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DONATION OF  
SAMUEL AGNEW,

OF PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Letter

March 25th. 1858.

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DISSERTATIONS  
ON  
THE UNITY OF GOD  
IN  
THE PERSON OF THE FATHER,  
AND ON  
THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS  
THE  
SON OF GOD AND OF MARY;  
WITH  
PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE  
AND  
ECCLESIASTICAL ANTIQUITY.

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BY WILLIAM CHRISTIE,

A BELIEVER IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE PRIMITIVE CATHOLIC  
CHURCH OF CHRIST, AS DELIVERED IN THE APOSTLES CREED.

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*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

REV. xiv. 6, 7.

*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, &c.*

GAL. iv. 4.

*I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David; and the bright and morning star.*

REV. xxii. 16.

Philadelphia:

PRINTED BY ABEL DICKINSON.—WHITEHALL.

FOR THE AUTHOR.

M.DCCC.VIII.

DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO WIT :

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fifteenth day of  
\* October, in the thirty-third Year of the Independence-  
\* L. S. \* of the United States of America, A. D. 1808, WILLIAM:  
\* CHRISTIE, of the said District, hath deposited in this  
\* Office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
as Author in the words following, to wit :

“ Dissertations on the Unity of God in the Person of the Father,  
“ and on the Messiahship of Jesus the Son of God and of Mary; with  
“ Proofs and Illustrations from Holy Scripture and Ecclesiastical An-  
“ tiquity. By WILLIAM CHRISTIE, a Believer in the Doctrine of  
“ the primitive Catholic Church of Christ, as delivered in the Apos-  
“ tles Creed.”

“ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach  
“ unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,  
“ Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is  
“ come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of  
“ waters. Rev. xiv. 6, 7.”

“ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,  
“ made under the law, &c. Gal. iv. 4.”

“ I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root  
“ and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. Rev. xxii. 16.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, inti-  
tuled, “ An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the  
Copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors  
of such Copies during the Times therein mentioned.” And also to  
the Act, entitled “ An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, “ An  
Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of  
Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such  
Copies during the Times therein mentioned,” and extending the  
Benefits thereof to the Arts of designing, engraving, and etching  
historical and other Prints.”

D. CAEDWELL,  
Clerk of the District of Pennsylvania.



THE  
PREFACE.

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IT is now twenty-four years since I published the *first Edition* of my *Discourses on the Divine Unity, &c.* (a work very different from the present) at *Montrose in Scotland*, in the year 1784.\* Though this Edition had the misfortune to be *very badly printed*, yet it was very well received in *England*, and all the copies I sent to *London* were disposed of in a short space of time.

This Treatise not only gave satisfaction to all my Unitarian friends in *South Britain* from the *Capital* to *Kendal* in *Westmoreland*; † but several persons,

\* The *Title* of this work at full length in the *first Edition* was, DISCOURSES ON THE DIVINE UNITY: or, *A Scriptural Proof and Demonstration of the One Supreme Deity of the God and Father of all: and of the subordinate Character and inferior Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ; with a Confutation of the Doctrine of a Co-equal and Consubstantial Trinity in Unity; and a full reply to the objections of Trinitarians.* By WILLIAM CHRISTIE, JUNIOR, Merchant in MONTROSE.

Having retired from business when the *second edition* was printed, and living then in the country at a place called *Woodston*, about six miles from *Montrose*, the word *Merchant* in the *Title* was changed into the words, *A member of the Society of Unitarian Christians at MONTROSE*. The reason for mentioning this seemingly unimportant circumstance will be afterwards discovered.

† This alludes to the late *Rev. Caleb Rotheram* then Dissenting Minister at *Kendal*, an amiable and deserving person, and a nephew of the late learned *Dr. Benson*; who visited me at *Montrose* on particular business in August 1781, about the time that the *Society of Unitarian Christians* was formed there, whom I afterwards saw at *Kendal*, on my return from *London* and *Birmingham* in the year 1783, and who was pleased to approve of the *Discourses on the Divine Unity*, when they made their appearance.

personally unknown to me, were pleased to express their approbation of it in strong terms; and I have as many letters by me from them alone as would fill a considerable pamphlet.

Among those *strangers to me*, who wrote me on this occasion, the most remarkable were, the late learned Dr. *Harwood*, the late venerable and excellent Mr. *Mort* of *Chowbent* near *Wigan*, *Lancashire*, and a *Clergyman* of the Church of England.

Sometime before I heard from Dr. *Harwood*, my late ingenious nephew, *Thomas Christie*, who afterwards wrote on the French Revolution and on other Topics, had written him on the subject of his *View of the various Editions of the Greek and Latin Classics*, which circumstance occasioned the confusion of persons which appears in Dr. *Harwood's* letter to me, and also was the cause that his letter came first to my nephew, as my nephew's letter to me on the occasion, inserted below, will explain.\* My chief reason for publishing Dr. *Harwood's* letter, is, for the sake of *the sentiment* contained in that part of it which I have distinguished by *Italics*, which, coming from an eminent Greek Scholar, and one formerly attached to *Arianism*, I think deserves to be record-

\* "DEAR UNCLE,"

"A long time ago hearing that Dr. *Harwood* was to publish a new edition of his book on the *Classics*, and willing to contribute any thing in my power towards the perfection of a work so valuable to every Student, I took the liberty to write a letter to him containing a list of errors, omissions, &c. which I had observed in consulting it, and suggesting some additions. I also reminded him of his promise to the public of writing a *third volume* to his *Introduction to the New Testament*, which should contain an explication of all the sacred phraseologies from passages of the Greek Classics."

"As he was taken ill about the time, he never gave me any answer, and I never minded it more. To day Anderson & Co. have sent me a letter from him, which by mistake was directed to you in place of me. Inclosed is a sight of it. He confounds you and me together, and the letter is a curious medley of answers to me, and observations which can only apply to you."

"Yours,"

"T. C."

ed. As my nephew wished to correspond farther with Dr. *Harwood* on the subject of the *Classics*, I returned the letter to him but took an exact copy of it beforehand, as follows.

“ *London, Dec. 30, 1784.*”

“ WORTHY MR. CHRISTIE,”

“ Sometime ago I had the honour of receiving from you a letter concerning some Editions of the Classics, which letter I mislaid, and having been long confined by a dreadful paralytic stroke, I lament that I have not been able to recover. Little did I then imagine, that the learned Gentleman, who appeared to have given so much attention to the best editions of the ancient writers, would have manifested in the world such a signal and striking proof of religious integrity, in displaying to a region which for so many centuries has been the valley and shadow of death, the glorious effulgence of the divine Unity. I write to thank you for your learned and excellent discourses, which I have read with great satisfaction and improvement. The Divine Unity stands on an immoveable basis, whatever our trivial differences may be with regard to the nature of Christ. *I am inclined to think that Socinianism, when the diction and phraseology of the New Testament are better understood, will be found to be the Doctrine of Scripture. I have written in favour of Arianism these twenty years, but I hesitate, and I have given a proof of my Candour and Diffidence in my little Tract “Of the Socinian Scheme.”* You are greatly to be commended not only for your own illustrious probity, but for the exemplary diligence you have employed in planting and watering a lit-

“ the church in an extensive and populous country,  
“ which has so long been corrupted with Trinitarian  
“ Idolatry. Your reward will be great. The pre-  
“ sent satisfaction indeed you must enjoy in the con-  
“ sciousness of having instituted and established  
“ such a little Seminary of true religion, must be  
“ the commencement of heaven to you. I have suf-  
“ fered greatly for sounding the trumpet of Arian-  
“ ism in Zion and protesting against a three corner-  
“ ed, triangular Divinity, but I do not repent of my  
“ uniform zeal and horror of Athanasianism. I had  
“ for a few years a small church in Bristol, which on  
“ account of the odium of my sentiments, dwindled  
“ at last to nothing, and, having a wife and six chil-  
“ dren, I was fairly starved into a surrender. I took  
“ refuge in this Town where I have lived comfort-  
“ ably and have flourished. My two volumes of the  
“ Introduction to the study and knowledge of the  
“ N. T. are a monument of my Industry. You,  
“ Sir, have done me the honour in bearing witness  
“ to my Integrity and love of truth in pointing out  
“ several passages in my Edition of the Gr. T.  
“ where I have had the courage and sincerity to alter  
“ or expunge obnoxious readings. With the same  
“ full persuasion of its being the true original read-  
“ ing I have inscribed in the text *ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς*. The  
“ same Phraseology is used in the XVI of the Ro-  
“ mans by the same writer, and shows that this dic-  
“ tion was familiar to him. Crippled as I am by the  
“ Palsy, I could not forbear giving you this small  
“ testimony to the distinguished merit of your book,  
“ and sincerely beg of God to bless it and its au-  
“ thor. I have prepared a fourth Edition of my  
“ Book on the Classics, which, if I live to see it  
“ printed, for it contains many additions, I will beg

“ your acceptance of a copy. Do not meddle with  
 “ Abbadie—he is too weak a creature for a person  
 “ of your strength.

“ I am your delighted and very much  
 “ obliged Friend,

EDWARD HARWOOD.

“ WILLIAM CHRISTIE, JUNR.      “ HYDE STREET,  
 “ Merchant in Montrose.      “ *Bloomsbury.*

“ To the care of }  
 “ Mr. Johnson.” }

Mr. *Mort's* letter is expressed in the following terms.

*Manchester, Jan. 11, 1786.*

“ MR. CHRISTIE,  
 DR. SR.

“ About 70 years ago I was educated in the  
 “ Religion of the Assembly of Divines, but when I  
 “ came to a mature Age and had gained a moderate  
 “ Knowledge of the new Testament I could not but  
 “ see that the Religion of Jesus Christ was very dif-  
 “ ferent from that I had been educated in; I there-  
 “ fore renounced the last, and embraced the other,  
 “ and now for some years past I have thought that  
 “ my Fidelity to Jesus Christ obliged me to use my  
 “ best Abilities to expose this corrupted System of  
 “ Christianity generally called Calvinism. I there-  
 “ fore endeavoured to get this Contrast which I now  
 “ inclose to you to have a place in the Gentleman's  
 “ Magazine; but could not prevail. I had there-  
 “ fore no other way to publish it than to get a large  
 “ number of these Papers printed and to disperse  
 “ them. This Contrast will be of no advantage to  
 “ you, but you cannot be displeas'd when I tell you,  
 “ that I see Christianity in the same light as you do,  
 “ and you ought to be pleas'd when I tell you, that

“ your Discourses to prove that important Truth ;  
 “ that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the  
 “ one supreme God, and only to be worshipped, are  
 “ invincible, and still more confirm me in the belief  
 “ of this important Truth. What a shameful, sor-  
 “ rowful matter is it, that the Ministers of the Es-  
 “ tablished Religion in Scotland and England cannot  
 “ be allowed to preach, ’till they have subscribed  
 “ their Belief of an Antichristian, adulterated Sys-  
 “ tem of Christianity. Surely such Antichristian  
 “ Establishments must have a Fall sometime. I am,  
 “ tho’ unknown to you,

“ Your sincere Friend and obedt. Servt.

“ JNO. MORT.”\*

“ P. S. If at any time, you should have a thought  
 “ of honouring me with a Line ; my address is at  
 “ Chow Bent, near Wigan, Lancashire.”

“ Mr. WM. CHRISTIE, Junr.

“ at Montrose.”

\* Mr. Mort died two years after the date of this letter. *A Short View of his Life, Sentiments, And Character, with a Sermon preached on the occasion of his death, two Family Prayers composed by him, and the Contrast mentioned in his letter to me, were published by Mr. H. Toulmin then a Dissenting Minister at Chowbent, or Atherton, at present a Judge in Tennessee.* A Character of him was published in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for February, 1788; with some elegant lines which Mrs. Barbauld had sixteen years before composed in his praise. The following is extracted from Mr. Toulmin’s *Short View &c.* p. 73. *Unitarian Tracts, Vol. 8.*

“ The following Character of Mr MORT, (by Mr. JOSEPH SMITH, of Liverpool) is inscribed on a slab of marble in New Bent Chapel, dedicated to his memory by Mr. PETER VALENTINE.”

“ This monument is erected as a testimony of veneration for the character of Mr. John Mort, the last male representative of a highly respectable family, and long a distinguished member of this religious society: who ended a life of usefulness and honour, on the 12th day of January, 1788, in the 86th year of his age. The leisure he enjoyed from the avocations of business, was principally devoted to the study of the scriptures; and unlearned in the subtleties of scholastic divinity, his enquiries were directed by the light of a clear understanding, and the dictates of an upright heart. The unremitting zeal, with which he endeavoured to propagate the principles of Christian truth, furnishes an example to those who are de-

The *Clergyman* of the Church of England before-mentioned, wrote me no less than *four* letters from the year 1784 to 1788: the two first of these letters I shall here transcribe, with my reply to the second; as they present the picture of a truly pious and humble mind, anxious, impartial, and sincere in its inquiries after truth, and willing to receive it from whatever hand it might come; and my answer will show the state of my mind at that time, and that I have not been precipitate in deciding upon the question concerning the Pre-existence of Christ.

“ I beg leave, Sir, to present you my sincere  
 “ thanks for the great pleasure and satisfaction I  
 “ have received from the perusal of your excellent  
 “ discourses, and cannot forbear taking the liberty  
 “ to add that they do you singular credit as an able  
 “ and judicious patron of the doctrine you have so  
 “ candidly maintained. To this doctrine of the di-  
 “ vine unity—which I hope is daily gaining ground—  
 “ I long ago gave my hearty assent, and was glad to  
 “ find in my late worthy neighbour and friend Mr.

“ voted to theology by profession. His religion did not terminate in  
 “ mere speculation: the uniform fidelity he maintained, was only  
 “ equalled by the ardor of his benevolence, and the simplicity of his  
 “ manners. By the force of personal character, he retained a patriarch-  
 “ al authority in his neighbourhood, to the last. Though born to a libe-  
 “ ral fortune, which was improved by a regular, and successful indus-  
 “ try, he disdained the purposes of vulgar ambition, and studiously em-  
 “ ployed the bounty of heaven, in relieving the sorrows of nature, and  
 “ extending the happiness of life. Every public-spirited design he was  
 “ forward to promote: he was open as the day to melting charity, and  
 “ plain-hearted hospitality was ever found beneath his roof. The habi-  
 “ tual devotion of his mind and the consciousness of useful exertions,  
 “ produced that cheerfulness, which even old age was unable to im-  
 “ pair; nor did he survive either the vigour of his understanding, or  
 “ the sensibility of his heart, the fervour of his piety, or his generous  
 “ attachment to the cause of liberty and truth. Through temperance  
 “ and exercise, his life, though long, was unembittered by sickness.  
 “ His death was almost instant, and without a groan.”

“ READER,”

“ While you revere his character, endeavour to copy his example.”

“ Lindsey’s history of it, that it had found a kind of  
 “ establishment under your immediate patronage at  
 “ Montrose. Please to accept my sincere and ar-  
 “ dent wishes for the prosperity of your congrega-  
 “ tion, and the success of that doctrine which you  
 “ profess.

“ Though you have not any where in your dis-  
 “ courses—as far as I can recollect—given your  
 “ opinion directly and explicitly of the existence of  
 “ Jesus Christ, yet I conclude that you do not in that  
 “ point coincide with Mr. Lindsey. In my humble  
 “ opinion indeed, his opinion upon this subject is  
 “ liable to insuperable objections, and his explication  
 “ of the beginning of St. John’s gospel, has—I  
 “ think—been fully refuted by a friend and neigh-  
 “ bour of mine in a pamphlet intitled, Objections to  
 “ Mr. Lindsey’s interpretation of the first fourteen  
 “ verses of St. John’s gospel—printed for Johnson,  
 “ London, and Charnley, Newcastle. The expres-  
 “ sion *ev apxyn* at the beginning of this gospel, though  
 “ coinciding exactly with the septuagint version of  
 “ the beginning of Genesis, will—I allow—fairly  
 “ admit of a different and more probable interpreta-  
 “ tion than the Trinitarians give it; yet there are  
 “ many other passages in the N. T. which appear to  
 “ me so fully in favour of Christ’s pre-existence,  
 “ that there is no necessity for laying any particular  
 “ stress upon this. My doubts—I will candidly ac-  
 “ knowledge to you—respect the *mode of worship*  
 “ which is due to Christ, *divine worship* is out of  
 “ the question; but the scripture according to my  
 “ conception, seems to authorise or rather injoin  
 “ *some*. Upon this subject I am still undetermined,  
 “ and must take the liberty to request your kind  
 “ concurrence and assistance to enable me to come  
 “ to a clear and satisfactory conclusion. The im-  
 “ portance of this point to me and every sincere



“ christian, will I am persuaded—be a sufficient  
 “ apology for thus addressing a person whom I have  
 “ not the pleasure of knowing personally. Your  
 “ obliging communications upon this subject will be  
 “ esteemed a particular obligation by, Sir,

“ Yr. hble Servt.

“ The Revd \*\*\*\*\*”

“ Master of \*\*\*\*\* School”

“ Mr. CHRISTIE junr.”

“ near \*\*\*\*\*”

“ Merchant”

“ Yorkshire.”

“ Montrose”

“ Scotland.”

“ SIR,”

“ I received so much pleasure and information  
 “ from the perusal of your excellent unitarian dis-  
 “ courses, that about six months ago, I took the  
 “ liberty of addressing a letter to you, containing  
 “ my grateful acknowledgments for them. As this  
 “ letter was not merely complimentary, but express-  
 “ ed likewise a desire, that you would oblige me  
 “ with your opinion of the pre-existence of Jesus  
 “ Christ; and proofs for and against this much con-  
 “ troverted and important doctrine, I conclude it has  
 “ not reached you. From that ingenuous freedom  
 “ of research with which you had so successfully  
 “ studied the scriptures, and that candour and sin-  
 “ cerity with which you had communicated the re-  
 “ sult of your enquiries to the public, I concluded  
 “ that you would not refuse giving any information  
 “ in your power upon these subjects, even to a per-  
 “ son totally unknown to you. Your speedy answer  
 “ to this, will, I am persuaded, convince me, that  
 “ I have not made a false estimate of your character  
 “ and disposition. I need not perhaps inform you  
 “ that I am, and have long been fully convinced of  
 “ the truth of that doctrine which you maintain so

“ ably in your discourses ; and that I had the pleasure and satisfaction of knowing Mr. Lindsey’s sentiments upon these matters, before his resignation of the vicarage of Catterick in my neighbourhood. I most sincerely wish prosperity to that unitarian congregation over which you so laudably preside, and am respectfully,”

“ Sir,”

“ Yr. obliged Humb. Servt.”

“ \*\*\*\*\* ”

“ Master of \*\*\*\*\* School”

“ near \*\*\*\*\* ”

“ Mr. Wm. CHRISTIE Junr.”

“ Yorkshire.”

“ Merchant”

“ Montrose”

“ Scotland.”

“ *Montrose, 20th July, 1785.*”

“ REV. SIR,”

“ I received both your polite and obliging letters, and must own myself to blame in not replying sooner to the first of them. I esteem it an honour, that any thing I am capable of writing should give pleasure and satisfaction to a Gentleman of good sense and learning. I am at the same time sorry that I cannot at present give you that farther information you desire. I am myself in a state of suspence with regard to the pre-existence of Christ ; and have been so for some years past. I find very considerable arguments on both sides of the question, and think it better to hesitate for sometime than to decide hastily upon insufficient grounds. I am notwithstanding a most determined Unitarian, and have the fullest conviction of the Father’s sole and supreme Godhead. Being in this state of mind when I wrote the *Discourses on the Divine Unity*, I endea-

“voured on texts of doubtful interpretation to state  
 “the arguments of Arians and Socinians with all  
 “the candour and fairness I was capable of, that  
 “the reader might judge and determine for himself.  
 “I am however taking measures for the settlement  
 “of my mind, and to bring myself if possible to a  
 “decision upon this subject.

“I propose to study the phraseology and various  
 “readings of the Old and New Testament with  
 “greater critical exactness than ever I have hitherto  
 “done: and also to peruse with care the earliest  
 “Writers of the Christian Church. This enquiry  
 “must necessarily take some time, as it must be  
 “conducted with great coolness and deliberation. If  
 “in the course of it I am able to acquire any new  
 “light, or to arrive at any farther satisfaction, I shall  
 “gladly impart it to any sincere inquirer after truth;  
 “and to none more readily than you, Sir, who have  
 “done me the honour of writing me upon the sub-  
 “ject. I shall be glad to hear from you occasional-  
 “ly, and heartily wishing you that solid and well  
 “grounded peace of mind which arises from the se-  
 “rious belief and practice of rational religion,”

“I remain,”

“Dear Sir,”

“Your obed. hum. Servt.”

“WILLIAM CHRISTIE.”

“The Rev. Mr. \*\*\*\*\*,”

“Master of \*\*\*\*\* School”

“near \*\*\*\*\*”

“Yorkshire.”

The other two letters from this Gentleman are too long to be inserted in this Preface: but they do honour to his abilities as a critic, a scholar, and a man of candour. He appears still to be undetermined with respect to the Pre-existence of Christ, but to

lean rather more to Arianism than Socinianism, and in the last of the two he mentions, that his religious principles had obliged him to withdraw from officiating and worshipping in the established Church. If this worthy Clergyman be yet alive, he will have an opportunity (though at a long interval of time) from the present work of seeing the result of my inquiries with respect to the Pre-existence of Christ, and it will afford me a singular pleasure, if he can join in my conclusion on the subject.

A second and larger Edition of the *Discourses on the Divine Unity* was published at *Montrose* in 1790, of which my friend Mr. *Palmer* was a zealous promoter.\* The sale of this was still more rapid than

\* THOMAS FYSHE PALMER, B. A. M. A. B. D. *Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge*, and originally a Clergyman of the Church of England, was a younger son of an ancient and respectable family in Bedfordshire in England. From his connection with persons of rank and influence, he might have risen to high preferment in the established Church, could he have brought his noble and Christian mind to continue to submit to the yoke of a Subscription to Antichristian articles of Faith. But he generously broke his fetters, and asserted the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free; (Gal. v. 1.) and cheerfully gave up very flattering worldly views and prospects for the love of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, (Rev. i. 9).

I knew nothing about Mr. *Palmer* nor his concerns till July 1783, when being in London, I was agreeably surprised with receiving the following letter from him, which had been first sent to *Montrose*, but was returned me to London from thence.

“*Queen's Coll: Cambridge, July 14th, 1783.*”

“DR. SIR,”

“A new publication by Mr. *Lindsey*, entitled, The History of the Unitarians since the reformation, which he was so obliging to send me the other day, first made me happy with the intelligence of the Unitarian Society at *Montrose*, and with your name. Indeed I was seldom ever more affected with joy and gratitude to the Great Being for having vouchsafed to extend the knowledge of himself so far. As a partaker of your joy, and fellow-worshipper of Him, you will allow me to give you the reasons why I trouble you with this.”

“I must begin with telling you, that I am to my sorrow a Clergyman of the Church of England. But as I think her liturgy corrupt and antichristian, and her articles to be not only an injurious violation of the liberty wherewith God and Christ have made me free, but a jumble of absurdity and impiety, I have declined the acceptance of all preferment at the dear price of swearing these to be

the former Edition: in 1792 there was not a copy to be had in *London* or *Edinburgh*.

The Unitarian Society of London who had taken off a considerable part of this Edition, and had

“ true and agreeable to scripture, which I believe to contain so many  
 “ gross and shocking falsehoods. With such opposite sentiments how  
 “ can I ever unite with her? I am persuaded she is very erroneous in  
 “ many points, but in none more than in the object of her worship. I  
 “ profess myself a zealous worshipper of The Only True God, whom  
 “ only to serve, my Teacher and Master said, was the first and great-  
 “ est of all commandments. Convinced as I am both by reason and  
 “ revelation of this most important of all known truths, I dare not, it  
 “ would be Idolatry in me to join in the Church’s service of three  
 “ Gods, and in her litany service of four Gods. For these reasons I  
 “ have quitted all connexion as much as possible with her. But being  
 “ a member of this University and fellow of a College, I feel the  
 “ force of decency and decorum obliging me to attend the daily ser-  
 “ vice of the Chapel, while a much more powerful motive obliges me  
 “ never to go. Yet this is a kind of halting between two opinions, it is  
 “ unmanly, it is unbecoming him who is not ashamed of his God, but  
 “ who thinks it his highest privilege, honour, and happiness, to be  
 “ permitted to be his lowliest servant, and to profess himself so  
 “ openly.”

“ Pressed by these difficulties and others of a like kind which it is  
 “ not necessary to mention, I thought Montrose might be an asylum  
 “ to me for a year or two, till I had gotten information enough in that  
 “ book” (meaning the Bible) “ to dispense it to others. Where in  
 “ the mean time I could worship the Father of Mercies according to  
 “ my conscience, could enjoy the union of brother Christians, and  
 “ might possibly build and be built up by them.”

Mr. *Palmer* speaks afterwards of private concerns, and concludes in the following manner.

“ May the Father of mercies smile upon your little society, may it  
 “ be the nursing mother to the whole kingdom to bring it back to the  
 “ long lost truth, the worship of *only him*. May every spiritual, and  
 “ every temporal blessing fitting in the eye of infinite benevolence be  
 “ your portion is the hearty prayer of

“ Sir,”

“ Your most obednt.”

“ Humble Servant”

“ THOMAS FYSHE PALMER.”

“ Mr. CHRISTIE Merchant”

“ Montrose”

“ Angus Shire”

“ post. paid”

“ Scotland.”

Mr. *Palmer* and I exchanged letters together while I remained in *London*, and afterwards when I returned to *Montrose*, till towards the end of November, when with a manly resolution he bade farewell to the *University* and the *Church of England* together, and took his passage from *London*, in a Scotch vessel bound for *Aberdeen*, where he ar-

adopted the work into the number of their books, proposed to me in 1794, through the medium of their Secretary the Rev. *Thomas Morgan*, to have a third Edition printed at their own expence; but for

rived safely in a course of tempestuous weather, and proceeded from that place to *Montrose*, which he reached December 4th, 1783; and I had the pleasure of first seeing and embracing him.

Mr. *Palmer* was active and zealous in propagating the Unitarian Doctrine in *Scotland*, both by preaching and the distribution of Pamphlets. He was my *Colleague* at *Montrose* till about May or June 1785, when he went to see his friends in *England*, and on his return to *Scotland* in Autumn that year, he settled in *Dundee* a populous town and much larger than *Montrose*, where by his zeal and assiduity he soon raised an Unitarian Congregation. He visited *Montrose* occasionally, and other places, and was chiefly instrumental, in connection with myself and others, in forming the Unitarian Societies of *Edinburgh*, *Glasgow*, *Arbroath*, *Forfar*, and *Newburgh*. He once made an excursion into *England*, and preached powerfully at *Newcastle* and other places. In 1792, he settled for a time in *Edinburgh*, where his preaching at first had a surprising effect, and excited the attention both of Lawyers and Physicians; but unhappily about this time the political Societies that were formed in *Scotland* in consequence of the French Revolution, diverted the attention of many from religion and excited mutual rancour and hatred; and in the end brought about a mournful reverse in the affairs of my unfortunate friend. Mr. *Palmer's* conduct however was steady and upright, and he fell the innocent victim of a *packed Jury* and a *partial and courtly Judge*.

See, *The Trial of the REV. THOMAS FYSHE PALMER, Before the Circuit Court of Justiciary, Held at PERTH, on the 12th and 13th September, 1793, on an Indictment for Seditious Practices. With AN APPENDIX, containing various pieces, also Mr. PALMER'S DEFENCE, Which he intended to have delivered, Had he not employed Counsel. With A Preface by W. SKIRVING. EDINBURGH, 1793.*

Mr. *Palmer's* Sermons were generally learned and well composed: he was the author of several ingenious and original Essays in the 5th and 6th volumes of the *Theological Repository*, under the signature of *Anglo Scotus*. While at *Edinburgh* he published a Pamphlet, entitled, *An Attempt to refute a Sermon by H. D. Inglis, on the Godhead of Jesus Christ, And to restore the long lost Truth of the first Commandment: BY T. FYSHE PALMER, Member of the Unitarian Congregation at DUNDEE.*

This piece is written with much ease and vivacity, and some strong argument, and is a picture of Mr. *Palmer's* free and unconstrained manner of delivering his Sentiments. The *Address* prefixed, *To the Unitarian Congregations of Edinburgh, Dundee, Forfar, Arbroath, Montrose, and Newburgh*, is an admirable Composition, and after some animated exhortations to his brethren to act with fearless integrity, zeal, and perseverance in the great, important cause of Unitarianism, it concludes in the following manner.

“ If active zeal can spread the abasing and idolatrous superstition  
“ of a popular sect, what success must attend equal exertions in a ra-

a particular reason I declined the proposal; though I now repent that I did decline it, as the object I had then in view did not succeed. In future, if that Society shall incline to reprint that work, they have

“ tional service of the Deity, which, issuing from him, will be found every way worthy of him, and has all that can captivate our reason, and warm and amend the heart. Let us not be slothful then, Brethren, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, always abounding in his work, forasmuch as we know that our labour will not be in vain.”

“ But while we are filled with zeal, let us, at the same time, be filled with equal charity; while we endeavour to root out the error, let us love the erroneous, remembering, that universal love, without the distinction of sect or party, and undissembled active benevolence, are the mark and criterion of being disciples of Him who laid down his life for those that rejected his doctrine.”

“ Thus, by our reverence and attachment to the Almighty, and by our love to our brethren of mankind, may we adorn his Gospel and cause many to glorify *Our Father*; that so we may be filled with the unspeakable consolation of his being our great and everlasting reward.”

“ Farewell, my Dear Brethren, bound to you by a love which nothing but the Gospel can inspire, I am, your affectionate Brother in Christ,

“ T. F. PALMER.”

“ *Edinburgh, May 24. 1792.*”

In the *Monthly Magazine* for February 1804, p. 83, there is published an *Account of the late Mr. Thomas Fyshe Palmer*, in which, several particulars of his life are related, his voyage to *New Holland* in consequence of the iniquitous sentence passed upon him, and residence there for seven years, the term of his exile. According to this *Account*, the vessel in which Mr. *Palmer*, his friend Mr. *Ellis*, and others were embarked with a view to return to Great Britain, being in a crazy condition, occasioned much delay, inconvenience, and distress, and at last they were obliged to take refuge in *Guam* a Spanish island and surrender themselves prisoners. They were treated with hospitality by the Spanish Governor; but Mr. *Palmer* was seized with a Dysentery, under which disorder he lingered for sometime, but a mortification taking place, he was relieved by death from all his troubles on the second day of June 1803. From what Mr. *Palmer* once told me, he must have been about 55 or 56 years of age at the time of his death. Rev. xiv. 12, 13. *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

It may appear at first sight strange, and unaccountable, that a man who gave up such flattering worldly prospects as Mr. *Palmer* did for the sake of the Gospel, and laboured zealously ten years in *Scotland* without a Salary, fee, or reward in preaching and propagating the Unitarian doctrine, should be condemned to a seven years exile in a

my full consent to do so ; for I do not consider it as superseded by the present Treatise, which is composed on quite a different plan. All I have to say is, that if it ever shall be reprinted, the Editor will do me the justice to say in an *Advertisement* prefixed to the work, that I adhere to the *proper Unitarian interpretations* of Scripture contained in it ; and that I consider the Arian comments as no farther useful than as a matter of information or curiosity.

When I composed, first printed, and reprinted, these *Discourses*, I was in possession of a far more numerous collection of theological books than I have immediately ; consisting of a formidable body of Fathers, Commentators, biblical critics, &c. among which books were more than twenty Editions of the Greek Testament, the English Polyglott, Dr. *Kennicott's* hebrew bible, *Woide's Fac Simile* of the Alex-

distant, desolate, and ill-inhabited country, among the refuse of the human species, and after experiencing and surviving so many hardships should perish on his return to his native land, a prisoner in a remote Spanish settlement. But if we take a retrospect of the moral Government of God, and the dispensations of divine Providence in different ages, we shall find that similar afflictive trials have been often the lot of the righteous. The *Worthies*, recorded in Heb. xi. *of whom the world was not worthy*, were subjected to cruel sufferings, *they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented ;—they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.* John the baptist for his honest detestation and censure of Vice, fell a victim to the malice and revenge of a lewd woman. John the Apostle was banished by the tyrant *Domitian* to the isle of *Patmos* ; Peter is said to have been *crucified* and Paul *beheaded* : and many others have suffered in like manner in different ages. But the time is fast approaching when temporal decisions and judgments shall be *rejudged* : when the real and disinterested friends of truth and piety ; of civil and religious liberty ; shall lift up their heads with joy ; and their oppressors (though at present they may be seated on *thrones*, or wearing the robes of Justice, if they have not averted the divine displeasure by repentance and reformation) shall *say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : For the great day of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ?* Rev. vi. 15 to 17. N. B. Though this passage in its more immediate sense may respect the downfall of Paganism ; yet it is not improbably supposed by some Commentators, that it may have a typical reference to the day of Judgment.



andrian Manuscript to which I was a Subscriber, Lexicons, Concordances, &c.

I was at great pains in consulting and comparing the various readings of that all-important book, the Greek Testament, in *Mill, Kuster, Wetstein, Griesbach*, and sometimes the *Polyglott*; and therefore in this present work I refer occasionally to these *Discourses* with respect to the various readings.

In 1791, having been greatly moved by the accounts of the horrid riot at *Birmingham*, I wrote and published, *An Essay on Ecclesiastical Establishments in Religion: shewing their hurtful tendency; and that they cannot be defended, either on Principles of Reason or Scripture. To which are annexed, Two Discourses on Rev. xiv.* In the following year I took my *Farewell* of the Society of Unitarian Christians at *Montrose* in a *Discourse* delivered November 18, 1792, but not published till Spring 1794; when I removed from the neighbourhood of *Montrose* to *Glasgow*.

At this period, having carried on my inquiries as far as I thought it possible I could do, and being then in the forty-fourth year of my age and arrived at full maturity of judgment, I made a positive decision on the subject of the *Pre-existence of Christ*;—rejecting it as a notion not consistent with the general tenor of Scripture or the nature of things, unwarranted by the Apostles Creed, and the purest remains and most authentic accounts of Ecclesiastical Antiquity.

It does not follow, though I was so long in coming to a conclusion on this subject, that others should be so too; or that there is any great dubiety or difficulty in the question. I have sometimes a blameable timidity and hesitation in my temper, and I believe that having received the first impressions of Unitarianism, when very young, from *Dr. Clark*, and other eminent *Semi Arian*, or *Arian* Writers, these early

impressions stuck long upon my mind, and made the decision a more difficult task to me than otherwise it would have been. I passed in a course of years, through all the different stages of high Arianism, proper Arianism, low Arianism, and a state of *Suspense*, till at last I found *rest for my soul* in the scheme of the proper humanity of our Lord; in which last system I can truly say, that I have had more peace of mind, joy, and comfort in religion than I ever had before I adopted it; and therefore I have no reason to repent of my determination.——But leaving all these past events and considerations, I come now to speak upon the subject of the present *Dissertations*.

My previous studies having qualified me for executing a work of this kind, I composed these *Dissertations* at leisure hours in Spring, Summer, and Autumn, 1794, in the city of *Glasgow*, and delivered each of them when composed, the same year, to the members of the Society of Unitarian Christians in that city, and others who attended, at their place of worship. I had been previously invited to *Glasgow* with the unanimous consent of the Unitarian Congregation there, and the approbation of their former Preacher the Rev. *Bartholomew Spencer*, who wrote me a very kind letter on the subject, and removed soon after my arrival to attend the medical College in *Edinburgh*, and from thence to *Birmingham*, where he proposed to practise as a Physician.\*

\* Mr. *Spencer* had formerly been a baptist Minister in *England*, and had given up his congregation in consequence of his having embraced Unitarian principles. He came to *Edinburgh* and commenced the study of medicine. I first saw him in that city in the year 1791, by means of the late worthy Mr. *James Purves*, and was much pleased with his conversation. He afterwards went to *Glasgow*, and in connection with Mr. *Palmer* was useful in forwarding the progress of Unitarianism in that city. He was an edifying and agreeable Preacher, and possessed talents for argumentation and debate. I visited his congregation at *Glasgow* in December 1792, and delivered some discourses to them, which visit, with other previous circumstances, laid the foundation of my removal to that city afterwards.

These *Dissertations*, composed and *first* delivered as beforementioned, are in general the result of an impartial and critical investigation of the sense of Scripture, of much study, research, and application, joined with extensive reading of the best Unitarian Writers in Latin and English. Some advantages I have no doubt derived from the perusal of every author of merit and reputation, but not so as to render a particular acknowledgment necessary. *Socinus* and the Polish Unitarians, with *Hugo Grotius*, and the English Unitarian Writers of the seventeenth Century, have been useful assistants in some places. I have profited by the Paraphrase of *Le Clerc* and the Comments of *Abouzait*, in composing my improved translation and paraphrase on the introduction to John's Gospel. Both these I published at full length in my *Discourses on the Divine Unity* ;\* but I thought it would have a better effect in the present work to publish an entire new Paraphrase of my own ; in the composition of which I laboured much to express with fidelity the true sense of the Evangelist, and to set his sublime conceptions in a brilliant and conspicuous point of view.

I have adopted some valuable thoughts from different Writers in the *Theological Repository*, and some from my late dear friend Mr. *Palmer*, beforementioned. I have derived some precious hints from the the great LARDNER, delivered with much simplicity in his artless but touching manner, which I have endeavoured to enlarge upon and improve to advantage. I acknowledge myself indebted to the venerable Mr. *Lindsey* (whose numerous and valuable writings on the subject of these *Dissertations* I have often read with pleasure and improvement) for some sentiments, expressions, and brief quotations in the

\* 2 Edit. p. 206 to 211.

*sixth Dissertation*, and also a short quotation in the *seventh*. To the late Rev. Dr. *Priestley* I am indebted for some occasional thoughts of great moment, and particularly in the two last *Dissertations*.

But here I think it necessary to mention for the reader's security, that in all the long, important quotations in this work from *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Eusebius*, and *Athanasius*, on which so much depends with respect to the true state of things in the Primitive Church, I have followed no second hand authority whatever, however respectable; but have examined the Greek and Latin in the original Authors, from Editions of the *Fathers* either in my own possession, or which I have found in the *Logan Library* in this city. The reader may therefore rely on the correctness of the Quotations, and on the fidelity of the Translations; which I have laboured hard to make as close to the originals as the genius of the English language would admit.

With respect to the Scriptural Quotations in these *Dissertations*, which I have collected and arranged with great care, on which I rest their credit and authority, and which are in themselves of inestimable value, I may truly say with strict propriety, in the elevated language of the Latin Poet, that,

I HAVE ERECTED A MONUMENT MORE LASTING THAN BRASS, AND HIGHER THAN THE REGAL ELEVATION OF THE EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS, WHICH NEITHER CONSUMING RAIN, NOR VIOLENT WIND, NOR AN INNUMERABLE SERIES OF YEARS, AND LAPSE OF AGES, CAN DESTROY: BUT WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST IN VIGOUR, AND EXHIBIT AN UNIFORM AND UNDECAYED FRONT, FOR EVER.\*

\* *Exegi monumentum ære perennius,  
Regaliq̄ue situ pyramidum altius:  
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens*

Psal. cxix. 89, 90, &c. *For ever, O JEHOVAH, thy word is SETTLED in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: &c.* Psal. xix. 7 to 11. *The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.* Math. vii. 24, 25. *Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built HIS HOUSE UPON A ROCK: And the RAIN descended, and the FLOODS came, and the WINDS blew, and beat upon THAT HOUSE, and it fell not; for it was founded upon A ROCK.*

After the delivery of these *Dissertations* in Glasgow, I was diverted from the thought of publishing them there by engaging in a Sunday Evening Lecture, in which I gave an Exposition on the *Revelation*. This Exposition was far more popular and better attended than the delivery of my *Dissertations* had been; and I was advised by a Friend to publish

*Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis  
Annorum series, et fuga temporum.  
Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei  
Vitabit Libitinam. Usque ego posterâ  
Crescam laude recens, dum Capitolium  
Scandet cum tacitâ virgine Pontifex.*

Hor. Lib. III Ode 30.

I am not an original in the application of this passage of *Horace* to a serious purpose. On casting my eye on a note in the *Dauphin* Edition, I find that *Ferom* made a similar application of it many centuries ago, in his *Epitaph* on *Paula*. I am pleased to think, that I have the authority of a learned and respectable *Father* to countenance me in my method of applying this passage.

an *Advertisement* on the subject, which I did in the following terms.

“ It is proposed to publish by Subscription, A  
 “ Treatise, entitled, *An Illustration of the Propheti-  
 “ cal Part of the Revelation of John, in the Form of  
 “ Discourses or Lectures*; In which the obvious or  
 “ probable sense of the text will be succinctly ex-  
 “ plained, and the events alluded to by the sacred  
 “ prophet, veiled for the most part under sublime  
 “ figures and metaphors, will be elucidated by an  
 “ abstract of historical facts. To this publication  
 “ will be prefixed a preliminary Dissertation, con-  
 “ taining a vindication of the authenticity of this book,  
 “ a display of its utility, with remarks on some of  
 “ the most celebrated expositors and their schemes.”

To this *Advertisement* was annexed *An Address, TO THE PUBLIC*, on the subject of the *Revelation* of three pages length, bearing date, *Glasgow, 27th March, 1795*. Several Subscribers were procured for this proposed publication in *England* and *Scotland*; but not so many as to render it safe for me, in my then depressed situation with a numerous family of eight children all on my hands, to undertake a work of this difficulty and magnitude. Besides, by this time, (towards the end of July 1795) having been impressed with the threatening aspect of public affairs in my native country, as well as affected with some private inconveniences in my own situation, I had come to the resolution of emigrating to *The United States of America*. I therefore laid aside this design, and published a short paper signifying my intention in this respect.

With a sigh, I bade farewell to *Glasgow*, to *Edina's lofty towers and fair Scotia's realm*;\* and em-

\* While I lived at *Glasgow*, I was happy in the acquaintance of several worthy and respectable Citizens of that place; and particularly in that of Mr. *Peter Houghton*, a young man of a pious and amiable

barked with the greatest part of my family, at *Greenock*, August 6th, 1795, in a vessel bound for *New-York*, where I arrived in the beginning of October. In the latter part of the voyage, I was seiz-

disposition who came from *England*, and then attended the Divinity Class in the University and preached occasionally for me; now a Dissenting Minister in the *West of England*.

The reader who feels himself in any degree interested in the narrative, will naturally inquire, how the Societies of Unitarian Christians in *Scotland* proceeded after the removal of Mr. *Palmer*, and the departure of Mr. *Spencer* and the *Author*? I shall endeavour to state what I know of the matter as briefly as possible. The Society of *Montrose* had no public Meetings after I left them. *Forfar* fell into a state of derangement in a short time after its institution. *Glasgow* subsisted for some years under two or three successive Preachers. The Unitarian Societies, properly so called, of *Edinburgh* and *Arbroath*, are I believe no more. The latest information I have on this subject, is by a letter dated, *Dundee*, 7th November, 1807, from my friend Mr. *Robert Millar* a respectable Merchant of that place, formerly a member of the Society at *Montrose*, who not only attended Mr. *Palmer's* Meeting in *Dundee* but in connection with a Mr. *Mathews* has kept up the Society ever since Mr. *Palmer's* removal. Mr. *Millar* after some general observations on the effects that political views and apprehensions have had on religion, and on the progress of an enthusiastic sect called *Missionaries*, proceeds as follows.

“The cause in *Montrose* never recovered your departure from that place,—and there I fear it is now, as to any public profession almost extinct. As far as I have learned similar consequences followed at *Glasgow* soon after your leaving that place. I have indeed heard that both there and at *Paisley* there are Societies who openly profess the *Divine Unity*, but do not seem to perceive the primary importance of that principle, and wish rather to be distinguished by some other peculiar opinions, and to be denominated *Universalists*: there is I hear a similar Society in *Edinburgh*, and one of their chief corner stones is *Baptism*. Besides these and the one here, I can learn of no other Society in *Scotland* that in the most remote degree tends to *Unitarianism*. It appears therefore to be a plant not likely to thrive in this northern climate in our day. Some seeds however are sown and these will not perish. The first planting of the Gospel was like that of a mustard seed. In no place has the cause had more or greater difficulties to encounter than here. Mr. *Palmer's* misfortunes gave it a severe blow; some of its most zealous Advocates, abandoned it, and have very decently gone for years to the Established Church. We have lost many Members in the course of 20 years by death. Still the Society has been kept up through good and bad report, and at present consists of about 20 joined Members, besides about half as many young People, and a few constant Hearers who have not joined. There are also always some strangers.”

In *England* I am happy to announce a far more glorious and triumphant state of things with respect to *Unitarianism*. There were Unitarians in *England* at the time of the Reformation, and several per-

ed with a slow fever, as I suppose of the nervous kind, and when I landed at *New-York* was in a state of great debility both of body and mind. The yellow fever was then in that city, and a great part of my family were either affected with it or other disorders. I had to encounter many difficulties, embarrassments and unfortunate incidents in that city; but experienced at the same time the kind attentions of some pious and worthy persons, which alleviated these distressing events not a little. I removed to

sons suffered death or imprisonment for the profession of the truth. For 150 years the cause has been supported, less or more, by learned writers, able Preachers, and distinguished private Christians.

The Unitarian Society formed at *London* in 1791, in a manner connects and combines all the noted men of that profession, throughout *Great-Britain*, in one general body. A similar Society on a large plan of that kind was afterwards formed in the *West of England*. And by a letter, accompanied with a Pamphlet, which I received near three months ago, from a respectable Unitarian Minister in the vicinity of *London*, I find there is a *third* general Society formed, called the *Unitarian Fund*, the object of which is to afford encouragement and support to popular and itinerant Preachers in different parts of the country in order more fully to extend and diffuse the knowledge of the truth. An account is given of the progress and exertions of Mr. *Wright* and other Unitarian Preachers in different places of *England* and *Wales*. P. 17 "Since the last Annual Meeting of the Society, Mr. Wright has travelled as a missionary more than 2000 miles; chiefly on foot and with great varieties of road and weather. In these journeys, he has been much occupied, not only with preaching, which he has omitted no opportunity of performing, but also with religious conversation; with a view to instruct the ignorant, to strengthen young converts, to reconcile differences between brethren, and to administer advice to ministers and churches. He has distributed in his progress a great number of Unitarian Tracts." Mention is also made in this Pamphlet (p. 6 to 10) of the Unitarians in *Scotland* and particularly at *Paisley*; which passage concludes as follows. "In no long time, it is ardently hoped, that a missionary may be deputed to proclaim in *Scotland*, where there appears to be such a forward disposition to free inquiry, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, in its original simplicity and power."

A very useful periodical publication has been set on foot at *London*, entitled, "*The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature*," arranged under the following heads: 1. History and Biography. 2. Miscellaneous Communications. 3. Biblical Criticism. 4. Review of Select Books. 5. Original Poetry. 6. Obituary. 7. Literary and Religious Intelligence. 8. A list of New Publications. Published by Messrs. Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster Row. Price 12s. 6d. Sterling, each Volume, in boards, for a whole year.



*Philadelphia* towards the end of December, where I remained till the 9th of February 1795, when I set out for *Winchester* in *Virginia*, and my family followed me there in April following.

After some attempts, by conversation, letter-writing, and lending books, to propagatè the Unitarian Doctrine in a private, familiar way; with little or no success, I recited these Dissertations a second time in the Court house at *Winchester*, in Autumn 1799, to crowded audiences at first, but in the sequel to very thin ones. I wished much then to have published these *Dissertations*, but as the subject was unpopular and the publication would have been expensive, I did not attempt it; but contented myself with writing and printing a small Pamphlet entitled;

“ *A Serious Address to the Inhabitants of Winchester; on the Unity of God, and Humanity of Christ: With A List of Theological Treatises, To be afforded to the perusal of those who may incline to make an enquiry into these important subjects.*”  
*Winchester* 1800.

This *Address*, I advertised for eleven months, in the *Winchester Gazette*, and concluded the Advertisement by a *Solemn Protest* against the Trinitarian Doctrine and Worship, published the 31st of December 1800, the last day of the late Century. I confirmed this *Protest* in a *Farewell Address* to the people of *Winchester*, published also in the *Winchester Gazette* of the 20th of May 1801.

My next settlement was at *Northumberland town* in this *State*, where after having resided near seven months, I began to preach, and continued to do so, generally once a fortnight, for the space of more than four years, viz. from *Christmas-day* 1801, to February 1806, without concealing or dissembling my Sentiments; though I did not there recite these *Dissertations*. I hereby express my grateful acknow-

ledgments to the good people of *Northumberland* and that neighbourhood, for the candour and attention with which they heard me, from first to last. My good wishes will ever attend them, and my prayers be offered up in their behalf to the heavenly Father in the name of Christ. I am indebted to that place for several Subscriptions to these *Dissertations*, for which I return thanks. While I resided at *Northumberland*, I composed the following pieces.

1. "*The Doctrine of the Scriptures, Concerning GOD, JESUS CHRIST, and the HOLY SPIRIT, Briefly stated; and accompanied with remarks on Observations on the Divinity of Christ, ascribed to Judge Rush; which appeared in the Sunbury and Northumberland Gazette of September 20th last.*" This piece was published in a small type, in Mr. *Kennedy's* paper beforementioned, of the 25th October 1804, and filled near seven columns.

2. *A SPEECH delivered at the grave of the Rev. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S. &c. Northumberland: 1804.*

3. *A Review of Dr. Priestley's Theological works, with occasional Extracts, expressive of his sentiments and opinions, and observations on his character and conduct as a Christian Minister.* When I removed from *Northumberland* in February 1806, I left this *Review*, prepared for the press, with *Joseph Priestley Esq.*; who published it the same year, in *Dr. Priestley's Memoirs*, Vol. 2. APPENDIX, No. 6.

At *Pottsgrove*, where I resided from February 1806 till near the end of that month 1807, I had no opportunity afforded me of public speaking, and I must add no desire for it; though I lived agreeably with some worthy people in that place.

Since my coming to reside in *this City*,\* I have en-

\* I arrived in *Philadelphia* with my family, February 26, 1807.

gaged in public worship, and other religious services, with two different classes of men of the Unitarian Denomination; and neither of these Societies have answered my expectations in all respects; though I had the satisfaction of parting with a *majority* of the members of *the Independent Society*, in an agreeable manner.\*

I doubt not but that I might resume my labours in this way, if I were so disposed; but I think I have already employed, and may in future employ, my time on the Lord's day to more spiritual improvement and advantage to myself and others, by private devotion and the study of the Scriptures, than I could do in preaching to a very small congregation, most of whom as they are pious and moral people, stand in little need of my instruction or admonition. Besides, I am now come to *the evening of life*; and wearied nature craves some respite from continual toil. A period of *twenty-seven years* has elapsed, since the commencement of the Society of Unitarian Christians at *Montrose in Scotland*, in August, 1781. During all which time (with little interval) I have been more or less actively engaged as a Preacher, in different places; either in *my own country*, or in *Virginia and Pennsylvania*. It may now be becoming, at least not inglorious, to leave the useful and necessary duty of public speaking on the Lord's day to others, *greener in years and firmer in strength*

\* For the causes and reasons of my difference with *one* of these Societies, see, two small pamphlets published in this city last year, the *first* entitled, *Remarks on The Constitution, Framed by Three Leading Members, And lately Adopted by A Majority of the Society of Unitarian Christians, Who Assemble in Church Alley; &c.*: the second, entitled, *A Sequel to the Remarks on the Constitution &c.—Containing A Defence of The Remarks And Their Author. By WILLIAM CHRISTIE, The Author of the said Remarks.* Philadelphia: 1807. The Reasons of the Suspension of the Meetings of the *Independent Society* will afterwards appear.

than I am, and to wish them success in the name of the LORD.\*

In the place of Worship of *the Independent Society of Unitarian Christians* of this city beforementioned, were these *Dissertations* rehearsed for the third and last time, as a *Lord's day Evening Service*, which began on Sunday, November 15th, 1807, and ended February 28th, 1808, when the last *Dissertation* was delivered; though the Evening Service itself was still continued on the subject of the *Prophecies of Daniel* till May 8th. A considerable number of hearers attended the recital of the *Dissertations* at first; but the audience gradually declined till near the close, when it was almost reduced to the proper members of the Society.†

\* The Rev. Mr. *Lindsey*, of *Essex Street Chapel, Strand, London*, gave over preaching at *Seventy years of age*, though he was then in tolerable health, and living on the most agreeable footing with his Congregation, who regretted his resignation. My increasing infirmities, with the various trials, reverses, and disasters, that I have experienced in human life, have probably made me *as old* (if I may so speak) at *near Sixty*, as that *good man* was at *Seventy*. Add to this, that I am under the constant necessity of labouring for a worldly subsistence for myself and family. It is high time, therefore, as *Horace* says, that I should be *donatum rude*, "released from active service."

† As I have had occasion in some of my late publications, and even in this *Preface*, to mention the name of *The Independent Society of Unitarian Christians*, which commenced in this city in September 1807, and assembled at No. 26, North Sixth Street, it may be proper here, briefly, to state the causes of the *Suspension* of its public Meetings since May 22d, 1808.

When this Society was instituted, it was unanimously agreed by its members, among other things, that public Worship and other religious Services should be conducted every Lord's day by an *Elder*, and two *Deacons*. The *Elder* consented to perform the morning Service, and the two *Deacons* agreed to perform, by turns, that in the afternoon. One of these *Deacons* having been absent on business for some months, on his return, declined performing the duty he had undertaken, and having been conversed with on the subject in consequence of a motion made by the other *Deacon*, he still appeared averse to the Task. In a second Conversation, which took place on a *question* proposed by himself, and seconded by the *Elder*, viz. "Whether the Meeting should be continued or not?" he at last assigned a frivolous and insufficient reason for his declining to act, (viz. the publication of a pamphlet in 1807, written by the *Elder*, entitled, *An Account of an Erasure and Interpolation, &c.*) which a Comparison of preceding

The Author of these *Dissertations* having in the *Prospectus* he published, bearing date November 9, 1807, and which he afterwards reprinted, annexed to a Pamphlet, signified his intention (with the divine permission) of putting these *Dissertations* to the press, at an early period in 1808, with or without Subscribers, is truly happy that circumstances have been so ordered that he is able to fulfil his intentions, and to present those friends that have done him the favour to subscribe to his work, and the public in general, with an Edition of these *Dissertations*. He has spared no pains to correct, and improve them; to retrench redundancies, and supply omissions where necessary: he has also added a number of useful notes.

The Author considers the publication of these *Dissertations*, as the most useful labour he was capa-

and succeeding circumstances has now fully discovered not to have been the true one. Besides this Deacon's declining to perform his duty, and the defection of another member, who had some time before left the Society; the other Deacon who had discharged his duty with fidelity, was obliged from the situation of his affairs to remove from the city to the country; and another respectable member proposed to set out soon for a distant country residence among her friends, and there to remain for some months.

The Elder taking all these circumstances under consideration, and reflecting, that the whole of the public Service of the Society, twice every Lord's day, would either devolve upon himself, (a task for which, joined to his close application on ordinary days, he found himself inadequate) or one part be left unperformed; and that he should now have to speak to a very small audience, not much exceeding the number of an ordinary family, thought it most eligible to propose to the Society, that its *public Meetings should be suspended*, which was accordingly agreed to.

The Majority of the *Independent Society of Unitarian Christians*, however, who have continued true and firm to their original profession; though they do not *now* meet publicly, yet see one another with pleasure, when they have it in their power; and consider one another as brethren.

The above is as full a Statement of the Transaction to which it relates, as it may be proper to give in this work. I have by me materials for composing a particular Account of the Institution, Progress, and Suspension of *this Society*, in all its steps, with proper Observations, and Inferences from undeniable facts, which I may either bring forward separately, or suppress, as circumstances may require.

ble of performing for the glory of God or the benefit of mankind; and as far exceeding any service he could render to religion or piety by his ordinary preaching to such small audiences as generally attended him. It is to be regretted, that the effect of Preaching is but too often momentary, and that good impressions wear off very soon; but a printed work on an interesting and all important subject, is calcu-

*Philadelphia, August 27th, 1808.*—How short-sighted are mortals! Little did I think a few days ago, when I wrote the above note, that the *amiable Lady* mentioned there, “as a respectable member, who “proposed to set out for a distant country residence among her “friends,” was then on the verge of dissolution, or actually no more! Yesterday brought me the melancholy accounts of her demise! The sad tidings opened former wounds, and made my heart and those of my family bleed afresh.—Truth, Justice, and Friendship, require me to say, that Miss DARCH was no ordinary person;—that she was humane and benevolent to all,—sincere and constant in her attachment to her friends.—Good sense and fair inquiry led her to entertain just and rational views of the Christian System; and she acted up to her means of information, by an open acknowledgment and public profession of the Truth.

When the difference took place among the Unitarians of this city, she regretted it; but at the same time of her own accord, and without any solicitation, she gave a preference to *the Independent Society of Unitarian Christians*, and adhered to it steadily till the *Suspension* of its Meetings, which took place just before she set out on her journey.

Math. x. 41, 42.

I.

*Why should we mourn departing friends?  
Or dread their op'ning grave?  
In kindness 'tis their Father sends  
From ev'ry ill to save.*

II.

*We too are hast'ning to our home  
As fast as time can fly;  
Nor can that home too swiftly come  
Which seals our hopes on high. &c.*

Birmingham Collection, Hymn cv. p. 151.

lated to have a permanent effect, and is always at hand to renew its first impressions.

The Author humbly trusts, that these *Dissertations* will continue to do good, and to promote the knowledge of the *one God*, and the *one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, when he shall *sleep with his fathers*, and be numbered among the dead. But though the work should not have any considerable influence or effect, though it should even be neglected and despised; yet none can deprive him of the accomplishment of one main object which he had in view by its publication. It has been a work long projected, of ardent wishes, and of many prayers; and the Author by executing his purpose at last by means of painful exertion, has relieved and discharged his conscience, and removed a burden from his mind.

In his former Treatise he bore a full and complete testimony to the supreme and unrivalled Majesty of the Father as *the only true God*, but came to no positive conclusion, concerning *Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*, farther, than that he was “a being inferior to God, dependent upon him, and acting by his command and authority; or in other words his *Son, Servant and Messenger*; and by the Father’s appointment, the *Messiah*, or only Mediator between God and Man.” This last point, though clearly established and proved, still left the mind in a state of suspense and uneasiness, respecting the nature and character of our Lord, viz. whether he was to be ranked among angelic or superangelic beings; or considered as one of the human species, perfect and complete in piety and all moral virtue; and thereby as *the captain of our salvation, the author and finisher of faith*, affording an imitable and salutary example to all his followers. The present *Dissertations*, after

exhibiting a full proof of *the Unity of God in the person of the Father*, decide this important question explicitly, and establish *the Messiahship and Proper Humanity of Jesus*, by strong and cogent Arguments.

The Author, therefore, has now borne his full and complete testimony to *the truth as it is in Jesus*, to the pure and *sincere milk of the word*, calculated to nourish the human mind, and make it grow in grace and goodness, and in a meetness for everlasting life. If, therefore, his work shall be well received, he will rejoice and be thankful; but though it should be otherwise, he cannot be deprived of the sweet consolation of having done his duty, by serving the cause of God and truth, according to the best of his knowledge and ability. This is a reward that will be *his*, both here and hereafter.

Above all things, it becomes the Author, with unfeigned humility and self-annihilation to express his gratitude to *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*, for making his unworthy servant an instrument in promoting the knowledge of his truth, and the Gospel of his Son; and for granting him strength and ability to begin, carry on, and finish this work. If any thing good or useful has been performed in it, if any important truth has been set in a clearer light and established by more powerful arguments than by former Writers, to him alone, to his great, glorious, and adorable name be all the praise ascribed!

The satisfaction I have derived from the accomplishment of this work, and other useful undertakings that I have been enabled to perform, I consider as a balance to many seeming evils that have befallen me, and a means of support under them.

I have seen so many sad changes and vicissitudes take place in the world; I have experienced so many



trials, difficulties, and disappointments in human life, that I have been sometimes ready to say in a desponding moment, with the hebrew Philosopher, *All is vanity and vexation of spirit,\** or with *Addison's Cato,*

“ O *Lucius,* I am sick of this bad world !”

But I correct myself. Though such melancholy apprehensions may sometimes arise in a man's mind, and cast a gloom over it, yet it is extremely wrong to give way to them, or to suffer one's self to be influenced by them; as they must necessarily have a tendency to check that spirit of general and ardent benevolence, that a Christian ought to cherish. Such thoughts when indulged imply ingratitude to God, who is infinitely wise and good; and are injurious to mankind, as they hinder a man from taking a sufficiently strong interest in their concerns, so as to act his part in Society with vigour and alacrity. *The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD; he does not grieve willingly nor afflict the children of men.* The means of happiness, at least of content and resignation, are in every man's power. Life accompanied with an ordinary share of health, and any tolerable means of Subsistence, is a great and singular blessing, particularly to those who do not think it probable, that there is any state of conscious existence between death and the resurrection. *Life is the accepted time and the day of salvation;†*—the time for securing the divine favour, being useful to mankind, overcoming vitious propensities, and laying in a stock of virtue and piety, which may stand us in stead hereafter. *Psal. cxv. 17, 18. The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. But*

\* Eccles. i. 14.

† 2 Cor. vi. 2.

*we will bless the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD. cv. 3. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Phil. iv. 4. Rejoice in the LORD alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*

These are noble and cheerful sentiments. They check the risings of chagrin and discontent, and spread a sacred serenity over the mind. The true Christian medium is,—not to be worldly minded, nor over fond of life: nor yet wantonly and ungratefully to despise its proper business,—nor even its sober satisfactions and innocent enjoyments. Intellectual and moral pleasures afford still higher sources of delight; and devotional feeling completes the pitch of human felicity. Phil. i. 21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*, says Paul, with exact propriety. A good man ought always to be ready to depart, and yet willing to wait the divine call.

*Father of Christ! to thy sure hand,  
My health, my breath, I trust;  
And my flesh waits but thy command,  
To drop into the dust.*

Psal. xxiii. lxxiii. 23 to 26. 1 Pet. i. 3 to 5.

PHILADELPHIA, 25th October, 1808.

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<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	
35	bot. 4	<i>for exciting read exerting.</i>
36	top 9	<i>for move read more.</i>
45	bot. 6	<i>for 1 John i. 7 read v. 7.</i>
49	bot. 15	<i>for gratifications read qualifications.</i>
81	top 16	<i>for by him read did by him.</i>
124	<i>Note</i>	<i>for Luke xx read xxiii.</i>
142	bot. 13	<i>for then read them.</i>
130	bot. 5	<i>for Collossians read Colossians.</i>
212	<i>Note</i> top 5	<i>for oeconomiam read oeconomiam.</i>
223	<i>Note</i> bot. 1	<i>for Fol. read Fab.</i>
253, Index	Col. 2.	insert after line 1. Psal. *ex. p. 67, 94
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# DISSERTATION I.

## THE UNITY OF GOD IN THE PERSON OF THE FATHER,

DEMONSTRATED FROM

### *REASON AND SCRIPTURE.*

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I TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

WE have here a Creed, or a declaration of the two main articles of our Christian Faith, delivered to us by apostolical authority and expressed with great clearness, brevity and simplicity.

I have been apt to wonder, that our modern Creed-makers and composers of theological systems should have overlooked and neglected this and other evangelical models laid down in scripture, and introduced so much foreign, precarious and traditional materials into their Confessions of Faith and Schemes of Divinity.

But the fact is less surprising when we consider, that the corruptions of Christianity are of long standing and have been accumulating and gathering strength for a series of ages; and that many persons dazzled and overwhelmed by the weight of human testimony and misled by the authority of great names who have

gone before them, have chosen rather to follow the track marked out by others than to return to the primary path and begin all their divinity anew.

I would not be understood, however, as affirming, that the class of writers I have in view did not consult the scriptures at all. Undoubtedly they consulted them, held them in high veneration, and took the laudable pains of translating them and making them generally known. They were also led by the perusal of these scriptures to discover, detect and expose several of the glaring and prevailing errors of their times; and for this and every other meritorious service they performed, the christian world is certainly under very great obligations to them. But with respect to some of the most capital and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, a dismal mist of ignorance, prejudice and bigotry beclouded their minds, and prevented them from discovering truths in their own nature, bright, luminous, and conspicuous. As it was said of the ancient Jews, in relation to the writings of Moses, that the *veil was upon their heart*,\* which prevented them from attending to the evidences of the divine mission of Jesus; so it may be said of these Reformers and their Successors, that the veil of Platonism and ancient tradition blinded them, and still blinds them; and intercepts from their view some of the plainest principles of our holy religion.

The first Reformers, having been educated under the tuition of ill-instructed masters, accustomed to the scholastic mode of Divinity, and taught to respect the authority of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds and the decisions of the three general councils that followed that of Nice; and being highly prepossessed in favour of the sentiments of *Augustin* and other



Fathers who wrote in the fourth and fifth centuries, were, I may say, incapacitated for forming a sound and unprejudiced judgment respecting the true nature of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Having taken it for granted that these beforementioned Councils and Fathers were certainly in the right, instead of trying and examining their decisions by the Scriptures, they endeavoured to accommodate the sense of these sacred books to the received and traditional opinions; and by the help of false readings, ill explained and figurative passages, they made out a sort of proof that seemed to satisfy themselves, however little it might satisfy an impartial and ingenuous inquirer.

It seemed good to the Providence of God, whose ways are wonderful, mysterious, and past finding out, to permit this species of half-reformed Christianity to receive the sanction of civil authority, and to be established in various countries of modern Europe, and in Great Britain among the rest; for the time of complete, general reformation was not then fully come. Though there existed at this period of time, I mean in the sixteenth century when the Protestant Reformation took place, a class of writers who saw much farther, and exhibited the truths of Christianity in a juster point of view, than the ordinary popular reformers, commonly called orthodox. These were those celebrated Italians, *Lælius*, and *Faustus Socinus*, with various other writers who flourished chiefly in Poland and Transylvania. The writings of these eminent and worthy men have been of signal service to the world, and have led the way to other writers who have risen up in succeeding times.—Great Britain, the southern part of the island in particular, has been blessed with much important information respecting the great points here alluded to, from the days of *Biddle* down to the present times:

and within the last thirty or forty years through the exertions of some very enlightened persons, knowledge of this kind has been exceedingly diffused, and nothing is now wanting to improvement, but a willing, candid and attentive mind.

I have thought proper to offer these few, brief observations, as a sort of prelude or introduction to a series of discourses grounded upon the words I have just now read to you. But before I unfold my general plan, or attempt in the least to pursue the subject, it will be proper to trace the connection and correspondence the words of our text have with the preceding verses. For though they may be considered and handled as a distinct, independent proposition, yet they have an evident relation to what the Apostle says before, as appears from the connecting particle *for*. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

We must go as far back as the first verse of this second chapter before we can arrive at the proper connection. *I exhort therefore* (says the Apostle) *that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

To understand the true sense of this passage taken in connection, we must have in our view, that the Jews of these times were too apt to confine the favourable regards of God to their own country, and to imagine that foreign nations were estranged from God, and had no share in his kindness and mercy. Of consequence, they would not be disposed to be

interested in the welfare of mankind in general, or inclined to pray for them. Also, some of these Jews were of a mutinous disposition and quite impatient of their subjection to the Romans, and so were likely to treat with little regard all civil governors but those of their own nation. But as it pleased God to permit that the power of the Romans should prevail at this time, and it might have been highly pernicious to the christian cause to have manifested any kind of hostile disposition towards them, the apostle in order to counteract this impatient spirit of the Jews and give a check to their contracted notions; in his instructions to Timothy exhorts, ver. 1, *that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, should be made for all men, of every rank and condition of life; for as none are so high as to be above, or not stand in need of, the protection of the Supreme Being; so none are so low in point of worldly station and fortune as to be beneath his notice. He is the common Father of all the human race, and embraces the whole species in the arms of his universal benevolence. His mercy and favour are not limited to any particular nation, or party, but extend to all men, and therefore, it is proper to pray for all men. Ver. 2. For kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.* The reason why we are commanded to pray for Kings or any kind of civil Governors is, for the moral and beneficial effects that may attend a wise and good administration. The sacred writers, in this as well as in other passages when they inculcate obedience to civil rulers, go upon the supposition, that Government is a real blessing, and administered so as to promote peace, good order and general happiness. Ver. 3, and 4. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: who will have all men to be saved, and*

*to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* It is agreeable to the will of God, that his believing people should be interested in the happiness of all men in every sphere of life, and put up prayers for them, as it is his gracious wish and desire that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and be led thereby to the attainment of everlasting life. And then follows in the words of our text, ver. 5. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* That is, taking the meaning in connection;—we have the highest reason to be interested in the happiness of all mankind, both temporal and eternal, of every nation, rank and degree, and to intercede in prayer for them, for one God is the common creator and parent of all. He is no local, particular, limited or national Deity; he is not only the God of the Jews, but the God of the Gentiles also. His grace and favour are restricted to no station or rank in life, he is equally the God of the great, the powerful and the eminent, *the King of kings, and the Lord of lords*, as well as the sovereign of those of inferior degree. All mankind, creatures of every sort and description are comprehended under his universal empire and government. And not only in this respect are the whole species united and consolidated, in having only one God and Parent; but they are still drawn closer together, and in a secondary sense connected and assimilated by another most tender and endearing relation, that is, by having one common mediator, or means of access to this one God, who opens a communication between God and men, viz. *the man Christ Jesus*, or as it may be rendered, *Jesus the anointed man.*—That chosen one of God, who was replenished with the fulness of divine gifts and graces; whom *God anointed with the holy ghost*

and with power,\* and rendered every way fit and qualified for the discharge of his important mediatorial office. This eminent instrument in the hands of God for the deliverance of the human species from sin and death, sacrificed his life, or devoted himself, for the common benefit of all mankind, and therefore it is said in the words immediately following our text, that he *gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*†

What a beautiful sense does our text supply, and what a strong, affectionate and persuasive motive to universal benevolence taken in this connection. When we consider the whole human species, men of every class and situation, and in every region under heaven, not as formed by different beings with opposite ends and views, but as equally the production of one great and good God, and all equally included in the mediatorial office of the man Christ Jesus, can we forbear loving them, or being interested in their happiness and prosperity, and must we not see the propriety, reasonableness and incumbent duty of joining in *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks* for the whole?

\* Acts x. 38.

† This expression, *gave himself a ransom for all*, and other similar phrases, must ever be interpreted in a consistency with the goodness, mercy and free forgiveness of God, which is so clearly the doctrine of the scriptures in a multitude of passages. Whatever Jesus Christ is to us, he is so, by the decree and appointment of God. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the LORD, or in Jehovah the God and Father of all.* Here, the apostle Paul evidently refers to Jer. ix. 23, 24., to which the reader for his satisfaction may turn. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, &c.*—And to quote no more, our Lord himself expressly affirms in that beautiful passage, John iii. 16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Thus, we have considered the words of our text as connected with the foregoing verses: but we now proceed to treat them as implying and forming a distinct, independent proposition, as they really do: otherwise the Apostle could not have applied them in the manner he has done. For, unless it had been a truth beyond all contradiction clear and manifest in our Apostle's age, that *there is one God and one mediator*, he could never have made use of this *axiom* as an argument in enforcing the duty of universal benevolence.

Our text naturally divides itself into two branches or affirmations, viz.

First, That *there is one God*.

Secondly, That *there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*.

In considering and treating the first of these important affirmations we propose to observe the following method.

I. To demonstrate, that by the words *one God* are meant, one single, individual being, agent, or person, viz. THE FATHER; in opposition to more such individual beings, agents or persons.

II. To produce a sufficient number of passages from the Old and New Testament to prove that this sense of the words *one God*, is sanctioned and confirmed by the concurrent testimony of divine Revelation.

III. To reply to such mistaken, or ill-interpreted passages of scripture, as have been supposed to inculcate the Doctrine of a Trinity in general, or to establish the Divinity of the Son and the Personality of the holy Spirit in particular.

Our plan of treating the second important affirmation will be as follows.

I. To evince the true nature and character of our Lord Jesus Christ, from a variety of scriptural evidence and testimonies concerning him; or to prove that he was really *a man*, as the apostle stiles him, distinguished and dignified by extraordinary powers, gifts, graces and qualifications: *the man Christ Jesus*, or Jesus the anointed man.

II. To reply to the objections of those who adopt the Arian system; with respect to the supposed Pre-existence of Christ, and his having been employed as an agent or instrument in the formation of the world or first creation.

III. To endeavour to show, that the doctrine of the Proper Humanity of Christ, was not only taught by the Apostles, but held in the earliest Jewish and Gentile churches, and by what steps and degrees it became corrupted, and the present doctrine of the Trinity took its rise.

We return then to the first affirmation, or general division of our subject, viz. that *there is one God*. Under this, we proposed to demonstrate in the first place, that by the words *one God*, are meant one single, individual being, agent, or person, viz. *the Father*, in opposition to more such individual beings, agents or persons. And here I may venture to appeal to any one of competent understanding and sound judgment, whether the words *one God* do not naturally convey to the mind the idea of a single agent or person, and no more. The word *God*, by itself, offers to our conceptions, the notion of the supreme, infinite mind or Spirit; and when the numerical adjective *one* is placed before it, it necessarily signifies, that no other being, agent, or person, except that *one* can be God. For, to say there is one God, is equivalent to saying, that there is but

one person who is God ; and in strictness of speech, the original Greek words may be so rendered. When we say, that there is one God, or one person who is God, we at the same time deny, that two or three persons can be God.

It may still farther illustrate the subject in hand, if we apply the numerical adjective *one* to other objects, and consider the force of it when so applied. Thus, when I say, there is *one angel, one man, one horse, one tree, &c.* I can be only understood to mean according to the proper force and use of words, a single, individual angel, man, horse, tree, &c. in opposition to more individuals of each species. And if this be a just and grammatical way of speaking with regard to Creatures, it is much more so when applied to the Supreme Being. For Creatures are finite, and therefore capable of being multiplied and prodigiously diversified under each class and species ; but the Supreme Being is infinite, and therefore incapable of multiplication and diversity. To say there is one God, is in fact to say, there is one infinite being or person, and this excludes the very idea and conception of another : for what is infinite, must be immense, unlimited, unconfined and eternal, and consequently, can admit of no partner or co-equal.

The doctrine of one God, or one infinite mind or Spirit, is so clearly and undeniably the doctrine of divine revelation, that Trinitarians however inconsistently with the notion of a Trinity of divine persons find themselves obliged to admit it ; and therefore affirm that there are *three persons* and *one God*. This is the very notion inculcated by the Athanasian creed, and is affirmed over and over with amazing inconsistency and self contradiction. In conformity to the affirmations of this wonderful symbol, the two great national establishments of Great



Britain, have inserted the same doctrine into their public articles and confessions of faith. "There is but  
 "one living and true God, &c. And in unity of  
 "this Godhead, there be three persons of one sub-  
 "stance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son,  
 "and the Holy Ghost," say the Articles of the one:  
 "There are three persons in the Godhead, the Fa-  
 "ther, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three  
 "are one God, the same in substance, equal in  
 "in power, and in glory," says the Confession, or  
 Catechism of the other.

When we hear such contradictory positions affirmed, when we find them established by human authority, and enforced by assent and subscription; it is surely no more than reasonable to require an explication, and to call upon these peremptory affirmants to attempt a reconciliation of their doctrine with that of Paul and other sacred writers. *There is one God*, says Paul, without any exception, limitation, or reservation: and this one God, as sufficiently appears from the whole tenor of his writings, can be no other than *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore,\** or as he stiles him elsewhere, *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,—of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.†* The idea of more divine persons than one never entered into our apostle's mind, else he would never have expressed himself so unguardedly. Had the great Apostle of the Gentiles who *received not his Gospel from man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, ‡* had he I say, *who shunned not to declare all the counsel of God,||* known any thing of a Trinity in Unity, he would not have failed to communicate the same to his hearers, and to the members of the

\* 2 Cor. xi. 31. † Eph. i. 17. iii. 15. ‡ Gal. i. 12. || Acts xx. 27.

different churches to whom he wrote. When he affirms in the words of our text, that there is *one God*, he at the same time adds, that *there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*: and by this addition he excludes the mediator from being in any respect *that God* in behalf of whom he mediates. It is somewhat strange, that an inspired teacher should stand in need of being corrected by those who came after him; and that ancient Fathers and modern divines should be capable of stating and defining divine truths with more clearness and accuracy, than those who received their light from heaven.

But in order that we may treat our opponents with all proper candour and fairness, let us hear in what manner they attempt to unfold and explain their doctrine, so far as reason is concerned. For their scriptural arguments, according to the plan we have laid down, are reserved for another place. Of late years, the patrons of the doctrine of the Trinity have been very shy in offering any explications at all; they have rather chosen to fold themselves in the arms of mystery, than to come forward and meet their opponents on equal ground. Their predecessors however were more open and unreserved, and thought it became them to attempt at least to offer something like a rational account of their religious opinions.

One celebrated Trinitarian divine, in reply to an Unitarian writer, attempted to cut the knot at once, and to make the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity quite plain, simple and intelligible. He affirmed that the three divine persons were three distinct, infinite minds, or intelligent beings, united by a mutual consciousness, and a mutual inexistence. This was certainly the fairest and most honest explication ever given of the Trinity in modern times; but

it laboured under this vast inconveniency, that it destroyed the Unity, and went to establish direct Tritheism, or the belief of three Gods. For undoubtedly, the words, three distinct infinite minds, or intelligent beings, are nothing else but the definition of three Gods. The mutual consciousness, that the author supposes and insists upon so much, will never make these three beings one God in the scriptural sense; no more than three men capable of knowing one another's thoughts would become one man in consequence. Nor will mutual inexistence remove the difficulty at all; for if such a thing be possible, the essence of each person must be supposed to remain entire, and not to be confounded or blended with the essence of another, and consequently, each being will be still distinct and independent, though in a state of union and conjunction. This scheme, therefore, not only afforded great triumph to the Unitarians, but gave great scandal to Trinitarians themselves; and was solemnly condemned as impious and heretical by a celebrated English University.

Another eminent Trinitarian divine, grieved to find his cause so much hurt by the unguarded Tritheism of the preceding writer, advanced a quite different method of explication. He affirmed, that what Trinitarians call persons or personalities in the Godhead were not beings or substances, but modes, manners, habitudes, postures, &c. This scheme was almost the reverse of the former. So far as we can understand the obscure terms of the author, it appeared to preserve the Unity, but it quite annihilated the Trinity. For with what propriety can a mode or manner of being, not implying distinct agency or intelligence, be called a Person.

A third scheme was advanced by another learned man, according to which the three persons in the Trinity are explained to be three qualifications; or

characters, and relations that God stands in to his creatures, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. But this scheme, was a mere Sabellian turn, a sort of Unitarianism in disguise, and in effect, giving up the doctrine of the Trinity altogether.

A fourth scheme of a Trinity has been proposed, in which all the three persons are declared to be eternal and distinct, but the Father alone supreme, and the Son and Spirit deriving their existence from him, and inferior in dignity and power to him. This scheme, is a mixture of Arianism and Tritheism. It asserts three distinct minds and substances, or one Supreme Deity, and two inferior subordinate Gods.

These are the most considerable schemes of a Trinity that have been advanced in modern times, and to which all the rest may in some measure be reducible. For were we to reckon up all the slight and minute differences of opinion on this subject, in ancient and modern times, the detail would be very copious, and the labour I apprehend, tend little to our improvement. Indeed, the Trinitarian writers very seldom adhere long to one method of explication. When they are pressed close by their Unitarian opponents with strong arguments from scripture and reason in favour of the Divine Unity; they almost lose sight of the Trinity, and when they come to speak of the Incarnation, they return to Tritheism again. Never was there a pretence more ill founded than the boasted uniformity of opinion that Trinitarians lay claim to. Their most celebrated writers have adopted different theories, quite incompatible with one another; and have carried on a controversial war, full of rancour and bitterness. And numbers, I may say the great body of those that profess to believe in a Trinity, believe they *know not what*,\* and can give no explica-

\* John iv. 22.

tion of their tenets. It makes much against the truth of any opinion whatever, when the terms in which it is expressed are quite unintelligible, and when its professed advocates and most zealous defenders, either decline giving any explication, or differ materially and fundamentally from one another in their explanations.

What reason have we to be thankful, that God in the course of his providence hath opened our eyes, and brought us from darkness, confusion and mystery, *into his marvellous light*\*. The doctrine of the Scriptures concerning God is expressed in plain, intelligible language; the simple and perfect Unity of the divine nature is asserted without any figure, covering, or disguise, in a great variety of places; all confirming the declaration of our apostle, that, *there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*. We find no terms of art employed, no positions expressed in words that convey no corresponding ideas. Every thing is suited to the plainest and least cultivated understanding, and may be comprehended by every person endued with the right exercise of reason.

In this introductory discourse, we have kept closely to the elucidation of the words of our text, and such points as are connected with it. In some future discourses, we shall pursue the plan we have laid down, and enter more fully into the scripture evidence at large, respecting the Divine Unity. To the **GOD AND FATHER OF ALL**, in whose inconceivably glorious person, this *Unity* resides, and can *only* be found, be ascribed everlasting homage and praise, in the name of *the man Christ Jesus, the mediator*. Amen.

\* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

## DISSERTATION II.

### THE UNITY OF GOD IN THE PERSON OF THE FATHER,

DEMONSTRATED FROM THE

### SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

IN every part of the Bible, our only standard in matters of Faith, the great doctrine of the Divine Unity, is either directly expressed or clearly implied. We find no traces, or indications of a diversity, or multiplicity of Deities. One great, infinite mind or Spirit, possessed of all natural and moral perfections, is uniformly held forth to us in every part of the sacred volume. Indeed, it was the chief and principal end of the Jewish Oeconomy, to inculcate, keep up, and preserve the impressions of this great and important truth. In this respect the theology of the Hebrews was materially different from that of all ancient nations.

If you open *Homer*, or *Virgil*, or any ancient Greek or Roman writer, you will be at no loss to discover that the popular, Pagan theology, admitted of a variety of Deities. You will find Gods celestial, terrestrial, and infernal; Gods of the land and the water, of the hills and the vallies, and every part

of nature. But in the writings of Moses and the prophets you find quite the reverse. There you discover without any difficulty, that JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, the God of universal nature, is the *only God* and object of worship, that *besides him there is none*, that all other supposed Gods, are the fictions of human vanity, and the vain, pernicious conceits of a disordered fancy, tainted and depraved with the vilest superstition.

But that we may not rest in general assertion, let us examine and specify what Moses and the Prophets have delivered with respect to this important topic, to whose writings we propose to confine our inquiries at present.

Upon opening the books of Moses we find a description of the creation of the heavens and the earth. If there were more Deities or divine persons than one, here we might naturally expect to find some account of them. But Moses represents every part of nature as created and formed by one great being or agent, and no more. *In the beginning*, he says in general terms, *God created the heaven and the earth*;<sup>\*</sup> and then he goes on to particularize the formation of all the different parts of nature; but he introduces no different agents on the scene, supreme or subordinate; no Trinity of Gods; every thing is the work of one divine person, one great creative Architect, under whose forming hand the new born world arises in perfect order and beauty.

But here, that I may leave no room for cavil, it may be proper to anticipate an objection which has been a stumbling block in the way of some, and a hindrance to the reception of the truth. It has been urged by trinitarian writers, that the Hebrew word rendered God, is ELOHIM or ALEIM, and of a plural termination, though construed with a verb in the sin-

<sup>\*</sup> Gen. i. 1.

gular; thus *God created* may be rendered literally, *Gods be created*. From this irregularity in the Hebrew language some trinitarian writers would infer, a plurality of divine persons. But other writers on that side of the question, particularly *Calvin*, sensible of the weakness of this argument have fairly given it up, and owned there is no force in it. And indeed it would have been a strange way of discovering a truth of this kind to mankind, to give intimation of it by a grammatical nicety, which some of the best critics have otherwise explained. A candid man, who weighs things fairly, would say, that the singular verb was sufficient to determine the singular signification of the word that goes before it; and all translators it seems have thought so; for in no language or translation of the Bible whatever, has it been otherwise rendered than in our version. I have elsewhere produced some criticisms on this subject, which I do not think it necessary to introduce here.\* But I shall assign an infallible argument sufficient at once to remove the force of this objection; and that is, that our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles in quoting passages from the Old Testament, where the word ELOHIM occurs translate it always by *θεός*, or God, in the singular. After this, no more needs be said on the subject.

A second objection has been formed from Gen. i. 2. *The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*. This is removed entirely when we consider, that by the spirit of God, according to the signification of the word, nothing more is meant than the divine afflatus or energy, which moved or animated the shapeless mass, and brought it into its proper form.

The Psalmist is an excellent commentator on this passage, when he says Ps. xxxiii. 6,—9. *By the word of*

\* *Discourses on the Divine Unity*, 2d Edit. Montrose, 1790, p. 118 to 121.



*Jehovah were the heavens made : and all the host of them by the breath of HIS mouth.—For HE spake, and it was done ; HE commanded, and it stood fast.*

A third objection which some may think more formidable than any of the rest, has been started from Gen. i. 26. *And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* Much has been said upon this passage ; but every argument for a plurality of divine persons drawn from it may be overthrown by the two following considerations.

1. In the verse immediately following, the effect of the divine purpose, or the actual creation of man, is expressed in the most decisive, singular terms, Gen. i. 27. *So God created man in HIS own image, in the image of God created HE him : male and female created HE them.* † Attend to this passage, for it has been strangely overlooked by those who make use of the preceding verse as an objection. It is surprising that Trinitarian writers will not allow Moses to be his own interpreter, that they will attempt to father their own spurious, Pagan notions upon him, contrary to his own express explication of his meaning. The words *his*, and *he* twice repeated, in the 27th verse, are sufficient, if we will be fair and candid, to remove all ambiguity from the plural pronouns in the 26th verse.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who certainly knew the truth of the matter, whether one or more agents were concerned in the formation of man, says, Mark x. 6. *But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.* Observe, he uses the word *θεός*, or *God*, in the singular, and uses no terms implying plurality, or more creators than one. In Matthew, xix. 4. the same idea is expressed, in a manner still more precise. *And he answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that HE which made them at the beginning, made them male and female?* After this, what can we desire more to satisfy us, that no plurality of persons was intended in the 26th verse?

† See also, Gen. ii. 2, 3, V. 1, 2.

If it shall be asked, why then these plural expressions were used at all, it may be answered, that it is nothing uncommon for single persons to speak in the plural, particularly on great and solemn occasions, and that it is expressive of majesty and dignity so to do. The Jewish Commentators and Paraphrasts think not improbably, that in the 26th verse there is a reference to the Angels or those superior intellectual beings who were present at the creation of man. With this view, they paraphrase the 26th verse, "And Jehovah said to the Angels who minister before him, let us make man, &c."

What we have said, I think is abundantly sufficient to obviate the objections formed upon the mistaken sense of a few words in the first chapter of Genesis; and consequently the argument in favour of the divine Unity, arising from the creation in general, and that of man in particular, being the work of a single agent, remains in full force. And this argument will be found to be very strong and conclusive. For if there had been more Creators than one, undoubtedly, express mention of them would have been made in the first chapter of Genesis. We should have been told in plain and unequivocal terms, that would have left no room for doubt and hesitation. But as every suggestion of this kind has been proved to be a mistake; and the whole universe is the work of one transcendently great and glorious Being, there is not the shadow of a rational argument that can be urged in favour of the existence of any person strictly and properly divine, besides HIM who made the world.

But let us go on to consider what Moses relates concerning the Divine Being in other passages.

When God establishes his covenant with Noah the general ancestor of mankind after the flood, including all his posterity, the terms are expressly singular, Gen. ix. 8, 9. *And God spake unto Noah, and*

to his sons with him, saying, *And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; &c.* ver. 12. *And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between ME and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations, &c.*

In Gen. Chap. xvii. 1. when God renews his covenant with Abram, he addresses him as follows, *And Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before ME, and be thou perfect, &c.* The same Abram, in the preceding chapter, making an appeal to God when speaking to the king of Sodom, Gen. xiv. 22, says, *I have lift up mine hand unto Jehovah, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.* These and other passages in the book of Genesis † discover clearly to us, that Abraham, the Father of the Faithful and *Friend of God*, knew of no other God or divine agent but *Jehovah*, and that he considered him only as one being or person. Now the Faith of Abraham is spoken of with great commendation in the New Testament; for we are told Rom. iv. 3. (where the words of Moses Gen. xv. 6, are quoted) that *Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness*: and again ver. 24th of the same chapter, it is said of the same Faith, that *it shall be imputed to us, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, &c.* This proves, that the belief of the Divine Unity forms an essential part of true Faith, even that Faith by which we are justified. The Faith of the other Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob prior to the Mosaic dispensation was the same with that of Abraham; for God revealed himself to them under the same singular character; † as well as to Moses himself personally. †

\* See, Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3. xv. 1, 2,—6. &c

† Gen. xxvi. 24. xxviii. 13, 14, 15.

‡ Exod. iii. 6. vi. 2, 3, to 8.

When the law was given from Mount Sinai to the Israelites with great majesty and solemnity by the Supreme being himself, we find the personal Unity of the Divine Being contained in the preface and forming the first precept of it. Exod. xx. 1, 2, 3. *And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before ME\**. Again Deut. vi. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD, or as it may be more properly rendered, Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one. And thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

These passages are exceedingly momentous, and deserve to be duly weighed according to their vast importance. The Divine Unity is here made the basis of God's covenant with his people Israel, a truth which they are never to lose sight of, but to have in view at all times as a matter of indispensable obligation; and to bring their children to an acquaintance with it; and to carry a sense of it through every scene and transaction of human life. The doctrine is here delivered with a degree of precision and accuracy which no sophistry can ever get the better of. *I am*

\* It is said of the same *Jehovah*, or I and ME, Exod. xx. 11. *For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, &c.*

*Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt have no other Gods before ME. Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one.* It is incumbent upon those who set up or hold forth any God or divine person, besides the I, ME, or ONE JEHOVAH here mentioned, to shew when this command became repealed, and by what authority it was repealed. And they must excuse us if we demand some better authority for the repeal of such a command than that of Constantine, the Council of Nice, the Athanasian Creed, or even the British Parliament. A law enacted by God himself, confirmed by his prophets, and authenticated by the most awful denunciations, is paramount and superior to all human laws.

And yet it is a melancholy but certain truth, that the decisions and constitutions of every established church in Christendom have run counter to this awful mandate of the Supreme Being. Though in words they seem to acknowledge its obligation and say there is One God, yet this is nothing but an unmeaning compliment; for they take all back again when they affirm that besides the Father *the only true God*; there is a God the Son, and a God the Holy Ghost. I and ME three times repeated are certainly more than a single I and ME: and if there be any truth in numbers three can never be one, nor one three. Those therefore who assert three divine persons and ascribe distinct divine honours to each, do in fact repeal this command, however much they may affirm they still believe in one God. Let not these remarks appear severe; they are nothing more than just consequences drawn from the opinion I am necessarily led to oppose by the subject I have undertaken to treat.

These passages I have quoted are only a specimen out of a vast number to be found in the writings of Moses, in which the Divine Unity is held forth to the Israelites as a truth of the last importance, the foundation of the divine covenant, the corner stone

of their religion, on which their attention was always to be fixed, and the most jealous circumspection used, lest at any time this capital doctrine should be debased or corrupted by an imitation of the Idolatry of the surrounding nations. Indeed, a great part of the book of Deuteronomy may be profitably read over with a view to this subject. And the reader who will do so will find his pains amply rewarded, by the many animated appeals that Moses makes on this subject, so well calculated to touch a susceptible mind. But that I may not be tedious in quotation, I hasten to consider what the other sacred writers and holy men have advanced on this subject.

1 Kings viii. 22, 23,—27 *And Solomon stood before the altar of Jehovah, in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven: and he said, Jehovah God of Israel, there is no God like THEE in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants, that walk before THEE with all their heart:—But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain THEE, how much less this house that I have builded.* 2 Kings xix. 15. *And Hezekiah prayed before Jehovah and said, O Jehovah God of Israel, who dwellest between the cherubims, THOU art the God, even THOU alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, THOU hast made heaven and earth.* Neh. ix. 6 7,—13. *THOU, even THOU art Jehovah alone, THOU hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and THOU preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth THEE. THOU art Jehovah the God, who didst choose Abram, and brought him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham, &c.—THOU camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them (the Israelites) from heaven, and gavest them right judgments,*

*and true laws, good statutes and commandments.*

In the book of Job, and particularly in the Psalms, we have many sublime descriptions, of the peerless majesty of Jehovah, or his superiority to all other beings; and we find him always addressed or spoken of by the singular pronouns THOU and HE, &c. Instances of this kind occur in most Psalms and every one of them amounts to a proof of the strict and absolute oneness of the divine Being. A few of these it may be proper here to recite.

Job xii. 7 to 10. *But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul (or life) of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.* xxxviii. 4. *Where was tthou when I (Jehovah) laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding, &c.* Ps. viii. 1—3, 4. *O Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is THY name in all the earth! who hast set THY glory above the heavens.—When I consider THY heavens, the work of THY fingers, the moon and the stars which THOU hast ordained; What is man that THOU art mindful of him? and the son of man, that THOU visitest him?* xix. 1. *The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth HIS handy-work, &c.* lxv. 2. *O THOU that hearest prayer, unto THEE shall all flesh come.* lxxxiii. 18. *That men may know that THOU, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.* lxxxvi. 8, 9, 10. *Among the Gods there is none like unto thee, O Jehovah, neither are there any works like unto THY works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come, and worship before THEE, O Jehovah; and shall glorify THY name. For THOU*

*art great, and dost wondrous things: THOU art God alone. c. 3, 4, 5. Know ye that Jehovah HE is God, it is HE that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are HIS people, and the sheep of HIS pasture, &c.* See also Psalms ciii. civ. cxxxvi. cxlvi. cxlviii. throughout. Where, Jehovah the true God, is uniformly represented, as the sole and sovereign creator of heaven and earth; as *the Lord of lords, the God of gods*, whose *mercy endureth for ever*, who made the sun, moon and stars, and all the different parts of nature in exquisite order, harmony and beauty; as the guardian and protector of his creatures in general, and the guide, saviour and deliverer of his people Israel in particular; who views those that fear him with paternal pity and tenderness, forgives their iniquities, heals their diseases, and compassionates their infirmities: and all creatures without exception, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, are called upon to glorify the Creator; but particularly the human species of whatever age, sex, rank or station, are commanded to praise and bless *him*, and give thanks *to him*, and *to him only*, their God, their Father, their maker, preserver and benefactor.

Among the Prophets, Isaiah gives many express attestations to the glorious truth we have been inculcating, and that in language the most definite and express. The *Holy One of Israel* is a general phrase which occurs in his writings as denoting the Divine Being; very different indeed, from the modern phraseology of the Holy Three, or the blessed Trinity. We shall quote a few of these passages. Isa. xl. 25. *To whom then will ye liken ME, or shall I be equal? saith the HOLY ONE. xlii. 5,—8. Thus saith God the LORD, HE that created the heavens, and stretched them out; HE that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people*



upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:—I AM JEHOVAH, that is MY name, and MY glory will I not give to another, neither MY praise to graven images. The same great Being speaking to the Jews styles them his witnesses as being the advocates for his Unity among the surrounding idolatrous nations. xliii. 10, 11, 12. *Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe ME, and understand that I am HE: before ME there was no God formed, neither shall there be after ME. I, even I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange God among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah that I AM GOD. xliv. 6—8. Thus saith Jehovah, 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.—Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have I not told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God besides ME? Yea there is no God, I know not any. See farther Isa. xlv. 5, 6,—12,—18, &c. li. 13.*

The two following passages from Jeremiah are peculiarly striking. Jerem. ix. 23, 24. *Thus saith the LORD, (OR JEHOVAH,) Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth ME, that I AM JEHOVAH: which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith JEHOVAH. xxiii. 23, 24. Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah. See also Jer. x. 10,—12, &c. Ezek. xiv. 4, 5, 6,—11. xx. 19, 20. Dan. ix. 4, &c. Hos. xiii. 4.*

In some places of the Old Testament we find not only the personal Unity and Supremacy of the Divine Being asserted, but the paternal character expressed. 1 Chron. xxix. 10. to 13. *Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be THOU, Jehovah God of Israel our FATHER for ever and ever. THINE, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is THINE; THINE is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and THOU art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of THEE, and THOU reignest over all, and in THINE hand is power and might, and in THINE hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank THEE, and praise THY glorious name. Isa. lxiii. 16. Doubtless THOU art our FATHER, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: THOU, O Jehovah, art our FATHER, our redeemer, thy name is from everlasting. Jerem. iii. 1,—4.—return again to ME, saith Jehovah.—Wilt thou not from this time cry unto ME, MY FATHER, thou art the guide of my youth? Mal. ii. 10. Have we not all ONE FATHER? hath not ONE GOD created us?*

This may suffice for quotation from the Old Testament. We have now seen from the testimonies of the Patriarchs, Moses and the Prophets, that the Old Testament Saints who held immediate communication with the Deity are uniform in their attestation to the infinitude of Jehovah; as the sole, almighty Creator of heaven and of earth, of man and all other creatures, without the intervention of any other cause, co-equal, or subordinate. They also bear the fullest and most unequivocal testimony to the single, individual unity of his person. For every other pretended kind of Unity in the Deity exclusive of personal Unity, is a fraud, an imposture, a delusion. Such a

mixed, compounded, scholastic, metaphysical Unity, as Trinitarian Divines hold forth, never entered into the minds of the sacred writers. They were simple, sincere men, who spoke *the words of truth and soberness*, and intended no subterfuge or subtile concealment. Could they have foreseen how their words would have been squeezed and tortured, it would no doubt have greatly surprised them. But indeed, their language is so clear and well defined, that every attempt to explain it away must only expose the chicanery of those who do it.

Let it be remembered also, that a great part of the passages we have quoted are not merely the words of inspired men, but the language of the Divine Being himself, who is introduced by the prophets in a sublime manner setting forth his supremacy and declaring his single and unrivalled Majesty. *Is there a God besides ME, Yea, there is no God, I know not any.* And when God himself makes this declaration, who shall dare to contradict him? What miserable rubbish are metaphysical distinctions, against language so determinate and precise, that no sophistry can elude it.

Having thus in a brief and succinct manner given some of the principal proofs from the Old Testament, in favour of the simple divine Unity, we shall in a following discourse enter upon the evidences arising from the New.

To JEHOVAH the God of the Universe; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of Moses and the Prophets, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be ascribed everlasting glory and praise, *Amen.*

## DISSERTATION III.

### THE UNITY OF GOD IN THE PERSON OF THE FATHER,

DEMONSTRATED FROM THE

SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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I TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

CHRISTIANITY having been built upon the foundation of the Jewish Revelation delivered by Moses and the Prophets, it must be expected in every essential tenet of Religion to harmonize with it. For God cannot contradict himself, or deliver opposite and different theories concerning his nature at different periods. If he revealed himself from Mount Sinai to the Jews as *one Jehovah*, one single agent or divine person, *who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is*; and confirmed the same great truth by a succession of Prophets during the whole period of the Jewish Dispensation, he must continue to do so till the end of time. For he is *the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*\*

\* James i. 17.

Accordingly, when our Lord Jesus Christ, the great author of the Gospel Dispensation, entered upon his important commission as a teacher, we do not find, that he proposed to make any alteration in the doctrine that Moses and the Prophets had taught respecting God. The main object of his mission to the Jews was to call them to repentance, and the belief of his Gospel; to rectify the false glosses their teachers had put upon the Law; and to set the doctrine of immortality by a resurrection, in a clear and conspicuous light.

We find it recorded, that prior to his entering upon his ministry, when he underwent a course of trial in the wilderness, and the tempter urged him to worship him, he replied, *Math. iv. 10. Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Here, our Lord refers to two express passages in the book of Deuteronomy: *vi. 13. Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name:* and *x. 20. Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.* By this reference, he strongly confirms what Moses had formerly inculcated; and directs us to the great object of our adoration, *Jehovah our God*, whom we only are to *worship and serve*, when these terms are understood as implying divine homage.

In our Lord's celebrated sermon on the mount he has these remarkable words. *Math. v. 17, 18, 19. Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called*

*the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* In this passage, we find our Lord making a solemn assertion, that the object of his mission was not in the least to invalidate, change, or weaken the obligation of the moral law of God; but to confirm and strengthen it in every respect. That heaven and earth should sooner be dissolved, than the least particle of the immutable laws of Jehovah should lose their binding force and efficacy. And that whoever should presumptuously dare to break or infringe the smallest, or least considerable, of these important precepts, and add to his presumption by teaching or exhorting others to do the like, should *be called the least in the kingdom of heaven*, or should suffer not a little in consequence: but that he who acted a contrary part, and not only observed these commandments himself, but inculcated a strict regard to them upon others, should have an honourable admittance into his kingdom. Stronger words than these can hardly be devised to show, that all that Moses and the Prophets taught with respect to the nature of God and his true worship, as well as the moral duties we owe to one another, were of indispensable and eternal obligation.

And the argument is capable of being enforced in a still stronger manner when it is attended to, that if even the breach of one of the smallest of these precepts exposes the sinner, or the false teacher, to so great danger; to how much greater danger may it be said will a breach of the *greatest* expose him to. If it be criminal to transgress in what may be called comparatively, one of the least parts of the moral law of God, what aggravation must attend a deliberate breach of the first and the most important precept,—the *Unity* of the ever blessed Jehovah. Those who disavow this

important article, and in their public lectures and instructions endeavour to darken it and explain it away, would do well to consider the force of what our Lord says, and how far they can exculpate themselves from falling under his censure.

Through the whole of this Discourse of our Lord, we find him continually referring his disciples to their Father, as the great being whose favour they were to study to cultivate by worthy actions, and to whose approbation they were ever to have a sacred and supreme regard. Math. v. 45. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.* Again, verse 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

This is particularly observable in his directions concerning prayer and fasting. Math. vi. 6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* Verse 9. *After this manner, therefore, pray ye : Our Father, who art in heaven, &c.* Again, with respect to fasting, he recommends the utmost secrecy, and adds, Verse 18. *That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* With respect to these two quotations I have to observe, that our heavenly Father is the only being, we are commanded by our Lord to have in view when we set about the duties of prayer and fasting ; he mentions no divine agent or person but one, which very plainly discovers to us, that he knew of no other. In the model he gives us concerning prayer, we are commanded to direct our prayers to the Father, without the least intimation of any other divine person or agent capable of hearing them or receiving them. Were not men

wonderfully blinded by prejudice, or false notions of religion early imbibed and carefully instilled into them, it would be impossible to resist the evidence arising from this argument. Were there more divine beings or persons than one, it would be our duty to pray to them as well as the Father, and to perform other religious duties with a view to their approbation. But our Lord Jesus Christ knew of no other God besides the Father, and therefore he neither prayed himself, nor commanded his disciples to pray to any other, but to him alone. In every part of our Lord's discourse on the mount, we find the word *God*, and that of *Father*, used as terms of the same import and mutually implying each other; which of itself amounts to a proof that our position is well founded. But we proceed to consider other passages.

In Luke x. 21. we have the following words: *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* This is an address of our Lord to the Father, in which he acquiesces in his providential dispensations, and particularly in the wisdom of his counsels, whereby the plainest and most evident truths are sometimes overlooked or disregarded by those who in the world's judgment are called wise and prudent, while the evidence of them appears plain to men of simple apprehension, whose minds are open to the evidence of truth, and their hearts willing to receive it. The Father is here styled *Lord of heaven and earth*, a grand and sublime epithet, marking his sole and single supremacy and the absolute subjection of every other being to him. Such a mode of address could never have been used



by our Lord to the Father, if himself or any other being or agent had been co-equal to him, or a sharer in his single, self-existent, and undivided Deity.

Mark xii. 28, to 34. *And one of the scribes came, &c. and asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is ONE GOD, and there is none other but he. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*

We have here the full and explicit attestation of our Lord Jesus Christ to the doctrine of Moses concerning one God. A scribe, or lawyer, as he is called in the parallel place in Matthew's gospel, xxii. 35. comes to our Lord and asks him, which is the first, or the most important commandment of all? Our Lord immediately refers to what Moses had delivered to the Jews, in Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5. when he calls upon them to listen and to give the utmost attention to the declaration, that *the Lord our God is one Lord*, and to love him as such, with supreme and sovereign affection, exciting in this duty the utmost stretch and vigour of their faculties. In reply to this, the scribe approves of what our Lord had said, as agreeable to truth; for, adds he, *There is one God, and there*

*is none other but he, &c.* To which in return our Lord says, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* Nothing can be clearer from the whole of this conference between our Lord and the Scribe, than that the Jews were right, with respect to the doctrine they held concerning the Unity of God. Both understood Moses in the same sense, as intending to inculcate the notion of one divine agent or person in opposition to move such persons. In consequence of the Scribe agreeing with our Lord in this important particular, and being otherwise a man of fairness and candour, Jesus declares that he *was not far from the kingdom of God.* He wanted nothing more to be a disciple of our Lord, than to acquiesce in him and receive him as the promised Messiah. But on the supposition of the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, it would not have been true, that by making the declaration, that there is *one God, and none other but he,* that he made a near approach to the kingdom of God. On the contrary, supposing the truth of that doctrine, he would have been going farther from it, and it would have been necessary in our Lord to have informed him, that the doctrine of Moses stood in need of explanation and improvement, and that there were three different persons or agents to whom the title of God properly belonged. But where do we find our Lord giving the least hint of a notion of this kind? Much as he censures the Jews, for their idle, mischievous traditions, and false explications of some of the moral precepts of the law, in making justice, mercy, and truth give way to ceremonial institutions, he never charges them with mistaking or corrupting the doctrine of Moses, with respect to the divine Unity. This is an invincible and undeniable proof, that the doctrine of Moses, the Jewish Legislator, and of Jesus, *the Apostle and High Priest*

of our Profession, † were one and the same. Both were equally Unitarians, and devout believers in, and worshippers of, the one only living and true God.

Farther, the personal unity of the Divine being, is implied or necessarily supposed, in the precept that follows the solemn declaration, that *the Lord our God is one Lord*. For how is it possible to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength*, if he is supposed to be more than one single agent or person. We cannot divide and sub-divide our minds, and give part to one, and part to another. This may be done indeed in regard to inferior objects of esteem and love: but in a case like the present, where our highest affections are interested, and that requires the utmost stretch and exertion of our faculties, it is impossible to be performed. We must have one great, single object, separate and apart from all others, upon which to centre our supreme love. Thus, among many other bad consequences attending the belief of this erroneous doctrine of a Trinity of divine persons, this is none of the least, that it renders the first and great commandment—an impossibility.

In various places of the Gospels, the doctrine of the simple divine unity is fully proved and established by the express declarations of our Lord. Thus, Math. xix. 16, 17. *And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God*. This passage furnishes a strong proof of the great point we have been establishing. Our Lord Jesus Christ, though better entitled to the appellation of *Good Master* than any who ever appeared in human nature, refuses this title when offered him, and refers it to God as the only source of pure, unmixed, and perfect goodness. And by limiting the glory of this attribute to

one particular person or agent, he has shown as clearly as words are capable of doing it, that it cannot belong to two or three. If there were more divine persons than one, they must be all equally sharers in the divine attributes, and consequently possessed of supreme goodness, and then it would not be true that *there is none good but one, that is God*. The Greek words imply still more than is expressed in our version, and may be rendered, *There is none good but one person, that is God*. And this *one person* can be no other than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John viii. 54. *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing, it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God*. A strong passage, that carries conviction along with it, proving equally that our Lord Jesus Christ derives all his credit and authority from the testimony that God his Father bore in favour of him, and that the Father *only* was the person whom the Jews acknowledged and honoured as their God.

There is a remarkable passage in John's gospel, which may be very properly alledged here. When our Lord entered into a conference with a woman of Samaria, she inquired of him whether Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim was the most proper place for worshipping God, in answer to which query, he replies, John iv. 21 to 24. *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: For salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

From this passage we learn, that the Father only was worshipped both by Jews and Samaritans. The devout Jews of every sort and description had no conception of any other divine agent or being besides him. A controversy subsisted between the Jews and Samaritans with respect to the place of worship, but none at all with regard to the object. But farther, what is still of more importance, it appears clear and undeniable from this passage, that the true worshippers were in every place, under the new, or gospel dispensation, to *worship the Father in spirit and in truth*, without the least hint or indication that any other being or agent was to be joined with him in such acts; and our Lord by adding, *God is a Spirit, &c.* evidently shows, that he understood the words, *God* and *Father*, as signifying the same great being, exclusively of any person else. It is farther observable, that those who worship the Father are styled *the true worshippers*, or those who worship acceptably according to the divine command and scripture precedent; and if so, what kind of worshippers must those be, who, besides him, pay supreme adoration and homage to two other beings or agents.

John xvii. 3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Here are words as strong, clear, and precise, with respect to the subject we have in hand as can be expected or desired. They are part of a prayer addressed by our Lord with great fervour to his heavenly Father, before the scene of his sufferings commenced. And in this prayer he styles his Father, *the only true God*, and distinguishes himself from him as one that he hath sent, or his ambassador, and declares that life eternal consists in the apprehension or knowledge of these two important articles, which may be styled the pillar or ground of our re-

ligion. Observe, the force of the words used by our Lord; he does not only call his Father *God*, but *the true God*, yea *the only true God*, as distinguished from himself, and all other beings, whatever. And if the Father is *the only true God*, can there be a true God besides him? Is the belief of a God the Son, or a God the Holy Ghost, consistent with our Lord's assertion that the Father is *the only true God*? If such inconsistencies as these can be affirmed, language must lose all its effect, and words be quite insufficient for explaining our ideas. The force of this passage was so great, that Mr. *Elwall* declares in the postscript to his Trial, that it made him a convert to Unitarian principles. We have now alledged all we propose to urge immediately from the Gospels in favour of the simple divine Unity. Several passages we have purposely omitted, as they will be more properly introduced afterwards, when we come to treat of the true nature and character of our Lord.

We proceed to state the sentiments of the Apostles with respect to the Unity of the divine nature. Acts iii. 13. Peter in company with John having performed a remarkable miracle in curing a man, who had been lame from his birth, ascribes the glory of it to God in the following words, *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus*; &c. Observe here, that the Jehovah of the Jews, who appeared to the Patriarchs, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We find the same Apostles with all the rest, joining in a prayer to God in Acts iv. 24, &c. *And when they heard that, they lift up their voice to God, with one accord, and said, Lord, or as it may be more properly rendered, Sovereign Lord, thou art God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is*: &c. That this prayer is addressed to the Father is evident not only

from what we have quoted above, but from what follows after in the 30th verse, when it is added, *By stretching forth thine hand to heal: and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child, or servant, Jesus.* Now this prayer appears from the circumstances of the chapter to have been offered up by all the Apostles, and therefore is of great weight and efficacy; as a proof that they all considered the Divine Being as a single person or agent, and he only the Father of Jesus.

Another argument which carries invincible force in it may be grounded upon the apostolical benedictions and salutations. Thus, Rom. i. 7. *Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* 2 Cor. i. 2, 3. *Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.* And so through all the Epistles. Now, any unprejudiced reader, who wishes to draw his notions and apprehensions of divine things from the sentiments of the sacred writers, must be immediately struck, when he reads these and similar passages, with the difference between the style of the apostles, and that of modern divines, called orthodox. The latter, talk of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost; but the inspired writers speak only of *God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Such an amazing difference in language can only arise from a difference in meaning and sentiment. The sacred writers knew of no God besides the Father, and therefore they give the title to no other. They style Jesus Christ, *Lord*, because the Father raised him from the dead, and made him both Lord

and Christ;† and in this sense only we are warranted to understand this title in all places where it is applied to him.

We shall now conclude this part of our general subject by reciting three distinguished passages from the writings of the Apostle Paul, with a few brief remarks upon them.

1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. *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.*

Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. *There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

1 Cor. xv. 24,—28. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, EVEN THE FATHER; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.—And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that GOD may be all in all.*

Now, I will venture to affirm, that to a mind open to conviction and susceptible of the impressions of plain and distinct language, these three passages will speak for themselves, will speak irresistibly, without the aid of a commentator or interpreter. The first is expressed with all the clearness of a proposition; it is affirmed, that there is *none other God but one*, and then after mentioning *gods many and lords many*, to whom these titles have been improperly applied.

† Acts ii. 32, 36. Gal. i. 1.



we are told that to us believing Christians, *There is but one God, the Father, &c.* In the second, after mentioning, *one body, one spirit, one Lord, &c.* follows, *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;* and in the last passage we are told that our Lord Jesus Christ after having accomplished the purposes for which his mediatorial kingdom was erected, shall resign all his power into the hands of *the Father* from whom he received it, that *God, or the Father, may be all in all.*

From these passages in connection with all the other proofs we have brought from the Old and New Testament, I apprehend, that the truth of our first and second positions are sufficiently established,—that by the words *one God*, in our text, are meant, one single individual being, agent or person, viz. **THE FATHER**, in opposition to more such individual beings, agents or persons; and that this sense of the words *one God*, is sanctioned and confirmed by the concurrent testimony of divine Revelation.

To this *One God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in us all*, be ascribed all glory and praise, in Christ, for ever. *Amen.*

## DISSERTATION IV.

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### A REPLY

TO SUPPOSED OBJECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE.

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I TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

AGREEABLY to the plan we laid down, we come now to reply to such mistaken or ill interpreted passages of scripture, as have been supposed to inculcate the doctrine of a Trinity in general, or to establish the Divinity of the Son and the Personality of the holy Spirit in particular.

And here it is obvious to remark, that sacred scripture properly compared and interpreted cannot contradict itself. The Revelations contained in the Old and New Testament, coming from the source of all wisdom and truth, must be uniform in their testimony respecting the great Being from whom they proceed. Whatever difference of opinion takes place therefore amongst the professed believers of such a Revelation must originate in mistake, or not rightly apprehending the true sense of the language in which the Revelation is conveyed. One of the par-

ties therefore must be radically and fundamentally wrong, and this I apprehend to be the case with respect to the advocates of the doctrine of the Trinity; and it shall be the object of this discourse to show that it is so.

It is incumbent upon the advocates for the doctrine of the Trinity, if they would produce a solid argument in favour of their opinion to point out to us some express testimonies of Scripture in which this doctrine is clearly declared. But unhappily for them no such passages occur in the whole compass of the Old and New Testament. I would request any who hold this opinion to refer me to a single place of Scripture in which it is affirmed, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three divine persons forming one Godhead. We may peruse the Bible from Genesis to the Revelation, but we shall find no declaration of this kind. Often are we told that there is *one God*, and that the Father is that One God, as we have already fully shown; but we find no evidence in favour of a plurality of divine persons. Now if our opponents would be candid and weigh things fairly, as they really are, the deficiency of evidence, in this respect, might be expected to make a favourable impression upon their minds. It is surely an unanswerable objection against any opinion, or tenet, whatever, when the arguments against it are clear, numerous and express, and no explicit testimony can be brought in favour of it.

But here some may think, that I am going too fast, and may wish me to take notice of a passage in John's 1st Epistle, i. 7, where it is affirmed, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

But even this proof, though it were genuine, would be incomplete: for observe, that this passage

does not affirm, that these three are one God, but only that they are *one*; and this *oneness* may refer to a Unity of testimony, and not to a Unity or sameness of nature. But it is well known to those who are acquainted with sacred criticism, that this passage is spurious, and forms no genuine part of John's Epistle; but has been either wilfully or ignorantly inserted in it. It is wanting in all the Greek manuscripts, excepting two modern ones, which are of no authority. It is not quoted by any of the Greek Fathers, in any of their genuine writings, though some of them quote the verses immediately before and after. None of the Latin Fathers refer to this passage for several centuries after Christ. *Tertullian* and *Cyprian* have been said to do so; but upon an accurate examination of their writings, the assertion is found to be a mistake. During the time of the Arian controversy, when the whole bible was ransacked for proofs of the divinity of Christ, this passage was never alledged by the advocates for the Nicene faith, which is an ample proof, that even in the fourth century it had not yet found its way into the bible. These words are also wanting in all the oriental versions of the New Testament, and though many copies of the Latin Vulgate have them, yet they are wanting in several manuscripts of that version. All this amounts to a full and satisfactory proof, that this passage is an interpolation, and a violation of the purity of the sacred writings. What a pity is it, that such a text should remain in our bibles, and prove a stumbling-block to those who are not properly informed.

It has been asserted, that the sense of the context is disturbed by leaving out this passage. But the contrary is evident; for the interpolation occasions a confusion in the Apostle's discourse, which is rendered quite clear when it is removed, and runs as

follows in the best Greek Manuscripts. 1 John v. 6, &c. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one; that is, one testimony, that Jesus is the Son of God, or the Christ.* Here, we find the true order of the passage restored, and the sense quite regular and distinct. The *water* refers to the testimony that Jesus received at his baptism, \* the *blood* to his death and consequent resurrection, and the *spirit* to the miracles performed by our Lord and his Apostles, by all of which he was proved to be the true Messiah.

Another passage that has been frequently alledged in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity is the words of our Lord addressed to his disciples and recorded in Matthew's Gospel, xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost.* This passage, however, will not answer the end for which it is urged. Or rather, if we consider the verse that goes immediately before, it will be found to prove the direct contrary. Ver. 18. *And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, &c.* Now, when our Lord says, that *all power* was given him, it necessarily implies that he received this power from another, and from *whom* did he receive it, but from his *God and Father*; who exalted him after his resurrection and ascension, *and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, &c.*† But can the *receiver* be compared with the *giver* or can God be said to *receive* any thing. *Who hath first given to him,* (says Paul, Rom. xi. 35; 36.)

\* Math. iii. 16, 17. † Eph. i. 20, 21.

*and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* The Divine Being gives to all, but he receives from none, and as Christ received all his power and authority from the Father, this discovers in the strongest manner, his dependence and subordination. With respect to the holy Ghost, here mentioned, it is abundantly clear from other passages of scripture, that the *divine power* is meant by which the Gospel was propagated and supported. So that the true sense of the passage will be this, *Go and teach*, or make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the belief and profession of that religion, which the God and Father of all authorized his son Jesus to teach, and which was confirmed by the miraculous operations of the holy Spirit, or the divine power. Here, we have a plain, sensible exposition, perfectly agreeing with the context, and harmonizing with the scripture doctrine in general. And in fact it appears, that the Apostles understood this place rather as a summary of christian doctrine than an exact *form*, that was to be used on all occasions: for we never find a single instance in the New Testament of this form being repeated when any person was baptized, but we find them simply baptizing *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, as appears from several places of the Acts of the Apostles.\*

1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6. *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all.* This text appears to be very improperly applied for a proof of a Trinity in Unity. We find only one person here distinguished by the title of God, and that can be no other than the Father, as the Spirit, and the Lord Jesus are mention-

\* See Acts ii. 38. viii. 16. x. 48. xix. 5. See also, Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27.

ed before. The plain meaning of it is, that though in the primitive times there was a difference in the gifts conferred on christians, some having higher and others inferior qualifications; yet they were all operated by the same *Spirit*, or divine power and energy. And though there were different services or offices in the christian church, yet one *Lord*, or master, viz. *Christ*, the head of his church, presided over all. And though there were different operations, yet all these proceeded from the same *GOD who worketh all in all*, or bringeth about every thing according to his sovereign pleasure.

2 Cor. xiii. 14.—*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Communion of the holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.* I barely mention this passage, because it has been weakly urged by some, as a proof of the doctrine we are confuting. But in truth it is rather an argument in favour of Unitarianism. For the title of *God* is here appropriated to the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ is distinguished from him. *The Communion of the holy Ghost*, denotes the participation of spiritual gifts and gratifications.

These are the chief passages that have been urged to prove the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity in general; the weakness and insufficiency of which, I think, are abundantly apparent. The first is an interpolation, and the other three are nothing to the purpose; but rather make against the cause they are employed to defend.

We shall next take under consideration those texts that have been separately urged to prove the Divinity of the Son and the Personality of the holy Spirit. And first with respect to our Lord Jesus Christ, it has been alledged, that he is styled *God* in several places of Scripture. We shall take a review of these places, and offer our remarks upon them.

Isaiah ix. 6.—*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace.* It is not absolutely certain that the word *God* should be read in this passage, as it is wanting in the Alexandrian and Vatican copies of the Septuagint. But admitting it were so, it would prove nothing in the connection in which it stands; and the words may be properly rendered *a mighty God*, that is, *a mighty ruler or potentate*, who was to sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, &c. (ver. 17.) and referring to the dignity and authority of our Lord, as the anointed of God, King of the Jews, Head of the church, and Judge of mankind. The words “*everlasting Father*,” are a false translation; for they should be rendered *the Father of the age to come*, or *the everlasting age*, that is, the author of the Gospel dispensation. And all this is rendered clear, and certain, by the words that follow in the 7th verse, *the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.* It is *Jehovah*, or the *LORD of hosts*, that is to make this *child*, or *son*, whatever he is,—to constitute him, *a mighty ruler or potentate*, to make him *the Father of the age to come*, and in short to confer upon him every dignity and qualification he possesses.

The following words in Luke’s Gospel seem to throw light on this prophecy, and may, very probably, be an allusion to it. Luke i. 32, 33.—*He (Jesus) shall be great and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

John i. 1.—*The Word was God.* If a person were here meant, the word *God*, must necessarily be understood in an inferior sense, as in the clause that



goes before, he is said to be *with God*, but I apprehend, that the *Logos*, does not signify a person at all, but the divine reason or wisdom, which was communicated to our Lord Jesus Christ. I, however, do not propose to enter into a particular exposition of this passage immediately; but reserve it with all those texts that are supposed to speak of Christ as acting in the first creation, until I come to reply to the Arian objections; as I consider all these passages as more applicable to the Arian than the Trinitarian Hypothesis.

John xx. 28.—*And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God.* The most natural way of understanding this passage, is that of an abrupt exclamation uttered by Thomas, when his unbelief was overcome, and he was persuaded that his Lord and Master was really risen from the dead. He breaks out into a transport all at once and utters unconnected words, all of which we have no certain authority to apply to Christ, far less to ground an argument upon them contrary to the obvious tenor of divine Revelation.\*

\* It is impossible to suppose that Thomas meant to call Jesus Christ *God* in the proper and sublime sense of that word, if he really intended to call him *God* at all, in any sense. This would be to involve Thomas as a Jew, in a breach of the first commandment, and the solemn declaration of Moses, ratified by Jesus himself.—*Lord*, he might call him with the utmost propriety; for Jesus himself had said before to Thomas and all his disciples, John xiii. 13. *Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.* But Jesus in all his discourses, that are recorded, never assumed the title of *God*; and when he was injuriously accused by his enemies of *making himself God*, he refuted the charge by saying, John x. 34, to 36. *It is not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods? If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken: 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?* Here, we find, that though Jesus might have claimed the title of *God* in the same sense in which Moses and others to whom *the word of God came*, were called *Gods*, he does not assert his claim, even in this low sense; but only claims the character of the *Son of God*, and that on account of the Father's *sanctification* and *mission*, or as he expresses it in the 38th verse, *that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.* It is farther

Acts xx. 28. *Take heed, &c.—to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* The best manuscripts read in this place, *the church of the Lord*, as do also two eastern versions, and a number of ancient Fathers. This appears, therefore, to be the true, or most probable, reading of the place; and the objection consequently is removed.

Rom. ix. 5.—*Whose are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen.* These words are known to be of ambiguous construction, and may be rendered either as our translators have done; or by putting a full stop after the words *Christ came*, may run thus, *God, who is over all, be blessed for ever. Amen:* or thus, *who (Christ) is over all, God be blessed for ever. Amen.* It is probable, that the passage was read in this way, or at least in a way very different from our present English version, in the early ages of the Christian Church; as we find these two ancient Greek Fathers *Origen* and *Eusebius* disapproving of those who called Christ *the God over all*, and the last, referring

observable, that in this same xxth chapter, ver. 17, John records a message that Jesus sent to his disciples, in these words,—*go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.* Jesus, therefore, who had the same God and Father as his brethren and disciples had, could not be called God by Thomas in the proper sense of that awful and sacred word. Nor would Jesus, who refused to be called *Good Master*, have accepted that title, but have reproved Thomas for offering it.

For my part, though I wish to honour and reverence Jesus, as the anointed Prophet and Son of the most high God, as one whom the Father hath raised from the dead, and made both *Lord and Christ*, (Acts ii. 32, 36. Eph. i. 17 to 23.) and who is therefore ever to be acknowledged as *Lord, to the glory of God the Father*: (Phil ii. 9 to 11.) yet, standing in awe of the strict mandate, and solemn declarations of Jehovah and his Prophets, as well as those of Jesus himself and his Apostles, I cannot call the *man Jesus of Nazareth*, (Acts ii. 22.) though my exalted Saviour and future Judge, GOD ALMIGHTY, but must reserve this epithet for his and our heavenly Father; attending to his own express words, which it may be seasonable again to repeat, *Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.* At the same time I wish not to forget, another necessary caution of his, Math. vii. 21. *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

to this title and another of similar import, affirms, that, "whosoever applies these titles to Christ cannot be a pious person."

1 Tim. iii. 16. *And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, &c.* Were it granted, that the true reading was *God was manifest, &c.* it would not serve the cause of our opponents, for the words might be explained in a most scriptural and rational sense, as denoting that the divine wisdom became conspicuous, or was publicly manifested to mankind, by Jesus Christ and his gospel. But it is proper to take notice here, that the word *God* in this text is of very doubtful authority. It is wanting in some very ancient manuscripts, as also in the vulgate, and several oriental versions, and is not read by ancient writers for several centuries after Christ. All this amounts to a pretty strong proof, that it has been inserted improperly either by negligence or design. The true reading appears to be either, *which was manifested, or he that was manifested in or by flesh, &c.*

Titus ii. 13. *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* This passage should be rendered, *the appearance of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* When it is rendered in this way, which is the exact meaning of the original Greek, it denotes, that a representation of the glory of God shall attend Christ at his coming to judgement, and not that Christ himself is the great God. This is agreeable to what our Lord says himself, Luke ix. 26. —*the Son of man—shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

Heb. i. 8. *But unto the Son he saith, 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.* According to the original Greek, the first clause of the verse ought to be rendered *God is thy throne*, that is, the support of thy throne, *for ever and ever*. This is agreeable to that ancient prophecy concerning the Messiah, Psal. LXXXIX. 3. 4. *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant. Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.* But if the common translation were admitted, it would be of no force in the argument; for the Son is here declared to have a God above him, who on account of his having *loved righteousness and hated iniquity, hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows.*

1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: &c.* The word *God* here is not in the Greek manuscripts, and is even wanting in several printed Greek Testaments, it is therefore spurious, and ought to be expunged from our English bible. The true reading of the place is this, *Hereby perceive we love, because he* (viz. Christ, who is understood) *laid down his life for us.*

John v. 20, 21. *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols. Amen.* It is clear that *him that is true*, is a different person from the *Son of God*, because the latter gives us an understanding to know him. And if the word *even* be taken away from the 20th verse, which our translators have inserted without any authority from the Greek, it will appear that it is the Father and not Jesus who is styled *the true God*. We are in the true God in or through Jesus Christ, or as his disciples. A warning is here given against idolatry: for every deviation from the

worship of the true God the Father in or through Jesus Christ, comes under that appellation. This passage therefore, is a strong confirmation of the Unitarian Doctrine, and equivalent to our Lord's words, John xvii. 3.

Jude ver. 25. *To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.* It is the Father (before ver. 4. called *the only Lord God, or only Sovereign Lord,*) who is here styled, *the only wise God our Saviour,* and this is established beyond a doubt, because our most ancient manuscripts and versions, after the words, *the only wise God our Saviour,* read, *through Jesus Christ our Lord,* and this necessarily restrains the words to the Father.

Rev. i. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord,* or as it should be, *the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* This passage has by some been erroneously applied to Christ, because it follows the sixth and seventh verses, which relate to him; but any person who considers that this book of Revelation is styled, *the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him,* and that the Father is characterized by John in the fourth verse, as he *which is, and which was, and which is to come,* and that Christ is styled *the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth,* will easily discover that in the eighth verse, John returns to speak of the Father, who gave this Revelation to Christ, and that consequently all these sublime titles are applicable to the Father only, and not to him.

We have now taken a view of those passages in which it has been supposed that our Lord Jesus Christ is styled God, and have found them either false or very doubtful readings, or erroneous translations, which can never afford solid ground for an argu-

ment. But if it were really proved that in any of them Jesus Christ is called *God*, this could not shake the firm scriptural foundation on which *the Unity of God in the Person of the Father*, has been demonstrated and established in the three preceding Dissertations; since there is (as before intimated) an acknowledged lax, or limited sense, in which this title is applied in Scripture. Thus Exod. vii. 1. Moses is called *a God to Pharaoh*, Judges and Magistrates are called *Gods*;\* and in a similar sense the word might be applied to the man Jesus, as the anointed of the Father, and the appointed Judge of all mankind.

There are some other passages of Scripture from which the divinity of Christ and his equality with the Father has been erroneously inferred: I shall take notice of such as appear to be most material.

Math. xviii. 20.—*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* That our Lord could not intend to represent himself as an omnipresent being is evident from the preceding verse, where he says. *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* Here we find, that the Father only is the hearer of prayer, who grants and fulfils the requests and petitions of his servants; and consequently, he alone is possessed of divine attributes, and *omnipresence* among the rest. Neither *the man Christ Jesus*, nor any finite being can be every where present at the same time; it is the prerogative of God our heavenly Father alone. Some other sense therefore must be sought for in our Lord's words.

In Deuteronomy xxxi. 23, it is said of Moses, *And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and*

\* John x. 34 to 36, before quoted.

said, *Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee.* No one, Jew, or Christian, I apprehend, ever inferred the divinity of Moses from this passage, though he speaks in the character of God, and affirms what is literally impossible, concerning himself, as a man. But Moses intended nothing more, than to intimate that the favour and assistance of Jehovah would accompany the Israelites, and Joshua their leader, as effectually, as if he himself had been present with them in their expedition to the promised land. And why should it be thought strange or unwarrantable to understand the words of Jesus in a similar sense. Moses and Jesus were both Prophets of the most high God; though the latter was far superior in glory and dignity. Our Lord then may have intended to intimate, that the prayers of *two or three* of his sincere disciples, assembled in his name, and recognizing his authority as the Messiah or mediator of the new covenant, would be as prevalent and efficacious with Jehovah the heavenly Father, as if he himself were personally present and praying along with them.

But as I would wish to do all justice to this passage, I will here take notice of another sense in which it may be understood, and which perhaps, may be more acceptable to some, than that above stated. Our Lord says, John xiv. 16 to 18. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.* Observe, that our Lord here represents himself as coming to his disciples, in consequence of the effusion of the holy Spirit, which he promises to procure for

them from the Father by his prayers. The gift of the Spirit may therefore be what our Lord intended, when he spoke of being *in the midst* of two or three of his disciples assembled in his name.

John viii. 58. *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.* Much unmeaning declamation has been raised from this passage by Trinitarian writers, who have erroneously imagined, that our Lord meant to allude to the words of God to Moses, when he says, according to the Septuagint, Vulgate, and our version, Exod. iii. 14. *I am that I am*: but which the Chaldee paraphrast *Onkelos*, and a learned modern critic translate, *I will be that I will be*, that is, that God would perform whatever he had promised. But our Lord, I conceive, had quite a different view, and that his words have no reference to the supposed sense of this passage at all. He meant nothing more than to express in a concise manner, his being the *Messiah*, foreordained in the eternal counsels of God,\* and the subject of Prophecy (Gen. iii. 15) before Abraham had a being, and promised to Abram himself (Gen. xii. 3) before his name was changed to Abraham. The pronoun *he* ought to have been supplied here by our translators as it is elsewhere; and the passage rendered, before *Abraham was I am HE*, that is, I am the promised Messiah, the future light and glory of the world.

In all the other places where the words *I am* occur, *he* has been added to complete the sense, and in this very chapter we have two instances of it. Verse 24. *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am HE, ye shall die in your sins.* Verse 28. *Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am HE, and that I do nothing of myself: but as my Father taught me, I speak these things.* See

\* Pet. i. 20.



also John iv. 25, 26. xiii. 19. But the most curious passage of this kind is that which occurs, John ix. 9. *Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am HE.* This place may justly make some writers and preachers ashamed. For here the man who had been *blind from his birth*, and whom Jesus had miraculously restored to sight, might put in his claim to divinity and self-existence upon the footing of the words *I am*.

But before we dismiss this passage, we have another observation to make. Our Lord says, verse 56 of this chapter, *Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.* To see the day of a person implies, that the person did not then exist, but was to make his appearance in the world at a future period. Abraham looked forward with joy to the advent of the Messiah; and with the eye of a strong and lively faith he exulted in the pleasing prospect, and anticipated the season, when after a succession of turbulent ages, *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.\** Here, then, with respect to the promised Messiah, we have a confutation both of the doctrine of Self-existence and Pre-existence.

John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* Observe, our Lord does not say, that himself and his Father are one God, but that they are *one*. And in what sense they are one appears evidently from the Context. They are *one* in respect of will, consent and desire for the salvation of Christ's flock, and of power communicated to Jesus and exerted for that purpose. Verses 27, 28, 29. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.* Jesus here declares, that his

\* Gen. xxii. 18.

Father is *greater than all*, and consequently greater than *himself*, and therefore could never mean to insinuate that he was in any respect equal to the Father, or, according to the dialect of some, “one God with him.”

In the same moral sense that our Lord and his Father are declared to be *one*, Paul and Apollos are said to be *one*,\* Jews and Gentiles are said to be *one*,† and our Lord prays that his Apostles, and all who should believe in him through their ministry, may be *one*. John xvii. 20 to 23. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be ONE, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be ONE in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be ONE, even as we are ONE. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in ONE, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

John xii. 41. *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* Some by comparing this passage and the two preceding verses with Isa. vii. 1,—9, 10, have inferred that our Lord Jesus Christ was Jehovah that Isaiah saw, *sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, &c.* An inference truly horrid, unwarranted by the context, and which any man who reads this chapter with care, or attends to the declarations of Jesus in general, may perceive to be false. In the 38th verse, John quotes Isa. liii. 1. *Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord (OR JEHOVAH) been revealed?* This quotation must necessarily be understood of God the Father, the only Jehovah, because the prophet (speaking of the Messiah) immediately

\* 1 Cor. iii. 5 to 8. † Eph. ii 11 to 14

adds, *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant*, and calls the Messiah afterwards, *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. The words *his glory*, may therefore be referred to the glory of Jehovah, or God the Father, which Isaiah saw. Some manuscripts, and oriental versions, read in this place, *the glory of God*, or, *the glory of his God*,\* which confirms this interpretation. But if we should suppose that the words *his glory*, had a reference to Christ, they could only signify, that Isaiah saw beforehand, by faith and the spirit of prophecy, the future glory of that Messiah, or Son of God, who after the lapse of several centuries, *when the fulness of time was come, was born of a woman*,† in the time of Augustus Cæsar; in the same manner as Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it, and was glad.‡

Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12. *For 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. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* By a comparison of this place with Isa. xlv. 23, here quoted, it has been inferred, that Jesus Christ is Jehovah the true God. This conclusion, however, is a mere sophism, and equally unwarrantable and presumptuous with that mentioned in the preceding article. For though the awful process of the last Judgment will be immediately conducted and administered by the man Christ Jesus, yet the judgment itself will ultimately be *God's*, confirmed and ratified by him, as well as exercised by a delegated power and authority derived from him. This will appear abundantly clear from the following citations. John v. 22,—26, 27. *For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, &c. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have*

\* See *Discourses on the Divine Unity*, &c. p. 151.

† Gal. iv. 4. ‡ John viii. 56.

life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Acts xvii. 31. Because he (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that MAN whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Rom. ii. 16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Phil. ii. 6, &c. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: &c.* The latter part of this passage, as it stands in our version, is subversive of the Unity of God, expressly contradictory to the doctrine both of the Old Testament and the New, and inconsistent with the Context itself. Isa. xl. 25. *To whom then will ye liken ME, or shall I be equal? saith the holy ONE.* It is not however the mistake of the great Apostle Paul, but that of his translators, who have made him speak a language directly contrary to his true meaning. The place should be rendered in the following, or a similar manner. *Who being in the form of God, did not aspire to be like God: or, more literally, did not think it a prey to be seized, or laid hold of, to be like God.* Jesus our Lord was in the form of God, when God anointed him with the holy Ghost and with power,\* when he appeared amongst men as his ambassador, distinguished by supernatural knowledge, wisdom, and all heavenly graces and virtues, and working so many illustrious miracles; yet he *did not aspire, or covet, to be like God,* he made no ostentatious or unnecessary display of these extraordinary powers, but exercised them for the glory of God and the benefit of men, and lived in a humble, familiar, and condescending manner with mankind and his disciples. This appears to be the true sense of the passage from

\* Acts x. 38.

what follows; when it is said, *but made himself of no reputation, or emptied himself, &c.* and also when it is added, *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, &c.*—For if Jesus Christ had been really God, or equal with God, he could neither have been lessened nor exalted, in any respect.

Rev. i. 11. “I am Alpha, and Omega, the first and the last: and,”—Verses 17, 18.—*Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (or hades) and of death.*  
 ii. 8. *These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.* The first of these places is wanting in many manuscripts, in the Vulgate and several other versions, and left out in several printed editions of the Greek Testament, and set aside as spurious by some eminent critics.\* The second and third are genuine, but contain no difficulty in them. It is evident that it is a human being, who speaks here; one who *was dead and is alive*, and who shall *live for evermore* in that glorious state of dignity to which he is exalted by God, with authority over the living and the dead. Our Lord, therefore, can only be *the first and the last* in such a sense as is compatible to a once suffering but now glorified man. He may be called *the first* in his present exalted state, and *the last*, when *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*: † or *the first* may refer to his being the author of the christian dispensation, or the *captain of salvation* to his followers, ‡ and *the last* to his final triumph and conquest over death and the grave at the general resurrection and day of Judgment.

Rev. ii. 23. *And 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 his works.*

\* See *Discourses on the Divine Unity*, &c. p. 278

† Phil. ii. 8. ‡ Heb. ii. 10

It is the prerogative of Jehovah the true God and heavenly Father alone, who is present every where, and conscious to whatever is passing, to *search and try the reins and the heart*. See 1 Kings viii. 39. Psal. vii. 9. Jerem. xi. 20. xvii. 10. Nevertheless, we find some extraordinary instances in Scripture of the knowledge of the human heart having been communicated to holy men, in certain cases, either by inspiration or revelation. See three memorable examples of this knowledge, recorded of Elisha the Prophet, 2 Kings v. 26. vi. 12. viii. 12, and one of Peter the Apostle, Acts v. 1 to 11. If then a Prophet and an Apostle had a singular power of this kind communicated to them to serve useful and important purposes, why should it be thought incredible that the man Christ Jesus should possess a far superior degree of the same power or faculty?

Our Lord, while conversant in the world and partaking of the innocent infirmities of human nature, discovered on various occasions that he knew the thoughts of men.\* He possessed this knowledge, no doubt, in consequence of the *anointing of the Spirit*, or those communications from his God and Father with which he was favoured. In his glorified and exalted state when his sphere of action was enlarged, we cannot doubt but that these divine gifts would be proportionably increased also. In Rev. iii. 1. he declares that he has *the seven spirits of God*,† the proper meaning of which expression I apprehend to be, 'a plenitude of inspiration and divine communications.' Possessed of these transcendent powers, the state

\* Math. xii. 25. John ii. 24, 25.

† In Rev. i. 4, these *seven spirits of God* are said to be *before his throne*. In Rev. v. 6, they are called the *seven eyes* of the Lamb, *sent forth into all the earth*. It is evident then, that Jesus Christ, even in his exalted state, derives all his supernatural knowledge of human affairs from divine communication or revelation: and consequently *his searching the reins and hearts*, is much the same as if it were said, that God performed this office for him; since it is performed by *the seven spirits of God*.

and condition of these early churches could not be concealed from him, and he discovers in all his addresses to them a perfect acquaintance with their prevailing sentiments and dispositions.

But when all this is said, it must still be remembered that our Lord's knowledge and his other capacities are derived, and such as he *received* them from the Father, as he intimates, Rev. ii. 29; and that all are of limited extent and adapted to the circumstances of his churches, *that he may give unto every one according to their works.*

Rev. xvii. 14. *These (the ten horns of the beast, or kings of modern Europe) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* xix. 13,—16. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood: and his name is called, The Word of God.—And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Through the whole book of Revelation a clear and obvious distinction is preserved between the God and Father of all, and our Lord Jesus Christ. The former is magnificently styled, *him which is, and which was, and which is to come*; denoting his Self-existence, infinitude, and eternal duration; *the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*; and again, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*;—*him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever*; and is afterwards addressed in the following sublime strain, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.\** The latter is distinguished by the honourable but far inferior titles of *the faithful wit-*

\* Rev. i. 4,—8. iv. 8 to 11.

ness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, and called also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star, and the Lamb that was slain, and who has redeemed us to God by his blood, &c.\* The very book itself is styled *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him*; and he received the sealed book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.† All these and many other expressions in this book, respecting the heavenly Father and his son Jesus Christ, very plainly discover to those who have spiritual discernment, that the *former* is alone God Almighty, eternal and supreme; and that the *latter* is not God but a man; a glorified, exalted, and highly dignified man.

Having made these previous observations, it will not be difficult for us to explain the words *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, as applied to Jesus Christ. Titles or appellations are given in very different senses in Scripture, and must always be understood according to the nature of that being to whom they are applied. The Father is called 1 Tim. vi. 15, *the King of kings and Lord of lords*, but at the same time he is characterized as *the blessed and only Potentate,—who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.* And it is previously said of the Father, that *in his times he shall shew, or manifest, Jesus Christ.* Here, the title *the King of kings, and Lord of lords*, in the connexion in which it stands, must be interpreted in the highest possible sense. But it is not so to be explained when applied to Jesus Christ in the two places from the Revelation, above quoted. It is there connected with such other expressions, and such circumstances, as plainly forbid us to understand it in the highest sense, and will lead us at the same time to

\* Rev. i. 5,—v. 5,—9,—12. xxii. 16. † Rev. i. 1. v. 7



the proper interpretation, if we will but attend to them. In the first quotation our Lord is called *the Lamb*, which plainly points at a human character. A Lamb is a terrestrial creature, a native of our globe, and can never be employed as an image to denote God, or any supposed superangelic being. A *Lamb*, denotes a pure, holy and innocent man, and *the Lamb that was slain*, a virtuous and most excellent, but suffering man, previous to his exaltation. The *vesture dypt in blood*, may refer either to the blood and sufferings of Jesus, or the vengeance to be inflicted on the enemies of his church and people. *The Word of God*, denotes either a *Prophet*, one who delivers a message from God, and reveals and interprets his will; or a *King*, or *Lord*, who derives his authority from God and executes a commission from him. All these three terms are applicable to Jesus Christ, but the two last are the most suitable to the circumstances mentioned in the Context of both passages. Jesus is that *King* concerning whom it is said, Psal. ii. 6. *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion, and that Lord mentioned Psal. cx. 1. JEHOVAH said (LADONI) unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool, &c.* and whom we are informed, Acts ii. 36. *God hath made both Lord and Christ; and who is therefore ever to be acknowledged and revered as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.\**

Let us now take a view of the prophetic events related in the Context of both places. In the *first*, Jesus Christ, accompanied by his chosen and faithful servants, is described as in a state of hostility or warfare with those kings that gave *their power and strength unto the beast*; but we are informed that he *shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and*

\* Phil. ii. 11.

*chosen, and faithful.* From these circumstances compared with the four passages before quoted, we can investigate the true reason why he is called by this sublime title;—not because he is God or equal with the Father, but because he is the anointed *King* appointed by Jehovah, and the *Lord* whom he hath set at his right hand, having made him both *Lord and Christ*, and whose power consequently, is irresistible, and superior to that of all earthly kings, lords, and potentates. In the *second*, we have a more particular account of the dreadful catastrophe briefly mentioned in the first. Jesus Christ is represented as descending from heaven with all the ensigns of royalty and majesty, for *on his head were many crowns*, and gaining a complete victory over all the enemies of God and true religion, viz. *the beast, the kings of the earth, and the false prophet*, joined in desperate confederacy.

Immediately after this decisive event, (Rev. xx.) Satan is bound; the Martyrs and Confessors, who suffered *for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* At this period the Millennium, or kingdom of Christ on earth, will properly commence. He will then be *King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the Prince of the kings of the earth*, as he is called by anticipation in the very beginning of this Prophecy; when the Jews shall be restored to their own land, and acknowledge Jesus as their promised Messiah, and he will then consequently *sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever;*\* when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in,*† and *the kingdoms of this world shall be*

\* Isa. ix. 7. † Rom. xi. 25.

*come the kingdoms of our Lord (JEHOVAH) and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.\**

It is on this account, I humbly conceive, that our blessed Lord is called by this glorious title, when he comes to take possession of his kingdom upon earth, and not before; and it is remarkable, that it is said, that *he had a name written that no man knew but he himself*, which seems to imply that the title was a new one, though we are afterwards told that this name, or title, inscribed *on his vesture, and on his thigh*, was, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, which title, I hope, we have now satisfactorily explained, in a perfect consistency with the Unity of God in the Person of the Father, and the Humanity of the Messiah.

We have now replied to the principal of those mistaken or ill interpreted passages of Scripture, from which the Divinity of Christ and his equality with the Father has been erroneously inferred. Some texts not immediately noticed will be found explained in other places of these Dissertations; and some objections we have thought so frivolous and weak as not to merit a reply. Such are those *paralogisms*, or forms of speaking, in which what is in one place said of God is in another place said of our Lord Jesus Christ, as God's instrument or messenger. By arguments of this kind the Divinity of Moses,† and even of Satan,‡ may be proved from the authority of Scripture. I am confident that such contemptible fallacies can never mislead an impartial and patient inquirer after truth, and that whoever shall attentively read what has already been said and will hereafter be advanced in the course of these Disser-

\* Rev. xi. 15.

† See Numb. xii. 3. compared with Exod. iv. 16. vii. 1.—Exod. xx. 1. 2. compared with xxxii. 7. xxxiii. 1.—Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. compared with x. 16, 17. Numb. xii. 11.—Exod. xiv. 31.—Deut. xi. 14, 15. compared with xxi. 23.

‡ See 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. compared with 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

tations, and make a proper use of his bible at the same time, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*,\* will be in no danger of being deceived by them.

We have already occasionally intimated what we apprehend to be the true scriptural sense of the words, *The Holy Spirit*, or *Spirit of God*. It may be proper however, to be a little more particular. There are two senses in which these terms are used in Scripture.

1. As denoting JEHOVAH, or God even the Father himself. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. *The spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said.* Psal. cxxxix. 7. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence.* Isa. lxiii. 10. *But they rebelled and vexed his holy spirit: compared with Numb. xiv. 11. And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke ME? and Psal. lxxviii. 56. Yet they tempted and provoked THE MOST HIGH GOD, and kept not his testimonies: and in other places. But the strongest passage of this kind is that in 1 Cor. ii. 11. For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man (Gr. none) but the spirit of God.* Here, we have the authority of Paul the Apostle for affirming, that the Spirit of God is as truly God, as the spirit, or intellectual faculty of a man is a man. Consequently, it is as absurd to say, that the Spirit of God our heavenly Father, is a different person from him, as it would be to say, that the spirit of a man is a separate agent, or different person from the man himself.

2. The *Holy Spirit*, or *Spirit of God*, frequently denotes in Scripture, the power, energy, operation, efficacy, influence or inspiration of God. Luke i. 35. *The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the*

\* 1 Cor. ii. 13.

POWER of the Highest shall overshadow thee: &c. Luke xi. 13. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Compare this with Math. vii. 11. *If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give GOOD THINGS unto them that ask him?* Math. xii. 28. *But if I cast out Demons by the Spirit of God, &c. compared with Luke xi. 20. But if I with the FINGER of God cast out Demons, &c. Acts x. 38. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost and with POWER;—for God was with him. See also 1 Cor. ii. 4.*

In John xiv. 16, 17—25, 26. xvi. 7,—13. *the holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, is personified by our Lord, and represented under the character of a Comforter, who should abide with the Apostles for ever, and guide them into all truth: &c.* In Luke xxiv. 49, he explains all this figurative language, when he says, *And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endowed with power from on high.* Again Math x. 20. *For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.* Mark xiii. 11. *For it is not ye that speak but the holy Ghost.* Luke xii. 12. *For the holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.* From a comparison of these places together it is evident, that *the holy Spirit, the spirit of your Father, the promise of my Father, and power from on high,* mentioned by our Lord, are one and the same thing; and do not denote a person at all, but a gift, an inspiration, a communication from Jehovah, or God the Father himself.

This idea is still farther confirmed by the manner in which the holy Spirit is said to have been imparted or conveyed to our Lord's immediate disciples, and

to others. John xx. 22.—*he (Jesus) breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the holy Ghost. Acts ii. 2, 3, 4. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.* Here we find no person or intelligent agent introduced, but the whole representation betokening only a divine *afflatus* or inspiration. And with respect to our Lord himself, we know that the holy Spirit descended upon him at his baptism as recorded by all the Evangelists; and it is said John iii. 34, that, *God giveth not the Spirit by MEASURE unto him*, a form of expression that can only apply to a divine influence or communication, but will never apply to a person. On account of this *fulness of the Spirit* that dwelt in Jesus our Lord, from whence the very term *Christ*, or *the anointed*, is derived, and also because it was imparted or distributed through him, or in his name, to his disciples, it is sometimes (though rarely) called the *Spirit of Christ*. But in a strict and proper sense, it is only the Spirit of the living and true God the Father, from whom it originally proceeds. We find also in various places of Scripture the *holy Spirit* represented as *poured out, shed forth, distributed, &c.* all which is utterly inconsistent with Personality. See Acts ii. 17, 18,—33. Rom. v. 5. Tit. iii. 5, 6. Heb. ii. 4. vi. 4.

A strong negative argument against the existence of *the holy Spirit*, as a person distinct from Jehovah the God and Father of all, may be formed from the omission of *that name* in some remarkable places of the New Testament, such as the introductory Apostolical benedictions and salutations in the Epistles of

Paul and others, and in Math. xi. 27. John xvii. 3. 1 Tim. v. 21. Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. Rev. v. 13, &c.

It is not wonderful that the *holy Spirit* should be sometimes personified in Scripture, when we recollect that other things to which it would be the highest absurdity to attach real Personality, are personified. Thus Solomon represents *Wisdom* as a person, and even as a *female*, Prov. viii. throughout, also ix. 1, 2, 3, and couples *her* with *Understanding* and *Prudence*, viii. 1,—13, and describes *her* as everlasting and present with Jehovah at the creation of every part of nature, ver. 22 to 30. *Sin* and *Death* are also exhibited as persons by the Apostle Paul, Rom. v. 14. vi. 12,—14,—17,—23. 1 Cor. xv. 26,—55, 56; and *Charity* is personified in the strongest manner, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Upon the whole from a fair, and candid comparison of *spiritual things with spiritual*, there appears to be no more foundation in Scripture for representing the *holy Spirit*, or *Spirit of the living God*, as a distinct agent from Jehovah the heavenly Father himself, than for converting the Wisdom, Truth, Mercy, Glory, Providence of God (so often personified in common discourse) or any other divine attribute or property into a person; and it is melancholy to think, that so large a part of the Christian world have been so long deceived in this respect, and that a third God, or intelligent agent, should have been brought in as an object of supreme adoration.

May JEHOVAH *the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good gift, and every perfect gift;\** *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory*, be pleased to enlighten the understanding of his wandering creatures, and give unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,† the only

\* Jam. i. 17. † Eph. i. 17, 18.

proper object of divine worship.\* To HIM, *the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come, who sitteth upon the throne and liveth for ever and ever, who created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and were created,* be ascribed glory and honour, and power,† for ever. Amen.

\* Math. iv. 10. † Rev. iv. 8 to 11.



## DISSERTATION V.

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### THE MESSIAHSHIP, AND PROPER HUMANITY OF JESUS, *STATED AND VINDICATED.*

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

WE now enter upon the first division, of the second important affirmation contained in our text, which was to evince the true nature and character of our Lord Jesus Christ, from a variety of scriptural evidence and testimonies concerning him; or to prove that he was really *a man*, as the Apostle styles him, distinguished and dignified by extraordinary powers, gifts, graces and qualifications: *the man Christ Jesus*, or Jesus the anointed man.

It is a true but at first sight a very surprising consideration, that, for a great number of ages, very different and opposite opinions have prevailed among Christians concerning the nature, the person, and character of our great master and teacher Christ Jesus. Some (the Trinitarians) have elevated him to the height of Deity and made him coequal and co-

eternal with the God and Father of all. Others (the Arians) have supposed him to be a superangelic being, the first and greatest of all the creatures of God. And a third party (the Unitarians) have declared him to be *a man*, of the same nature and character as other men are; but distinguished by supereminent virtue and the fulness of divine gifts and qualifications.

It is obvious that these opposite and contradictory opinions cannot all be true, nor rightly founded on divine Revelation. And indeed had either the Trinitarian or Arian schemes been adopted by the sacred writers, can we suppose that they would have expressed themselves as they have done? If they had believed that Jesus Christ was God equal with the Father, would they ever have styled him *a man* simply and expressly; without any limitation, qualification, or reservation?

It is in vain to reply to this perplexing difficulty, that our Lord Jesus Christ was "God and man both in two natures and one person:" for this is a mere assertion without the shadow of a proof, and a thing besides absolutely impossible. God and Man are as different as finite and infinite, as creator and creature, as self-existent and dependent, as eternal and mortal; and to say they are the same; or that any proper, indissolvable union can take place between them, so as to render such opposite natures *one person*, is to affirm as great an absurdity as can be conceived.

If this notion of Christ "being God and Man," had been founded in truth, it would have been known to the Apostle Paul; and instead of saying *the man Christ Jesus*, he ought to have said as Trinitarians say now, "the God-man." But the words of our Apostle are incompatible with this notion; for the word *Christ* signifies "one that is anointed," and

consequently the phrase may be rendered as we have done above, *Jesus the anointed man*. And this excludes every idea of two natures in our Lord: for had our Lord Jesus Christ possessed a divine nature, he would have had no occasion to have been anointed with the divine Spirit.

With respect to the Arian notion of our Lord having been a superangelic being, a mighty pre-existent Spirit, who came down from heaven to inhabit a human body; though it is not attended with such gross and shocking absurdities as the Trinitarian system, yet it is in itself exceedingly improbable, and does not correspond to the language used by our Apostle. With what propriety can a pre-existing spirit be called *a man*, or how could such a being feel as a man does, and be a partaker of all the properties of our nature? The term *man* can only be used to describe one of the human species, and can never be applicable to an angelic or superangelic being. *The man Christ Jesus*, or *Jesus the anointed man*, is a mode of expression unsuitable to Arianism as well as Trinitarianism; and could only, I apprehend, have been used by our Apostle, with the full belief, that his Lord and Master was really *a man*. And it is not only in one or two passages of Scripture, but in a considerable number that our Lord Jesus Christ has this title applied to him. To confirm our argument and exhibit it in all its force, it may be very proper to recite these passages at full length, and consider their fair and obvious meaning.

In John's Gospel i. 30, our Lord is styled *a man* by his forerunner John the Baptist. *This is he of whom I said, after me cometh A MAN, which is preferred before me: &c.* John the Baptist speaks of Jesus in lofty terms, as one far superior to himself, as one *whose shoes latchet he was not worthy to unloose*, and who should *baptize with the holy Ghost*; and yet

observe, he styles him in plain and formal terms *a man*.

John viii. 40. Our Lord has the following words *But now ye seek to kill me, A MAN that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God.* Here we find, our Lord himself calls himself *a man* in speaking to the Jews, and asserting that the Jews wished to take away his life, because he told them these necessary and important truths which God had instructed him in the knowledge of. These words in the connection in which they stand carry a great deal of force in them, and are quite inconsistent with the ideas formed by those who suppose him to have been a great pre-existent being. Our Lord here gives the Jews to understand that he was *a man* of sincerity and virtue, who spake the plain truths of God, and received his doctrine by divine teaching and inspiration. A character and description only compatible with humanity, but not reconcilable either to the Arian or Trinitarian systems.

Another cogent testimony to the proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, occurs Luke xxiv. 19, though the force of it does not appear in our translation.—*Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people.* In the original Greek, the words rendered a prophet are ἀνὴς προφήτης, that is a *man-prophet*, or a prophetic man. This passage deserves to be attended to. It shows the ideas that our Lord's own Disciples entertained of him, and they certainly had the best opportunities of knowing the nature of his person. And yet these disciples who fell in with him going to Emmaus, and who appear to have had the sincerest affection and esteem for him, and to have regretted bitterly his sufferings and death, call him nothing more than *Jesus of Nazareth a man-Prophet*, or a prophetic man, *mighty in deed and word be-*

fore God, and all the people. A most beautiful and just description of the true nature and character of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts ii. 22. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, A MAN approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: &c.* This is a precise, full, direct, and illustrious attestation to the real manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given at a very remarkable period: viz. on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit, in a wonderful and supernatural manner, had descended upon the Apostles. If ever the Apostles were fully illuminated and instructed in the true nature of Christianity, they must have been so on the present occasion. They were now in the possession of the divine Spirit, or *power from on high, the promise of the Father,\** which had been given them to *teach them all things,* and to *bring all things to their remembrance, &c.†* and *the Spirit of truth, to guide them into all truth.‡* If in any respect they were defective in knowledge before, this impediment, in consequence of the divine gifts bestowed upon them, must be supposed to be now removed. They were discoursing to the Jews not only residing at Jerusalem but assembled from every place of their wide dispersion in order to attend a grand festival at Jerusalem. It was incumbent upon the Apostles, therefore, on this memorable occasion to deliver a full and complete testimony concerning their Master. Many of the numerous concourse that were present immediately might soon return to their own homes; where they might be long before they had another opportunity of having the truths of the Gospel fairly reported to them. An omission, therefore, of any capital truth on the part of the Apostles might be attended with

\* Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, 5,—8. † John xiv. 26. ‡ xvi. 13.

very bad consequences, and could not easily afterwards be remedied.

From these considerations, I would expect a delineation of all that was capital and important in Christianity. Nor are we disappointed in this expectation. Peter, who was the chief speaker or mouthman of the Apostles, asserts and proves the divine mission of our Lord, as authenticated by numerous, well attested miracles, charges the Jews with the guilt of his death, affirms his resurrection as taking place by the power of God, and exaltation to universal dominion, being *made Lord and Christ*; in consequence of which he had been enabled to send down the holy Spirit. Here, we have the great outline of Christian doctrine, delivered by an inspired Apostle and particular intimate of Jesus, for the information of those that were quite ignorant of it. If in any place, therefore, we are to look for a proper account of our Lord, it is here. We have the Apostles for our instructors, and behold the great body of the Jewish people attending as auditors.

What account does Peter then give of our Lord Jesus Christ, now removed from this world, ascended into heaven and exalted to dominion and glory? Does he call him the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, co-equal and co-essential to the Father? Does he say that he was an eternal son, begotten in an ineffable manner, and of the Father's essence or substance? Or, does he express himself in terms similar to those of the advocates for Arianism, and style Jesus, a great pre-existent Spirit, the first production of the Supreme Being, and a subordinate instrument in the creation of the world? By no means. Though he enters upon an express definition of his character, it is only in these words, *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved, or pointed out, of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and*

*signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.* Can we wish for a clearer testimony, or a more exact delineation of the true nature and character of Jesus our Lord? Words more precise cannot be devised. Nor can we desire more unexceptionable evidence. This is primitive christianity; pure religion, unmixed and unadulterated. This is not only the testimony of Peter, but that of the whole Apostles and the Christian church put together. Worth an hundred Nicene councils; yea the whole body of clerical assemblies. Does any one ask us what our honoured Lord and Master Jesus Christ was?—We need never be afraid, nor ashamed to answer in the words of Peter his Apostle, that he was *a man approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God by him.*

We have now seen in what manner Peter and the primitive church at Jerusalem speak of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us turn to Acts xiii. 38, 39, and we shall find the Apostle Paul using similar language. *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through THIS MAN is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

These words were spoken by Paul in the Synagogue of the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, in a discourse addressed to his countrymen there assembled on the sabbath-day, when after reciting some particulars of Jewish history, and mentioning *David the son of Jesse*, he adds ver. 23. *Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: &c.* He then speaks of John the Baptist, and of the unjust condemnation of Jesus by the Jews, his death and glorious resurrection by the power of God, and sums up and enforces his discourse in the important words before quoted. We find

from them, that *the forgiveness of sins* is to be obtained *through this man*, even *the man Christ Jesus*, and such a perfect *justification* bestowed as the law of Moses could not furnish. How daring and presumptuous, then, is it in any to say, that *the man Christ Jesus* is an insufficient Saviour, unless he be “a God-man.” Let such take heed lest they be found to *kick against the pricks*, in opposing *the man Jesus of Nazareth*,\* of the seed of David, who was raised from the dead, according to Paul’s Gospel,† as the Saviour of the world of God’s appointing; and substituting in his room a fictitious Platonic dream of human tradition. Let them attend to the awful threatening contained in the conclusion of the Apostle’s discourse, ver. 40, 41. *Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

We find another instance, still more remarkable, in the Acts of the Apostles, of this illustrious Preacher and Orator Paul employing the same significant and expressive word to denote Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

Acts xvii. 31. *Because he (God) hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that MAN whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

This testimony is very precise and distinct as well as the two former. We find here our Lord Jesus Christ expressly distinguished from God, under the character of *a man whom he hath ordained*, and whom he *raised from the dead* in order to give all mankind certainty and assurance of a future Judgment. The occasion when Paul uttered these words was a very

\* Acts ix. 5. xxii. 7, 8. † 2 Tim ii. 8,—11 to 13.



memorable one: he had been discoursing to the philosophers and wise men of Athens, and giving them an account of the doctrines of Christianity. If our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, had been *more than a man*, our Apostle, who *shunned not to declare all the counsel of God*, would not have failed to communicate this piece of information to the people of Athens. But it appears, that he only announced him as *a man ordained by God* as the Judge of the human species, and raised from the dead as an evidence of the certainty of the fact.

It must be owned to be a strong argument for the proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he was declared to be *a man* at the first preaching of Christianity both to Jews and Gentiles. At Jerusalem, the seat of religion, where the true God was worshipped, at Antioch in Pisidia to the Jews also; and at Athens the seat of Gentile learning.

In the Epistles of Paul we have several clear testimonies in favour of this important truth; some of which are very strong and convincing. Rom. v. 15. *For if through the offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST, hath abounded unto many.*

In this place and the verses that go before and after, there is a strong and pointed opposition marked between Adam and Christ: and mankind are represented as losing or suffering by the one and gaining by the other; and both are represented in the contrast or comparison as *equally men*. In the 15th verse before quoted Jesus Christ is expressly called a *man*, and the word *man* is to be necessarily understood three times, though not expressed in the 17th, 18th, and 19th verses. *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness,*

*shall reign in life by one (man) Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, (man) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one (man) shall many be made righteous.* Nothing is more evident than that the word *man* is constantly to be understood here in the opposition between Adam and Christ.

A passage, strongly resembling this we have been quoting, occurs 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. *For since by MAN came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in ADAM all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.*

This place carries irresistible weight with it. The Apostle affirms that *as by MAN came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead*; and then illustrates his meaning by contrasting ADAM and CHRIST. Now, it may be argued here with the greatest force and clearness, that as surely as Adam was *a man* Christ was *a man* also. For without this be admitted the Apostle's argument founded on a comparison between Adam and Christ will not be true or well founded. If Christ was a pre-existent spirit and not a man of the same nature and species as Adam was, it would not be true that *as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead*. For it might be replied very justly, that though death came by *man*, yet the resurrection came by one of a higher nature and character, either by a person equal to God himself, or by the first of all created beings. Thus, the comparison between Adam and Christ would be totally lost, and the force and beauty of the Apostle's argument destroyed. Of consequence, from the nature of language, and all the rules of fair and just reasoning, we must understand the Apostle Paul

as intending to inculcate and enforce, that *Adam* and *Christ* were both of one nature, species and character; and that death was inflicted in consequence of the offence and misconduct of the one, and that the resurrection and a glorious immortality were conferred by means of the virtue and obedience of the other.

In this same chapter verse 47, we have another passage that deserves to be taken notice of. *The first man is of the earth, earthy: the SECOND MAN is the Lord from heaven.* Here, we find our Lord Jesus Christ even in his state of heavenly exaltation styled *a man*; and *the second man* in opposition to Adam. He is styled *the Lord from heaven*, or as some copies read, simply, *from heaven*, because he will come from thence when he returns to clothe his people with the resurrection body.

Heb. x. 12. *But THIS MAN, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; &c.* Our Lord here is called *a man*, when undergoing sufferings and death for the benefit of mankind, and he still retains the same appellation when exalted at *the right hand of God*.

Besides all these passages where our Lord Jesus Christ is called *a man*, we find a very great number in which he styles himself, or is called by others, *the Son of man*. Instances of this kind occur so frequently in the Evangelists that I think it needless to quote them, as they may be found at the slightest perusal.

From all this, we have an abundant proof of his proper humanity; for no being that had pre-existed in any former state could have been called *a man* or *the Son of man* so often, without a great perversion of language. Nor can we suppose that the sacred writers, on the supposition of Christ's pre-existence, would have expressed themselves in this way without

any guard or limitation, or explanation, whatever.

If it should be objected, that Angels are sometimes called men in Scripture, as Luke xxiv. 4,—*behold two men stood by them in shining garments*: and in other places, it may be very properly replied, that they are so called for the moment, with regard to their external appearance, as they assumed the form and figure of men. But the circumstances of the story show that they were really superior beings and not men, and consequently, no body could be mistaken or deceived. But a case of this kind is very different from the continued use of the word *man* with respect to our Lord Jesus Christ. Were any supposed angelic or super-angelic beings to be shut up in human bodies, and did we know them to be such, we would never look upon them as men like ourselves; we would consider them and speak of them as incarnate Angels, but not as men.

If it should be farther objected, that our Lord Jesus Christ though styled *a man*, and *the Son of Man*, is also called the *Son of God*, we reply that this objection has no force in it; for every sense in which that title is given is grounded either upon his proper humanity or necessarily connected with it. We shall examine this point briefly, and prove our affirmation by scripture evidence.

1. Luke i. 35. *And the Angel answered and said unto her, (Mary) 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.*

There is nothing in this passage but what relates to the formation of our Lord Jesus Christ as *a man*; no reference to any prior state of existence either implied or expressed; and nothing more can be drawn from it than that our Lord Jesus Christ was a human being begotten or produced by the immediate power

of God; and on this account called *the Son of God*.

2. Jesus is called *the Son of God*, because he was *the Christ* or *the anointed of God*; foretold by the prophets, and fully qualified by divine gifts and endowments for discharging that high and important office. This may be proved from a vast number of Scriptures; but we shall only alledge the following passages. John x. 34, 35, 36. *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods? If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 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? From this place it is clear, that Jesus is the Son of God on account of the Father having sanctified him, or conferred extraordinary powers and gifts upon him, superior to what any other prophet possessed; but all this is grounded upon his humanity, which rendered these gifts necessary. Again, John xx. 31. These (signs) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name. From this passage it appears that the words Christ and Son of God are synonymous, both denoting the same thing, viz. "a man anointed with the fulness of the divine spirit;" and that it was the great end for which John wrote his Gospel to prove Jesus to be such a person.*

3. Jesus is called, *the Son of God*, because God raised him from the dead, and restored him to a new and glorious life. Rom. i. 3, 4. *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. To the same purpose Acts xiii. 32, 33. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their*

children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

In this third sense the title of *the Son of God* is grounded upon his humanity as well as the former: for as *a man* Jesus was subject to death, and as *a man* the *spirit* or *power of God* was manifested and displayed in his resurrection from the dead.

4. The fourth and last sense, in which Jesus is styled *the Son of God*, relates to his triumphant exaltation at the right hand of God to a state of dominion and glory. Heb. i. 1, 2. *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, &c.* Heb. v. 5. *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.*

This kind of *Sonship* is also derived from the same source or connected with it, viz. the proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; for on what other footing, or in what other respect, could he be exalted? God cannot be exalted; it would be downright nonsense and absurdity to suppose it. Nor is it easy to discover how the first of all created beings, through whom all the rest were formed, and the Father's supposed instrument in the creation of the world, could be exalted, or have his glory increased, by carrying along with him a glorified human body into heaven. But on the scheme of the proper humanity of Jesus, this difficulty vanishes; Christ, being a man, was capable of being exalted; and his supereminent virtue and obedience unto death for the benefit of mankind, rendered him highly worthy of being so.

We have now shown, that Jesus being *the Son of God* is so far from being an objection to his real manhood, that his humanity is the only ground on

which this title can rest, or be properly explained according to the different senses in which it is given in Scripture. And this strongly confirms the truth of our opinion, when it is found to be consistent with itself and to harmonize with the general scheme of the sacred writers.

TO GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER be ascribed all glory and praise, in the name of the MAN Jesus his only begotten and anointed Son, whom, *according to the working of his mighty power;—he raised from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, &c.\** Amen.

\* Eph. i. 19, 20, &c

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## DISSERTATION VI.

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### THE MESSIAHSHIP, AND PROPER HUMANITY OF JESUS, *STATED AND VINDICATED.*

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

IN the preceding Dissertation, we quoted a variety of places in the New Testament in which our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly called *a man* and enlarged upon them, pointing out their force and efficacy. We also took notice, that there were a vast number of passages in the Gospels in which our Lord styles himself, or is called by others, *the Son of man*. These, joined with the other places in which he is styled simply *a man*, furnish a strong and striking proof of his proper humanity. For the sacred writers could not without the greatest abuse and perversion of language have used the terms *man* and *Son of man* so often concerning our Lord, and that without any limitation or reserve, if he had either been God, or a transcendently great, superangelic being. And the argument appears still stronger when we consider, that they



hold the same language, and *still* call him *a man*, even after his resurrection from the dead and exaltation to heavenly glory. As some might think, that Jesus being styled *the son of God* was an objection to the scheme of his real manhood, we examined all the different senses in which he is so called in Scripture; and proved that every one of them was grounded upon or connected with the doctrine of his strict and proper humanity. Though all this taken together forms a very strong and clear proof, yet we shall still pursue the same subject from other topics, and prove the humanity of our Lord from other considerations.

It is no small confirmation of our doctrine, that all the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament speak of him uniformly as *a man*.

Gen. iii. 15. (the sense of which place is) *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*. Now, with what propriety can any one be called the seed of the woman, or a descendant from the original mother of mankind, unless he was really a man, possessed of the same nature, form, and mental powers, as other men are. Can God be called *the seed of the woman*? Can he who made the woman be accounted her *seed* and her *offspring*? Can a superangelic being be styled *the seed of the woman*, or by any incarnation or union whatever lose his own proper nature and become *a man*? *The seed of the woman*, according to all fair rules of interpretation, can imply nothing more but a person born of, or deriving his existence from, *a woman*, who had no existence before; in other words, a man born into the world as other men are, and growing gradually up to manhood as they do. And so the expression is similar to what the Apostle Paul uses Gal. iv. 4. *But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law*.

Gen. xxii. 18. God speaking to Abraham says, *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; &c.* The same reasoning will apply to these words as the former. The Messiah, who was to be a signal blessing to the whole earth, is here declared to be a descendant of Abraham, and that excellent patriarch in consequence, as our Lord tells us, *rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it, and was glad.\** But how could the Messiah be a descendant of Abraham unless he was endowed with the very same nature as Abraham was? If in our conception of the Messiah, we include the idea of a divine or pre-existent nature, it will not be found correspondent to the promise made to Abraham, which points at nothing but one of the human race, descending in a line from him.

Deut. xviii. 15. 18. We find a passage that is twice quoted in the Acts of the Apostles and applied to Christ. *The LORD (or Jehovah) thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.*

A late ingenious writer applies this prophecy, not particularly to Christ, but to a succession of prophets who were to succeed Moses, and speak in the name of God to the children of Israel. But though we were to admit this sense of it, yet as Christ is one in the succession, and more resembling Moses than any other, it might be supposed more eminently to respect him than the rest. But it is quite sufficient for our purpose that it is referred to as applicable to Christ, by Peter, Acts iii. 22. and by Stephen, vii. 37.† These quotations show the idea that the New

\* John viii. 56.

† It is highly probable that our Lord himself alluded to this prophecy of Moses, when he says to the Jews, John v. 45 to 47. *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father? there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*

Testament writers had of their Master's person, and that they considered the words as giving a just account of him. From their application we are warranted to make use of this passage in our argument, and to draw from it every inference that it is capable of affording.

It is obvious then, that an exact parallel is run between Moses and Christ, and Christ is declared to be *a prophet like unto Moses*. Moses, it is well known, was a man, and Christ, who is affirmed to be *a prophet like unto him*, must therefore be accounted *a man* also. But the words are still more precise and striking. Not only is it said, that *the LORD God would raise up a prophet like unto Moses*; but he is declared to be raised up *from the midst of thee*, from the midst of Israel, *of thy brethren*—that is, a Hebrew, or Jew, by birth, one of your own flesh and blood, a genuine descendant of Abraham and Jacob. Can any thing more clearly point out to us the true nature and character of our Lord? Would Peter or Stephen have ever thought of applying this prophecy to Christ, if they had not believed him to be a *true and real man*? Would they have compared God, or a man personally united to God, to Moses; and styled him one of their brethren, or would they have given this name to a supereminent pre-existent spirit? I affirm this argument to be a good and a solid one, and to contain a great deal of strength in it, even though we should admit the words to respect a succession of prophets; for this makes no alteration in the argument, so far as it is grounded upon the ideas that the New Testament writers had of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In several Psalms, which are either quoted or referred to in the New Testament, as having a view to Christ and the Gospel Dispensation, the strain still

runs upon a *man*; sometimes represented in a suffering, and at other times in a triumphant state.

In Psalm ii. our Lord is represented as the anointed of Jehovah, against whom the Kings of the earth vainly leagued themselves and conspired to hinder the establishment of his kingdom, ver. 6, 7. *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* All this entirely respects a human character, and the *begetting* and *Sonship*, here mentioned, refer entirely to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, (and are so applied by the sacred writers) when he was begotten again from the bowels of the earth, and declared to be *the Son of God with power.*

A like train of thought occurs in Psalm cx. in which Jehovah is represented as seating the Messiah, now made *Lord*, at his right hand, and overthrowing all his enemies, and rendering him triumphant over them.

In Psalms xvi. and xxii. some places of which are applied to Christ in the New Testament, we have the idea of a suffering person of great virtue and piety held forth to us, enduring great calamities, and overcoming them all by faith and piety, constancy and perseverance in well doing.

In Psalm lxxxix. the stability and duration of Christ's kingdom is supposed to be alluded to: and in cxxxii. 11. it is said, *The LORD (or Jehovah) hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it, of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.* This is expressly applied to Christ, Acts ii. 30. and from it we discover that it was a person of the human species lineally descended from David that was to be *the Christ.* Agreeably to this prophetic character the Apostle Paul says, 2 Tim. ii. 8. *Remember that Jesus*

*Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my Gospel.*

In the Prophets we find the same notion of the human character of the Messiah still kept up. Isa. xi. 1, 2, 3. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the LORD (or Jehovah) shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD; &c.* Can any thing more fully denote a human being, a prophetic character, guided by divine inspiration than these words? I might expatiate long upon them, but forbear at present, as I shall have occasion hereafter to treat them more fully.

In Isaiah liii, we have a prophecy of considerable length concerning Christ, in which he is uniformly represented as a suffering, afflicted human character, and even expressly styled ver. 3. *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.* In verse 8, occur the words, *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? &c.* which last words refer either to the wickedness of that generation among whom he lived, and by whom as the prophet adds, *he was cut off out of the land of the living;* and concerning whom our Lord himself says, Math. xi. 16. *But whereunto shall I liken this generation?* and again xii. 39. *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign:* or if we adopt the translation of the Hebrew word proposed by the late learned Bishop Lowth, the clause will run, *And his manner of life who shall declare?* Referring, as the ingenious writer supposes, to the injustice done to Jesus by the Jewish Rulers, at his trial and condemnation, in not calling in witnesses to prove the innocence and integrity of his character.

We may examine all the prophetic descriptions of the Messiah occurring in other places, and we shall find they all centre in one belonging to human nature, who was to spring from Abraham and from David. In some prophecies a few figurative expressions occur, which have been greatly mistaken by some christian interpreters, who read the Jewish Scriptures full of their own Trinitarian prejudices and preconceived notions; and on that account snatch at a shadow and endeavour to convert it into a real argument. Thus, when Isaiah ix. 6, styles the Messiah *a mighty God*, according as the Hebrew text now runs, (though the word *God* is wanting in the two most valuable copies of the Septuagint,) they imagine this expression makes a great deal for their cause; but when it is compared with the context it amounts to no more than *a mighty ruler* or *potentate*, as we shewed when we treated of this passage in our reply to objections.

In like manner some consider Jerem. xxiii. 6.— *And this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness*; as a formidable objection; when in truth it is just nothing but a mere Hebraism, denoting that Jehovah will be favourable to his people Judah and Israel (ver. 5, 6.) by that *righteous branch*, which he promises to *raise unto David*, or a *King who shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth*. This is evident beyond a doubt from another passage in the same prophet, xxxiii. 16. *In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith SHE shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness*. Here the city of Jerusalem is styled by the prophet *Jehovah our righteousness*. But surely no one ever imagined that city to be God. The same argument is equally conclusive in both cases.

Of the same nature is that expression occurring

Isa. vii. 14. and quoted by Matthew, i. 23. *And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.* It denotes God's kindness and favourable designs by the Messiah, and his extraordinary presence with him, and nothing else.

In a prophecy concerning the Messiah in Micah v. 2. our translators have rendered the latter part of the verse, *whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.* The original word, rendered *whose goings forth*, cannot be considered in an active sense, as respecting the Messiah himself, who was born at Bethlehem; but if it is not to be interpreted of the royal and ancient family from which he sprung, it must be referred to the divine decree and prophetic declarations concerning him, as the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "whose name has been *told* or *mentioned* from eternity, from the days of the age." Every argument for the eternal existence, or even pre-existence of the Messiah, from this place, is effectually overthrown, not only by the *inconsistency* of the thing itself, but by what is said concerning him in the 4th verse. *And he shall stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God, &c.*

In a celebrated prophecy concerning the happy and gracious change which shall take place in the temper and sentiments of the Jewish nation with respect to Jesus our Lord, upon their conversion, and acknowledgment of him as their promised Messiah, the following words occur, Zechar. xii. 10. *And I (Jehovah) will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.* One may be sensible, at the slightest inspection, of a very

gross impropriety, not to call it by a harsher name, in the common Hebrew text, and our English translation, in the words, *and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced*. It is inconsistent with what follows, where the pronoun is changed from *me* to *him*; and there can be no doubt but that it is a false reading. The Evangelist John expressly quotes it *him*, xix. 37. *And again another scripture saith, They shall look on HIM whom they pierced*. Besides this, the venerable Mr. Lindsey observes, “the late learned Dr. Kennicott, whose design and immense labours, ought ever to be mentioned with honour, in his most valuable edition of the Hebrew Bible; has found *they pierced HIM*, to be the reading of this passage in no less than forty Hebrew manuscripts.”

I shall just mention one prophetic passage more which has also been strangely misapplied. Zechariah xiii. 7. *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against THE MAN that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: &c.* From the mere sound of the word *fellow* in our version, which by the bye is not a just rendering of the original, it has been absurdly if not blasphemously supposed by some, that Jehovah has an equal, an associate. One would have thought that the words *shepherd*, and *man*, here used, would have set these interpreters right and led them into the true sense of the passage. But to cut off every subterfuge it is proper to observe, that the original word signifies one that is *near* or *dear* to another, and may be rendered *my darling*, or *my friend*.

We have now shown, that the ancient prophecies concerning Christ point entirely at a human character, an Israelite by birth, of the stock of Abraham and David. And it is a matter of consequence to show this, because the Messiah when he came must be found to correspond to what ancient prophets had foretold concerning him, or he could not be consi-



dered as the true Messiah. The Trinitarian doctrine concerning our Lord Jesus Christ has been a prodigious stumbling block to the Jews; and even the Arian scheme by no means suits their ideas.

The Jews understood the language of the prophets far better than many christian interpreters. They never thought that God himself, or any pre-existent spirit, was to come down from heaven to them. On the contrary, they expected their Messiah to be *a man* and a native of their own country. Traces of this notion appear in the Gospels. John vii. 42. *Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* So prevailing was the notion that Christ was to be of the family of David, that the words *Son of David* was become a term appropriated to him whom they expected as *the Christ*, of which we find various instances in the New Testament.\* The Samaritans, who were of the same religion as the Jews, and differed only with respect to the place of worship, entertained the same ideas concerning the person of the Messiah; as appears from what the woman of Samaria says, John iv. 29. *Come, see A MAN which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?*

This notion of the Jews concerning the real humanity of Christ appears to have been the prevailing sentiment of the nation in every age. Their Targum on Cantic. viii. 1. is as follows: “When the Messiah shall reveal himself, the sons of Israel shall say—unto him, thou shalt be unto us a Brother;” and Trypho the Jew in his dialogue with Justin Martyr tells him, that “it appeared to him not only astonishing, but even ridiculous, to suppose Christ to have been a God existing before the world, and condescending to become a man, and not a man as other men are.” Origen in his reply to Celsus bears

\* Math. i. 1. xxi. 9. xxii. 42, and in other places.

testimony to the same truth, and says, "he" (Celsus) "does not consider, that the Jews by no means "allow the Christ to come down from heaven, either "as a God, or Son of God."

Having now shown the evidence for the proper humanity of Jesus arising from ancient prophecy, we come to prove the same important point from another strong consideration, viz. *the communication of the divine Spirit to him*, which was the source of his wisdom, and knowledge, and of all his miraculous works. We have seen from a passage already quoted from the prophecy of Isaiah chap. xi. 1, 2, &c. that when the Messiah came, *the spirit of Jehovah should rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the LORD; &c.*

Accordingly, before our Lord entered upon the great and important work of his public ministry, he was solemnly consecrated, sanctified, and set apart to his office by the effusion of the holy Spirit, which descended from heaven upon him in a visible form, and attended with an audible voice. All the four Evangelists have particularly recorded this remarkable fact, which indeed is of the highest consequence. I shall content myself immediately, with quoting the account of it as given by Matthew and John, both Apostles and personal attendants of our Lord.

Matthew's account is as follows. Chap. iii. 16, 17. *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight-way out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

John's account is in the following words. Chap. i. 32, 33, 34. *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it*

*abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.*

An important narrative of this kind, deserves particular notice; and if attentively considered it may suggest some very important topics. I apprehend, that the account here given by the inspired writers is sufficient to overturn from the foundation both the Trinitarian and Arian schemes, and to establish the doctrine of the proper humanity of Jesus on a solid, rational, and scriptural foundation.

In the first place, it appears evident to me, that before this miraculous communication of the Spirit to Jesus, he was only in a private station, not consecrated to the Messiahship, not qualified for acting in the public character of the great teacher and reformer of mankind, not endowed with the fulness of divine gifts and graces, with supernatural wisdom and the power of working illustrious miracles. But when this wonderful power and divine energy descended upon him, he was endowed with every qualification necessary for the purposes of his Messiahship. He could speak as *never man spake*, he could teach with authority and propriety in the name of God, and could work whatever miracles were necessary for authenticating his divine mission, and ascertaining the validity of his public character, as God's messenger and ambassador.

Now, all this is extremely consistent and natural upon the scheme of the proper humanity of Jesus. Without divine communications, without the *fulness of the Spirit* imparted to him, Jesus, as a man, would have been unqualified for the great and arduous task assigned to him.

But, I inquire, how do these qualifications tally or coincide either with the Trinitarian or Arian schemes?

According to the Trinitarian hypothesis, the human nature of Jesus was in union with the second person of the Trinity, with God the Son equal in dignity with the first, from the moment of its first formation; and in consequence of this personal union which was of the closest and most indissolvable kind, the human nature must have been possessed from the very first of whatever divinity could confer upon it. I ask then, and the question is by no means impertinent, or out of place, what use a person already in union with supreme Deity could have for the effusion and communication of the holy Spirit? Was not God the Son, equal in dignity with the eternal Father, sufficient to fill the human nature to which he had united himself, with wisdom, knowledge, and every grace and virtue, as also to impart to it the power of working miracles? Could the third person of the Trinity confer any thing that the second had not already conferred? Could any thing be added to him who was already in strict personal union with Deity? Impossible. The very idea is contradictory and absurd; therefore the scheme that supposes and labours under this contradiction is inadmissible, and equally repugnant to Scripture and reason.

The Arian scheme in this respect, though it does not offer equal violence to our reasoning faculties, is yet, I apprehend, attended with such difficulties, and accords so ill with the plain sense of Scripture as to warrant its rejection also. According to the Arian Hypothesis, the first of all created beings, the divine *Logos*, or Word, by whom all things were made, descended into the womb of a virgin, and became the animating, rational principle in the body of

Jesus. Now a transcendent spirit of such high powers and vast natural capacity as the Arian Logos is represented to be, must be supposed naturally capable of that wisdom and knowledge that Jesus possessed, and also of a power of working all the miracles he performed. For all these fall much short of the display of wisdom and power manifested in the formation of the world, which the Arians ascribe to this pre-existent Spirit. This being the case, the communication of the divine Spirit to such a person appears to me not at all a natural or probable thing, if it be not a downright inconsistency.

If it shall be said, that the original powers of this great Spirit were so much weakened or depressed by his incarnation as to render the effusion of the Spirit necessary, I answer, that this supposition is quite unnatural, and a multiplication of miracles without necessity; for surely it was as easy, and far more agreeable to the analogy of things, to preserve such a part of the natural powers of this being undiminished, as might be necessary for the office in which he was to be engaged, than to render him capable of it by a new accession of power. To take a way a power naturally sufficient for an effect, or purpose, and to confer a new one by supernatural means, is an inconsistent supposition, that appears to me to carry its own confutation along with it.

Thus we see, that neither the Trinitarian nor Arian schemes will correspond with the plain doctrine of the Scripture in regard to the communication of the Spirit to Jesus. It can never rest solidly or consistently on any other foundation, than that of the real manhood of our Lord and Saviour. And on this footing the sacred writers expressly place it, as in our next Dissertation will still more fully appear.

How beautiful, how simple, and consistent is truth; it tallies and corresponds with itself, and exhibits one

uniform and harmonious system. The passages we have quoted, and other similar ones, which we shall afterwards have occasion to consider, will never correspond with, or be consistently explained on any other scheme than that of the proper humanity of our Lord. And indeed, I have long thought, that the communication of the divine Spirit to Jesus affords an argument that carries irresistible weight in it, and as such to be worthy of the consideration of all those who wish to make an impartial inquiry into religion.

*Glory to God in the highest, in the name of the man Jesus, his anointed and beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. Amen.*

## DISSERTATION VII.

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THE MESSIAHSHIP,  
AND PROPER HUMANITY OF JESUS.  
*STATED AND VINDICATED.*

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I TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

IN our sixth Dissertation we proposed additional arguments for the proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the prophecies of the Old Testament; in which he is uniformly represented as *a man, the seed of the woman, a descendant of Abraham, a prophet like unto Moses, a son of, or of the seed of David,* and in short a person partaking of the same nature as other men are.

We farther enforced this doctrine from the remarkable circumstance of *the communication of the Spirit to Jesus,* and particularly from the wonderful descent of the holy Ghost upon him after his baptism, as recorded by all the Evangelists, and quoted the accounts given by Matthew and John; when he was solemnly consecrated, sanctified and set apart to his office, and in every respect fully qualified to discharge it. We

showed that this communication of the holy Spirit was by no means reconcilable either to the Trinitarian or Arian schemes. For if Jesus was already in personal Union with the second person of the Trinity equal in dignity with the first, as Trinitarians say, he could never stand in need of any other assistance to fill him with wisdom or enable him to perform miraculous works. And if the first of all created beings, the divine *Logos* or *Word*, by whom all things were made, had descended into a human body and become the animating principle of it, a spirit of such transcendent high powers and vast natural capacity as the Arian *Logos* is supposed to be, must be conceived naturally capable of that wisdom and knowledge that Jesus possessed, and also of a power of working all the miracles he performed. We pursued this point and considered it under different views, and the result was that the communication of the divine Spirit to such a person was not a natural or probable thing, if not a downright inconsistency. From these considerations we showed, that neither the Trinitarian nor Arian schemes will correspond with the plain doctrine of the Scripture in regard to the communication of the Spirit to Jesus, and that this doctrine could never rest solidly or consistently on any other foundation than that of the real manhood of our Lord and Saviour, on which the sacred writers expressly place it.

This is an argument that appears to me to have great force in it, and to deserve a very serious and attentive consideration. It is a certain fact, an indisputable and undeniable truth, that all the supernatural wisdom that Jesus possessed and all the extraordinary miracles he performed, were owing, and are expressly ascribed in Scripture, to the holy Spirit.

Our Lord himself says, Math. xii. 28. *But if I cast out Demons* BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, &c. Luke



has the following words, Acts i. 1, 2. *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he THROUGH THE HOLY GHOST had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: &c.*

I shall now quote a passage at full length which will not only establish the point I am contending for, but at the same time give us a clear and distinct summary of all that is important and fundamental in Christianity. The Apostle Peter in speaking to Cornelius the devout Centurion, who came to him in consequence of a supernatural intimation to receive express information concerning the Gospel, says as follows. Acts x. 34 to 43. *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (he is Lord of all,) That word, I say, you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached: HOW GOD ANOINTED JESUS OF NAZARETH WITH THE HOLY GHOST, AND WITH POWER; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: FOR GOD WAS WITH HIM. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew, and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly, Not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.\* And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it was he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets wit-*

\* John xxi. 12 to 15.

*ness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.*

These words are very emphatical, and may lead one at once into the true nature and character of our Lord. They evidently shew, that the power that Jesus possessed of working miracles of beneficence and mercy was not his own power, was not a qualification natural to him, or inherent in him, but a divine gift bestowed upon him, a power descending from on high and an effusion from God himself, similar in kind, but much higher in degree, to that which ancient prophets possessed and was afterwards conferred on the apostles. In this view John the Baptist says, John iii. 34. *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit BY MEASURE unto him.* Other prophets had it in inferior degrees and in smaller proportions, but Jesus possessed it fully and permanently, it was ever present with him, and accompanied him on all occasions.

By this, *he spake as never man spake*, taught with authority and power, was never disconcerted or at loss to reply even when the most ensnaring and captious questions were put to him, knew when to be silent and when to speak, and sometimes even discovered a knowledge of the hearts and most secret intentions of those with whom he conversed. Other prophets received the Spirit by degrees and according to measure, were occasionally inspired and sometimes left to act according to their own discretion; but our Lord Jesus Christ had the never failing presence of God with him on all occasions, guiding, directing, and conducting him, though not exempting him from the common and innocent infirmities incident to human nature.

By this divine *afflatus* or energy, Jesus not only spoke and acted but performed all his miracles; by

this supernatural power, he was enabled to cure the most inveterate diseases that had baffled all the remedies of the medical art; by this power, he walked on the sea, stilled the winds, fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, raised the dead, and performed every other great and wonderful action that is recorded of him during his public life and ministry. And in the number and variety of his miracles, he far exceeded any other prophet, though none were ostentatious or unnecessary, but all of them salutary and useful.

It is to this divine power that our Lord refers, when it is recorded of him, Luke iv. 16 to 19. *And he (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered to him the book of the prophet Esaias; and when he had opened the book he found the place where it was written,\* The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

To the same power he appeals, John v. 30. *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will; but the will of the Father which hath sent me.* Again ver. 36 of the same chapter. *But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* Again, John xiv. 9. 10. the following remarkable words occur. *Jesus saith unto him, (unto Philip) have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believ-*

\* Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. See also xlii 1 to 7.

*est thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*

These last words throw light upon what goes before, and a great many other figurative expressions occurring in Scripture, which have been sadly mistaken by those who are unacquainted with the oriental phraseology, and wrest the diction of the sacred writers to support their own ill-founded and fanciful notions. When our Lord says here, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* and in John x. 30. *I and my Father are one;* he does not refer to any metaphysical essence or nature, to any union of spiritual or co-equal beings, but merely to those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, that divine *afflatus* and energy that attended him, by which he had an union with the Father, and was continually supported by him. All these expressions harmonize with the doctrine of his proper humanity, and cannot be explained consistently or properly on any other scheme. But we now leave this subject and proceed to establish our point from other considerations.

The Evangelist Luke, in describing the early period of our Saviour's life, has the following words. Luke ii. 52. *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.* These words resemble very much the language that is used concerning the prophet Samuel. 1 Sam. ii. 26. *And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.*

Let us now consider the natural force and meaning of the words of Luke respecting our Lord. If we do so without prejudice, and attend to their obvious sense, I apprehend, we can form no other conclusion, but that Jesus was born into the world as others

are, and grew up as they do; his understanding ripening by degrees and receiving accessions of knowledge according as he advanced in age; and that as he was of a most excellent disposition, he was equally in favour with God, and had the good will of mankind.

Let one attempt, if he can, to shape or modify the words of Luke into a consistency either with the Trinitarian or Arian schemes? If Jesus was, as Trinitarians affirm, God and man in one person, if the divinity was closely and inseparably united to the humanity, how could Jesus be said to have increased in wisdom? As a divine person he must have been possessed of that attribute in an infinite degree. He must have known from the very first all that it was possible for him to know, and could have received no increase in wisdom from his intercourse and correspondence with poor feeble mortals. If it shall be said, that the divinity gradually revealed and manifested itself to the humanity as it grew up: I answer, that this reply will not serve the purpose; for the divinity and humanity are declared to be one person from the very first, and as such the human understanding must have been a partaker of the divine wisdom from the first as far as it was capable of it, or we shall have two persons instead of one, which this system will not admit of. But indeed, the idea of a personal Union between Divinity and humanity is so gross and contradictory that it cannot be adopted, and therefore it is needless to reason concerning an impossibility.

Let us next see how the words of Luke will tally with the Arian scheme. A being such as the Arian Logos is described to have been, existing before the foundation of the world and the subordinate operator in its formation, must be supposed to have been possessed of transcendent knowledge and capacity, and

consequently it can never be conceived, that such a being could receive an accession to his wisdom, or be in the least improved, by living in this world, or having any connection with its inhabitants. Thus the language of the Evangelist Luke is in full contradiction to both these systems; and will never suit with any but that which supposes our Lord to have been really a man in mind as well as in body.

An ingenious writer, who has never been reckoned an Unitarian, has the candour to remark on these words of our Evangelist as follows. "I know what subtle comments have been made on these words; but it is plain the Evangelist designs to inform us that *Jesus improved in mind and body*; and to give any other sense of that passage, is not to interpret, but to contradict Scripture." This is the language of good sense, and very much to the purpose.

We proceed to another proof of the proper humanity of Jesus, and that drawn from the temptations he underwent whilst he lived in the world, and in particular that singular one, that ensued immediately after his baptism and the effusion of the holy Spirit, which is recorded by the three Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke. That our Lord was tempted in general, we learn from the course of the evangelical history, and from that expression, Heb. ii. 18. *For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* But the temptation I mean to insist on immediately is that particular one before referred to, of which we have a distinct account.

Matthew informs us, iv. 1, &c. that Jesus soon after his baptism, *was led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil*, that he fasted forty days and nights and afterwards became hungry, that three different temptations were proposed to him, the first of which was to turn the stones into bread, the

second to throw himself from a pinnacle or wing of the temple, and the third to fall down and worship Satan, upon the offer of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.

It has been disputed by learned and ingenious men whether this temptation was real or visionary, that is to say, whether the scene here described, really happened, and was actually transacted, or the whole was only a mysterious trance or vision, and a representation suggested to the mind of Jesus. I am apt to join in opinion with those who think it to have been a visionary representation suggested by the divine Being, in order to strengthen the mind of our Lord, and prepare him for the trials and troubles he was to undergo in the course of his ministry. But it is by no means my intention to enter into any discussion of this point immediately, as it would be foreign to the subject I have in hand, which is not to explain the nature and circumstances of this temptation, but merely to urge it as an argument in proof of the proper humanity of Jesus. This temptation, though it should be supposed to have been visionary, was as real to Jesus, as great a trial of his fidelity, and as proper to strengthen and invigorate his mind, as upon the most strict and literal interpretation.

I shall consider each of the temptations proposed to our Lord, and examine how far they can be considered as trials or preparatory exercises on the Trinitarian and Arian systems, and then point out briefly how well they correspond with the scheme of his proper humanity.

The first temptation proposed to our Lord was to turn stones into bread in order to allay his excessive hunger. Our Lord was miraculously supported, and rendered superior to the ordinary necessities of nature, during his fast of forty days. But after these days were expired, the sensation of hunger returned,

with a keenness, we may suppose, proportioned to the long period he had been without food. This was indeed a very severe trial to a man *in all things made like unto his brethren; and who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;*\* as any body who has ever experienced any extraordinary degree of want or hunger will acknowledge. But I am at a loss to conceive how hunger could be any temptation to God, or how one hypostatically united to him could be hungry. Nor can I conceive on the Arian scheme, how the first of all created beings, who framed the earth under God and all the different tribes of creatures, could be subjected to the keen sensation of hunger. A Spirit of this exalted nature must have supported the human body to which he was united and rendered it superior to the ordinary wants of nature: or supposing that any overuling power had prevented such a spirit from exerting his capacity in this respect, it is not easy to discover how hunger could affect such a being as it does a man.

Again, with respect to the second temptation offered to our Lord, viz. to prove himself to be the Messiah or Son of God, by throwing himself down from a pinnacle or wing of the temple; I am as little able to find out how God, or a man in personal Union with him, could be liable to an affectation of this kind: or how such a proposal could make any impression on the first of all created beings. Could beings of such a nature be supposed susceptible of vanity, or a ridiculous ostentation of displaying themselves and their extraordinary powers, and of laying claim to a distinguished character in the sight of weak mortals?

As to the third and last temptation, the offer and gift of all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

\* Heb. ii. 17. iv. 15.



This must be owned to be a very strong and powerful temptation to a man prompted either by ambition or avarice: but that it should be any to a God-man, or to the first and most excellent of all creatures, I cannot conceive. Could the God who made the world, or a man in personal union with him, and upheld by him, be tempted to disgrace himself and vilify and degrade his own character to an inexpressible degree by the offer of a small part of his own creation, which by the bye was his own already? Or could the first of all created beings be tempted by the gift of that world which he himself was the instrument in making, and which he must have known Satan could not in fact bestow, whatever he might falsely promise?

How strange and unaccountable do the three parts of this temptation appear on the Trinitarian, and even on the Arian scheme! But it is quite otherwise on the scheme of the proper humanity of our Lord.

1. Excessive hunger was a real temptation to a man made as other men are. Esau was unable to withstand a temptation of this kind; *and for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.\** But our Lord Jesus Christ showed his superior virtue by resisting the pinching calls of nature, and refusing to satisfy his hunger till it was agreeable to the will of God to gratify his inclination.

2. In like manner, to make an ostentatious display of miraculous powers was also a considerable temptation to a man; and our Lord Jesus Christ showed his amiable modesty and diffidence by declining it.

3. The offer of all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, was a temptation of a very alluring nature to a man, and calculated to inflame the mind and

inspire it with ambitious desires. What crimes, what cruelties, what detestable frauds, will men be guilty of and perpetrate for the possession of a single kingdom, or province; but our Lord, *the man Christ Jesus*, rejected all the kingdoms of the world put together in their full glory and splendour, and would not commit one base and impious action in order to acquire them!

TO JEHOVAH THE MOST HIGH GOD, *the possessor of heaven and earth*, be ascribed glory and praise in the Messiah's name. Amen.

## DISSERTATION VIII.

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### THE MESSIAHSHIP, AND PROPER HUMANITY OF JESUS, STATED AND VINDICATED.

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

**I**N three preceding Dissertations we pursued our proof of the strict and proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, from a variety of conclusive arguments and striking considerations. We propose at present farther to illustrate the same subject, by exhibiting different incidents and occurrences in the life of Jesus, with some select passages of Scripture; and drawing what appears to us natural and obvious inferences from them.

It is well known, that John the baptist, who was sent on purpose to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus, or the way of Jehovah by him, never represents Jesus as God, or in any respect equal with God, or as a great, distinguished pre-existent Spirit; but as one mightier and far superior to himself and all for-

mer prophets, as one who came *from above*, or had his commission immediately *from heaven*, to whom God had not imparted *the Spirit by measure*,\* and who should baptize *with the holy Ghost, and with fire*.†

We have already taken notice of the baptism of Jesus, and of his consecration and solemn inauguration to the office of the Messiahship, and the following trial or temptation. We find him, soon afterwards, appearing in the character of a prophet and public teacher, and as such working the most astonishing miracles, and teaching and instructing his auditors with great wisdom, dignity, and authority. But neither that wisdom, that power, and authority were his own, as he was always ready to acknowledge. John viii. 26 to 29.—*he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am HE, (that is, I am the Messiah or the Christ, or a man anointed by the divine Spirit) and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.* This is one distinguished testimony from the lips of Jesus himself, among many others, some of which we have had occasion to quote before; that his divine wisdom and powers were the Father's gift, and exercised by him solely to promote his glory, and to authenticate his own mission from him: and consequently these words are a proof of his real humanity.

He frequently styles God *his Father* and himself *his son*; but this appellation can never be used to im-

\* John iii. 31 to 34. † Math iii. 11.

pugn the doctrine of his proper manhood, because, as we have before shown, this title is expressly grounded upon, or connected with circumstances relative to his humanity. Besides, how often, in his celebrated sermon on the mount, and on other occasions, does he style God the common Father of all mankind. *Your heavenly Father* is a term that occurs frequently in that discourse, and he commands his disciples to pray to God under the character of their common Father. *Our Father who art in heaven, &c.* But the most striking passage of this kind is that which John has recorded in his Gospel, chap. xx. 17., when Jesus says to Mary Magdalene,—*go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God.* These are words remarkably significant and emphatical. He styles his disciples *his brethren*, because they partook of the same nature with himself, and he was *a real man*, not a man in appearance or disguise, as well as they were. He calls God *his Father and their Father, his God and their God*; thereby evincing that he derived his being from the same origin and source as they did;—from the benignity of the Supreme God and universal parent of all nature.

Another proof of the proper humanity of Jesus may be derived from his having been so frequently and earnestly engaged in prayer. We find instances of this recorded by the Evangelists,\* and a particular specimen given by John, chap. xvii. This is decisive against the Trinitarian notion of his proper Deity; for one in personal Union with God cannot be supposed to have occasion to pray to him; and it is not very compatible with the Arian Hypothesis. For though I will not take upon me to affirm, that prayer might not be necessary, or be a duty, even to so ex-

\* Math. xiv. 23. Luke vi. 12. ix. 18,—20. 39. xi. 1.

alted a being as the Arians describe their *Logos* to be, yet the *way* and *manner* in which Christ prayed agrees best with the notion of his proper humanity. Particularly, these words of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. v. 7. *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared; &c.* This affecting description offers to our conceptions nothing else, but the idea of a pious, worthy, human character under great perturbation and distress, pouring forth the feelings of a deeply affected mind in devout supplications to the great hearer of prayer, and obtaining his requests.

In Matthew's Gospel, xvi. 13. our Lord puts the following interesting question to his disciples.—*Whom do men say, that I, the Son of man, am?* Attend to this query, it is an important one; and it is observable, that at the same time that our Lord asks a solution of it, he styles himself *the Son of man*. As if he had said in other words; “You all know, that I Jesus am *a man*, of the same nature and species with yourselves. As such I have always appeared among you, and never laid claim to any other character; but as to my office or designation, what is the opinion of those among whom you are conversant and whose sentiments you have had occasion to hear?” ver. 14. *And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.* From this answer of the disciples, it appears, that our Lord at this time occasioned much speculation among the Jews, and that they were divided in opinion concerning him; some imagining him to be one or other of their former ancient prophets come back again, and others, John the baptist *risen from the dead*. But among all this difference of opinion, they never departed from the idea of a human character, none

supposed him to be God; or a pre-existent super-angelic Spirit. But our Lord brings the question home to the disciples themselves, ver. 15, 16, 17.—*But whom say ye that I am. And Simon Peter answered, and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.\* And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

Let us attentively consider the force, and ascertain the meaning of Peter's answer to our Lord's inquiry, which we find was a just and true answer, and received the fullest approbation from our Lord himself. It may lead us into the true notion of our Lord's person and character. Peter certainly understood at this time the true character of his Master, or Jesus would not have applauded him so much for his reply, or ascribed his knowledge and declaration to divine revelation. Now observe, that Peter though inspired on this occasion, and called upon to give a precise definition of his Master, according to the best of his knowledge and information, does not say that his Master was God, or equal with God, or that he was the first of all created beings who had come down from heaven to animate a human body; but simply asserts, that he was *Christ, the Son of the living God*. Words which, when scrutinized and examined according to the strictest rules of fair criticism, can imply nothing more than, yea, I may add can only necessarily signify "a man anointed with the divine Spirit," *whom the Father had sanctified, and sent into the world:*† for the word *Christ*, has this precise meaning; and the term *the Son of the living God* is equivalent to it, or explanatory of it. That this was the exact meaning of Peter is evident, from his afterwards styling our Lord on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 22. *Jesus of Naza-*

\* Mark viii. 29. Luke ix. 20. John vi. 67 to 69. † John x. 36

*retib, a man approved of God, &c.* and in Acts x. 38. saying, *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost, and with power; &c.* passages which we have quoted before, and may be considered as a comment upon Peter's concise declaration. To the same purpose John says towards the conclusion of his Gospel, chap. xx. 31. *But these (signs) are written, that ye might believe that JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD, &c.* Paul affirms, 1 Cor. iii. 11. *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS THE CHRIST.* And our Lord says to Peter in consequence of his declaration concerning him, ver. 18.—*upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:* and in the sequel of his discourse, ver. 20. it is added, *Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was JESUS THE CHRIST.*

From the obvious meaning of all these passages put together, taken in connection, and properly interpreted, some very important consequences will follow.

1. That the terms, *the Messiah* or *the Christ* and *the Son of God*, are equivalent, of the same signification, and imply each other. This may be still farther confirmed by the words of Martha to Jesus, John xi. 27. —*I believe that thou art THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD, which should come into the world:* and by the two following passages in John's first Epistle. v. 1, —5. *Whosoever believeth that JESUS IS THE CHRIST is born of God: &c.—Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD?*

2. That a belief in the proper humanity of Jesus is implied in the assertion and declaration of his being *the Messiah* or *Son of God*. This appears plain from the very meaning of the word *Christ*, which signifies *an anointed man*, and from Peter's declarations on two different occasions.

3. That this is a fundamental article of Christi-



anity, a rock upon which Christ builds his church, a foundation than which another cannot be laid, and the very end or design for which John wrote his Gospel.

Here then, the proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ is established upon a solid basis, and made a corner stone or inseparable part of Christianity, by the united and concurring testimony of these three celebrated Apostles, Peter, John and Paul; and the whole corroborated by the authority of their great Master our Lord himself.

Our Lord's refusing the title of *Good Master*, and declaring *none good but one, that is God,\** his saying, *for my Father is greater than I.†*—*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, (Gr. none) no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father: or but my Father only.‡* and *to sit on my right-hand, and on my left, is not mine to give;||* &c. are expressions decisive against proper Deity being ascribed to him; and if they do not necessarily imply his proper humanity, they at least accord with that system very well.

But we proceed to take a view of a very affecting scene, which it will be very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to account for on any other principle than that of the strict and proper humanity of Jesus. The scene I allude to is the dismal agony and melancholy apprehensions he experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane, immediately before his apprehension, trial, and consequent sufferings. Of this agony three evangelists have given a particular account; and they all make use of expressions intimating, that his distress and depression of mind were very great. Mathew, xxvi. 38., describes him as saying, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* Mark says, xiv. 33. *He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;* and

\* Math. xix. 17 † John xiv. 28. ‡ Mark. xiii. 32.  
Math. xxiv. 36. || Math. xx. 23.

Luke mentions, xxii. 44. *And, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* All of these Evangelists take notice of his praying, that *if it were possible this hour or cup might pass from him*; but submitting at the same time to the will of his heavenly Father: and Mathew mentions that this prayer was repeated thrice.

Now, how is it possible, to account for our Lord's apprehensions in the view of his approaching sufferings, on any other footing than that of his being *a man*? I doubt not but other causes might contribute to his agony besides a concern for his own personal sufferings;—the obstinacy of his countrymen in rejecting the evidence of his miracles, their hard heartedness in withstanding his animated instructions, and faithful warnings, their baseness and ingratitude in forgetting his acts of kindness and benevolence and returning him evil for good, and the dreadful calamities he foresaw would soon come upon them in consequence of their rejecting him as their promised Messiah. All these reflections might make a deep impression on his tender and feeling mind. For our Lord Jesus Christ does not appear to have possessed a stoical apathy, or want of feeling; but to have possessed all the innocent tenderness and delicate sensibility belonging to a mind rightly constituted.

This appears from his *weeping over Jerusalem*\*, and expressing how often he would have gathered its inhabitants if they would have attended to his call; † and also from his saying to those women who attended him, when he was led out to crucifixion, *be-wailing his fate; Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children*: and what follows. ‡

But though there was a great mixture of these benevolent sympathies in the distress which our ami-

\* Luke xix. 41. † Math xxiii 37 ‡ Luke xx. 27 to 31

able Master endured on this occasion, yet still these are only suitable in the degree he experienced them to a human character,—to one endowed with the general sensations and compassionate tenderness that prevail in human nature. We cannot suppose that a being in personal Union with the Deity could have been affected in this manner, nor that the first of all created beings, who had existed for thousands of years, and even before the world, could have been so intensely agitated by a mournful and deplorable prospect of this kind. Such a being from the natural vigour of his superior understanding and exalted capacity, from long observation, from a comparison of past events and an anticipation of future ones, must have acquired a comprehension of mind, a fixedness and stability of thought, that no concurrence of present circumstances on our earthly globe could have divested him of, or shaken and perplexed his mind in so violent a degree.

And this observation will derive more force from a circumstance which Luke mentions, that we have not yet taken notice of, chap. xxii. 43. *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.* Our blessed Lord appears to have been in the height of his agony and distress and almost overpowered, when this heavenly messenger came to his assistance. To be sure, he would not have come, if his presence had not been necessary; and if the sad conflict in which Jesus was engaged had not been too hard for his frame to support, unassisted. I apprehend therefore, that the coming of this angel for the comfort and relief of Jesus in these circumstances, is a consideration sufficiently strong to overthrow both the Trinitarian and Arian systems. For, could our Lord in personal Union with Deity need the assistance of any created angel? Or, could an angel be supposed to *strengthen* or relieve the first of all created beings, far superior to all Angels, and

even the subordinate creator of Angels themselves?

Upon the whole, the circumstances of our Lord's agony in the Garden are only competent to *a man*, and a person of tender sensibility. It is natural and proper to a man, even the most virtuous and holy, to view a painful, lingering and shameful death with apprehension. It is natural to a man, to be anxiously impressed for his country, and to be deeply affected with any great calamity he knows, for certain, will come upon it. But such views, for the reasons before assigned, can never be supposed to affect a transcendently superior mind in the manner they did our Lord.

Having viewed our Lord under the pressure of his painful agony in the Garden, if we trace him through the whole train of his appearances before the Jewish Council, Herod, and Pilate, and his sufferings on the cross; we shall find that he maintained his character as *the anointed prophet of the LORD*, with great dignity and propriety; but still there is nothing in the whole course of his procedure, that indicates any thing more than a human being of the greatest excellence and worth, suffering patiently, magnanimously, and forgivingly, under an unjust and iniquitous sentence.

And indeed, in the whole series of our Lord's life, though his character was in the highest degree exemplary, his conduct judicious, his words pertinent and well chosen, and the most diffusive and fervent benevolence ever accompanied him; yet abstracting from the divine powers with which he was endowed, there appears (if I may be allowed the expression) something *innocently human* about him, which discovers him plainly to have been a partaker of the same nature with ourselves. He was susceptible of all the sinless infirmities, passions, and affections of human nature. He sympathized with the distresses of his

friends,—witness the generous tears he shed over Lazarus in concert with his sister Mary, and others.\* He was at times impressed with just indignation when he discovered unworthy views and intentions, or had detected the base, insidious designs of hypocrites and formal professors,—witness the woes he pronounced on the Scribes and Pharisees.† He was some times affected with melancholy and mournful impressions,‡ and at other times *rejoiced in spirit*, and felt his mind elevated by bright and cheerful prospects.¶ I need not add that he experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue, bodily weariness, and other frailties incident to human nature. These things are obvious to every one who peruses the Gospels. And what inference shall we draw from all these particulars; but that the Lord Jesus was a *true and real man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.*

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews appears to have had the same ideas concerning him, chap. ii. 10, 11, 12,—14,—16, 17, 18. *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.—Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.—For verily he took not hold of angels; but he took hold of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in*

\* John xi. 32 to 36. † Math. xxiii. 13, &c. ‡ Math. ix. 36.

¶ Luke x. 21.

*that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

With respect to the resurrection of Jesus, that can only be satisfactorily accounted for in the way it is mentioned in Scripture on the system of his real humanity, as well as his exaltation. If Jesus had been in personal Union with God or a transcendent superangelic being, why should his having been *raised from the dead* be perpetually ascribed in Scripture, as it undoubtedly is, to the Father, and represented as *a mighty effort of his power*?\* The

\* Some of the most remarkable of the passages in which Jesus our Lord is said to have been *raised from the dead* by God, or the Father, are the following. Acts ii. 24,—32. iii. 26. xiii. 32 to 34,—37. Rom. vi. 4. x. 9. Gal. i. 1. Epk. i. 19, 20. Col. ii. 12. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 21.

Our Lord himself says, John ii. 19,—21.—*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.—He spake of the temple of his body.* But he does not mean to intimate any agency of his own in his resurrection. This is evident from another passage. John x. 17, 18. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

Our Lord knew from the *Father's commandment*, or promise, that his irresistible power would be employed in effecting his resurrection; and therefore speaks of it as a thing in his own power, because he was assured it would certainly take place on the third day after his death. Math. xvi. 21 *From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and BE RAISED AGAIN the third day.* Luke ix. 22 *The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and BE RAISED the third day.* In the parallel place in Mark x. 34, the words are,—*and the third day he shall rise again.* But this expression, or any similar ones, that may be elsewhere found, are of no force to prove that Jesus was in any respect actively concerned in his own resurrection, since we find the same language used concerning the dead in general, and the Saints. 1 Cor. xv. 16, 17. *For if the dead RISE not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.* 1 Thess. iv. 16.—*and the dead in Christ SHALL RISE first.*

When our Lord Jesus Christ was about to die, he said, (Luke xxiii. 46.) *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:* and it is perfectly clear from the whole evidence of Scripture, that it was the *working of the Father's mighty power*, which relieved him from the *dominion of death*, and restored him again to a new, glorious and immortal life.

supposed divine nature of Jesus was certainly the only proper agent to raise the human part; and the first of all creatures, who was himself upon the Arian scheme a subordinate creator, might be supposed a very fit agent to reanimate his own body.

Again, with respect to our Lord's exaltation. How could a being already in personal Union with God be exalted, or the first and most excellent of all created beings be made higher than he was before? But on the scheme of the proper humanity of Jesus every thing appears regular and consistent, and the mind acquiesces with entire satisfaction in a system supported by the clearest and fullest evidence from Scripture, and perfectly consonant to reason.

If we examine this scheme in a practical view it will be found to be attended with excellent effects. When we see Jesus, a partaker of the same nature with ourselves, raised from the dead to a glorious immortality, we have a permanent proof of a future state and also a certainty of our own resurrection, and are encouraged to hope, that *because he lives, we shall live also.*\*

When we see Jesus, subjected to all the innocent infirmities of human nature as well as ourselves, conflicting with trials and temptations, hardships and difficulties; and surmounting them all by ardent faith, dependence on God, fervent prayer, holy diligence, and exemplary perseverance, we are stimulated to be active in our turn, and by the use of the same means to follow out the path marked out to us by the great *captain of our salvation.*

On the Trinitarian and Arian schemes, the motive from example does not operate with near so much force and efficacy. That a man in personal Union with God should surmount trials and difficulties does

not appear wonderful, or that the first of all created beings should do the same. In either case, it is not a proper pattern of imitation for us.

But on the scheme of the real humanity of Jesus, every thing is calculated to rouse, animate, and encourage. *To him that overcometh* (says our Lord, Rev. iii. 21.) *will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* Duly impressed with these transporting words, as well as influenced by the example of *faithful* men in former ages, we are strongly prompted to *lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.\**

MAY GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER be blessed and praised for his grace and mercy *in Christ*, and all the inestimable advantages derived from the practical knowledge and influence of the pure, evangelical scheme of religion. Amen.

\* Heb. xii. 1, 2.



## DISSERTATION IX.

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A REPLY

TO ARIAN OBJECTIONS.

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I TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

HAVING concluded the positive proof and evidence, which we proposed to alledge from Scripture, in favour of the proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; we now, according to the plan we laid down, come to enter upon the second division of the second important affirmation contained in our text, which was to reply to the objections of those who adopt the Arian system; with respect to the supposed pre-existence of Christ, and his having been employed as an agent or instrument in the formation of the world or first creation.

We shall first take notice of those passages of Scripture which are urged by the Arians, as referring to a state of pre-existence in general, and then proceed to explain those which are thought by them to

refer to our Lord's having been employed as an inferior agent in the creation of the world.

Indeed, I apprehend, in order to be consistent, both these must be believed or rejected together. For though some modern Arians have attempted to make a distinction, and have asserted, that the notion of Christ's pre-existence in general might stand by itself, without necessarily implying any agency on his part *in creation*; yet this distinction was quite unknown to the ancient Arians, as well as to all who have embraced their system in modern times, until of late years it has been started by some ingenious men: and if we are to interpret a part of these Scriptures literally which are supposed to refer to a state of pre-existence, uniformity and consistency seem to require, that we should interpret the whole in a like manner.

After the clear, striking, and almost irresistible evidence, that we have exhibited in favour of the real manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, it seems highly improbable *à priori*, that any thing solid or well founded can be alledged against it. For a divine revelation intended for the benefit and information of mankind at large must be supposed to be clear and uniform; and a set of writers deriving their information from the same source can never be conceived to contradict one another.

If Mathew, Mark, Luke, Peter, and James have said nothing respecting the pre-existence of Christ, it is highly improbable that John or Paul should have inculcated it or referred to it; and it is very natural to think that the sense of those passages which some have supposed to look that way has been misunderstood, and that the comments made upon these places of Scripture are mistaken criticisms, arising from the authors of them not having been rightly acquainted with the oriental idiom.

The most literal interpretations of Scripture are not always the best. It is granted on all hands, and by all parties, that some passages are to be understood figuratively, that is, when the literal sense is absurd, or impossible, or contrary to the general analogy of Scripture.

If we take this good general rule along with us, and also such a share of candour and fairness as ought always to accompany a Christian in all religious inquiries and disquisitions, it may be sufficient to guide us in our scheme of interpretation, and to lead us to the just and true, or most natural meaning of the sacred writers.

The pre-existence of Christ, his existing in a state of glory before the world was, and having been employed in the creation of the Universe, and afterwards having come down from heaven to inhabit a human body, is a notion so wonderful, astonishing and transcendent, so contrary to all that could be supposed or imagined, that, *if true*, we might well suppose it to be almost the perpetual theme and burden of the sacred writers, that it would have been particularly and distinctly recorded, and that very frequent allusions to it would have been found in every book of the New Testament. And yet the fact is, that in the three first Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude, the greatest part of the Epistles of Paul, and the Revelation of John, there is no colour for it to be found, nor even an allusion which seems to imply it.

How shall we account for these omissions supposing this notion to be true? Was it not incumbent upon Mathew, Mark, and Luke, who undertook to give a fair and distinct history of every thing remarkable and important relative to our Lord Jesus Christ, to take notice of a circumstance so wonderful as

that of his pre-existence and consequent incarnation.

This omission is altogether unaccountable in Luke; who proposed to take things from their first rise, and says that he derived his information (chap. i. 2.) from those *who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word*; who enters so minutely into all the circumstances preceding and attending our Lord's birth, and yet drops not a word relative to any state of pre-existence before his formation of the Virgin Mary. What a fair opportunity had he of doing it in the conference which he describes between Gabriel and the Virgin, and yet he refers to nothing of the kind, but merely informs us of the *divine power* which was employed in the formation of Jesus, on account of which he was to be called *the Son of God*.

I must say, that considerations of this kind affected me powerfully, even at a time when I was less decided with respect to our Lord's proper humanity than I am at present; and I should think they must also have a strong effect upon every mind that is open to conviction.

Luke together with Matthew and Mark, must have been acquainted with our Lord's pre-existence, *if a fact*, and they must also have considered it as a matter of great importance, and of consequence delivered it to the world fully and explicitly in their writings. They knew not that any one was to come after them, and compose a supplement or appendix to their writings;—an omission, therefore, of so important a fact, which might lead the disciples of Jesus for ever into a mistake concerning his character, was unpardonable and irretrievable. It follows therefore, as a natural and unavoidable consequence, that neither Mathew, Mark, nor Luke, knew any thing of the pre-existence of Jesus; and if they knew nothing of

it, it cannot be supposed to be a truth, and consequently, Arianism, as well as Trinitarianism, will be shaken from its foundation, and fall to the ground.

Having premised these general observations, we now proceed to the consideration of those passages of Scripture which are supposed to imply or infer the pre-existence of Christ.

John i. 15. *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me.* These last words, *for he was before me*, as they stand in our last translation, have been thought by some to imply Christ's pre-existence,—as he was certainly younger than John in respect of years in this world, they imagine that these words must refer to a prior state of existence. But several learned men are of opinion, that the Greek words  $\piρῆτωρὸς μὲ$ , rendered *before me*, may with more propriety be translated *my chief, my principal*, or, “one more excellent than I.” This removes the objection at once, and makes the sense of John similar to that of the other Evangelists; who when they take notice of the description that John the baptist gives of the character and dignity of our Lord use words that imply no prior state of existence, but only greater dignity and power than John was possessed of. Thus, Math. iii. 11.—*He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: &c.* Mark i. 7. *There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose:* and Luke iii. 16. in words nearly the same as those of Mark. These quotations from the other Evangelists supply us with a good commentary on John's words, and confirm the translation we have given of them.

John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he*

*bath declared him.* The word *only begotten* is equivalent to *well beloved*, as may be proved by many examples;\* and the *Sonship* of Jesus with every epithet annexed to it is only referable to his humanity, as we have before shown. The being *in the bosom of the Father*, denotes that our Lord was a person very dear to him, and acquainted with his counsels; but has no reference to any prior state of existence.

John iii. 13. *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.* This passage occurs in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, in which are several figurative expressions, and this among the rest. In a literal sense, it was not true that *no man had ascended up to heaven*, since Enoch and Elijah had both been translated to those happy regions. It was also not literally true that our Lord, being *the Son of man*, had ever been there. We have no account of any ascension of our Lord, but his final one after his resurrection. The literal sense of this passage therefore, cannot be the true one. And if *ascending up to heaven*, cannot be taken in a literal sense; neither can *coming down from heaven* be understood of a literal descent; but each must be interpreted in conformity with the other. Now as, according to common and ordinary ways of thinking, heaven is supposed to be upwards, and those who wish to be acquainted with the will of God must go there to inform themselves concerning it, so our Lord following this popular idea, and adapting his discourse to it makes use of these figurative expressions; intending nothing more by them as I apprehend, than to signify, that he only was acquainted with the divine counsels or designs for the safety and happiness of the human race. And this method of explaining his words is strengthened by what follows, *even the Son of man which is in heaven.* For it is a cer-

\* Compare John i. 18 with Math. iii. 17. xvii. 3. Mark i. 11. ix. 7. Luke iii. 22. ix. 35. 2 Pet. i. 17.

tain fact that *the Son of man*, or a material, fleshly being, could not *come down from heaven*, and yet be *in heaven* at the same time. It would be equal in absurdity to the doctrine of transubstantiation, to suppose it. The whole passage therefore is figurative, and is owned to be so by a learned Trinitarian writer who interprets it, "No one knows (or understands) heavenly things, but I only."

And it strengthens our interpretation greatly and shows it to be a just one, when we find similar language used in the Old Testament. Thus, Moses speaking to the Jews concerning the will of God, or his commands revealed to them from heaven, says, Deut. xxx. 12. *It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say; Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?* And Prov. xxx. 4. *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? &c. — what is his name, and what is his son's name? if thou canst tell?*

The plain meaning, then, of our Lord's words, when stripped of their metaphorical dress, was no more than this. *I the Son of man*, the promised Messiah, the great prophet, teacher, and instructor of mankind, am alone acquainted with the divine will, or the counsels of the Father; his presence is ever with me, and in consequence thereof, these *heavenly things* (ver. 12.) are as well known to me, as if I had ascended up to heaven and come down again on purpose.

John vi. 34. *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.* 38. *For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* Ver. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: &c.*

The chapter from whence these passages are quoted is one of the most figurative in the whole New Testament. That our Lord did not intend a great part

of what he said to be understood literally, appears from the caution he gives, ver. 63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

As our Lord styles himself thrice in this discourse, *the Son of man*, and represents himself at other times by material substances, such as *bread, flesh, and blood*, it is sufficiently plain to those who consider his words here with attention and compare them with what he himself and his Apostles say elsewhere, that when he speaks of *coming down from heaven*, or that he *came down from heaven*; he can only refer to the divinity and heavenly origin of his doctrine and mission, or his supernatural production *as a man* by the power of God, and the fulness of the Spirit imparted to him; but by no means to any state of pre-existence, before his formation of the Virgin Mary.

John vi. 62. *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* This is perhaps as obscure a Text as is to be met with in the New Testament; and the Arians urge it as an argument in support of their system; and think that the words *ascend up* refer to our Lord's ascending to heaven after his resurrection, and that the word *before* refers to a state of pre-existence. But as *the Son of man* never was in heaven (considered as a state of separation from this world) till his final ascension, some other sense than this must be the true one.

A late writer refers it to Christ's resurrection from the dead into this world, in which he was before his death. But it is to be observed, that our Lord was speaking here to a pretty numerous concourse; not merely to his own disciples, but to many others besides; all, or even the greatest part of whom, never saw him in this world after his resurrection, and therefore it could not be said in this sense that they should see him *ascend up where he was before*.



The learned Dr. Lardner thinks, “that this passage should not be understood too literally, and that our Lord intended by it only to say that he should not be always personally here, but should leave this world; which was the most discouraging thought to all the carnal Jews, and much suited to his purpose on the present occasion.”

Though we were to interpret these words in the strictest literal sense, they would not necessarily prove what Arians contend for, that Christ existed in heaven prior to his birth: for it is *the Son of man* that is here spoken of, and we are sure that *the Son of man* did not exist before he was born. The utmost, therefore, that could be inferred from these words taken in the most literal sense would be, that our Lord was at some period of his life taken up to heaven in order to be instructed in the divine counsels. This was the opinion of Socinus himself and the early Polish Unitarians, who supposed that our Lord was taken up to heaven before he entered upon his public ministry, as Moses was called up by God to Mount Sinai,\* or Paul *caught up to the third heaven*,† and there received the divine commands.

It might have been expected however, that an account should have been given of this matter in the Evangelists; but we find none; unless some portion of the time our Lord spent in the wilderness, before or after his temptation, may have been employed in this way.

John viii. 58. *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* We had this passage before under consideration in the class of Trinitarian objections, (p. 58, 59.) and showed that the true rendering and meaning of it was, *Before Abraham was I am HE, or the Messiah*, the object of Abraham's faith, whose *day he rejoiced to see; and he*

\* Exod. xix. 20. xxxiv. 4.

† 2 Cor. xii. 2.

*saw it, and was glad.* This, which is the true sense of the passage, removes the objection and shows that our Lord intended to say nothing more, but that he was the true Messiah predicted and promised before Abraham had a being.

John xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.* Many have been misled as to the true meaning of this passage by not attending to the particular force and genuine sense of words as they are used in Scripture. To *come into the world* as here used, does not signify to come from any previous or prior state of existence, or even to be born and enter into our natural world: but it signifies, to receive a commission from God, to enter upon it, or appear in his name amongst men. The term *world* here signifies not merely the material fabric of the earth, but men united by the bonds of Society. To *come into the world* therefore, is to mix amongst mankind, to commence a course or an office in Society, and enter upon a scene of public action.

We can prove this to be the genuine sense and meaning of the words by many scriptural examples. Thus our Lord says to Pilate, John xviii. 37. *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.* Here, he refers to his *birth* in the first place, which shows him to have been *a man*, and afterwards speaks of his divine commission, by the phrase of *coming into the world*. In like manner, 1 John iv. 1.—*many false prophets are gone out into the world:* and 2 John ver. 7. *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.*

These two last quotations deserve to be attended to. Here we find, that false prophets and deceivers are said to be *gone out into the world* and to have *entered into the world*. Few, or none, I apprehend, will say

that these false prophets and deceivers pre-existed in any former state; and yet a similar mode of expression is used concerning them, as our Lord. They are said to have *gone out* or *entered into the world*, when they commenced false teachers or deceitful instructors of mankind; and in the same manner our Lord, who was the best and most excellent teacher that mankind ever knew, is said to *come into the world*, when he entered upon his public ministry.

But there is a passage still stronger than any of those I have yet alledged, which will confirm the explication of the phrase *coming into the world* we have given, beyond a doubt. Our Lord, in his devout, solemn prayer to the Father, John xvii. 18, speaking of his disciples, says, *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* Here the Apostles are declared by our Lord himself to be *sent into the world* in the same manner *as the Father sent him into the world.* And as no one can infer the pre-existence of the Apostles from this expression, neither is it reasonable to infer the pre-existence of our Lord from it.

Upon the whole, the words of our Lord may be understood as conveying this sense. *I came forth from the Father*, that is, I was sanctified and set apart by him and fitted for my mediatorial office, and *came into the world*, or entered upon my public ministry. *Again, I leave the world*, I retire from this scene of action and spiritual occupation, and *go unto the Father*, that is, I withdraw from mankind, and return to my heavenly Father from whom I received my commission. Thus, a passage, that at first sight, appears invincibly strong for the pre-existence of Christ, and which has greatly puzzled many; when accurately examined, and spiritual things are compared with spiritual, appears to afford no solid foundation for it.

John xvii. 5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* This is another passage, that, literally taken, interpreted by itself, and without attending to the oriental idiom and the general sense of Scripture concerning our Lord, may seem irresistibly strong for his pre-existence and almost unanswerable. It had long a powerful effect upon myself, suspended my judgment, and prevented me from coming to an absolute decision with respect to the proper humanity of our Lord. But as it is impossible that any sacred writer can contradict another, and as it does not seem reasonable to build a doctrine, inconsistent with many clear places of Scripture, attended with great difficulties, and embarrassing the plain, simple scheme of Christianity, upon one or two passages; let us examine with calm and unprejudiced minds, whether we can find a way of interpreting this passage, consistent with the general scheme of the sacred writers.

It may help to lead us to the true sense of this place if we consider, that the glory belonging to the Messiah was something posterior to, or coming after his sufferings and death, and not possessed before then. Thus, our Lord himself says, Luke xxiv. 26. *Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter unto his glory?* Thus, 1 Pet. i. 11. *the sufferings of Christ are spoken of, and the glory that should follow.* And it is said of our Lord, Heb. ii. 2.—*who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, &c.*

The glory belonging to Christ therefore was a *following glory*, something that was to take place, and that he was to *enter into*, after his sufferings and death, and that he did not actually *enjoy* before them.

If we arrange our Lord's words in the order in which they stand in the original Greek, we may per-

haps find some authority from that order, for affixing this sense to them. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had before the world was, with thee.* The glory which our Lord prays for, was a glory that had not been in his own possession, but was *with the Father*, or prepared for him by the Father. And from the certain assurance that the glory promised him would be actually conferred, he speaks of it, ver. 22. of this chapter, as already in his possession, and promises it to his disciples. *And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one.*

It was a part of the divine counsel from the very first, that the Messiah should be glorified: and that his faithful followers should share in the divine grace and mercy by him. And therefore it is said, Ephes. i. 3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath CHOSEN US IN HIM, before the foundation of the world, &c.* Thus also, 2 Tim. i. 9. *Who (God) hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS, before the world began, &c.* And our Lord represents himself as saying to the righteous at the day of Judgment, Math. xxv. 34.—*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom PREPARED FOR YOU from the foundation of the world.*

We therefore interpret the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the passage we have been considering, according to the Hebrew phraseology and the general sense of Scripture, of *the glory* that was *laid up* or *reserved for him*, in the divine decree, *before the world was.* Thus our Lord, after having *glorified the Father on the earth*, and *finished the work which*

*he had given him to do*, requests in prayer *that glory*, which he knew was destined and *prepared for him* at the Father's right hand.

This interpretation is by no means a novel one, or of modern date; it is that of *Grotius* and *Le Clerc*, and was also that of *Augustin*, an ancient Latin Father; and has been generally adopted since the Reformation by the advocates for the proper humanity of Jesus.

Blessed be God for the dispensation of *grace and truth* by Jesus Christ, *who verily was FOREORDAINED before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for those, who by him do believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and GAVE HIM GLORY, that our faith and hope might be in God.* Amen. 1 Pet. i. 20, 21.

## DISSERTATION X.

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### A REPLY TO ARIAN OBJECTIONS.

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

AGREEABLY to our proposed plan, we proceed in replying to the objections of those who adopt the Arian system, founded upon some passages of Scripture, which seem to them to imply the pre-existence of Christ, but which appear to us to be capable of other solutions, and to admit of explications consistent with the scheme of the proper humanity of our Lord.

1 Cor. x. 4.—*For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ.* This passage has been urged as an argument to prove that Christ existed in the time of Moses, and that he was the agent that commanded Moses to *smite the rock* which supplied the Israelites with water in the wilderness. But this application is entirely grounded upon an erroneous idea, and arises from not attend-

ing to the figurative language used by Paul, who delights in allegorical applications of this kind.

It is certain, that Jehovah the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that God, who in the New Testament is styled *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and who raised him from the dead, was the agent who conducted the Israelites, under the ministry of Moses his servant, and who brought water from *the rock*.\* And accordingly we find that in this chapter, ver. 1, the Israelites are said to have been *all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*; and ver. 3 and 4, it is said, they *did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink*: and then it is added by way of parenthesis (*for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ,*) or a type, or figure of *Christ*.

The indirect method in which this allusion is brought forward, seems to denote that it was only intended by the Apostle as a figure or allegorical application. And it is a very dangerous thing to build doctrines of importance upon hints, metaphors, or figurative allusions.

The plain, and obvious meaning of the Apostle appears to be, that the rock, by which the Israelites when parched with thirst were supplied with refreshing draughts of water, was a type or figure of Christ and the blessings of his Gospel; which afford a far superior refreshment and consolation to Christian Pilgrims, when travelling through the wilderness of this world towards the heavenly Canaan.

In the same chapter another passage occurs of which a similar erroneous application has been made. Ver. 9. *Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.*

\* See Exod. xvii. 5, 6.



Admitting the commonly received reading to be a just one, it would not follow that Christ pre-existed, nor that the Israelites literally *tempted* him, since we might understand the passage in the same way that a learned Commentator does, who supposes the word *God* to be understood, and renders it as follows. *Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted God, and were destroyed of serpents.*

But we have still a better solution of this place; for the celebrated Alexandrian Manuscript reads here, *Neither let us tempt God*, and some later ones either exhibit the same reading, or have, *let us not tempt the Lord*. And add to all this, that Epiphanius an ancient ecclesiastical writer informs us, that this text was very early corrupted by Marcion, an ancient heretic; who changed *Lord*, the ancient reading into *Christ*. So that, from these considerations, this objection is satisfactorily removed.

2 Cor. viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* These words have no necessary reference to any pre-existent state. They may be very well explained in regard to our Lord's state and conduct while upon earth. He was in possession of great and illustrious powers, by which he could controul nature and procure what he pleased for himself or others. He abounded also in wisdom and every moral virtue. But though his benevolence prompted him to make use of his miraculous powers in behalf of others, yet we never find it recorded, that he ever did any thing for his own private emolument, ease, or accommodation.

Though he might have chosen an easy, independent station for himself, and as far as we know there would have been no criminality in so doing, yet he inclined to appear in a low station, and to embrace

a life of voluntary poverty; making his example thereby more eminently extensive and useful, as the bulk of mankind are placed in such situations; and giving also by his appearance the strongest proof of his disinterestedness and the truth of the doctrine he taught, as having no connection with worldly power, grandeur, and policy, but prevailing by its own intrinsic worth and excellence.

In this manner, our Lord *was rich* in his divine powers, gifts, graces, and qualifications; and in this manner, he *became poor*, by his moderate, self-denying application of them; and that *for our sakes* and the Gospel's, that his example might be more eminently useful and instructive, and the truth of the Gospel ascertained with greater evidence.

Ephes. iv. 9, 10. *Now that he 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.* This passage has not the least reference to any pre-existent state of Christ before his birth. The Jews of that age had their objections to a suffering Messiah, who should be subjected to death. The Apostle endeavours to obviate this objection by an allusion to Psalm lxviii. He quotes the 18th verse, with some alteration. Verse 8. *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.* And then, he argues, *Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? or the grave, which is meant thereby.*

The *descent* here spoken of, is not a descent from heaven or any pre-existent state, but a descent from this world to the grave, or the state of the dead; and then an ascent from that state to a state of power, glory, and dignity, *far above all heavens*; here signified by *filling all things*, or superintending what-

ever relates to the government of his church and people.

Philip. ii. 5 to 11. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who being in the form of God, did not aspire, or think it a prey to be seized, to be like 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. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name : That at (or in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This passage was examined and replied to before, (p. 62) so far as it can be considered as a Trinitarian objection ; but as an objection on the part of the Arians, it deserves a more particular and minute discussion.

Some Arians, and particularly an ingenious writer in the *Theological Repository*, have urged this passage as a strong argument for the pre-existence of Christ, inasmuch as he is said to be *in the form of God*, and afterwards to have taken upon him *the form of a servant*, and to have been *made in the likeness of men*, and to be *found in fashion as a man*. These expressions they think exceedingly strong and to have a necessary reference to a state of pre-existence : and much elaborate declamation has been employed with a view to evince that this is the only fair and natural sense of the words.

But let us attentively consider the words of our Apostle, the object he has in view, the example he proposes, and we shall find that we can explain his expressions in a very just manner, as referring to our

Lord's condition and demeanour while upon earth.

The drift or object of the Apostle's discourse is to recommend humility, condescension, and self-denial to the members of the christian church at Philippi by the example of their great Master. Phil. ii. ver. 1 to 4. *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies: Fulfil ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* And then he proposes the example of Christ, as the most exact model or delineation of the virtues which he had been recommending.

Now, where shall we find any account of the state, conduct, or behaviour of Christ but in the Gospels? And do we ever find there any relation of his having lived or acted in any other state or condition than that of *a man*? The Apostle therefore in proposing our Lord as a pattern of humility and self-denial must be supposed to refer to his life and manners in general, to something that was palpably known, well understood, and obvious to every beholder. The example of Christ as *a man*, was the only object, properly speaking, that could be held up as a pattern for imitation to the Philippians.

Let us therefore take a survey of the conduct of Christ *as a man*, placed in the very peculiar circumstances in which he was, and try whether we can find a suitable explanation of every term the Apostle here employs concerning him.

*Who being in the form of God.* Observe here, the Apostle does not say, that Jesus was God, but only that he was *in the form of God*: and what follows in our translation, "thought it not robbery to be

equal with God," is erroneous, and ought to be rendered as we have done before, *did not aspire, or think it a prey to be seized, to be like God.* That this is the true rendering is well known to those who are acquainted with the Greek, and the Arians themselves admit it as a just translation. *The form of God,* therefore, must necessarily signify, "the appearance or likeness of God," or more properly, "some resemblance of his power, glory, and excellence." And this will be found perfectly applicable to our Lord Jesus Christ *as a man.*

He was *in the form of God,* when he was enriched with the gifts of the Spirit *without measure*; when he exhibited a wisdom altogether unusual and extraordinary, taught with authority, and *spoke as never man spake*;—more especially when he performed so many astonishing miracles, healed the sick, lame and blind, cast out Dæmons by a single word, walked on the sea, stilled the raging winds, and tumultuous waves, supplied the cravings of fainting multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, and broke the barriers of death and the grave by raising the dead to life. These were great and God-like actions, and by the performance of these our Lord appeared *like a God* amongst men. With a view to this extraordinary and signal part of our Lord's life and character, the Apostle might properly say, that he was *in the form of God.*

But though *the man Christ Jesus* was really *in the form of God,* yet he *did not aspire to be like God*; he made no ostentatious display of these God-like powers, yea sometimes ordered his miraculous cures to be concealed. Some think there may be an allusion here to the conduct of our first ancestor Adam and his Spouse. Our first Parents, though *made in the image, and after the likeness of God,*\* fell by an exor-

\* Gen. i. 26, 27

bitant and sinful desire of forbidden knowledge; by wishing to be *as Gods, knowing good and evil.*\* But the *last Adam*, though *in the form of God*, had no unlawful and irregular desires of this kind. He never made use of his miracles to advance his own glory, or recommend and distinguish his own person; but referred them all to the glory of his heavenly Father, and the advancement of his kingdom and interest among men. In this respect our Lord *did not aspire to be like God.*

*But he made himself of no reputation, or more literally, he emptied himself.* He did not exert these extraordinary powers, but in the cases mentioned above, for the glory of God and the good of mankind. In all cases and situations where these two great objects of his mission did not call them forth, he appeared as if divested of them, and acted like an *ordinary man.*

*And, took, or more properly, taking upon him the form of a servant.* Our Lord, as before observed, though he might have chosen a more easy and respectable situation in life, yet, from a motive of benevolence and a regard to general usefulness, preferred a low station. Thus, Math. viii. 20. *And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* Math. xx. 28. *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* His whole life was employed in the service of others, he even condescended *to wash and wipe his disciples feet,*† and in short made himself like a *servant* or *slave* entirely subservient to the purposes of his mission; not consulting his own ease or pleasure, nor partaking of the dainties or delicacies of human life.

\* Gen iii 4, 5, 6,—22. † John xiii. 3 to 17.

*And was made in the likeness of men, or more exactly from the original, was or being in the likeness of men.* This is a continuation of the description of our Lord's humility. The Apostle here is not speaking of the manner in which God made Christ, or of transferring a being from a higher to a lower state of existence; but he is speaking of Christ's own situation and circumstances while he resided on earth and was conversant amongst men. He intends to signify, that our Lord was of the same nature, or character, as other men, exposed to the same sufferings, infirmities and calamities, which he willingly and cheerfully bore and acquiesced in.

*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* The Apostle has been hitherto describing and going through the different steps and gradations of Christ's humility. He comes now to the last link of the chain, or the lowest step of degradation. *And being found in fashion, or being in fashion as a man,* that is, "being of the same figure and texture as other men," he made no effort to prevent the insidious designs or open assaults of his enemies from taking effect; nor did he endeavour to rescue himself out of the hands of his adversaries, or call in the assistance of his miraculous powers, or supernatural aids, to resist their attempts, which he could have easily done;\* but calmly yielded and gave himself up to the most unworthy usage and a painful and ignominious death.

*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, &c.* On account of the unparalleled humility, condescension, and self-denial that our Lord Jesus<sup>c</sup> Christ exhibited in the course of his whole useful and holy life, and particularly at the time of his sufferings and

\* Math. xxvi. 47 to 54. John xviii. 1 to 12.

death, God hath been pleased to reward him in the most signal and extraordinary manner, and advance him to a state of the highest dignity, authority and dominion.

Thus, we have entered into a particular and distinct examination of each of the parts of our Apostle's discourse, and found they will apply to our Lord Jesus Christ *as a man*, and to his conduct on earth, which the Apostle recommends in the strongest manner to the imitation of his followers.

Indeed, the exaltation of Jesus, mentioned in the conclusion of the Apostle's argument, is a strong presumption that our interpretation is right. For the words *God also hath highly exalted him, or exalted him higher than before*, apply far better to *a man* than to a transcendent pre-existent being, such as the Arians suppose our Lord to have been: and it is difficult to conceive how one that was *so high* before could be made *higher*, or receive any accession to his natural dignity by ascending to heaven in a human body.

But the exaltation of Jesus to *honour and glory*, on account of his humility, and unreserved obedience and submission to the will of God, agrees perfectly with the scheme of his proper humanity, with the description of his exaltation in other places of Scripture,\* and furnishes a most animating, grand and attractive motive to all his followers to excel in the cultivation and practice of those virtues that were so eminently rewarded in their Lord and Master.

Heb. ii. 16. *For verily he (Jesus) took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* This passage is literally rendered in the margin of the bible, as follows.—*he taketh not hold of angels; but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold:*

\* Acts ii. 32 to 36. Eph. i. 17 to 23. Heb. xii. 2.  
1 Peter iii. 18, 22.



denoting, either, that Jesus was not an angel but a man, or, as some think, that he did not act for the benefit of angels, but of men; and in the connection in which it stands it is so far from being an objection,—that it may be considered as an argument for our Lord's proper humanity.

Heb. xi. 26. It is said of Moses by the Author of this Epistle, *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.* The whole force of this objection may be taken away if we consider, that the ancestors of the Jews from the very first had the promise of *a Messiah*, or a great deliverer, who was to be born of their nation. Thus, *Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it, and was glad.\** And what Abraham *saw* or foresaw Moses might also see. Taking the passage in this view, a very learned Commentator paraphrases it as follows. “Esteeming the reproach he should suffer for his faith in a Messiah to come more valuable and more worthy to be chosen than the treasures of Egypt.”

1 Pet. i. 11. *Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* Some have endeavoured to form an argument for our Lord's pre-existence from this passage, because *the Spirit* that resided in the ancient prophets, who lived long before he was born, is here called *the Spirit of Christ.*

But this way of speaking may be accounted for without having recourse to this supposition. It is well known that *the Spirit of God*, or *the holy Spirit*, was something conferred upon our Lord himself at his baptism, when it *descended and lighted upon him,†* and consequently it did not belong to him necessari-

\* John viii. 56.

† Math. iii. 16. Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 22. John i. 32, 33.

ly, nor was inherent in him. If this had been the case, there would have been no occasion for God to have *anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost, and with power.\** The *Divine Spirit* in the prophets appears therefore, to be called *the Spirit of Christ* by way of *anticipation*, as it was *that Spirit* that afterwards most eminently resided in *Christ*, and was by his instrumentality conferred on his followers on the day of Pentecost and at other times. And Peter, who might be in the habit, as well as some other of the Apostles, of sometimes styling this divine communication *the Spirit of Christ*, might do it in this sense, or from custom, in the present case.

1 Peter iii. 19, 20. *By which also he (Christ) went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient: when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.*

There is a considerable degree of obscurity in this passage which of course has given room for a variety of interpretations. Some of the early christian writers imagined that Christ went literally to hell, or *hades*, and preached his Gospel there to departed souls. But others, who do not adopt this extravagant notion, conceive this passage to be a proof that Christ existed in the days of Noah.

I apprehend, however, that this text will afford a very insufficient basis for this opinion, whatever may be the true interpretation of it. For observe, in the verse immediately preceding, it is affirmed of Christ, that he was *put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit*, and then it follows, *by which (Spirit) also he went and preached, &c.*

Now it is a certain fact, that *the Spirit* by which Christ was *quickened* or brought to life again, was

\* Acts x. 38.

*the divine Spirit, or power of God.* It is also certain that *this Spirit* was a divine gift or power, not a part of our Lord's person, but a qualification annexed or or super-added to it; and Peter asserts, that it was by *this Spirit also* that *he went and preached to the spirits in prison*, whatever these *spirits* were.

Some learned and judicious persons apply this passage to the Gentile idolaters who, before their conversion to Christianity, are said (Eph. ii. 1.) to have been *dead in trespasses and sins*, and concerning whom it is farther affirmed, ver. 4, 5. *But God &c.—bath quickened us together with Christ, &c.* And Peter himself says (1 Epistle, iv. 6.) in language similar to that of Paul. *For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.* In like manner the prophet Isaiah (xlii. 6, 7.) speaking of the Messiah converting the Gentiles says. *I JEHOVAH have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.*

These, with similar expressions elsewhere found,\* may guide us to the most probable interpretation of this dark passage, as signifying, that the same *Spirit* which dwelt in Christ, resided in his Apostles after him, by whom, as his agents and ministers, *he went and preached* to the Gentiles, who, for their idolatry and other scandalous vices before their conversion to Christianity, are compared to that licentious and abandoned race of men in the antedeluvian world, concerning whom *Jehovah*, with much long-suffering, said, *My spirit shall not always strive with*

\* Compare Isaiah ix. 2. xlix. 8, 9. lxi. 1 to 3. Math. iv. 6. Luke i. 79. 1 Tim. iii. 16

man,—yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years, and who, notwithstanding this long term granted for their repentance, and the endeavours of Noah (2 Pet. ii. 5.) a preacher of righteousness to reclaim them, persisted in their ungodly practices; and were therefore all deservedly destroyed (Luke xvii. 26, 27.) by a tremendous flood; leaving to all future generations an awful example of the divine justice and vengeance against hardened and impenitent transgressors.

To JEHOVAH, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin; but whose wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; be ascribed glory and praise, in the name of the man Christ Jesus his once suffering but now highly exalted Son, who is ever to be confessed and revered as Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Rom. i. 18. Phil. ii. 11.

# DISSERTATION XI.

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## A REPLY TO ARIAN OBJECTIONS.

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I TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

WE come now in prosecution of our plan to give an explication of those passages of Scripture, which are urged by the advocates of Arianism, as declaring or implying, that our Lord Jesus Christ in his supposed pre-existent state was employed as an agent or instrument in the formation of the world or first creation. The passages that have been urged in this way are five in number, viz. John i. 1, 2, &c. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 15, 16, &c. Heb. i. 1, 2. Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. Each of these passages we shall take under consideration, and point out what appears to us to be the true sense of them.

We begin with the first mentioned. John i. 1, 2, &c. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made*

*by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Before we enter into any particular remarks upon these words, we shall offer a few general observations. It is highly improbable, if not impossible, that John should have intended to inculcate any other doctrine but that which had been already delivered by the preceding Evangelists. Matthew, Mark, and Luke uniformly represent Jesus as an eminent prophet, upon whom the *holy Spirit had descended* ; as the promised *Messiah*, or *the Christ the Son of the living God*, who performed a variety of miracles, and taught many important doctrines. But they never drop the least hint that he was employed as an agent in the creation of the world, which it is scarcely to be thought they could have avoided doing in some parts of their writings, and upon some particular occasions, if this notion had been founded in truth.

Nor does John himself (this passage excepted) ever afford the least colour for such a thought. On the contrary, he has in various parts of his Gospel, more than any other of the Evangelists, recorded those discourses of Christ which are quite incompatible with an idea of this kind. John describes our Lord, as saying, v. 30, *I can of mine own self do nothing, &c.* vii. 16.—*my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* xii. 49. *For I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent me he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.* xiv. 10.—*the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself : but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.* These sayings of Jesus, and many others of a like kind, which John has related, are by no means suitable to the explications that the Arians give us of the introduction to his Gospel.

If there is any uncertainty about the sense of a writer, what he means or refers to, the safest way

surely is to look to other parts of his writings, and to make use of them in determining the meaning of a passage which has any obscurity or ambiguity in it. But that John could not intend to give his readers to understand that Christ was the instrumental maker of the world is evident from those parts of his Gospel that we have already quoted, and if possible, still more so, from the following remarkable passage towards the conclusion of it, in which he assigns the reasons or motives that induced him to compose his Gospel. John xx. 30, 31. *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

From this passage, it is perfectly clear, that the great end John had in view in all that he records concerning our Lord was to prove, that he was *the Messiah, or anointed Son of God*, and therefore he could never intend in the beginning of his Gospel to point him out under a character quite different from this, viz. as “the creator or former of the world,” or “the Universe.” For to be *the anointed Son of God* is a human character and points plainly at a Being in the condition of *a man*: but to be “the creator of the world,” or “the Universe,” though in a subordinate capacity, implies something far transcending human nature and inconsistent with it.

It is not, therefore, fair to affix an arbitrary meaning to the words of John, but to explain every part of his Gospel in a consistency with his own plain and express declarations, and according to the accounts given us by the other Evangelists.

Having made these general observations, let us examine the words of John as they stand in his Gospel.

Ver. 1. *In the beginning was the Word.* The first point that is to be determined here is what John means by *the Word*. The Arians say, that he means the person of Jesus Christ in his pre-existent state, as existing *in the beginning*, or before the formation of *all things*, in a state of great glory, dignity and happiness. But I apprehend that they are here mistaken, and that John by the Logos, or *Word*, does not mean a person at all, but an attribute or quality in the divine nature.

It is well known to those who are acquainted with the Greek language, that the term Logos signifies *Reason* as well as *the Word*. The English reader may be made sensible of the truth of this observation, if he considers the meaning of the word *Logic* in our language, which is derived, or formed, from the Greek word Logos. Every one that understands English knows that *Logic* signifies *reasoning*, or *the art of reasoning*. Of consequence it will appear that the Greek word Logos may signify *Reason*. And that it does have this meaning is most certain, and is acknowledged by *Tertullian* an ancient Trinitarian Father, who contends that this is its most precise and exact meaning when applied to God; and that the term Logos should be translated *Reason* and not *Speech*, or *Word*.

It has also been remarked by several Christian interpreters that John here alludes to Prov. viii. 22, &c. where Solomon speaking of *Wisdom* says, *Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, &c.* and describes this *wisdom*, as superintending and directing all the various parts of nature in their formation and appointment. Now the *wisdom* mentioned by Solomon is undoubtedly *no person*, but merely an attribute of the divine nature; for Solomon speaking of it,



ver. 12 of the same chapter says, *I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions*; and elsewhere represents it under such images and characters, as plainly show he had no person, or intelligent agent in view. If then the wisdom mentioned by Solomon be no person, but an attribute, it is reasonable to understand the Logos or *Reason* that John mentions as being no person either, but merely an attribute or property in the divine nature.

*And the Word was with God.* The Arians say, that this expression means, that *the Word*, or pre-existent spirit of Christ, was with the Father; or was present with him as one person is present with another. But we affirm, according to the explication that we have given of the term Logos, that *Reason*, or *Wisdom was with God*, that is, existed in him as an attribute; God being the source and fountain of all *Wisdom*, and possessing it in the highest perfection before any display of it was made in the formation of any creature.

*And the Word was God.* Here the Arians are sensible, that one God, and another God with him, if there be any truth in numbers, make two Gods; and therefore they are for taking the term *God* when applied to *the Word*, in a restrained and limited signification, as importing, that *the Word was a God*, or a divine person, in the inferior sense. But how does this interpretation tally with the general doctrine of the Old and New Testament?

It is the uniform language of the Scriptures, that *there is one God, and none else besides him*; and that *Jehovah alone, or the Father, is that one God*. Psal. lxxxii. 8 to 10. *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; There shall no strange god be in thee: neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I AM JEHOVAH THY GOD which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy*

mouth wide, and I will fill it. Isa. xlv. 6,—8. Thus saith JEHOVAH 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.—Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. John xvii. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee (the Father) the only true God, &c.

And yet according to this Arian interpretation there is a God, though an inferior one, besides Jehovah the God and Father of all! There is a person called God, who is really God or a God though in a subordinate sense, manifestly contradictory to the assertions of Jehovah himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded by the sacred writers. We grant that this Arian interpretation is better than the Trinitarian. The idea of an inferior God, does not shock the feelings of the human mind, so much as the notion of two supreme or co-equal Gods. But still it is a multiplication of divinity inconsistent with the plain and positive declarations of Scripture. The sacred writers never make any distinction of true Gods. They never speak of *one great God*, and another inferior or subordinate deity: but always declare that *Jehovah*, or *the Father*, is *God alone*, without any other to whom the title can be applied in a proper sense. Angels, Governors, and Magistrates, are indeed called *gods*, but here the word is used so obviously *lax* that it can mislead nobody. But the Arians suppose the Logos to be the pre-existent spirit of Christ, and to be called *God* in a *real* though inferior sense before the creation of the world,—a notion that can never be reconciled to the general doctrine of the Old and New Testament.

This Arian interpretation therefore, cannot be admitted, and we must find a sense of the words of our Evangelist better suited to the analogy of Jewish and Christian Divinity. *And Reason or Wisdom was God.*

It existed in God as its sovereign source. It was the spring of action in the Deity, that governed and directed all the divine counsels.

Ver. 2. *The same was in the beginning with God.* This is a repetition of what had been said before, in order to fix our attention the more, and prevent mistake; denoting that *Reason* or *Wisdom* had its residence with God before any part of nature was formed. And this is similar to the words of Solomon, who describes *Wisdom* as existing, *from the beginning, or ever the earth was*, and in many other expressions of a like nature.

Ver. 3. *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* The Arians say here, that the pre-existent spirit of Christ was employed as an agent or instrument in the creation of all the different parts of nature. But this notion of an *inferior Creator* is as different from the general doctrine of the Scriptures as that of an *inferior God*. The Scriptures declare in various places, that *Jehovah the heavenly Father made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is*, by his own power and energy; but speak of no subordinate instrument or operator as concurring with him in the superlatively glorious work. Indeed, Creation is such an effort of Omnipotence, that it seems to be a power quite incommunicable in a proper, adequate sense.

Here then, I apprehend, we are warranted to interpret the words of John as follows. *All things were made by the Divine Reason, or Wisdom, and without it was not any thing made that was made.* That is to say, —Every thing was made in number, weight, and measure, or according to the rules of the most exquisite wisdom, harmony, and order.

In the same manner is to be explained the 10th verse. *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* That is to say, —

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the *Divine Reason* or *Wisdom* resided, *was in the world, and the world was made, or framed, by that Divine Reason or Wisdom* that was imparted to him, though *the world knew it not, or did not discover its brightness in him.*

Ver. 14. *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.* The true meaning of which appears to be this. And the *Divine Reason* or *Wisdom* was communicated to *flesh* or imparted to *the man Jesus Christ*, who received the gifts of the Spirit *without measure*, and this signal gift of *Divine Wisdom* among the rest, *and we beheld the glory of the Divine Wisdom* shining through him, and appearing in all his words, actions, discourses, and miracles, as a glory worthy of, or suitable to, *the only begotten, or well-beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth or true grace.*

Having now explained the most difficult places of this introduction to John's Gospel; in order to make the sense appear still clearer, we shall give an improved translation of the first fourteen verses taken in connection, with a paraphrase annexed to every verse.

1. *In the beginning was Reason, or Wisdom; and Reason, or Wisdom, was with God; and Reason, or Wisdom, was God.*

1. There existed before the creation of this visible world, a principle of supreme Reason, Intelligence, or Wisdom. And this Reason, or Wisdom, was always inseparably united to the Deity, and formed a necessary part of his sovereign and eternal nature: it was not any thing distinct from him, like the heathen Minerva, or goddess of wisdom; or like any of the Gnostic emanations; but to speak properly it was God himself.

2. *The same was in the beginning with God.*

2. This principle, or attribute, resided only with God, before any display of it was made in the work of creation, or the dispensation of grace.

3. *All things were made by it ; and without it was not any thing made that was made.*

3. The heavens and the earth and whatever they contain, were formed, adjusted, and harmonized according to the rules of the most perfect Reason. Creation was not the work of chance or caprice, fate or blind destiny, but the foreordained plan and voluntary operation of an infinitely wise and discerning mind ; in all its various parts, forms, and degrees.

4. *In it was life, and the life was the light of men.*

4. There was only lodged in this Divine Reason or Wisdom, the knowledge of the way of attaining eternal life, and this knowledge when communicated became the light or instruction of men.

5. *And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.*

5. That light appeared to the human race either by the manifestation of natural reason, which is a ray derived from the supreme source of Wisdom ; or more properly by supernatural revelation ; but the human race blinded by error, vice, and superstition, did not perceive or comprehend this divine light, or profit by it.

6, 7. *There was a man sent from God, his name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.*

6, 7. John the baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, was sent by God, to bear his testimony to that superior light of Divine Reason or Wisdom that was to come after him, and to induce the Jewish nation to give credit to it.

8. *He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness concerning that light.*

8. But this divine light did not reside in the person of John; though he was styled in other respects *a burning and a shining light*.\* The end and intention of John's mission was only to prepare the way for, and procure a more favourable reception to that person who possessed this divine light.

9. *That light was the true light, which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.*

9. In that man, viz. *the man Christ Jesus*, resided that supereminent and excellent light which alone deserves to be called *the true light*, and which when it came into the world was capable of enlightening whoever would attend to it or follow its direction.

10. *Reason, or Wisdom, was in the world, and the world was made by it, and the world knew it not.*

10. This Divine Reason, this supreme Wisdom by which the world was framed, appeared visibly amongst men in the person of Jesus Christ, who was so eminently endued with it; but notwithstanding this divine principle conversed with them so long, a numerous majority, insensible of its worth, or hardened by their lusts and prejudices, refused to listen to its dictates, and rejected the ministry of him by whom it was manifested.

11. *It came unto its own, but its own received it not.*

11. Though the excellent person in whom this divine principle of Reason resided, came on a particular and gracious embassy to those, who were by profession the peculiar people and the heritage of Jehovah, yet, they impiously and wantonly rejected the doctrine of that God with whom they were in covenant, and slighted the message of his chosen minister.

12. *But to as many as received it, to them it gave*

\* John v. 25

*power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on its name.*

12. But all that received Jesus as the promised and expected Messiah, and embraced with cordiality the divine and rational doctrines of Christianity, had the exalted privilege conferred upon them of becoming *the sons of God*, by adoption,\* were made *fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*;† and this was the inestimable advantage they derived from their belief and virtuous practice.

13. *Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

13. This *new-birth*, or honourable change of state, was not the consequence of their being descended from Jewish ancestors, nor acquired by alliances contracted with that people, nor by becoming proselytes to their religion, nor by any carnal effort whatever; but was the free gift of God, upon their cordial belief and reception of his message by his son Jesus the Messiah.

14. *And Reason, or Wisdom, was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld its glory, the glory as of the only begotten of (or from) the Father) full of grace and truth.*

14. The Divine Reason or Wisdom of which I have all along been speaking, which *was in the beginning with God and was God himself*, and in which *was life and the light of men*, did not always remove itself from human observation, but was largely imparted to the man Jesus Christ, appeared gloriously and conspicuously in him during the course of his public ministry, as one of the most distinguished gifts of the Spirit of God;‡ and as a glory becoming the well-beloved of the Father, adorned with the most signal gifts and graces.

\* Rom. viii. 14. to 21.

† Eph. ii. 19.

‡ Isa. xi. 1 to 3.

From the explication and paraphrase we have given of this passage, I think it is apparent, that the interpreting the words of John, as respecting the manifestation of the Divine Reason or Wisdom, first in the original creation, and afterwards by the Gospel in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, affords a very noble sense.—A sense which brings John and the other evangelists into perfect harmony with one another, and will be found edifying and useful in a high degree.

It is a strong and sublime idea conceived in the eastern style and manner of thinking, and yet philosophically true; representing Reason or Wisdom as existing with the Deity, yea, as the Deity himself, exerting an universal agency, and appearing equally conspicuous in the works of nature and in the dispensation of grace.

It is evidently derived from the diction of the Old Testament, from which it is natural to think John should take his ideas, and form his sentiments concerning God.—In particular, it is correspondent to the words of Solomon, before quoted, and referred to; and to those of the prophet Jeremiah who speaking of God (chap. x. 12.) says, *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.* In like manner David says, Psal. xxxiii. 6,—9. *By the word (Septuagint, ὁ λόγος) of Jehovah were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.—For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

From what has been said, it is obvious to remark, that the words of John in the introduction to his Gospel are by no means so well translated in our version as they should be. In the old English translation, that was used in England, in Queen Elizabeth's time, the words are rendered far nearer to the true sense.



That translation renders, John i. 1, 2, 3, 4,—14, as follows. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was that Word. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by IT, and without IT, was made nothing that was made. In IT was life, and the life was the light of men. And the same word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw the glory of IT, as the glory of the only begotten Son that came from the Father) full of grace and truth.*

This old English translation would far sooner lead one to the true interpretation than our present version.

To JEHOVAH, *the only living and true God*, by whose supreme, eternal reason, wisdom and intelligence, *all things* in the first, original creation *were made*, and whose power and wisdom appeared so gloriously in *the man Christ Jesus*, his gracious instrument in the Gospel or new creation, be ascribed the glory ever due to his sacred and blessed name. Amen.

## DISSERTATION XII.

A REPLY

TO ARIAN OBJECTIONS.

1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

WE proceed to examine the other passages urged by the advocates of Arianism, as asserting, that our Lord Jesus Christ in his supposed pre-existent state was employed as an agent or instrument in the formation of the world or first creation.

Ephes. iii. 9. *And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things, "by Jesus Christ."* The objection is founded upon the last clause of the verse, viz. *who created all things "by Jesus Christ."* As to it, I observe, that if the words "by Jesus Christ" were genuine, they could not with propriety, in the connection in which they stand, be referred, to the first or original creation; but ought to be explained as respecting the new creation, or renovation of the world, by Jesus Christ. This

will appear if we attentively consider the context. The Apostle speaks in the second verse of this third chapter of *the dispensation of the grace of God which was given him*, and in the fourth, of *his knowledge in the mystery of Christ*; and proceeds in the verses that come between that and the eighth verse to express himself as follows, *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel: Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me; by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. And then he adds in the words we are just now treating of, And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things "by Jesus Christ."*

The words, *who created all things* "by Jesus Christ," have no proper connection with the Apostle's discourse, if we refer them to the first creation; for the Apostle is not speaking of the original formation of the world but of God's purpose of calling the Gentiles; the knowledge of which was not communicated to men in former ages, as it was then *revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*. The words therefore "by Jesus Christ," coming after *who created all things*, if genuine, must be interpreted according to the subject of the Apostle's discourse, and so will apply to the calling of the Gentiles; or the union of both Jews and Gentiles by Jesus Christ under a new and spiritual constitution, styled *the new creation*. This would be the proper

explication of the words, and is granted to be so by some very skilful interpreters of Scripture.

But it ought by no means to be concealed, that we have good reason to reject the words "by Jesus Christ," as being no part of genuine Scripture; for they are wanting in some of the best and most ancient manuscripts, in the most faithful and ancient versions, in the writings of various christian Fathers, and set aside by the consent of some eminent critics, even on the Trinitarian side;\* so that we have no reason to say more concerning *a few words*, which do not appear to belong to the New Testament.

We now come to a very celebrated passage, which will be highly worthy of a particular investigation.

Col. i. 15, to 19. *Who (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: 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. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.*

The Arians conceive, that this passage refers to the original creation, and that the pre-existent spirit, or soul, of Christ before its incarnation, is here said to have been under God the immediate creator of all things in the Universe, whether of angels, or spiritual beings in heaven, or of men, and all other creatures, that inhabit this earthly globe. They farther say, that his being called *the first born of every creature*, implies, that he was the first being whom God made, or created, immediately derived from him, and his

\* See *Discourses on the Divine Unity*, 2 Edit. Montrose 1790. p. 243, Note.

instrument in the creation of all other beings and all other things.

In opposition to this exposition, we shall by proper scriptural arguments make it appear, that the whole passage relates to the *new creation*, or moral renovation of the world; and with this view we shall go over it distinctly, and explain every part of it in connection.

Ver. 15. *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature.* Christ is styled the *image* or representative of the invisible God, because the Supreme Being *whom no man hath seen, nor can see\**, was *declared and manifested†* by the wisdom, holiness, and *power* which were exhibited and eminently displayed in the life, conduct, and miracles of Jesus, in which the glory of the Father so illustriously appeared, that he who had *seen him* might in a certain sense be said to have *seen the Father,‡* by seeing his most lively image among men, and discovering the glory of the Father in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Any person that has proper consideration may easily perceive, that *the image of the invisible God*, must be something different from *the invisible God* himself; for no being can be called its own image. Nor can Christ properly be styled *the image of the invisible God*, but in so far as he appeared to be so among men; so far as he was seen and beheld as such, while he conversed with mortals and had his abode in this lower world.

It does not appear wonderful that our Lord should have a title of this kind, when we find similar language used concerning Adam and all his posterity. Gen. i. 27. *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female cre-*

\* 1 Tim. vi. 16. ; John i. 18. 1 Tim. iii. 16. † John xiv 9, 10.

ated be them. Gen. ix. 6. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.* 1 Cor. xi. 7. *For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.* James iii. 8, 9. *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.*

It is clear from a comparison of these passages, that Adam at his creation was *made*, and all mankind descending from him are still *made*, *in the image*, and *after the similitude of God*, who is invisible; and that a good man in particular, engaged in religious duties, *is*, as Paul says, *the image and glory of God*. With the strictest propriety then, may *the man Christ Jesus*, so much superior to all the rest of the species in wisdom, holiness, and divine gifts, be styled, without any reference to a pre-existent state, *the image of the invisible God*; yea, as he is also styled, (Heb. i. 3.) *a ray of his glory, and the express, or impressed, image of his person or substance.*

*The first born of every creature*, is a Hebrew Idiom, or a Jewish form of speaking, of the use of which we have several instances in the Old Testament. In one sense it signifies like the similar phrase *only begotten*, "the most beloved," "the chief favourite," or "one who is preferred to all others." Thus Israel and Ephraim are called *the first born of God*. Exod. iv. 22. *And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, even my first born.* Jerem. xxxi. 9.—*for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born.* The Jews were called by this title, as the peculiar people of God and his true worshippers, in opposition to the Gentile world, who were in a state of idolatry and estrangement. In like manner in Psal. lxxxix. 27. David as the re-

presentative of the Messiah has the title of *first born* conferred upon him. *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my first born higher than the kings of the earth.*

But there is a passage still more to our purpose in Rom. viii. 29. *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.* Here we find our Lord plainly styled *the first born among many brethren*, as being the head or author of the Christian dispensation. This citation is quite applicable to our subject, and coming from the Apostle Paul may be considered as a proper explication of his own words, and taken in connection with the acknowledged sense in which the word *first born* is used in the Old Testament is sufficient to justify and confirm our interpretation. Christ therefore is styled *the first born of every creature*, not because he was the first being whom God made or created as the Arians say, but because he was *the first born among many brethren*, the head and author of the new creation or moral renovation of the world, and the great leader of all his followers.\*

Ver. 16, 17. *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 princi-*

\* It is not only in this passage that the relation of the human species, particularly believers, to Jesus Christ, as *his brethren*, is noted. We find this *relation* expressed in other places. Our Lord represents himself in his regal and judicial capacity, as saying with respect to the benevolent actions of righteous men, Math. xxv. 40.—*In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these MY BRETHREN, ye have done it unto me.* In like manner, after his resurrection, he says respecting his disciples to Mary Magdalene, John xx. 17.—*go to MY BRETHREN, and say unto them, &c.* Heb. ii. 11, 12,—17. *For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them BRETHREN, saying I will declare thy name unto MY BRETHREN, &c.—Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto HIS BRETHREN.*

*palities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him.* That the creation of the world is not here meant or intended may be proved by some very strong and good arguments.

1. He who is called *the first born of every creature*, which form of expression we have before explained, is the same person, concerning whom it is said in the 14th verse of this chapter. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* And this person can be no other than the *man Christ Jesus*, who appeared and acted in this world as a *man*, and shed his blood for the benefit of mankind. Now it is affirmed, that by this *man Christ Jesus*, God's *dear Son*, *all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth* : but as *Creation*, considered as applicable to the formation of the world, is incompetent, and improper to be ascribed, to a man clothed in flesh and blood, it is evident that the term *created*, here used, cannot refer to the old, or original, creation, but to the new creation or moral renovation of the world..

2. It must also be observed here, that our Lord Jesus Christ is not said to have created heaven and earth; but the apostle Paul only says, that *by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth*. Observe this attentively, for there is a great difference between these two forms of expression as will presently appear.

The proper definition of the first or original creation is to *make or create heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is, or the world and all things therein*, which Christ is never said to have done in sacred Scripture. To make this point appear clear and distinct we shall quote some passages of the New Testament where a description of the first or original creation is given, and which is always ascribed to JEHOVAH or *God alone*, without mention of any



inferior agent, minister, or subordinate operator, whatever.

Acts iv. 24. *Lord, (Gr. Sovereign Lord) thou art God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.*

Acts xiv. 15. *We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.*

Acts xvii. 24. *God (says the Apostle Paul) that made the world, and all things therein, seeing he is the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands : &c.*

Rev. x. 5, 6. *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, &c.*

Rev. xiv. 7. *Fear God, and give glory to him,—and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.\**

\* In the Old Testament JEHOVAH, the one living and true God and heavenly Father, is always said to make or create the world and all things therein, or heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, BY HIMSELF ALONE; or by his power, word, spirit, wisdom, understanding or discretion, which as they are his attributes or properties, are equivalent to HIMSELF. No inferior deity or subordinate creator, is ever introduced, or supposed; but carefully excluded by the most decisive expressions.

The following is a pretty complete list of passages descriptive of the Creation, or some of its principal parts, collected from different books of the Old Testament, which it may be proper to turn to and compare with those striking passages in the *New Testament* above stated. Several places in this list are inserted at length or referred to in the *second Dissertation*.

Gen. i. throughout. Gen. ii. 1 to 4. Exod. xx. 11. 2 Kings xix. 15. Nehem. ix. 6. Job xxi. 13. xxxviii. 4. Psal. viii. 3. xix. 1. xxiv. 1, 2. xxxiii. 6,—9. lxxxvi. 8, 9, 10. xc. 1, 2. xcv. 3 to 6. xcvi. 4, 5. c. 3. cii. 25. civ. throughout. cxv. 15, 16. cxix. 89, 90, 91. cxxi. 2. cxxxiv. 3. cxxxv. 5, 6, 7. cxxxvi. 5 to 9. cxlvi. 5, 6. cxlvii. 4, 5,—8,—15 to 18. cxlviii. throughout. cl. 1. Prov. viii. 22 to 31. Isa. xl. 12 to 14,—28. xlii. 5. xlv. 2. xlv. 11, 12,—18. xlviii. 12, 13. li. 13. Jerem. x. 12. li. 15, 16. Mal. ii. 10.

Here we have the true and proper description of the creation of the world, according to the style of scripture phraseology. Were the creation ascribed to Christ in such plain, express, and unequivocal terms, the Arian objection would have force in it; and if the Apostles had believed this doctrine they would have made a point of inculcating it in the strongest manner, so as to leave no room for doubt and hesitation. But when they ascribe creation to Christ their language is very different. The Apostles never say that our Lord Jesus Christ *made or created heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is, or the world, and all things therein.* In the very place we are commenting upon the Apostle Paul does not say, that *the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, created heaven and earth;* but only that *by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth:* and the *all things* of which he speaks he limits and restricts, to *all thrones and dominions, principalities, and powers,* which terms respect the new creation or modification of these dignitaries as will afterwards appear.

This consideration, that the words of the Apostle Paul in this place do not contain the proper description of the first or original creation, as mentioned by himself and the rest of the Apostles in other places, has a great deal of weight in it, and joined with the foregoing observation, that the Apostle's language in the 14th verse implies that Christ was *a man*, may go a great way to satisfy an unprejudiced person, that the creation of the world is not here ascribed to Christ.

3. A great deal of light may be thrown on this passage of the Collossians we are treating of, by comparing it with some similar expressions of the same Apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians.

Ephes. i. 10. *That, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all*

*things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.*

Ephes. i. 17 to 23. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Now in these passages of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, though the turn of thought resembles that in the Colossians very much, there is not the least mention of any creation effected by Christ, but merely of gathering together in one all things in him, and of his exaltation far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, &c. which if we will allow Paul to be his own interpreter, and explain the one Epistle by the other, it will appear natural to think that Paul in the Epistle to the Colossians did not mean to refer to the proper original creation, but only to the renovation or new constitution of the world.

4. Our Lord himself never hinted that he acted any part in the original creation. But when he speaks of our first parents, Mark x. 6. he says, *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.*

5. The Gospel itself is prophesied of in the Old Testament as a new creation. Isa. lxx. 17, 18. *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be you glad, and rejoice for ever, in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy.* And this refers to the Gospel times expressly, and more to the same purpose may be found in that prophet.\*

6. The Greek word translated *were created*, may with the same propriety be rendered *were renewed*, or *restored*. *For by him were all things renewed, &c.*

7. To confirm and strengthen all we have said, the Apostle Paul himself, who is the best commentator on his own words, expressly styles the Gospel dispensation *a new creation*. Gal. vi. 15. *For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* (Gr. *a new creation*) 2 Cor. v. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: (Gr. a new creation) old things are past away, behold, all things are become new.* Ephes. ii. 10 to 22. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, &c.*

Ver. 17. *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Christ is *before all things* not with respect to time, but dignity, and worth. As the Messiah, the anointed and beloved son of God the Father, who received from him *honour and glory*, and as the *Father or author of the age to come*, he is more glorious and excellent than all former prophets and lawgivers, and acts in a higher sphere and a more exalted capacity than any of them ever did. The *all things*, which *consist in him*, or are *established by him*, are obviously the things of the *new creation*, which Paul in a passage just quoted before tells us are from *old things* which are *past away*, become *new things*; hav-

\* See Isa. li. 16. lxvi. 22.

ing been brought by Christ into a reformed or renovated state.

Ver. 18, 19. *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell.* These two verses are very plain, and the meaning apparent, and when compared with the context before and after the verses we have been discussing, may confirm not a little our interpretation. The Apostle says ver. 12, 13. *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.* Ver. 20. *And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

It appears from these passages, that the views of our Apostle were entirely directed to the happy change effected in the state of the Gentile world, by the coming of Christ and the preaching of his Gospel. By the benignity of the heavenly *Father*, the Gentiles were liberated from *the power of darkness*, transferred into the kingdom of Christ, and made the happy subjects of his gentle dominion. Their former ferocity, and hostility to goodness, were now effectually subdued, and a happy reconciliation had taken place with the Creator through the ministry of his Son. Transported, as it were, with this delightful prospect, this happy Union of Jews and Gentiles under Christ, our Apostle in a bold and elevated style represents it under the figure of *a creation of all things in heaven and in earth.*

From all these considerations taken together, and allowed their due force and weight, I think there is

ground to say, that the Apostle Paul intended merely to represent Christ as under God, *the new Creator* or reformer of the world, and that there is no reference in his words to the first or original creation.

In this view I will attempt a paraphrase upon Col. i. 15, to 19. *Who (Christ) is the visible image or resemblance of the invisible God, the first born, or most excellent and dear to God, of every creature. For by, or through him, were all things created again, or renewed, or restored, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, of whatever rank, or degree: all things were created again, or renewed, by, or through him, and for him: and Jews and Gentiles are by him brought into a bond of Union. And he is before all things in worth and excellence, and every part of this new creation, or system, is dependent upon him and directed by him. And he is the great head of the body, the church: the beginning, the first born from the dead; pre-eminent in all things, according to the good pleasure of the Supreme Father, who hath caused all fulness to dwell in him, or conferred upon him every power necessary for the exercise of this extensive government.*

Leaving now this passage as sufficiently explained, we come to consider Heb. i. 1, 2, 3. *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all thing, by whom also he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

The first and second of these verses want nothing to give the true sense of the original, but to rectify one word in our translation. The Greek word *αἰώνας*,

is not properly translated *worlds*. In its strict, original meaning, it signifies *ages*, or “periods of time.”

These three verses may be paraphrased as follows. *God, who at sundry times, and in various ways and methods, spake to our fathers in former days by a succession of prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son (or by a Son) whom he hath appointed heir, Lord, or ruler of all things, by or through whom, or, as some render it, “with respect to whom,” he made or constituted the ages or “periods of time.” Who being a ray or beam of his Father’s glory and the express or impressed image of his person or substance, and upholding or conducting all things by the word of his Father’s power, when he had by himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. *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: 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.*

This quotation is taken from Psal. cii. It is there addressed to JEHOVAH *the one true God*, and is not applicable to Christ at all any farther than to manifest the stability of his kingdom. All the other citations in this chapter are brought in with an application to *the Son*; but no application is made of this one. This quotation follows simply on the back of another, and is only alledged to show that the LORD God or JEHOVAH, *who laid the foundation of the earth*, who exists from eternity, and who can never fade or fail, will secure the stability of *his Son’s throne*, and place it on a sure and solid foundation.

We now conclude our reply to the objections of those who adopt the Arian system ; and without introducing farther remarks on the subject, we shall leave what has been said upon it to the serious and candid consideration of the pious and intelligent reader.

*Glory to JEHOVAH, the most high God and heavenly Father, for his tender mercy in delivering his wandering creatures of mankind from the darkness of Idolatry and Vice, and translating them into the kingdom of his dear Son, the man Christ Jesus ; whose throne he has established on a permanent foundation, and made him the author of a new creation, and the Father of the age to come. Amen. Isa. ix. 6, 7. lxxv. 17, 18. 2 Cor. v. 17. Heb. ii. 5 to 8.*



## DISSERTATION XIII.

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THE UNITY OF GOD IN THE PERSON  
OF THE FATHER,

AND

THE TRUE SONSHIP OF JESUS,

EVINCED FROM THE NATURAL AND OBVIOUS MEANING OF THAT  
ANCIENT SYMBOL, STYLED

## THE APOSTLES CREED.

WITH A FEW PREVIOUS OBSERVATIONS, ON

THE DOCTRINES PREACHED BY THE APOSTLES, AND ON  
THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

**H**AVING in twelve preceding Dissertations from these plain and express words fully established THE UNITY OF GOD IN THE PERSON OF THE FATHER, and THE MESSIAHSHIP AND PROPER HUMANITY OF JESUS, as the genuine doctrines of the Scriptures, and having also REPLIED to the OBJECTIONS both of TRINITARIANS and ARIANS; we come now to execute the last part of our plan, and to show, that

the Unity of God as above stated, and the Proper Humanity of Christ were not only taught by the Apostles, but held in the earliest Jewish and Gentile churches; and to point out by what steps and degrees these doctrines became corrupted, and the present doctrine of the Trinity took its rise.

It is a certain fact, whether we are able to show it to have been so or not, that if the doctrine taught by the Apostles was *Unitarian*, that of the earliest and first Christians must have been *so* also. For the first Christians, those I mean who lived in the Apostolic age or the first century, had no other teachers or instructors but the Apostles; and as the Apostles we are sure would teach no other doctrine than what is recorded in their writings, and if these writings are strictly *Unitarian*, both with respect to *the personal Unity of God*, and *the proper humanity of Christ*; then of necessity, the doctrine of the primitive church must have been *Unitarian* also, with respect to these articles.

If Peter, John, and the other Apostles, taught at Jerusalem, that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is, and was the Jehovah of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,\** and also that *Jesus of Nazareth, was, A MAN approved of God—by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, &c.;* † the Faith of the first Jewish converts must certainly have been *Unitarian*.

If Paul taught the same doctrine at Athens and elsewhere, viz. that, *God that made the world, and all things therein,—is the Lord of heaven and earth, and that,—he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that MAN whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assur-*

\* Acts iii. 13. iv. 24 to 30. † Acts ii. 22. iii. 22.

ance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead;\* of consequence the Faith of the early Gentile Christians must also have been *Unitarian*.

To those who are fully convinced that the Apostles really taught these doctrines, no other proof of the Unitarianism of the primitive Church is absolutely necessary: and to those who cannot be convinced that these doctrines were really taught by the Apostles, perhaps no other proof will be sufficient. But at the same time in each case it may be useful, at least it can do no harm, to alledge such proof as we are in possession of. It will confirm the Unitarian Christian the more in his profession and belief, when he finds that so much evidence from ecclesiastical Antiquity can be produced in favour of his interpretation of the Scriptures; and it may shake the confidence of those who may be inclined to understand the Scriptures in a different sense, to be informed, that so many in the first ages of Christianity embraced the same sentiments that Unitarians do now, and had the same general views of Scripture with respect to the important topics in question as Unitarians have at present.

Next to the books of the New Testament, the oldest Christian writings that are extant are supposed to be, the first Epistle of *Clemens*, the Epistle of *Barnabas*, the Pastor of *Hermas*, the Epistles of *Ignatius*, and the Epistle of *Polycarp*. Three of these Compositions, viz. the Epistle of *Barnabas*, the Epistles of *Ignatius*, and the Pastor of *Hermas*, are either doubtful writings, or bear pretty plain marks of interpolation; so that no doctrine can be certainly proved from them.

The first Epistle of *Clemens*, and the Epistle of *Polycarp*, are two valuable records, bear the marks of

\* Acts xvii. 24,—31.

early and genuine antiquity, and contain nothing in them contrary either to the personal Unity of God or the proper humanity of Christ, but several sentiments and expressions which discover that the authors had ideas of these subjects similar to those of the Unitarians. *Polycarp* is said to have been a disciple of the Apostle John, and *Clemens* is thought by some to have been the same person mentioned by the Apostle Paul by that name.\*

There is also a work of very great antiquity, supposed to be as early as any of *Justin Martyr's* writings, called the *Clementine Homilies*, which is completely Unitarian. It introduces the Apostle Peter and *Clemens* beforementioned as speakers, and uniformly represents them as expressing themselves like Unitarians. A proof that in this writer's judgment, who was a very early one, they were really so.

I will now come to the proper subject of this Dissertation, by introducing an argument in favour of early Unitarianism, and a proof of it, which must be allowed to be a very strong one by all candid and considerate persons, and is so plain that it is level to the meanest capacity, and lies within the inspection of every one. This argument, or proof, is drawn from the *Apostles Creed*.

It is not pretended that this Creed was composed by the Apostles, though it is called by their name; but only that it was a summary of their Doctrine put together in the earliest ages and generally received in the christian churches.

This Creed was not confined to one country, or one Age, but prevailed in successive Ages; and was received and used, as the baptismal creed, in churches planted in countries at a remote distance from each other: viz. in the *Eastern* churches; in the church of *Rome*, the most eminent western church; and in the church of *Aquilcia*. Besides the com-

mon Creed received in these different churches, which we have immediately; *Tertullian* gives us another copy of it used in Africa, which he affirms to be *the Rule of Faith, invariable and unalterable.*\*

Now there is hardly any child who has been instructed in the principles of Christianity, but who has heard of this creed, or can repeat it. And there is no material variation between our present common Creed and the ancient copies of it in the different churches. Let us now consider the plain meaning of the principal parts of this Creed or profession of Faith, and whether, when fairly interpreted, they may be capable of a Trinitarian, an Arian, or an Unitarian sense.

\* *Regula quidem fidei una omnino est, sola immobilis, et irreformabilis, credendi scilicet in unicum Deum omnipotentem, mundi conditorem, et Filium ejus Jesum Christum, natum ex Virgine Maria, crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato, tertia die resuscitatum a mortuis, receptum in Cælis, sedentem nunc ad dexteram Patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos per carnis etiam resurrectionem.* TERTULLIAN. *de Virginibus Velandis.* p. 173. Edit. Rigaltii. Parisiis. 1695.

“The Rule of Faith, indeed, is absolutely one, alone invariable, and unalterable, namely, to believe in one God Almighty, the Creator of the world, and in his Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again from the dead on the third day, sitting now at the right hand of the Father, who will come to judge the living and the dead even by the resurrection of the flesh.”

Tertullian adds, *Hac lege fidei manente, cætera jam discipline et conversationis, admittunt novitatem correctionis, operante scilicet et proficiente usque ad finem gratia dei.* “This law of Faith remaining, other things respecting discipline and behaviour admit of new correction, the grace of God undoubtedly operating and always advancing them to the end.”

There are other two, longer, Creeds in *Tertullian's* works, but in these (Math. xiii. 25) he has sowed tares among the wheat, and mixed his own comments, and Platonic ideas, with the Rule and law of Faith. The like may be said, with some abatement, of the two Creeds found in the writings of *Ireneus*.

In the *Apostolical Constitutions*, there is found a simple and unexceptionable Creed, expressed in these comprehensive words. *There is one God Almighty, besides whom there is no other; and him only we ought to adore and worship, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the most holy Spirit.*

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

This is the first Article. How will this correspond with the belief, either of a Trinitarian, or an Arian?

According to the Trinitarian system, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, form the one true God, not the Father *only*: consequently the Apostles Creed, or the Creed of the primitive churches formed upon the Apostles Doctrine, does not express their sentiments.

But it expresses perfectly the sentiments of the Unitarians. And in the *Oriental* and *Aquileian* copies of this Creed, this first Article is still more emphatically expressed and runs thus, *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty.*

Again, the Apostles Creed styles the Father, *Maker of heaven and earth.* But the Trinitarians say that the whole Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were concerned in the work of creation: and the Arians affirm, that the Son was employed as a subordinate minister or operator in this work. The Creed of the first Christians takes no notice of these things, but refers the work of Creation wholly to the Father.

How shall we account for this silence and these omissions, on the supposition that the doctrines of the Trinity and the pre-existence of Christ were known to the primitive Christians? The Trinity, and the Pre-existence of Christ, if true doctrines at all, must be owned to be of great importance. Why then, were they not put into the Creed or general profession of Faith, which all Christians gave assent to at Baptism?

If it shall be said that these doctrines were not then controverted or opposed, and therefore there was no occasion for inserting them in the Creed;—

this answer will be found to be unsatisfactory. For Articles of importance ought always to be, and are always, inserted in a Creed whether controverted or not. Besides, it is not true that these articles were not then controverted. It is well known, that the earliest ages of Christianity abounded with Unitarians, yea, as I hope, I shall be able to prove, it was the prevailing and general opinion. This therefore is an insufficient reason and falls to the ground of itself.

But I will mention the true reason why these articles thought now so important by Trinitarians were not then inserted in the Creed. The Reason was, that no such articles then existed,—that the Trinity and Incarnation, were no part of *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*,\*—that the Apostles, and the great body of the primitive Church were Unitarians, and could not insert in a Creed what they themselves did not believe, or perhaps had never heard of. The Trinity and Incarnation were the spurious brood and ill-formed progeny of the *Man of sin*, and therefore could not make a formal appearance in the world in a general Creed for the use of all persons, until such time as the *Apostacy*, had been considerably advanced, and the *Man of sin* had come upon the public stage.†

\* Jude ver. 3.

† It has been customary among Protestants to apply the term, *Man of sin*, exclusively of all others, to the Popes or bishops of Rome. But I am by no means satisfied that this exclusive application is just. As the *Man of God* in Scripture does not signify merely an individual character or single line of men, but respects every good man who preserves the pure doctrines of Christ both in principle and practice; so the *Man of sin* does not apply merely to one corrupter of Christianity, but to all (whether acting in a civil or ecclesiastical capacity) who corrupt it, and enforce these corruptions.

The *Man of sin* was formed in the Christian Church long before the Papal power had arrived at any great height. *Constantine*, the first christian Emperor of the Romans, who assumed *Lordship* in the Church of Christ, (Math. xx. 25 to 28) and enforced the decisions of the Council of Nice by his imperial authority, was the first *Man of*

Let us now consider the second Article of this ancient Creed.

*And (I believe) in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*

Now, upon Trinitarian and Arian principles this second Article will be found to be as inexplicable and unaccountable as the first. For Trinitarians say, that *the Son of God* was begotten from eternity, that he is of the Father's essence or substance, and equal to him in all divine perfections: and the Arians affirm that he was the *first born of every creature* in respect of time, and brought forth before the creation of the world. But this ancient Creed, or profession of Christian Faith, is quite silent with respect to both these assertions.

But could the Creed have been silent,—could it have omitted these articles now reckoned so important, if they had been believed or generally received at the time it was composed? Would any Trinitarian or Arian omit them now in making a Creed, or a Catechism, for the professed purpose of instructing converts, and delivering to the world an account of their respective principles? If these articles are of importance now and never omitted in any account or profession of Faith, why were they omitted in the first age of Christianity? Were the successors of the Apostles and the primitive Christians so negligent and inattentive as to forget the most important, the most profound, and the most necessary articles of their religion, in a Creed, or *form of doctrine*, expressly drawn up for the information and instruction

*sin*, who made a public appearance; and the pattern and example of all who have followed in succeeding times, whether *Papal* or *Protestant*.

See *Evanson's Letter to the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry*, London, 1777. Since reprinted.



of beginners and new Converts? Would they have abandoned in this careless manner *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, if it really had been *so delivered*? Alas! alas! This question can never be satisfactorily answered, but in the same way I answered the former one, viz. that the first Christians knew of no eternal or pre-existent *Son of God*,—that they were neither Trinitarians, nor Arians, but plain, simple, Unitarian Christians; and therefore could not put into their Creed, or profession of Faith, what they did not believe, or did not know themselves.

But this is not all that may be said upon this part of the subject. This ancient Creed, not only leaves out every thing relating to an eternal or pre-existent *Son of God*, but expresses clearly and precisely what is inconsistent with this notion. The Creed calls *Jesus Christ*, (or *Jesus the anointed*) *God's only Son*, as he really is; but it defines expressly at the same time in what sense it understands *the term*. The Creed styles him then *our Lord*, or *Master*, because *God made him both Lord and Christ*,\* and it continues to describe him as a *Son of God*, *who was conceived by the holy Ghost*, (or *the power of the Highest*†) *and born of the Virgin Mary*, and thereby excludes all ideas of an eternal, or pre-existent *Sonship*. Were a professed modern Unitarian to draw up a *Creed*, he could hardly *make one* more expressive of his own sentiments than the first Christians have already *made* to his hands!

The only remaining Article in this Creed that it is proper to take notice of, as belonging to our present subject, is that which respects *the holy Spirit*. This is expressed simply as follows.

*I believe in the holy Ghost ; (or holy Spirit).*

\* John xiii. 13. Acts ii. 36. Phil. ii. 11. † Luke i. 35

Now, the terms in which this Article is expressed by no means imply *the personality* of the holy Spirit. For the Creed also inculcates the belief of *The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting*; which we are sure are not *persons*, but *things or circumstances*.

*I believe in the holy Ghost, (or holy Spirit)*; therefore, implies nothing more in the manner in which it is expressed, and in the connection in which it stands, than a belief of the supernatural *descent*, the *effusion*, or *pouring forth* of the divine *Spirit of the Father*, first upon our Lord himself, and then upon the Apostles and believers in the first age of Christianity; or that miraculous *power* by which the Gospel was supported and propagated; and which may still operate upon the minds of Christians in a way unknown to us.\*

Thus, we have shown that the most ancient, general, and universal Creed, or profession of Faith of human composure, that the Christian world ever saw, is certainly and strictly *Unitarian*, and of consequence affords a strong and striking proof that the whole, or the great body, of Christians, must have been Unitarians, at the time it was composed. For would ever Trinitarians, or Arians, have composed a Creed contrary to their own sentiments, or leaving out and omitting the most important Articles of their Faith?

And if the great body of Christians were Unitarians when this Creed was composed,—it was composed at so early a period, and received so universally, that it will follow from these circumstances, that the Apostles themselves must have taught the Unitarian Doctrine; and this will strongly confirm all our in-

\* The reader may if he pleases turn to *Dissertation iv.* page 70, &c. and read what is there said, concerning “the true scriptural sense of the words, *The Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God.*”

terpretations of Scripture, as giving the true sense of the Apostles writings.

This ancient Creed is so well attested, and was so generally received, that it was continued to be used long after the doctrine of the Church was changed, and the Trinitarian system came to prevail, though it was thought necessary by the prevailing party to make other Creeds by way of supplement to it, or explanatory of it; and to enforce them, by arbitrary penalties and severe punishments, upon Christians. But the Antiquity and long use of this Creed was such, that it could not be laid aside, and it is therefore continued in all Trinitarian Establishments to this day: though some of their learned men have written large Comments upon it, and have endeavoured by a forced construction to make it speak their own principles, in the same manner as they misinterpret the Scriptures.

I have been thus long in commenting upon some Articles of this ancient Creed, because the Argument arising from them is well calculated to make an impression, and is so plain as to be adequate to every capacity.

But I would not be understood by any thing I have said, to wish to impose any form of words of human composition upon Christians. The Scriptures are the only authoritative *Rule* of Faith, Worship, and Practice. I intend nothing more than to urge *this Creed* as a plain and powerful Argument for the *Unitarianism* of the primitive Church; and it must be owned to have a great deal of force in this respect.

An Argument derived from a general Creed or profession of Faith, received in Christian churches in early ages, and handed down from the remotest periods, is stronger in favour of any particular doctrines, than the sentiments of any one respectable writer, or even many such writers put together. The

opinion of a single eminent writer, or that of many writers, is no farther to be valued than as he, or they, bring powerful reasons to support it; but the evidence arising from a general Creed is quite of a different nature. It is an evidence arising from *general consent* at an early period; which general consent could never have taken place, if this Creed at its first publication had not been thought to be a faithful transcript of the doctrine of the Apostles.

The case of this *early Creed* is very different from that of all other *ones* that have been composed in later times by Councils and bodies of Clergy, and backed and countenanced by civil authority. The *Nicene Creed*, it is well known, was framed by a council of Bishops called together by *Constantine*, and established by his authority. The *Athanasian Creed* was fabricated by an obscure or unknown individual, and afterwards adopted by the Church and enforced by civil and ecclesiastical power. And all modern *Articles*, and *Confessions of Faith*, in the European Establishments, have been framed by Councils, Synods, or Assemblies of Divines, and enforced in a similar manner.

But the *Creed* called *The Apostles Creed*, was not the work of a Council, or a body of Clergy, was not established or enforced by civil or ecclesiastical authority, but grew up and was received freely and voluntarily, by the general consent of Christians; and was found with little variation in the records of different ancient Churches situated at a vast distance from one another. It cannot therefore be traced to any particular period, but seems to have taken its rise from *Apostolical Tradition*; and consequently, is entitled to high respect and consideration.

*To God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: be ascribed, honour, glory, and praise; through Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was*

*conceived by the holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; The third day he rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead: in the holy Spirit. Amen.*

## DISSERTATION XIV.

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### THE UNITARIANISM OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH PROVED,

FROM

SOME REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCES,

AND

FROM THE CONCESSIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF  
SOME ANCIENT ECCLESIASTICAL WRITERS.

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

**I**N our preceding Dissertation, after some brief Observations on the Unitarian Doctrine preached by the Apostles, and on the Authority of the Apostolical Fathers, we introduced, a plain but powerful Argument in favour of the truth of that Doctrine derived from the obvious meaning of some of the principal Articles of the *Apostles Creed*; and a Proof of the Unitarianism of the Primitive Church from the early and continued use of *this Creed*; as containing a faithful summary of the *Apostles Doctrine*, and therefore styled by some the *Rule or Law of Faith*.

We proceed immediately to produce farther evidence of the general prevalence of Unitarian principles in the early ages of the Christian Church; partly arising from some remarkable circumstances respecting the Jews, and the Apostles themselves, that may be collected or inferred from the Evangelical and Apostolical history, and partly from the concessions and acknowledgments of some eminent Fathers.

It is well known, that the Jews have made it a serious objection to Christianity since ever the doctrine of the Trinity took its rise, that it teaches the belief of more Gods than one, even a Trinity of Gods, or three divine persons; contrary to the first, important article of their law, Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one.*

How comes it to pass then, that in no part of the Acts of the Apostles, where we find the Jews so often opposing and combating the doctrines of the first christian Preachers, we ever find them urging against these Preachers, their inculcating the belief of *more Gods than one*, or teaching the *divinity* of their Master, his *pre-existence*, *incarnation*, or any thing of that sort?

The Jews would have eagerly seized an objection of this kind, had but the shadow of it appeared, as it would have afforded them a very strong and just reason for calling in question the divine mission of Jesus, and for rejecting the authority of his Apostles; and besides would not a little have raised the indignation of the people against them.

But as it does not appear in the whole compass of the New Testament, or from any record that is in being, that this objection was ever started in the course of *the first Century*, this negative circumstance furnishes a strong proof that there was no room for making such an objection, and consequent-

ly, that neither the Apostles, nor any of the evangelical Preachers, ever taught the Doctrine of the Trinity, or that of the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ.

But farther, by parity of reason it may be supposed, that if our Lord himself had ever at any time communicated to his Apostles the strange and contradictory doctrines beforementioned, they would have discovered a great deal of surprise and wonder at the first communication. For as all the Jews, agreeably to the prophetic declarations, expected their Messiah, whenever he should make his appearance, would be *a man* of their own nation, *the son of David, the son of Abraham*;\* the Apostles being Jews would naturally form the same expectations with their countrymen, and must therefore like them have been struck with astonishment and aversion at the notion of a sublime, pre-existent being, or a divine person, coming as their Messiah.

It was therefore, to be expected, on the supposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, and Christ's Pre-existence and Divinity having been original Tenets of Christianity, that we should have had some account of the effect that this communication had made upon the minds of the Apostles at its first discovery to them. But in vain do we look for any information of this kind in the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles.

In other respects we find the disciples of our Lord expressing their surprise when any new or unusual thing was imparted to them, such as, that their Master, though *the Messiah*, should *suffer* and *die*, and that *the Gentiles* should be equally partakers of the blessings of the Gospel with *the Jews*. If these things startled them, offended them, and shocked their

\* Math. i. 1.



prejudices, how much more must the discovery of a fact far more wonderful and astonishing have affected their minds, viz. that Jesus their Master, with whom they had so long lived and conversed on the footing of his being *a man*, was really a divine person equal to Jehovah himself, or a transcendently glorious, pre-existent Spirit, inhabiting a human body. And yet our research is fruitless in the evangelical history for a discovery of this kind, and the corresponding effects of it upon their minds.

This then is not merely a presumption, but a clear proof, founded upon unerring circumstances, the constitution of human nature in general, and the peculiar mental complexion of Jews in particular, that no such discovery was ever made, and that consequently the Apostles, and other early disciples must have uniformly considered Jesus their Master *as a man* from first to last, and *as such* have preached and announced him to the world; as we find from the Acts of the Apostles they actually did.

And to show that this is not fanciful or chimerical reasoning, we shall confirm what has been here advanced by a quotation from a noted Father, who lived in the fourth century, and found himself obliged to grant our *conclusion*, though he assigns *another reason* for the cause of it. The celebrated champion of orthodoxy *Athanasius*, having those who held the proper humanity of Christ particularly in view, and after quoting several places in the Acts of the Apostles, has the following words:

“ Will they now rage and say, for nothing is too daring for them, that the Apostles thought as Arius did: discovering such sentiments, because they announce Christ as *a man of Nazareth*, who suffered? Or because they used these words, had the Apostles known Christ only *as a man and nothing more*? Be it not so: (or God forbid). This conception is not to be admitted. But this they did as *wise master-builders, and stewards of the mysteries of*

“*God.* And they had this persuasive reason (or  
 “cause) for it. For the Jews of that age being de-  
 “ceived themselves, and having deceived the Gen-  
 “tiles, thought that Christ was a mere man, only  
 “that he came of the seed of David, and resembled  
 “other descendants of David: and they did not be-  
 “lieve either that he was God, or that *the Word was*  
 “*made flesh.* On this account the blessed Apostles,  
 “with much judgment, first declared to the Jews  
 “what things related to the humanity of our Saviour,  
 “that having fully persuaded them, from his mira-  
 “culous works, that the Christ was come, they  
 “might afterwards bring them to the belief of his  
 “divinity, showing, that his works were not those  
 “of a man but of God. For example, Peter having  
 “said that Christ was a man who had suffered, im-  
 “mediately added, he is *the prince of life.* In the  
 “Gospel he confesses, *Thou art the Christ the Son*  
 “*of the living God,* and in his Epistle he calls him  
 “*the bishop of souls;* and his own Lord, and that of  
 “*angels and of powers, &c.*”\*

\* Ὡρα γὰρ λοιπὸν αὐτοὺς ἀποδραστεῖσθαι καὶ λεγεῖν, Οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀιολ-  
 μῆτον, αὐτοὶ ἀποσόλοι τὰ Ἀρεῖα ἐφρονοῦν. ἀνδρῶπον γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀπο Ναζαρετ,  
 καὶ παθετὸν τὸν Χριστὸν ἀπαγγελλέουσιν, ἐκείνων τοίνυν τοιαῦτα φανίζομενων,  
 ἀρ ἐπειδὴ τοῖς ξημασι τῆτοις ἐχρησάτο, μόνον ἀνδρῶπον ἠδεισαν τὸν Χριστὸν οἱ  
 Ἀποσόλοι καὶ πλέον ἔδεν; μὴ γενόισο\* ἐκ ἐσιν οὐδὲ εἰς νοῦν ποτε τῆτο λάβεῖν·  
 ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆτο ὡς ἀρχιτεκτονὸς σωφοὶ, καὶ οἰκοδομοὶ μυστηρίων Θεοῦ πεποη-  
 κασι· καὶ τὴν αἰλίαν ἐχούσιν εὐλογον, ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οἱ τότε Ἰουδαῖοι πλανηθέντες,  
 καὶ πλανησαντες Ἕλληνας ἐνομίζον τὸν Χριστὸν, ψῖλον ἀνδρῶπον, μόνον ἐκ σπερ-  
 ματος Δαβὶδ ἐρχεσθαι κατ' ὑμοιοτήτα τῶν ἐκ τοῦ Δαβὶδ ἄλλων γενομένων  
 τεκνῶν· οὐτε δὲ Θεοῦ αἰλίον, οὐδὲ οἱ λόγος σαρκὸς ἐγενέτο ἐπίστευον τούτου ἐνεκα,  
 μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς συνετέως ὁ μακάριοι ἀποσόλοι τὰ ἀνδρῶπινα τε σωτήρος  
 ἐξηγουνοῦν ὡροῦν τοῖς Ἰουδαῖοις· ἵνα ὅλως πείσαντες αὐτοὺς, ἐκ τῶν φαινομένων καὶ  
 γενομένων σημειῶν, ἐληλυθῆναι τὸν Χριστὸν, λοιπὸν καὶ εἰς τὰ περὶ τῆς θηότητος  
 αὐτοῦ πείσαν αὐτοὺς ἀναγαγῶσιν, δείκνυντες οἱ τὰ γενομένα ἔργα ἢ ἐσιν ἀνδρῶ-  
 πι, ἀλλὰ Θεοῦ ἀμελεῖ Πέτρος ὁ λέγων ἀνδρᾶ παθῆναι τὸν Χριστὸν, εἰδὺς συνῆπτεν  
 εἰὸς ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς ἐσιν· ἐν δὲ τῷ Ευαγγελίῳ ὁμολογεῖ· συ εἰ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς  
 τῆ Θεοῦ ζῶντος· ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐπιστολῇ φησιν αὐτὸν ἐπισκοποῦν ψυχῶν. καὶ Κυρίου  
 αὐτῆ τε καὶ Ἀγγελῶν καὶ δυναμῶν εἶναι, &c. &c. *Athanasii opera,*  
 Vol. 1. p. 553, 554. Parisiis, 1627. *De Sententia Dionysii con-*  
*tra Arianos.*

There are several things in this quotation from *Athanasius* well worth attending to. In the first place, he acknowledges in the fullest manner as other of the Fathers do, what some Trinitarians in after ages have attempted to deny, that "the Jews of that age thought that Christ was a mere man, and did not believe either that he was God, or that *the Word was made flesh*,"\* he also says that "the Jews of that age being deceived themselves, deceived the Gentiles."

Now the question is here, whether *Athanasius* means the Jews who were believers in Christianity or the unbelieving Jews? Some have said that he intended the unbelieving Jews. But this is not at all probable, from his saying, "they deceived the Gentiles." Now, how could unbelieving Jews deceive the Gentiles? The Question concerning the nature of the Messiah, whether he was a man, a superangelic being, or a person strictly divine, was a question of no moment to the Gentiles previous to their conversion to Christianity, and in which they did not at all concern themselves. But it was a question of real moment to those Gentiles who were converted from Paganism by believing Jews to the truth of the Christian Religion; and therefore the words of *Athanasius* can only be rightly understood of those Jews who were believers in Christ; and who held their Lord and Master to be *a man*, and as such declared him to the Gentiles.

This being the case, the words of *Athanasius* are

\* These Jews, that *Athanasius* speaks of, only denied, that "a divine person, or intelligent agent," *was made flesh*. They could never deny that *the Word*, or the *Divine Reason* or *Wisdom* was communicated to *the Messiah*, which *Isaiah* (xi. 1, 2, &c.) had foretold long before would be the case. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of JEHOVAH shall rest upon him, the spirit of WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING, &c. &c.*

of considerable importance for the proof of the general prevalence of the Unitarian Doctrine in the primitive Church. For from them we have an explicit acknowledgment on his part, that the Apostles preached the doctrine of the *simple humanity of Christ*, and were obliged to do it; and to use *much judgment*, or “prudential reserve,” in divulging the tenet of his Divinity; because the first Converts both Jews and Gentiles were so fully persuaded of *the humanity of the Messiah*, that they could only be brought to the belief of his *divinity* by degrees.\* Here we find that *Athanasius* is obliged to own *the fact*, viz. “the Unitarianism of the members of the first Jewish and Gentile churches,” though he assigns a false reason to account for it, viz. *judgment*, or in other words, “caution and prudence” on the part of the Apostles.

But the real state of the case is,—that *this belief*,

\* The passages of Scripture that *Athanasius* quotes to prove that Peter himself held the Divinity of Christ are nothing to the purpose; and two of them make directly against that notion. If the expression, “the prince of life” was intended, as *Athanasius* thought, to give some intimations of Christ’s Divinity to the Jews, it must be owned to have been a very *indirect* way of doing it, and it does not appear from any part of the Acts of the Apostles, that any of the Jews or Gentiles *took the hint*.

The truth is, that this expression means nothing more than that Christ is what he himself says (John xi. 25.) *the resurrection and the life*; or than as Paul fully explains the subject, 1 Cor. xv. 21. *For since by MAN came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead.*

But the passage, when fully quoted, explains itself sufficiently to those who have *ears to hear* the truth, without a reference to any other. Acts iii. 13 to 15 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the holy one, and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And killed the prince of life, WHOM GOD HATH RAISED FROM THE DEAD; whereof we are witnesses.* Poor *Athanasius!* how art thou foiled! how art thou fallen, like *Dagon before the Ark of God!* No wonder: the greatest *Champions must fall*, when they attempt to subvert the plain and obvious truths of the Gospel: and David, with a *sling and a stone in his hand*, going forth in the name of the LORD of hosts, is superior to the *Philistine Go’iah*, in all his boasted strength and armour, who defied the armies of the God of Israel. 1 Sam. xvii.

both of Jews and Gentiles in the *first age* of the proper humanity of Christ, can only be accounted for on the supposition, that the Apostles themselves really believed and preached it: for what other reason could prompt both Jews and Gentiles to believe it? It is strange, that the first Christians, Jews and Gentiles, should believe quite contrary to what their professed teachers did, who proved their doctrines by miracles! That the Apostles should be *Trinitarians*, and both Jews and Gentiles, *Unitarians*; so that the Apostles were obliged at first to conceal their *chief doctrines* from them, and only to reveal them in a slow and cautious manner as they were able to bear them.

This method of acting on the part of the Apostles cannot be admitted, without shaking the credit of their testimony. It exhibits them in the light of politicians and worldly minded men, who temporized; and made great and important truth subservient to conveniency. Paul affirmed to the elders of the church of Ephesus when he took his farewell of them, (Acts xx. 27): *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*; but we never read that he preached the doctrine of the Trinity, or the divinity of Christ to them. And shall we suppose that either he or Peter, would have forborne to do this from motives of caution and prudence. Far be such unworthy shuffling and prevarication, such mean concealment of the truth, from the characters of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

Undoubtedly, if they preached *only* the humanity of Christ, it was because they believed it to be *true*, and not because they did not think it *prudent* or *safe* to do otherwise. Besides, if they were ever really actuated by prudential motives of this kind, these motives must have held them long under restraint; for in no place of the Acts of the Apostles, nor any

where else in the New Testament, do we ever find them changing their language concerning Jesus their Master. To exhibit such a scheme of accounting for the conduct of the Apostles,—so full of artifice and worldly wisdom;—is quite sufficient to discredit it, and confute it.

I shall next produce a passage from *Justin Martyr*, which has undergone, formerly and of late, great discussion, and is a proof of the great prevalence of Unitarianism in the early ages of the church.\* *Justin*, who lived towards the middle of the second Century, in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, speaking of the doctrines of the supposed pre-existence and incarnation of Christ, represents *Trypho* as saying, viz.

“ We have heard your opinion concerning these  
 “ matters; but resuming the subject you left, pro-  
 “ ceed to say; for you seem to tell me of a most  
 “ wonderful and incredible thing, which can never  
 “ be proved. To say, that this Christ pre-existed as  
 “ a God before the ages, and then to have submit-  
 “ ted to be born and to be made a man, and that he  
 “ was not a man of man, appears to me not only  
 “ wonderful and incredible, but even foolish. To  
 “ this I answered, I know that this opinion appears  
 “ incredible, and especially to those of your race,  
 “ (Jews by birth); who never were inclined, either  
 “ to understand, or to perform the commands of  
 “ God, but to follow your own Teachers, as God  
 “ himself exclaims against you. Notwithstanding,  
 “ *Trypho*, said I, that (foundation) will not be lost,

\* Mr. *Biddle* in his *Testimonies from the Fathers*, quoted this passage of *Justin Martyr* and translated it into English, 150 years ago; it came afterwards under the consideration of those Unitarians who were contemporaries with Bp. *Bull*; and in 1783, the sense of some words in it was warmly debated between the late Dr. *Priestley*, Mr. *Badcock*, and Dr. *Cappe* of York. In 1785, the Rev. Mr. *Lindsey* made a new and exact translation of it, accompanied with some judicious observations.

“ viz. that this same person is the Christ of God,  
 “ though I should not be able to prove that he pre-  
 “ existed, being God, the son of the Creator of all  
 “ things, and that he was begotten a man through  
 “ the Virgin. But since it has been already fully  
 “ shown that he is the Christ of God, whatever  
 “ else he be; though I should not prove that he pre-  
 “ existed, and submitted to be born a man having  
 “ flesh, subject to the like affections and sufferings  
 “ with us, according to the will of the Father: it  
 “ will be right to say, that in this only I have been  
 “ mistaken, and not to deny that he is the Christ,  
 “ though he should appear to be a man born of  
 “ men, and it should be proved that he was made  
 “ Christ by election. For there are some of our  
 “ race, (Gentiles by birth, but believing in Christ)  
 “ said I, O Friends, who confess him to be  
 “ the Christ, but declare him to be a man of men.  
 “ To whom I do not assent, though the greatest  
 “ part of them should say that they have been of  
 “ the same opinion: because we are commanded by  
 “ Christ himself, not to obey the teachings of men,  
 “ but what was proclaimed by the blessed prophets and  
 “ taught by himself. To this *Trypho* replied. They  
 “ who say that he was born a man, and that he was  
 “ by election anointed, and made Christ, seem to exhi-  
 “ bit your Doctrine (viz. Christianity) in a more credi-  
 “ ble form than you do. For all of us expect that  
 “ Christ will be born, a man of men, and that Elias  
 “ will come to anoint him. If, therefore, this person  
 “ should appear to be the Christ, it behoves him by  
 “ all means to be known as a man born of men.”\*

\* Και ο Τρύφων, ἢ ὡςτις τῶν ὅσα φησὶς ἀκηκῶτα εἶπεν· ἀναλαβὼν  
 κν τον λογον οδεν επαυσω· περαινε· Παρεδοξος τις γαρ σπολε και μη δυναμενος  
 ελως αποδειχθηναι δοκει μοι ειναι. Το γαρ λεγειν σε περιπαρχεν Θεον οὐκ  
 προ αιωνων τῶν Χριστον, εἴτα και γεννηθηναι ανδροπον γεν-μενον υπομε-

There are several important inferences that may be drawn from this passage of *Justin Martyr*.

1. That the doctrine of Christ's divinity and pre-existence had at this period gained very little footing among Christians, if it was not the invention of *Justin* himself; for we do not find him appealing to former writers on the subject, or even to the general opinion of Christians in his time, but only to his own *sense*, or interpretation, of the Scriptures; which appears from the nature of his comments to have been a very erroneous one.

2. The diffidence with which *Justin* expresses his own opinion, and the doubt which he intimates whether he should be able to demonstrate that Christ pre-existed, and his asserting that in case of a failure in his proof, the Messiahship of Jesus would remain firm notwithstanding, are all indications that the doctrine of the Divinity and Pre-existence of the

και, και οτι η ανθρωπος εξ ανθρωπου, η μονον παραδοξον δοκει μοι ειναι αλλα και μορον. Και προς ταυτα εφην, οιδ' ολι παραδοξος ο λογος δοκει ειναι και μαλιςα τοις απο γενους υμων. οι τινες Ια τε Θεου ουτε νοησαι ουτε ποιησαι ποτε βεβουλησθε. αλλα τα των διδασκαλων υμων, ως αυτος ο Θεος βοα. Ηδη μνη τοι, ω Τρυφων ειπον, ουκ απολλυται το τοιθειον ειναι Χριστον του Θεου εαν αποδειξαι μη δυναμαι οτι και πρεστηρχεν, υιος τε ποιητη των ολων Θεου ων η γεγεννηται ανθρωπος δια της παρθενου. Αλλα εκ παντος αποδεικνυμενη οτι ελος εστιν ο Χριστος ο τε Θεου, οστις εγος εσαι, εαν δε μη αποδεικνω οτι πρεστηρχε και γεννηθηται ανθρωπος ομοιωσθησθαι ημιν, σαρκα εχων, κατα την του πατρος βηλην. υπειμεινεν, εν τουτω τωνπλαησθαι με μονον λεγειν δικαιον. αλλα μη αρνεισθαι οτι εγος εστιν ο Χριστος, εαν φαινηται ως ανθρωπος εξ ανθρωπων γεννηθεις, και εκλογη γενομενος εις τον Χριστον ειναι αποδεικνυηται. Και γαρ εισι τινες, ω φιλοι ελεγον, απο τε ημετερον γενους ομολογηθεις αυτον Χριστον ειναι, ανθρωπον δε εξ ανθρωπων γενομενον αποφαινομενοι. Οις, η συνιδεμαι, ουδ' αν πλεισοι ταυτα μοι δοξασαντες ειπωιεν. επειδη ουκ ανθρωπειοις διδαγμασι κεκελευσμεθα επ' αυτε τε Χριστε πειθεσθαι, αλλα τοις δια των μακαριων προφητων κηρυχθεισι και δι αυτην διδαχθεισι. Και ο Τρυφων. εμοι μεν δοκωσιν, ειπεν, οι λεγοντες ανθρωπον γεγονεναι αυτον και κατ' εκλογην κεχρισθαι, και Χριστον γεννηται, πεισανωτερον υμων λεγειν. των ταυτα απερχης λεγοντων και γαρ παντες ημεις τον Χριστον ανθρωπον εξ ανθρωπων προσδοκωμεν γενησεσθαι, και τον Ελιαν χρισται αυτον ελθοντα. Εαν δε ελος φαινηται ων ο Χριστος, ανθρωπον μεν εξ ανθρωπων γενομενον εκ παντος επισασθαι δει. *Justini Philosophi et Martyris Opera*, Lutetiae Parisiorum. 1615. p. 267, 268.



Messiah, was at that time accounted a novel and very precarious opinion.

3. Though *Justin* does not expressly assert, that the doctrine of the proper humanity of Christ was the prevailing opinion in his time both among Jews and Gentiles; yet from his words he affords some room to conclude that this was the case. "Though the greatest part of them (or the majority) should say that they have been of the same opinion." If *Justin* had been conscious that the *Majority* of the Gentile Christians had been upon his side, he would no doubt have asserted the fact without the least hesitation; and ought to have done so.

Another testimony which I shall produce, when compared with that of *Justin*, will have great force to show, that the Gentile Christians in the second Century must have been generally Unitarians.

*Tertullian* a Latin Father, who lived a little later than *Justin*, towards the end of the second century, has a passage respecting the Unitarians of his time as follows.

"For the simple, that I may not say, the ignorant, and unlearned, who are always the greater part of (the body of) believers, (or Christians) since the Rule of Faith transfers (our worship) from many Gods of the age (or heathen world) to the one only and true God, not understanding that the Unity of God is to be believed with its oeconomy, dread this oeconomy. They presuppose that the number and disposition of a Trinity is a division of the Unity; when the Unity deriving the Trinity from itself, is not destroyed by it, but administered. They therefore affirm that two and even three Gods are confessed by us, but they presuppose themselves to be worshippers of one God. As if the Unity irrationally collected, may not make a heresy, and the Trinity rationally

“ considered, may not constitute a truth. We, they  
 “ say, hold the monarchy. And so also the Latins  
 “ express the sound vocally, as do also the Barba-  
 “ rians, that you may think that they understand  
 “ the monarchy as well as they pronounce it. Even  
 “ the Latins are desirous to bawl out the monarchy,  
 “ and the Greeks themselves will not understand the  
 “ oeconomy.”\*

This passage carries light and conviction, like a sun beam, upon the subject in question. It is clear and undeniable from it that the Unitarians in Africa, where *Tertullian* lived, were the *major pars credentium*, the “majority” or “greater part of believers:”†

\* *Simplices enim quippe, ne dixerim imprudentes et idiotæ, quæ major semper credentium pars est, quoniam et ipsa regula fidei a pluribus diis seculi, ad unicum et deum verum transfert; non intelligentes unicum quidem, sed cum sua oeconomia esse credendum, expavescent ad oeconomiam. Numerum et dispositionem trinitatis, divisionem præsumunt unitatis; quando unitas ex semetipsa derivans trinitatem, non destruat ab illa, sed administretur. Itaque duos et tres jam jactitant a nobis predicari, se vero unius dei cultores præsumunt. Quasi non et unitas irrationaliter collecta, hæresim faciat, trinitas rationaliter expensa, veritatem constituat. Monarchiam, inquit, tenemus. Et ita sonum vocaliter exprimunt etiam Latini, etiam opici, ut putes illos tam bene intelligere monarchiam, quam enunciant. Sed monarchiam sonare student Latini, oeconomiam intelligere nolunt etiam Græci. *Tertulliani Opera*. Edit. Rigaltii. Parisiis. 1695. p. 502. *Adver. Praxeam*.*

† Upon a cool, candid, and impartial Review of this passage in Philadelphia in September 1808, I am of opinion that much more may be inferred from it in favour of the general prevalence of Unitarianism in the Christian Church, among the people at large, in the time of *Tertullian*, than I actually did infer from it fourteen years ago, when I composed what is said above in the city of Glasgow in 1794.

It is my opinion, that it may be fairly inferred from this place of *Tertullian* without any straining, that about the year 200 of the Christian æra, not only the *major pars credentium*, “the great body of believing Christians” in Africa where *Tertullian* lived were Unitarians, but also that people of the same description, as they are characterized by him, were Unitarians also throughout the Roman Empire, or where the Greek and Latin languages were spoken.

1. For observe, that *Tertullian* speaks of *the greater part of believers* in general, without restraining the expression to any particular country: and the reason which he assigns why *the greater part of believers* dreaded, and rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, is a reason which must have had great weight in every country where the Christian Religion was professed. “Since *the Rule of Faith*,” (by which he un-

and that when *he* and other Platonizing Fathers began to preach the Trinity to them, and to recommend it by such sophistical and delusive terms of art as might tend to hide its deformity from them, they “dreaded it,” *expavescunt*, “shuddered at it” or heard it with horror and aversion, as an infringement of the Unity of God, and implying the belief of two or even three Gods; and that all *Tertullian’s* scholastic reasonings, laboured apologies, and technical terms, could not reconcile them to this doctrine, or make it go down with them.

A strong and striking proof that the doctrine of the Trinity was then a *novelty*, lately brought into public view, and that the doctrine of the simple Divine Unity was the *ancient doctrine* of the church, which the people had received from their ancestors, and

doubtedly means the Apostles Creed) “transfers the worship of many Gods of the age to the one only and true God.”

The Apostles Creed, as we have shown in our *thirteenth Dissertation*, is strictly Unitarian, and was received by general consent in the Christian Churches. The great body of the people therefore, must have been Unitarians in all Christian churches in other countries as well as in Africa, and *Tertullian* expressly says they were so, by their belief of, or attachment to, *the Rule of Faith*, or “the Apostles Creed.” They were led by this simple, noble, *Apostolic Creed* to reject the doctrine of the Trinity, and shudder at it, as a novelty, inconsistent with the ancient doctrine of the Church; when first proposed to them by their Platonizing Teachers, and to say, that these their teachers “were confessors of *two* and even of *three Gods*, while they themselves were worshippers of *one God*.” *Blessed ancient Believers!* how much do I admire your christian zeal, and your christian integrity; in rejecting an *intricate*, and *impious novelty*, and adhering to the *plain doctrine* of the Apostles Creed. I bless God, that through the greatest part of my life I have been led to imitate your example, and hope I shall have grace given me to persevere unto the end.

2. *Tertullian* adds, “Even the Latins are desirous to bawl out the monarchy, and the Greeks themselves will not understand the oeconomy.” From these words it is apparent, that *Tertullian* is speaking of the general state of opinions in his time respecting the subject he is treating of, and affirms that the general sentiment in all christian churches was in favour of the Unitarian doctrine; and not merely of the prevailing opinions of a particular country. He was a very learned man, and of general information; his account of things may therefore be depended upon as correct; more especially when his testimony is corroborated by that of other Fathers.

which had been conveyed to their ancestors by the Apostles. For how could the great body of the christian people be Unitarians in so early an age, if they had not been taught that doctrine by their ancestors, and from whom could their ancestors receive it but from the first teachers of Christianity, viz. the Apostles of our Lord.

This striking passage throws light upon the quotation from *Justin Martyr*, and gives an additional strength to our interpretation of it. It also adds weight to our way of receiving the words of *Athanasius*. And when the testimonies of all the three are fairly appretiated and combined together, they form a triple cord that is not easily broken, and a weight of evidence that cannot fairly be gainsayed.

The evidence of these Fathers is the stronger because they were all Trinitarians, such as the Trinity was held in their days, and consequently would say nothing willingly against the credit of their own party. The testimony of Adversaries, when given in favour of those with whom they are at variance, is allowed in a court of equity to be the strongest of all evidence. And so it is with respect to the case before us. The Unitarianism of the primitive Church is proved from the explicit concessions and acknowledgments of three noted opponents.

*Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, God only wise : Be honour and glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Tim. i. 17. Rom. xvi. 27.*

## DISSERTATION XV.

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FARTHER EVIDENCE FROM ANCIENT  
ECCLESIASTICAL WRITERS,

THAT

THE FIRST JEWISH AND GENTILE CHURCHES HELD  
THE UNITARIAN DOCTRINE;

WITH SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

IN the foregoing Dissertation, we produced some very clear and striking evidence in proof of the first Christian Churches, both Jewish and Gentile, having been Unitarian. Among other things, we urged the testimonies of three celebrated Christian Fathers, viz. *Athanasius*, *Justin Martyr*, and *Tertullian*, which taken in connection have a peculiar force and strength, and prove much more than any one of them could do, considered singly.

The Evidence arising from the acknowledgments of these Fathers is much stronger when it is considered that they were Trinitarians, and so not likely

to advance any thing to the discredit of their own party, except unwillingly and when off their guard.

Nor are these concessions peculiar to the three Fathers beforementioned. Many passages of a similar nature, implying either directly or indirectly the same, have been extracted from the writings of the Fathers in general, by a celebrated Advocate for Unitarianism, and delivered at large to the world. Among these the names of *Chrysostom*, *Theodoret*, *Theophylact*, *Oecumenius*, and others appear; all bearing evidence, to the extreme caution with which in their judgment the Apostles found it necessary to divulge the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and also to the prevalence of Unitarianism among Jews and Gentiles in the first age of the Church.

All these Fathers grant in the fullest manner, that neither the Pre-existence nor the Divinity of Christ were ever taught explicitly by the three first Evangelists, or by the author of the Acts of the Apostles; and assign some curious, prudential reasons for this reserve, and silence. John they suppose indeed, to have taught these Doctrines fully, and clearly; but John came too late to teach them with proper effect; and if they were never taught so as to be understood before the publication of his Gospel, the evil was past remedy.\*

We have before shown in the course of these Dissertations, that it is impossible to suppose that John should teach any thing with respect to any important article of Christianity, *different* from the rest of the Apostles. To suppose this would be highly dangerous indeed! All the Apostles were *equally* charged with the trust of communicating the tenets of their

\* See PRIESTLEY'S *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ, compiled from Original Writers; proving that the Christian Church was at first Unitarian*, in 4 Vols. 8vo. Birmingham, 1786. Vol. 3. p. 101 to 157.

great Master, and were commanded to proclaim publicly, or *preach upon the house tops*, what was told them in secret;\* they were *equally* “witnesses of Christ’s resurrection;”† they had *equally* the gift of *the Spirit of truth, to guide them into all truth*:‡ and if any of them, or the majority of them, concealed or smuggled any important truth from prudential considerations, they were unfaithful witnesses indeed, and this concealment might have been sufficient to impair the credibility of the whole of their testimony.

The writings of John therefore, notwithstanding the erroneous glosses and comments of the Fathers, must be understood and interpreted in the same manner as those of the three preceding Evangelists; and of consequence the pretended proof of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ arising from John’s supposed testimony will be found to be a gross mistake. And if we will indeed read the Gospel of John with candour and fairness, and attend to the figurative nature of his style, we shall find no real difficulty in bringing him to an agreement with the doctrine of the other Evangelists; as we have before fully shown.

In confirmation of the general evidence we have produced that the Christian Church was Unitarian in the first ages, we shall take notice of what has been said by ancient writers of the *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes*, two names by which the Jewish Christians were particularly distinguished.

It is well known, and must be evident to every one who has read the Acts of the Apostles, that the first church or assembly of Christians, and the parent of all other churches, was THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM:—that *pure church* which was formed

\* Math. x. 27. † Acts i. 8,—21, 22. ‡ John xvi. 13.

immediately after our Lord's ascension under the ministry of the Apostles.

If it can be proved by certain evidence that *this church* was *Unitarian*, it will follow by inevitable consequence that *all other early churches* must have been *so* also; and thus the question will be decided entirely in favour of the Unitarians. And here, the best and most unexceptionable evidence that we have is derived from the Acts of the Apostles, which, as far as it goes, affords very ample testimony, that nothing but *the Unity of God in the Person of the Father, and the Messiahship and Proper Humanity of Jesus*, was ever taught there by the Apostles.

This evidence we have already exhibited in its full strength,\* and at present it is our business to prove from ancient ecclesiastical Writers, that those called *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes* were the successors of those Jewish Christians that composed the *first Church* at Jerusalem. But here it is much to be lamented, that none of the writings of these Jewish Unitarian Christians have come down to us; so that all the evidence we can collect concerning them is from incidental expressions occurring in the works of their professed adversaries, who cannot be expected to give the most fair and candid account of them. Yet, notwithstanding, making the best use we can of the brief hints concerning them found in the writings of the Fathers, and putting the most reasonable construction upon the passages that have been alledged and so much controverted, the evidence upon the whole preponderates that these Jewish Christians must have been Unitarians, and the successors of the Apostles and first members of the church of Jerusalem.

Some modern Trinitarians well knowing what a mortal wound their cause would receive, could it be

\* See *Dissertation* iii. p. 40, 41. . v. p. 79 to 83. xiii. p. 188, 189.



satisfactorily proved, that these *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes* were the genuine successors of the first Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, have struggled hard to perplex the evidence, and to prove that these *Ebionites* and *Nazaranes* took their rise after the destruction of Jerusalem by *Titus*, or even still later in the time of the general dispersion of the Jews in the reign of *Adrian*; thereby endeavouring to make them a different body of men from the first Jewish Christians at Jerusalem.

It has also been pretended by the same class of writers, that there was a difference of opinion between the *Ebionites* and the *Nazarenes*, the former viz. the *Ebionites* holding the doctrine of Christ's being a mere man, and the latter admitting his divinity; though both sects concurred in their attachment to the ritual ceremonies of the Jewish law.

In opposition to this very considerable evidence has been brought to prove, that the *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes* were the same people; and that they existed in the time of the Apostles, which if it can be fully made out, there will remain little doubt but that they were their genuine successors. To omit some less considerable testimonies, the evidence of *Origen*, who lived in the neighbourhood of Judea, and was one of the most learned of the Fathers, is very clear to this purpose.

*Origen* says, "that a poor man is called *Ebion* by the Jews; and that those among the Jews who acknowledge Jesus as the Christ are styled *Ebionites*."\* In this quotation, we find all the Jewish Christians comprehended under the term *Ebionites*. *Origen* gives a distinct account of their opinion con-

\* Εβίων τε γὰρ ὁ πτωχὸς παρὰ Ἰουδαίους καλεῖται. Καὶ Ἐβιωναῖοι Χρηματίζουσιν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὡς Χριστὸν, παραδεξαμένοι. *Origenes contra Celsum*, Edit. Spenceri. Cantab. 1677. Lib. ii. p. 56.

cerning the person of Jesus our Lord in the following passage.

“ And when you consider the faith concerning  
 “ our Saviour of those among the Jews who believe  
 “ in Jesus, some indeed thinking him to derive his  
 “ existence from Joseph and Mary, and some indeed  
 “ from Mary only and the Divine Spirit, but not  
 “ however with any belief of his divinity, you will  
 “ perceive, &c.”\*

This passage from *Origen* is very express, and it is so *clear*, that some late Trinitarian Writers could find no way to avoid its *force* but by taxing the veracity of *Origen* and charging him with wilful falsehood. Had *Origen* been disposed to favour the Unitarians, there might have been some plausibility though no certainty in a charge of this kind; but when it is considered, that he was a *Trinitarian*, who had deeply imbibed *the Platonic Theology*, the charge must appear groundless and uncandid in a high degree. *Origen* could have no purpose to serve, as far as we know, to represent the Jewish Christians as *Unitarians* if they were *not so*, and *his testimony*, whatever prejudiced persons may say, will ever have great weight with men of real judgment and candour.

But to confirm what *Origen* has advanced, we shall alledge another powerful testimony. *Eusebius* the ecclesiastical historian, a very great adversary of Unitarians, or of those who believed our Lord to be really *a man*, as appears from his inveterate opposition to *Marcellus of Ancyra*, describes the *Ebionites* in the very same manner that *Origen* had done before him.

\* Και επαν ιδης των απο Ιηδαιων πρισευδων εις τον Ιησuhn την περι τη σο-  
 ηρος πιστιν, οτε μεν εν Μαριας και τη Ιωσηφ οιομενων αυτον ειναι, .οτε μεν εκ  
 Μαριας μονης και τη Θειη πνευματος, η μεν και μελα της περι αυτη θεο-  
 λογιας, οφει, &c. *Origenis Comment. in Matt.* Edit. Huetii, Vol. I.  
 p. 427.

“ A malignant Dæmon (he says) took possession  
 “ of others, finding them entangled in certain re-  
 “ spects, though unable to remove their attachment  
 “ to the Christ of God. The Ancients commonly  
 “ called these persons *Ebionites*, as thinking meanly  
 “ and humbly concerning Christ. For they account  
 “ him to be only of the common and ordinary rank  
 “ of men, begotten of Mary’s husband, but justifi-  
 “ ed (or dignified) by the excellence of his morals.  
 “ ——— But others being of the same appellation  
 “ with these, receding from the absurd incongruity  
 “ of the forementioned (opinions), do not deny that  
 “ the Lord was born of a Virgin and of the holy  
 “ Spirit. These indeed, however, in like manner,  
 “ not confessing him to pre-exist, being God the  
 “ Word and Wisdom, were drawn round into the  
 “ impiety of the former.”\*

Here we have the opinion of *Origen* authenticated by that of *Eusebius*; both men of learning, and both living in the neighbourhood of the *Ebionites*; and consequently having an opportunity of being well informed concerning their tenets. They both agree that there were two sorts of them, the one believing that Jesus was the Son of Joseph and Mary; and the other, that he was the Son of Mary, but conceived by the holy Spirit; but both adhering to the doctrine of his Proper Humanity, and denying his Pre-existence and Divinity.

\* Άλλες δε ο πονηρος δαιμων της περι τον Χριστον τη Θεω διαθεσεως αδυνατων εκσεσησαι. Διερκληπιες ευρων εσφειριζελο. Εβιωνικιες τουτες οικειως επεφημιζον οι πραιοι, πτωχως και ταπεινωσ τα περι τη Χριστη δοξαζοντας. Αλιον μεν γαρ αυλον και κοινον ηγενιο καλα προκοπηνη ηδης αυλον μονον ανδρστων δεδικαιωμενον εξ ανδρος τε κοινωνιας και της Μαριας γεγεννημενον ——— αλλοι δε παρα τειες της αυλης οντες προσηγοριας, τη μεν των ειρημενων εκλοπον διεδιδρασκον αλοπιαν, εκ παρθενε και του αγιε πνευμαλιος μη αενημενοι γεγονεναι τον Κυριον· ου μεν εδ ομοιωσ και ουλοι προπαρχειν αυλον, Θεον λογον οντα και σοφιαν ομολογηντες, τη των προερων περιερεπονιο ουσσεβεικ. *Eusebii Eccles. Historia*. Edit. Valesii. Parisiis. 1659. Lib. iii. Cap. 27. p. 99.

The testimony of two such early, well informed writers can never be counterbalanced or redargued, by broken hints, and ill founded conjectures, or by the testimony of a writer that lived at two thousand miles distance\* and had no opportunity of being well informed on the subject.

The testimony of *Jerom* another learned Father, though not so clearly expressed as those of the two foregoing writers, is, when fairly and properly considered, by no means contradictory to them. It is as follows.

“ If this be true we fall into the heresy of *Cherintus* and *Ebion*, who believing in Christ, were anathematized by the Fathers for this (cause) only, that they mixed the ceremonies of the law with the Gospel of Christ, and so confessed the new (institutions), as that they might not lose the old. What shall I say concerning the *Ebionites*, who pretend that they are Christians? A heresy is (or exists) even to this day among the Jews, through all the synagogues of the east, which is called that of the *Minei*, and is even now condemned by the Pharisees, whom they commonly call *Nazarenes*, who believe in Christ the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, and say, that it was he who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose again, in whom also we believe: but while they wish to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither Jews nor Christians.”†

\* *Sulpitius Severus.*

† Si hoc verum est; in Cherinti et Hebionis hæresim dilabimur, qui credentes in Christo, propter hoc solum a patribus anathematizati sunt; quod legis ceremonias Christi evangelio miscuerunt, et sic nova confessi sunt, ut vetera non amitterent. Quid dicam de Hebionitis, qui Christianos esse se simulant? Usque hodie per totas orientis synagogas inter Judæos hæresis est, quæ dicitur mineorum, et a Pharisæis nunc usque damnatur, quos vulgò Nazaræos nuncupant, qui credunt in Christum, filium dei, natum de virgine Maria, et eum dicunt esse, qui sub Pontio Pilato passus est, et resurrexit, in quem et nos credi-

*Epiphanius*, though in speaking of the Jewish Christians, he divides them into *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes*, yet it does not appear from all his testimonies taken together and impartially stated, that the *Nazarenes* believed in the divinity of Christ more than the *Ebionites*, though the former might be that part of the Jewish Christians that both *Origen* and *Eusebius* mention as holding the miraculous conception.

*Theodoret*, who lived in Syria, speaking of the *Nazarenes*, says, “The *Nazarenes* are Jews who honour Christ as a righteous man; and who use the Gospel called according to Peter.”\*

Upon the whole from the passages we have quoted, it appears, that there is very respectable and credible evidence to prove, that the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites* were in the main the same people; and that however the Jewish Christians might differ among themselves with respect to the miraculous conception, they were unanimous in their belief of *the Unity of God in the Person of the Father*, and in that of *the Messiahship and Proper Humanity of Jesus*.

This attachment and constant adherence of the Jewish Christians to Unitarian Principles is a point of great importance, and affords a very strong proof in addition to other invincible proofs, before stated, that the Apostles must have taught the Unitarian Doctrine. For it must be admitted on all hands as an indisputable fact, that the first Christian Church, viz. the Church of Jerusalem, was composed entirely of Jews. Now this being the case, how can it be accounted for on any reasonable principles, that the

mus: sed dum volunt et Judæi esse, et Christiani, nec Judæi sunt nec Christiani. *Hieronymi Opera*, Edit. Victorii. Lutetiae, 1624. Vol. i. p. 634.

\* Οἱ δὲ Ναζωραῖοι Ἰουδαῖοι εἰσι, τὸν Χριστὸν τιμῶντες ὡς ἀνθρώπων δικαιοσύνην, καὶ τὴν καλεσθεῖσαν κατὰ Πέτρον εὐαγγελίῳ κηρύττοντες. *Theodoretii Opera*, Edit. Sirmondi. Hær. Pol. Lib. ii. Cap. 2. Vol. 4. p. 219.

whole body of Jewish Christians should have been unanimous in rejecting the divinity of Christ and asserting his proper humanity, on the supposition that the Apostles had *preached* and the first Converts at Jerusalem had *believed* the doctrine of the Trinity?

The first Christian Converts must be supposed to have held the doctrine of the Apostles, or else Christianity was never taught to any purpose at all. And if the Apostles and first Church at Jerusalem really believed the divinity of Christ, how came the whole body of Jewish Christians, who received their faith immediately from them to reject it, and to adopt the notion of his proper humanity? It was more natural for them rather to magnify the person of their Master than to endeavour in any respect to lessen or diminish it.

And yet it is a certain fact, from the early authentic accounts of *Origen* and *Eusebius*, who had the best means of information, and no motive to deceive by a misrepresentation of the state of the case, that the Jewish Christians were strict Unitarians, and held the doctrine of Christ's proper humanity. If only a few of them had embraced these opinions, it would not have been so wonderful; but that the whole body, or a very great majority, should have done so, is a fact that will never correspond with the Apostles having preached or the members of the first Christian Church at Jerusalem having believed, either the Doctrine of the Trinity, or Christ's Pre-existence and Divinity.

If the great body of Jewish Christians, were Unitarians in the middle of the third century, in the time of *Origen*, it is reasonable to think that they must have been *so* in the second, and also *so* in the first century, and in the very time of the Apostles. There is no evidence to prove that ever any alteration took place in their opinion; on the contrary, as some

of the Fathers supposed that the Apostle John had a view to the *Ebionites* in his Gospel; this notion (however mistaken these Fathers might be with respect to John's object) is a proof that the Jewish Christians were believed to have been in that way of thinking even in the time of the Apostles.

Here then, we have a chain of tradition, strongly confirming our great point that the Christian Church was originally Unitarian; we have the evidence of the great body of Jewish Christians, ascending in a line to the Apostles themselves: and the accounts given of these Jewish Christians by ancient ecclesiastical Writers bears such an affinity with what is recorded in the *Acts*, and particularly with the description given of them Chap. xxi. 20 to 23, that the argument becomes peculiarly strong and convincing; and shows, that what some have ventured to affirm of a church of Trinitarian Jews established at Jerusalem is a mere modern fabrication, without any foundation in ecclesiastical Antiquity.\*

\* "The resemblance between the character of the Ebionites, as given by the early christian fathers, and that of the Jewish christians at the time of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, is very striking. After he had given an account of his conduct, to the more intelligent of them, they were satisfied with it; but they thought there would be great difficulty in satisfying others. *Thou seest, brother, say they to him, Acts xxi. 20. how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? The multitudes must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this, that we say to thee. We have four men that have a vow on them. Them take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads, and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly and keepest the law. So great a resemblance in some things, viz. their attachment to the law, and their prejudices against Paul, cannot but lead us to imagine that they were the same in other respects also, both being equally observers of the law, and equally strangers to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. And in that age all the Jews were equal-*

Having thus treated of the Jewish Unitarian Christians, we shall now add a few observations on the Gentile Converts to Christianity; and here we have very satisfactory evidence to prove, that the great body of them were Unitarians as well as the Jews. The evidence arising from the *Apostles Creed* so generally received in the Gentile Churches, and also from the testimonies of *Athanasius*, *Justin Martyr*, and *Tertullian*, before quoted and commented upon, is invincibly strong to this purpose. It is apparent from these authorities, that the Unitarians were a very numerous body in the Gentile Churches, inasmuch that they were styled by *Tertullian*, the *major pars credentium*, that is, "the greater part of believers," and their opponents were obliged to make elaborate Apologies to them, which were by no means satisfactory.

Besides this clear, direct, and positive proof, on which, *after the Scriptural Testimonies*, we chiefly rest the cause, the prevalence of Unitarianism in the early Gentile Churches may be inferred from two considerations.

1. From the Unitarians having no particular *name* assigned them, and their worshipping in the public churches or congregations styled *Catholic* or *Universal*. Had the Unitarians been only a small body, and considered as *innovators*, their adversaries would have soon characterized them by a name, or perhaps expelled them from the public Assemblies. This

"ly zealous for the great doctrine of the *unity of God*, and their *peculiar customs*. Can it be supposed then that they would so obstinately retain the one, and so readily abandon the other?"

"These considerations (and much more might be added to enforce them) certainly affect the credibility of Christ having any nature superior to that of man; and when they are sufficiently attended to (as I suspect they never have been) must shake the Arian hypothesis; but they must be particularly embarrassing to those who, like you, maintain the perfect equality of the Son to the Father." *PRILESTLEY'S Letters to Horsley*, Part i. p. 62, 63. Birmingham, 1783.



however was not the case. The Unitarians had no particular name given them for a long time, and so far were they from being expelled from the public congregations as heretics, that the Platonizing Fathers found themselves considered as *innovators*, and could not make a satisfactory defence of their *novel Theology* to them.

2. Another proof of the great prevalence and Apostolical Origin of Unitarianism in the Gentile Churches, is, that this doctrine appears to have taken *a firm hold* of the minds of the *unlearned*, or of people in the middle or lower ranks of life. Now (as it has been justly remarked by a late writer) if we trace the progress of religious opinion, we shall find, that changes and innovations of every kind take place at first among the learned and speculative, and that it requires a considerable space of time before they can make any permanent impression upon the people at large. I would therefore ask any intelligent person, how it can be accounted for, that *the greater part of believers* should have been Unitarians in the time of *Tertullian*, that is about the end of the second century, while their professed teachers were of a different opinion. Nothing but an Apostolical tradition in favour of Unitarianism can account for this surprising fact. The oldest opinions are always found among the great mass or body of the people, and speculations of every kind begin with the learned. This may be admitted as a *general maxim* with hardly an exception, though not in many cases *a test of truth*, as it certainly was in the present case.

But independent of these considerations, we find a remarkable fact recorded by *Eusebius*, or rather by a more ancient author quoted by him, viz. that these ancient, Gentile Unitarian Christians maintained, that the doctrine of Christ's proper humanity

was the ancient doctrine of the Church, handed down to them from their ancestors, and that the Trinitarians had altered and corrupted this genuine, ancient doctrine. I shall here quote the passage as it occurs in *Eusebius*.

“ In an accurate Treatise of one of these (authors)  
 “ composed against the heresy of *Artemon*, which  
 “ *Paul* bishop of *Samosata* attempted to renew  
 “ in our times, there is found a certain narration  
 “ very suitable to the subject of our present inquiries. For (that author) in proving that manifested heresy to have taken its rise not long before,  
 “ whereas its leaders wish to render it venerable as  
 “ if ancient; after many other things alledged against  
 “ their blasphemous falsehood, proceeds in these words.  
 “ For they say, that all the ancients and the Apostles themselves received and taught these (Doctrines) which now they teach, and that the truth  
 “ of the public declaration (that is, the purity of the  
 “ Apostolical Doctrine) was preserved until the time  
 “ of *Victor*, who was the thirteenth bishop of *Rome*  
 “ from Peter: but that the truth was corrupted in  
 “ the time of *Zephyrinus* his successor. Perhaps,  
 “ this assertion might appear credible, if in the first  
 “ place the divine Scriptures were not opposed to  
 “ them: and there are (besides) writings of some  
 “ of our brethren older than the time of *Victor*,  
 “ which they composed in defence of the truth  
 “ against the heathens, and against the heresies then  
 “ existing. I speak of those of *Justin*, *Miltiades*,  
 “ *Tatian*, *Clemens* (*Alexandrinus*), and many others,  
 “ in all which divinity is ascribed to Christ. For  
 “ who is ignorant of the books of *Irenæus*, *Melito*,  
 “ and others, declaring Christ both God and Man.  
 “ But how many psalms and hymns of the brethren,  
 “ committed to writing by the faithful from the beginning, extol Christ as the Word of God, as-

“ cribing divinity to him. When therefore the doctrine of the Church has been declared for so many years, how can it be admitted, that the doctrine which they profess should have been publicly taught till the time of *Victor*. How are they not ashamed to frame these falsehoods against *Victor*, knowing perfectly that *Victor* excluded from the Communion *Theodotus the Tanner*, the leader and parent of this God-denying Apostacy, who first said that Christ was a mere man. For if, according to them, *Victor* so thought as their blasphemy teaches, why did he expel *Theodotus* the inventor of this heresy?”\*

The author quoted here by *Eusebius* is said by some to have been *Caius*, who lived about the year

\* Τουτων εν τινος σπουδασματι κατα της Αρτεμιωνος αιρεσεως πεπωνημενω, ην αυτις ο εκ Σαμοσατων Παυλος, καθ ημας ανανεωσασθαι ωπειραται φερεται τις διηγησις ταις εξεταζομεναις ημιν προσηκουσα ιστοριαις. Την γαρ τοι δεδηλωμενη αιρεσιν ψιλον ανθρωπων γινεσθαι τον σωτηρα φασκησαν ε προ πολλου νεωρισθεισαν διευδυναν. Πολλα και αλλα εις ελεγchon αυτων της βλασφημου ψευδηγοριας παραδειξ ο λογος, ταυτα καλα λεξιν ιστορει. Φασι γαρ της μεν προτερης απαντας και αυτες τους αποστολους παρεληφθεναι τε και δεδιδαχθεναι ταυτα, α νυν ουτοι λεγουσι και τηρηθησθαι την αληθειαν του κηρυγματος μεχρι των Βικηρος χρονων, ος ην τρισκαιδεκατος απο Πιερου εν Ρωμη επισκοπος. Απο δε του διαδοχε αυτη Ζεφυρινη. παρακεχαρχαχθαι την αληθειαν. Ην δ' αν τυχον πιθανον το λεγομενον, ει μη πρωτον μεν ανιπιπλον αι δεξαι γραφαι και αδελφων δε τινων εσι γραμματια πρεσβυτερα των Βικηρος χρονων, α εκεινοι προς τα εδη υπερ της αληθειας, κη προς τας τοτε αιρεσεις εγραψαν. Λεγω δε Ιουστινη και Μιλτιαδου και Τατιανου και Κλημενις και εβερων πλειονων εν οισ απασι θεολογειται ο Χριστος. Τα γαρ Ειρηναϊαι τε κη Μελλιωνος και των λοιπων τις αγιοι βιβλια, Θεον και ανθρωπων καταγγελλοντα τον Χριστον; ψαλμοι δε οσοι κη ωδαι αδελφων απαρχεις υπο πισων γραφεισαι, τον λογον τε Θεου τον Χριστον υμνησι θεολογηντες πως ουν εκ τούτων ετων καταγγελλομενου του εκκλησιαστικου φρονηματος. ενδεχεται τοις μεχρι Βικηρος ουτως ως ουτοι λεγουσι κεκερυχθεναι; πως δε ουκ αιδουνται ταυτα Βικηρος καταψευδεσθαι. ακριβως ειδοτες, οτι Βικηρω τον σκευεα Θεοδωτον τον αρχηγον κη πατερα ταυτης της αρησιδεασ αποστασιας, απεκηρυξε της κοινωνιας. πρωτον ειποναι ψιλον ανθρωπον τον Χριστον; ει γαρ Βικηρω και αυτες ετως εφρονει ως η τετων διδασκει βλασφημια, πως αν απεβαλλε Θεοδωτον τον της αιρεσιως ταυτης ευετην. *Eusebii Eccles. Historia*. Edit. Valesii. Parisiis. 1659. Lib. V. Cap. 28. p. 195, 196.

210, and wrote a piece called *The Little Labyrinth*. He abounds in declamation and opprobrious epithets, in which he has been imitated by some writers in later times; but to these as they carry no conviction along with them, we shall pay no regard. He stumbles at the very threshold, and appeals to the Scriptures as being on his side, which the Unitarians alone have a proper claim to. The Arguments he alledges against the claims of the ancient Unitarians to Antiquity, and having the original doctrine of the church on their side, are weak and insufficient. The oldest of his authorities is *Justin Martyr* who was a *Platonist*, and corrupted the evangelical doctrine by an infusion of heathen philosophy; and who proposed his new system, with such a degree of hesitation, as gives ground to think that the majority of Christians in his time were against him, and that he had even some distrust of it himself. All the other writers mentioned by him followed the track of *Justin*, and debased the original simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. The psalms and hymns he mentions were probably spurious compositions, and from the account he gives of them must have been very different from those noble models of devotional composition left us by *David*, *the sweet singer of Israel*, and other sacred poets; in which the majesty and glory of *JEHOVAH*, *the only true God*, are extolled and celebrated; and *the Messiah*, when prophetically mentioned, is represented *as a man* upheld and supported by him alone. It is not improbable but that these Hymns might be the very same ones, which *Paul* the Unitarian bishop of *Samosata* laid aside on account of their *novelty*.

There is one glaring falsehood asserted in this quotation, which is contradicted by the evidence of all Antiquity, and even by that of the Ecclesiastical History of *Eusebius* himself, viz. that *Theodotus the Tanner*, "was the first who said that Christ was a

mere man," or in other words, "a real and true man." What has been before said in this *Dissertation*, and in the two preceding *ones*, furnishes a sufficient confutation of this assertion.

The circumstance of *Theodotus* having been expelled from the Communion by *Victor*, and the cause assigned for it, do not appear to be well authenticated. *Praxeas* who professed Unitarian principles is said afterwards to have come to *Rome*, and to have been kindly received by *Victor*: it is therefore probable that there must have been some other reason for this excommunication, if it really took place at all.

When all these circumstances are seriously considered, and allowed their due weight, joined with the clear proofs and powerful arguments before produced; the claim of these ancient Gentile Unitarian Christians to the honourable character of being the genuine successors of the Apostles and the preservers of the purity of their Doctrine, must be allowed to be just; and their assertion, that the Apostles themselves and all the ancients taught the same Doctrine, will appear exceedingly credible.

*Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Phil. iv. 20.*

## DISSERTATION XVI.

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A BRIEF VIEW OF THE RISE, PROGRESS,  
AND ESTABLISHMENT

OF THE

PRESENT DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY :

WITH PREVIOUS REMARKS ON THE PROPENSITY OF  
MANKIND TO IDOLATRY.

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1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God  
and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

HAVING in three preceding Dissertations produced clear and satisfactory evidence to prove, that the first Christian Churches, both Jewish and Gentile, were Unitarian : or held the Doctrine of the strict, personal Unity of JEHOVAH, *the heavenly Father and the only true God* ; and also that of *the Messiahship and Proper Humanity of Jesus* ; we now proceed in order to complete the last part of our plan to show by what steps and degrees the present Doctrines of

the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ, and the Trinity, took their rise, and gained an ascendancy over that pure *seed* of the *word of God*, first *planted* and *watered* by our Lord and his Apostles, and *sealed* with their *blood*, and that of other Martyrs and Confessors.

It may seem wonderful that the true doctrine of the Gospel should so soon give way, and be corrupted by the inventions of men: but this is no more than what has taken place in all ages; by the fraud, cunning, and evil designs of some; and by the weakness, ignorance, caprice, and instability of others.

The true God revealed himself to the first ancestors of mankind, but they soon fell off from their allegiance to their Maker, and in the course of some generations the world became so corrupted and depraved, that it was found necessary to destroy the whole species by a flood.

After the deluge the Divine Being revealed himself to Noah and his Family; and yet in a short time afterwards Idolatry became so prevalent, that the pure and unadulterated worship of the true God was almost confined to a single family: the rest of the world being more or less affected with Idol-worship.

At last, it pleased Almighty God, in order to preserve some remains of pure and undefiled religion, to select one nation from the rest of mankind;—to proclaim himself to them, and vindicate his sovereign authority by a series of the most extraordinary miracles;—to give them a plain written law, delivered in an illustrious and conspicuous manner, and guarded by the most awful sanctions of rewards and punishments; and yet notwithstanding, this highly favoured nation continued but a short time after they were peaceably settled in the land of Canaan, in the

worship and service of JEHOVAH: for no sooner were that generation removed, *who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel,* than their posterity began to imitate the idolatrous practices of the surrounding nations.

We have a very natural and affecting description of this *sad change* given us in the book of Judges, Chap. ii. 7, 8,—10 to 13. *And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. . And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.—And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other Gods, of the Gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*

Now, *the very same change* seems to have taken place in the Christian Church, as is here described to have done among the Jews. While the Apostles lived, and those Apostolical men who had seen them, and conversed with them, the Christian Church remained pure and uncorrupted: but after these good men were removed by natural death, or martyrdom, a succession of Platonizing Teachers followed, who being lately converted from Paganism to Christianity, and exchanging the school of *Plato*



for that of Jesus, brought along with them *Tares\** and mingled them with the genuine *Wheat*. By this means, *the gold became dim and the most fine gold was changed.*†

These Platonizing Teachers became *ashamed* of the PLAIN GOSPEL of *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him;‡* who was crucified, and raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. || They wished to have something elevated and sublime, profound and mysterious in religion: something that *smelt of Philosophy* and would coalesce with the system of *Plato* and other heathen Writers.

So far as we are able to trace it, the *first rise* of the great *Corruption* of Christianity took place among the *Gnostics*, a sect which separated very early from the great body of Christians, and blended many false notions with that part of Christianity which they thought fit to retain. These men found fault with the doctrines of the Gospel as taught by the Apostles, as being inconsistent with their philosophical System, of the impurity of matter; and from an eager desire to exalt the person and character of Christ, and to raise him above the capacity of *a man* subject to sufferings and death, they asserted that he was a man in appearance only; but in reality a being of a much more noble and excellent nature, viz. a distinguished celestial emanation, or superangelic Spirit.

The Apostle John is supposed to have written against these early corrupters of our religion in the following verses.

1 John iv. 1, 2, 3. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that*

\* Math. xiii. 25. † Lam. iv. 1. ‡ Acts ii. 22. || Rom. vi. 4.

*confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.*

It is clear, that there is an allusion in these words of John to some false teachers in his own time; and it is also clear from them that their *error* lay with respect to the person of Christ, in supposing him *not to have come in the flesh*, or “not to have been really a man.” The Apostle John calls such a doctrine *Antichristian*, and gives us a *test* whereby, in this respect, to distinguish true from false doctrine. Those (says he) who teach that *Jesus Christ*, (or *Jesus the anointed*) *is come in the flesh*, or “appeared as a real and true man, in opposition to a phantom or a man in appearance only,” *are of God*; and those who teach otherwise, *are not of God*; and consequently are false and erroneous teachers.

From this passage, it is evident, that one of the *earliest errors* that ever appeared in the Christian church was that of supposing our Lord Jesus Christ not to have been truly a man.

*Polycarp*, who is said to have been a disciple of the Apostle John, has a beautiful passage descriptive of the true character and dignity of Christ, and the purity of manners which ought to be preserved by his followers; after which he passes a severe censure upon this erroneous doctrine held by the *Gnostics*.

“Believe therefore in him” (viz. in the Father)  
 “who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead,  
 “and gave him glory and a seat at his own right  
 “hand; to whom all things are made subject in  
 “heaven, in earth, and under the earth; whom  
 “every spirit serves; who will come to judge the

“ living and the dead ; whose blood God will re-  
 “ quire from those who have not believed in him,  
 “ who both raised him from the dead, and will raise  
 “ us to life, if we shall have done his will, and shall  
 “ have walked in his commandments, and shall have  
 “ loved what he himself loved ; abstaining from all  
 “ unrighteousness ; that is from concupiscence, from  
 “ covetousness, from detraction, from false witness,  
 “ not rendering evil for evil, nor injury for injury, nor  
 “ slander for slander. Whosoever does not confess  
 “ that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is Anti-  
 “ christ ; and whosoever does not confess his mar-  
 “ tyrdom upon the cross is from the devil ; and who-  
 “ soever shall have perverted the words of the Lord  
 “ to his own desires, and shall have said, there is no  
 “ resurrection nor judgment, is the first born of  
 “ Satan.”

*Ignatius*, another early Writer, though in some places very much interpolated, has one passage relating to the *Gnostics*, which has truly a primitive appearance, and may be supposed to be genuine.

“ Stop your ears therefore, as often as any one  
 “ shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ, of the race  
 “ of David, by the Virgin Mary. Who was *truly*  
 “ born, did eat and drink ; was *truly* persecuted un-  
 “ der Pontius Pilate, was also *truly* crucified and  
 “ dead :——Who was *truly* raised from the dead  
 “ by his Father, after the same manner as he (the  
 “ Father) will also raise up us who believe in him,  
 “ by Christ Jesus : without whom we have no true  
 “ life.”

Here then we have sufficiently explained to us by Apostolical and other authorities, how soon the *spirit of Antichrist* began to work in the Christian Church, even before the expiration of the first century, in the time of the Apostle John, who lived longer than any of the other Apostles.

This error, in consequence of the severe censure it met with from the Apostle John and other early Christian Writers, began to cease within the Church itself, and to be confined to the *Gnostics*, who were in a state of separation from it.

But as *error* is ever restless and insinuating and assumes various forms and shapes, a *notion* seemingly different from this, but which may be traced to the same source was soon after *invented*, which was far more plausible and dangerous; and unhappily increased and prevailed *at last* to the depravation of pure and genuine Christianity.

This was the *personification* of the *Logos* or *Word*, (the *Divine Reason* or *Wisdom*) used by the Apostle John in the beginning of his Gospel.

The ancient Unitarians found no difficulty in explaining the *Logos* or *Word*, as used by John, in a perfect consistency with the Unity of God. From what *Marcellus* the Unitarian bishop of *Ancyra* and others said about it, in such fragments of their writings as have come down to us, it appears, that they explained it entirely of the *wisdom* or *power* of God the Father communicated to and acting by the *man Christ Jesus*.

But the philosophizing teachers that had now crept into the Christian Church, and were refining and improving the doctrines of Christianity according to their own fanciful Ideas, began to frame other notions of the *Logos* than that of a mere attribute, power, or quality in God the Father.

Some of them held it to be a *principle* or *power* occasionally emitted or sent forth, which for the time it acted was a real person or agent, and afterwards when its action ceased, its personality ceased also, and it was drawn back again or resumed into the essence of the *Divine Being*.

This appears to have been the first departure from the simple notion of the divine Unity. *Justin Martyr* mentions it as held by some in his time, though he did not adopt it himself.\* And perhaps, while the notion of the *Logos* remained in this form, it might not give any great alarm to the great body of the Christian Church, who were then Unitarians. If they understood the notion at all, they might consider it as a harmless fancy, not any way affecting the proper Unity of God.

But it is necessary to guard against the first approaches of *error*, as it gains ground and steals on by various deceiving shows and appearances. For this notion of a *variable* *Logos* or *Word* settled in the firm belief of the *permanent stability* of the *Logos*, or of a divine person produced or begotten by the Father, by whose instrumentality the world and all creatures were framed, who represented the invisible Jehovah or heavenly Father on various occasions under the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations; and was afterwards incarnate in Jesus Christ.

*Justin Martyr* is justly supposed to have been one of the earliest who adopted this notion, and unhappily for the Truth it became soon very prevalent among many Christian Teachers. *Justin* before his conversion had been a *Philosopher*, and had changed and shifted various systems and *sects* in his researches after truth, and had *at last* attached himself to that of the *Platonists* as affording him more satisfaction than any of the rest.† Coming from the school of *Plato* to that of Jesus, he appears to have brought along with him a strong attachment to the tenets of his former master, and to have wished to accommodate the doctrines of the Gospel to the notions of the *Platonists*.

\* *Justini Martyris Opera*. Lut. Par. 1615. p. 358.

† ————— *Opera*. Lut. Par. 1615. p. 218, and 219.

*Plato*, or more properly, the *later Platonists*, according to some representations which they give of their opinions, held a Trinity of divine *Principles*, of which the *first* was the *Supreme God*, (τὸ ἀρχαθόν) or the *Good*, the *second* an intellectual conception or image of him, called the *Logos* or *Nous*, and the *third* the *world* or the *soul of the world*. Agreeably to these *Platonic Ideas*, *Justin* appears to have been willing to frame the Scripture doctrine of the *Father, Son, and holy Spirit*, though signifying quite another thing than what his erroneous conceptions led him to imagine.\* Accordingly, *Justin* supposed the *Logos*, or *Word* of *John*, to be another divine person produced or begotten by the *Father*, and distinct from him, but of secondary and subordinate dignity; who acted under the *Father*, and represented him, as beforementioned. *Justin* has taught and inculcated this notion in his writings, endeavouring to accommodate many passages of the *Old Testament* to it. But his pretended proofs are weak and insufficient, and only discover his ignorance of the hebrew phraseology or forms of speaking. From the tenor of some passages in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, he appears to have thought himself *inspired*, and that he was guided by divine communications to his method of interpreting the sacred writings of the *Old Testament*.† And from other passages in his works, one would be apt to imagine, that he was partly led into this way of thinking from a desire to avoid the *shame of the cross*, and to make the *Christian religion* appear more respectable in the eyes of heathens.‡

\* The writings of *Philo* a *Platonizing Jew* of *Alexandria*, who lived about a *Century* before the time of *Justin* and was greatly admired by the *Fathers*, might have a tendency to mislead *Justin*, and other *Christian Teachers*, fully as much as, if not more than, the heathen *Platonists*.

† *Opera*. Lut. Par. 1615. p. 280, 326, and elsewhere.

‡ *Apologia II. Opera*. Lut. Par. 1615. p. 60, 61, and 67, 68.

Happy would it have been for the Christian world if *this error* had remained with *Justin Martyr*; but it was adopted and closely imitated by *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, and other early writers; and though it could not extinguish the *ancient doctrine at first*, yet it greatly impeded its progress.

These *Platonizing Fathers* who brought in the notion of a *second God* subordinate to the Father, and of a *Divinity residing in three persons*, found great difficulty in reconciling their new doctrines to the great body of the people, who retained the *ancient Unitarian doctrine* delivered in the *Apostles Creed*, long after many of their Teachers had deserted it. This appears sufficiently obvious from the passages we have quoted in former *Dissertations*; wherein we find some of them making laboured Apologies on this subject, and complaining much of the opposition that was made to their doctrines.

But notwithstanding that the Truth was *considerably corrupted* during this period, yet the doctrine of the Trinity as *then* taught was very different from what it is *now*, and did not imply the same degree either of contradiction, or else of barefaced Polytheism. Though *Divinity* was supposed to reside in *three persons*, yet a subordination and inferiority respecting the *Son* and *Spirit* was carefully maintained, and that not in name and order merely, but in dignity, authority and power; and *the Father* was declared *only* to be *αυτοθεος* and *αγεννητος*, *God self-existent and unbegotten*. Even *Tertullian*, zealous as he was for the doctrine of the Trinity as it then stood, declares as follows.

———“ Because God is a father and God is also  
 “ a judge; he is not however, therefore, always a  
 “ father and a judge, because he is always God.  
 “ For he could neither be a father before the son,

“nor a judge before sin. But there was a time when both sin and the son was not, which” (sin having taken place) “made the Lord a judge, and who” (the son having been produced) “made him a father.”\*

*Origen* also and *Eusebius* have some passages in their writings which manifest the inferiority of the Son to the Father, and that of the holy Spirit to both the Father and the Son. In this manner the doctrine of the Trinity stood till about the time of the *Council of Nice*.

What gave occasion to the meeting of *this Council* was a Controversy that took place between *Alexander* the Bishop of *Alexandria* and *Arius* a Presbyter in the same Church. *Arius* contended that *the Son* was a creature made out of nothing before the creation of the world, capable of Virtue and Vice, and that *there was a time when he was not*. *Alexander* affirmed, on the other hand in opposition to *Arius*, that *the Son* was no Creature but that he was begotten or derived from the substance or essence of the Father. The controversy grew warm and parties were formed on each side: but *Alexander* having the greatest influence, got *Arius* deposed and excommunicated in a provincial council, and wrote a circular letter, in abusive terms, against him and his opinions. *Constantine* who then held the reins of Government, and was the first Christian Emperor of the Romans, wrote a letter to each of the contending parties, in which after censuring their conduct, he endeavoured by persuasion and influence to put a stop to their debates, and to allay their animosities.

\* ———quia et pater Deus est, et judex est; non tamen idèo pater et judex semper, quia Deus semper. Nam nec pater potuit esse ante filium, nec judex ante delictum. Fuit autem tempus cum et delictum et filius non fuit, quod judicem et qui patrem Dominum faceret. *Tertulliani Opera*, p. 234. Edit. Rigaltii. Parisiis: 1695. *Adversus Hermogenem*. Cap. III.



sities; but that not having the effect he desired, he determined to exercise his power and to compel the Church to uniformity of sentiment by a General Council. Accordingly at the Emperor's command (as we are informed by some Greek Writers) about three hundred and eighteen bishops coming from different parts of the Roman Empire, met at *Nice*,\*

\* DR. PRIESTLEY in his *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*, Vol. III. p. 320, 321, has given an Extract in Latin from the *Annals of Eutychius* the Patriarch of *Alexandria*, written in Arabic but translated by *Selden* into Latin, and said to have been compiled from the archives of the church of *Alexandria*; which gives an account of the number of Bishops who assembled at *Nice*, and of the first proceedings there, very different from that of the Greek writers. I have translated this Latin quotation as follows.

“Constantine having sent into all countries, called together the Patriarchs and the bishops, so that after a year and two months two thousand and forty-eight bishops met at *Nice*, differing from each other in their sentiments and modes of religion.—There were some of them said that Christ derived his existence from the Father like a flame of fire hanging down from another, and that the derivation of the latter from the former did not diminish it, which was the opinion of *Sabellius* and his followers.—Others said that Christ was created a man by God and of the same substance as other men, and that he was chosen to be the deliverer of Mankind, the divine grace attending him and dwelling in him through love and good will; and that therefore he was called the Son of God. They also said, that God was one substance, and one person called by three names, not believing in the Word, nor in the holy Spirit. This was the opinion of *Paul of Samosata* the Patriarch of *Antioch*, and of his followers who are called *Paulicians*.—Others finally asserted the divinity of Christ, which is the opinion of the Apostle Paul, and also of three hundred and eighteen bishops. The Emperor *Constantine* having heard their opinions wondered at this difference, and a house being selected for them in the place he had prepared, he ordered them to hold disputations, that having discovered upon what side the true faith might be, he might follow it. These three hundred and eighteen consented in one faith and one opinion, and disputing with the rest who had urged them to contend with them, they came off superior to them by their arguments and declared the true faith: but the other bishops differed from one another in their opinions and modes of religion. Therefore a convenient and large place being prepared for these three hundred and eighteen bishops, the Emperor himself sat down in the middle of them, and delivered to them his ring, sword and sceptre, telling them, I have granted you to-day my power in the empire, that you may do in it whatever is expedient for you to do respecting those things which relate to the right establishment of religion and the advantage of the faithful. *Selden's Eutychius*, p. 439, 440, 443, 444.

a town in *Asia Minor*, and after having discussed the matter in debate for some time were *all* (*Arius* himself and a very few excepted) by persuasion, influence, authority or one method or other, brought

Dr. PRIESTLEY remarks, p. 319, 320. "The same account *Selden*, "the publisher of *Euty chius*, found in an Arabian and christian writer "named *Joseph*, and also in a celebrated Mahometan historian, *Ismael* " *Ebn Ali*."

"This account, though seemingly very different from that of the "other ecclesiastical historians, Beausobre thinks may be reconciled "with it, if it be supposed that the bishops of villages, presbyters, "and those who were deemed heretical, were not allowed to have a "seat with the rest. Wormius, he observes, says that no sectary was "allowed to give his opinion in that council."

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October 1789, p. 885 to 887, there is a piece, entitled, *True State of the Proceedings in the Council of Nice*, in which the chief of the particulars beforementioned are related, with observations on them.

"*Josephus* a native of *Egypt*, but a Christian priest" relates "that "2048 bishops met at *Nice*, and that the Emperor commanded that "the Creed drawn up by the bishop of *Jerusalem* should be read in "the Synod. 318 bishops embraced it, 1730 differed in various ways, "neither agreeing in their general sentiments, nor any one article of "Faith."

"*Ismael Ibn Ali*, a Mohammedan historian of great and extended "reputation" says, "The aforesaid 318 bishops, moreover assenting "to the ordinance of *Constantine*, set forth the Christian Faith in a "different manner from what had been current as such heretofore."

We need not wonder that the 318 bishops should be represented as having had the better in the dispute, seeing the account comes from a Trinitarian Writer that derived his information from the archives of *Alexandria*. Nor is it surprising, that *Constantine* should declare himself on their side, since from his situation he was an incompetent judge of the matter in dispute, was hasty in his decision, and seems to have been guided in his determination by pacific and political views more than religious ones.

But it is a surprising circumstance, that 1730 bishops assembled from all parts of the Roman Empire, however much they might differ from one another in other points, should yet all agree in rejecting the divinity of Christ and the Nicene Creed; and that only 318, not a *sixth part* of 2048 bishops that were called to this Council, should adopt it.

From the account given of these 1730 bishops by *Euty chius*, as having been all followers either of *Sabellius*, or of *Paul of Samosata*, they must have been all Unitarians, and believers in the proper humanity of Christ, whatever contrariety of sentiment there might be in other respects among them.

This is an *additional proof* from a quarter little known or attended to, that "the Christian Church must have been originally Unitarian:" for how is it otherwise possible, that so many as 1730 bishops, who came from all parts of the widely extended empire of the Romans, could entertain and maintain sentiments of this kind, in opposition to

to adopt and assent to a *new Creed*, commonly called the *Nicene Creed*, the second Article of which is expressed in the following terms.

“ And (I believe) in one Lord Jesus Christ, the  
 “ only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father  
 “ before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light,  
 “ very God of very God, begotten, not made, be-  
 “ ing of one substance with the Father, by whom  
 “ all things were made; who for us men, and for  
 “ our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was  
 “ incarnate by the holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,  
 “ and was made man, &c.”

What unscriptural, what unwarrantable language, is the greatest part of all this; and how different from the ancient, plain, and sound doctrine of the *Apostles Creed*! A second God is here plainly set forth, a second Creator, who *was made man*! O monstrous extravagance and abomination! This is surely the *strange God* foretold in the prophecy of Daniel, which an Antichristian *king* should set up.\*

*Arius* himself and his adherents were banished, and his peculiar opinions and all who held them were condemned and anathematized by the authority of the Council, confirmed by the Emperor. The

a powerful monarch like *Constantine* and the *favoured* 318; at so advanced a period as the year 325, when the Council of *Nice* was held.

We may also infer from the relation of *Eutychius the Patriarch of Alexandria*, and those of the other two historians, that there must have been much *management* and *policy* exercised on the part of *Constantine*, and his ecclesiastical friends, in order to find a plausible pretence for setting aside the *votes* of so many *Christian bishops*, who had been summoned to this Council by the command of *Constantine* himself. But what is it, that unlimited power joined with State-policy and Clerical fraud, cannot perform?

From this view of things, it is manifest, that *the Council of Nice*, cannot be considered as a *fair representation* of the Christian Church at the time it was held; nor can *the Creed* that was adopted, by those *comparatively few bishops* that were permitted to sit and vote in it, be received as a *just and true expression* of the *general sentiments* of Christians at that period.

\* Dan. xi. 36 to 39.

*Man of sin* was now openly displayed by the intolerance and tyranny of *Ecclesiastics*; but more especially by the assumption of *civil authority* in the Christian Church, and the banishment of *Arius* and his adherents. This may be called the *third stage* of the doctrine of the Trinity. But though the divinity of *the Son* was raised higher by the *Nicene bishops* and more unequivocally declared than before, yet *the Father* is still styled in this Creed *the one God*, and the words of the first Article are the following.

“I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, “Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things “visible and invisible.” This shows that the ancient doctrine had taken such deep possession of men’s minds that it could not be thrown off all at once, even by a Council of bishops and the Emperor at their head. But what was wanting in the Council of *Nice* was soon after completed in the Council of *Constantinople* and other general Councils: \* and after a struggle of many years between the *Arian* and the *homousian* parties, the doctrine of the Trinity was *fully established* and the divinity of all the *three persons* was declared to be *the same*, co-equal and co-eternal. The *Athanasian Creed* which was afterwards adopted, with the *Definitions* of the Schoolmen completed the stupenduous fabrick of modern Orthodoxy. Various superstitious rites and idolatrous practices were also introduced, which as they have no necessary connection with my present subject I shall not stop to describe.

In this manner, and by this gradual process in the course of five hundred years after Christ was the

\* The Article respecting the holy Ghost, stood originally in the *Nicene*, as it does in the *Apostles Creed*, “I believe in the holy Ghost,” without any more words. The Council of *Constantinople* added “the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father;” and afterwards the words “and the Son” were inserted in it.

*Unity of God* subverted, and *Polytheism*, or the worship of *three Gods*, called in *name*, and by contradiction *one God*, established among Christians, first by ecclesiastical authority and afterwards confirmed by civil power. During the greatest part of this period a great *majority* of the Christian people appear to have been Unitarians, and to have resisted for a time the *advancing corruption* of their religion; but they were overborne *at last* by the Platonizing Clergy and Civil Authority together.

There were some eminent and learned men among these early Unitarian Christians, whose *names* deserve to be honourably mentioned, though their writings (some fragments excepted found in the works of their adversaries) have unfortunately perished.

Such were, among the Jewish Unitarian Christians, *Hegesippus* who wrote a *Continuation of the history of the Acts of the Apostles*, now lost, but some facts that were recorded in it have been preserved by *Eusebius* in his Ecclesiastical history; *Papias* also an author; *Symmachus*, a Samaritan; *Theodotion* and *Aquila*, Jewish Proselytes. These three last made different Translations of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, which were much esteemed by the ancients.

Among the Gentile Unitarian Christians, were, viz.

*Beryllus*, bishop of *Bostra* in *Arabia*, who appeared as an author at an early period of the church, and is said to have "left elegant writings behind him." *Eusebius* speaking of *Beryllus* observes, that "he dared to say, that our Saviour and Lord was "not before produced, according to any individual "subsistence of being, (or essence) before his habitation among men, and that he had no proper (or "separate) divinity, but only that of the Father residing in him." This is a just definition of the

Unitarian doctrine, expressed with as much precision as it can well be.\*

*Theodotus* the learned *Tanner of Byzantium*.

*Artemon*, who I am apt to think was a most judicious and sensible man; and concerning whose opinions *Theodoret* informs us in these words. “He” “(*Artemon*) says that the Lord Jesus Christ was a “mere man (that is, a real and true man) “born “of a Virgin, superior to the Prophets in virtue, and “misinterpreting the meaning of the divine writings, “he says, that the Apostles declared these things; “but that those who came after them spoke of “Christ as God, who is not God.”†

*Paulus Samosatensis*, or *Paul* bishop of *Samosata*, a learned, and eloquent man, and very popular in his diocese, but who was accused by his adversaries with being haughty, ostentatious, and fond of applause.

*Sabellius*, who lived in Africa, and whose opinions occasioned much controversy in the Church.

*Marcellus* bishop of *Ancyra*, a learned and able Writer, against whose opinions *Eusebius* wrote with much acrimony;——and several others.

But I must not omit to mention *Photinus* the celebrated bishop of *Sirmium*, who wrote both in Greek and Latin, and continued to maintain the strict Unitarian doctrine of *the personal Unity of God* and *the proper humanity of Christ*, with ability and energy, against both *Trinitarians* and *Arians*, after the Coun-

\* Τον σοτερα και κυριον ημων λεγειν τολμων μη παρφεσαναι κατ' ιδιαν ηστας περιγραφην. προ της εις ανθρωπος εωιδημιας, μηδε μην θεοηλε ιδιαν εχειν, αλλ' εμπολιτευομενην αυτω μωνην την πατρινην. *Eusebii Historia Eccles.* Edit. Valesii. Parisiis. 1659. Lib. VI. Cap. xxxiii. p. 231.

† Τον δε κυριον Ιησουν Χριστον ανθρωπον ειπε ψιλον, εκ παρθενε γυνηνημερον, των δε προφελων αρετη κρειττονα. Ταυτα δε και της απωστολης ελεγε κηρυχεναι, παρεξημειωων των θεων γραφων την διακριαν, της δε μετ' εκεινης θεολογησαι των Χριστον, εκ ουκ Θεον. *Theodoretii Opera*, Edit. Sirmondi. Parisiis. 1642. Vol. IV. p. 220. Hærr. Fab. Lib. II. Cap. iv.

cil of *Nice*, even so late as the middle of the fourth century, and was so popular in his diocese, that he resisted the decrees of two Councils who had deposed him; and could not be ejected but by a third Council held at *Sirmium*, and backed by the authority of the Emperor *Constantius*.\*

Notwithstanding, however, the spirited exertions and laudable resistance of *Photinus*, or other worthy persons who may have taken the same side, *the truth at last*, by the force of civil and ecclesiastical authority combined and united against it was *brought low*, and continued to keep in a declining state, till in the dark ages when the Apostacy was at its utmost height, and *the woman* (or the church) *had fled into the wilderness*,† it was very obscurely seen. But here from the want of sufficiently clear and full information concerning the real sentiments of Christians in many parts of the world in these times, we are much at a

\* An ancient Writer speaks of *Photinus* in the following terms. Nam erat et ingenii viribus valens, et doctrinæ opibus excellens, et eloquio præpotens: quippe qui utroque sermone copiose et graviter disputaret et scriberet: ut monumentis librorum suorum manifestatur, quos idem partim Græco, partim Latino sermone composuit. *Philaster. Bib. Patrum. Vol. V. Cap. xvi. p. 71. Parisiis, 1576.*

“For he was eminent by the strength of his genius, and excellent by the variety of his learning, and very powerful in elocution; being a person who could dispute and write copiously and with energy in either language: as is fully shown by the monuments of the books which he composed, partly in the Greek, and partly in the Latin speech.”

*Photinus* is mentioned besides, as an eminent man and copious Writer, by *Hilary*, *Jerom*, *Socrates*, *Sozomen* and *Nicephorus*. *Socrates* says, that “he wrote against all heresies, exhibiting only his own doctrine:” and *Sozomen* relates that “after his banishment, he did not cease to propagate his principles, and that he published treatises in the Greek and Latin tongues in which he attempted to make appear the falsity of the opinions of others, his own excepted.” The writings of *Photinus* must have made a considerable impression in his own times, since answers appeared to them long after his death, and one is said to have come abroad so late as about the year 500.

What a pity, that none of the compositions of this learned and valuable writer have reached our times.

† Rev. xii. 13 to 17.

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loss as to the state of the case; and it is probable that the number of those who in private and retired situations, held the true evangelical doctrine, or some considerable and important parts of it, may have been greater than any records that are in being and have come to light can furnish us with an account of. For in these times of spiritual tyranny, it was penal and highly dangerous in every part of Christendom to make a public profession of any sentiments or opinions, that were contrary to those that had been received and established.

But no sooner had the restoration of useful learning assisted by the noble and lately invented *typographical art*, under the conduct and administration of divine Providence, given a different turn to men's sentiments, and brought about a partial Reformation; than the true doctrine of the Gospel emerged from its former obscurity and made a public appearance: though its *open professors*, those generous, disinterested, and heavenly minded persons who espoused it, and like *good soldiers of Jesus Christ* maintained it in *conversation, disputation, or from the press*, had a hard battle to fight in these miserable times; and were opposed, oppressed, and persecuted, in different ways and methods, on all sides; but *chiefly* (though with the highest degree of criminality and inconsistency) by the popular leaders of the *partial* Reformation. The fates of *Lewis Hetzer, Michael Servetus, Bartholomew Legatt, and Edward Wightman*, the *first* of whom was put to death at *Constance*, and the *three last* were burnt at the stake by *Protestants*, are some melancholy instances (out of many that might be produced) of the truth of this assertion.\*

\* *Lewis Hetzer*, wrote a Treatise against the Trinity so early as the year 1524. His book was suppressed by *Zuinglius*, and the author suffered at *Constance*. *Michael Servetus* a Spanish Physician, was the au-



But notwithstanding these severe conflicts, this fiery trial, and other cruel and unmerited hardships, such as, banishment, imprisonment, and confiscation of worldly substance, that the honoured advocates of Unitarianism had to endure at the Reformation and for a long time after, the truth of the Gospel continued to spread in different countries on the continent of Europe, and in England, and to be supported by a succession of learned and illustrious advocates till the present times: and there can be no doubt that as it is of divine origin, it will continue to extend its influence until the *destined period* shall arrive, when it will overspread the whole earth.

Blessed and eventful period! when God's ancient and chosen people the Jews, who have been in all ages the depositaries of the divine Unity, and *witnesses* for that all-important truth, shall be recalled from their long and wide dispersion and restored to their own land, when having their eyes opened, and their spiritual blindness removed, they shall acknowledge *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom their ancestors

thor of several works against the modern system of divinity, commonly called, *orthodox*. The first of these was published in 1531, and entitled, *De erroribus Trinitatis*. "Concerning the Errors about a Trinity." He was burnt at Geneva in 1553; and CALVIN was consenting unto his death. Bartholomew Legutt and Edward Wightman, were both burnt, the former at *Smithfield*, and the latter at *Litchfield*, in the reign of James the first of England, and in the year 1611.

At this *intolerant* period, the open and avowed Unitarians had no *rest* in any Christian country, except in *Poland* and *Transylvania*, where they enjoyed the free exercise of their religion in common with other sects. They were afterwards ejected from *Poland*; but were permitted to continue in *Transylvania*, where their churches have subsisted in regular succession from the Reformation to the present day.

These Unitarians in *Poland* and *Transylvania* have had a number of eminent Writers and biblical Critics among them, and they published two *Catechisms*, or *Confessions of Faith*, the *first* in 1574, (four years before *Faustus Socinus* came into *Poland*) a simple and beautiful Composition; and the *last* a far more elaborate work, in 1609. This *last* has been improved and much enlarged in succeeding editions. The best Edition is that published in 1680, with notes by some of their most celebrated writers.

*with wicked hands did crucify and slay\** as their true and promised Messiah, when JEHOVAH shall pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon him whom their ancestors pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born: † when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in; ‡ when the magnificent fabric of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it, &c. || when they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; § when the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and JEHOVAH alone shall be exalted in that day, and the idols he shall utterly abolish; \*\* when JEHOVAH shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be ONE JEHOVAH, and his name ONE; †† and when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord (JEHOVAH) and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. ††——Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all his people, for ever. Amen. ||||

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out? For who hath known the mind of the LORD, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. § §

\* Acts ii. 23. † Zech. xii. 10. ‡ Rom. xi. 25. || Isa. ii. 2, 3. § Isa. ii. 4.  
 \*\* Isa. ii. 17, 18, &c. †† Zech. xiv. 9. †† Rev. xi. 15. |||| Rev. xxii. 20, 21.  
 § § Rom. xi. 33 to 36.

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## TO THE TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE,

Which have been commented upon, or particularly referred to in the  
*Dissertations.*

Texts which have no mark are urged in proof of *the Unity of God in the Person of the Father.*

\* Before a Text denotes it to be a proof of *the Messiahship and Proper Humanity of Jesus*, or to have a relation to that Subject.

† Before a Text denotes it to have been used as an Objection by *Trinitarians.*

|| Before a Text denotes it to have been used as an Objection by *Arians.*

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FINIS.



## APPENDIX.

(To be inserted in the *Dissertations* after the second Index.)

HAVING in Dissertation XVI, pages 245, 246, inadvertently quoted the *Nicene Creed*; as it stands in the *Liturgy of the Church of England*, and from thence in that of the *Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*; which is more properly the Creed of the Council of *Constantinople*, with some still later additions, than that of *Nice*, I think candour and fairness require of me that I should give the Creed of this partial and mutilated Council of Bishops, such as it really came from their hands. I shall therefore here transcribe it at full length in English, with the original Greek annexed, as inserted by *Socrates* in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

### *The Original Creed of the Council of Nice.*

“ We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten the only begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father: God of God, and Light of Light, true God of true God: begotten not made; of the same substance with the Father; through whom all things were made, the things in heaven and the things in the earth; for us men and for our salvation descending, and having taken flesh, was made man; suffering, and having risen again in the third day, ascending into the heavens, coming to judge the living and the dead. And in the holy Spirit. But the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes those who say, that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that he was not before he was begotten, and that he was made of things not existing, or those saying that he is of a different substance or essence, or created, or liable to conversion or mutation ”

Πιστευομεν εις ενα θεον, πατερα παντακρατορα, παντων ορατων τε και ακορατων ποιητην. Και εις ενα κυριον Ιησουν Χριστον τον υιον του θεου, γεννηθεντα εκ του πατρος μονογενη, τετρεσι εκ της εσιας του πατρος θεου εκ θεου, και φως εκ φωτος, θεου αληθινον εκ θεου αληθινου. γεννηθεντα κ ποιηθεντα. ομοουσιον τω πατρι δι' η τα παντα εγενετο, τατε εν τω θρανω και τα εν τη γη. Δι' ημας της ανθρωπης και δια την ημετεραν σωτεραν κατελθοντιε, και σαρκωθεντα, και ενανθρωπησαντα παθοντα και ανασαντα τη τριτη ημερα, ανελθοντα εις της θρανου. ερχομενον κριναι ζωντας και νεκρου. Και εις το αγιον πνευμα. Τησ δε λεγοντας. ολι ην ποτε, οτε εκ ην, και πριν γεννηθηναι εκ ην, και οτι εξ εκ οντων εγενετο, η εξ ετερας υποστασεος η εσιας φασκοντας ειναι, η κλισον, η τρεπλον η αλλοιωτον του υιον τε θεου, τετρεσ αναδεματιζει η αγια καθολικη και αποσολικη εκκλησια. *Socratis Hist. Eccles. Lib. I. Cap. 8. p. 22, 23. Edit. Valesii. Parisiis. 1668.*

Corrupt, unscriptural, inconsistent, extravagant, and uncharitable, as this Creed in general may be; and though I verily believe that a certain part of it is alluded to in the Prophecies of Daniel; yet it falls much below the standard of modern Orthodoxy, the *Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens; cui lumen ademptum*, of "three persons and one God;" and exhibits, in its first article, the ancient Unitarian doctrine of the Church of Christ.

I shall farther add, that if we give credit to *Epiphanius*, *Constantine* after he had written to *Alexander* bishop of *Alexandria* and to *Arius* without effect, summoned the latter to appear before him previous to the meeting of the Council of *Nice*, when a Conference took place that appears not to have been pleasing to *Constantine*; for he afterwards wrote a severe letter respecting *Arius*, addressed to all his subjects. Dr. *Priestley* mentions, that *Baronius* says, he found a copy of this letter, in Latin, in the Vatican library, and published it, and that the letter was addressed to *Arius* and his friends, but circulated through the empire. If this account can be depended upon, it will appear that *Constantine* met the Council of *Nice* with hostile intentions against *Arius*. We need not therefore wonder at the result of the Council.

But what is still more surprising, *Constantine*, some years after the Council of *Nice* recalled *Arius* from banishment, became reconciled to him, and even, it is said, towards the end of his reign, was somewhat inclined to Arianism. And it is a certain fact, that his son and successor *Constantius* gave his Countenance to the *Semi-Arian* party all his time. The Emperor *Valens*, who succeeded sometime after, was a zealous *Arian*. The Council of *Ariminum*, and some others, held in the fourth Century, decided in favour of the *Arian* or *Semi-Arian* Doctrine; and there can be no manner of doubt, that if the succession of *Arian* Emperors had continued, some modification of *Arianism* would have been generally adopted and established; and accounted the standard of Orthodoxy at the present day.

But unfortunately for the *Arians*, *Theodosius*, who succeeded *Valens*, embraced with eagerness and firmness the tenets of the *homousian* party; and by his authority and influence the *Creed* of the Council of *Nice* was confirmed and enlarged in the Council of *Constantinople*, called by the Orthodox (with gross impropriety) the second general Council, and held in the year 381. In this Council, the divinity and personality of the *holy Spirit* was first established, and the doctrine of a *co-equal and consubstantial Trinity* properly formed.

The pretended third general Council was held at *Ephesus* A. D. 431, and determined among other things in opposition to *Nestorius*, that the divine and human natures made *one person* in Christ.

The pretended fourth general Council met at *Chalcedon* in the year 451, and decreed against *Eutyches*, that the divine and human natures existed in Christ without *change, mixture, or confusion*; and still remain *two natures*, though inseparably united in *one person*.

In this manner the orthodox system was finished *at last*; having been *patched up and pieced out* at four different Councils. All the modern *Creeds, Articles, and Confessions of Faith*, of established churches in Christendom, hang upon these Councils; and not upon the *Law, the Prophets, or Apostles*.

It may appear strange to an ill-judging and superficial understanding, that though both *Trinitarians* and *Arians* can boast of Roman Emperors



and General Councils on their side, the *proper Unitarians*,—the advocates for *one God, the Father, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, (1 Cor. viii. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5.) can pretend to no such formidable and splendid human supports. The humble Unitarian Christians give up very freely to their opponents, all these ramparts and fortifications of *mystical Babylon*. They are contented with the clear sense of *Scripture* on their side; with the *Apostles Creed*; and the *major pars credentium*, “the majority of believers” in the purest ages of the Church, granted to them by the confession of their adversaries. Though, if they were disposed to put in their claim to the authority of a general Council, they might say with truth and justice, that the Unitarian Doctrine would have been carried at the *Council of Nice* by a great majority of votes, if *Constantine* had not garbled that Council, by ejecting the greatest part of those Bishops who had been summoned by himself to attend it, and permitting only about a seventh part of the original number to vote. See, *Dissertation XVI Note*, p. 243, &c

In *Du-Pin's History of the Church*, Vol 2, p 113, I find an account of *Photinus*, and the progress of his opinions, which as it contains some particulars that I have not met with elsewhere, in the course of my reading, I shall here insert.

“This last” (*Photinus*) “did not dissemble his sentiments, and said expressly, that the Word was not a distinct person from the Father, and that the Designation of Son of God ought not to be given him before his being born of the Virgin *Mary*. His error was no sooner discovered, but it was condemned; by the Bishops of the *East* in a Council that was held at *Antioch*, in 345, and by the Bishops of the *West*, in the Council of *Milan*, in 346 Two years after these last assembled at *Sirmium* to depose him; but they could not get him dispossessed, because of the opposition made by the people of that city The Bishops of the *East* assembled in that City in 351, deposed *Photinus*. He had recourse to the Emperor, and prayed him to grant a Conference. *Basil of Ancyra* was named to dispute against him in that Conference. *Photinus* being put to confusion was banished. He returned under the reign of *Julian*; but he was banished again under that of *Valentinian*, and died in *Galatia*, in 376. He had spread his doctrines in *Illyria*, and the neighbouring places, where his Sect settled It did not die with himself; there were many *Photinians* in *Dalmatia*, in the time of *Innocent I. Gratian* and *Theodosius* made several laws against them. *Bonosus* Bishop of *Naissa* followed his errors; and that Sect continued ’till the fifth Century.”

I have nothing to object to in this account of *Du-Pin*, who, making some allowance for his theological prejudices, is, upon the whole, a candid and valuable writer; excepting that part where he says, that *Photinus* in the disputation with *Basil*, “was put to confusion” It may be proper here to state what *Dr. Priestley* says in his *General History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 2. p. 140; where he has faithfully reported what *Socrates* and *Sozomen* have related about this matter, as I myself have found, upon an express examination of these Greek Ecclesiastical Historians.

“*Photinus* being promised a restoration to his bishoprick provided he would (renounce his opinion, and) “subscribe to these Creeds,” (Semi-Arian Creeds in Greek and in Latin) “not only refused to do it, but challenged any of the bishops who were present to dispute









