, but also the Son, and the Holy Ghost: because these two last Persons were as proper to show who the one God is, as

‘ the person of the Father ; and, consequently, should  
 ‘ not have been passed over in silence ’

Here I shall make a few reflections, which may serve as so many general answers to this objection. And it may be observed, both in this passage and several others of a similar kind, that the names *Father*, and *God*, are not used to signify one single person in the Deity ; but that infinite essence which is common to all the Divine persons. This is what theological writers mean, when they speak of the term *God*, being taken *ομοιούτως*, or essentially. God, then, that eternal, invisible, omnipotent, and infinite Being, who is neither the Father alone, nor the Son alone, nor the Holy Spirit alone ; but, who comprehends the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit ; is called *Father* in a large and general sense, because he is the first cause, ‘ of whom are all things, and ‘ we in him.’ In this place he is called *Father*, in the same sense as when it is said, ‘ every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from ‘ the Father of lights :’ and again, ‘ one God and Father ‘ of all.’ In which passages the character, *Father*, is general ; and signifies, that God is the first cause of all things. A character this, like those of Creator, Redeemer, Saviour ; all which belong to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, because they are applied to the essence which is common to the three persons.—Crellius, therefore, is under a mistake when he suggests, that Christ and the Holy Ghost are never, in the Scripture, called Father. For Jesus Christ is expressly called, ‘ the everlasting Father.’ And as he made the world, and is the great first cause, he may with propriety be called the Father of all things ; for ‘ all things were made by him, ‘ and without him was not any thing made that was ‘ made.’—Should it be said, ‘ though he is called ‘ the ‘ everlasting Father,’ yet not simply *the Father* :’ I answer, neither is God called simply *the Father*, in the passage before us ; but ‘ the Father, of whom are all ‘ things.’

The character, *Father*, may be taken two ways ; either, as standing alone, or as connected with adjectives,

which limit the signification of it. When *alone*, it signifies that person in the Godhead, who is distinguished from *the Son* ; but in this text it is limited. We must not say, ‘ to us there is but one God, the Father,’ and stop there ; but we must add, ‘ of whom are all things.’ Had the apostle said, there is but one God, *the first cause*, of whom are all things ; our opponents could have found nothing in the words, which they would have imagined to be in their favour. And though we could not find a similar epithet given to Jesus Christ or to the Holy Spirit ; this would not prevent our concluding, that he to whom infallibility gives the names, and ascribes the works of God, is the first cause of whom are all things. Now it is plain, that ‘ the *Father* of whom are all things ;’ and, the *first cause*, of whom are all things, are equivalent propositions. Consequently, our adversaries have no more advantage from the former, than they could have by the latter.

But though the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have all the same essence ; yet they are revealed, in the work of Redemption, under very different views. The Father appoints, the Son executes, and the Holy Ghost applies. The Father in a more particular manner, sustains the character of the offended Deity, and asserts the honors of Divine government : for which reason he is more frequently called God, than the other adorable persons. The Son appears as mediator ; holding the place of man, yet invested with the rights of the Godhead. And the Holy Ghost holds the place of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, supplying the absence of the latter. We need not wonder, therefore, that the name, God, which is common to all the persons of the most holy and glorious Trinity, should be more frequently given to the Father, who sustains the Divine character in a very particular manner, in the wonderful economy of Redemption.

Again : the adjective. *one*, which here limits the name, God, should not be understood in that rigour of signification which our adversaries urge. For though it utterly excludes the ‘ gods many and lords many,’ that are here mentioned, from having any claim to the character

of Deity ; yet, without entirely departing from the analogy of faith, it cannot be understood as militating against the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Because he not only bears the names and titles of the true God ; but is also represented, by the unerring Spirit, as possessing the attributes and performing the works, as requiring the honors and receiving the adoration, which are peculiar to the infinite Supreme. Such is the union between the Father and the Son, that, in respect of their essential glories, what is asserted of the one, is to be understood of the other. Jesus does not only say, ‘ I and the Father are one ;’ but also affirms, that, ‘ he who honors the Son, honors the Father also.’ And again he says, ‘ all that the Father hath, is mine—he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also.’

Hence it follows, that when the Scripture ascribes any perfection to the Father alone, it does not mean to exclude the Son. This our opponents are obliged to acknowledge ; and, in so doing, confess the weakness of their own objection. For when God is represented as the *only* Saviour, will they except our great Mediator ? or, when Christ is exhibited, in the gospel, as the *only* Saviour, there being no salvation in any other ; will they exclude the Father ? the Scripture asserts, that ‘ God only is wise ;’ that he only is good ; but must we consider the term *only*, as excluding Jesus Christ from an interest in those perfections ? and when it is said, ‘ the things of God knoweth οὐδείς, no one, but the Spirit of God ;’ must we from hence conclude, that the Father and the Son are ignorant of the things of God ?

From these general reflections I come to my author. ‘ Paul, explaining who this one God is, says, ‘ he is *the Father* ;’ not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.’—This is a great mistake. For Paul neither explains who this one God is, nor does he say that he is the Father, to the exclusion of the Son and Holy Spirit. He does not *explain* who this one God is ; or, if it be called an explanation, it is an imperfect one, and only adapted to the matter in hand. It was not his business, in this place, to explain the nature of the Father of our Lord, and to.

show what the Father had more excellent than the Son. His business was, to characterize that God who is opposed to idols; and to assert his infinite superiority over the deniers of the *Heathen*, the angels of Heaven, and the kings of the earth, who are sometimes called *gods*. This being the apostle's design, he describes God in such a manner, as exalts him far above all other beings; and, well remembering what the prophet had said of all fictitious divinities, 'the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens,' he gives this opposite description of the true God: 'to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.'

Our author proceeds. 'The apostle's design was, to explain who this one God is. But does he explain a thing well, who omits more particulars that are proper to illustrate it, than he expresses? and who, instead of mentioning *three* persons, speaks only of *one*, as the apostle would do in this place, if the opinion of our adversaries were true? Who, among them, designing to explain and to show who this one God is, would mention only the Father, and say; there is but one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? and would not rather say, there is but one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'—I reply; the design of the inspired writer was, not fully to explain who the one God is, but to make him known so far as his subject required; by giving him a character which exalts him infinitely above all created intelligences and fictitious gods; calling him 'the Father, of whom are all things.' Nor is it necessary, every time we speak of a thing, that we should endeavour to *explain* it; much less, every time we describe a thing by some epithet, that we should explain it *fully*.—The same apostle declares, 'I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.' But shall we say, the discourse is absurd; because the apostle, undertaking to describe the way of salvation, omits more things than he expresses? for he does not mention God the Father, nor the Holy

Ghost, nor eternal life, nor many other objects which are proposed to our faith, in the Holy Scriptures. When the Philippian Jailer inquired what he should do to be saved ; and was answered, by Paul and Silas, ‘ believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ; ’ will our learned opponent say, that those ambassadors of Christ spake impertinently on that occasion ? the jailer desired to know, how he might obtain salvation. A most important query, concerning the greatest of all blessings. Their business was to answer the query ; and it was equally necessary for them to be full and explicit, on such an occasion, as upon that before us. Yet these unerring guides did not direct the trembling querist, to believe in the Father, nor in the Holy Spirit, though it was necessary he should do so ; far he was to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Nor did they, so far as the history informs us, tell him to repent ; though repentance was no less necessary than faith.—The Ethiopian eunuch professes his faith in these words ; ‘ I believe that Jesus Christ is the ‘ Son of God.’ But was this *the whole* of his faith ? If not, can we say, ‘ that he explained himself well, when ‘ he concealed more than he expressed ? ’—It is neither necessary, nor possible, to say every thing belonging to a subject, on all occasions : and a man must be ignorant, both of Divine and human language, to imagine that an explanation given of any thing by an adjective, should be an exact definition of it, according to the rules of logic, and take in the whole extent of its object. Philosophers, indeed, speak thus ; but people in common speak in a different manner. True it is, since we began to dispute on these important subjects, we choose to express ourselves with such a caution as would be needless, if these questions had never been agitated : and, therefore, when speaking of the Supreme Being, we frequently say, one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But how often do we express ourselves otherwise ? on how many occasions do we give thanks to God, as the author of our being and salvation, through Jesus

Christ the mediator ? which is a way of speaking similar to that of the apostle, in the text before us.

‘ Who among them would fail to say, it is the Father, ‘ Son, and Holy Ghost ? they must, indeed, so express ‘ themselves, if they would speak agreeably to their own ‘ principles. Much more ought the apostle to have ‘ spoken after that manner, if he had been of their sentiment ; because it was his duty to give no occasion to ‘ the great and pernicious error, as they think it, of believing that God is *one*, as well in *person*, as in *essence* ; ‘ and that none but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ‘ is God.’—It is not necessary, to speak agreeably to our principles, that we should always fully express them. Though we are verily persuaded of the mystery of the Trinity, yet we may consistently speak of the Father, without mentioning the Son ; and of the Son, without mentioning the Father ; and of the Holy Spirit, without mentioning either the Father, or the Son. For there is no necessity that every thing we say concerning God, should be attended with an explicit declaration of this grand mystery.

Nor was it necessary that the apostle should be so very apprehensive of giving occasion to an heretical opinion, by expressing himself as he does, in this passage. Such an insinuation, however, comes with a very ill grace from the lips and pens of our opponents, and betrays their inadvertence to a great degree ; for it may be retorted upon them with the utmost propriety and unanswerable force. Was it proper for the apostles, was it their duty, to avoid giving occasion to pernicious errors ? Ought they not, then, to have forborn the use of such language as tended, strongly tended, to lead mankind into error and impiety, into blasphemy and idolatry ! Could they, without renouncing all concern for the salvation of man and the glory of God, apply to Jesus the peculiar, essential, and incommunicable characters of JEHOVAH ? Could they, without affronting their Maker and laying a snare for immortal souls, apply to Christ, a mere creature, those oracles which manifestly, speak only of the true God ? Or could they, with a due



regard to the honor of the Eternal Sovereign and the happiness of their fellow-creatures. assert, that Christ is God ; that ‘ he is before all things, and that he created ‘ all things ;’ that he ‘ is the First and the Last ; equal ‘ with God, and one with the Father ;’ that before him every ‘ knee shall bow,’ and that ‘ all the angels are ‘ commanded to worship him ?’ Nay, in those very passages which are produced against us, the apostles associate Christ with the Father, as a performer of the same works and a partaker of the same glories. They assert, that life eternal consists in the knowledge of Christ, no less than in that of the Father ; and, in this text, where Jesus is opposed to all false gods, it is said, ‘ To us there ‘ is but one God, the Father, OF WHOM ARE ALL ‘ THINGS, AND WE IN HIM ; and ONE LORD, JESUS CHRIST, ‘ BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE BY HIM ;’ as if the Son were on a level with his Father. Could any thing be more arrogant and impious than this familiarity, with which Jesus Christ treats the Infinite God, if it be true that he is a mere creature ? for it must not be forgotten, that these, as well as other expressions of a similar kind, were penned by his authority and his direction. What, shall the Holy Ghost confine his care to the salvation of our adversaries, by avoiding every occasion of betraying them into pernicious errors ; while he takes little or no heed to preserve us from blasphemy and idolatry ! But, whatever had become of us, as there is nothing so precious, nothing so great, as the incommunicable glories of the Godhead ; it might have been expected, that the Holy Spirit would take particular care, in penning the New Testament, that no occasion should be given to Christians to rob God of his honors, by giving them to a mere creature.

‘ From whence it appears, that what some of them ‘ answer is idle, when they suggest, that the apostle calls ‘ this one God, ‘ the Father,’ by *attribution*, as they express it. For if so, he would not have instructed the ‘ vulgar Christians, but rather have led them into a pernicious error. For the people do not know in what ‘ this attribution consists ; nay, many among the learned

‘ have never heard it so much as mentioned.’—The *term* attribution may, perhaps, be unknown to many ; but the *thing* is well known, and it is that about which we are chiefly concerned. *Attribution* consists, in giving a name to one only, which belongs to others. For example : As the name, LORD, belongs to both the Father and the Son, when it is given to Christ only, it is called an attribution : and so, as the name, GOD, belongs to them both, it is an attribution to give it to the Father only. Those gracious characters, REDEEMER. and SAVIOUR, are common to the Father with Jesus Christ ; when, therefore, it is affirmed of the latter, ‘ There is ‘ none other name under heaven, given among men, ‘ whereby we must be saved ;’ it is called an *attribution*, or an appropriation of a name common to the Father and the Son, to the latter only.—Shall we say, that the Scripture knows nothing of a love of *appreciation*, and a love of *intention*, because these terms come from the schools and are not found in the Bible ? The *names*, indeed, are not there ; but the *ideas*, intended by them, are strongly expressed in that sacred Volume. The *former* consists, in loving God with all our hearts ; the *latter*, in forsaking kindred, property, and life itself, at his command and for his glory. So, in the case before us. Either, then, our opponent who makes the objection, meant only, that the *term* attribution is strange to vulgar Christians ; or that the *thing*, represented by it, was equally unknown. If the term, we have nothing to object. If the thing, his mistake may be rectified by showing, that in these words, ‘ ONE LORD, Jesus Christ,’ there is an attribution perfectly similar to that which we find in these ; ‘ ONE GOD, the Father.’

‘ If the term GOD, be understood in this place, as peculiar to the Father ; either it includes a particular excellency, and is taken for that Person who is the source of the other ; or for the Father, without denoting any particular excellency. If the *former*, we have already showed, that they who speak thus, either contradict themselves, and acknowledge that the Father only is the Supreme God ; or else they say nothing to the pu-

‘pose. If the *latter*, the apostle must have spoken impertinently. For the question was not, whether *the Father* is but one; but, whether *God* is but one; as appears from the preceding words.’ Here we retort upon Crellius. If the term Lord be taken in this place as peculiar to the Son; either it includes a particular excellency, and is taken for the person who has an original authority; or for one possessed of dominion, without denoting any particular excellency. If the *former*, they who speak thus, either contradict themselves, and acknowledge that the Son is the Supreme Lord; or else they say nothing to the purpose. If the *latter*, the apostle must have spoken impertinently. For the question was not, whether *the son* is but one; but, whether *the Lord* is but one; as appears from the preceding words.

Our adversaries, if they can, may answer this objection; as for us, we are not concerned in it. For what is this argument but a mere sophism? The term God, by being appropriated to the Father, does not lose its natural signification. It still denotes that infinite excellence which distinguishes his essence, to whom it is applied, from all that are called gods, or lords, whether on earth, or in heaven. The FATHER, who is here opposed, not to the Son, nor to the Holy Ghost, for that was not the question; but, to false gods, to magistrates, and to angels, is represented as infinitely superior to ‘all that is called god.’ But what insurmountable difficulty is there in all this? Is not JESUS also opposed, in this place, not to the Father, for that was not the question; but to all those that are called lords, whether on earth or in heaven?

## CHAP. V.

An Objection from Luke i. 35. answered.

**A**NOTHER objection, against the doctrine maintained, is formed by our adversaries on the following words :  
' The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power  
' of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also  
' that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be  
' called, **THE SON OF GOD.**' From hence they infer, that the sublime title, **SON OF GOD**, is founded on the miraculous conception of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. Here they demand, how Christ could be so called, on account of his wonderful conception, by the power of the Highest, if he was the Son of God from eternity ?

In answer to which I observe ; That God, in this revelation of his will, accomodates his language to the capacities of the person to whom he makes known his gracious designs. Thus he had frequently done to the Jewish prophets. When he revealed to those holy men the calling of the Gentiles, it was often under such images as were borrowed from the ancient sanctuary, with which they were well acquainted. He informed them, that ' an altar should be erected in the midst of Egypt ;' and that, from the rising to the setting sun, ' incense  
' should be offered with a pure offering.' Such ideas were familiar to them ; and, therefore, spiritual things and future events were revealed to the prophets, and the church of old, under these images.—So the angel, who appears to Mary, speaks in a similar way. He might, if he had pleased, have described Jesus Christ as the Mediator, who should reconcile heaven and earth. He might have represented him to the virgin mother, as an universal Monarch, according to the oracle of Daniel ; as a spiritual King, who should reign over the hearts and consciences of men ; and as Lord of the universe, having all authority in heaven and in earth. These things, however, he does not mention ; because it was expedient

that she should be gradually led into the mysteries of the kingdom of God. He, therefore, speaks of the re-establishment of David's kingdom, which was at that time the object of the nation's hope, and most familiar to the mind of a Jew. 'The Lord God,' says Gabriel, 'shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.' Now, as the eternal Sonship of Jesus is one of the most sublime and mysterious doctrines in the whole Book of God, we have no reason to be surprised if the heavenly messenger, in his converse with Mary, did not intend, by any thing he said of the Lord Messiah as the Son of God, to declare the *proper ground* of his Divine filiation; but only to inform her, in general, of his infinite dignity, and that his filial relation to the Father should be attested in his miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit.

Again: The Scripture frequently makes use of such words to express an *event*, as seem to denote the *cause*. So the evangelist says, 'therefore they could not believe, *because* that Esaias said again.'—Thus the expressions on which the objection is raised, seem to denote the cause for which Jesus Christ should be called, the Son of God: but they signify only the event. For the sense of the passage is this; the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; and it shall come to pass, that the Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. The particle *therefore*, is not to be considered as pointing out the reason why Jesus should bear the exalted title; but why he should be *received* and *acknowledged* under it, by his people: who would infer, from his miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost, and his wonderful birth of a Virgin, that he was the 'Child born, the Son given,' and the glorious IMMANUEL spoken of in ancient prophecy.\*

But were we to understand the words in their literal sense, they would not express any thing really inconsistent with what we maintain. For the power of the Holy

\* Isaiah vii. 14. and ix. 6.

Spirit, by which the body of Jesus was conceived in the womb, conferred upon him, as man, the unspeakable honor of being called, *the Son of God*. This cannot be denied, in whatever sense you understand the phrase, 'he shall be called,' whether for, he shall *be*, or he shall be *denominated*. Certain it is, that the conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost, was the reason why that which was born of Mary is called the Son of God. For as the human nature of Jesus is hypostatically united to the Divine ; it partakes of this and other glorious titles which are given to the Messiah, in consequence of his miraculous conception. The reason why the humanity of Christ is sometimes, though in a figurative sense, invested with such titles and qualities as belong only to the eternal Son of God, or the uncreated word ; is its *personal union* with the word.

Admitting, however, that there was a real difficulty in the text : a difficulty intended, by the wisdom of God, to exercise our humility and faith ; yet our opponents would gain but little advantage by it ; because it is easily proved that the title, Son of God, is established on different foundations from that of his miraculous conception. He is frequently called, God's *beloved Son* ; his *own Son* ; his *only Son* ; and his only *begotten Son*. We ought, consequently, to inquire, not only into his general character *Son* ; but also into those ideas of *distinguishing excellence* which are annexed to it, by various remarkable epithets.

Our adversaries being determined not to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God, by eternal generation, endeavour to establish the title on the following foundations. His conception by the Holy Ghost—his investiture in the offices of prophet, priest, and king—his unction by the Holy Spirit—his resurrection from the dead—and his exaltation, after his sufferings. Of all which in their order.

In regard to the *first* supposed ground of the august character, I would ask ; whether the mere advantage of having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, be greater than that of being formed immediately by the power of

God, in a state of holiness ; as were the angels, and the souls of our first parents ? for, to be formed by the Spirit of God, and by the power of God, is, on the principles of our opponents, the same thing. This, therefore, they must allow, Consequently, though Jesus might be called **THE SON OF GOD**, because he was formed by the Divine Spirit ; yet the title would be common to him with angels, whom God created by his own immediate power. He would then be the **SON**, but not the **ONLY SON** of God.

It may, perhaps, be said ; ‘ Jesus might be called the  
 ‘ Son of God, in distinction from angels, because they  
 ‘ have not a father, being created and unbegotten intelli-  
 ‘ gences ; which was the case of our first parents, and  
 ‘ is true of the souls of men in general. But it was pro-  
 ‘ per that Christ, being like other men, and having a  
 ‘ mother, should also have a father. Yet, not having had  
 ‘ one as other men, the want of ordinary generation be-  
 ‘ ing supplied by the Holy Spirit ; we need not wonder,  
 ‘ either that he is called the Son of God, or that he is  
 ‘ thus denominated in distinction from pure intelligenc-  
 ‘ es.’—This reply is weak. For the character **SON**, **OWN**  
**SON**, and **ONLY BEGOTTEN SON**, though such a sublime  
 title. is of no real dignity, according to this argument.  
 Because, upon this principle, the reason why Christ is  
 called the *only Son of God*, rather than the first man,  
 or any of the angels, is only this : They, having been  
 formed immediately by Divine power, were not conceiv-  
 ed in the womb, as he was to whom the character is ap-  
 propriated and peculiar. But, give me leave to ask,  
 What excellence is imparted to a creature, produced  
 immediately by Omnipotence, merely on account of hav-  
 ing been *conceived in the womb* ? The Scripture teaches  
 us to consider this title, *the only Son of God*, as one that  
 is very eminent and glorious ; as one that distinguishes  
 Jesus Christ from all the angels, and proclaims his do-  
 minion over them. But it would be absurd to imagine  
 that *he* bears the exalted character rather than any of  
*them*, because, though they were formed immediately by  
 the power of God, in common with him ; yet he had the

*singular advantage* of being formed in the womb of a virgin. Nay, there is something more noble, in being formed immediately by Divine power, without the intervention of either father or mother; than in being formed without a father, in the womb of a mother, by the Almighty. Because the less second causes intervene, in the production of a Divine work, the more immediate relation it has to God; and immediate production carries the *appearance* at least of more excellence, than that which is mediate. So, the creation of man, for instance, was more perfect than his generation.—If, then, Jesus deserve to be called the Son of God, because he was formed by Omnipotence, with the intervention of a mother; Adam, who was formed by the power of God, without father and without mother, deserves a higher title: and the angels, who were formed in a more perfect manner than our first parent, because not formed of any pre-existent matter, must be worthy of a more glorious title than he.

Again: If the Sonship of Christ resulted from his being conceived by the Holy Ghost, the Divine Spirit, rather than the first person in the ever blessed Trinity, would be properly denominated the *Father* of our Lord; because that effect, on which the filiation of Jesus is supposed to depend, was more immediately produced by the former, than by the latter, of those Divine persons. But this is evidently false; being contrary to the whole current of Sacred Scripture.—Further: though the conception of Jesus was truly miraculous and very wonderful, yet it extended only to his human nature. But the word of God does not represent the Sonship of Christ, as terminating in him as *man*. No; that infallible rule of our faith speaks of it, as relating to his *Divine person*. As man, he was the seed of the woman and the son of David, in contradistinction to his being the Son of God. Now it is evident, that his being the Son of God, cannot arise from that which constituted him the son of man; for the sonships being so widely different, the foundations of them cannot be the same; cannot but be equally different, corresponding to the two natures



united in his wonderful person, as IMMANUEL. Agreeable to those words ; ‘ concerning his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord ; who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh—Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came ; who is over all God blessed for ever.’

‘ But the conception of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is not the only foundation on which the title is established.’ If so, different reasons of the glorious character must be sought ; and our opponents must disclaim the advantage they pretend to have, from the text under consideration. If they suppose the evangelist, in this passage, to point out the *only* foundation of the title, they contradict themselves. But if they consider the character as having *other* foundations, then this text cannot be supposed to exclude others ; nor, consequently, to oppose that of eternal generation.

The *second* pretended ground of the sublime title, is, the *investiture* of Jesus Christ in his mediatorial offices. In proof of which they adduce the following text : ‘ If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came,—say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest : because I said, I am the Son of God ?’ that he who was sanctified and sent is the Son of God, is an undoubted truth ; but that his sanctification and mission were the ground of his Sonship, is far from being proved by this passage. There is a wide and manifest difference, between a *claim of relation* to any one, and assigning *the ground* of that relation. Of the *former*, our Lord here speaks ; of the *latter*, he is entirely silent.—Again : though princes and magistrates are called *gods*, in the Sacred Scripture, yet we do not read of any individual among them being called *the Son of God* ; much less is any of them so denominated, in that emphatical and frequent use of the title, in which it is applied to our Immanuel. Besides, if Jesus Christ were the Son of God, either merely, or principally, on account of his mediatorial offices ; he must have been much more so, after he entered on his public ministry, than he was before. But this cannot be

supposed, with the least shadow of reason. Dare our opponents affirm, that the Sonship of Jesus commenced at his baptism, when the Father said, ‘ This is my ‘ beloved Son ?’

Again : If Jesus be the Son of God, on account of his offices, he must be so, either by nature, or by adoption, or by a metaphor ; for we know not, as yet, of any other way. Not by *nature*, on account of his *offices* ; for that implies a contradiction. Nor by *adoption* ; for how can his bearing an office be the cause of his adoption ? But if it were, this would not distinguish him from his disciples ; who are all the children of God by adoption. Nor is He the Son of God by a *metaphor*. For, on such a supposition, the Sonship of Christ is greatly inferior to that of believers. They are the sons of God by adoption, and also by regeneration. Their sonship, consequently, is much superior to a merely *metaphorical* relation — Once more : When we consider our Lord as invested with various offices, we view him as Mediator ; but, as Mediator, he is the Father’s servant, and is repeatedly so called. Whoever imagines, therefore, that Christ is the Son of God in virtue of his offices, confounds the distinct, the opposite ideas, of a *son* and a *servant*. To suppose that our Lord is the Son of God, by office, or on account of his mediatorial undertaking ; and to assert that he is God by office, are equally indefensible, and equally absurd : so that he who can demonstrate the *former*, has no reason to despair of proving the *latter*.

Some there are that cordially acknowledge the doctrine of the Trinity, and are far from denying the proper Deity of Christ, who yet maintain, that his exalted character, Son of God, is economical, and founded in his mediation. But if so, it had its rise in a sovereign act of the Divine will ; and, consequently, if infinite wisdom and absolute sovereignty had so determined, he who is called the *Father*, might have been the *Son*. Nay, on this hypothesis, had not man fallen, and had not grace provided a Mediator ; neither the emphatical title, nor the sublime relation signified by it would ever have been known in the world, nor ever existed.

The *third* reason assigned by them, as the foundation of the exalted character, is, his *Divine unction*. But here they confounded the effect with its cause ; the character, with the thing characterized. That God gave the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ, as man, is allowed : but he vouchsafed the Divine gift without measure, because he was his Son. This heavenly unction did not constitute, but supposed him to be, the Son of God.—The Holy Spirit, indeed, is granted to believers ; to the children of God, in general, as their common privilege. But the gift is not bestowed, the privilege is not enjoyed, *prior* to their adoption ; no, both the one and the other are the blessed *fruits* of their filial relation to God. And so Jesus was filled with the Holy Ghost, *because he was* the Son of God ; not that he *might be* so.—Besides, if he had been honored with so illustrious a title as, the SON OF GOD, only or principally, on account of the gifts he received ; yet he could not for that reason have been called God's ONLY Son : because many others have received the gifts of the Spirit, though not to such a degree. But why should I here enlarge, seeing it is evident from the Scripture, that Christ was the Son of God prior to his inauguration, his baptism, his unction ?

The *resurrection* of Christ from the dead, is the *fourth* foundation on which our opponents endeavour to establish the glorious title. But our Divine Redeemer was the Son of God, his own Son, and his only Son, before that illustrious event took place ; as appears from a multitude of testimonies which need not be recited. It is, indeed, said, ‘ He was declared to be the Son of God with power—by the resurrection from the dead : ’ but then the words evidently suppose that he was the Son of God *before* his resurrection. His triumphant resurrection did not *constitute*, but *declare* him to be, the only begotten of the Father.—Besides, admitting that he might, with propriety be called THE SON OF GOD, because he was raised from the dead ; yet he could not be called his ONLY SON ; for some have risen, and millions shall rise from the dead, as well as he.—Further : If Jesus bear the august character on this ground, it must be only in a way of analogy

and by a metaphor ; much in the same sense as the angels, being created by Jehovah, are called the sons of God. I said, by a *metaphor*, or only in a way of *analog*y. For I cannot perceive that the resurrection of a man from the dead, is any more like a generation, or gives a better claim to the sublime title, than his creation. Yet there are very few who would not be offended to hear, that Christ is the Son of God only by a *metaphor*. For every one may easily see, that believers in common would be the sons of God in a higher and nobler sense than Christ himself, were that the case ; they being more properly the sons of God by adoption, than he can be in a sense that is merely figurative.—But whatever be the real ground of the glorious character, it is manifest, that it must be something *peculiar* to Jesus Christ ; something in which none upon earth, nor any in heaven, besides himself, has a share ; because none but He, either is, or ought to be called, ‘ the *only* begotten of the Father—the *only* Son of God.’

The *fifth* reason assigned for the exalted character, is, the *sovereign exaltation* of Jesus to the right hand of the Father, after his death and resurrection. But I need not spend much time in refuting this conjecture ; because many of the arguments already advanced return upon this occasion. I shall, therefore, only ask, was not Christ the Son of God, his own Son, and his only begotten Son, *before* his exaltation ? Must we never distinguish between his being a Son, and his entering on the actual possession of his inheritance ? Jesus, the mediator, I allow, entered on the full possession of the inheritance, when he ascended into heaven ; but does it from hence follow, that he was not the Son of God before ?—We may affirm, that God *anointed* his Son ; that he *sent* his Son, to be our priest, prophet, and king ; that he *raised up*, and *highly exalted* his Son ; because the word of Inspiration assures us of these things. Consequently, instead of saying that Jesus is the Son of God, because he was anointed—was invested with various offices—was raised from the dead, and highly exalted ; we should rather say, he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and invested with his mediatorial offices ; became the first fruits of them that sleep, and was exalted after his

resurrection ; because he was the Son of God prior to these events. And if so, we must either consider his conception by the Holy Ghost, as the only reason of the illustrious title, which we have already disproved ; or we must have recourse to a more ancient generation.\*

But here, as through the whole subject, we must carefully distinguish the *modus* of our Lord's eternal Sonship from the Sonship itself. The *latter* is revealed, as an object of faith, by the Spirit of infallibility ; while the *former* lies concealed in impenetrable darkness. I shall not, therefore, attempt to *explain* the eternal generation of the Son of God. It is, I acknowledge, far above all our expressions and all our thoughts : nor do I wonder that all the comparisons which the wit of man can invent, in order to illustrate the subject, come vastly short of their designed end. But I have no need of such comparisons to satisfy my reason and conscience. For if I do not allow that there are many great and interesting realities which as to the *modus* of their existence, are absolutely incomprehensible by me, I am not capable of reasoning either in religion or nature. But if this be granted, the eternal Filiation of the Divine Son being to me incomprehensible, is far from affording a sufficient reason to question the reality of it. I ought rather to inquire, Whether I can, without impious arrogance doubt of its truth, it being clearly revealed in the Bible.

\* Perfectly conformable to the reasoning of our Author, in this Chapter. are the language and sentiments of that sensible and ingenious writer, Mr JOHN M'LAURIN. ' If that name, God's own, or proper Son, signified his being produced by God the Father, it would agree to all creatures. If it signified only some imperfect likeness to the nature of the Father, it would agree to all living, especially all rational creatures. If it signified only the highest resemblance, or likeness to God, that any creature has, it might agree to many ; since no mere creature can have so much of God, but another might be raised to have as much, or more. If it signified his being created immediately by the Father, whereas other beings are immediately created by the Son ; all other rational creatures might have had the same relation to the Father, and would, however have the same relation to Christ that he hath to God. The name of, God's own son, therefore, cannot agree to any mere creature.' *Sermons and Essays* page 137. Edit. 2d.

By examining the Scripture I am fully convinced, that Christ existed *before* his conception in the womb of the virgin ; this we have proved in the preceding Sections—that, before his incarnation, he was *the Son of God* ; this the Holy Ghost expressly asserts—that he is the Son of God, not by adoption, much less by a metaphor, but in a *proper* sense ; and hence he is called, ‘ *the only begotten Son of God* ’—that, as the Son of God, he possessed a glory with the Father *before the world began* ; of this he himself assures us—that he is the *Creator* of all things, and *one* with the Father—that he is *equal* with God, and the *true* God ; as appears from the foregoing pages. Consequently, how incomprehensible soever the *modus* of his Divine Filiation may be, I cannot, without, rejecting the testimony of God, refuse my assent to the *reality* of his ETERNAL SONSHIP.

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## CHAP. VI.

### Other objections answered.

OUR opponents object, with confidence, all those passages of Scripture which express the idea of *dependence*, in Jesus Christ, upon the Father. They, therefore, frequently confront us with those texts which assert ; that Christ ‘ does nothing of himself ;’ that he does ‘ those works which the Father gave him to do ;’ that ‘ the Son knoweth not the hour of the last judgment ;’ that ‘ the Father is greater than he ;’ and that ‘ the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father,’ at the consummation of all things.—On each of these, and on similar passages, they argue against us. But as they make, in reality, but one difficulty, we shall consider them altogether, and give them but one reply.

Here, then, it may be observed, that we frequently meet with such declarations in Scripture, as are, in *appearance*, directly opposite to these. There we behold

our Lord acting according to his own will ; acting with a sovereign authority ; acting as absolutely independent. ‘ Be it unto thee even as thou wilt—I will, be thou clean —thy sins be forgiven thee.’ There also we are assured, that he is, ‘ one with the Father and equal with God ; that he ‘ knoweth all things, and of his kingdom there ‘ shall be no end.’—Now these passages, with many of a similar kind, *appear* contradictory to those on which our adversaries argue ; but they are not, they cannot be so, in *reality* : because they were all indited by the same Spirit, who is not liable to error and contradiction. Consequently, of two hypotheses, that which makes them clash and renders them irreconcilable, must be false ; and that which proves their consistency, bids fair to be true, and is abundantly preferable. The former, I am abundantly persuaded, is the character of the *Socinian*, the latter of *our* hypothesis.

By what medium, for instance, will the Socinians show me, that Christ is *equal* with his Father, and yet *inferior* to him ? for, according to them, he is inferior, infinitely inferior to the Father, *by nature*. Is he then, equal to him by his *offices* ? impossible : the supposition is big with absurdity. For, in regard to his offices, he is evidently *the servant* of God ; he is not, he cannot, therefore, be equal with him, on that account. For a common servant to say, ‘ I am equal to my master,’ would be inscience ; for a minister of state to assert it, would be a species of high treason against his sovereign.

With what consistency can our opponents maintain that Christ knows *all things*, and yet is ignorant of the time fixed for one of the *greatest events* that ever did, or ever will take place in the universe ? The distinction between nature and office, is of no use here. For *knowledge* is a property of nature : something, therefore, belonging to the *nature* of Jesus must be in question. Will they say, ‘ when Peter declares that our Lord knows *all things*, that he does not speak in *the general* ?’ But what is speaking in the general, if not making use of general expressions ? besides, Peter, from a general principle, draws a particular conclusion. ‘ Lord thou

‘ knowest *all things*, thou knowest that *I love thee* ’ As if he had said, Lord, I love thee ; and thou must know that I love thee ; for thou art not ignorant of any thing. To suppose the apostle under a mistake, when he so expressed himself, has no shadow of reason. - Because if he was, he uttered blasphemy, by attributing omniscience to Jesus Christ, which belongs only to God ; and because his holy and humble master would not have rewarded blasphemy by saying, ‘ feed my sheep.’

How can they reconcile those passages which inform us, that Christ does nothing of himself ; that he prayed at the grave of Lazarus ; and that the Father always hears him ; with others which represent him, as working miracles by his own will and his own power ? If he be a mere man, he depends on God for his existence every moment, and was entirely beholden to the Great Sovereign for every exertion of power in the performance of his miraculous works. But if so, how came he to speak with such an air of Divine authority and of Divine power, ‘ *I will, be thou clean ?* ’ had Moses, or Paul, expressed themselves after this manner, they would, undoubtedly, have been guilty of blasphemy. Nor can the distinction between office and nature, be of the least service on this occasion.

Nor is their hypothesis any better calculated to reconcile what the Scripture asserts about the perpetuity of our Lord’s kingdom, with what it says concerning his *delivering of it up* to the Father. For as according to them, he does not reign by *nature*, but only in virtue of his *offices* ; it does not appear how his kingdom can be eternal. Nay, it necessarily follows that it must come to a period, if his offices do so.—The seeming contradictions, therefore, between the different passages, remain in all their force, as to any relief which can be afforded by their hypothesis. If, then, we be able perfectly to reconcile these apparently jarring texts, they must allow that our sentiments have a manifest and great advantage over theirs.

Though the distinction of *nature* and *office*, which is fundamental in their hypothesis, be of no service here ;



yet ours of *two distinct natures* in the person of Christ, which is essential to the system embraced by us, is calculated to answer the important end. Nothing more easy, nothing more natural, than to reconcile one Scripture with another, on the foundation of this distinction. For example : Jesus Christ is man, and therefore inferior to the Father : He is God, and therefore equal with the Father. He is man, and therefore ignorant of some things : he is God, and therefore must be omniscient. He is man, and therefore must be dependent on the first cause ; he prays and is heard. He is God ; to act, therefore, he need only to will ; for by willing he commands, and by commanding he executes. ‘ *I will, be thou clean.*’ He is man, and therefore may receive a dominion, which is not natural to him : he may also receive it for a certain time ; after which he shall deliver up his delegated kingdom and dominion to the Father. He is God, and therefore, has an everlasting kingdom, a necessary dominion that shall never have an end.

Crellius will reply, ‘ this distinction of *two natures* in Christ, is a fiction.’ But if so, the Scriptures are absolutely irreconcilable. Besides, if we search the volume of inspiration, we shall find this distinction strongly marked and firmly laid. There it is affirmed, that ‘ *the word,*’ who created all things, ‘ *was made flesh ;*’ and that ‘ *God was manifest in the flesh.*’ These assertions must imply that the Divine nature was united to the human, in the wonderful person of Jesus Christ. The same fundamental truth is expressed in the name, ‘ *Immanuel ; God with us.*’

And if you examine the passages produced against us by our opponents, you may soon perceive, that this distinction of natures in our Mediator, is quite consistent with their scope and design. For example : ‘ if ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father : for my father is greater than I.’ It is *as man* that he leaves his disciples ; for, in other respects, he engages to continue with them to the end of the world : it is of himself as going away *speedily*, that he speaks the

words ; and, consequently, he speaks of himself as man, when he says, ‘ my Father is greater than I.’—And as to those ideas of *dependence* which he expresses in other places, the several passages may be easily explained, consistently with the analogy of faith and the Divinity of our Lord, either by the distinction of *two natures* ; or by the office of *Mediator* ; or by that *relation* which subsists between the Father and the Son. But that peculiar mode of subsistence not being revealed in the Scripture, it would be presumptuous folly in me to attempt an inquiry into it : and I again declare, that I will make no inquiries, on this mysterious profound subject, which are curious and philosophical. *For Divinity consists in speaking with the Scripture, and in going no further.*

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## CHAP. VII.

Some considerations adapted to relieve the mind respecting the difficulties which attend this Great Mystery.

**H**AVING answered the principal objections, which our opponents advance against us, it is proper we should now inquire ; how we may satisfy our own minds, as to the difficulties attending the grand truth, which it has been the business of this treatise to establish ? and, in order to this, the following considerations are presented to the reader’s notice.

Almost every thing in the system of nature, notwithstanding the great improvements in modern philosophy, is attended with difficulties. If you look up to the heavens, you stand astonished at their greatness, and feel yourself incapable of comprehending that immensity which lies beyond those vast spaces which surround us.—If you cast your eyes on the earth, you meet with as many mysteries of nature, as there are animals, plants, and creatures inanimate. You meet with insuperable

difficulties in explaining, the sensation of one, the vegetation of another, and the motion of a third.—If you consider material nature in its wide extremes, of immense greatness and invisible minuteness, you are struck with amazement and imagination is nonplussed.—If, to the consideration of bodies, you take in that of their duration, time will show you incomprehensible wonders; both in the succession of ages past, and in that which is future.—If you turn your thoughts to spiritual essences, every thing surpasses your comprehension. You cannot comprehend, either their manner of existing, or their manner of acting. Even the human soul is so great a paradox to itself, that it long since despaired, not only of comprehending, but of knowing itself.

And if so, is there any reason to assert, as our adversaries do, that there are *no mysteries* in religion? or, have they sufficient ground to refuse their assent to the doctrine of our Lord's eternal Divinity, so clearly revealed in the Bible, because it is attended with such difficulties as are insuperable to the powers of reason? is it any wonder if the difficulties with which we meet in the Christian religion, and especially those that regard the Deity of Christ and the doctrine of the trinity, should be found greater, much greater, than those which attend a philosophical inquiry into the system of nature? It would, indeed, be a wonder if it were not so; because the constitution and capacities of our minds bear some proportion to natural objects, which are created and finite; and are much better qualified to inquire into their causes and properties, their connections and uses, than into those of religion, which are of a spiritual kind, and particularly what relates to the INFINITE GODHEAD.—Besides, the blessed God has not prepared our minds, in the volume of Revelation, for meeting with mysteries in the frame of nature, as he has in the objects of religion. He has told us that the mystery of godliness is GREAT, and that the things of the gospel are accounted FOOLISHNESS by the sons of science.

‘ But reason, they will say, reason is the principal light,  
‘ and, in some respects, the principal revelation, by which

‘ God makes himself known to man. By reason we are  
 ‘ led to the Scriptures; and by that noble faculty we are  
 ‘ delivered from the blindness of universal scepticism.’  
 —Reason, as before observed, prepares the way to faith,  
 by leading us to receive the Scripture as a Divine Reve-  
 lation; but when she has put the Sacred Volume into  
 our hands, and has found the natural import of its lan-  
 guage, she either is, or ought to be silent. She has no  
 right to demand, how can these things be?—no right to  
 dictate *what* the Almighty should reveal, or *how* he  
 should speak. Nay, there is nothing more reasonable,  
 than to hearken to the voice of unerring wisdom and Infi-  
 nite authority, with an *implicit* submission and an *unsus-  
 pecting*, reliance.

There are two kinds of knowledge; one of curiosity,  
 the other of practice: and this distinction takes place in  
 all arts and sciences. Thus, for instance, in the art of  
 navigation we must know, what a ship is; which seas  
 are safe, and which dangerous; at what time such a sea  
 is navigable, and when it is not so. This is essential to  
 the end of navigation; and this I call, a knowledge of  
*practice*.—But it may be inquired, why the sea is salt?  
 what is the reason that such a sea has its flux and reflux  
 more than another? and why such particular winds pre-  
 vail more in this climate than they do in that? this I call,  
 a knowledge of *curiosity*: and it would be very absurd  
 to fail of reducing the other to practice, because these  
 questions contain such difficulties as are unanswerable.  
 —Again: I resolve to eat my common food, and, some-  
 times, when I have no appetite; because I know that  
 without food my strength and life must fail. But were I  
 to defer taking the necessary refreshment, till I knew  
 how the various transmutations are performed; or till I  
 was able to comprehend, how the food is turned into  
 chyle; the chyle into blood; and the blood into flesh;  
 all the world would laugh at my folly: while I should  
 suffer the pains of hunger, perhaps, the agonies of death,  
 notwithstanding any pretended importance of such in-  
 quiries.

In the affairs of morality and divinity, there are also two kinds of knowledge; the one of practice, the other of curiosity. To *worship* Jesus Christ, I must know that he is God. To put my *trust* in him, I must look upon him as God; because it is written, ‘Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from JEHOVAH.’ But it is not necessary that I should know the *modus*, and the adorable secrets, of the hypostatical union. As to what is *practical*, it is this: to know that Christ is the Son of God, whom all rational creatures are bound to love, obey, and adore—that he created the heavens and the earth, and by him all things consist—and that he is over all, God blessed for ever. But speculative and metaphysical inquiries into these things, belong to a knowledge of *curiosity*; and are no other than bold and presumptuous endeavours, to penetrate the unsearchables of the Divine essence and the Divine personalities.

God’s design, in that revelation which he has given, is to make known *realities* and *facts*, not the *manner* of them. So, in the works of creation, he discovers himself as an almighty Being, whose power produced all things; but he does not answer a multitude of curious questions, devised by men of a speculative turn relating to the *manner* in which Divine power produced the universe, and operates in the conservation of all things.—In the constitution of the world and the conduct of Providence, God gives us such a display of his perfections, as challenges our reverence and affection, our obedience and adoration: yet multitudes of insuperable difficulties attend the Divine administration, from our not being able to comprehend *how* the holiness, and wisdom, and power of God concur in the permission of the most wicked actions, and in over-ruling them so as to promote some valuable end.

And thus it is in the Divine word, which contains, as a doctrine, and reveals, as a fact, the incarnation of the Son of God. These Divine declarations, ‘the word was made flesh—God was manifest in the flesh’—are plain and full to the point; especially, if considered in connec-

tion with other infallible testimonies. But they do not, nor does the Bible at large, enable us to answer a number of difficult questions, which might be started about the *modus* of that wonderful fact. Nor, indeed, was this either necessary, or practicable. It was not *practicable*. For, as the minds of speculative men are ever teeming with unprofitable questions and perplexing doubts, the volume of Scripture must have been of an immense bulk, to have provided solutions for them all. It was not *necessary*. For to know the *modus* of the grand reality would, perhaps, only indulge our curiosity and flatter our pride; whereas our acquaintance with the *fact*, serves for practice; and it is practice, not the gratification of our curiosity, at which the Holy Spirit aims.—Happy would it be, if all teachers of Divinity were careful to distinguish between those things which are practical and necessary, and those which are curious and merely speculative. They would be surprised to find, by this distinction, that a great part of mankind spend their time in seeking a kind of knowledge, which is of little or no use—a kind of knowledge, which would neither meliorate their tempers, nor amend their conduct; neither increase their devotion to God, nor promote benevolence to man. They would see that philosophical divines lose their way, the very first step they take, in searching after the truths of salvation; because they spend their time and pains, in attempting to grasp incomprehensibles, instead of insisting upon what is plainly revealed.

As they who lived under the legal economy had, in comparison with us, but faint representations of the *reality* of the incarnation; though agreeable to the plan of Divine wisdom, respecting the state of the church at that time, and had regard to a clearer manifestation of that capital truth under the gospel dispensation; how do we know but our present ignorance of the *manner* of that mysterious fact, may have a relation to the future life? for the knowledge of the people of God does not only vary, according to the difference of the Divine economies, under which they live; but according to the different *state* in which they are. A child, for in-

stance, has no reason to be offended, or grieved, because he cannot comprehend how the empires of this world are governed ; any more than the ancient Israelites had, because they were not favoured with all the light and grace of the Messiah's kingdom. The condition of men, while on earth, like that of a child in the simile, does not permit them to penetrate the mysteries of religion to that degree, of which the human mind shall be capable in a future state : though even then it will be impossible to ' find out the Almighty to perfection.'

Our ideas proceed from three sources, the senses, reason, and faith ; and these are mutually dependent, though their uses and jurisdiction are different. The senses furnish reason with her materials, and reason furnishes faith with her principles. The senses never rise so high as reason, nor is it proper that reason should rise so high as faith. Reason judges of that which the senses cannot perceive. She tells us, for example, that there is matter between the earth and the heavens ; though this matter does not appear. And so it is the province and prerogative of divine faith, to judge of those things which surpass the powers of reason. God asserts and faith teaches, that the ' Word was made flesh ;' though reason, of herself, perceives nothing of it ; nay, though she strongly object against it. And why ? Because faith is superior to reason, as reason is superior to the senses. As, therefore, it would be vain and absurd, for a man to endeavour to discover that by the senses, which reason cannot develope ; so it is preposterous and arrogant for reason to determine upon those mysterious realities, which lie within the province of faith—even of that faith, which entirely depends on the Divine testimony, and is altogether directed by it. For as the errors of the senses, which are the first means of knowledge, are corrected by reason ; so the mistakes of reason should be rectified by faith. Let reason, then, lead me to faith, as my senses lead me to reason ; but let reason be silent when faith speaks, as my senses are silent when reason dictates. For, certainly, if reason convince me of many truths, contrary to what my senses suggest ; if it con-

vince me, for instance, that the sun is bigger than the earth, though my eyes teach me the contrary ; faith may teach us a variety of important things which reason could never discover, and which, when discovered, she cannot comprehend.

Here, perhaps, it may be said, ‘As the general agreement of men, in assenting to a proposition, is a strong presumptive proof of its truth ; so a general reluctance to receive it is an equal evidence of its falsehood. The doctrine of the incarnation, consequently, having something in it repugnant to the minds of men in general, ought to be rejected as void of truth.’—But there is a vast difference between rejecting a principle, as contradictory to some *known, established* truth ; and finding it *naturally incomprehensible*. The former is a character of its falsehood ; the latter of its sublimity.—There are some universal repugnancies of the senses, of the imagination, and of the mind itself, which do not conclude against the reality of their objects. For example : The *senses* tell those that view, from the ground, an Egyptian pyramid, that the summit of it is almost like the spire of a steeple ; and though all mankind were to see it, in that situation, they would universally agree that it terminates in a point. But reason, judging of the distance and proportion of the object, as well as being assisted by experiment, corrects the error ; and, notwithstanding this universal language of the senses, convinces you, that the top of the pyramid is a platform capable of holding fifty men.—Human *imagination* has an aversion, universally, to represent to itself, men, who, without falling, have their feet diametrically opposite to ours. Yet reason corrects this error, and puts it beyond a doubt, that there are antipodes.—The *minds* of all mankind are naturally shocked, at which philosophers and geometricians assert, concerning the infinite divisibility of matter : and yet, on inquiry, we cannot but assent to the truth of the strange assertion, notwithstanding this universal repugnancy.—May we not, then, conclude, that though all men found something offensive to them in this proposition, ‘The Word was made flesh ;’ or, ‘God was made man ;’ yet



faith would have a right to correct this universal repugnancy, as reason does that of the senses and imagination?

Many learned and pious men have laboured hard to find out pertinent similitudes, by which to illustrate a subject which is unsearchably deep and beyond all comparison. Such attempts, however well-intended, cannot fail of proving abortive, and are often injurious to the cause they were designed to serve.—These comparisons are not adapted to answer the end, as they speak only to our imagination. Now it is not the *imagination*, but *reason* that must be satisfied. For as those emblems, under which I may represent to myself the Divine Being, have but little evidence to convince me of his existence; so the images, by which the mystery before us may be represented, have but little force to persuade me of its truth.—Besides, these comparisons give occasion to our opponents, to examine and expose the disparities which attend them; which must necessarily be both numerous and striking, by reason of the immense disproportion which there is between similitudes taken from finite creatures, and the infinite Creator. On these disparities the enemies of the truth raise imaginary triumphs; and improve them to blind the simple and seduce the ignorant, who do not well understand the design of such comparisons; which was, not the *conviction* of the mind, but the *assistance* of the imagination.—Another reason why these comparisons appear to us injurious to the cause of truth, is, their being intended to lessen the difficulties attending the grand mystery, by discovering the *manner* of it, which God has not revealed. This, so far as it is supposed to operate, supersedes the necessity of an unreserved confidence in the divine testimony, concerning this profoundly mysterious subject; and, in a measure, the end of Revelation itself, which is calculated to humble us, by presenting us with objects which we cannot comprehend, as well as to enlighten us in such things as are necessary to be known.

The only use I would make of such comparisons, is, to discover the difference between intuitive and abstracted knowledge. I call that *intuitive*, which arises from sight

and experience ; and that *abstracted*, which results from reasoning and testimony. For instance : A man, blind from his birth, has only an abstracted knowldge of many agreeable and wonderful objects around him, of which persons in common have an intuitive knowledge. Now, supposing you speak to such an one about light and colours ; about the brightness of the sun, in his meridian glory, or concerning the vegetable beauties of spring ; his ideas of what you mean are all confused. Nay, if you enter into particulars with him, on subjects of this kind, he will consider many things you say, as quite inconsistent one with another. He will not know how, and he will think it impossible for any other person, to reconcile so many apparent contradictions. Whereas if you mention the several particulars to one who enjoys the blessing of sight, and, especially, if he have been studious of nature ; he understands what you say, and has not the least doubt in the case. The grand reason of this difference is, those things which are incomprehensible, when they are known merely with an abstracted knowledge, appear in a very different light when they are known intuitively ; and, frequently, the difficulties we suppose to be in the *objects*, are in our *own minds*, and arise from our *manner* of knowing them.

Hence it appears, that difficulties and seeming contradictions may be found in the most common objects, when they are known merely in an abstracted way ; and that the supposed inconsistencies vanish, so soon as they come to be viewed intuitively. We have, therefore, little reason to be surprised, it, when contemplating the mystery of the incarnation, difficulties occur and seeming contradictions appear ; since in the present state, our knowledge of it is purely abstracted.

The two following reflections shall conclude this Treatise. As there are difficulties in almost every subject of inquiry, it is by a *comparative view* that wise men have always been determined to take one side of a question, rather than the other. This is a certain rule of good sense, and should be followed in the case before us. We ought not to reject the doctrine of the incarnation as er-

roneous, because difficulties attend it ; nor because very plausible objections have been made against it. It is the fault of young persons, and the character of rash and weak understandings, that are not capable of viewing several objects, and their relations, at once ; to determine questions of importance, on the appearance of an insuperable difficulty : or else it is an evidence of a negligent and lazy temper, which will not permit them to examine things maturely. We ought here, as it is a question of infinite importance, to the glory of God and the salvation of men ; to compare arguments with arguments, and difficulties with difficulties, and that with diligence and prayer.—On such an examination it will be found, that the most plausible *arguments* of our adversaries consist, either in metaphysical speculations ; or in such passages of Scripture as explain themselves, by others, to a very different sense : whereas ours are formed on such Divine declarations as are clear and express, frequently repeated and closely connected ; so that either the obvious and natural meaning of the terms must utterly be rejected, and then any expressions will serve any purpose ; or our interpretation must be received. And as to the *difficulties* it will appear, that the most formidable of those which are started by our opponents, are taken, either from their being incapable of comprehending the mystery ; or from the glosses of some whimsical schoolmen, which we freely give up and heartily despise, as much as our opposers themselves. But the difficulties which we improve against them, arise from a consideration of such things as are absolutely essential to the Scriptures ; which are, *truth, perspicuity, and piety*. For without these the Bible is unworthy of God : destitute of these, whoever attributes it to Him, reproaches his Maker. Difficulties multiply and load their hypothesis, by considering, the analogy of faith—that by which God's love to mankind is most highly recommended—that on which are founded the reality of the atonement by Jesus Christ, and all the merit of his death—and, above all, that which the apostles, who were inspired and commissioned to reveal and publish the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, have

most said, repeated, urged ; and upon which they have grounded the practice of worshipping Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as **OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.** So that the difficulties which we object, are such as affect **THE BIBLE**, as a Divine Revelation ; and **CHRISTIANITY**, as a Divine Religion.

Again : Though the Socinian interpretation of controverted texts, is, in many instances, the most probable that can be given, in opposition to the arguments we form upon them, in defence of our Lord's Divinity ; yet they appear unnatural, far-fetched, and invented merely to serve an hypothesis. So that, as we are not required to interpret the oracles of God by a Spirit of divination, nor to decypher unsearchable riddles ; we cannot be under any obligation to know, much less to approve, such refined subtilties as are calculated to lower, to obscure, to destroy, those sublime ideas which the Scriptures give us, of the essential and mediatorial glories of Jesus Christ.

The former of these reflections proves the *truth* of our principles, the latter shows the *safety* of them. The one satisfies our *minds*, the other our *consciences* ; and both together give a just idea of the design of this Treatise, which I now dedicate to the eternal honor of my **DIVINE REDEEMER**, the **ADORABLE IMMANUEL**.—‘Forgive, O GOD, the imperfections of the work, and the sins of the author ! Establish and spread the infallible truths of thy gospel ; that as thou hast been pleased to manifest thyself in the flesh, all flesh may behold thy glory and bow at thy footstool ! Amen.’

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