

OF THE
SOCINIAN SCHEME.

By EDWARD HARWOOD, D.D.

Και γὰρ εἰσι τινες, ὡ φίλοι, λεγόν, ἀπο τοῦ ἡμε-
τεροῦ γένους ὁμολογούντες αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι, ἀνθρώπου
δὲ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενομένου ἀποφθινομένοι. οἷς οὐ συν-
τιθεμαι. *Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 142.
Edit. Jebb. Lond. 1719.*

SECOND EDITION, enlarged.

PRINTED AT THE AUTHOR'S EXPENCE,
And sold only by him, at N^o. 6. *Hyde Street,*
Bloomsbury, LONDON.

T O

The Right Reverend Dr. LOWTH, Bishop of London :

The Hon. and Right Reverend Dr. BARRINGTON, Bishop of Salisbury :

The Right Reverend Dr. EDMUND LAW, Bishop of Carlisle :

The Right Reverend Dr. JOHN LAW, Bishop of Clonsfert :

The Right Reverend Dr. NEWCOMBE, Bishop of Waterford :

The Reverend Mr. Michael Pope :

The Reverend Mr. Reginald Heber, Rector of Malpas, Cheshire :

The Right Hon. Lady Charlotte Wentworth :

The Hon. Mrs. Walsingham :

Dr. Warren, Physician to his Majesty, and F. R. S.

Dr. Robert Bromfield, F. R. S.

Dr. Richard Saunders, F. R. S.

Edward Ford, Esq; Surgeon :

John Peachey, Esq;

Joseph Windham, Esq;

Richard Payne Knight, Esq;

William Cowden, Esq;

John Walker, Author of several ingenious Treatises.

To THESE most worthy Persons, who were my great Benefactors, in my long and deplorable Illness, this little Tract, with the most grateful heart, is inscribed by their

obliged Servant,

EDWARD HARWOOD.

A 2

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

DURING the present triumphant Progress of *Socinianism*, I republish this little Treatise, in a cool and dispassionate manner to evince^{to} the Reader, That such men as Sir ISAAC NEWTON, Dr. CLARKE, Mr. WHISTON, PIERCE, HALLET, CHANDLER, FOSTER, EMLYN, and BENSON did not, without *reason* and *judgment*, adopt those Tenets concerning the *exalted nature* of our blessed Lord, for which some of them *suffered bonds and imprisonment*; and ALL of them *had trial of cruel mockings and calumnies* from the world. If in *any way* this small Tract contribute to the Glory of the Gospel, I shall cordially rejoice amidst that deplorable condition, to which it hath pleased GOD that I should be reduced by a severe stroke of the Palsy, which for fourteen months hath deprived me of the use of my left side, and rendered me an helpless cripple. For the principal Merit of this Treatise the Reader stands indebted to the Rev. Mr. CLARK, late of *Birmingham*, with whom, when I was expert in scriptural knowledge, I once discoursed a whole day on this Subject. I write this discourse as a Greek Scholar, principally for the edification and establishment of young Clergymen in one of the fundamental Concerns of our most holy Faith; no Answer therefore, but from a Scholar can be deemed satisfactory either by *others* or by *myself*. May CHRISTIANITY, that heavenly System of *Doctrines, Duties* and *Discoveries* to this World, diffuse its salutary influence in the hearts and lives of its Inhabitants, *whatever* their metaphysical speculations may be concerning the *conception and nature* of that divine Person, *who had glory with the Father before the world was!*

London, Hyde Street, Bloomsbury, *4* OC 58
July 1783.

EDWARD HARWOOD,

O F T H E
S O C I N I A N S C H E M E.

IN the celebrated Dialogue between *Justin Martyr* and *Trypho* the *Jew*, occurs the following distinguished passage. “It appears to me, says *Trypho*, that they who maintain that Christ was merely a man, and that he was according to the Divine purpose anointed and constituted the Messiah, advance a sentiment much more probable than what you espouse. For all of us *Jews* expect the Messiah to be a *man*, and that *Elias* will come and anoint him. But when that Person, who is the Messiah, shall appear, it will certainly be found, that he is a *man* born from men*.” And a little before, we hear the

A 3

same

* Και ὁ Τρυφῶν, ἔμνη μιν δεκάουσιν, εἰπεν, οἱ λεγόντες ἀνθρώπον γίνεσθαι αὐτόν, καὶ κατ' ἐκλογὴν κεχρισθαι, καὶ Χριστὸν γίνεσθαι, πιθανώτερον ὑμῶν λεγὴν τὸν ταῦτα ἄπειρ φης λεγόντων. καὶ γὰρ πάντες ἡμῖς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀνθρώπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων προσδοκῶμεν γινῆσθαι, καὶ τὸν Ἰλῆαν χρίσθαι αὐτόν ἐλθόντα, ἵαν δὲ οὗτος φαινῆται ὡς ὁ Χριστός,

same *Jew* making this declaration: “The sentiment appears to me to be strange and utterly incapable of being demonstrated; for to maintain, as you do, that the Messiah was a *Divine* person, and had a pre-existence before all ages, and that afterwards he submitted to assume human nature, and was not merely a *man* from an human origin, this seems to me not only a *paradoxical*, but a *foolish* opinion. I am sensible, replies *Justin Martyr*, that this subject appears to be paradoxical, especially to those of your nation, who never discovered a desire either to understand or to do the things of God, but rather chose to adhere to your *Rabbies*, as God himself witnesseth against you. However, *Trypho*, the great truth that Jesus is the Christ of God, is not invalidated, if I should not be able to satisfy you that the Son of the universal Parent is a *Divine* person, and had a pre-existent State, and that he became a *man* by means of the virgin. For it is in every respect demonstrable, that he is the Messiah of God, whatever his *nature* may have been. Should I not, therefore, be able to satisfy you that he pre-existed, and that in compliance with the *Divine* will, he humbled

Χριστος, ανθρωπον μιν εξ ανθρωπων γινωσκοντων εκ παντος επιγινωσκειν δι.
Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 142. Ed. Jebb.
Lond. 1719.

humbled himself to become a *man*, to assume human flesh, and to subject himself to our infirmities, it behoveth you to say, that I *only* am in an error in this point—this will not justify you in denying that Jesus is the Christ, should he appear to have no other than an *human* origin, and to have been constituted the Messiah by the election of God. For, my friends, said I, there are some of our society who acknowledge him to be the Messiah, but maintain that he was a mere man—to whose opinion I assent not *.”

From this honest passage we learn, in the *first* place, that the *Jews* expected that their *Messiah* would only be a man, and have no other than an human original. We see *Trypho* treat with great ridicule and contempt the doc-

A 4

trine

* Παραδόξος τις γαρ ποτε και μη δυναμινος ὅλως αποδειχθῆναι δοκει μοι εἶναι. το γαρ λεγειν σε προυπαρχειν Θεον οντα προ αιωνων τουτον τον Χριστον, ειτα και γινῆθῆναι ανθρωπον ὑπομειναι, και ὅτι ουκ ανθρωπος ἐξ ανθρωπου, ου μονον παραδοξον δοκει μοι εἶναι, αλλα και μωρον. Καγω προς ταυτα εφην, Οιδ' ὅτι παραδοξος ὁ λογος δοκει εἶναι, και μαλιστα τοις απο του γινους ὑμων, οἱτινες τα του Θεου ουτε τελεσθαι ουτε ποιησθαι ποτε ἐβουλησθη, αλλα τα των διδασκαλων ὑμων, ὡς αυτος ὁ Θεος ερε. ηδη μιντοι, ὦ Τρυφων, ειπον, ουκ απολλυται το τοιουτον εἶναι Χριστον του Θεου, ιαν αποδειξαι μη δυναμει ὅτι και προυπηρχεν υἱος του ποιητου των ὅλων Θεος ων, και γινηται ανθρωπος δια της παρθενου, αλλα εκ παντος αποδεικνυμινου ὅτι ουτος εστιν ὁ Χριστος ὁ του Θεου, ὅστις ουτος εσται. κ. λ. *Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 140. 141. Edit. Jebb.*

trine of the *pre-existence* of Jesus, and the transmission of this exalted Spirit into the uterus of a virgin! He calls it strange, passing strange, and stigmatizes this tenet of the Christians with absurdity and folly. “You attempt, says *Trypho* to *Justin Martyr*, in another place, to prove to me a thing utterly incredible and almost impossible, That a *God* submitted to be *born* and to become a *man*!” He, elsewhere, attempts to ridicule the notion which the Christians held of the incarnation of a pre-existing Messiah, as the height of extravagance and infatuation. “We read, says he, in the *Heathen Mythology*, that *Perseus* was begotten of a virgin called *Danae* by their supreme God *Jupiter* in the form of a golden shower. You *Christians* believe a *fable* similar to *this*—You ought to be ashamed of it—You ought rather to maintain that your Jesus was a *man*, of the same origin as *other* men, and to attempt to prove from the scriptures, that he was constituted of God to be the Messiah on account of his virtuous and perfect character—But venture not to vend these *prodigies*, lest you incur the same folly as the *Greeks* in their *Theology*.”

* Ἀπίστου γὰρ καὶ ἀδύνατον σχεῖν πρᾶγμα ἐπιχειρεῖς ἀποδεικνύει, ὅτι θεὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ γινέσθαι, καὶ ἀνθρώπος γινέσθαι. *Justin Martyr. ibid. p. 104.*

logy*.” The Christians’ notion, that the Messiah existed with God before his assumption of human nature, was what *Trypho*’s understanding could not digest. He lavishes all his wit and satire upon it: Compares the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the virgin *Mary*, and the power of the Almighty overshadowing her, to the impregnation of *Danae* by *Jupiter*, and says that the Christians ought to be ashamed of such a weak and wild hypothesis. This exception of the *Jew*, the *Martyr* refutes with great learning and piety.

Another thing we learn from this passage is, that some of the Christians, in these primitive times, denied the pre-existence, affirming that our Saviour was no more than a *man*—with whose opinion, says *Justin Martyr*, I cannot agree†. Other Christians, on the contrary, in these

* Εν δε τοις των λεγομενων Ελληνων μυθοις λεγεται οτι Περσιος εκ Δαναης παρ’Ιννου ουσης, εν χρυσου μορφη ρυσαντος επ’ αυτην του παρ αυτοις Διως καλουμενου, γεινηται. και υμεις τα αυτα οικειοις λεγοντις, αιδισθαι οφειλιτε, και μαλλον ανδρωπον εξ ανδρων γινομενον λεγειν τον Ιησουν τουτον. και ιαν αποδεικνυτε απο των γραφων οτι αυτος εστιν ο Χριστος, δια το νομως και τιλιως πολιτευεσθαι αυτον, κατηξιωσθαι του εκληθαι εις Χριστον. αλλα μη τερατολογειν τυλματι, οπως μητε ομοιως τοις Ελλησι μοραιοις ελιγχεσθαι. *Justin Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 200, 201. Edit. Jebb. 1719.*

† Και γαρ ησι τινες, ω φιλοι, ελιγον, απο του ημιτερου γινους εμελογοντις αυτον Χριστον ειναι, ανδρωπον δε εξ ανδρων γινομενον αποφαινομενοι.

these *early* ages went into the *opposite* extreme, and rashly maintain, says *Origen*, that Christ was the Supreme God over all [the same individual being with the Almighty] but we do not think him so, says this Father, for we believe his own words when he assureth us, saying: *The Father, who sent me, is greater than me**. In the very remotest ages of the Church there subsisted a great diversity of opinions concerning the nature and person of Christ. Some, even in the Apostles' time, asserted that *Christ was not come in the flesh*†—that he never was really invested with human nature—but only exhibited the external *shadowy appearance* and *form of a man*.

In the third place, this passage stands an everlasting monument of the amiable and truly Christian candour and charity of *Justin Martyr*. He brings no *railing accusation* against those Christians in his days, who believed our Saviour to have been merely a *man*—he pronounces no anathemas

αποφαινομένην οἷς οὐ συντίθεται. *Dialog. cum Tryph.* p. 142. *Edit.* 1719.

* Εγώ δὲ τινὰς, ὡς ἐν πληθὺι πιστευόντων καὶ διχορμῶν διαφωτῶν, διὰ τὴν προπίπτειαν ὑποτίθισθαι, τὸν Σωτῆρα εἶναι τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεόν· ἀλλ' οὐτὶ γὰρ ἡμῖς τοιοῦτον, οἱ πειθόμενοι αὐτῷ λέγουσι, Ὁ πατήρ, ὁ πέμψας με, μείζων μου ἐστίν. *Origen contra Celsum. Lib. viii.* p. 387. *Cantab.* 1677.

† Second Epistle of John, ver. 7.

anathemas upon their creed—he only says, he himself could not concur with them in their sentiments in this particular. He declares, that the *denial* of a pre-existence did not invalidate, or in the least weaken the evidences of Christianity—that Jesus had abundantly evinced himself to be the Messiah, whatever his nature and origin might be, whether human or divine—and that however this disquisition were determined, Christianity itself could not be affected by it, but would remain in full possession of its native excellence and divine authority. One cannot but remark, with affecting concern, the striking contrast between that candour and moderation here expressed, by this good man, towards those who denied the pre-existence of Christ, and the temper and conduct of many haughty orthodox bigots, whose frantic violences and intemperate zeal against this sentiment, and those who adopted it, have, through a series of many centuries, defiled the pages of Ecclesiastical history, and dishonoured the annals of humanity.

In the time of *Irenæus*, there were Christians, who are frequently mentioned and confuted in his celebrated *Book against the Heresies*, who denied the pre-existence of our Lord, and contended that he was the son of *Joseph*. They argued thus: If Christ was *born*, he had no
being

being before he was born.* In answer to these, *Irenæus* asserts, “That the Word existed along with the supreme Being at the beginning: that all things were created by him: that he ever superintended the human race: and that in the last ages, according to the time fore-ordained by the Almighty, this Divine person united himself to human nature, and became a man: that he descended from the Father—became incarnate: humbling himself even to death, and then accomplishing the oeconomy of our salvation†.” From the same Father we learn, that the persons who asserted that Christ was a mere man, and generated, in a natural manner, by his Father *Joseph*, were the *Ebionites*‡. But with what propriety, replies *Irenæus*, can our Lord be styled greater than *Solomon*, or *Jonas*,
OR

* Dicentium, si ergo natus est, non erat antè Christus. *Irenæus*, p. 245. Edit. Grabe. Oxon. 1702.

† Osenso manifestè, quod in principio Verbum existens apud Deum, per quem omnia facta sunt, qui et semper rederat generi humano, hunc in novissimis temporibus secundum præfinitum tempus à Patre, unitum suo plasmati, passibilem hominem factum—Verbum Dei existens, a Patre descendens, et incarnatus, et usque ad mortem descendens, et dispensationem consummans salutis nostræ. *Irenæus*, Grabe. 245.

‡ Nudi tantùm hominem quum dicunt ex *Joseph* generatum. P. 248. Οἱ Ἐβιωναῖοι ἐξ Ἰωσήφ αὐτοὺς γινώσκουσιν πασχοῦσι. *Irenæus*, p. 253. Oxon.

or even *David*, if he had the same *common* original with these, and were merely an ordinary descendent from them. Or with what propriety could our Lord pronounce *PETER blessed* for making that profession; Thou art Christ the son of the living God!* In another place of this learned and useful work, one of the most valuable remains of Christian antiquity, this Father argues against those who asserted, That the *beginning* of Christ's existence was the *time* of his advent into our world, that only from the time of *Tiberius Cæsar* had the Deity interposed for the happiness of mankind, and who *denied* that the Logos had *always* been the governor and guardian of the human race.†

In the *third* century *Paul* of *Samofata* distinguished himself, in maintaining that our Saviour had no existence before he was born of the virgin *Mary*. The council of *Antioch*, convened A. D. 269, by which he was deposed and excommunicated, in their synodical epistle say,
That

* Quomodo autem plus quam Salomon, aut plus quam Jona habebat et Dominus erat David, qui ejusdem cum ipsis fuit substantiæ. *Irenæus*, p. 358. *Grabe*.

† Si autem Christus tunc inchoavit esse, quando et secundum hominem adventum suum egit, et a temporibus Tiberii Cæsaris commemoratus est Pater providere hominibus, et non semper Verbum ejus unà cum plasmate fuisse præstendebatur. *Irenæus*, Edit. Oxon. p. 300.

That this heretic affirmed our Lord's original to be *human**, and that the son of God never *descended* from heaven†. Contrary to the doctrine of the church, says *Eusebius*, this divine formed a very mean and abject idea of Christ, as being nothing more than an ordinary man‡. In the vindication and support of his hypothesis, he maintained, That the essence of the son of God was consubstantial with the essence of the Father§.

In the subsequent century, *Marcellus*, bishop of *Ancyra*, in a controversial piece he published against one *Asterius*, being transported by the spirit of opposition to his adversary, in the heat of his zeal, happened to assert, That our Saviour was no more than a *man*. This was a part of his book too criminal for the zealots of those times to overlook. He was cited before a synod of Bishops, who then sat at Jerusalem. They accused him of reviving the heresy of *Paul of Samosata*. They commanded him publickly to
change

* Λειτουργίαν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κατωθιν. *Eusebii Eccl. Hist. Lib. 7. p. 362. Cantab. 1720.*

† Τὸν μὲν γὰρ υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐ βουλιταί συνομολογεῖν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβηλῶσαι. *Eusebii Eccles. Hist. p. 362.*

‡ Τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν Παύλος ὁ ἐκ Σαμοσατῶν παραλαβὼν. τοῦτου δὲ ταπεινὰ καὶ χαμαιπαιτὴ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρὰ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν διδασκαλίαν φρενησάντες, ὡς κοινὸν τὴν φύσιν ἀνθρώπου γινόμενον. *Eusebius Eccl. Hist. Lib. 7. p. 357. Edit. Cantab. 1720.*

§ See the *Bishop of Clogher's* vindication of the Old Testament against *Bolingbroke*. Page 447. *Edit. Lond. 1759.*

change his sentiments. The poor man was covered with confusion, and promised them he would burn his book—His scheme was afterwards re-examined by a number of Ecclesiastics at *Constantinople*, and upon his refusing to destroy his bad book, as he had once promised them he would, they deposed him, and sent *Basil* to be his successor*.—By a synod, however, which was some time after convoked, he was invested with his former dignity, upon his protesting, That his book had been misunderstood, and that he had been *falsely* charged with adopting the opinions of *Paul of Samosata*†. Against this book of *Marcellus*, *Eusebius* wrote an elaborate treatise‡, which hath been happily transmitted

* Ψιλον γαρ ανθρωπον ως ο Σαμοσατευσ ετολημειν ειπειν τον Χριστον. ταυτα γιντες οι τοτε εν Ιεροσολυμοις συνελθοντες—εκειθεν αυτον μεταβισθαι της δοξης· ο δε καταισχυνθεις, επηγγιλλιτο κατακαυσιν το βιβλιον. ως δε σπουδη διελυθη ο των επισκοπων συλλογος, του βασιλιως εις την Κωνσταντινουπολιν καλυντος αυτους, τοτε δη των περι Ευσεβιον εν τη Κωνσταντινου πολιε παροντων, αυθις τα κατα Μαρκιλλον ανιζηταιτο. ως δε ο Μαρκιλλος ουχ ηρειτο κατακαυσαι καδα υπισχιτο την ακαιρον συγγραφην, αι παροντες τον μιν καθειλον, Βασιλειον δε αυτ' αυτου εις την Αγκυραν επιμψαν. *Socratis Hist. Eccles.* p. 72, 73. *Edit. Cantab.* 1720.

† See *Socrates*, p. 73. 105. and *Sozomen*, p. 91. *Edit. Cantab.*

‡ Τουτο μιν το συγγραμμα Ευσεβιος εν τρισι βιβλοις αντρεψεν, εξιλιγξας την κακοδοξίαν αυτου. *Socrates Hist. Eccles.* p. 73. This treatise of *Eusebius* against *Marcellus*, is published at the end of his *Evangelica Demonstratio*. *Edit. Vigeri, Paris*, 1628.

transmitted to our times, and will amply recompence the learned reader's careful perusal.

Photinus, the disciple of *Marcellus*, inherited from his master the same religious system. He asserted, that there was one supreme Being, who had created all things by his own word, but he denied the eternal generation and pre-existence of the son, and maintained that Christ had no being before he was born of his mother. Say the good Bishops when sitting in council on this heresy; We execrate and anathematize those who falsely assert the Logos to be a pure simple essence, having its subsistence in another—some of them styling it the *Word manifested*, others the *internal Word*, and maintaining that Christ the son of God, the mediator and image of God, had *not* a being before the ages, but that he only was constituted the Messiah, and the son of God, when he assumed our flesh from the virgin, four hundred years ago. For they assert, that our Saviour's Kingdom had a beginning, and will have an end after the general judgment and the consummation of all things. Such are the tenets of those who are the followers of *Marcellus* and *Photinus* of *Ancyra*. They, like the *Jews*, reject the præ-existence and deity of Christ, and the eternal duration of his kingdom*.

In

* See *Socratis Eccles. Hist.* p. 98. 100, 101. Edit. Cantab.

In these wretched times, also, of theological disputation and uncharitableness, one *Anastasius* happened to throw out this sentence in one of his sermons: Let no one presume to call *Mary* the mother of God. For *Mary* was a mortal, and it is impossible that God should be born of a mortal.—This was no sooner heard, but the whole church was in an uproar*. *Nestorius* seconded the preacher, and supported his assertion. Such a contest, such a tumult was instantly excited, that, for the peace of the church, it was deemed necessary, that a general council should be convoked. The fathers met at *Ephesus*. *Nestorius* was summoned before them. And while they were witnessing a good confession of their soundness and orthodoxy, this heretic had the audacity publicly to declare before them all: I will never call him God, who was once a babe of two or three months old! And, therefore, I am pure from the blood of you all, and from this time I will never come among you. They affirmed he had spoken blasphemy against the son of God, and deposed him†.

B

Crushed

* Και ποτε ἐπ' ἐκκλησιας ὁ Ἀναστασιος διδασκων ἔφη, θιστοκεν την Μαρναν καλειτω μηδεις. Μαρια γαρ αἰθρωπος ην. ἐπ' ἀνδρωπου δε θιων τιχθηναι, αδυνατον. τουτο ακουσθιν, πολλους κληρικους τε και λαικους εν ταντω παντας ιταραξιν. *Socratis Hist. Eccles.* p 380. *Cantab.* 1720.

† Και ὁη πολλων θιολογουντων τον Χριστον, ἐγω, ἔφη Νεστοριος, τον
γινομενον

Crushed by these ecclesiastical censures and anathemas, this scheme at first languished, and seems at last totally to have perished in the Christian Church. But about *two* centuries ago it rose from its ashes, under the auspices and patronage of *Faustus Socinus*. Of generosity and liberality of mind, there is not perhaps, in the whole History of Religion, a more illustrious example than *Socinus*. An *Italian*, born in a country overwhelmed with popish darkness, fanaticism, and mystery, the greatness of his soul, the strength of his genius, and the honest freedom of his enquiries, threw off all that immense load of the national superstition, and the errors of a system which was every where triumphant. His understanding he cultivated with an assiduity which nothing could fatigue, the scriptures he read and examined with a mind divested, as much as the human mind can be divested, of prejudices and prepossessions, and from the profoundest *abyss* of national darkness emerged, some will tell you, to the highest summit of rationality and good sense. Smitten with the love of truth, and acted by a probity and integrity, which hath few examples, he dissolved all the ties of country, consanguinity, and friendship ;

γινώσκον διμηνιαίον και τριμηνιαίον, ουκ αν θιον νομασαιμι. και
 δια τουτο καθαρος ειμι απο του αιματος υμων. *Socrates*, p. 383.
Cantab.

ship; and in order to enjoy unmolested a system of religious institution, which he had the strongest persuasion was built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, he left his native soil, tore himself from the embraces of a prince who loved him, relinquished all the splendors and honours of a court, and migrated first into *Germany*, afterwards into *Poland*, where he supported the insults, that were offered him on account of his religious principles, with a dignity and elevation of soul worthy of a philosopher and a christian. Whether his hypothesis concerning the person of Christ be true or false, the honesty with which he conducted his researches, and the greatness of mind he displayed in voluntarily expatriating himself, rather than incur the temptation and guilt of worldly compliances, will for ever immortalize his name and his virtue. And though upon a careful and impartial examination of the Divine records, I see reason to differ from him in that article which is peculiarly styled *Socinianism*, yet permit me, reader, freely to declare, that the most rational and instructive criticisms and annotations which were ever published upon the scriptures, were executed by *Socinus*, *Crellius*, *Wolzogenius*, *Slichtingius*, *Pzercovius*, and *Brennius*. I have had occasion to consult and collate many commentators and critics upon the sacred writings, and I will venture to assert,

That there is hardly a good criticism in all our modern Expositors, Mr. *Locke*, Dr. *Clarke*, Dr. *Benson*, Dr. *Taylor*, Messieurs *Pearce* and *Hallet*, Dr. *Sykes*, but what is to be found in that *Collection* published under the name of the *Unitarian Brethren*, and commonly called the *Fratres Poloni*. I once heard a Gentleman* of great erudition declare, That Dr. *Benson* plundered this great Treasure of a vast number of ingenious remarks and judicious observations, without acknowledging the sources of his intelligence. If this be true, which I hope is not, it was very disingenuous and illiberal.

In *England*, in the last century, a number of *Socinians* arose, and published a few books, ill-written and ill-translated. They appear to have formed themselves into a society—but, like *Marcellus*, they were only just *shewn*† to the world, and then disappeared.

Mr. *Biddle*, against whom Dr. *Owen* wrote, and who was for his heresy banished by the *Long Parliament*

* The late Reverend and worthy Mr *Brekell* of *Liverpool*, at whose house I spent a fortnight in the year 1763, the pleasantest time, with regard to a literary intercommunity, I ever spent in my life; I never knew a better *Greek* scholar. E. II.

† *Ostendent terris hunc tantùm fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent.* *Virgil. Æneid. Lib. 6. vers. 869.*

Parliament into the isle of *Scilly*, was an avowed *Socinian*. He possessed very considerable learning, and a singular understanding. A *Catechism* he published, and which is printed at *London*, 1654, discovers an enlargement of mind, a liberality of sentiment, and a sincerity in freely publishing what he apprehended to be truth, which do honour to his memory.

In the present *century* the scheme of *Socinus* hath met with several advocates of the first eminence for learning and piety. My late worthy and learned friend Dr. LARDNER, whose memory I honour, and whose distinguished abilities and integrity it is not for me to celebrate, for a number of years stood almost alone, among the Dissenters, as a supporter and defender of the *Socinian* doctrine. In his singular erudition and sincerity, the scheme had the weight and authority of a thousand advocates. He carried on a free and calm debate, in an epistolary correspondence, with his worthy and learned colleague Dr. Benson—but this amicable discussion produced no alteration in their respective sentiments and schemes. For a number of years, in harmony and love they conducted the pastoral offices together, and to a small but very respectable number of intelligent Christians preached, as one expressed it, *Socinianism* in the morning, and *Arianism* in the afternoon. I mention not this as any thing

invidious and disparaging. For it reflects the greatest honour upon the memories and characters of these great and good men, that such an inviolable harmony and friendship subsisted between them, notwithstanding this difference of opinion; and it redounds to the everlasting praise of that worthy society over which they presided, that the supporters and members of it allowed and encouraged, in their ministers, this generous latitude of sentiment, and this liberal freedom in their religious profession. On the publication of my Explanatory version, or Concise paraphrase of the New Testament, Dr. *Lardner* did me the honour of writing me a long and very learned and excellent *Letter* on *this* subject, which I once intended to have inserted in this Dissertation. But it shall not be lost*.

Of late years there have appeared a few publications in support of the Socinian scheme, written, chiefly, by *Dissenters*, among whom, it is said, this theory has recently been gaining some profelytes.

In the year 1766 was published an anonymous pamphlet,

* Perhaps, my aged and worthy Friend, the Reverend Dr. *FILKMAN*, at present the learned and venerable Father of the Dissenting Ministers in LONDON, understands the *Socinian Controversy*, from its *origin* to its *present state*, better than any man now living. E. H.

pamphlet, entitled, *Another defence of the Unity, wherein St. John's Introduction to his gospel, and his account of the Word's being made flesh, are considered.* The professed design of this little production, is to invalidate and explode the pre-existence of Christ: but it is written with great inaccuracy of style and confusion of ideas.

In the subsequent year the public was favoured with an elaborate work in favour of the Socinian Hypothesis, entitled, *The true doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ, considered, wherein the misrepresentations that have been made of it, upon the Arian hypothesis, and upon all Trinitarian and Athanasian principles are exposed.* This book, which is written with great candour, and with an excellent spirit, is little more than a studied Dissertation on one single passage of scripture, *Before Abraham was, I am*—for other passages of the New Testament, which have been understood to assert, in the strongest manner, the pre-existence of the Son of God, are either totally omitted, or mentioned in a very slight and cursory manner. To this treatise is prefixed a very sensible and judicious preliminary discourse on the rights of private judgment, in which the authority of scripture, as the sole standard of truth, is irrefragably supported, the native liberty and unalienable privilege of thinking and judging for ourselves in matters of religion,

gion, is excellently maintained and defended, and the notion of an infallible judge and arbiter of controversy, the *public* invasion of *private* freedom and liberty in forming religious sentiments, and the supposed utility and necessity of an human *established* orthodoxy, to be a public national test of truth and error, are admirably confuted and exposed.

The *Letter* written in the year 1730, and published 1759, and now well known to have been Dr. *Lardner's*, contains the strength of the *Socinian* cause.

These several performances I have read with care—with a mind, I can truly say, open to conviction, and unbiassed as much as possible, by any former religious hypothesis. But they have not convinced me. They have not caused me to hesitate. I believe others to be as sincere in their opinions as I am in my own. I have candour and charity for all who differ from me in these speculations*. I embrace those, who
believe

* I have carefully read, what hath been written since the year 1772, in favour of *Socinianism*, either by Dr. *Priestley*, or the learned and worthy Mr. *Lindsey*, or other names of inferior renown; but they have not invalidated my firm belief of the pre-existence of the Word of God. Perhaps the Palsy, which hath deplorably broken my bodily frame, hath also
in-

believe the truth of the Christian religion, but see reason to disbelieve the pre-existence of its author, in the arms of my benevolence and love, as my christian brethren. I repeat with pleasure the candid sentiments of *Justin Martyr*, and with pleasure adopt them for my own: Christianity is the same divine and heavenly scheme, its authority and excellence are not invalidated and destroyed, whatever our theories and speculations may be concerning the *nature* and *person* of Christ. I shall be highly indebted to any ingenious and learned person, who thinks me in an error, if he will publish remarks upon this Dissertation. I shall esteem it an honour done me. I wish my worthy friend Dr. *Lardner* could have seen it. But he is removed into Eternity, as I shall shortly be. It manifests a littleness, an illiberality of soul, unworthy an enquirer into truth, unworthy that benevolence the gospel was given to inspire into the human breast, to look *coldly*
one

impaired my mental abilities. That famous passage in our Saviour's solemn Address to God, before his last Sufferings, is, I *still* think, decisive. *Glorify THOU me, with thine own self, παρὰ σεαυτὸν, apud te ipsum, in tuâ præsentia, with the glory, which I had, with thee, παρὰ σοί, apud te, in thy presence, near thy person, before the world was,* On which my ingenious and learned Friend the Rev. Mr. ROBERTSON well observed; Our Saviour evidently prays for his *future* Restitution to that glory, which in a *prior* state of Existence he *had* once enjoyed.

one upon another, to *think* and *speak* disrespectfully and contemptibly one of another, on account of a contrariety in our respective systems and disquisitions concerning the *Logos*. The essence of Christianity doth not consist in theorizing and speculating, in framing systems for ourselves, and ingeniously disproving those of others; but it consists in a good heart, in a devout life, in benevolent affections, and in a truly virtuous and well-ordered conversation. There are difficulties in most subjects: a *metaphysician* will find them in the *plainest*. I own it is most congruous to our natural ideas to suppose a person who was born in our world, lived in it, and died in it, to be only a *man*: but there are many of the plainest passages of scripture, which I think can never be accommodated to such an hypothesis. Metaphysicians and speculatists, by philosophical refinement, may shed darkness and obscurity upon the strongest light, and dispute and explain away the clearest and plainest expressions.

It is an excellent canon in interpreting scripture, often inculcated by all rational critics and expositors of the sacred Oracles, That the most obvious sense of the words is the true sense. The poor, originally, had the gospel preached to them, and the vulgar were designed to understand its truths equally with the scholar and philosopher.

osopher. What ideas, therefore, does that text, *Before Abraham was I am*, convey to a man of plain understanding! Does he not naturally infer from these plain words, That our Saviour had a being *before* Abraham! What notion hath a plain poor man of figurative and ideal existence—of an existence, that was not real, but only posited in the Divine decrees! Or how did the *Jews* understand this assertion of our Lord? From their *conduct* most certainly it appears, that they understood him to assert his own existence *before* Abraham—for we find upon this explicit declaration, that he had a being *before* that great and illustrious ancestor, that they were exasperated to madness against him, and took up stones instantly to murder him for impiously presuming to say of himself a thing so enthusiastically extravagant. Their sanguinary violence on this occasion is a clear FACT in testimony of their construing his words in the *plain obvious* meaning of them, as being a solemn public asseveration that He had a being *before* the birth of the great father and founder of their nation.

On this and every other subject I honestly and sincerely represent things as they appear to my understanding. I plead not the prescription of antiquity, or the authority of names. Fathers and Councils, Creeds and Formularies, human Systems

Systems and Catechisms, are not the rule of my faith. Any *man*, however learned and illustrious, or bodies of men, however dignified with worldly stations and honours, and venerable for their age, erudition and piety, will not justify a blind acquiescence in their judgment*. They are not to direct my own understanding, to invade the unalienable right I have to think and examine freely for myself. The *Fathers* were weak men: the *public judgment* of oecumenical councils, paltry and puerile to the last degree. Synods and Convocations have erred. Great men, and the greatest number of great men are fallible, and the *weakest* things that were ever *said*, and the *wickedest* things that were ever *done*, in the whole history of mankind, were *said* and *done* in general Councils and Ecclesiastical synods.

Thanks to the immortal Locke, and to his illustrious second, the ever-memorable *Bishop of Winchester*, Religious Liberty is now well understood, the rights of *private* judgment accurately defined, gloriously extended, and immoveably established; and *scriptural authority* alone,

* The authority of Emperors, Kings, and Princes, is human. The authority of Councils, Synods, Bishops and Presbyters, is human. The authority of the Prophets is divine. *Sir Isaac Newton in his Observ. on Daniel*, p. 141

alone, not any *established human* compilation or system of orthodoxy, uncontrovertibly proved to be obligatory on the opinions and consciences of Christians.

There is no man, for whom I retain so great a veneration as Dr. LARDNER. His memory is dear to me. His learning was immense, and the distinguished features of his mind were simplicity and godly sincerity. If there were any person whose *ipse dixit* would have been sacred with me, and in whose opinion I were to have reposed, without examining for myself, that person would have been Dr. *Lardner*. I had almost said, that I regard other critics as children in comparison with him. But with all my persuasion of his abilities, with all my conscious knowledge of his integrity, with the full idea, deeply infixed in my breast, of his singular worth as a scholar and a Christian, which worth was, moreover, endeared to me by an intimate friendship for many years, I think his celebrated treatise on the Logos to be weak, his criticisms in favour of the *Socinian* scheme inaccurate, and the whole book, like Dr. *Taylor's* Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement, to exhibit a melancholy proof of the fallibility of human talents and abilities, however dignified with erudition or exalted with goodness. We must, I think, have *new* scriptures, and a *new* Revelation to prove and establish

blish *Socinianism*: for I am persuaded it will never be satisfactorily demonstrated from the *present* sacred volume. I think it weak and foolish in any man, after free enquiry and impartial examination, to adopt an opinion which he cannot defend. But it is with most men, as it was with the Fathers, who undertook to *defend* Christianity before they *understood* it.

It need hardly be remarked, that this Disquisition is solely restricted to *Revelation*, and to be determined solely by *Revelation*. Men may easily frame what they may call *rational* hypotheses, and *then* accommodate *Revelation* to the support of them. But the New Testament was never designed to form subjects for philosophical disquisition and refinement. By this spirit it was corrupted and debased in the earliest ages. Even in the time of the Apostles the doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead* appeared to certain geniuses to be irrational and impossible. They, therefore employed their understanding to invent and establish a more *reasonable* hypothesis, and by an ingenious explication they construed it to denote only a *moral* restoration, declaring that what the scriptures meant by a resurrection was *already past*, and had taken place in that *renovation* of heart and life, which Christianity had *already* effected in the world. The natural obvious meaning, that sense, which a man of plain

plain good understanding would affix to the plain expressions of scripture, is the true sense of scripture. For it is the intended distinguishing excellence of the sacred books, that they are plain. Whether our Saviour had an existence in heaven with God the Father before his incarnation, I think one might safely rest the decision of this question with a *Turk* or an *Indian*, or any other plain honest upright person in the world, who could read our New Testament.

What idea does almost every man naturally annex to that expression, which so often occurs in scripture, of the Son of God's *descending from heaven*? Does not he certainly conclude, that this Divine person *lived* in that blessed place, and *came down* from it on *earth* to instruct and save us? What idea do we affix to the *very same* expression, which is of such frequent occurrence in the Classics, of the Gods *descending from heaven** upon our earth, but that, according to the heathen mythology, these immortal Powers were happy in *Olympus*, but sometimes *relinquished*

* — Summo delabor Olympo,

Et deus humanâ lultro sub imagine terras.

Ovid. Met. Lib. i. ver. 212.

Deus aliquis delapsus e coelo coetus hominum adeat, versetur in terris, cum hominibus colloquatur. Cicero de Harusp. resp. 28. p. 480. Edit. Schrevel.

relinquished it to visit mortals. Such phrases we interpret in their natural obvious sense, when used by *Plato, Plutarch*, or any of the writers of antiquity. And should any of the inferior Pagan Deities, when on these embassies to mortals, have used such a plain expression as our Saviour hath employed, that he *was come from God, and was going to God**, as these are *relative* terms, we should naturally understand him to signify that he actually *descended* from *Jupiter*, and was *returning* to him again.

I will faithfully exhibit a detail of those passages of scripture which appear to me in a strong and striking manner to manifest the pre-existence of our Lord, prefixing or subjoining such remarks and observations, as either the *particular expressions* employed in these passages, or the obvious tendency and tenour of them, seem fully to justify.

It has been the common and prevailing opinion of the Church, from the *first* institution of Christianity to the *present* time, that our blessed Lord was that illustrious instrument and minister whom the Deity employed in creating this world. This notion, which hath almost been universal,
hath

* Απο Θεου ΕΞΗΛΘΕ και προς τον Θεον ΥΠΑΓΕΙ. *John* xiii. 3.

things were made by him, says the Evangelist, and without him was not any thing made that was made, *John* i. 3.—These texts, I humbly apprehend, evince, in as perspicuous and absolute terms, as writers can employ, the *existence* of our blessed Lord *previous* to the formation of this world, and that he was that illustrious *agent* and *minister*, whom the Supreme Father elected and impowered to form this planet on which we live, and all the things which it compriseth. Words, I think, have no meaning, and are not the true signs of men's ideas, if these plain and clear passages do not contain and manifest this position, That Jesus Christ was the person, who by the direction of the Deity, originally formed all things.

But the scripture carries our views beyond this *æra* of the creation, and, according to the order of our ideas, plainly represents the Son of God as the very *first* production of the Deity, the very *first* being whom the Father Almighty called into existence. This is the precise and determinate meaning of some expressions in scripture, which explicitly convey this very idea,
and

to have been rendered, Forgiving one another, as God has, by Christ, « Χριστῷ, graciously forgiven you. *Ephes.* iv. 32.

and in sound just criticism, I think, cannot be interpreted to any *other* signification. For example: Our Lord is styled the FIRST-BORN* of every creature. The word is very properly translated, *first-born*. It signifies the *very first production*. It obviously denotes that the Son of God was the *very first being*, whom the power and goodness of the Supreme produced into existence. The very same exalted idea had St. John of the pre-existent dignity of Christ, when he styles him; *The beginning of the creation of God*†—an expression, exactly of the same import with that employed by St. Paul, the *first-born* of every creature; and denoting that the Son of God was the very first and primary production of the Deity, generated by him before all other things had an existence. On account of this pre-eminence of nature and pre-existence *before all other* created beings, the Apostle declares concerning him: That he is *before* all things‡, and by him all things consisted. These words of the Apostle manifest, that our Saviour had a *being before* the things to which he himself

C 2 gave

* Πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισιως. *Colos. i. 15.* See a number of passages, in which this word πρωτοτοκος occurs, produced in a note in my *third* Dissertation.

† Αρχη της κτισιως του Θεου. *Revel. iii. 14.*

‡ Και αυτος εις ΠΡΟ παντων. *Colos. i. 17.*

gave a being, and that he existed before all things were originally formed and constituted by him. This high and magnificent idea of the Son of God is also intended to be conveyed to the reader by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, where in representing the superiority of Christ to the Angels, he says: 'That when God introduced his FIRST-BORN* into the world he said, Let all the Angels of God worship him. —These expressions of scripture, I think, naturally lead us, and seem intended by inspired Apostles to lead us, to form the most exalted ideas of the glorious dignity and pre-eminence of our blessed Lord, antecedently to his incarnation, and to affect us, in the most powerful manner, with that *humiliation* and astonishing *benevolence* which this Divine person expressed for us.

Moreover, his *existence* and *dignity previous* to his incarnation are clearly manifested in the following passages. In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with the Supreme Being, and the Logos was a divine person†. Verily,

* Όταν δὲ πάλιν εισαγάγῃ τὸν ΠΡΩΤΟΤΟΚΟΝ εἰς τὸν κόσμον.
Heb. i. 6.

† Christ was *with* God at the creation of the world, a real person distinct from him with whom he was. And he with whom Christ then was, is called ὁ Θεός, God in a peculiar

Verily, verily I say unto thee, says our Lord to Nicodemus, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness: If I have told you earthly things,

C 3

and

peculiar and absolute sense, God, self-existent, unoriginated, independent, and supreme over all, *Κυριος ὁ Θεος ὁ Παντοκράτωρ*, the Lord God Almighty. Our blessed Saviour is indeed styled *Θεος*, a God, that is, a *divine person*, but whatever dignity is included in this term, he is however here distinguished from *ὁ Θεος*, the supreme God, and, thus distinguished, must of necessity be subordinate to him. For two co-ordinate, self-existent, absolutely supreme Beings are a contradiction. This distinction is sufficiently evident from the nature of the Greek language to all that are skilled in it: But if it should be suggested that, because this is now a dead language, such critical remark is not to be depended on, I answer, that both *Origen* and *Eusebius*, who must be allowed to understand the language in which they wrote, and were men of eminent learning, in the early ages of Christianity, have taken notice of this difference for the same purpose, as I have mentioned. See a short and plain Commentary upon near two hundred texts in *St. John*: printed for Griffiths, 1754. Says a learned Lady: In quoting the text—*In the beginning, &c.* you ought in all fairness to have informed your hearers, that the original term *Θεος*, a God, applied to the Word, or Christ, has not the same high signification, as *ὁ Θεος*, God appropriated in the same verse to the Father. Whatever you may insinuate, or think, I will venture to affirm, that no person has a just and critical knowledge of the Greek Language, who denies this. And it is of great weight, that both *Origen* and *Eusebius*, who wrote in the Greek Language,

and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man who was in heaven. Which I have thus paraphrased in my *Explanatory Version* of the New Testament. “I can solemnly assure you that I speak from certain knowledge, and attest only facts, for the veracity of which I have had the most undoubted evidence—and yet you are not disposed to credit my testimony. If I tell you these plain and simple truths, and you will not credit them—how could you relish and embrace more sublime and mysterious discoveries! None of the former prophets was ever admitted into the seats of celestial joy in order to attest to men the reality and happiness of this state—the son of man, who is descended on earth, was the only person that ever resided in those blessed abodes,” *John* iii. 11—14. The son of man *who was* in heaven*, is so direct, positive, and solemn an assertion

Language, and were the most learned Fathers of the primitive Church (ten times more learned than your great *Athanasius*) have expressly taken notice of this difference, and allowed the force of it. See an excellent Letter to the Reverend Mr. Randolph, rector of Deal, by a Lady, supposed to be our British Dacier, the very ingenious and learned translator of *Arrian's Epictetus*. It is printed for Griffiths.

* *John* iii. 13. ὁ υἱ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ: the son of man who was in heaven. So it ought to have been translated, as it

sertion of the pre-existence of our Saviour, from the mouth of our blessed Lord himself, that I see not what criticism can evade it, or how it can be tortured into any acceptation, compatible with a scheme which denies that our Lord had any being before he was born of the Virgin Mary. The antient *Socinians*^{*}, indeed, in order to solve this difficulty, framed an hypothesis, that our Lord, after his *baptism*, was caught up into heaven, and there had the whole scheme of redemption, which he was to conduct and accomplish, revealed to him by the Father. But this *journey to paradise*, which hath so much the air of a *Mohammedan* tale, hath no existence in the sacred page. It was *ingeniously* imagined and invented to reconcile to a favourite theory, those many passages which speak of the *descent* of our Lord from *heaven* upon earth.—What can this plain declaration of St. John mean, *The same was in the beginning with God*, but that this Divine person, who was afterwards *manifested in the flesh*, existed with the Supreme Being

C 4

before

it is very properly in *John ix. 25.* Τυφλος ων, αρτι βλιπω : Whereas I *was* blind, now I see.

• *Socinianism* is but of yesterday. It was *first* planted in the wilds and woods of *Poland*, not many years ago. It is *now* advanced to a still greater refinement. I know some persons who scout the *miraculous conception* entirely. E. H. 1783.

before the foundation of the earth was laid? These assertions of our Lord; I speak what I have seen with the Father: *John* viii. 38. What he hath seen and heard, *viz. with the Father*, that he testifieth: *John* iii. 32. All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you: *John* xv. 15. If ye shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before: *John* vi. 62.—These expressions, in *just* propriety of language, can be interpreted only to refer to that *state* of glory and happiness which the Son of God enjoyed with the *Father* antecedently to his mission into our world and assumption of our nature. They are the solemn asseverations of our Lord, predicated concerning himself, claiming attention and regard to his doctrines, from his pre-existent greatness and union with the Deity, and the authority of his commission and embassy from heaven. That plain declaration of our Saviour to the *Jews*, that before *Abraham* was he had an existence, will, I think, for ever stand in full force against all the acumen of criticism and sagacity of refinement which may be employed to invalidate and explain away its natural and obvious signification. The interpretation, that our Lord had an existence in the Divine decree before *Abraham*, and that it was before the *times* of this Patriarch *fore ordained* that he should appear in
such

such an age and state of the world, is extremely forced and futile, and does not discriminate our Lord, from thyself, O reader, who hadst from eternity an existence in the divine decree, that thou shouldest appear under such a dispensation, and in such an age and state of the world. It is plain that our Saviour's audience took these words in their natural acceptation, as hath been already remarked; for upon his asserting to them that he was in being before their great ancestor, they were instantly transported into the last excesses of fury against him as a blasphemmer and impostor, and took up stones with a design to murder him. These *actual* violences of the Jews, prove, I apprehend, better than a thousand inane and chimerical theories, *how* our Redeemer was understood and *intended* to be understood. His auditors, we find, always interpreted these declarations, which he so frequently repeats, in their most obvious meaning, by these plain solemn expressions, and understanding him to disavow that his original was only human, and peremptorily to manifest by them his intimate union and felicity with the DEITY *before* his appearance among men. The following passage clearly evinceth this. *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will who hath sent me, that of all whom*

whom he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him that *sent* me, that every one, who seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. The *Jews* then *murmured* at him, because he said, I am the bread which CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. And they said: Is not this Jesus the *son of Joseph*, whose *father* and *mother* we know! How is it then that he saith, I *came down from heaven*! From this disgust and indignation of the *Jews*, excited against him for his solemn and reiterated assurances that he *came down* from heaven, it is manifest that they understood him to arrogate to himself an *original* superior to his *earthly* and obscure *parents*, and in the most plain and public manner to assert his pre-existence.

In consistence with this state of pre-existent glory and happiness which our Lord enjoyed with the Father before the world was, his amazing condescension in voluntarily relinquishing this station of consummate dignity and felicity, his astonishing abasement in cloathing himself with our infirmities, and his unparalleled humiliation and benevolence in expatriating himself from all the blessedness of heaven, and going in voluntary exile to our world, to deliver us from darkness, to rescue us from ruin, to save
us

us from the penal effects of sin, to abolish death, to bring life and immortality to light, and to announce and ensure to all sincere penitents and good persons a resurrection from the grave at the last day, and a state of perfection and happiness with himself through all ETERNITY—in consistence, I say, with this pre-existent glory and dignity of our Saviour, his HUMILIATION, in order to effect our recovery and redemption, is by the sacred authors represented in all that sublimity of language and pathos of expression, which are suited to seal the most deep and indelible impressions upon the minds of creatures who are infinitely interested in this great transaction. Of his *mission* from God—of his *descent* from heaven—of his *divesting* himself of his *former* honours, and shrouding all his *pristine* glory in the earthly house of our tabernacle, the following passages are clearly and emphatically declarative—His COMING FORTH FROM GOD, HE HIMSELF thus expresseth. “For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I *came out from God*. *John* xvii. 27. I *came forth from* the Father, and am *come* into the world. *John* xvii. 28. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was *come from* God, and *was going* to God. *John* xiii. 3. By this we believe that thou camest forth from God: *John* xvi.

xvi. 30. Now I go my way to him that *sent* me, *John* xvi. 5. God *sending* his son in the likeness of sinful flesh. *Romans* viii. 3. Concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David, *according to the flesh.*" *Rom.* i. 3. —His DESCENT from *heaven* upon *our earth*, and his wonderful *condescension* and *benevolence* in his *assumption* of human nature, are thus represented. "Now he that *ascended*, what is it, but that he also *descended* first into the lower parts of the earth. He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended* up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. *Ephes.* iv. 9. 10. A *body* hast thou prepared me. *Heb.* x. 5. Then said I, Lo! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God! *Heb.* x. 7. Who, though he was in the form of a God, or a divine person, was not eagerly desirous of appearing on earth in this glorious form, but divested himself of it, assumed the form of a slave, and appeared amongst us cloathed with the common robe of frail mortality: And after this assumption of human nature, he gave a still farther proof of his humiliation, by voluntarily submitting to death, and even to the death of crucifixion! *Philip.* ii. 6, 7, 8. For ye know the benignity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was RICH, yet for your sakes he became poor," 2 *Cor.* viii. 9. On the *Socinian* scheme,

scheme, which institutes that the Son of God had *no* being before he was born of the virgin, with what propriety can this be predicated of our Lord? Where and when was our Saviour *rich* in *this* world! His whole history contradicts this assertion. On the contrary, he was so *poor*, that he was obliged to work a miracle to satisfy the demands of some *Jewish* collectors. He lived solely upon the beneficence of his friends. He had no place, whereon to lay his head. To interpret this of our Lord being *rich* in miracles, and becoming *poor* in them at his crucifixion, is such a strange metaphor and mode of diction, as I believe was never employed by any writer, and such a jejune and forced criticism, as I imagine was never studied to explain any author. But on the hypothesis that our Lord enjoyed the most exalted station before his embassy to our world, every thing is consistent and natural. In his pre-existent state he was *rich* in glory, honour, and happiness: with a greatness and benevolence of soul, that can never sufficiently be extolled, he abdicated all this, and became *poor*, that we through his *poverty* might become *rich*. The Apostle's *argument* to excite the liberality and beneficence of the *Corinthians*, from this stupendous act and instance of our Lord's condescension and benevolence, upon *this* scheme only, is cogent, apposite, and very elegant and persuasive.

I will

I will conclude this enumeration of passages, which, after the most impartial examination of scripture, with a mind, I am sure, open to conviction, and solely intent upon investigating and embracing truth, I am persuaded, plainly and clearly evince the existence of Christ previous to his incarnation. I will close this detail with a distinguished passage, which I beg the reader seriously to ponder. In that most excellent PRAYER, which our Lord addressed to the Almighty a little before his last sufferings, among other requests he preferred to the Deity, the following very striking and distinguished one occurs. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS! Were there no intimation in the whole New Testament of the pre-existence of Christ, this single passage would irrefragably demonstrate and establish it. Our Saviour, here, in a solemn act of devotion, declares to the Almighty, that he had glory with HIM before the world was, and fervently supplicates that he would be graciously pleased to *reinstate* him in his *former* felicity. The language is plain and clear. Every word hath great moment and emphasis. Glorify thou me with that glory which I had with thee. The *verb* is in the *past* tense *, and

ac-

* Δόξῃ ἣ ΕΙΧΟΝ πρὸ τοῦ τοῦ κόσμου εἶναι. *John xvii. 5.*

according to all the rules of language, relates to *past* time. The phrase we translate, *with thee*, is very expressive and emphatical, and signifies *apud te*, in *thy presence*, near *thy person**. Glorify thou me with that glory which I enjoyed in thy presence, and near thy person, before the world was. It is a plain solemn address to the Deity, that since he had glorified his name on the earth, and had finished the work he had given him to do, that he would now be pleased to *re-admit* him to that state of glory and happiness which he had possessed in his presence *before* the creation of the world. Upon this single text I lay my finger. Here I posit my system. And if *plain* words be designedly employed to convey any determinate meaning, if the modes of human speech have any precision, I am convinced that this *plain* declaration of our Lord, in an act of devotion, exhibits a great and im-

* Παρα σιαυτω, παρα σοι. Says the mother of the Maccabees: Τα της αρετης αθλα οισομιν, και ισομιθα παρα Θιω. See Josephus, tom. 2. p. 509. Haverc. Non enim solum ante Adam, sed et ante omnem conditionem glorificabat Verbum Patrem suum. Irenæus, p. 315. Edit. Oxon. This very expression, παρα σοι, occurs in the PLUTUS of Aristophanes. Says Chremylus, the God PLUTUS is within, ενδον. Blepsydemus. Where? Chr. With me, παρ' ημι. Bleps. With you? παρα σοι. along with you, chez vous? This is in point. Aristophanis Plutus. vi. 394.

important truth, which can never be subverted or invalidated by any accurate and satisfactory criticisms.

When I have suffered my ideas freely to expatiate on this subject, I find reason to think, that men possessed of erudition and a philosophical genius, do wrong in indulging a disposition to theorize and speculate upon it. I wish learned and ingenious men would consider, That Christianity was never designed to teach men philosophy, and to reveal to the world the arcana of nature. The sacred writers never study, never frame any hypothesis to account for the mode and manner of our Lord's transmission into human nature. They relate it as a *fact*. They weave no subtil refinements and curious theories on this subject. It was not their province. They declare only that the *Word* was *made flesh*, and dwelt among us, but the *manner* in which this was effected, it was no part of their design to teach men. Had they hazarded a *theory*, it might have afforded food to metaphysicians and speculatists, but would have contributed nothing to the cause of practical religion and personal holiness. The sacred writers give the world a plain unadorned narrative, lay before men a series of *facts*, and leave men either to admit them in their plain acceptation, to theorize and refine upon them, if they think them irrational,
or

or to reject them, if they have reason to believe they are not properly authenticated. The gospel does no violence to the freedom and liberty of the human mind : it faithfully exhibits, before the understanding and judgment of rational beings, a system of duties, doctrines, and discoveries, and leaves the issue with themselves.

Moreover, it appears to me that the *Socinian* scheme, the notion that our Lord had no existence before he was born of his mother Mary, eclipses the lustre of his *humiliation*, or rather, totally annihilates such an idea. The astonishing *condescension* of Christ, in relinquishing a state of great glory and happiness in heaven, and assuming human flesh, is frequently represented by the sacred writers, in the strongest terms, in order to affect and impress us, and to move all the springs of gratitude and affection in our breasts. You know, says St. Paul, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was RICH, yet for our sakes became *poor*, that we through his poverty might become rich. And when he is exhorting the *Philippians* to mutual *condescension* and *lowliness* of mind, he represents the *humiliation* and benevolence of the Son of God, in all its sacred dignity and greatness, most powerfully to affect them, and inspire them with the like amiable condescension and beneficence. Let

D

nothing

nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in *lowliness of mind* let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the *form of a Divine person*, was not desirous to retain this glorious form, but divested himself of it, 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 still *farther* by becoming obedient to death—and even to such a death as crucifixion! In numberless passages our Lord speaks of his *mission from God*, and *descent from heaven*, in order to instruct and save men—and the Apostles are perpetually extolling that most exalted philanthropy and grace which he displayed in this amazing condescension. But upon the anti-pre-existent scheme, all this illustrious merit and benevolence of Christ, in abandoning the mansions of the blessed and assuming our nature, hath no place. He was no more than an *human* prophet and instructor, endowed with very great gifts. I cannot accommodate this to those many representations of scripture, which were purposely written to celebrate his wonderful humiliation and benevolence, in disrobing himself of his heavenly glory, and investing himself with

with our infirmities. The principal feature in our Lord's mind, which was BENEVOLENCE, is hereby effaced: by far the most illustrious and shining part of his character is, surely, wiped away by this most degrading hypothesis.

Farther, when I have been contemplating this subject, it has always appeared to me very strange, That such a magnificent apparatus should be instituted by heaven to usher into the world one who was nothing more than a *man*! Angels after angels wing their flight to *Bethlehem*, to indicate the birth of a *man*! *Gabriel*, one of the most exalted of the heavenly Spirits, is despatched from the throne of God to announce the birth of a *man*! The *Holy Ghost* should come upon her, and the power of the Most High should overshadow the virgin, to convey into her uterus nothing but what was *human*! Another celestial envoy is delegated to *Joseph*, to bid him not hesitate in taking *Mary* to wife, for that which was conceived in her, was, indeed, of the Holy Ghost, but was nothing more than *man*! A most magnificent heavenly choir, consisting of a multitude of Angels, cheering the midnight hours with repeating, *Glory to God in the Highest! Good will towards men!* deputed to our World, and chanting these rapturous strains to celebrate the birth of a *man*! Is it not some-

thing incongruous and disparate, that Heaven should display all this splendid scenery, and lavish all this pomp and pageantry to introduce into our World a mere ordinary common man, distinguished in no one natural endowment from any other of the species? But supposing the Being introduced with all this eclat, to be the same who was in *the beginning* with God, and had glory *with the Father* before the world was, is not the decoration and magnificence, with which heaven dressed the stage, on which this Divine messenger would shortly appear, highly pertinent and honourable, and is it not with the greatest propriety that multitudes of the heavenly host, on this GREAT occasion, the greatest that ever occurred in the annals of this world, should conjoin with harmonious voices and accordant hearts, in applauding and solemnizing a condescension and benevolence, illustrious and great beyond all example!

Finally, whenever I have in my own mind seriously revolved and discussed the merits of that scheme, which denies to our Lord all existence before his conception, and impartially collated it with the declarations of scripture, it hath always appeared to my reason and understanding, to be very strange and extravagant to imagine that a *man*, however illustrious his talents, and signal his endowments of God, who
only

only figured as a most excellent teacher of religion and morals, on this little and very inconsiderable planet, for a few years, and was born, lived, and died as mortals do; it hath always appeared, I say, strange and extravagant to me to suppose, that a mere MAN should have all *power* in HEAVEN, as well as earth, immediately given him—that a mere *man* should instantly have a name given him *above every name*, and be exalted to an eminence infinitely *superior* to any that obtains even in heaven—that at the name of a mere *man* every knee should be commanded to bow, of things in *heaven* and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every being in the whole scope of the universe, be ordered to confess the worthy and regular exaltation of a *mere man*, above all the Cherubim, Seraphim, Archangels, and the most exalted orders of celestial Beings! Far be it from us to arraign the Divine allotments, and censure his wisdom, equity, and rectitude in the administrations of his distributive justice—but to a reflecting and contemplative mind, it cannot but appear a violation done to that established gradation and harmonious order, which obtains, as the scripture teacheth us, among the various ranks and classes of angelic Beings, to suppose a *man* to be infinitely exalted above the most elevated and dignified of them—that a person,
who

who had merely a *terrestrial* origin, should, after his decease, be rapt above the spheres, and seated above the stations of the highest Angels and Archangels—and a *man* be raised, at once, far above *all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come!*

4 OC 58