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AN  
H I S T O R Y  
OF  
EARLY OPINIONS  
CONCERNING  
J E S U S C H R I S T,  
COMPILED FROM *Adams 201.5*  
ORIGINAL WRITERS; *Vol. 4*  
PROVING THAT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH WAS  
AT FIRST UNITARIAN.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S.

AC. IMP. PETROP. R. PARIS. HOLM. TAURIN. AUREL. MED.  
PARIS. CANTAB. AMERIC. ET PHILAD. SOCIUS.

V O L. IV.

Αλογως πιστευσω; και μη εξελασω τι δυναλον, η συμφερον, η ωρεπον,  
η Θεω φιλον, η τη φυσει καταλληλον, η τη αληθεια συμφωνον, η τω  
σκοπω ακολουθον, η τω μυστηριω αρμοδιον, η της ευσεβειας αξιον;

ATHANASIUS.

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V O L. IV.

E R R A T A.

N. B. (*b*) signifies from the bottom of the page.

- Page 5. line 12. *for* was, read *did*
- 33. line 9. *for* Joseph, read *Jonas*
- 61. line 13. *for* they were, read *it was*
- 75. line 6. *for* believed, read *disbelieved*
- 80. line 9. *dele* equally
- 203. line 14. *dele* not
- 268. line 12. *dele* those of

T H E

T H E  
H I S T O R Y O F O P I N I O N S  
C O N C E R N I N G  
C H R I S T.

---

B O O K III.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN DOCTRINE,  
CONTINUED.

---

C H A P T E R XX.

*Of the Doctrine of the Miraculous Conception.*

**H**AVING considered the great principles on which all the unitarians of antiquity were agreed, viz. the doctrines of *the unity of God*, and the *simple humanity of Christ*, with the *arguments* by which they supported them, I shall now consider an article with respect to which

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B

they

they held different opinions, viz. the *miraculous conception of Christ*, fairly laying before my readers all that I could collect concerning it, that they may be able to form their own judgment. I had thought to have made some remarks on this subject, in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, but I did not do it there, because at that time I had not sufficiently considered it. But having now given to it all the attention of which I think I am capable, I shall with great frankness lay open the whole state of my mind with respect to it. From the same premises different persons will draw different conclusions.

Many, I doubt not, will be alarmed at so free a discussion of a doctrine which is held sacred by almost all the christian world; the miraculous conception of Jesus appearing to them to rest upon the same authority with every other fact in the gospel history, and therefore involving in its consequences the truth of christianity itself. I am fully apprized of the situation  
in



in which I write, and of the load of censure that I am sure to bring upon myself by it. Many of my best friends, those who think I have hitherto been a zealous and successful advocate for truth, will think that I am now going too far, and even risking what has been already gained. To these I would suggest the following considerations.

1. Calling in question the truth of the miraculous conception cannot appear more alarming to *them*, than the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ now does to *others*, who are as sincere friends to the gospel as themselves; and, in this business, I cannot give greater offence than I did when I wrote against the doctrine of *a soul*, and scrupled not to declare myself *a materialist*.

2. An alarm may be of use to excite attention to a subject; and when the first consternation is over, those who were the most startled will recover themselves, and consider the arguments dispassionately, and with a temper more proper for the disco-

very of truth. No man at this day can give more offence, or render himself more obnoxious, even to christians, than the apostle Paul did, by preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised Gentiles. Neither himself, nor even his memory, ever survived the odium that he brought upon himself by this means, with the generality of the Jewish christians. His principal object, in many of his epistles, is to justify himself in this respect. But though he was supported by reason, and an especial commission from God, he wrote in vain. Now, with respect to fortitude in bearing sufferings of this kind, in the cause of truth, or which is the same thing to me, what I seriously *think* to be so, I would not be behind St. Paul, or any man. I have been trained to it, and I hope the discipline has not been lost upon me.

3. I would farther observe, that all those to whom it can be worth my while to make an apology, think as I do with respect to *the scriptures*, viz. that they were written  
without

without any particular inspiration, by men who wrote according to the best of their knowledge, and who from their circumstances could not be mistaken with respect to the *greater facts*, of which they were proper *witnesses*, but (like other men, subject to prejudice) might be liable to adopt a hasty and ill-grounded opinion concerning things which did not fall within the compass of their own knowledge, and which had no connexion with any thing that was so; and such I hold the miraculous conception to be. We ought all of us, therefore, to consider ourselves as fully at liberty to examine with the greatest rigour, both the *reasonings* of the writers, and the *facts* of which we find any account in their writings, that, judging by the rules of just criticism, we may distinguish what may be depended upon, from what may not. It may, perhaps, however, appear probable, that neither Matthew nor Luke wrote any thing about the miraculous conception, especially the former.

4. Lastly, I would observe, that though at present there are but few who disbelieve the miraculous conception, there have always, I believe, been *some*, and those men of learning and character among christians, who have thought as I am now inclined to do with respect to it. I have seen a small tract of Mr. Elwall's, written about sixty years ago, the design of which was to disprove it. It made no impression upon me at the time, and I have not been able to procure it since. Dr. Eaton, a learned and respectable dissenting minister, late of Nottingham, though he never *wrote* upon the subject, is well known by his acquaintance to have been decidedly of the same opinion with Mr. Elwall; and so have been, and are, several others, inferior to none that bear the christian name for understanding, learning, or probity. To my certain knowledge, the number of such persons is encreasing, and several of them think it to be a matter of great consequence, that a doctrine which they regard as a discredit to the christian scheme,

scheme, should be exploded. They also think it far better that this should be done by christians themselves, than by unbelievers, who may say that we never give up any idle notion, till we can maintain it no longer.

Having premised thus much, I proceed to the consideration of the subject before me, and I shall do it with the greatest freedom, and as far as I can judge concerning myself, with perfect impartiality. Observing that, though I frankly acknowledge the arguments *against* the miraculous conception considerably preponderate in my mind at present, I shall not form an absolutely decided opinion, till I shall have had an opportunity of seeing what weight may be thrown into the opposite scale, by any persons who shall candidly examine what they will find advanced in this chapter.

## SECTION I.

*Of the Nature and Importance of the Doctrine  
of the Miraculous Conception.*

**I**N the first place I would observe, that the importance of this doctrine has been unreasonably magnified in modern times. It is one on which the ancient unitarians held opposite opinions, without, as far as appears, having ever thought the worse of one another on that account; and, therefore, there can be no reason why we should not exercise the same mutual candour at this day. The value of the gospel depends not at all upon any idea that we may have concerning *the person of Christ*. All that we ought to regard is the *object of his mission*, and the *authority* with which his doctrine was promulgated. The doctrine of immortality, which is the great object of the whole revealed will of God, is just as acceptable to me, from the mouth of the son of Joseph

1

and

and Mary, as from the mouth of any man created for the purpose, from that of an angel, or from the voice of God himself speaking from heaven.

When the doctrine of the miraculous conception is not particularly attended to, we all readily say, that it is the belief of the *doctrines*, the *miracles*, the *death*, and the *resurrection* of Christ, that makes *the christian*; and also that the fewer things of an *extraneous* nature, that we connect with these, and maintain to be inseparable from them, the better; especially if we thereby make the defence of christianity the easier. And certainly no circumstance relating to the *birth* of Christ has any more connection with the articles above mentioned, than the opinion of his having been a tall or short man, of a fair or a dark complexion. It does not at all concern us to know how Christ came into the world, but what he taught when he was in it, and what he did and suffered, as a proof of the authority by which he taught it. Every man, therefore, who believes that Christ had a divine com-  
mission

mission to teach the great doctrines of a resurrection, and of a life to come, is as much a christian, and has as strong motives to govern his life by the precepts of christianity, as he who likewise believes that he was without father, or without mother, that he was the maker of the world, or the eternal God himself. Such articles of faith as these can only serve to puzzle, to amaze, and confound men; but they have no tendency to mend the heart or the life.

I would farther observe, that the doctrine of the miraculous conception itself is not, in fact, of any more consequence to the Socinian, than it is to the Arian, or even the Athanasian hypothesis. For it is no impediment to the union of the Arian or Athanasian *logos* to the human nature of Christ, that his body was derived from Joseph. For any thing that we can judge, a body produced in the natural way, was just as proper for the residence of this heavenly inhabitant, as one made on purpose. And if, on any scheme, it was fit that Christ should have human nature at all, it may



be supposed to have been equally fit that he should have *!a proper human nature*, differing as little as possible from that of his brethren. There is, therefore, no more reason why the Arian, or the Athanasian, should be more attached to the belief of the miraculous conception than the Socinian. The doctrine itself connects equally well, or equally ill, with any particular hypothesis concerning the nature of Christ.

It may be imagined to be more *honourable* to Christ to have come into the world without the help of a man than with it; but this is an affair of *imagination* only. And, for the very same reason, it might have been imagined to be still more honourable to him, to have come into the world without the instrumentality of either woman or man, and that the second Adam should have come from the hands of God as immediately as the first. Ideas no better than these gave rise to the doctrine of the Gnostics. For they meant to do honour to Christ; and therefore we should be on our guard against them. But even admitting ideas of  
this

this kind to have some weight, is it not, in fact, just as humiliating to have a *mother*, as it is to have a *father*; for it is nothing more than the *body* that is concerned in the question.

We should likewise attend a little to the ideas of the Jews, as well as to our own, on this subject. Now, the doctrine of the Messiah being the proper son of Joseph, a lineal descendant from David, will certainly be more acceptable to them, than that of his having had a miraculous conception. For, though we may fancy that this circumstance reflects more honour upon him; yet, in the eye of a Jew, he must, on that very account, appear to be less accurately described by their ancient prophets; though any doctrine which makes Christ to have been properly and simply *a man*, in whatever manner he was *made* so, must be infinitely more acceptable to them than the opinion of his having had a nature entirely different from that of man. I own, however, that the expectations of the Jews (any farther than they have a real foundation in the prophecies) ought, not by any means

means to determine our judgment in the case, so as to weigh against any proper argument that may be alledged on the other side.

Should I have any controversy with a Jew, I should not feel myself at all embarrassed with this circumstance of the miraculous conception; as I should not hesitate to follow the example of the candid Justin Martyr with respect to it; telling him, that he was at full liberty to think as he should see reason to do on that subject; and that he might be as good a christian as the Ebionites were before him, though he should believe no more of the miraculous conception than they had done.

Indeed, with respect to the importance of the question in itself, there are few, I imagine, but would be ready enough to agree with me, if they did not imagine that a disbelief of this article would affect the credibility of the rest of the gospel history. But there is an argument of *fact* (which is the strongest of all arguments) directly against them. For the Ebionites, who did disbelieve

lieve the miraculous conception, were as firm believers in the rest of the gospel history as other christians. And, besides, if we consider the nature of this apprehension, it will appear to be founded on a mistake; because the evidence for the miraculous conception, and that for the public life, miracles, death, and resurrection of Christ, are exceedingly different; so that a total failure in the evidence for the one, will not affect the credibility of the other.

With the miraculous conception a few persons only could be acquainted; and we have not the testimony of any of those few, much less is it in our power to compare the evidence of one with that of others of them. Who were the persons that informed Matthew and Luke concerning it, we cannot tell, nor through how many hands the story was transmitted before it came to them; admitting, for the present, that the introductions to their gospels were written by themselves. Whereas the great events, subsequent to the preaching of John the Baptist, have not only the testimony of  
the

the writers themselves, but that of all the inhabitants of Judea, and of the strangers residing in it. For, as Paul says, "These things were not done in a corner." And to give the gospel history its just degree of credibility, we must simply consider the writers as *credible witnesses* of what came to their knowledge, without any regard to their supposed *inspiration*, which will never make any impression on unbelievers. On no other ground shall we ever produce a just and rational defence of this most important history.

Setting aside all notions of *inspiration*, we should judge of the gospel history as we do of any other. Now, no person, I apprehend, lays the less stress on the history of Livy, with respect to events near to his own time, because his account of Romulus and Remus is thought to be fabulous. Making myself, therefore, perfectly easy as to all the possible consequences of this discussion, I shall, with perfect freedom, consider the evidence for the miraculous conception as an *article of history*, and shall, with as much care

care as I can, state the arguments for and against it.

It has been more particularly said, that, supposing Luke to have been the author of the introduction to his gospel, we may, with the same reason, withhold our assent to any circumstance in our Saviour's history, that has been recorded by him only; for instance, the account of the raising the widow's son at Nain, and the mission of the seventy disciples, as to this of the miraculous conception. But this goes both upon the supposition of his being a competent witness to them all alike; and, also, of there being nothing more extraordinary in the latter case than in the two former; whereas, in both these respects, there is a remarkable difference between them.

The raising of the widow's son, and the mission of the Seventy, fell within the term of the *public life* of Christ, of the transactions of which there were thousands of witnesses; and Luke himself, being generally said to have been one of *the seventy*, and consequently to have attended upon Christ during

during his ministry, might have been an eye-witness of what he relates; whereas he cannot be said to have been in circumstances to bear *testimony* to the miraculous conception at all, and, as I have said, through what hands the story came to him we are not told. They might, therefore, be very well, or very ill informed concerning it.

Both the raising of the widow's son, and the mission of the seventy, besides falling within the *public life* of Christ, are events similar to those for which we have the testimony of the other evangelists; the widow's son not being the only person that Jesus raised to life, nor the seventy disciples the only mission that he sent out. Whereas the miraculous conception was a miracle absolutely singular in its nature, there being nothing like it in the history of the Old or New Testament. And what makes still more against the credibility of it is, that it does not appear to be adapted to answer any good purpose whatever; but, on the contrary, a manifestly bad one, in making our Saviour's

messiahship too soon, and too generally known, or exposing his mother to undeserved reproach.

On the whole, therefore, we may very readily admit the credibility of Luke's account of the raising of the widow's son, and of the mission of the seventy disciples, and reject that of the miraculous conception, though related by the same historian.

The *presumptive evidence* of any doctrine depends upon the *nature* of it; and this should be considered before the *direct evidence*. For it is universally acknowledged, that the less reason there is to expect any particular event, the stronger evidence it requires. A slight evidence is sufficient to certify us of such facts as happen every day, or very frequently. Miracles require much stronger evidence; and, accordingly, such evidence has always been provided.

Again, in miracles there is a gradation, and some of them being more extraordinary, and less probable, *a priori*, than others, require evidence proportionably more circumstantial,



cumstantial, and less liable to exception. Thus the resurrection of our Saviour, the most extraordinary, and, *a priori*, being the most improbable of all events, approaching the nearest to an impossibility, the evidence of it is remarkably circumstantial; in consequence of which there is not, perhaps, any fact in all ancient history, so perfectly credible, according to the most established rules of evidence, as it is. And the arguments, *a priori*, in this case, are as striking as those which may be called the arguments *a posteriori*, or the proper historical proof. Because we are able to see the *importance* of the fact, the evidence of which required to be so exceedingly clear. Christ, coming to give mankind the fullest assurance of an universal resurrection, it was obviously necessary, at least highly desirable, that, besides solemnly announcing the doctrine, and confirming it by miracles, he should himself actually die and rise again, as a proof of it. Accordingly, we find, that Christ did rest the evidence of his divine mission in a particular manner, on the event of his resurrection.

C 2

urrection. We, therefore, see clearly, *why it behoved Christ both to die, and to rise again from the dead.*

Now are we able to discover any reason why Christ should be born of a virgin, rather than in the usual way? Can we conceive it to have been at all necessary, or advantageous to the great object of his mission, or to qualify him for fulfilling it? I think I may answer for all unitarians, that, *a priori*, we should rather have thought otherwise, viz. that there would have been a greater propriety in his being, in this, as well as in all other respects, what other men are. For then, having had no natural advantage over us, his resurrection would have been calculated to give us the greater assurance of our own. Whereas, his coming into the world in a manner so very different from that of other men, might create a suspicion that there was some other essential difference between him and other men; and, therefore, that his nature might be subject to other laws than those of ours.

On this account, I am confident, that, had mankind been desired to name a proper *representative* of themselves, in whom they should see exhibited what was to befall themselves, they would have chosen a man born as themselves had been. *A priori*, therefore, it must have appeared less probable, that Christ, being sent on such a mission as his was, should be born of a virgin, than that he should be born like other men; as it might have been suspected, that he would not have been produced in this manner, if it had not been for the sake of giving him such advantages in point of constitution, as men born in the usual way cannot naturally have. His example, therefore, is, in all respects, less properly proposed to us, and his resurrection affords less ground for our expectation that we also shall be raised to immortal life; since any peculiar constitution of nature may have unknown peculiar privileges.

In the scriptures, mankind are generally apprized of the *reasons* of all the great measures

fures that God has been pleased to take with respect to them. Our Saviour informs his disciples very particularly *why* it was expedient that he should die, and leave them for a time; assuring them that it was for their own advantage, &c. and with respect to those reasons which they were not at that time qualified to enter into, he plainly told them, that they were not; and that, for that reason, the communication of more knowledge to them was deferred.

Now, are any reasons given us in the scriptures, to show us that it was more proper that Christ was to be born of a virgin, than in the usual way? Or, is it there said, that there *was* a reason for it, but that men were not qualified to understand it. Neither of these is the case; and what is particularly remarkable, a thing of this extraordinary kind is not so much as mentioned, or in the most distant manner alluded to, by Christ himself, or by any writer in the New Testament; so that, if the doctrine be true, it does not appear to  
have

have answered any end whatever. And it is by no means analogous to the usual conduct of Divine Providence, to take extraordinary measures without a proportionable object and use. It is no where said, that God honoured mankind so far, as either to send a person of a higher rank than man, to be his messenger to them, or to make a man, in an extraordinary way, for that purpose; that more dignity might be given to his character, and greater attention secured to him.

There is only one expression in the whole New Testament, that is capable of being laid hold of, as, in the most distant manner, alluding to the miraculous conception, which is, Paul speaking of Christ, Gal. iv. 4. *as made of woman*, as well as *made under the law*. But the slightest knowledge of the scripture phraseology may satisfy us, that this is only synonymous to the term *man*. Job says, ch. xiv. 1. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, &c.* and again, chap. xxv. 4. *How can he be clean that is born of*  
C 4
*a woman.*

*a woman.* Our Saviour also says, Matt. xi. 11. *Among them that are born of women, there is none greater than John the Baptist.* To be *born of women*, therefore, or *made of a woman*, and to be *a man*, or a *human being*, is the same thing.

According to all appearance, therefore, if the doctrine of the miraculous conception be true, God wrought a most extraordinary miracle without any proper object or use. Nay, as far as we can judge, such a *pretension* as that of a miraculous birth, unless it had been much more particularly authenticated than the gospel history represents this to have been, must have operated greatly to the prejudice of our Saviour's character, and consequently must have obstructed the end of his mission. For without the most circumstantial evidence, for which no provision was made, the story of the miraculous conception would never have been believed by the Jews. And does not this circumstance render the *wisdom* of the scheme very questionable? For, though it  
must

must always be acknowledged, that the ways of God, even with respect to men, may be inscrutable to men, yet, when nothing is said of such wisdom, and no such submission of our judgments is required of us, the facts from which such mysterious conduct is inferred, ought not to be admitted without proportionably clear evidence.

## SECTION II.

*The Opinions of the Christian Fathers concerning the Use of the Miraculous Conception.*

AS the *scriptures* say nothing at all on this subject, and *reason* is equally silent, let us hear what the *Fathers* have said; and we shall find, that they were far from being at any loss for good reasons, as they thought them, for Christ's coming into the world in that extraordinary manner; and certainly a natural birth would by no means have so well suited *their* hypotheses. But, unhappily, all their schemes are such as unitarians would reject, and therefore they will not tend to make the thing more credible to *them*.

Justin Martyr says, that " Christ was  
 " born of a virgin, that by the same means  
 " that disobedience came by the serpent, by  
 " the same means it should be terminated.  
 " For Eve, being a virgin, and uncorrupt,  
 " conceiving the *logos* [word] of the ser-  
 " pent, brought forth disobedience and  
 " death;



“ death ; but the virgin Mary, receiving  
 “ faith and favour, when the angel Ga-  
 “ briel said that the spirit of the Lord  
 “ should come upon her, and the power  
 “ of the highest overshadow her, wherefore  
 “ that holy thing that shall be born of  
 “ thee is the Son of God, answered, Be it  
 “ unto me according to thy word. And  
 “ of her was born he, concerning whom  
 “ we have shown that so many scriptures  
 “ have spoken ; by whom God destroys the  
 “ serpent, and angels, and men who re-  
 “ semble him, and produces a deliverance  
 “ from death for those who repent of their  
 “ evil deeds, and believe in him \*.” Thus,  
 as Cyril of Jerufalem says, “ As death came

\* Και δια της παρθενσ ανθρωπος γεγονεναι, ινα και δι' ησ οδσ η απο τε οφews παρακοη την αρχην ελαβε, δια ταυτης της οδσ και κακια- λυσιν λαβη. Παρδεισ γαρ εσα Ευα και αφθορσ, τον λογον τον απο τε οφews συλλαβεσας, παρακοην και θανατον ελεκε. Πισιν δε και χαριν λαβεσα Μαρια η παρθενσ, ευαγγελιζομενη αυτη Γαβριηλ αγελεσ οτι πνευμα κυριεσ επ' αυτην επελευσεσαι. και δυναμιεσ υψιτεσ επισκιασει αυτην, διο και γεννωμενον εξ αυτης αγιον εστι υιοε θεεσ. απε- κριναλο, γενουσο μοι κακια το ρημα σε. Και δια ταυτης γεγεννησαι αυλοε περι ε τσαυλαιεσ γραφαιεσ αποδεξαμεν ειρησθαι, δι' ε ο θεοε τον τε οφιν, και τεεσ ομοιοθενταεσ αγγελεεσ, και ανθρωπεεσ, καλαλυει, απαλλα- γην δε τε θανατιεσ τοιεσ μεταγινωσκουσιν απο των φαυλων, και πειτεουσιν ειε αυλον, εργαζεσαι. Dial. pars 2. p. 354.

“ by the virgin Eve, so it was necessary  
 “ that life should be brought by a virgin ; or  
 “ rather, out of a virgin \*.” It was, however,  
 another analogy in this history that struck  
 Ambrose. He says, “ Adam was made of  
 “ the virgin earth, and Christ was from a  
 “ virgin †.”

Maximus Taurinensis improves upon this  
 idea ; saying, that “ as Adam was produced  
 “ from the pure earth, so is Christ produced  
 “ from a pure virgin.” He also, alluding  
 to Ps. xxii. 6. observes, that worms were bred  
 in the pure manna, to which he compares the  
 virgin Mary. What use he makes of these  
 comparisons may be seen in the extract which  
 I make from this writer in the notes †. The

\* Δια παρθενος της Ευας ηλθεν ο θανατος, εδει δια παρθενος, μαλ-  
 λον δε εκ παρθενος, φανησθαι την ζωην. Cat. 12. p. 155.

† Ex terra virgine Adam, Christus ex virgine. In  
 Luc. cap. 4. Opera, vol. 2. p. 59.

‡ Sed magis illum accipiendum puto quoniam vermis  
 nulla extrinsecus admixtione alieni corporis, sed de sola  
 et pura terra procreatur, ideo illum comparat cum domi-  
 no, quoniam et ipse salvator de sola et pura Maria gene-  
 ratur. Legimus etiam in libris Moyfi de manna vermi-  
 culos procreatos: digna plane et justa comparatio. Si-  
 quidem de manna vermiculus gignitur, et dominus Chris-  
 tus de virgine procreatur, quin potius ipsam Mariam  
 manna

same writer says, that God could not be born otherwise than of a woman only. "He was born," he says, "of a pure virgin, that the human birth might prove him to be a man, and the virgin shew that he was God. For as flesh can only be generated from flesh, so the flesh of God could not come, except from a female, without the help of a man\*." All that we need say to these ingenious analogies, is that the scriptures say nothing about them; and I suppose that those who are now advocates for the miraculous conception will have little to say in their defence.

manna dixerim, quia est subtilis, splendida, suavis et virgo, quæ velut cælitus veniens cunctis ecclesiarum populis cibum dulciorem melle defluxit, quem qui edere ac manducare neglexerit, vitam in semet ipso habere non poterit, sicut ipse dominus ait. Nisi quis manducaverit meam carnem, et biberit meum sanguinem, non habebit vitam in semetipso. Opera, p. 209.

\* Et natus sane ab intacta est femina, ut eum pariter et hominem testaretur partus humanus, et deum probaret æterna virginitas. Nam sicut non poterat nisi caro de carne nasci: ita non poterat dei caro de femineo utero nisi sine generante prodire. Ibid. p. 196.

A reason

A reason quite different from the former, and no less ingenious, is given by Lactantius. “ God the Father himself,” says he, “ being both the origin and principle of things, because he has no parents, is truly called by Trismegistus, *απαλιος* [without father] and *αμηλιος* [without mother].— Wherefore his son ought also to be born twice, that he might be without father and without mother. In his first spiritual birth he was without mother, because he was generated by God the Father only, without the assistance of a mother. In his second carnal birth he was without father, because he was generated in the virgin’s womb, without the assistance of a father ; that, having a middle substance between God and man, he might lead our frail and weak nature, as it were by the hand, to immortality \*.”

\* Ipse enim pater deus, et origo, et principium rerum, quoniam parentibus caret, *απαλιος*, atque *αμηλιος* a Trismegisto verissime nominatur ; quod ex nullo sit procreatus. Idcirco etiam filium bis nasci oportuit, ut ipse fieret *απαλιος* atque *αμηλιος*. In prima enim nativitate spiritali *αμηλιος* fuit ; qui sine officio matris, a solo deo patre generatus est. In secunda

With respect to the latter part of this reasoning, it might be retorted, that if it was necessary that Christ should be both God and man, he should have been both proper God and proper man, i. e. a man born and constituted like other men.

Austin, whose genius seldom fails him, is not so happy in his solution of this difficulty as he is in that of some others. He says, "The salvation of the female sex was intended, because Christ was a man, born of a woman only\*." I suppose, however, he must have meant, that Christ would take care of the men for his own sake, and of the women for the sake of his mother. Had he had a father as well as a mother, he

secunda vero carnali *απαλορ* fuit; quoniam sine patris officio, virginali utero procreatus est; ut mediam inter deum et hominem substantiam gerens, nostram hanc fragilem, imbecillemque naturam quasi manu ad immortalitatem posset educere. Factus est et dei filius per spiritum, et hominis per carnem, id est, et deus, et homo. Inlit. lib. 4. sect. 13. p. 388.

\* Ergo qua virum oportebat suscipere, qui sexus honorabilior est, consequens erat ut feminei sexus liberatio hinc appareret, quod ille vir de femina natus est. *Questiones, Opera*, vol. 4. p. 536.

might

might have taken more than an equal care of the male sex. He says, that “Christ  
 “ was born of a woman only, that neither  
 “ sex might despair. For had he been a  
 “ man, which was necessary, but not born  
 “ of woman, the women might have de-  
 “ spaired of themselves, recollecting their  
 “ first offence, because the first man was  
 “ deceived by a woman.” His illustra-  
 tion of this argument, part of which may  
 be seen in the notes, is curious\*.

\* Sed hoc nobis ostendit, ut scilicet in nullo sexu de se desperaret humana creatura. Sexus enim humanus, marium est et foeminarum. Si ergo vir existens, quod utique esse deberet, non nasceretur ex foemina, desperarent de se foeminæ, memores primi peccati sui, quia per foeminam deceptus est primus homo, et omnino nullam se spem habere in Christo arbitrarentur. Venit ergo vir sexum præeligere virilem, et natus ex foemina sexum consolari foemineum, tanquam alloquens et dicens: ut noveritis quod non dei creatura mala est, sed voluptas prava pervertit eam, in principio cum feci hominem, masculum et foeminam feci. Non creaturam damno, quam feci. Ecce natus sum vir, ecce natus ex foemina. Non ergo creaturam damno, quam feci: sed peccata, quæ non feci. Uterque sexus videat honorem suum: et uterque confiteatur iniquitatem suam: et uterque speret salutem. Ser. 63. Opera, Sup. p. 238.

A much more plausible reason than any of the preceding is that which supposes that the greatness and sanctity of Christ's character, so much superior to that of other men, required that he should not be born as other men are. Of this nature is that of Irenæus, who says, "If Christ had been born of Joseph, what could he have done more than Solomon, or Joseph, or David, when he was produced in the same manner, and their proper offspring." He adds, that "he could not have been the proper son of God, and therefore not a king, if he had been the son of Joseph, nor the heir, according to Jeremiah \*."

Lactantius, not contenting himself with his former reason, says, "that it might be certain that he was sent of God, it be-

\* Si enim Joseph filius esset, quemadmodum plus poterat quam Salomon, aut plus quam Jonas habere, aut plus esse David, cum esset ex eadem seminatione generatus, et proles existens ipsorum? Ut quid et beatum dicebat Petrum, quod eum cognosceret esse filium dei vivi? Super hæc autem nec rex esse posset, si quidem Joseph filius fuisset; nec hæres, secundum Hieremiam. Lib. 3. cap. 29. p. 258.

“ hoved him not to be born as men are  
 “ born, from two human parents ; but that  
 “ it might appear that he was a heavenly  
 “ person in man, he was created without  
 “ the assistance of a father\*.” “ He ought,”  
 says Cyril of Alexandria, “ to have such a  
 “ birth, I mean his earthly birth, of a wo-  
 “ man, that his presence and manifestation  
 “ to the world might have something in it  
 “ worthy of a God †.”

“ For the very reason that you doubt,”  
 says Chrysoftom, “ for that reason believe.  
 “ It is not because marriage is a bad thing,  
 “ but because virginity is a better ; and it  
 “ behoved the Lord of all to have a more  
 “ splendid entrance into the world than  
 “ ours ; for it was the entrance of a king.

\* Sed tamen, ut certum esset, a deo missum ; non ita illum nasci oportuit ; sicut homo nascitur, ex mortali utroque concretus ; sed ut appareret, etiam in homine illum esse cœlestem, creatus est sine opera genitoris. Instit. lib. 4. sect. 20. p. 430.

† Εδει γαρ εδει τοιαυτην αυτη γενεσθαι την απολειν, την καλα σαρκια φημι και εκ γυναικος, ιν εχη το θεοπροπτες η εις τον κοσμον αυτη παροδ και αναδειξις. Contra Julianum, lib. 8. Juliani Opera, vol. 2. p. 279.

“ He



“ He ought both to agree, and to differ,  
 “ with us in our birth ; and both these  
 “ things have taken place. He ought to  
 “ be born of a woman, in common with  
 “ us ; but to be born without marriage is  
 “ greater than us\*.”

All this might do tolerably well, if Christ was to have been any thing more than a man, or to have done something more than man could do, or than it was proper that man should be the instrument of doing. But what is this to those who think that there was a greater propriety in Christ being *precisely a man*, and his office such as that there would have been the greatest propriety in its being filled by a man.

No more will an unitarian acquiesce in the following reason of M. Caleca.—

\* Ωστε δι ο απιστεις, δι αυλο πιστευε, εκ επειδη κακον ο γαμος, αλλ επειδη κρειττων η παρθενια . την δε τς κοινς παντων δεσποια εισοδον σεμνολεραν εχρησιν ειναι της ημελερας . Βασιλικη γαρ ην η εισοδος . εδει κοινωνειν, ημιν της γεννησεως, και εξηλλαχθαι της ημελερας . και αμφοτερα ταυτα γεγονε . και οπως ακε . το μεν γαρ απο μητρας γενεσθαι κοινον προς ημας . το δε χωρις γαμων γενεσθαι μειζον, η καθ ημας . In Gen. 25. Opera, vol. ii. p. 685.

“ Christ was born of a virgin, that he might  
 “ both be born without original sin, and  
 “ live without sin \* ;” because they think  
 it is rather desirable that Christ should be  
 of a nature as *liable to sin* as other men ; that  
 in all things he might be like his brethren,  
 and be *tempted as they were*, though he did  
 not yield to any temptation.

Austin thought it was proper that Christ  
 should be exempt from original sin, and ac-  
 cordingly he believed that he was so, and that  
 his being born of a virgin was the cause of  
 that singular exemption. If any person wish  
 to know the principle on which he argued, he  
 will find it in the following sentence. Nulla  
 igitur voluptate carnalis concupiscentiæ fe-  
 minatus, sine conceptus est, et ideo nullum  
 peccatum originaliter trahens, &c. Enchy-  
 ridion, cap. 41. Opera, vol. 3. p. 167, 214.

Fulgentius enlarges upon this idea of  
 Austin, shewing why, in the ordinary way,  
 men cannot be born without sin ; and  
 therefore that Christ was born in an extra-

\* Οθεν κ̅ εκ παρθεν ε̅λεχθη, ινα παντη ελευθερος η της προπα-  
 τορικης αμαρτιας· κ̅ ε̅τω διαβιωσαι, ω̅τε μηδεμιαν αμαρτιαν εν αυτω  
 ευρεθηναι. Combesis, vol. 2. p. 264.

ordinary

ordinary way, that he might take away that sin\*.

Leo the Great says, “ Christ was born  
 “ of a virgin, that the contagion of human  
 “ seed ceasing, the new man might have a  
 “ true human nature, and yet be absolutely  
 “ pure †.” I shall subjoin, in the notes,

\* Et quia dum sibi invicem vir mulierque miscentur ut filios generent, sine libidine non est parentum concubitus ; ob hoc filiorum ex eorum carne nascentium non potest sine peccato esse conceptus, ubi peccatum in parvulos non transmittit propagatio, sed libido.—Qui ut illud peccatum quod in concubitu mortalis carnis generatio humana contraxit, auferet, conceptus est novo more, deus incarnatus in matre virgine, sine coitu viri, sine libidine, concipientis virginis : ut per deum hominem, quem absque libidine conceptum inviolatus edidit virginis uterus, ablueretur peccatum, quod nascentes trahunt omnes homines : quibus in corpore mortis hujus talis est nascendi conditio, ut matres eorum fecunditatis opus implere non possint, nisi prius virginitatem carnis amiserint. Solus igitur abstulit peccatum conceptionis, atque nativitatis humanæ deus unigenitus, qui dum conciperetur, veritatem carnis accepit ex virgine, et cum nasceretur, integritatem virginitatis servavit in matre. De fide, cap. 2. p. 487.

† Creator ac dominus omnium rerum dignatus est unus esse mortalium, electa sibi matre quam fecerat, quæ salva integritate, virginea, corporeæ esset tantum ministra substantiæ, ut humani seminis cessante contagio, novo homini et puritas in esset, et veritas. De Nativitate Domini Ser. 4. Opera, p. 17.

another passage from this writer, in which he argues more at large on the subject\*.

Hilary imagined that the body of Christ was exempt from the sensation of pain, and this he ascribed to his miraculous conception †. How this circumstance gave him that privilege, he does not say. But what is all this curious reasoning to those who think that all men are born free from original sin, and

\* *Superbia hostis antiqui non immerito sibi in omnes homines jus tyranicum vindicabat, nec indebito dominatu premebat: quos a mandato dei spontaneos in obsequium suæ voluntatis illexerat. Non itaque juste omitteret originalem dedititii generis servitutum, nisi de eo quod subegerat vinceretur. Quod ut fieret sine virili semine editus est Christus ex virgine, quam non humanus coitus sed spiritus sanctus fecundavit. Et cum omnibus matribus non fiat sine peccati forde conceptio, hæc inde purgationem traxit unde concepit. Quo enim paterni seminis transfusio non pervenit peccati se illic rubigo non miscuit. Inviolata virginitas concupiscentiam, nescivit substantiam ministravit. Assumpta est de matre hominis natura, non culpa. Creata est forma servi sine conditione virili, quia novus homo sic contemperatus est veteri, ut et veritatem susciperet generis, et vitium excluderet vetustatis. Opera, p. 14.*

† Sed non habens naturam dolendi, dum et hominis habitus est, et origo non hominis est, nato eo de conceptione spiritus sancti. *De Trinitate, lib. 16. p. 256.*

that

that the body of Christ was no more exempt from the feeling of pain than ours are !

Such are the reasonings that I have found advanced by the Fathers concerning the miraculous conception, and the final cause of it ; and it was a circumstance of which they made no small boast. “ What righteous person,” says the great Athanasius, “ what holy prophet, or patriarch, in all the sacred writings, was born of a virgin only ; or what woman was sufficient for the conception of a man, without a man \* ? ” “ When Christ,” says Constantine, in his oration before the Fathers of the council of Nice, “ was to live among men, he invented a new way of being born ; for there was a conception without marriage, a delivery of a pure virgin, and a young woman was the mother of God † . ”

\* Τις γαρ πωποτε των εν ταις θειαις γραφαις ιστορηθειων δικαιων, η αγιων προφητων, η πατριαρχων εκ παρθεν μονης εσχε την τε σωματος γενεσιν ; η τις γυνη χωρις ανδρος, αυταρκης γεγονε προς συστασιν ανθρωπων. De Incarnatione, Opera, vol. I. p. 88.

† Επει δε κοσμικω σωματι πλησιαζειν, εν τε γη χρονιζειν εμελλε, της χρειας τειλο απαλλεσης, νοθην τινα γενεσιν εαυτε εμηχανησατο. χωρις γαρτοι γαμων, συλληψις η αγνης παρθενιας ειλειθυια η δεα μητηρ πορη. Cap. II. p. 689.

“ Who,” says Proclus, “ has ever seen  
 “ or heard, that an infinite God inhabited  
 “ a matrix, and that he whom the heavens  
 “ cannot receive, should not be straitened in a  
 “ virgin’s womb. Well may we call this  
 “ womb larger than the whole creation \*.”  
 “ The trinity,” says Maximus Taurinensis,  
 “ has effected three wonderful kinds of birth,  
 “ Adam from the dust of the ground, Eve  
 “ from the side of Adam, and Christ from a  
 “ virgin †.” It is remarkable, that the au-  
 thor of the epistle to the Hebrews makes  
 no such boasts as these, though he seems to  
 have been intent on bringing together every  
 circumstance that he could think would re-  
 flect honour on Christ. Great use, how-  
 ever was made of this circumstance by the

\* Τίς εἶδε, τίς ἤκουσεν, οὐ μὴραν ὁ θεὸς ἀπεριγραπτῶς ὠκλήσεν; καὶ  
 οὐ βρανὸς ἐκ ἐχώρησε, γαστήρ τῆς παρθένου ἐκ ἐγενοχώρησεν. Δεῦτε  
 ἰδομεν γαστέραν παλαιότεραν τῆς κτίσεως. Hom. in Nativitatem  
 Domini, p. 149.

† Tres valde mirabiles nascendi species operatum repe-  
 ries trinitatem. Et prima est quidem, quod Adam figu-  
 ratus ex limo est: secunda quod mulier formata de mas-  
 culo: tertia, quæ et cœlestis est, quod Christus processit ex  
 virgine. Opera, p. 196.

christian Fathers, in answering the objections that were made to the meanness of Christ's birth. "If it appears to weak senses," says Maximus Taurinensis, "unworthy of the Son of God to be born of a woman, consider that it was a *virgin* that brought him forth \*." This, however, would not satisfy the Gnostics. Manes thought it unworthy of the majesty of the Son of God to go into the womb of a woman; et sortir ensuite avec toutes les ordures, qui accompagnent l'enfantement. Beausobre, Hist. de Manichéisme, vol. 1. p. 555. Even the orthodox christians could not help being affected with this consideration. Paschasius, the author of the doctrine of transubstantiation, thought that it was unworthy of Christ to be born of a woman, &c. Ibid. vol. 2. p. 526.

My readers having heard a variety of ingenious conjectures concerning the reasons for this extraordinary measure of divine

\* Quod si tibi sensuum tuorum fragilitate minus dignum videtur filium dei natum de foemina credere, virginem cogita peperisse. Opera, p. 197.

providence, may, perhaps, be able to suggest one for themselves ; but I own that, unsatisfactory as they appear to me, I am not able to assign any better.

That the circumstance of Christ *pretending* to a miraculous birth would have had an unfavourable effect on his character and credit in his life-time, all the Fathers, who speak of it, readily acknowledge ; and the character of his mother, they say, would have sustained an irreparable injury. They also acknowledge that, even had the fact been known and proved, the great object of his mission would have been in great danger of being defeated ; as it was of the greatest importance to the success of the scheme, that Christ should not be known to be the Messiah at so early a period. For they imagined, that it was quite necessary that the devil should be kept in ignorance of his rank and true character.

This is the reason which they give, why Mary, though designed to bring forth Jesus while she was a virgin, should have a nominal husband. For they say that, as the devil



vil knew that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, he would, if she had not been married, have suspected that her child had been the person, and would have exerted himself to defeat the object of his mission. This hypothesis implies a high idea of the power of the devil; but, withal, a very low one of his penetration and sagacity, or that he was ill served by his spies. Such is not at present the idea of the devil with those who believe his real existence.

As the notions of the Fathers are a matter of some curiosity, at least, I shall lay before my readers some of their thoughts and reasonings on this subject. Origen, who says, that “the Jews thought Christ to be the son of Joseph and Mary \*,” says, that “they would not have believed Jesus, if he had said that he was the son of Mary only †.” “Our Lord,” says Ambrose, “rather chose that his origin should be unknown, than

\* *Ὁμοιο ἐν αὐτοῖς εἶναι Ἰωσήφ καὶ Μαρίας υἱόν.* Comment. vol. 1. p. 223.

† Dicebant autem qui mirabantur, ignari illum esse filium virginis, ne credituri quidem si dictus fuisset filius virginis: Opera, vol. 2. p. 13.

“ that

“ that his mother’s chastity should be  
 “ questioned \*.”

But the person who has written the most largely on this subject is Chrysoſtom, and the following extract from him will ſhew, in a very clear light, of what importance it was imagined to be, that the miraculous conception ſhould be concealed from the Jews. But it does not ſeem to have occurred to any of theſe Fathers, that every reaſon for this *concealment* is an argument againſt the *propriety* and *wiſdom* of the meaſure itſelf; and therefore an argument againſt the truth of the fact: for, certainly a circumſtance which they acknowledge to have been ſo highly improbable, and of apparent diſſervice to the ſcheme of chriſtianity, requires very clear and ſtrong evidence of its truth.

“ Why is there an account of the genealogy  
 “ of Joſeph, who had nothing to do with the  
 “ generation of Chriſt? I have mentioned one  
 “ reaſon, but I muſt mention another more

\* Maluit autem dominus aliquos de ſui ortu, quam de matris pudore dubitare. In Luc. lib. 2. Opera, vol. 2, p. 17.

“ myſterious,

“ mysterious. What then is it? He would  
 “ not have it known to the Jews, after the  
 “ birth, that Christ was born of a virgin.  
 “ Be not alarmed at this extraordinary cir-  
 “ cumstance. The reason is not mine, but  
 “ that of our fathers, eminent and distin-  
 “ guished men. For if Christ from the  
 “ beginning concealed many things, calling  
 “ himself *the son of man*, and did not al-  
 “ ways discover his equality with the Fa-  
 “ ther, why should you wonder that he  
 “ concealed this, managing it as a great and  
 “ wonderful thing, to preserve the virgin,  
 “ and cover her from wicked suspicion.  
 “ For if this had been known to the Jews  
 “ from the beginning, they would have  
 “ stoned the virgin, abusing her for what  
 “ would be said, and have condemned her  
 “ for adultery. If they impudently abused  
 “ him for works, of which they had many  
 “ examples in the Old Testament (for  
 “ when he cast out demons, they called him  
 “ a demoniac, and when he healed on the  
 “ Sabbath day they thought him an enemy  
 “ of God, though the Sabbath had often  
 “ been

“ been broken before) what would they  
 “ have said, if *this* had been reported! For  
 “ they had seen nothing of the kind in all  
 “ preceding time.” For if, after so many  
 “ miracles, they called him the son of Jo-  
 “ seph, how could they have believed, be-  
 “ fore his miracles, that he was the son of a  
 “ virgin?”

“ On this account, Joseph has his ge-  
 “ nealogy inserted, and he married the vir-  
 “ gin. For when Joseph, who was a good  
 “ man, stood in need of many things, as of  
 “ an angel, a vision, and the testimony of  
 “ prophecy, in order to believe the fact,  
 “ how would the Jews, who were so cor-  
 “ rupt, and so hostilely disposed towards  
 “ him, have received the suspicion? They  
 “ would have been very much disturbed at  
 “ a thing so strange and new, the like of  
 “ which they never heard of in the time of  
 “ their ancestors. He who is once per-  
 “ suaded that Christ is the Son of God, has  
 “ no doubt on this subject; but he who  
 “ considers him as a deceiver, and an ene-  
 “ my of God, how would he not be more  
 “ scandalized

“ scandalized on this account, and have  
 “ been led to this suspicion (viz. of adul-  
 “ tery). On this account, neither did the  
 “ apostles at first speak of this, but rather  
 “ discoursed largely concerning his resur-  
 “ rection. For of this there were examples  
 “ in former times, though not in all re-  
 “ spects the same; but they had never  
 “ heard of a person being born of a vir-  
 “ gin. Nor did his mother dare to men-  
 “ tion this: for observe how she says, *Be-*  
 “ *hold, thy father and I have sought thee.*  
 “ For if this had been suspected, he would  
 “ not have been thought to be the son  
 “ of David; and this not being admitted,  
 “ many mischiefs would have arisen. On  
 “ this account, neither did the angels men-  
 “ tion this, except to Mary and Joseph only,  
 “ but not to the shepherds, though they  
 “ acquainted them with his being born\*.”

\* Τινος ενεκεν ο Ιωσηφ γενεαλογειται, εδεν προς την γεννησιν συ-  
 Τελων; και μαν μεν αιτιαν ειρηκαμεν ηδη. Αναγκαιον δε και την  
 ειεραν ειπειν την μυστικωτεραν [και απορηθησικεραν] εκεινης. Τις εν  
 εστιν αυτη; ημ εβλεστο τοις Ιουδαιοις ειναι δηλον παρα τον των ωδινων  
 καιρον, οτι εκ παρθενου γεγενηται ο χριστος. Αλλα μη δορυθεισθε  
 προς το παραδοξον τε λεγομεν. Ου δε γαρ εμος ο λογος, αλλα  
 πατερων

Jerom argues very much in the same manner on the subject, giving three reasons why Mary was married to Joseph. First, “ that by means of the genealogy of Joseph,

πατερων ημετερων, θαυμαστων και επισημων ανδρων. Ει γαρ πολλα συνεσκιασεν εξ αρχης, υιον ανθρωπου καλων εαυτον, και εδε την προς τον πατερα ισοηλια παναρχα σαφως ημιν εξεκαλυψε, τι θαυμαζεις ει κη τειλο συνεσκιασε τε, ως θαυμαστον τι και μεγα οικονομων; και ποιου θαυμαστον φησι; το διασωθηναι την παρθενον, κη υποφιας απαλλαγηναι πονηρας. Ει γαρ τειλο εξ αρχης τοις Ιουδαιοις γεγενη καταδηλον, αν καλευσαν την παρθενον κακουργητες. Τω λεγομενω, κη μοιχειας αυτην εκριναν αν. Ει γαρ υπερ των αλλων, ων πολλακις κη υποδειγματια ειχον εν τη παλαια, φανερωσ ηνεσχρητων (Και γαρ επειδη δαιμονιας εξεβαλε, δαιμονωλια εκαλεν, κη επειδη εν σαββατω εθεραπευεν, ανηιδεον ειναι ενομιζον, κη τοι γε πολλακις κη προτερον ελυθη το σαββατον) τι εκ αν ειπον τειλα λεχθεν: κη γαρ ειχον παντα τον προ τειλα συναγωνιζομενον αυτοις καιρον, εδεποτε τι τοιβιον ενεγκονια. Ει γαρ μελα τοσαυτα σημεια ει αυτον τε Ιωσηφ εκαλεν [υιον] πως αν προ των σημειων επιτευσαν οτι κη εκ παρθενου ην; δια δη τειλο κη γενεαλογειται, κη μνησεται την παρθενον. Οπως γαρ ο Ιωσηφ κη δικαιοσων κη θαυμαστος ανηρ πολλων εδεδη ωσε δεξασθαι το γεγενημενον, κη ανγελια, κη της δι ονειρατων οψεως, κη της απο των προφητων μαρτυριας, πως αν οι Ιουδαιοι κη σκαιοι οντες κη διεφθαρμενοι, κη πολεμιας ελω προς αυτον εχοντες ταυτην αν παρεδεξαντο την υπονοιαν; σφοδρα γαρ αυτες εμελλε θορυβειν το ξενον κη καινον, κη το μεδεποτε τι τοιβιον μηδε ακοη παρεδεξασθαι επι των προγονων συμβεβηκος. Ο μεν γαρ απαξ πεισθεις οτι τε θεσ υιος εστιν, εδε περι τειλα λοιπον αμφισβητειν ειχεν. Ο δε κη πλανου κη ανηιδεον αυτον ειναι νομιζων, πως εκ αν απο τειλα και εσκανδαλισθη μειζονως, και προς εκεινην ωδηγηθη την υπονοιαν; δια τειλο εδε οι αποτολοι παρα την αρχην ευθεωσ τειλο λεγ-

σιν.

“ to whom Mary was related, it might ap-  
 “ pear that he was descended from David.  
 “ Secondly, lest, according to the law of  
 “ Moses, she should have been stoned as an  
 “ adulteress. Thirdly, that, in their jour-  
 “ ney to Egypt, she might have the com-  
 “ fort of a guardian, rather than that of a  
 “ husband.” “ Who,” says he, “ at that  
 “ time would have believed the virgin, if  
 “ she had told them that the angel Gabriel  
 “ came to her, and that she had conceived  
 “ by the Holy Spirit, and would not ra-  
 “ ther have condemned her after the ex-  
 “ ample of Sufannah; when, at this very  
 “ day, when all the world believes it, the  
 “ Jews still cavil?” He afterwards says,

σιν. Αλλ' ὑπερ μὲν τῆς ἀναστάσεως πολλὰ διαλεγούσιναι καὶ πολλὰκις,  
 ἐπεὶ δὲ ταύτης ὑποδείγματα ἦν ἐν τοῖς ἐμπροσθεν χρόνοις. εἰ καὶ μὴ  
 τοιαῦτα. Οὐδὲ ἐκ παρθενης γεγενει, ἔ συνεχως λεγῶσιν. Αλλ' ἔδὲ  
 αὐτὴ ἡ μήτηρ ἔξεγενεκεν τὸ εἶολμησεν. Ὅρα γὰρ καὶ παρὸς αὐτὴν τι  
 φησιν [ἡ παρθεν] ἰδὲ ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ σε ἐξήλεγμεν σε. Εἰ γὰρ  
 τὸ ὑπωπτευθῆ, ἔδ' ἂν τὸ Δαβὶδ λοιπὸν ἐνομισθῆ εἶναι υἱὸς. τὴν δὲ  
 μὴ νομισθῆναι, πολλὰ ἂν εἴεχθη καὶ εἴερα κακὰ. Διὰ τὸ ἔδὲ οἱ  
 ἀγγελοὶ ταῦτα λεγῶσιν. Ἀλλὰ τῆ Μαρία μόνῃ καὶ τῷ Ἰωσήφ [διεσα-  
 φησαν] τοῖς δὲ ποιμέσιν εὐαγγελίζομενοι τὸ γεγεννημένον, καὶ τὸ τὸ  
 παρθενησαν. In Matt. Hom. 1. Opera, vol. 7. p. 20, &c.

that “ except Joseph the husband, Mary  
 “ herself, and a very few others, who  
 “ might hear it from them, all persons  
 “ considered Jesus as the son of Joseph ; so  
 “ that the evangelists, expressing the com-  
 “ mon opinion, called Joseph the father of  
 “ our Saviour\*.”

I think it is hardly possible to read these passages, in which the inconvenience that would have attended the *discovery* of the miraculous conception are very strongly and naturally described, without feeling that

\* Ut per genealogiam Joseph, cui Maria cognata erat, origo quoque Mariæ monstraretur : secundo, ne juxta legem Moysis, ut adultera lapidaretur a populo : tertio, ut ad Egyptum fugiens, haberet solatium custodis, potius quam mariti. Quis enim in tempore illo virgini credidisset, de sancto eam spiritu concepisse, venisse ad eam angelum Gabrielem dei, detulisse mandatum, ac non magis, quasi adulteram, juxta exemplum Susannæ sententiæ omnium condemnassent : cum hodie, toto jam credente mundo, argumententur Judæi. — Denique, excepto Joseph, et Elizabeth, et ipsa Maria, paucisque admodum, si quos ab his audisse possumus existimare, omnes Jesum filium existimabant Joseph, in tantum, ut etiam evangelistæ, opinionem vulgi exprimentes, quæ vera historiæ lex est, patrem cum dixerint salvatoris. Ad Helvidium, Opera, vol. 2. p. 310.

the



the story itself is an incumbrance on the christian scheme, and that it would at least have appeared to more advantage without it.

That it was necessary that the miraculous conception of Jesus should be concealed from the devil, is a thought that is always ascribed to Ignatius, and it appears in the epistles that go by his name, as was quoted, vol. 3. p. 80. but it continued to be the serious belief of all the Fathers who have mentioned the subject. Basil says, “Mary was married to Joseph, that the devil might not suspect that she was a virgin For he knew that Christ was to be born of one, and that he was to put an end to his power \*.” Ambrose says, that “Mary conceived by a miracle, lest

\* Ειρηλαί δε των παλαιων τινι και ελερος λογος δι υπερ τς λαθειν του αρχουλα τε αιωνος τειε την παρθενιαν της Μαρίας η τε Ιωσηφ επενοηδη μνηστεια . οινει γαρ μελεωρισμος τω πονηρω το σχημα της μνηστειας περι την παρθενον επενοηδη παλαι επιτηρησι τις παρδενες, αφ ε ηκαστε τε προφητις λεγοντος . Ιδς η παρδενος εν γαστρι ληφεται και τεξεται υιον . απεβουλοηδη εν δια της μνηστειας ο επιβελος της παρδενιας . ηδει γαρ καταλυσειν της ιδιας αρχης την δια σαρκος επιφανειαν τε κυρις γενησομενην. Hom. 25. Opera, vol. 1.

P. 507.

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“ the

“ the princes of this world should not have  
 “ crucified Christ for our salvation\*.”  
 His idea, probably was, that the devil  
 would not then have instigated Judas to  
 betray him, or his enemies to crucify him.  
 Chrysoftom says, that “ Christ was both  
 “ born of a virgin, and suffered on the  
 “ cross, that the devil might be taken with  
 “ his own arts ; for that Eve was a virgin,  
 “ when she was seduced, and eat of the  
 “ tree of good and evil †.”

Leo the Great says, that “ Christ’s  
 “ chusing to be born of a virgin, was an  
 “ instance of profound wisdom ; that the  
 “ devil might be ignorant that the salva-  
 “ tion of men was born into the world ;  
 “ and that the spiritual conception being

\* Sciebat enim jam tunc gratia plena, spiritu divinitatis  
 afflata, quia si hunc hujus sæculi principes agnovissent,  
 numquam pro salute nostra crucifixissent. De Purifica-  
 tione S. Mariæ, Opera, vol. 5. p. 638.

† Ειδες πως παρθενος κ̅ ξυλον κ̅ θανατος γεγονεν ημιν της ητης  
 τα συμβολα ; ορα τοιουν πως κ̅ της νικης αυλα παλιν γεγνε παραυλια .  
 αυλι της Ευας η Μαρια, αυλι τε ξυλου τε ειδεναι γνωστον καλε κ̅ πονηρα  
 το ξυλον τε γαυρα, αυλι τε θανατις τε Αδαμ ο δεσποτικ̅ θανατος.  
 In Pasch. Opera, vol. 6. p. 643.

“ concealed

“concealed, he might believe that he who  
 “did not appear different from other men,  
 “was born like other men\*.”

“The virginity of Mary,” says Damascenus, “her delivery, and the death of  
 “Christ, were all concealed from the de-  
 “vil,” quoted from Ignatius †. “Mary,”  
 says Theophylact, “was married, that by  
 “this means she might deceive the devil.  
 “For the devil having heard that a virgin  
 “would be with child, observed the vir-  
 “gins. She, therefore, married Joseph  
 “to deceive the deceiver ‡.”

\* Hoc ipsum et autem quod Christus nasci elegit ex  
 virgine, nonne apparet altissima fuisse rationis; ut scilicet  
 natam humani generis salutem diabolus ignoraret; ut,  
 spiritali latente conceptu, quem non alium videret quam  
 alios, non aliter crederet natum esse quam ceteros. De  
 Nativitate, Ser. 4. Opera, p. 14.

† Και ελαθε τον αρχοντα τριτων αιωνων τρις η παρθενη Μαριας,  
 και ο τον αυτης, ομοιος και ο θανατος χριστου, τρια μυστηρια κραυγης,  
 ατινα εν ησυχια θεος επραχθη. De Mariæ Nativitate, Or. 3.  
 Opera, p. 576.

‡ Αμα δε, κη ινα λαθη τον διαβολον, δια τριτο εμνηστευθη · ο γαρ  
 διαβολος ανωστας οτι η παρθενος εν γαστρι εξει, επειληρει τας παρθενας ·  
 ινα τονν απαληθη ο απαλεων, μνετευλει την αειπαρθενον ο Ιωσηφ.  
 In Matt. cap. 1. Opera, vol. 1. p. 8.

Maximus Taurinensis makes a curious soliloquy for the devil, on the birth of Christ, which implies that he had heard of the pretension to a miraculous conception, but did not give entire credit to it. “Who  
“ is this,” says he, “that is come into the  
“ world unknown to me. I know that he  
“ is born of a woman, but I do not know  
“ how he was conceived. I see the mo-  
“ ther, but I cannot trace the father.—  
“ And what adds to my astonishment, the  
“ mother pretends that she brought him  
“ forth in some unusual manner, and that  
“ she is a virgin.” Then describing the  
perfect purity of Christ’s nature, he ex-  
claims, “What shall I do? Whither shall  
“ I turn myself? I find that I have to do  
“ with one who is stronger than I am.  
“ I believe he intends to reign in my king-  
“ dom. I fear lest he should be a god,  
“ who is absolutely without stain. But if  
“ he was a god, how could he bear the in-  
“ dignity of being born of a woman? How  
“ could he be content with the cradle and  
“ swaddling clothes? Who could believe  
“ the

“ the wailing of an infant in a God ; and  
 “ to whom does it not appear ridiculous  
 “ that God should be fed with a woman’s  
 “ milk. Besides he is hungry, and it is  
 “ repugnant to reason that God should be  
 “ hungry \*.”

\* Quis iste est qui nesciente me hunc ingressus est mundum? Novi quidem de femina natus est, sed nescio unde conceptus. Astat ecce mater, sed patrem investigare non possum. Partum video, sed non agnosco nascentem, et quod stupori meo accrescit, inconsueta lege pariendi etiam edito filio mater exultat, ut virgo.—Quid agam? Quo me convertam? Fortiorem sentio: puto illum in regno meo velle regnare, ne forte deus sit iste quem nullum potest maculare delictum. Sed si deus esset, quomodo indignitates partus feminei sustineret? Quomodo esset cunis pannisque contentus? Quis credere possit infantiae vagitus in deo, cui non audienti ridiculum est deum femineo lacte nutriri? Post omnia ecce esurit, cum utique esurire deum ratio nulla persuadeat. Opera, p. 206.

## SECTION III.

*A View of the Arguments in Favour of the Miraculous Conception, and of the historical Evidence by which its Credibility should be ascertained.*

HAVING thus stated the nature of the fact, the credibility of which I propose to discuss, and shewn the appearance that it has *a priori*, which is of considerable moment with respect to the evidence that is necessary to establish its authenticity; I shall proceed to state the evidence *for* and *against* it, with as much impartiality as I can. This is all that is of any consequence to the reader. He must then, and he certainly *will*, judge for himself.

The whole strength of the evidence in favour of the miraculous conception is expressed in a few words. The thing itself appears *a priori* to be highly improbable,  
and

and the *report* of it must have operated unfavourably with respect to the credit of christianity, and it is never argued from, or so much as alluded to, as of any use in the scheme, or as a part of it, in all the New Testament. But the testimony of the evangelists Matthew and Luke, is expressly in its favour. Their histories are likewise supposed to be the earliest accounts of our Saviour's life; and Luke says that he took particular pains to trace the history to its source, from those who were best qualified to give him information.

This positive testimony, very circumstantially related, by persons of such respectable characters, to say nothing of their supposed *inspiration*, is certainly entitled to the greatest credit. It may be said, What evidence can be stronger in favour of any event, than its being recorded by cotemporary historians, whose writings were published in their own life-time? If this part of the gospel history be fabulous, why may not the whole be so, since it is all related by the same evangelists? Is it not, therefore,

fore, to undermine the credit of the whole gospel history, to endeavour to weaken that of so considerable a part of it?

This, I think, is all that can be advanced in favour of the miraculous conception, setting aside all idea of the inspiration of the writers, to which, I own, I should pay no attention. I consider Matthew and Luke as simply *historians*, whose credit must be determined by the circumstances in which they wrote, and the nature of the facts which they relate. And before I consider the evidence that may be alledged against the fact which they have recorded, or are supposed to have recorded, I shall make one observation, which is of the greatest importance with respect to historical evidence, and which is always allowed its full weight with regard to all other histories. And it appears to me, that it is our backwardness to consider the gospel historians in the same light in which we do other historians (notwithstanding the doctrine of their inspiration is nominally given up) that prevents our forming a right estimate  
in



in this particular case. In any other similar case, I apprehend, we should decide much more readily than the boldest of us feel ourselves disposed to do here.

The observation which I would now make, and which I wish to impress upon my reader, is this; that fully to establish the credibility of any fact, it must not only be recorded by cotemporary historians, but it must also appear not to have been contradicted by those who were cotemporary with the historians, and who may be supposed to have been as good judges as the historians themselves. Still less will the single circumstance of an event being recorded by cotemporary historians, avail to establish the credit of it, if it appear not to have been believed by those who may be supposed to have been favourably inclined to the belief of it, and to have wished it to be true.

Let us suppose that we should now recover a copy of the history of Livy, containing an account of the transactions of his own time, or so near to it, that it could  
not

not be doubted, but that it was in his power to have procured good information concerning what he wrote; and that we should find in this copy of his history, that Cleopatra, instead of dying by the bite of an asp in Egypt, was brought by Augustus to Rome, and publicly married to him. The story would not, at this day, gain any credit. We might not be able to deny that Livy wrote the account, but we should immediately say; if it was true, why does it not appear to have been believed at the time?

Supposing, farther, that we should discover another Roman history, viz. that of Sallust, which should contain the same account; still, if we saw no reason to think that it was believed at Rome, where the scene of the transaction was laid, we certainly should not believe it now; nor would even ten or twelve historians, agreeing ever so well in their accounts, make us believe it, unless it should appear to us, that it was generally believed at the time. We might not be able to account for the misapprehensions and mistakes of the historians;

rians; but, in fact, their evidence would only be considered as that of ten or twelve men, opposed to the evidence of more than ten or twelve millions.

However, if the credit of Livy and Sallust was so well established, that we could not believe that they would assert as a fact, what they might easily have known not to be so; we should say that, though we had no method of accounting for such a narration being found in the copies of their works, which have come down to us, we were satisfied that they were not of their composition. Passages, we might say, like that in Josephus concerning Christ, may have got into the works of more respectable writers (as a comparison of circumstances sufficiently proves) without our being able to say *when*, or *by whom*, the books were corrupted. And if we had any evidence that there were, in early times, copies of the entire histories of Livy and Sallust, in which nothing was said of the marriage of Augustus to Cleopatra, nothing farther, I imagine, would be wanting to our entire satisfaction on the subject.

Now these very material observations, and several others, apply to the case before us. It is true that we do find the story of the miraculous conception in the received gospels of Matthew and Luke; and it is almost certain that they were there in the time of Justin Martyr. But it is no less certain, that there were in early times gospels of Matthew, and of Luke too, which did not contain that story; and there is sufficient reason to think, that the great body of Jewish christians, who were contemporary with the apostles, did not believe it. It was probably a long time before it gained any credit at all with any of their posterity, and it is probable that it never did so with the generality of them. It is certain that some very learned persons, and therefore, probably, the most inquisitive among them, and who wrote expressly on the subject, never believed it; and yet no good reason can be given why a history which has the appearance of being greatly to the credit of the founder of their religion, should not have been believed by them, as well as by other christians.

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A circumstance of greater weight than even this is, that the Gnostics of that age, to whose peculiar systems the doctrine of the miraculous conception could not but have appeared exceedingly favourable, did likewise reject it as fabulous. If these particulars can be well supported, it must appear that something is wanting to the full credibility of this part of the gospel history; and it will be farther weakened, if any circumstances can be pointed out that affect the *authenticity* of the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Such facts of this kind, and such observations as have occurred to me on the subject, I now proceed to lay before my readers.

## SECTION IV.

*Reasons for thinking that the Miraculous Conception was not known, or believed, in very early times.*

THAT the miraculous conception of our Saviour was *not known*, and of course *not believed*, during the time of his public ministry, will, I imagine, be allowed by all persons; and this of itself is a circumstance not very favourable to its truth. For though there might be reasons why it should be concealed from the enemies of Jesus (as it might be supposed to amount to a declaration of his being the Messiah) there does not seem to have been any reason why it should have been concealed from his friends, as it would have tended to strengthen their faith in his divine mission. Besides, as Joseph and Mary were not enjoined secrecy on this head, they would naturally speak of so wonderful a thing

a thing as that of a virgin being with child, at least to their pious friends, who would give them credit for it; and if it had been believed by them, is it not probable that more respect would have been paid to Jesus during his infancy and childhood?

If there had been any persons of property among them, they would hardly have suffered so extraordinary a child as this to have followed the occupation of a common carpenter, which Jesus is thought to have done till he was thirty years of age. If the account of Luke be true, the story of this miraculous conception could not well have been a secret. According to him it must have been known not only to Joseph and Mary, but also to Zacharias and Elizabeth, if not to Simeon and Anna; the latter of whom is said to have *spoken of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.* Luke ii. 38. Now, as none of these persons are said to have made any secret of what they knew, we may safely conclude, that, by some means or other, it would certainly get abroad; and a fact of this extraordinary

traordinary kind, or even a pretension to it, would never have been forgotten. All the country would have had their eyes upon any child that had been said to have been produced in this manner, and would never have lost sight of him.

Supposing, however, that this fact had been a secret between Joseph and Mary only, and that they had agreed to keep it to themselves, so that upon the death of Joseph, it would have remained in the breast of Mary alone, it cannot have been supposed to have been unknown to Jesus himself, after he was fully illuminated with respect to every thing that related to his character and office; and it must at some time or other have been communicated by her, or by him, to his disciples. But if we attend to the history, we shall find it extremely difficult to fix upon any particular time when the great secret was made known to them. For we perceive no trace of their ever having known it at all; there not being, as I have observed before, the least mention of it, or the most obscure reference



ference to it, in all the subsequent gospel history, or in any of the writings of the apostles; so that, if it was a fact, it was, to all appearance, a most extraordinary miracle, without the smallest use or effect; since the discovery of it excited no surprize, nor left any impresson by which it can be traced.

As soon as we certainly know that christians did believe the miraculous conception of Jesus, it was particularly objected to by Jews and heathens, almost as much as the doctrine of his divinity; and this obliged the christians who believed it, to have recourse to various arguments to defend it, and make it appear credible, as I shall shew hereafter; but we neither hear of the *pretension*, the *objections*, or the *defences* in the lifetime of the apostles. Now why do we hear so much about the miraculous conception in the time of the Fathers, and find so much said of it in their writings, and nothing at all about it in any earlier period, if the thing itself had been known and pretended to? Would not the same causes have produced

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duced the same effects, if they had really existed? And if the pretension had not been advanced in the age of the apostles, it would come too late afterwards, as it would be impossible then to authenticate the fact.

It is plain that Jesus was thought to be the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary by the Jews in general, and especially by the people of Nazareth, where he and his parents lived. For the worst that his countrymen, envious of his reputation, could say of him was, that he was the son of a carpenter, and that his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, were all known to them. This was about thirty years after his birth. Now, had Mary been with child when she came to live with her husband, and Jesus had consequently been born too soon after their cohabitation, it could hardly have failed to be noticed, and would probably have been recollected when he began to distinguish himself; so that we may be said to have the evidence of the inhabitants of the place in which he lived,

that he was the proper and legitimate son of Joseph and Mary. Origen, indeed, supposes that the Jews meant to reproach Christ with his pretension to being born of a virgin, when they told him (John viii. 41.) that *they were not born of fornication* \*. But I believe he is singular in this supposition.

But the principal objection to the story is that, at whatever time it was communicated, by Jesus or Mary, to the apostles, or by them to the rest of the disciples (concerning which nothing can be collected from the history) it does not appear to have gained any credit in that age. For it is certain that it was not believed by the great body, and probably the whole number of the Jewish christians in the age subsequent to that of the apostles; so that they either had not been taught any such doctrine by them, or if they had heard of it, they did

\* Ημεις μαλλον ενα πατερα εχομεν τον θεον, ηπερ συ, ο φασκων μεν εκ παρθενιας γεγεννησθαι, εκ πορνειας δε γεγεννημενος, και δια το αυχειν το εκ παρθενιας γεγεννησθαι λεγων ενα πατερα εχειν μονον τον θεον, των ομολογητων τον πατερα θεον, ηκ αρνεμενων και ανθρωπου πατερα. Comment. vol. 2. p. 303.

not think the account sufficiently authenticated.

The miraculous conception was a thing which none of the apostles could have asserted of their own knowledge; and if they had no particular *evidence*, or *revelation* concerning it (of which nothing is said) many of the early Jewish christians were as good judges in the case as themselves. Had the subject been then much talked of, or had it been mentioned at all in the life time of Mary, care would, no doubt, have been taken to interrogate her with respect to it; and her testimony, solemnly given, would hardly have been disputed. That this, therefore, was not done, and the credibility of the fact established in that age, affords the strongest presumption that the story of the miraculous conception had not been heard of in the life-time of Mary, or indeed in that of the apostles. If it had, we can hardly suppose but that all doubt with respect to it would have been precluded.

Had this remarkable history been imparted to the early Jewish christians with  
such

such circumstances as would have rendered it credible, we can imagine no reason why it should not have been universally received in that age, and have been transmitted as an unquestionable truth to all posterity. For, being the disciples of Christ, it may be supposed that they would have been pleased with a circumstance so much to his honour; the very principle on which, I doubt not, the belief of it did gain ground at length. Had it been thought credible at that time, the same causes which established the belief of it afterwards, would have effected it in a more early period.

That very many of the Jewish christians, who were generally called Ebionites, did not believe the miraculous conception, has the unanimous testimony of all who speak of them, even in the latest periods. It may, therefore, be presumed, that this disbelief was more general, and probably universal, in an earlier age. Justin Martyr, who is the first christian writer that mentions them at all, gives no hint of there being any among them who did believe it;

nor indeed does Irenæus, who mentions them several times, and who wrote near the close of the second century. He speaks of the Ebionites in general, as “vain, not admitting the union of God and man by faith, as persevering in the old leaven of generation, and not understanding that the spirit came upon Mary, and that the power of the highest overshadowed her\*.”

So far, therefore, we have no evidence of any of the Jewish christians believing the miraculous conception. Also, till this time, and long after, they do not appear to have been known to the Greeks by any other name than that of Ebionites. Origen expressly informs us, that in his time *all* the the Jewish christians went by that name. He is the first writer from whom we learn that *any* of them believed the miraculous conception; and he wrote

\* Vani autem et Ebionæi, unionem dei et hominis per fidem non recipientes in suam animam, sed in veteri generationis perseverantes fermento; neque intelligere volentes quoniam spiritus sanctus advenit in Mariam, et virtus altissimi obumbravit eam. Lib. 5. cap. 1. p. 394.

about the middle of the third century.

“When you see,” says he, “the faith of the  
 “Jewish believers in our Saviour, some of  
 “whom think him to have been the son  
 “of Joseph and Mary, and others of Mary  
 “and the Holy Spirit, but without ac-  
 “knowledging his divinity, &c †.”

Eusebius, who speaks of no Jewish christians, but such as were called Ebionites, in one place, makes the same distinction among them that Origen does; but in another place he speaks of the Ebionites in general as disbelieving the miraculous conception. So that in his time, that is about a hundred years after Origen, a great proportion of them, probably a majority of them, continued unbelievers in the miraculous conception, notwithstanding they must have had before them all the evidence in favour of it that we can pretend to have. And as, in after ages, when it was imagined that

\* Και επαν ιδης των απο Ιουδαιων πιστευοντων εις τον Ιησεν την περι τε Σωτηρος πιστιν, οτε μεν εκ Μαρίας και τε Ιωσηφ οιομενων αυτον ειναι, οτε και εκ Μαρίας μεν μονης και τε δεξ πνευματος, ε μην και μελα της περι αυτε θεολογιας, οφει πως ελθ ο τυφλος λεγειν. In Matth. Comment. vol. 1. p. 427.

there

there was some distinction between the Ebionites and Nazarenes, the Ebionites were always described as believing Christ to be the son of Joseph, and the Nazarenes are no where said to believe the contrary, we seem to be authorised to conclude, that the great majority of Jewish christians *always* continued unbelievers in this doctrine. Tertullian considered it as an answer to the Ebionites, that Christ is said to be born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God \*. He must, therefore, have considered them as denying the miraculous conception. Austin, describing the Ebionites, says expressly, that they denied it; and though he makes another sect of the Nazarenes, he does not say that they believed it †.

That there was any real difference between the Ebionites and Nazarenes has been shewn to be an opinion void of all foundation. But

\* Et non ex sanguine, neque ex carnis et viri voluntate, sed ex deo natus est, Ebioni respondit. De Carne Christi, sect. 24. Opera, p. 325.

† Natus est ergo dei filius ex homine, et non per hominem, id est, non ex viri coitu sicut Ebion dicit. De Definitionibus, cap. 2. Opera, vol. 3. p. 195.



if there was any difference between them, Epiphanius says, that he did not know that it consisted in this. And if, as he says, “the Nazarenes held doctrines similar to those of the Cerinthians\*,” he probably supposed that they believed the miraculous conception; because the Cerinthians, being Gnostics, had no other opinion that Epiphanius would call heretical (except that concerning the obligation of the law of Moses) in which they could agree with the Nazarenes. For the Cerinthians, like all the other early Gnostics, were unbelievers in the miraculous conception.

The Ebionites were not without men of learning and enquiry among them; and of these Symmachus (whose translation of the Old Testament into Greek, is quoted with the highest respect by Origen, Eusebius, and all the ancients) defended this particular opinion of the Ebionites. We have no account of any of his arguments; but that a man of his learning, and respectable character, about the end of the second century, with all the evidence before him that we

\* Καθα γὰρ εἶπεν, συγχρόνοι ἦσαν ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ὁμοία κινήματα ἔτα φρονήματα. Hær. 29. Opera, vol. 1. p. 117.

can have in favour of it, and probably much more than we now have against it, should write in defence of his opinion, is, of itself, *a fact* of considerable consequence. That his opinion was overborne, notwithstanding his defence of it, will not make an unitarian think the worse of it, as the unitarian doctrine itself was overborne; and it was probably the operation of the same general causes that was fatal to both the simple and the proper humanity; meaning *by proper humanity*, that Jesus had a human father, as well as a mother.

This work of Symmachus does not appear to have been seen by Eusebius; but he mentions it as having been in the possession of Origen. "Symmachus," he says, one  
 "of the interpreters of the scriptures, was an  
 "Ebionite; and the Ebionite heresy is that  
 "of those who say, that Christ was born  
 "of Joseph and Mary, supposing him to be  
 "a mere man. There are now commenta-  
 "ries of this Symmachus, in which it is  
 "said that, eagerly disputing about the  
 "gospel of Matthew he defends that heresy.  
 "And these commentaries of Symmachus,  
 "Origen,

“ Origen, together with other interpreta-  
 “ tions of scripture by the same author, said  
 “ he received of one Juliana, to whom they  
 “ came by succession from Symmachus him-  
 “ self\*.” Jerom and Nicephorus call this  
 work of Symmachus, a Commentary on the  
 gospel of Matthew. That the Nazarenes  
 did not differ from the Ebionites in their  
 believing the miraculous conception, may  
 be inferred from the former being some-  
 times called *Symmachians*. See vol. 3.  
 p. 221. of this work.

It is well known that the Ebionites  
 maintained that their copies of this gos-  
 pel, which wanted the introduction, was  
 the genuine work of the apostle. And why  
 should not the Jewish christians be as good  
 judges of this, as the Jews in general are

\* Των γε μην ερμηνευλων αυλων δη αξλων ισεων, Εβιοναιων τον Συμ-  
 μαχόν γεγονεναι . αιρεσις δε εστιν η των Εβιοναιων ελω καλημενη, των τον  
 χριστον εξ Ιωσηφ κ̅ Μαρίας γεγονεναι, φασκοστων ψιλον τε ανθρωπον  
 υπειληφοτων αυτον, κ̅ τον νομον χρηναι Ιεδακαϊερον φυλαττειν απισχυρι-  
 ζομενων. ως παρ κ̅ εκ της προσθεν ιστοριας εγνωμεν . κ̅ υπομνηματια δε  
 τε Συμμαχου εισειν τον φερεται . εν εις δοκει προς το καλα Μαθηταιον  
 απολεινομενος ευαγγελιον, την δεδηλωμενην αιρεσιν κραυνην . ταυτια δε ο  
 Ωριγενης μελα κ̅ αλλων εις τας γραφας ερμηνειων τε Συμμαχου, σι-  
 μακνει παρ Ιερακωνος τινος ειληφθηναι . την κ̅ φησι παρ αυτου Συμμαχου  
 τας βιβλους διαδεξασθαι. Hist. lib. 6. cap. 17. p. 278.

allowed

allowed to have been with respect to the writings of Moses? The general opinion is, that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew for their use, as Moses did his books.

Jerom says, that the gospel used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, was “ by *most* “ [plerisque] called the authentic gospel of “ Matthew \*.” Now, as there can be no doubt of the Nazarenes and Ebionites themselves considering this gospel as the authentic gospel of Matthew, it may be supposed, that many of the *Gentiles* also had the same opinion. And though the copy that Jerom translated had part of the two first chapters, and therefore probably the whole; yet, as we learn from Epiphanius, that that gospel began at the third chapter, and we know from Origen, that *all* the Gentile christians did not believe the miraculous conception; it is probable that the Hebrew gospel, used by the Ebionites, even without the introduction, was thought by many of the Gentiles to be the whole of the ge-

\* In evangelio, quo utuntur Nazareni et Ebionitæ, quod nuper in Græcum de Hebræo sermone transtulimus et quod vocatur a plerisque Matthæi authenticum, &c. In Matt. cap. 12. Opera, vol. 6. p. 21.

nuine work of Matthew. Indeed, they could hardly be unbelievers in the miraculous conception, and admit it to be authentic.

If, however, it be thought that the Ebionites were unbelievers in the miraculous conception, at the same time that they thought it to have been recorded by Matthew, the evidence against the credibility of it, will be much strengthened. It will be taken for granted that the Jewish christians, who were so fond of Matthew, as to admit no other gospel besides his, would not entertain an opinion so different from his, without having taken the greatest pains to examine into the matter, and consequently not without having had very good reasons to think that he had been too credulous in what he had written. And though we cannot, at this distance of time, discover what their reasons were; yet, as they were in the most favourable situation for examining into the truth of the fact, we cannot but think that their reasons must have been very strong ones.

All Jews, no doubt, in consequence of having expected a mere man, born as other men are, for their Messiah, would *at first* be averse to supposing any other concerning Christ. But having got over a much greater prejudice, viz. that of the Messiah being a *temporal prince*, it can hardly be conceived that *then* the circumstance of his miraculous birth, though originally equally unexpected, would be received with much difficulty, if it had been tolerably well authenticated. For, being actually christians, they would be within the influence of another prejudice, which would tend to counteract the former; a miraculous conception being a circumstance highly honourable to their master. In this way, as I have observed, I doubt not, the belief of the miraculous conception did at length make its way among the Jewish christians; so that, by the time of Origen, part of them gave credit to the story.

What proportion the believers in the miraculous conception bore to the rest, we cannot tell. Had the account of Origen been

been the first, and the only one that we had of the matter, and he himself been indifferent to either opinion, it might have been supposed, that the two kinds of Ebionites he mentions were nearly equal in point of numbers. But Origen himself being a believer in the miraculous conception, and his being the first account of *any* Ebionites believing it, the case is very different. I cannot help thinking that these were always few, and that by far the greatest part of the Jewish christians never gave any credit to the story.

It may be said, that the general unbelief of the Jews, in and after our Saviour's time, with respect to the miraculous conception, may be accounted for on the supposition of its not having been generally known, and its transpiring gradually from the few who were in the secret. This, I would observe, goes upon the idea of its being a thing, the knowledge of which was thought to be of no consequence to the scheme of christianity, and therefore, leaves us to ask, why so great a miracle was provided to answer no great end? But that this was

always considered as a miracle of a very extraordinary kind, is evident from its being perpetually objected to by the Jews, more than any other circumstance in the gospel history. And as it was always particularly objected to by unbelievers, those who were believers would, no doubt, think themselves particularly interested in maintaining its authenticity. If, therefore, it had been in their power fully to ascertain so very remarkable a fact, they certainly would not have failed to do it.

How reluctantly soever unbelievers might admit the evidence for a fact of this kind, all christians must have been sufficiently pre-disposed to believe a thing, which, they would naturally enough think, did so much honour to the founder of their religion. No reason, therefore, can be imagined for christians not universally believing the miraculous conception, but some considerable deficiency in the evidence for it. Many persons would eagerly catch at such a story as this, and believe it upon insufficient evidence. And yet we find that this story, long after its first promulgation, and when  
3 there



there had been time enough to examine into it, was not only laughed at by unbelievers, but rejected by those christians who had the best opportunity of satisfying themselves concerning it.

Had the miraculous conception been conceived to be a matter of no importance, the Jewish christians not believing it might be accounted for on the supposition of their never having given much attention to it. But a thing that actually exposed them to much reproach and ridicule, could not but engage their attention. In their circumstances they would not fail to examine and re-examine the evidence, and with a disposition of mind favourable enough to the belief of it, especially if they had thought it to be recorded by such a person as the apostle Matthew, for whom they always entertained the highest respect. As to Luke, his having been a companion of Paul might perhaps have given them a dislike to him.

But the very idea of the apostles *concealing* any thing that they knew concerning the history of their master, is altogether un-

suitable to their character and general conduct. They were men of too great simplicity for a scheme of this kind; and indeed it seems to have been contrary to their express instructions; as they were ordered to publish in the most open manner all that they knew concerning Christ, without any reserve whatever. Matt. x. 26. *There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and nothing hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops.*

The disbelief of the miraculous conception was by no means confined to the Jewish christians. It extended likewise to the Gentile converts, probably the majority of them, even in the time of Justin Martyr. For all the Gentile christians that he speaks of, as being unitarians at all, he considered as holding the same opinion on this subject, that is ascribed to the Jewish christians, viz. that Jesus was *a man born of man*, or the son of Joseph as well as of Mary; and independently of any rigorous construction of his language, the respect with which he

speaks of them sufficiently proves that their numbers must have been considerable.

However, as in this part of his work, Justin is defending his peculiar opinion of the *pre-existence of Christ*, we cannot conclude that he considered *all* those who denied his doctrine on this subject, as agreeing among themselves with respect to the circumstances of the birth of Christ. That was a thing which he had no occasion to attend to at that time; but as, in describing the unitarians in general, Jews and Gentiles, he mentions it as their opinion, that Jesus was the son of Joseph, it is natural to conclude that, in his time, it was the opinion of the majority of them. Had it been the opinion of *the minority only*, he would hardly have mentioned that circumstance in a *general character*.

Nor will this be thought improbable, when it is considered, that though the belief of the miraculous conception certainly kept gaining ground, as well as that of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, some, and probably a considerable number (or they would hardly have been mentioned at

all) remained to the time of Origen, who wrote near a hundred years after Justin Martyr. Origen comparing the blind beggar near Jericho to the poor beggarly Jewish christians, who believed Christ to be the son of Joseph and Mary, says, that “those who rebuked him, represented the Gentiles, who, excepting a few, believed that he was born of a virgin\*.” Had he himself been of this opinion, he might, perhaps, have spoken of them with more respect in point of numbers, as well as on other accounts.

In another passage, he also speaks of some christians who denied the miraculous conception, but he does not say whether they were Jews or Gentiles, though I think it is most probable that he meant the latter. “Persons,” he says, “may believe, and not believe at the same time;” and he in-

\* Ζήλω εἰ δυνασαι πολλοὺς μὲν εἰπεῖν ἐπιθιμωσίας ἵνα σωπῆσθαι, τῶν Ἑβραίων καὶ πτωχευόντων περὶ τὴν εἰς Ἰησοῦν πίστιν, τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν, οἵτινες παρ' ὀλίγας ἀπαντὲς πεπίστευκασιν αὐτὸν ἐκ παρθένου γεγενῆσθαι, καὶ ἐπιθιμῶσιν ἵνα σωπῆσθαι, τῶν οἰομένων αὐτὸν ἐκ σπέρματος ἀνδρός, καὶ γυναικὸς εἶναι, κατὰ γένος τοῦ γενέσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ Δαβὶδ. In Matt. Comment. vol. 1. p. 426.

stances in “ those who believe in Jesus  
 “ crucified by Pilate in Judea, but do not  
 “ believe that he was born of a virgin ; and  
 “ also in those who believed in his mira-  
 “ cles, but did not believe that he was the  
 “ son of him that made the heavens and the  
 “ earth \*.”

Irenæus, in his Gloss (for such it is) upon the creed, inserts the article concerning the miraculous conception, as what was universally received in his time. But this could not be the case, since, according to the evidence of Origen, there were even Gentile christians who disbelieved it after his time. Indeed I believe it is the general opinion of learned christians, that the apostles took no great care to inculcate this doctrine, but chiefly

\* Και επισηησον ει δυναται τις τω αυτω κατα τινα μεν επινοιαν πιστευειν, κατα δε ελεραν μη πιστευειν . οιγε παραδειγματι ενεκεν, οι πιστευουτες μεν εις τον επι Πουλις Πιλατη Ιησυν εσαυρωμενον εν τη Ιουδαια, μη πιστευουτες δε εις τον γεγεννημενον εκ Μαρίας της παρθενε, ελοι εις τον αυτον πιστευουσι, κη ε πιστευουσι . καλιν οι πιστευουτες μεν εις τον ποιησαντα εν τη Ιουδαια τα αναγεγραμμενα τερατα, κη σημεια Ιησυν, μη πιστευουτες δε εις τον Ιησυν υιον τε ποιησαντος τον θρανον κη την γην, εις τον πιστευουσι, κη ε πιστευουσι . καλιν τε αυ οι πιστευουτες μεν εις τον πατερα Ιησυν χριστη, μη πιστευουτες εις τον δημιουργον . και ποιητην τε δε παντος, ελοι εις τον αυτον πιστευουσι, και ε πιστευουσι. Comment. vol. 2. p. 322.

urged articles of greater moment. Among others, I shall give in the margin the opinion of Bishop Bull to this purpose\*.

The author of the Appendix to Tertulian's treatise, *De Præscriptione*, says, "that Theodotus believed the miraculous conception †." But, according to Epipha-

\* Quid vero de ea, quæ passionem, mortem, resurrectionem, &c. præcedit, conceptione Jesu Christi ex spiritu sancto, et nativitate ex Maria virgine statuendum? An illam quoque jam inde ab initio Judæi ac Gentiles ante baptismum sunt professi? Equidem de ipsis christianæ ecclesiæ primordiis aliquantulum dubito, quod in nullo catecheticorum, qui in actis apostolorum extant, sermonum, ulla vel conceptionis ex virtute spiritus sancti sine virili femine, vel nativitatis ex Maria virgine facta sit mentio quodque nec univèrsè apostolos eam Judæis vel Ethnicis prædicasse, neque hos illosve contra ipsam disputasse, ibidem legamus: uti quidem de resurrectione Christi factum constat. Haud vane igitur augurari licet, hujus mysterii propagationem pleniori evangelii expositioni post baptismum reservatam fuisse: vel quod omnibus in univèrsum, tam Israelitis quam reliquis mortalibus, plane impossibilis videretur virginis citra maris concubitum partus (vide Justinus M. Dial. cum Tryphone loco infra, cap. 7. sect. 4. citato) vel quod non æque necessaria putaretur supernaturalis Christi conceptionis ac nativitatis notitia, ac passionis atque resurrectionis ejus fides. Opera, p. 339.

\* Accedit his Theodotus hæreticus Byzantius qui—doctrinam eam introduxit qua Christum hominem tantum-  
mode

nus, his followers believed that “Christ  
 “ was a mere man, born of the seed of  
 “ man \*.” And this is not improbable, as  
 Theodotus was prior to Origen; though  
 I own Epiphanius is not the best au-  
 thority, and it is contradicted by other  
 accounts. But some of the followers of  
 Theodotus might believe the miraculous  
 conception, and others might not.

I think it very probable, that the disci-  
 ples of Paulus Samosatensis, and if so, the  
 generality of the Gentile unitarians of  
 his time disbelieved the miraculous concep-  
 tion, and paid no regard to the introduction  
 to the gospel of Luke, any more than that  
 of Matthew; because, according to Atha-  
 nadius, he supposed Christ to have been born  
 at Nazareth †. Had he received the intro-

modo diceret, deum autem illum negaret, ex spiritu qui-  
 dem sancto natum ex virgine, sed hominem solitarium at-  
 que nudum, nulla alia præ ceteris, nisi sola justitiæ autho-  
 ritate. Opera, p. 223.

\* Και οι απ αυτς συαδεις Θεοδωτιανοι, ψιλον ανθρωπον φασκου-  
 ρεις ειναι τον χριστον, και εκ σπερματος ανδρος γεγενησθαι. Hær. 54.  
 Opera, vol. 1. p. 463.

† De Adventu, J. C. Opera, vol. 1. p. 635. 637.

duction

duction to the gospel of Luke, he would naturally have said, that Christ had no existence before his birth at Bethlehem, rather than Nazareth.

It is not improbable, but that there were some who disbelieved the miraculous conception in the time of Athanasius; as he says, “ I wonder how they have dared to say that Christ was a man in the course of nature \*.” The tense of the verb that he makes use of, rather leads us to suppose, that he is speaking of a sect that then continued to subsist.

It should seem that there were some in the time of Cyril of Jerusalem, who believed that Christ was the son of Joseph; and as they are opposed to the *heretics*, it is most probable that they were not Gnostics, but proper Gentile unitarians. “ Let us not,” says he, “ bear with the heretics, who teach the appearance by phantasm only. Let

\* Αμελει καιμεινο τεθαιμακα, πως ολας και εννοσαι τελομηκασιν οι φυτεως ακολουθια γεγενηται ανθρωπος . ει και εως ην περιτη της Μαριας η μημη· εδε γαρ οιδεν η φυσις παρθενου χωρις ανδρος τικισταν  
De Divinitate Christi, Opera, vol. 1. p. 164.



“ us likewise despise those who say that the  
 “ birth was from man and woman, and dare  
 “ to say that he was the son of Joseph and  
 “ Mary \*.” It is evident from these facts,  
 that we cannot infer from Irenæus inserting  
 the article of the miraculous conception  
 in his gloss on the Creed, that it was the  
 belief of all christians. Like Tertullian  
 after him, he must have put into it the ar-  
 ticles of his own faith.

That any of the Gnostics should disbelieve  
 the miraculous conception, is a fact more  
 extraordinary, and more unfavourable to the  
 credibility of it, than the disbelief of it by  
 any of the catholic christians, Jews, or Gen-  
 tiles; because this doctrine would have  
 suited remarkably well with their other  
 principles. In reality, the belief of the  
 miraculous conception might have been  
 more naturally expected of them, than of  
 any persons of that age. They did not,  
 indeed, with Justin Martyr, and the ortho-

\* Μη ανεχωμεθα των αιρετικων, των καλα φαιλασιαν την παρρησιαν δι-  
 δασκουσων . καταπιυσωμεν και των λεγουσων εξ ανδρος και γυναικος ειναι  
 την γεννησιν, των τολμησαντων ειπειν, οτι ην εκ τς Ιωσηφ και της Μα-  
 ριας. Cat. 12. Opera, p. 164.

dox, believe that Christ was the maker of the world; but they thought him to have been a pre-existent intelligent being, equal in power, and superior in goodness, to him that made the world; and one who was sent to rectify the evils that had been introduced by the being that made it; and therefore they would as naturally incline to believe that he had a birth suited to his high rank as the orthodox themselves. They who thought that Christ derived nothing even from his mother, must have thought a father quite superfluous. That they did not embrace this opinion, therefore, could be owing to nothing but their not finding sufficient historical evidence for it.

That all the more early Gnostics did believe Jesus to have been the son of Joseph, is asserted by all who make any mention of their opinions. The earliest of them were the Cerinthians, and the earliest writer who mentions them by name is Irenæus: I shall, therefore, begin with his testimony concerning them. “Cerinthus,” says he, “who was of Asia, held that the world was not made by the principal God, but by a  
“ power

“ power very distant from him, and who  
 “ was ignorant of the true God ; that Jesus  
 “ was not born of a virgin, for that he held  
 “ to be impossible, but was the son of Jo-  
 “ seph and Mary ; that he was like other  
 “ men, but excelled them in virtue ; that  
 “ after his baptism, the Christ descended  
 “ into him, in the form of a dove ; that he  
 “ then announced the unknown Father,  
 “ and wrought miracles ; that at length the  
 “ Christ left Jesus, who suffered and rose  
 “ again, but that the Christ was impassible\*.”

What Irenæus says concerning Cerinthus,  
 the first of the Gnostics, Theodoret and

\* Et Cerinthus autem quidam in Asia, non a primo deo factum esse mundum docuit, sed a virtute quadam valde separata, et distante ab ea principalitate quæ est super universa, et ignorante eum qui est super omnia deum. Jesum autem subjecit, non ex virgine natum (impossibili enim hoc ei visum est) fuisse autem eum Joseph et Mariæ filium, similiter ut reliqui omnes homines, et plus potuisse justitia, et prudentia, et sapientia ab omnibus. Et post baptismum descendisse in eum, ab ea principalitate quæ est super omnia, Christum figura columbæ ; et tunc annunciasse incognitum patrem, et virtutes perfecisse, in fine autem revolasse iterum Christum de Jesu, et Jesum passum esse, et resurrexisse : Christum autem impassibilem perseverasse, existentem spiritalem. Lib. I. cap. 25. p. 102.

others

others say concerning Simon, Menander, Cerdon, and Marcion, the next in order of time, except that Simon, who was improperly ranked among christians, preceded him. “Simon,” says Theodoret, “Menander, Cerdon, and Marcion, deny the incarnation, and call the miraculous conception a fable: but Valentinus, Basilides, Bardesanes, Armonius, and those of that class, admit the miraculous conception and the birth; but they say that the God logos received nothing from the virgin, but passed through her as through a pipe; and that he appeared to men as a phantasm, seeming only to be a man, as he had appeared to Abraham and to others of the ancients\*.”

Theodoret here says, that Valentinus and Basilides, who preceded him, admitted the

\* Σίμων μὲν γὰρ, καὶ Μενάνδρος, Κερδῶν, καὶ Μαρκίων παύλασαι ἀρνείναι τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν, καὶ τὴν ἐκ παρθένου γεννησὶν μυσθολογίαν ἀποκαλεῖσι. Βαλεντίνος δὲ, καὶ Βασιλειδῆς, καὶ Βαρδησανῆς, καὶ Ἀρμονίος, καὶ οἱ τῶν συμμορίας, δεχόμενοι μὲν τῆς παρθένου τὴν κησὶν, καὶ τοῦ τοκοῦ ἔδεν δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον ἐκ τῆς παρθένου προσειληφέναι φασίν, ἀλλὰ παροῦσιν τινὰ δὲ αὐτῆς ὡσπερ διὰ σωλητῆρος ποησασθαι, ἐπιφανῆναι δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φάντασμα χρησαμένον, καὶ δοξάζειν αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπου ὡς τῶν Ἰσραηλῶν, καὶ τισὶν ἄλλοις τῶν παλαιῶν. Ep. 145. Opera, vol. 3, p. 1023.

miraculous

miraculous conception ; but an earlier, and, therefore, a better authority, says the contrary. For the Valentinians, as well as the Ebionites, are ranked among those who disbelieved the miraculous conception by Pamphilus the Martyr\*. And if Valentinus did not believe the miraculous conception, it is probable that Basilides did not, as he is sometimes called the master of Valentinus. Beaufobre says, it does not appear whether Basilides believed the miraculous conception, or not. *Histoire de Manicheisme*, vol. 2. p. 28.

That Carpocrates disbelieved the miraculous conception is universally admitted. “Carpocrates,” says Irenæus, “held that the world was made by inferior angels ; that Jesus was the son of Joseph, but that his soul was firm and holy †.” “Ce-

\* Sive secundum eos, que dicunt eum ex Joseph et Maria natum, sicut sunt Ebionitæ et Valentiniani. Hieronymi Opera, vol. 9. p. 117. Origenis Opera, vol. 1. p. 760.

† Carpoçrates autem et qui ab eo, mundum quidem et ea quæ in eo sunt, ab angelis multo inferioribus ingenito patre factum esse dicunt. Jesum autem e Joseph natum,

“rinthus and Carpocrates,” says Epiphanius, “used the same gospel with the Ebionites, and endeavoured to prove from the genealogy that Christ is the son of Joseph and Mary\*.” Theodoret also says, that “Carpocrates believed that Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary, like other men †.”

Thus it appears, that the earliest and most distinguished of the Gnostics agreed with the ancient unitarians, in disbelieving the miraculous conception. Now, what could bring persons so opposite to each other, as the unitarians and Gnostics are always represented to have been, to agree in this one thing, but such historical evidence as was independent of any particular system

et qui similis reliquis hominibus fuerit, distasse a reliquis secundum id, quod anima ejus firma, et munda cum esset, commemorata fuerit. Lib. 1. cap. 24. p. 99.

\* Ο μεν γαρ Κηρηνδθ και Καρποκρας, τω αυτω χρωμενοι δηθεν παρ αυλοις ευαγγελιω, απο της αρχης τε και Μαθαιον ευαγγελιου δια της γενεαλογιας βελουσαι παρισταν εκ σπερματος Ιωσηφ και Μαριας ειναι τον χριστον. Hær. 30. Opera, vol. 1. p. 138.

† Του δε κυριου Ιησου εκ τε Ιωσηφ και της Μαριας γεννηθηναι τοις αλλοις ανθρωποις παραπλησιως, Hær. Fab. lib. 1. cap. 5. Opera, vol. 4. p. 196.

of christian faith; and which, in the case of the Gnostics, must have been so strong, as to overbear the natural influence of their system.

With respect to the unitarians, it may be said, that many of them, having been Jews, who had expected that their Messiah would be a mere man, born as other men are, and especially a proper descendant from David, would not, without particular evidence, admit that he had any other kind of birth; and that the gentile unitarians, having learned christianity of them, would naturally adopt their opinion; though, I doubt not, but that the idea of aggrandizing the founder of their religion, which was so eagerly caught at in those times, would soon overbear the influence of that Jewish prejudice. But the Gnostics, who did not believe that Christ had any proper birth at all, but merely passed through his mother (to use their own favourite comparison) as water through a pipe, would naturally wish that it might be done in such a manner, as might be imagined (and the whole was an

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affair of imagination) to be in the least degrading manner. And that, in that age, it *was* supposed to be less degrading to be born of a virgin, than in the common way, is evident from what I have already quoted concerning their sentiments and ideas.

On what grounds or principles, or from what authority, the ancient Jewish christians, and many of the Gentiles, as well as the Gnostics, disbelieved the miraculous conception, we can only conjecture, as their writings on this, as well as on all other subjects, are long since buried in oblivion. But *the fact* of so general a disbelief, both of the unitarian christians and the Gnostics, at first universal, and giving way to the present popular opinion (which may easily be accounted for from the very general disposition to magnify the personal dignity of Christ, whose meanness was continually objected to them) very slowly, cannot, I think, be accounted for without supposing some considerable defect in the original evidence. Otherwise, it could not but, in the circumstances of the primitive christians, have very soon



soon and universally established itself. And the question now before us is simply this, viz. whether it be easier to account for the existence of this fact, viz. the general, and, to appearance, universal disbelief of the miraculous conception, at the only period in which it was possible fully to authenticate it, or the existence of the present records of it, viz. the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke, at so early a period as that to which they may certainly be traced, without supposing the history they contain to be authentic.

In order to throw some farther light upon the subject, I shall now freely consider the circumstances of this story, which has been so differently received; appearing to have gained no credit at first, but, by a slow process, to have come at length to be held absolutely sacred.

## S E C T I O N V.

*The internal Evidence for the Credibility of the Miraculous Conception considered.*

**I**N comparing the four gospels, we cannot but be struck with the remarkable difference between those of Matthew and Luke, and those of Mark and John, in this respect; neither of the latter giving the least hint of a miraculous conception. And yet it might well be thought that, if any part of the history required to be particularly authenticated, by the testimony of different historians, it was this; and many things of far less consequence are recorded by them all, and very circumstantially. With respect to John, it may, indeed, be said, that as he knew that Matthew and Luke had recorded the circumstances of the miraculous conception, he had no occasion to do it.

But what shall we say with respect to Mark? If he was an epitomizer of Matthew,

thew, as some have supposed, but of which I own I have seen no sufficient evidence, how came he to leave out the whole of the two first chapters? And if he was, as I think most probable, an original writer, how came he to give no account at all of the miraculous conception, on the supposition that he really knew of it? He could not tell that any other person of equal credit would write the history; and, therefore, as he did undertake it, he would certainly insert in it whatever he thought to be of principal importance. Consequently, he must either have never heard of the story, or have thought it of no importance. But it is of such a nature, that no person, believing it to be true, ever did, or ever could, consider it as of no importance. It was a singular and most extraordinary measure in divine providence, and could not but be considered as having some great object and end, whether we should be able to discover it or not. It was, therefore, such a fact as no historian could overlook; and it may, therefore, be presumed, that Mark

had either never heard of it, or that he did not believe it.

If we only take away the two first chapters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and change a very few words in the verses that follow them, we shall find very proper beginnings for them both, and exactly corresponding to that natural and simple one of Mark. For they will then begin with an account of the preaching of John the Baptist; as, in fact, the gospel of John likewise does, after a short introduction concerning the meaning of the word *logos*, which was, probably, much talked of at that time.

Does not this circumstance give us some suspicion that both these gospels of Matthew and Luke might originally have been published without those introductions; that the Hebrew copy of the gospel of the Ebionites, which was that of Matthew without the two first chapters (and which they maintained to be the genuine gospel of Matthew) might be all that Matthew himself ever wrote; that the copy of Luke's gospel,  
which

which Marcion had, and which began, as Epiphanius says\*, at the third chapter, was all that Luke wrote; that the *introductions* were written afterwards by other persons; and that they were first annexed to the gospels by those who admired them, and were afterwards copied, as proper parts of them. Supposing this to have been done, though it should not have been before the ancient versions were made, they would naturally be translated afterwards, and be annexed to the versions, as they had been to the originals.

The Gnostics in general seem to have selected what they thought proper of the different books of the New Testament, without regard to their authenticity. But it appears, from Tertullian, to have been the real opinion of Marcion (who was unquestionably a man of learning and ability) that Luke's original gospel contained no account of the miraculous conception. For this

\* Ταύτα πάντα περικοψας απεπηδησε, και αρχην τῶν ευαγγελιῶν εἶλαξε ταύτην· ἐν τῷ πεντεκαιδεκάτῳ εἰς Τιβερίου Καίσαρος. Hæg. 42. Opera, vol. I. p. 312.

writer, in his book against the Marcionites, says, concerning the two copies of Luke's gospel, his own and Marcion's; "I say that mine is the true copy; Marcion, that his is so. I affirm that Marcion's copy is adulterated; he, that mine is so." He adds, that his own copy was the more ancient, because Marcion himself did, for some time, receive it\*. But this he might do, till, on examination, he thought he saw sufficient reason to reject it.

How improbable soever this hypothesis may appear at first sight, no person can well doubt of something of the same nature having taken place with respect to several passages in the books of scripture, even where we have no evidence whatever from history, from manuscripts, or from ancient versions, of the passages having

\* *Funus ergo ducendus est contentiōnis, pari hinc inde nifu fluctuante. Ego meum dico verum, Marcion suum. Ego Marcionis adfirmo adulteratum, Marcion meum.— Adeo antiquius Marcion est, quod est secundum nos, ut et ipse illi Marcion aliquando crediderit. Lib. 4. cap. 4. p. 415.*

ever been what we now take it for granted they originally were. This, I think, to have been the case with respect to the word *πασχα*, John vi. 4. Bishop Pearce supposes the whole verse, and many others, to have been interpolations; and the famous verse, 1 John, v. 7. concerning the *three that bear record in heaven*, has been sufficiently proved to have come into the epistle in this unauthorized manner; and had it been done in an early period, there would have appeared no more reason to have suspected the genuineness of it, than there now does that of the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

This was indisputably the case with the gospel of the Ebionites itself; for, according to the most unsuspected evidence, it was the gospel of Matthew beginning at the third chapter; but that copy of the Ebionites gospel, which Jerom saw, had, at least, the second chapter; for he quotes a passage from it. It is very possible, therefore, that there might have been copies of the Greek gospel of Matthew, without the

two first chapters, as well as some of the Hebrew copies with them.

As the Ebionites were not wanting in their respect for Matthew, or his gospel, it is not to be supposed that they would have rejected the introduction, if they had really thought it to be *his*, even if they had not thought the history contained in it intitled to full credit. I, therefore, see no reason why they should leave it out entirely, but that they did not admit its authenticity: and, certainly, as I have said before, they for whose use that gospel was particularly written, and in whose language it was probably first published, must be allowed to have been the best judges of it.

It favours the idea of the two first chapters of Matthew's gospel not properly belonging to the rest, that they have a kind of *separate title*, viz. the *book of the generation of Jesus Christ*, to which the history of the miraculous conception, and the circumstances connected with it, are an appendage, and together with it make a kind of *preamble* to the proper history of the gospel,



gospel, which begins with the account of the baptism of John.

As to the gospel of Luke, though it should not be supposed that the copy which Marcion made use of (which wanted the two first chapters) affords any presumption that the original was without them, yet the authority of this writer is certainly less than that of an apostle; and careful as he was to collect the particulars of the history from the very beginning, he might possibly have been misinformed with respect to the early part of it, and have taken up that splendid part of his narrative too hastily. Had the work of Symmachus been extant, we should, no doubt, have known much more concerning the subject. Between the time of the publication of the gospels, and that of Justin Martyr, who is the first writer that mentions the miraculous conception, there was an interval of about eighty years; and in this space of time it is possible that additions to the gospel history of this kind (which did not affect the great and public transactions) might have been made

made and have been annexed to some of the copies, though not to them all.

Some doubt with respect to the authenticity of the introduction to Matthew's gospel arises from the genealogy being omitted in the *Harmony of Tatian*. He was a disciple of Justin Martyr, in whose writings, as I have observed, we have the first certain mention of the miraculous conception; but after the death of his master, he became the founder of a sect much resembling those of the Gnostics. His *Harmony* is not now extant; but we have the following account of it in Theodoret: "He  
 " composed a gospel called *δια τεσσαρων*, or of  
 " *the four*, having cut off the genealo-  
 " gies, and every thing that shews that  
 " our Lord was of the seed of David ac-  
 " cording to the flesh. This gospel was  
 " used not only by those of his sect, but  
 " also by those who followed the doctrine  
 " of the apostles; not perceiving the arti-  
 " fice of the composition, but using it,  
 " through simplicity, as a compendious  
 " work. I found more than two hundred  
 " of

“ of these books, much respected in the  
 “ churches; but, having collected them  
 “ all, I removed them, and introduced the  
 “ gospels of the four evangelists\*.”

All that we can certainly infer from this account of Theodoret is, that Tatian did not insert any genealogy of Christ in his Harmony, and I believe no other harmonist ever omitted so important an article in the gospel history. This is a circumstance that affects the authenticity of the *genealogy* only, directly, and the rest of the *introduction*, containing the history of the miraculous conception, indirectly, as supposed to be connected with the genealogy. As Epiphanius says, that Tatian’s gospel was sometimes called *the gospel according to the He-*

\* Ουλος κ’ το δια τεσσαρων καλεμενον συνθεθεικεν ευαγγελιον, τας τε γενεαλογιας περικοψας, κ’ τα αλλα οσα εκ σπερματος Δαβιδ κατα σαρκα γεγεννημενον τον κυριον δεικνυσιν, εχρησαυτο δε τω, ε’ μονον οι της εκεινη συμμοριας, αλλα κ’ οι τοις αποστολικοις επομενοι δογμασι, την της συνθηκης κακουργιαν εκ εγνωκοιες, αλλ’ απληγερον ως συνιομω τω βιβλιω χρησαμενοι. ευρον δε καγω πλειεις η διακοσιαις βιβλιαις τρι- αυταις εν ταις παρ ημιν εκκλησιαις τελμημενας, και πασας συναγα- γων απεδεμην, κ’ τα των τετραρων ευαγγελισων ανεισηγαγον ευαγγε- λια. Hær. Fab. lib. 1. cap. 20. Opera, vol. 4. p. 208.

*brews,*

*brews*, and he was a Syrian, it is not improbable, as Mr. Jones observes, that he might have been one of the sect of the Hebrew christians; and, therefore, it will be more probable that he omitted both the genealogy and the account of the miraculous conception, because he thought them not to be depended upon.

As Tatian had no genealogy of Christ in his gospel, he must have omitted that of Luke, as well as that of Matthew; and though that of Luke is not in the two first chapters, it is inserted in a place where it is not at all wanted, but has much the appearance of an interpolation, and therefore might have been written by the author of the *introduction*, supposing neither of them to have been written by Luke.

If we read the gospels of Matthew and Luke without the two first chapters, we shall not find the want of them; as in the subsequent history, there is no reference to them, and some things that are rather inconsistent with them. Thus, whenever either of these two writers speak of Jesus being called

called *the son of Joseph*, as well as of Mary, after he came into public life, they never make any remark upon it, or objection to it. Mary herself is represented by Luke, chap. ii. 53. as saying to Jesus, *Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing*; and from this passage, Cyril of Jerusalem says, that “some heretics endeavoured to prove that “Christ had a Father as well as a mother\*.”

But it may be replied, that having related the history of the miraculous conception so much at large before, he had no occasion to introduce any explanation afterwards; and as to Mary, she, perhaps, spoke what Luke mentions in a mixed company, and might not chuse to inform them that Jesus had no father. Still, however, I think it would not have been unnatural for both Matthew and Luke to have referred to the history of the miraculous conception on some particular occasions, as when they

\* Και ην ο πατηρ αυτης και η μητηρ αυτης θανυαζοντες . οπερ αρπαξισιν αιρεσιωτων παιδες, εξ ανδρος αυτον και γυναικος γεγεννησθαι λεγουσιν. Cat. 7. Opera, p. 106.

gave an account of his being despised for being the son of a carpenter. This, at least, might have been expected of Mark and John, who had given no history of the miraculous conception at all.

The very genealogies in the gospels of Matthew and Luke amount also to a confutation of the hypothesis adopted by those writers; and, therefore, should seem to be the work of other hands than those who wrote the gospels. And that of Matthew may well be supposed to have been written by one person, and the rest of the two chapters by another. For, of what consequence was it to give the genealogy of Joseph for that of Jesus, when, according to them, Jesus was no more descended from Joseph, than he was from Herod.

The genealogy of Luke has by some moderns been supposed to be that of Mary, because some Jewish rabbi has called her the daughter of Heli. But that rabbi was probably too late to know any thing of the matter; and he might call her so as the wife of Joseph, who was said to be the son

son of Heli ; and the genealogy in Matthew has always been supposed to be that of Joseph himself. However, the hypothesis of the ancients was quite different from that of the moderns ; for, according to them, both the genealogies are those of Joseph, that in Matthew by *natural descent*, he being the proper son of Jacob, and that in Luke *by law* ; Heli, the supposed brother of Jacob, dying without issue, and Jacob taking his wife, and having by her Joseph. Thus Eusebius, on the authority of Africanus, (whose authority is quite uncertain) says, that “ Joseph was the son of Heli by law, “ and of Jacob by nature \* ;” “ Jacob and “ Heli being brothers †.”

Jerom says, that “ Joseph’s genealogy is “ mentioned, because it was not the custom “ of the scriptures to reckon genealogies

\* Ων ο εἰeros Ιακωβ ἀδελφὸς τελευήσαντος Ἑλίου, τὴν γυναῖκα παραλάβων, ἐγέννησεν ἐξ αὐτῆς τρίτον τὸν Ἰωσήφ· κατὰ φύσιν μὲν αὐτῷ, καὶ κατὰ νόμον· διὸ καὶ γεγραπταί· Ιακωβὸς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωσήφ· κατὰ νόμον δὲ τὸν Ἑλίου υἱὸς ἦν· ἐκεῖνῳ γὰρ ὁ Ιακωβὸς ἀδελφὸς ὢν, ἀνεστήσε σπέρμα. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 7. p. 23.

† Ibid. p. 25.

“ according to women \*.” But on this principle the genealogy was a mere deception; and had the Jews known how the case stood, it would have given them no sort of satisfaction. It could not, therefore, have answered the end for which it was inserted. For, no doubt, the Jews understood the prophecies concerning the descent of the Messiah from David, to mean that he should be the son of some man who should be lineally descended from David. The insertion of any *daughter of David* would, in their opinion, have vitiated the whole genealogy. They must, therefore, have considered one of these genealogies as directly contradicting the other.

Austin has a peculiar method of solving this difficulty. He says, that “ Jesus was  
 “ the proper child of Joseph as well as of  
 “ Mary, because the holy spirit *gave* him  
 “ to them both; both of them being order-  
 “ ed by the angel to give a name to the

\* Cui primum respondebimus non esse consuetudinis scripturarum, ut mulierum in generationibus ordo texatur. In Matt. cap. 1. Opera, vol. 6. p. 1.

“ child;



“ child ; and by this,” he says, “ the authority of the parent is declared \*.”

The Jews make it a serious objection to the messiahship of Jesus, that, according to the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, he does not appear to have been descended from David, or even from Judah ; since it is only the genealogy of Joseph, his reputed father, that is given, and not his own, or his mother’s. “ Observe,” says the author of *Nizzachon vetus*, “ how they confute themselves ; “ for if, as they say, Jesus had no father, how “ can he be descended from the stock of David. But if the genealogy of Joseph be “ given to prove that he was of the house of “ David, Joseph must be his father. How “ then do you assert that he had no human “ father †”

\* Spiritus Sanctus in amborum iustitia requiescens ambobus filium dedit. Sed in eo sexu, quem parere decebat, operatus est hoc, quod etiam marito nasceretur. Itaque ambobus dicit angelus, ut puero nomen imponant ; ubi parentum declaratur auctoritas. Ser. 63. Opera, Sup. p. 246.

† Unde iis constat Jesum domo Davidica profatum fuisse ? Utique in libro errorum ipsorum nihil tale scriptum reperitur.

Rabbi Nachmanides says, if “ your Mes-  
 “ siah was descended from David, meaning  
 “ by the mother’s side, he could not be the  
 “ heir of his kingdom, because females do  
 “ not inherit while any male issue re-  
 “ mains \*.”

“ Both these genealogies,” says Rabbi  
 Isaac, in his *Munimen fidei*, “ belong to Jo-  
 “ seph only, and not to Jesus ; for they say  
 “ that Joseph had no commerce with Mary

ritur. Nam, Matthæus et Lucas qui genealogias texunt,  
 Josephi tantum, mariti Mariæ, genealogiam texunt, quam  
 ipsi ab Abrahamo deducunt, hoc modo, Abraham genuit  
 Isaacum, Isaacus genuit Jacobum, et reliqua, donec fini-  
 unt: Eleasar genuit Mattanem, Mattan genuit Jacobum,  
 Jacobus genuit Josephum, sponsum Mariæ. At Mariæ  
 genealogia non reperitur, in ullo ipsorum libro. Nunc  
 autem disce, et audi, quomodo propria eorundem dicta ip-  
 sos mendacii reos faciant. Quod si enim Jesus sine patre  
 genitus est, ceu dicitant, ex eo liquido inferimus non fuisse  
 illum oriundum ex prosapia Davidis. Quod si vero ideo  
 per Josephum Jesu genealogia conditur, ut appareat hunc  
 ex domo Davidica descendere, relinquatur, Josephum illius  
 patrem fuisse: quomodo igitur asseritis, ipsum citra viri  
 concubitum genitum esse? Nizzachon Vetus, p. 72, 73.

\* Quod si maxime vester Messias ex progenie Davidis  
 prodiiisset, non tamen hæres regni illius esse posset, non  
 enim filiæ hæreditatem adeunt, cum proles mascula est su-  
 perstes. P. 53.

“ his

“ his mother ; and as to that of Mary, it is  
 “ altogether unknown. Those, therefore,  
 “ who framed these genealogies may be com-  
 “ pared to persons who plunge into a deep  
 “ sea, and bring up nothing but shells \*.”

The two histories of the miraculous conception are themselves remarkably different from each other ; and though it may be possible to contrive a scheme, by which they may be reconciled, yet there are such capital circumstances in each of the accounts omitted by the other, as it can hardly be supposed would have been omitted, if the writers had been acquainted with them. Would Luke, for instance, whose account is so very circumstantial in other respects, have omitted all the three remark-

\* Cæterum, ambæ hæ ineptissimæ genealogiæ tantum ad Josephum, neutiquam vero ad Jesum attinent. Cum autem ipsi dicant, nunquam tota vita sua neque ante partum Jesu, neque deinde a Josepho Mariam fuisse cognitam. Secundum hoc assertum, Josephi genealogia, Jesu nihil quicquam prodest, imprimis cum genealogia Mariæ prorsus ipsos lateat. Quæ, quoniam ita se habent, frustra se occuparunt conditores harum genealogiarum, atque in profunda pelagi se demittentes, nil nisi testam retulere manibus. P. 390.

able stories of the visit of the wise men of the east, the massacre of the children, and the journey into Egypt? Or would Matthew, who has mentioned these things, have omitted all the particulars of the speeches of the angels, the story of the shepherds, and the prophecies of Simeon and Anna; to say nothing of the whole history of the birth of John the Baptist.

The narrative of Luke is so far from coinciding with that of Matthew, that it is hardly possible to find in it any room for the journey into Egypt. According to Luke, Jesus was presented at Jerusalem as soon as the days of Mary's purification were expired, and then returned directly to Nazareth, without going any more to Bethlehem; where, indeed, it does not appear that Joseph had any habitation, or friends; so that the wise men of Matthew, who are supposed to have found the child at Bethlehem, must have arrived in the country long after Mary had left that place. On the contrary, Matthew must have supposed that Jesus was kept at Bethlehem near two  
years

years after his birth, and was carried from thence into Egypt.

Indeed, one cannot help inferring from the account of Matthew, that Joseph and Mary were properly of Bethlehem, that they did not settle in Nazareth till after their return from Egypt, and that they then made choice of this place, as being out of the territory of Archelaus, the son of Herod. Had Matthew supposed Jesus to have been at Nazareth, in Galilee, at the time of his persecution by Herod, he would hardly have thought of sending him to Egypt as a place of safety, when, in order to come thither, he must have passed through the whole extent of Herod's dominions; but would rather have sent him to Tyre, or some part of Syria, bordering upon Galilee. On the whole, I cannot help concluding that, had the compilers of these two very different accounts, been both of them well informed concerning the subject, it would have been much more easy to harmonize them than it is at present. They are now so wholly different from each other, that

their histories might have been those of different persons.

If we examine each of the accounts separately, passing over the striking incoherence between them, a rational christian must see many things in them that he will find some difficulty in reconciling to himself. They have both, as I cannot help thinking, too much the air of *fable*, and the application of scripture in the account ascribed to Matthew is very far from being such as can recommend it. Jesus going into Egypt, and returning from it, is made to be the fulfilment of a prophecy of Hosea, which is no prophecy at all, but simply the mention of God having called his son, the Israelites, as a nation, out of that country. And Jesus is to settle at Nazareth, because the Messiah was to be a Nazarene; whereas all that can be imagined to give any countenance to this, in the Old Testament is, that he was to be despised and rejected of men; and Nazareth was a despicable place. If the writer had any other idea, it must have been more far-fetched, and improbable, than this. I say nothing

here of the prophecy of Isaiah, concerning a *virgin bearing a son*, as an account will be given of it hereafter.

As to the story of Luke, to say nothing of the long and improbable speeches it contains, and which could never have been transmitted with exactness, and the vision of angels to the shepherds (which does not appear to have been of any use) it implies such an early declaration of Jesus being the Messiah, as is incompatible with the whole plan of the gospel history. Jesus carefully concealed his being the Messiah from the Jews in general; and it was only at a late period in his history that he revealed it to the apostles; and yet, in this introduction to the gospel of Luke, it is supposed to have been known with certainty to the parents of John, to those of Jesus himself, to the shepherds, and to the prophets Simeon and Anna, none of whom are said to have made any secret of it, and the last is said (chap. ii. 28.) *to have spoken of him to all who looked for redemption in Israel.* Had this been the case, the eyes of all the country

try must have been fixed on Jesus as the promised Messiah, and all attempts to conceal it, after his public appearance, would have come too late.

Yet, notwithstanding all this preparation, it does not appear that Jesus was at all known, or in the least *suspected* to be the Messiah, till after his appearance in the character of a public teacher, and his working of miracles; and even then his own *brethren* did not immediately believe on him.

There are, indeed, several inconsistencies in the account of Luke, from which it may be gathered, that what could not but be known to every body, was, after all, a secret to Joseph and Mary themselves. After the history of the shepherds, we are told, cap. ii. 19. *that Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart*; which implies, that she was at a loss what to think of them. After the declaration of Simeon, we read, ver. 33. *that Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him*; and when Jesus was twelve years old, and  
told



told them that he must be about his father's business, or at his father's house (chap. ii. 50.) *they understood not the saying that he spake unto them, and Mary kept all these sayings in her heart.* Moreover, after all this preparation to announce Jesus, and no other person, as the Messiah, yet, when John made his appearance the *people* (Luke iii. 15.) *were in expectation; and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were Christ or not.* These are marks of the story being inconsistent and ill-digested.

S E C-

## SECTION VI.

*Considerations relating to the Roman Census, mentioned by Luke.*

THE account of the census taken by order of Augustus at the supposed time of the birth of Christ, its being taken by Cyrenius, governor of Syria, and the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem on that occasion, are particularly liable to exception, and therefore I shall treat of them in a separate section.

Dr. Lardner, with great labour and ingenuity (Credibility, vol. 2. p. 718.) has shewn that by transposing the words, the phrase *Αὕτη ἡ ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρενίου*, may be rendered, *This was the first assessment of Cyrenius, governor of Syria*; and had *ἡγεμονός* been used, instead of *ἡγεμονεύοντος*, this might easily have been admitted. But certainly the natural interpretation of the phrase, as the words now stand,

stand, implies that this assessment was taken at the time that Cyrenius was actually governor of Syria, which did not take place till five years after the death of Herod. But, independent of this difficulty, which has given commentators and critics a great deal of trouble, there are other particulars in this account that are extremely improbable.

As Judea was not at that time a province of the Roman empire, but had a king of its own, though in alliance with Rome, and in a state of dependence upon it, the Roman census could not regularly extend to that country. What the Romans had the *power* of commanding is not the question. They had power, no doubt, to deprive Herod of his kingdom, and to send a governor of their own in his place; in consequence of which the country might have become subject to the Roman law, and the people liable to the census. But while Herod was king, Judea was governed by Jewish laws, and subject to no taxes but such as were imposed and levied by Jews.

Dr.

Dr. Lardner has, indeed, shewn that Herod may be said to have been a *tributary prince*, and that the emperor might possibly have an officer of his own residing in the country, to take care of his revenues from it. But he has himself made it sufficiently evident, that a census was the most odious method of imposing a tax, and therefore that the Romans never had recourse to it, even in the proper provinces of the empire, except in very particular circumstances. He thinks, indeed (p. 618.) that he has found one instance of it, in the case of Cilicia Aspera; but this was a very inconsiderable country, and in a later period. I would also observe that, though Herod might be in disgrace with Augustus, and the emperor might wish to humble him, it is not probable that the people (while the whole country was united under one government, and in a very flourishing state) would have borne such an unprecedented insult, without such murmurings as we should have heard of, especially from Josephus. This writer, in his account of the census that  
was

was taken in Judea on its being made a proper Roman province, shews that the minds of the Jews were at that time exceedingly disposed to revolt at the measure; and it was taken in no more than one part of the country over which Herod had been king. It did not extend to the dominions of Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, those of Philip, or those of Lyfanius.

Dr. Lardner is of opinion (p. 618.) that Josephus has mentioned this census in the time of Herod the Great, in saying "that the people of Judea took an oath to be faithful to Cæsar, and the interests of the king." But he has not proved that this expression is equivalent to the *taking of a census*; and the most natural interpretation of it is, that it was an oath of friendship and alliance. Besides, the measure of taking a Roman census in a foreign country, of such magnitude as Judea then was, was certainly entitled to a more particular narrative, in such a history as that of Josephus. We might at least have expected some account of this first, and greater census, in his history of the  
second

second and lesser ; and especially some reasons why the latter gave so great an alarm, and excited such dangerous tumults, when the former had excited none at all.

It is true that Justin Martyr, and others of the Fathers, do mention this census under Herod the Great, as what the Romans would find an account of in their public registers. But some of them likewise appeal to an account of Christ transmitted by Pilate to the emperor Tiberius. The probability is, that these writers, taking it for granted that this account of the census in the gospel of Luke was a true one, did not scruple to appeal to it, as what they did not doubt would be found to be so. But we have no account of the fact being verified by an examination of records.

Admitting this unprecedented Roman census, in a country that was no province of the Roman empire, it is certainly highly improbable that Joseph, who lived at Nazareth, situated three days journey from Bethlehem, should be obliged to go thither on the account of it. A census was an  
account

account of a man's family and possessions, given in upon oath, with a scrutiny, if necessary; and certainly it was most convenient for every man to do this in the place where he resided, and where his account might be verified, or checked, by that of his neighbours and acquaintance.

Neither the Romans nor the Jews had any interest in such a manœuvre as this historian supposes to have taken place. For the trouble of every man going to the place where his remote ancestors had lived must have been infinite; to say nothing of the uncertainty of determining what place to go to, which must have been very great. For, in this case of Joseph, though David had lived at Bethlehem, his son Solomon had not. That the people of Nazareth should go to Bethlehem, and the inhabitants of Bethlehem perhaps to Nazareth, to do nothing but what might have been done by both with much more ease and advantage at their own homes, is therefore not to be supposed.

Dr. Lardner imagines (p. 605.) that Joseph might have had some estate at Bethlehem; but his poverty, his not residing at the place, and especially his not being able to provide better accommodations for his wife, at the time of her delivery, than the stable of an inn there, make this highly improbable. Besides this, is it to be supposed that a man who had estates in different parts of a country, should be obliged to attend at them all, in order to give in an account of them, which this conjecture implies? Can this be shewn to have been done by the Romans themselves?

But, admitting that Joseph, as the proprietor of an estate at Bethlehem, should have been obliged to take a journey of three days to attend the census there, what obligation could there have been upon Mary, a woman big with child, and so near the time of her delivery, to take such a journey? Women, in all circumstances, were excused from attending the three great religious festivals at Jerusalem, though many



of them went thither from choice. But no tyranny can be supposed to have been so extreme as to compel poor women, in such critical circumstances, to expose themselves to such hazard, merely to gratify the caprice of a governor. Besides, as this was the *first* census that was taken in the country, and was sure to be of itself highly unpopular, measures would, no doubt, be taken to make it as little burthensome as possible. Dr Lardner says (p.608.) that both Joseph and Mary might go to Bethlehem for reasons that are unknown to us. But it must have been a very urgent reason indeed, that could carry a woman so near her time of delivery to a place at the distance of three days journey, when the business to be done there could not require the residence of a single day.

It will be said that this was so ordered by divine providence, that Jesus might be a native of Bethlehem. But God, who orders all things, generally makes use of natural means, and therefore, we are not to suppose that Mary was brought to Bethle-

hem by means of a census, so improbably imposed, and carried into execution, as this must have been, when the same end might have been accomplished in a much more natural way.

It may be said that Mary's being delivered in so crowded a place as Bethlehem must have been on that occasion, would be the means of making the birth of Jesus more noticed, especially by the help of the vision of angels to the shepherds in that neighbourhood, and the visit of the wise men from the East. But besides the many improbabilities attending each of these stories (or indeed that of one place being more crowded than another, in consequence of all the people in the country going to be enrolled in their own cities) a much greater end, which we certainly know to have been a measure of divine providence, and a great object of the policy, as we may say, of Jesus when he came into public life, was sure to be defeated by it; and this was his Messiahship not being known till his miraculous works should declare it.

A child whose miraculous birth was so circumstanced as that of Jesus is said to have been, would never have been kept out of public view afterwards. The nation would have undertaken the guardianship of their young Messiah; and from that time the reign of Herod, who was universally hated, would, in all probability, have been at an end. A regency might have been appointed, but he would not have been included in it.

It may be said, that the power or policy of Herod might have prevented this. But power is always founded upon opinion; and if it be considered what expectations the Jews had from their *Messiah*, and with what eagerness they never failed to crowd to the standard of every man who pretended to that character, we cannot doubt but that the people (Herod's own guards, if they were Jews, included) would, to a man, have worshipped so great a rising sun. Indeed, no government could have been so well established in that country, as not to have been in great danger of being overturned in such circumstances.

As there is no evidence of Jesus having been born at Bethlehem, besides what is derived from the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke, those who do not admit their authority must conclude that he was born at Nazareth. Indeed his being so generally called *Jesus of Nazareth*, is a proof that, in the opinion of those who gave him that appellation, he was a native of that place. Had his disciples, in particular, really believed that he was born at Bethlehem, the native place of David, its being so much more reputable a place than Nazareth, and its bearing such a relation to David, whose descendant the Messiah was supposed to be, would, no doubt, have determined them to denominate him from thence. It would have been taking a natural and fair method of removing one great odium under which their master lay.

I would farther observe that, it may perhaps be inferred from John ii. 12. that Jesus's mother and the whole family removed from Nazareth to Capernaum, after his first miracle of changing water into wine.

wine. If, therefore Nazareth was not the place of his nativity, there was no reason why the disciples of Jesus should not have denominated him from Capernaum, rather than from Nazareth. According to the common hypothesis, he had only *resided* at either of the two places; and though he had not lived so long at Capernaum, yet it was the *last* residence that he had, and that from which he came forth into public life; and it was by much the more reputable place of the two. I, therefore, see no reason for Christ being stiled *Jesus of Nazareth*, by himself and his disciples, but that it was considered as the place of his nativity.

It appears from Athanasius to have been the opinion of Paulus Samosatensis, and therefore probably, that of the generality of the unitarians of the early ages, that Christ was born at Nazareth; which, as I have observed, is inconsistent with their paying any regard to the introductions of either Matthew or Luke's gospel, or indeed with their belief of the miraculous conception,

for which no authority can be pleaded besides that of those introductions, though it is asserted, that they believed that doctrine. “Say then,” says Athanasius, “how do you say that God was born at Nazareth, teaching that his deity began with his birth, according to Paulus Samosatensis\*.” And again, “Say then, how do you suppose that God was born at Nazareth; since all the heretics are used to say this, as Paul of Samosata, who confesses that God was born of a virgin, that he first appeared at Nazareth, and that his being commenced there †.”

Matthew, indeed, supposes that, according to a prophecy of Micah (chap. v. 2.) the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem. But this is no necessary inference from the

\* Επιπαλε τοιουνν, πως λεγεις θεου εν Ναζαρεϊ γεγενησθαι, της θεο-  
τητος ως αρχην γενεσεως απαγγελουνης καλα Παυλον τον Σαμοσατα.  
De Adventu Christi, Opera, vol. I. p. 637.

† Επιπαλε τοιουνν, πως θεου εν Ναζαρεϊ γεγενησθαι υπειληφαλε  
επειδη και παντες αιρετικοι τειλο λεγειν ειωθασιν, ως Παυλος ο Σαμοσα-  
ταεις θεου εκ παρθενεσ ομολογει θεου εκ Ναζαρεϊ σφδενια, και ενευθεν  
της υπαρξεως την αρχην εσχηκοια. Ibid.

the passage. The meaning of it seems to be, that Bethlehem, though a town of no great consideration on other accounts, was honoured by giving birth to David, whose posterity would make so great a figure in the Jewish history, especially by giving to the nation their future great deliverer.

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## SECTION VII.

*Supposed Allusions to the Miraculous Conception in the Scriptures.*

WHEN once it is taken for granted that any religious tenet is true, it is remarkable how readily the proof of it is found in the scriptures. Examples of this must have occurred to every person of reflection; and as they are not without their use, in teaching us caution, I shall shew in what manner the Fathers proved the doctrine of the miraculous conception from the old Testament; where it is, however, certain that no Jew ever learned to expect such a thing. When *arguments* fail, *imagination* has often been able to discover *a type*, and this has often given as much satisfaction as any reason whatever. I shall take the passages in which this doctrine has been alluded to, nearly in their order.

Irenæus



Irenæus says, that “Moses’s rod, being  
 “incarnate in a serpent, was a type of  
 “Christ being produced by the aid of the  
 “Spirit only, and that he was not the son  
 “of Joseph\*.”

The passage in the prophecy of Jacob, concerning Judah, Gen. lxi. 9. which we render *from the prey, my son, thou art gone up*, is in the Seventy, *ἐκ βλαστῆ* *from the bud*. This Epiphanius applies to Christ, and says that it is a reference to the miraculous conception, because it is not *ἐκ σπέρματος*, *from the seed* †.

“Christ,” says Jerom, “is called both a  
 “worm and a man; a worm, as the pro-  
 “phet says, Fear not thou worm Jacob;

\* Propter hoc autem et Moyses ostendens typum, projecit virgam in terram, ut ea incarnata omnem Ægyptiorum prævaricationem, quæ infurgebat adversus dei dispositionem, argueret et absorberet: et ut ipsi Ægyptii testificarentur, quoniam digitus est dei, qui salutem operatur populo, et non Joseph filius. Lib. 3. c. 29. p. 258.

\* Ἡ δὲ τῆς χριστοῦ γεννησις κατὰ φύσιν μὲν ἐκ γυναικὸς παρθεναῶς Μαρίας τὴν ἐνανθρωπήσειν ἐσχίκε, παρὰ φύσιν δὲ εἰμῆθη ἀπὸ τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα ἀκολοθίας· ὡς καὶ Ἰακώβ περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγει, ἐκ βλαστῆ υἱὲ μὲ ἀνεβῆς, καὶ ἔκ εἶπεν ἐκ σπέρματος ἀνεβῆς. Hær. 30. Opera, vol. I. p. 156.

“ and

“ and a man, because he is born of Mary.  
 “ His nativity resembles a worm that is  
 “ bred in wood, which has no father, but  
 “ only a mother\*.” Jerom is not the only  
 writer in whom I have found this observa-  
 tion. Eusebius gives three reasons why  
 the Messiah is called a *worm*, and not a man,  
 in his Commentary on Ps. xxi. 6. the se-  
 cond of which is, that he was not produced  
 like men, from the conjunction of male  
 and female †. A ray of good sense, how-  
 ever, appears in Theodoret, on this subject,  
 as well as on many others. He says, that  
 “ by a *worm and no man*, nothing was

† Christus et vermis dicitur, et homo. Vermis, ut ait  
 propheta : Noli timere vermis Jacob. Et homo, quia ex  
 Maria natus assimilatur sua nativitas vermi, quia vermis  
 qui in ligno nascitur, non habet patrem nisi matrem. Et  
 Christus ex Maria est natus absque coitu viri. In Ps. xxi.  
 Opera, vol. 7. p. 24.

† Και αλλως δ' αν ειποις σκολημα αυτον ωνομασθαι αι εκ ανδρα-  
 πον, δια το μη ομοιως ανθρωποις, εκ συνουσιας αρρενος και θηλειας την  
 της σαρκος γενεσιν εσχημεναι.— Παρισησιν οτι ε καλα φυσιν, εδε ομοιως  
 τοις λοιποις απασιν ανθρωποις, εδε τοις λοιποις ζωις παραπλησιως,  
 τοις εξ αρρενος και θηλειας συτισαμενοις και τα της αυτης γενεσεως  
 συνελελειθο. ειχεν δε τι πλεωω παρα την κοινην φυσιν. Montfau-  
 con's Collectio, vol. 1. p. 81.

“ meant

“meant but the meanness of David.” In Pf. xxi. Opera, vol. 1. p. 477.

*Thou bidest me in my mother's womb.* Pf. cxxxix. 13. is, by Eusebius, applied to Christ, “whose miraculous conception was “hid from the world\*.”

“The bridegroom proceeding from his “chamber,” says Jerom, “means from the “virgin's womb †.”

David says, Pf. cxxxix. 16. *In thy book all my members were written.* This book, says Epiphanius, is the virgin's womb ‡.

In the song of Solomon, mention is made of *a garden that was closed*, chap. iv. 12, This many of the Fathers say must mean the virgin's womb, particularly Ambrose ||.

But the capital argument in proof of the miraculous conception from the Old

\* Επεῑ κᾱτα την̄ π̄ρω̄την̄ συλληψιν̄ οῡ πᾱλιν̄ το̄ κᾱτᾱ γαστρο̄ς̄ επῑσκιασας̄, ως̄ αν̄ λᾱθω̄ τις̄ αρχον̄τας̄ τ̄ς̄ αῑωνος̄ τ̄ς̄ εῑς̄ η̄ εξ̄ αγ̄ις̄ π̄νευμᾱτος̄ της̄ αγ̄ιας̄ πᾱρθεν̄ς̄ συλληψ̄ις̄. Demonstratio, lib. 20. p. 499.

† Et quomodo tanquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo, id est, virginali utero. In Marc. cap. 1. Opera, vol. 6. p. 69.

‡ Hær. 30. Opera, vol. 1. p. 156.

|| Hortus clausus est virgo. De Institut. Virginis, cap. 9. Opera, vol. 4. p. 424.

Testament, is drawn from *Is. vii. 14.* in which it is said, *a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, &c.* but if the prophecy be more narrowly inspected, it will be found to teach no such doctrine. The country of Judah having been threatened with an invasion from the kings of Israel and Syria, *Isaiah* assures *Ahaz*, that in a short time he should be delivered from all apprehension of danger from that quarter, even before a child then conceived, or soon to be conceived, should be of age, to distinguish good from evil. *Behold a virgin conceiveth and beareth a son, and she shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, when he shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good. For before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and to chuse the good, the land shall become desolate by whose two kings thou art distressed.* Bp. Lowth's Translation.

It is evident, from the circumstances of the history, that the prophecy related to an event near at hand, and that it had its complete accomplishment when the country was delivered from the two kings who then threatened

threatened it with an invasion ; and it is not pretended that any woman at that time had a child without a man. It is the quotation of this prophecy, and the application of it to the miraculous conception of Christ, in the introduction to the gospel of Matthew, ch. i. 22. that has made christian divines imagine that they were under a necessity of defending the common interpretation. But the difficulty of defending it makes a very strong objection to the authenticity of that introduction.

All the orthodox Fathers maintained, that the word in the Hebrew עלמה signifies a proper virgin, and among the rest Origen contends for this. In Celsus. lib. 1. p. 27. But the Jews, and Symmachus the Ebionite, who were certainly better judges than either the Greek or Latin Fathers, say, that it often signifies a *young woman only*. Irenæus says, that “ Theodotion of Ephesus, and “ Aquila of Pontus, both Jewish profelites, “ translate it *a young woman shall bear a “ child* : and that the Ebionites followed “ them,

“ them, believing Jesus to be the son of  
“ Joseph \*.”

Eusebius has something curious in his explanation of this prophecy. He thought that the child by the prophets was the same with the child Immanuel; but thinking the Holy Spirit to be the speaker in the delivery of the prophecy, he explains his going in to the prophetes, by the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the virgin †.

Chrysofom says, that when Isaiiah speaks of Christ as a root out of a dry ground,

\* Αλλ' ἔχ' ὡς ἐμοὶ φασι τῶν νῦν μεθερμηνεύειν τοῦ μωϋσέως τὴν γραφήν. Ἰδοὺ ἡ νεανὶς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐξεί, καὶ τεξείλαι υἱόν, ὡς Θεοδόσιον ἠρμηνεύσεν ὁ Ἐφεσῖος, καὶ Ἀκυλᾶς ὁ Ποιλικός, ἀμφότεροι Ἰσραῖοι προσηγῆται; οἷς καὶ λαοκολαθησαίτες οἱ Ἐθιοπῖται, ἐξ Ἰωσήφ αὐτὸν γεγενῆσθαι φασκῶσι.  
Lib. 3. cap. 24. p. 253.

† Ἐπειπερ εἰρήναι ἀνώτερον ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ληψείαι, καὶ τεξείλαι υἱόν, ἀναίκατως ἐπὶ τῆ παρθένης, πῶς ἀν γενοίτο τέλος διασαφείαι αὐτός ὁ κύριος, λεγῶν, καὶ προσηγῆται πρὸς τὴν προφήτιν· ἀνὴρ τε, ἐγὼ αὐτός προσελευσόμεθα τῆ προφήτιδι· προφήτιν γὰρ οὐνομαζει τὴν τὸν Ἐμμανουὴλ τεξόμενην. διὰ τὸ πνευματικός ἀγιᾶ μέλασχευ κατὰ τὸν φησαίνα πρὸς αὐτήν· πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπέλε· σείλαι ἐπὶ σε, καὶ δύναμις υψίστη ἐπιπλασσει σοι. In Is. 8. 3. Montfaucon's collectio, vol. 2. p. 384.

dry

the *dry ground* means the virgin's womb \*. But this is not the only passage in Isaiah that has been thought to refer to the miraculous conception. Epiphanius imagined, that when an order was given to the prophet, ch. viii. 1. to take *a great roll*, as we render it, and which he supposed to be a sheet of *blank paper*, on which nothing was written, it was a type of the virgin's womb †.

In Is. xxix. 11. mention is made of a *sealed book*, given to a man who was acquainted with letters, who says, *I cannot read it, for it is sealed.* “ This sealed book,” says Gregentius, “ is the virgin Mary, and “ the man who was acquainted with letters “ is Joseph, who had been married, and had “ children by a former wife ‡.”

\* Και εἰερῶ παλιν εἶδομεν αὐλον ὡς παιδίον ὡς ρίζαν ἐν γῆ διψῶσα. γῆν δὲ διψῶσαν τὴν μήτραν λέγει τὴν παρθένην, διὰ τὸ μὴ δεξασθᾶ σπέρμα ἀνδρῶν, μὴδὲ συνουσίας ἀπολαύσαι, ἀλλὰ χωρὶς γαμῶν αὐλον τεκεῖν. In Matt. xxvi. 39. vol. 5. p. 132.

† Hæc. 30. Opera. vol. 1. p. 156.

‡ Και ὁ ἅγιος. Μὴ βολοικίζε· ἔ γὰρ ἐκ σπερματός Ιωσήφ, ὡς σὺ νομίζεις, ἀλλ' ἐκ πνευμοῦ ἁγίου γεγενησῆαι. λελάσκει γὰρ περὶ αὐτῆς ὁ προφήτης, καὶ υποδείκνυται ὅτι ἐκ ἐφθάρη παρὰ τὸν Ιωσήφ τὴν παρθένην, ταῦτα φησὶ· δοθητέα τὸ ἐσφραγισμένον βιβλίον ἀνδρὶ εἰδοῖ γραμματεῖ—Τὸ βιβλίον ἐσφραγισμένον ἀλλ' ἢ ἡ παρθένη, ἢ θεότοκος; τίς ὁ ἀπὸ;

Isaiah, in a remarkable prophecy concerning Christ, ch. liii. 8. says, *Who shall declare his generation.* The true meaning of this passage it is not easy to understand, and the best critics are by no means agreed about it. But Justin Martyr thought that it signified that “Christ should not be of the seed of man \*.”

There is one more passage in Isaiah, which Epiphanius imagined to refer to the miraculous birth of Christ, and that is chap. lxvi. 7. *Before she travelled she brought forth; before her pains came, she was delivered of a man child †.* For all the ancients believed that Mary was delivered without pain, the delivery itself having been properly miraculous. They always compared it to Christ’s coming into a room, after his resurrection, when the door was shut ‡.

αυτη; Ιωσηφ ο τεκλιον . τι δε ολε κη γραμμαλι ειδοι; τει εσι γαμω εν αλλη γυναικι προσωμιλησαυλι εφ η γυναικι κη τεκνα εκεκηλο. Dialogus. P. 45.

\* Καγω παλιν. υμων εν ταυτα αληθως συνηθειμενων, και τε λογε λεγοντι την γενεαν αυτε τις διηγησειαι, εκ ηδη και νοειν οφειλε οκ εκ εσι γενεσ ανθρωπησ σπερμα; Dial. p. 284.

† Hær. 30. Opera, vol. 1. p. 144.

‡ See Joannis Geometræ Hymnum in Virgine Deiparam Bib. Pat. vol. 8. p. 437.

This



This whimsical notion of Christ coming out of the virgin without any change in her, was derived from the Gnostics, and, like several other opinions of theirs, was afterwards adopted by the catholics. Beau-fobre says, it was borrowed from the Protevangelion, quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus \*. Austin, in answer to a Manichean, who thought it degrading to Christ to pass through a woman at all, compares this passage to a ray of light through glass †. He calls Mary “ a virgin before the birth, “ in the birth, and after the birth ‡.” Theodoret says, *την παρθενικην ζωνην & τη συλληψει λυσας, & τη γεννησει διαρρηξας.* Opera, vol. 5. p. 20. “ A “ virgin,” says Petrus Chryfologus, “ con- “ ceives, a virgin brings forth, and re- “ mains a virgin § ;” and Proclus says, the

\* Histoire de Manicheisme, vol. 1. p. 362.

† Ibid. vol. 2. p. 525.

‡ Nisi quia Maria virgo ante partum, virgo in partu, virgo post partum. Sermon. 14. Opera, vol. 10. p. 598.

§ Virgo concipit, virgo parturit, virgo permanet. Pe- tri Chryfologi, Ser. 117. p. 352.

“babe left the womb, leaving the gates un-  
 “hurt\*.” Lastly, John the Geometrician,  
 in his poem on the Virgin Mary, says, that  
 she was delivered without pain †.

It was so much taken for granted, that  
 Mary remained a proper virgin after the  
 birth of Jesus, that it was used as an argu-  
 ment against Photinus, by Theodotus, bis-  
 hop of Ancyra, at the council of Ephesus.  
 A mere man, he said, was never born in  
 that way ‡.

Of this Ambrose interpretes what Eze-  
 kel says, ch. xliv. 2. of a gate in the  
 temple, which he saw in vision, concern-  
 ing which it is said, *It shall be shut, because*

\* Εξήλθε γὰρ τὸ βρέφους, καὶ ἀκεραὶα τῆς κοιλίας τῆς γαστροῦ ἀπελίπεν. Hom. in Nativitatem Domini, p. 150.

† Παρθενὴ πᾶν καμάων μήτηρ ἀνευ ὀδύνης. Bib. Pat. vol. 8. Ed. Paris, p. 437.

‡ Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ Φωτεινὸς ψιλον ἀνδρῶπων λέγει τὸν γεγεννημένον, μὴ λέγων θεὸν εἶναι τοκόν, καὶ τὸν ἐκ μήτρας προελθόντα, ἀνδρῶπων ὑπόδειται διηρημένον θεὸν· λέγεται μοι νυν, πῶς φυσίς ἀνδρῶπινη διὰ μήτρας παρθε- νικῆς τιλλομένη, τὴν παρθεναίαν τῆς μήτρας ἐφυλάξεν ἀφθάρτων; ἔδοτος γὰρ ἀνδρῶπις μήτης, παρθενὴ μίμνησκεν. Binnii Concilia, vol. 1. pt. 2. p. 390.

*the Lord God of Israel has entered in by it\*.*

He also proves it from the prophecy concerning Immanuel, in Isaiah, ch. vii. saying that, according to that prophecy, Mary was to *bring forth*, as well as to *conceive*, while she was a virgin †.

Irenæus says, that “ it was with a view  
“ to the virgin’s conception, that Daniel  
“ spake of Christ as a stone cut out of  
“ the mountain without hands, or the  
“ hands of man ; not Joseph, but Mary  
“ only, being concerned in it ‡.” The

\* Et infra dicit propheta vidisse se in monte alto nimis ædificationem civitatis, cujus portæ plurimæ significantur, una tamen clausa describitur, de qua sic ait. Porta igitur Maria, per quam Christus intravit in hunc mundum, quando virginali fusus est partu, et genitalia virginitatis claustra non solvit. De Institutione Virginis, c. 7. Opera, vol. 4. p. 423.

† Ecce virgo in utero accipiet, et pariet filium. Non enim concepturam tantummodo virginem, sed et parituram, virginem dixit. Epist. lib. 1. 7. Opera, vol. 4. p. 186.

‡ Propter hoc autem et Daniel prævidens ejus adventum, lapidem sine manibus abscissum advenisse in hunc mundum. Non operante in eum Joseph, sed sola Maria co-operante dispositioni. Lib. 3. cap. 28. p. 258.

same observation is made by Cosmas Indicopleustes\*.

With respect to the New Testament, the only argument for the miraculous conception brought from it is, the history of it by Matthew and Luke? except that Paul's saying, that Christ came *made of a woman*, was interpreted by Cyril of Jerusalem, of Christ "not coming by man, but by woman" "only †." This I have explained before.

\* Και εὐλαβῶτα γὰρ ἀνευ χειρῶν εἶπεν ἰνα εἴπῃ, ἀνευ σπερμᾶτος ἀνδρός. Lib. 2. de Mundo, Montfaucon's Collectio, vol. 2. p. 145.

† Εξαιπεφειλε γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, φησὶν ὁ Παῦλος, ἔγενετο μὲν ἐξ ἀνδρός καὶ γυναικός, ἀλλὰ γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικὸς μόνον, τὸ εἶναι ἐκ παρθενίας. Cat. 12. Opera, p. 165.

S E C T I O N VIII.

*Objections to the Miraculous Conception by the ancient Unbelievers, and the Answers of the Christian Fathers to them.*

**I**T may well be imagined, that such a history as that of the miraculous conception would not escape the ridicule of unbelievers. It is a miracle of such a nature, as was not likely to gain credit without very circumstantial evidence, which is not pretended to in the case; and, therefore, it was less in the power of christians to make out a defence of it. The doctrine of the *resurrection* was also exposed to ridicule; but then the christian had to reply, that the evidence of a thing of so extraordinary a nature was proportionably full and clear. Our Saviour's own death and resurrection were so circumstanced with respect to the notoriety of the fact in the one

L 4

case,

case, and the number and choice of witnesses in the other, that the history may defy all ridicule, and the importance of the *object* made all the precautions proper.

On the other hand, the pretended circumstances of the birth of Christ, though no less extraordinary, and naturally as incredible as those of his resurrection, are totally destitute of all similar evidence; not one person who is said to have been a witness of the fact, having borne his testimony to it. A miraculous birth is, indeed, a fact of such a kind, as must be peculiarly difficult to prove; and on this account it was a kind of miracle that was not likely to be chosen by infinite wisdom.

We hear of no objection being made to the miraculous conception in the book of Acts, which, as I have observed, is almost a proof that the pretension to it had not been made in the age of the apostles; for we find that, as soon as it was believed by any christians, it was objected to by unbelievers, and that christianity suffered not a little on this account, both from Jews and heathens.

Trypho,

Trypho, in Justin Martyr's dialogue, was much offended at this doctrine, and thought it would be extremely unacceptable to his countrymen. Had the dialogue been written by a Jew, and not by a christian, the censure would probably have been expressed in still stronger terms.

According to Origen, Celsus introduced a Jew "discoursing with Jesus, and reproaching him on many accounts, but especially as pretending to be born of a virgin\*." He makes the Jew say that "the mother of Jesus was dismissed by her husband, the carpenter, on account of adultery, and being with child by a soldier, called Panthera †;" an idle story, which is told at full length in a Jewish tract, entitled *Toldos Jeshu*.

Accounts of the objections of the Jews to the miraculous conception are without end. "Tell the Jew," says Isidore Pelusiota, "who disputes about the divine in-

\* Μέγα ταύτα προσωποποιεί Ισραηλινόν αυτώ διαλεγόμενον τῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι ἐλείχονίᾳ αὐτὸν περὶ πολλῶν μὲν, ὡς οἶείαι· πρῶτον δὲ, ὡς πλασσομένης αὐτῆς τὴν ἐκ παρθένου γενέσιν. Con. Celsum. lib. 1. p. 22.

† Ibid. lib. 1. p. 25.

“carnation, and says it is impossible in  
 “human nature to bring forth without  
 “marriage, &c \*.” “The Greeks and  
 “Jews,” says Cyril of Jerusalem, “insist  
 “upon it, that it is impossible that Christ  
 “should be born of a virgin †.” “Many,”  
 says he, “contradict, and say, what so great  
 “cause was there that God should descend  
 “and become man; and if it be possible for  
 “the nature of God to become man, how  
 “could a virgin have a child without a  
 “man ‡.” On account of the infidel Jews,”  
 says Proclus, “I will interrogate the vir-  
 “gin. Tell me, O virgin, what made thee  
 “a mother before marriage §?”

\* Εἶπε τῷ Ἰουδαίῳ τῷ πρὸς σε διενεχθέντι περὶ τῆς θείας σαρκώ-  
 σεως, καὶ λεγόντι, ὅτι ἀδύνατον ἐστὶ φύσει ἀνθρωπείᾳ δίχα συνουσίας καὶ  
 σπερματός τεκεῖν. Epist. lib. 1. Opera, p. 43.

† Ἀλλὰ διασυρῶσιν ἡμᾶς Ἕλληνας τε καὶ Ἰουδαίους, καὶ φασιν, ὅτι ἀδύ-  
 νατον ἦν τὸν χριστὸν ἐκ παρθένης γεννηθῆναι. Cat. 12. p. 162.

‡ Ἀλλὰ ἀνιλεῖται πολλοὶ καὶ λέγουσι, τί τοῦτον ἦν αἰλίον, ὡσε-  
 θεον εἰς ἀνθρωπότητά καλεσθῆναι· καὶ εἰ ὅλως θεὸς φύσις ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις  
 συναναστρέφειν· καὶ εἰ δύνατον ἐστὶ παρθένον τεκεῖν ἀνευ ἀνδρός. Ibid.  
 p. 150.

§ Θέλω δὲ διὰ τῆς ἀπίστεως Ἰουδαίας, καὶ τοῦ παρθένον ἐρωήσασθαι. εἶπε  
 μοι παρθένε, τί σε μέλερα πρὸ τῶν γαμῶν ἐποίησε. Hom. in Na-  
 tivitatem Domini, p. 152.



This was a circumstance relating to christianity that did not escape the vigilance of Julian. Speaking of the prophecy of Jacob concerning Shiloh, he says, “ This “ has nothing to do with Jesus, for he is “ not of Judah ; for, according to you, he “ was not descended from Joseph, but was “ of the Holy Spirit ; and it is the genea- “ logy of Joseph that you carry up to Ju- “ dah. And even this you do not make out “ well ; for Matthew and Luke contradict “ one another \*.”

Let us now see what the christian Fathers have said in order to lessen the difficulty attending the doctrine of the miraculous conception. Origen says, “ the Greeks “ who will not believe that Jesus was born “ of a virgin, must be told that the maker “ of all things, in the formation of several

\* Οἱ δὲ τῶν ὀδῶν τῷ Ἰησοῦ προσημει, προδηλον. εἶδε γὰρ εἶναι ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ (ὡς γὰρ ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐκ ἐξ Ἰωσήφ, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἁγίου πνεύματος) τὸν Ἰωσήφ γενεαλογεῖν εἰς τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἀναφέρει, καὶ εἶδε τὸ εὐδυνήθητε πλάσαι καλῶς. Ἐλεγχοῦνται γὰρ Μαίδατος καὶ Λυκάς περὶ τῆς γενεαλογίας αὐτῶν διαφωνεῖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους. Cyril, contra Jul, lib. 8. Juliani Opera, vol. 2. p. 253.

“ animals,

“ animals, has shewn that what he has done  
 “ with respect to some, he might have done  
 “ in others, and even in man. For among  
 “ the animals some females have no com-  
 “ merce with males, which naturalists say  
 “ is the case with vultures, which are pro-  
 “ pagated without it. How then is it ex-  
 “ traordinary, if God, intending to send a  
 “ divine messenger to mankind, instead of  
 “ the usual mode of generation, by the  
 “ commerce of man with woman, should  
 “ employ another method\*.” He pro-  
 ceeds to mention Grecian fables, in which  
 something of a similar nature was supposed  
 to have taken place.

Ruffinus, to make it appear less incre-  
 dible, says, “ the Phœnix is reproduced

† Εἰ δὲ πρὸς Ἑλλήνας λέκτεον, ἀπειθύντας τῇ ἐκ παρθένου γενέσει  
 Ἰησοῦ, οἱ οὐ δὴμιερῶς, ἐν τῇ τῶν ποιμῶν ζῶν γενέσει, ἐδείξεν, οἱ ἢ  
 αὐτῷ βελήθει δυνάμιον ποιῆσαι, ὅπερ ἐφ' ἑνὸς ζῶν, καὶ ἐπ' ἄλλων, καὶ  
 ἐκ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Εὐρισκείται δὲ τίνα τῶν ζῶν θηλαῖα, μὴ  
 ἐχούσα ἀρρηνὸς κοινωνίαν, ὡς οἱ περὶ ζῶν ἀναγραφαίαις λέγουσι περὶ  
 γυπαῶν· καὶ τέλος τοῦ ζῶν χωρὶς μιξέως σώζει τὴν διαδοχὴν τῶν γενῶν.  
 Τὶ ἐν παραδόξῳ, εἰ βελήθει ὁ θεὸς θεῖον τίνα διδασκαλὸν περιμῆει τῷ  
 γενεῖ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. πεποιήκεν, αὐτῷ σπερματικῆς λογῆς, τὸ ἐκ μιξέως  
 τῶν ἀρρηνῶν ταῖς γυναῖξί [ποιῆσαι] ἄλλω τρόπῳ γενέσθαι τὸν λόγον  
 τὸ τεχθῆσομεν.

“ without

“ without a male, and without the con-  
 “ junction of the sexes \*.” “ If some ani-  
 “ mals,” says Lactantius, “ as is well  
 “ known to all, conceive by the wind, why  
 “ should any person think it wonderful  
 “ that the virgin should be with child by  
 “ the breath of God, to whom it is easy to  
 “ do whatever he pleases †?” “ That the  
 “ miraculous conception should not appear  
 “ altogether incredible,” says Basil (almost  
 copying Origen) “ even to those who do  
 “ not readily apprehend what relates to the  
 “ divine œconomy, God has made some  
 “ animals produce their young by the help

\* Et tamen quid mirum videtur, si virgo conceperit, cum orientis avem quem Phœnicem vocant, in tantum sine conjugate nasci vel renasci constet, ut semper una sit, et semper sibi ipsi nascendo vel renascendo succedat? Apes certe nescire conjugia, nec fœtus nixibus edere, omnibus palum est, sed et alia nonnulla deprehenduntur sub hujuscemodi sorte nascendi. In Symb. Opera, p. 176.

† Quod si animalia quædam vento, aut aura concipere solere, omnibus notum est; cur quisquam mirum putet, cum spiritu dei, cui facile est quicquid velit; gravatam esse virginem dicimus? Instit. lib. 4. sect. 12. Opera, p. 383.

“ of

“ of the female only, without the use of the  
 “ male, which naturalists say is the case  
 “ with the vulture \*.”

“ What is the reason,” says Chrysoftom,  
 “ why, when you see a virgin bring forth  
 “ our common Lord, you do not believe it.  
 “ Exercise your understanding with respect  
 “ to women who were barren; that when  
 “ you see the womb that was fast closed,  
 “ opened by the grace of God, you may  
 “ not wonder when you hear that a virgin  
 “ has brought forth. Wonder, indeed,  
 “ and be astonished, but do not disbelieve  
 “ the miracle. When a Jew then says to  
 “ you, *How can a virgin bring forth*, ask  
 “ him how can a woman that is barren and  
 “ old have a child. Here are two impedi-  
 “ ments, age and infirmity, but with respect  
 “ to the virgin there is only one impedi-  
 “ ment, viz. that she is not married. Let

\* Ὑπερ δε τῆς τῆν παραδοξῆν ταύτην γεννησιν μη πάνη απιστον εχειν τοις δυσπαραδεικῶς περὶ τὴν θείαν οικονομίαν διακειμενοις. ἐκίσε τινα τῶν ζῶων οὐδημιεργος δυναμενα απο μονε τῆς θηλεος, χωρις τῆς τῶν αρρενων ἐπισπλοκης, ἀπολιπειν. τοιαύτα γαρ ἰσορροσι περὶ γυτων, οἱ ταῦτα περὶ ζῶων πραγμαλειυσάμενοι. In If. 7. Opera, vol. 2. p. 186.

“ the

“ the barren then prepare the way for the  
“ virgin \*.”

Austin says, “ If the miraculous con-  
“ ception be thought incredible because it  
“ happened but once, other things like-  
“ wise have happened but once,” and thus  
he thought the objection answered †.

But the best answer of all, is that which  
is given by Cyril of Jerufalem. “ The  
“ Jews contradict, and will not be per-

\* Τις εν εστιν η αιτια ; ινα οταν ιδης την παρθενον τιμησαν τον κοινον  
ημων δεσποτην, μη απιστησης . γυμιασον σε εγλαυδα την διανοιαν, φησιν,  
εν τη μητρα των σειρων, ιν οταν ιδης πεπηρωμενην και δεδεμενην μητραν,  
προς παιδοποιαν ανοιγομενην εκ της τε δεξ χαρτιος, μη θαυμασης  
ουκων οτι παρθενος ελεκε . μαλλον δε θαυμασον και εκπλαγηδι, αλλα  
μη απιστησης τω θαυματι . οταν εν λεγη προς σε ο Ισδαιος, πως ελεκεν η  
παρθενος . ειπε προς αυτον, πως ελεκεν η σειρα και γεγηρακεια ; δυο  
γαρ κωλυματα τοτε ην, το, τε αωρον της ηλικιας, και το ακρησον της  
φυσεως . επι δε της παρθενος εν κωλυμα ην, το μη μεισχειν αυτην  
γαμω . προσοδοποιει τοιουνν τη παρθενω η σειρα . In Gen. Hom.  
49. Opera, vol. 2. p. 684.

† Quod si propterea non creditur quia femel factum est,  
quære ab amico quem hoc adhuc movet, utrum nihil invi-  
niatur in literis secularibus quod et femel factum est et  
tamen creditum, non fabulosa vanitate, sed sicut existimans  
historica fide. Quære obsecro te. Si enim tale aliquid  
in illis literis inveniri negaverit, admonendus est, si autem  
falsus fuerit, soluta quæstio est. Epist. 7. Opera, vol. 2.  
p. 36.

“ suaded

“suaded by what we say concerning *the*  
 “rod” [If. vii. 3.] “unless examples be  
 “brought to them of births equally strange,  
 “and contrary to nature. I, therefore,  
 “question them in this manner, Of whom  
 “was Eve generated from the beginning?  
 “What mother conceived her, who had no  
 “mother; for the scripture says, that she  
 “was produced from the side of Adam?  
 “Was Eve, therefore, produced from the  
 “side of a male without a mother, and  
 “cannot a child be generated from a vir-  
 “gin’s womb without a man\*?” To  
 the same purpose Petrus Chryfologus says,  
 “How can it be wonderful that he should  
 “inhabit a virgin’s womb, who himself  
 “made woman from the side of a man.  
 “He took a man from the womb of a  
 “woman who formed a virgin from the

\* Αλλα ει ανηλεγεσιν Ιουδαιοι, κ̅ κ̅ πειθον̅λαι τοις περι ραβ̅δ̅ς λο-  
 γοις, εαν μη ομοιοις παραδοξοις κ̅ παρα φυσιν πεισθωσιν τοκε̅λοις,  
 εξ̅ε̅λα̅ζ̅ω̅ το̅ιν̅υν̅ αυ̅ι̅ς̅ ε̅ι̅ω̅ς̅ · η̅ Ευ̅α̅ ε̅ξ̅ αρχ̅η̅ς̅ εκ̅ τιν̅̅ ε̅γεν̅νη̅θη̅;̅ πο̅ια̅  
 μη̅τηρ̅ συν̅ει̅λη̅φ̅εν̅ εκ̅ει̅νη̅ν̅ την̅ α̅μη̅λο̅ρα̅;̅ λε̅γει̅ δε̅ η̅ γρα̅φη̅ ο̅τι̅ εκ̅ π̅λευ̅ρας̅  
 γε̅γον̅ε̅ τ̅ε̅ Α̅δα̅μ̅;̅ α̅ρα̅ εν̅ η̅ με̅ν̅ Ευ̅α̅ εκ̅ π̅λευ̅ρας̅ αρ̅σ̅εν̅̅,̅ χω̅ρι̅ς̅  
 μη̅τηρ̅̅,̅ γεν̅νη̅ται̅,̅ εκ̅ δε̅ πα̅ρ̅θ̅εν̅ικ̅η̅ς̅ γ̅ασ̅τ̅ρ̅̅,̅ χω̅ρι̅ς̅ αν̅δ̅ρ̅̅,̅ παι̅δι̅ον̅ κ̅  
 γεν̅νη̅ται̅;̅ Cat. 12. Opera, p. 163.

“ body

“ body of a man ; so that what appears  
 “ new to you is old with God\*.” It is  
 also very prudently and pertinently observed  
 by Maximus Taurinensis, “ Whosoever is  
 “ disposed to examine the works of God,  
 “ rather than believe them, is influenced by  
 “ the flesh, and not by the spirit. Where-  
 “ fore, my brethren, let us not discuss in  
 “ what manner God is born of God, but  
 “ let us believe it. Nor let us retract the  
 “ miraculous conception, but admire ; that  
 “ acknowledging the only begotten Son of  
 “ God to be both God and man, we may  
 “ hold the true heavenly faith unblame-  
 “ able †.” To the same purpose Isidore

\* Quid mirum modo, si virginis habitavit utero, qui mulierem hominis sumpsit ex latere ? Ipse hominem mulieris resumpsit ex utero, qui virginem viri formavit ex corpore ; ac perinde, homo, quæ tibi videntur nova, deo habentur antiqua. Ser. 145. p. 372.

† Omnis ergo qui opera dei magis vult examinare quam credere, non sequitur animæ sensum, sed carnis errorem. Et ideo, fratres ! non discutiamus, qualiter deus de deo natus est, sed credamus : nec retractemus partum virginis, sed miremur ; ut unigenitum dei deum et hominem confidentes, inoffensam teneamus cœlestis fidei veritatem. Opera, p. 195.

also says, “ Behold therefore a man from  
 “ the earth, and a woman from a man, and  
 “ both without the conjunction of sexes\*.”

The conception of Christ by a virgin, is, no doubt, within the power of God, who made man originally; but as miracles are never wrought without a reason, and where a great and good end is to be answered by them, we ought not lightly to give credit to accounts of miracles for which we cannot imagine any good reason, and the very report of which is calculated to expose christianity to ridicule, without any necessity, or conceivable advantage. Whether the history of the miraculous conception of Christ be so circumstanced, as that the evidence in favour of it is able to overbear the force of this objection, and the many others that have been stated in this chapter, let the reader now judge.

All these, it is to be observed, are the objections of Jews or heathens, and the

\* *Ἰδὲ εὖ ὁ ἀνὴρ ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τῶ ἀνδρός, καὶ ἀμφότεροι τῆς συνουσίας χάρις.* Epist. 141. p. 43.



answers apply only to the light in which it was considered by *them*. What any christians, who equally disbelieved the miraculous conception, said to it, we are nowhere told, though we find that they published their objections. That the learned Symmachus in particular wrote against this doctrine, we are informed, but we find not a single quotation from the book, or that it was ever answered; and yet it is not said that it was undeserving of an answer.

The silence of the christian Fathers on this subject will be differently interpreted, as persons are differently disposed with respect to the doctrine itself. All the circumstances considered, it appears to me that so truly respectable a person as Symmachus writing against the miraculous conception, in so early a period (as early, probably, as the belief of it came to be general) and that no person answered his book, are both of them remarkable facts, and both unfavourable to the truth of that part of the history. Two of our gospels, indeed, contain the account, but it was not in the gospel that

was received by Symmachus, and the rest of the Ebionites ; and this they, who were certainly the best judges in the case, maintained to be the authentic gospel of Matthew.

Had the work of Symmachus been extant, or had the reasons of Paulus Samosatensis and his followers (whose opinion was probably that of the ancient Gentile unitarians in general) for believing that Jesus was born at Nazareth, and not at Bethlehem, been transmitted to us, together with the remarks of their adversaries, we should, no doubt, have been in possession of materials on which we might have founded a more decisive opinion than we can pretend to do at present. Wanting these important materials for forming a *decisive judgment*, let us not be wanting in candour in a case in which all we can say is, that one *probable opinion* is opposed to another less probable.

T H E  
H I S T O R Y O F O P I N I O N S  
C O N C E R N I N G  
C H R I S T.

---

B O O K I V.

O F S O M E C O N T R O V E R S I E S W H I C H H A D A  
N E A R R E L A T I O N T O T H E T R I N I T A -  
R I A N O R U N I T A R I A N D O C T R I N E.

---

C H A P T E R I.

*Of the Arian Controversy.*

**W**E have no account of any thing,  
in the whole compass of ecclesiastical  
history, that ever occasioned  
a greater revolution in the theological state  
of the world, than the doctrine of Arius ;  
and the revolution was equally sudden, and  
lasting. Within much less than the life of

man, this doctrine, from being wholly unknown, overspread perhaps, one half of the christian world, and more than once bid fair for having the seal of *orthodoxy* stamped upon it. In two pretty long reigns, it was the religion of the Roman court, and it had the sanction of several numerous councils; and this not long after its condemnation by the famous council of Nice, in the reign of the emperor Constantine. Socrates says that, upon the publication of the doctrine of Arius, it immediately spread from Alexandria through all Egypt, Lybia, Thebais, and the other provinces and cities; and that many persons of character took the part of Arius, especially Eusebius of Nicomedia\*. An event of such magnitude requires to be carefully investigated.

Before the time of Arius only three systems of christianity, or rather three opi-

\* Ταύτα τῷ καινοπρεπει λογῶ συλλογισαμενός, ἀναρριπίζει τὰς πολλὰς πρὸς τὸ ζήτημα. καὶ ἀναπύεται ἀπὸ σμικρῆ σπινθηρὸς μεγά-  
 πυρ. ἀρξάμενον τε τὸν καινὸν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρῆαν ἐκκλησίας, διε-  
 ῤρηχε τὴν συμπάσαν Αἰγυπτίον τε καὶ Διβυην, καὶ τὴν ἀνω Θηβαίδα.  
 ἤδη δὲ καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐπενεμέλο ἐπαρχίας τε καὶ πόλεις· συνελαμβα-  
 νοῦντο τῇ Ἀρείῳ δόξῃ πολλοὶ μὲν καὶ ἄλλοι, μαλιστα δὲ Εὐσεβίος αὐτῆς  
 ἐπιειχέλο. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 6. p. 10.

nions concerning the person of Christ, had been the subject of discussion. The first was that of the *unitarians*, who believed Christ to be a mere man, and to have had no existence prior to his birth, in the reign of Augustus. The second was that of the *Gnostics*, who thought that to this man, or something that had the appearance of a man, was super-added a pre-existent super-angelic-spirit, called *the Christ*. The third was the doctrine of the *personification of the logos*, according to which Jesus Christ, who had a body and a soul like other men, had also a superior principle intimately united to him. But this principle was nothing that had ever been *created*; for it was nothing less than the *logos*, or *the wisdom and power of God* the Father, and which, in a state of personification, had been the immediate cause of the formation of the universe, and of all the appearances of God in the Old Testament.

Now we find all at once a doctrine totally different from any of the preceding schemes, viz. that the intelligent prin-

principle which animated the body of Christ (for it was not thought that he had any other soul) was a great pre-existent spirit, and *created*, like other beings, *out of nothing*; that this pre-existent spirit, to which was still given the name of *logos*, had been employed by God in making the universe, and in all the appearances under the Old Testament, and then became the proper soul of Jesus Christ. Such is the outline of that doctrine which, from Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, obtained the name of *Arianism*, and which, with some variation, has continued to be held by great numbers of very intelligent christians to this day.

Of the three schemes which were prior to Arianism, it has the greatest resemblance to that of the Gnostics, but differs from it chiefly in two respects. First, the Gnostics supposed the pre-existent spirit which was in Jesus, to have been an emanation from the Supreme Being, according to the principles of the philosophy of that age, which made *creation out of nothing* to be an impossibility;

possibility; whereas the Arians supposed this pre-existent spirit to have been properly *created*. But this difference is rather philosophical than theological; because they both agreed in supposing that this pre-existent spirit had the same origin with that of angels, and other beings of a spiritual nature, superior to man.

Secondly, the Gnostics supposed that this pre-existent spirit was not the maker of the world, but was sent to rectify the evils which had been introduced by the being who made it; whereas the Arians supposed that their logos was the being that had been employed by God in the making of the universe, as well as in all his communications with mankind.

But even this difference, respecting the nature and office of Christ, was not of such a nature as to make any material difference in the *respect* that they entertained for Christ; both the Gnostics and the Arians agreeing in this, that Christ was a great pre-existent spirit, and that we owe him the greatest obligations for his condescension

sion in coming into this world, and undertaking to rectify the abuses that he found in it. In fact, therefore, the influence of the two systems on the mind must have been nearly the same. The Gnostics and the Arians must also have agreed in some measure with respect to the idea of the nature of *matter*, and its tendency to contaminate the mind, and to impede its operations. But in this all the systems which suppose that there is an immaterial principle in man, the cause of all sensation and thought, must be nearly alike. Athanasius censures the Arians as borrowing from the Gnostics\*. He even shews at large, that they are worse than the Gnostics†.

I do not say that Arius himself was the very first who advanced the doctrine which bears his name; but I find no trace of its existence prior to what may be called the age of Arius. Jerom allows that some of the Antenicene Fathers had given counte-

\* *Contra Arianos*, Or. 2. vol. 1. p. 363. Or. 3. p. 392.

† *Ibid.* p. 414.



nance to the Arian doctrine\* ; but this was not by advancing his proper doctrine, as I have shewn, but by incautious expressions, of which the Arians afterwards took advantage. The first person who is mentioned as holding the proper Arian doctrine is Lucian of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom in A. D. 312. For Epiphanius says, that “ Lucian, and all the Lucianists, denied that the Son of God took a soul, but had flesh only †.” According to Philostorgius, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and other chiefs of the Arians, were the disciples of Lucian, as Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nice, Leontius of Antioch, Asterius the sophist, and others ‡.

\* Vel certe antequam in Alexandria quasi dæmonium meridianum Arius nasceretur, innocenter quædam et minus caute loquuti sunt, et quæ non possunt perverforum hominum calumniam declinare. Adv. Ruffi. lib. 2. cap. 4. Opera, p. 513.

† Λεκιαν⊖ τις αρχαιος εκ ο των εν χρονοις Χανταντινις τε γεροντος γεγονως, εν δηθεν οι Αρειανοι εν μαρτυριω επιψηφισονται. ην γαρ και αυτος ο Λεκιανος προσφαλος φημι προσανεχων τη των Αρειανων αιρεσει. Hær. 43. sect. 1. vol. 1. p. 370.

‡ Οι τρις τε μαρτυρ⊖ πολλες μεν η̄ αι αλλες μαθητας αναγραφει, ος η̄ Ευσεβιον τον Νικομηδειας η̄ Μαριν τον Χαλχεδονος η̄ τον Νικαιας Θεογγιν συλλαλει, &c. Hist. lib. 2. cap. 14. p. 484.

But

But on the other hand, Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, affirms that Lucian adhered to Paulus Samosatensis, and separated from the church. Lardner says, one might be apt to suspect from Alexander's words, that Lucian had succeeded Paul in the episcopal care and oversight of those who were of his sentiments at Antioch\*. It is therefore doubtful, whether any person before Arius himself held his doctrine, though it is most probable, that many others about this time, did so; their minds, as well as his, having been prepared for it in the manner that I shall presently describe.

Though the appearance of the Arian doctrine was sudden, and the alarm which it gave to the christian world was proportionably great (which is a proof that it was imagined to be quite a *new* thing, and of a very extraordinary and dangerous nature) there were several pre-existent causes, which had gradually prepared the way for it; and these I shall endeavour to explain.

\* Credibility, vol. 4. p. 641.

S E C T I O N I.

*Of the antecedent Causes of the Arian Doctrine.*

THE controversy with the unitarians had led those who were called *orthodox* (by which I mean those who held the doctrine of the personification of the *logos*) to speak of Christ as greatly inferior to the Father, of which examples enow have been produced. So willing had they been to make concessions to the great body of zealous unitarians (or such were the remains of their own unitarian principles) that had they considered Christ-as, in all respects, a mere *creature*, they could not have spoken of him otherwise than they did. They were evidently afraid of incurring so much odium as they were sensible they must have done, by setting up their *second God* as a rival to the first and supreme God. Their principle of Christ having been the *logos* of the  
 Father

Father certainly led them to consider him as being of *the same nature* with the Father, and in all respects *equal* to him; and it did produce this effect afterwards, when the obstacle to its operation, in the general opinion of the christian world, was removed. But during the great prevalence of the doctrines of the unity of God, and the inferiority of Christ to the Father, it had been the custom of the orthodox to speak of their *second God* as the mere *servant* of the first.

Farther, in opposition to the Patripassians, or the philosophical unitarians, who said that the Father and the Son (meaning the divinity of the Father and Son) were the same, the orthodox had been led to speak of them as being *entirely different*, so as sometimes to say that they were of different *natures*; though the language must have been improperly used by those who considered Christ as being derived from the very *substance* of the Father, and having been his proper *wisdom and power*.

In

In consistency, however, with this language, suggested by controversy, it had been the custom of the orthodox to speak of the *generation* of the Son from the Father, as if it had been a proper *creation*, and as if the Son had stood in the very same relation to the Father, with that in which other creatures stood to him; which corresponded very well with the ideas of the Platonists, in whose scale of *principles*, or *causes*, the *nous* or *logos*, held the second place; the first principle being stiled a *cause* with respect to the second, as the second was with respect to the visible world.

Another circumstance which contributed to the rise of Arianism was the gradual influence of the doctrine of revelation, concerning *creation out of nothing*, which had been unknown to all the philosophers, who had thought that the material world had been created out of pre-existent matter, and that *souls* were either emanations from the supreme mind, or parts detached from the soul of the universe. But the apostle having said, Heb. xi. 3. that the world was  
made

made *ἐκ τῶν μὴ φαινομένων*, *from things that do not appear* (supposed to be equivalent to *ἐκ τῶν οὐκ ὄντων*, *things that are not, or out of nothing*) the term *creation*, on whatever account it had been used, would at length suggest the idea of a creation out of nothing. This Athanasius supposed to be the meaning of Paul in this epistle; for he makes the phrases *from nothing*, and *from that which did not appear*, to be synonymous\*. In this manner would the minds of many be prepared to pass from the idea of the personification of the logos, or the generation of the Son from the Father, to that of a *proper creation*.

Things being in this state, the warmth of controversy was sufficient to lead persons whose real opinions were the very same, to differ, first in words only, and afterwards in reality. And a real difference being once formed, it would easily extend itself,

\* Καὶ ποιήσας ἐκ τῆ μὴ οὐτος εἰς τὸ εἶναι ὅπερ καὶ ὁ Παῦλος σημαίνων φησὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι νοημὸν κληθῆσθαι τὴν αἰῶνα ῥημᾶτι θεῶν. εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκφαινομένων τὰ βλεπόμενα γεγονέναι. De Incarnatione, Opera, vol. 1. p. 55.

by analogies and consequences, on both sides. I shall now enter upon the proof of these particulars, and then shew their actual operation in the rise and progress of the Arian controversy.

That it had been the custom of all the Fathers before the council of Nice to speak of Christ, though they considered him as the *logos*, or the wisdom of the supreme God, as nevertheless greatly inferior to him, has been abundantly proved. I shall, therefore, proceed to give instances in which those of the Fathers, who undoubtedly considered Christ as having been the *logos* or wisdom of the Father, and therefore properly *uncreated*, yet described his *generation* in language equivalent to that of a proper *creation*.

The very term  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\lambda\omicron\theta$ , by which the Fathers generally expressed the *logos* becoming a Son, was the same that the Platonists had always used to distinguish a creature from the creator, or the thing *caused*, and the *cause*; so that the terms  $\delta\epsilon\theta$  and  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\lambda\omicron\theta$  had always been opposed to each other.

Thus Philo says, “ There is no *created* “ *God*; for he would want the necessary “ attribute of *eternity*\*.” And a writer who personates Origen makes γεννητα and κτιστα *generated* and *created*, to be synonymous †.

In later times, there was a distinction made between γεννηθ- and γεννηθ-, as if the former signified *created*, and the latter *generated*; but the distinction was not very ancient. Tatian makes no difference between γεννηθ- as applied to the production of the Son from the Father, and the creation of other things by the Son; but says that, “ the logos being generated in the begin- “ ning, again generated our world, fashion- “ ing the matter of it for himself. Mat- “ ter,” he says, “ is not αναρχθ-, *without* “ *origin*, like God, but γεννηθη, *generated*, “ being produced by the Maker of all “ things ‡.” Also the same word τιλειν, to

\* Γενητος γαρ εδεις αληθεια θεος, αλλα δοξη μονον, το αναγκαιουσιου αφηρημενος αιδιατητα. De Charitate, Opera, p. 699.

† Εγω εδ εν ειερον αγενητον λεγω, η μονον τον θεον. τα δε λοιπα παντα, οσα εσι, γενητα και κτιστα. Contra Marcionitas, p. 72.

‡ Ουτε γαρ αναρχος η υλη, καθαπερ ο θεος, εδε δια το αναρχον κη αυτη ισουδυναμος τω θεω. γεννηθη δε και εκ υπο τς αλλης γεγονυια, μονε δε υπο



bring forth, is used by Synefius of the generation of the Son, and the creation of other things by the Son\*.

The term corresponding to *cause* was likewise used promiscuously with respect to the generation of the Son, and the production of the creatures. Thus Gregory Nyssen makes the terms *unbegotten* and *without cause* to be synonymous †. Indeed, it was always allowed that the Son, though generated, had a proper *cause*; and, accordingly, the word αρχη, *origin*, by which the logos was distinguished from the creatures, was, without scruple, applied to the Father with respect to Christ; and the term αναρχος, *uncaused*, was always considered as the incommunicable attribute of the Father, he being the sole *fountain of deity*; and whenever the same term is applied to the

δε υπο τε παλιν δημιουργα προβεβλημενη. Ad Græcos, sect. 8. p. 23.

\* Σοι τεχθενι πατηρ ενευσε τιλειν. Hymn. 6. Opera, p. 343.

† Αλλ' εκ μεν της τε αγεντης προσηγοριας, το ανευ αιτιας ειναι του θωος ονομασμενον εμαδομεν. Contra Eunomium, Or. 12. Opera, vol. 2. p. 302.

Son, or the Spirit, it was only meant to signify that they had no beginning, not that they had no cause.

Thus, a writer, whose work has been ascribed to Athanasius, says, “ the Son is “ not a *cause*, but *caused*; so that the Fa- “ ther is the only cause, and there are two “ that are *caused*, the Son and the Spirit. “ But they are all *αναρχοι*, because they are all “ without beginning\*.” Nicephorus, in “ his epistle to Leo, says, “ Christ is not “ without origin with respect to the Fa- “ ther, who is his origin, as being his “ cause; but with respect to his genera- “ tion, he is without origin, being before “ all ages †.” Constantine also, in his oration, says, “ the Father is the *cause*, “ the Son *caused* ‡.” This language, being

\* Ο δε υιος ηκ εστιν αιτιος, αλλ' αιτιατος . ωσε μεν αιτιος εστι μονος ο πατηρ · τα δε αιτιατα δυο, ο υιος, και το πνευμα. Opera, vol. 2.

P 443.

† Των εν τριαδι θεωρουμενων, το μεν, πατηρ αναρχος, και αναιτιος υπαρχων . η γαρ εκ τινος, εν εαυτω γαρ το ειναι εχων, το δε υιος και ηκ αναρχος εκ τη πατρως γαρ, αρχη γαρ υιου πατηρ, ως αιτιον . ει δε την απο χρονι λαμβανουσι αρχην, και αναρχος. Zonaras, p. 769.

‡ Καθαπερ αιτια μεν υιου ο πατηρ · αιτιατον δ' ο υιος. Cap. 11. p. 688.

once

once established continued to the latest period. Thus M. Caleca called the Son αἰτιατός, γεννῆτός, and γεννημα\*.

Another circumstance which made way for the introduction of Arianism, and which greatly contributed to embarrass the orthodox in the controversy was, that in order to oppose the Sabellians, they had represented the Father and the Son as differing *essentially* from each other. Because they thought that the Sabellians had confounded the three persons, they, as was natural, made a point of separating them; and they did it to a greater degree than their principles really admitted. For they maintained that their very *ουσία*, *essence*, or *nature*, was different; whereas they should have contented themselves with saying that they differed in *rank*, or *dignity*. But, whereas the Sabellians maintained that the three persons were of the same *ουσία*, *essence*, and were therefore *ομοουσιοι*, *consubstantial* to each other, this was positively denied by the orthodox; and what

\* Ο δε υιος λεγεται αιτιατος, γεννητος, γεννημα. Combesis Auctuarium, vol. 2. p. 222.

was particularly unfortunate for them, they had passed a censure on this very term in the condemnation of Paulus Samosatensis. Thus Athanasius says, that “ they who condemned Paulus Samosatensis, said that the Son was not consubstantial with the Father\*.” Basil says the same, adding, that the reason why they rejected it was, its implying that God was a substance that was divisible †.

The effect of this circumstance remained a long time with the orthodox; many of whom were with great difficulty reconciled to this term, especially as it was not a scriptural one, which is acknowledged by Athanasius ‡. Ambrose speaks of some

\* Δια τε, εικότως ευλαβηθέντες το τοί στον σοφισμα τε Σαμοσαίως, ειρηκασι μη ειναι τον χριστον ομοουσιον. De Syn. Arm. Opera, vol. 1. p. 919.

† Και γαρ τω οντι οι επι Παυλω τω Σαμοσαίει συνελθόντες, διεβαλον την λεξιν ως εκ ευσημον. εφασαν γαρ εκεινοι την τε ομοουσιε φωνην παρισταν εννοιαν υσιας τε και των απ’ αυτης, ως τε καταμερισθεισαν την υσιαν παρεχειν τε ομοουσιε την προσηγοριαν τοις εις α διηρηθη. Vol. 3. p. 292.

‡ Ου λεγοντες τον χριστον ομοουσιον ειναι τω θεω. Ει γαρ η το ονομα τελο φημι μη ευρηκεναι, μηδε ανεγνωπεναι πρ των αγιων γραφων, αλλα γε, &c. De Sententia, Opera, vol. 1. p. 561.

who,

who, without being Arians, yet scrupled to say that the Son was of the same substance with the Father, because it was not a scriptural expression. But, he says, “ they ought to be deemed heretics if they did not expressly acknowledge it, and that for the same reason they might object to the phrases *God of God*, and *Light of Light*\*.” Sozomen says, that “ the Fathers of the council of Antioch acknowledged that the word *consubstantial* (ὁμοῦσι<sup>Θ</sup>) which appeared new and strange to many, was cautiously interpreted by the Fathers, and not according to its use among the Gentiles, but only in opposition to the sentiment of the Arians, that the Son was made out of nothing †.”

\* Vel si Arianus non es, et verum filium de vero patre natum non factum agnoscis, cur non eum cum patre unam substantiam dicis? Frustra times homo profiteri quod credis, et frustra credis si ita non credis, et merito hæreticus denotaris. De Filii Divinitate, lib. 1. cap. 3. Opera, vol. 4. p. 278, 279.

† Ὅπως δὲ το δοκεν ἐν αὐτῇ τισὶ ξενὸν ὄνομα τὸ τῶ ὁμοῦσι φάμεν, ἀσφαλὲς τέλευχηκε παρὰ τοῖς πάλαισιν ἐρμηνείας, σημαίνουσης ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἁπλῆς τῶ πάλαι<sup>Θ</sup> ὁ υἱὸς ἐγεννήθη, καὶ ὅτι ὁμοίας καὶ ἔσιαν τῶ πάλαι. εἴτε

Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in whose neighbourhood there were many Sabellians, and who opposed them with great vigour, as he also did Paulus Samosatensis, made no scruple, as Basil says, to assert, in this controversy, that “the Son was of a different essence, as well as hypostasis, from the Father, that he was inferior in power, and less in glory\*.” Ruffinus says, that “Dionysius of Alexandria, in his books against Sabellius, advanced things of which the Arians took advantage †.”

δε ως παθης τινος παρα την ἀρρήτον γεννησιν επινοημενε, ελε καλα τιναι χρηση ελληνικη λαμβανειαι το ονομα της υσιας, εις αναρροπην δε τε εξ εκ οντων περι τε υις ασεβως τολμηθεντ Αρειω. Hist. lib. 4. sect. 4. p. 224.

\* Και εκ ελερσηλα μονον των υποσασεων τιθειαι, αλλα κ̄ υσιας διαφοραν, κ̄ δυναμεως υφεσιν, κ̄ δοξης παραλλαγην. Epist. 41. Opera, vol. 3. p. 60.

† Dionysius Alexandrinus episcopus, eruditissimus asserter ecclesiasticæ fidei, cum in quamplurimis in tantum unitatem atque equalitatem trinitatis defendat, ut imperitioribus quibusque etiam secundum Sabellium sensisse videatur, in his tamen libris suis quos adversus Sabellii hæresim scribit, talia inveniuntur inserta, ut frequenter Ariani auctoritate ipsius se defendere conentur. Apologia pro Origine, Hieronymi, Opera, vol. 8. p. 130.

Though

Though this was nothing more than had been said by others, and especially in the same controversy; yet, when, afterwards, things had taken a different turn, and advantage was taken of this language, this Dionysius came to be considered as *the fountain of Arianism*, as he is called by Austin \*. Athanasius, however, apologized for him, and for the inaccuracy of his expressions, from the nature of the controversy in which he was engaged.

For the same reasons for which the memory of Dionysius was reflected upon, similar reproaches fell upon that of Clemens Alexandrinus, and that of Origen. But, indeed, none of the ancient writers ought to have escaped, since, for the reasons that I have given, they all use similar language. But as these two writers have been the most censured, I shall give a more particular account of the ground of those censures.

Pamphilus the Martyr, in his apology for Origen, says, that “Clemens Alexandrinus

\* Ut vult Dionysius fons Arrii. De Definitionibus, Opera, vol. 3. p. 196.

“ called

“ called Christ a creature \*.” Photius says, “ that Clemens Alexandrinus, in his Hypotyposes,” a work now lost, “ has many “ right things, but some things impious “ and fabulous. He makes the Son a creature, says that the logos was not made flesh, but only seemed to be so. He says “ that the logos, the Son, has the same name, “ but that it was not made flesh; for it is “ not the paternal logos, but a divine “ power, or efflux from the logos itself; “ being the *nous* which pervades the hearts “ of men †.” “ His Stromata,” he says, “ have many things not sound, but not so

\* Clemens quoque alius Alexandrinus, presbyter et magister ecclesiæ illius, in omnibus pene libris suis trinitatis gloriam atque æternitatem unam eandemque designat; et interdum invenimus aliqua in libris ejus capitula, in quibus filium dei creaturam dicit. Hieronymi, Opera, vol. 9. p. 130.

† Και εν τισι μεν αυτων ορθως δοκει λεγειν· εν τισι δε παντεως εις ασεβεις και μυθωδεις, λογος εκφερεται. Και τον υιον εις κτισμα κταγει. Και μη σαρκωθηναι τον λογον, αλλα δοξαι. Λεγεται μεν και ο υιος λογος, ομωνυμως το πατρικω λογω, αλλ' εδε ελος εστιν ο σαρκε γενομενος· ε δε μην ο πατρικως λογος, αλλα δυναμις τις τε θεος, οιον απορροια τε λογε αυτε, νος γειομενος τας των ανθρωπων καρδιας διαπεφοιηκε. Bib. S. 109. p. 286.

“ many



“ many as the Hypotyposes, and in them  
 “ he refutes what he had advanced in these.  
 “ His Pedagogue is quite free from  
 “ them \*.”

As Clemens Alexandrinus had been much addicted to philosophy, it is very possible, that when he wrote the Hypotyposes, he might retain some opinions similar to those of the Gnostics, as the quotation seems to indicate. As to the sense in which Clemens might call Christ *a creature*, it has been explained already, and shewn to be sufficiently consistent with all the orthodoxy of his age; and as to his error about the *logos*, it is very possible that he might speak favourably, as Justin Martyr did, of the doctrine of philosophical unitarianism; or he might have said what Origen did, about the *logos* being in all men. However, he certainly considered the *logos* that

\* Ο δε Παιδαγωγός εν τρισι τομοις—εδεν ομοιον εχουσι προς τας Υποτυπωσεις εστι οι λογοι . των τε γαρ μαλαιων και βλασφημων απηλαγμενοι δοξων καθηκασι— Αυτη δε η των Σρωμαλειων βιβλος ενιαχη εκ υγιως διαλαμβανει . ε μενοι γε ωσπερ αι Υποτυπωσεις, αλλα και προς πολλα των εχει διαμαχειται. Bib. S. 109. p. 287.

was

was in Christ, as the proper wisdom of the Father, which was all the orthodoxy that was known before the council of Nice.

Origen, being a person of more reputation, and whose writings were more numerous than those of Clemens Alexandrinus, suffered more from this kind of censure than he has done. Origen certainly called Christ *a creature*. “The sacred oracles,” he says, “speak of Christ as the oldest of all the creatures, and by him it was that God spake, when he said, Let us make man \*.” But whatever expressions he might use, he certainly could not differ in idea from the most orthodox of his age, so long as he maintained, as he unquestionably did, that Christ was the proper wisdom of the Father. For then he must have supposed him to have been *eternal*, and *uncreated*, though personified in time.

\* Πρεσβυτάτων γὰρ αὐτὸν πάντων τῶν δημιουργημάτων ἰσάσθιν οἱ θεοὶ λόγοι. καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν περὶ τῆς τῆ ἀνθρώπου δημιουργίας εἰρηκεναι, Παιτῶμεν ἀνθρώπου καὶ εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοιωσθὶν ἡμῶν. Ad Celsum, lib. 5. p. 257.

On this account, however, he was severely censured after the rise of the Arian controversy. Epiphanius says, “Origen was “blamed for calling Christ a creature, “though he allowed him to be produced “from the substance of the Father\*.” To this he adds, that “he had said that the Son “could not see the Father,” a phrase much used in that age, to express great inferiority either in rank or nature. But no language can express that inferiority more strongly than Justin Martyr, and others, whose orthodoxy was never called in question, have repeatedly done. What was meant by the phrase, “*not being able to see,*” may be clearly understood from another passage of Epiphanius, in which he states the accusation of Origen more distinctly. “Origen,” he says, “is charged with saying, that, as “the Son could not see the Father, so the “Holy Spirit could not see the Son; also “the angels cannot see the Holy Spirit,

\* *Εκ γὰρ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς τὸν υἱὸν εἰσθηγείλαι, ἡλίσον δὲ αὐτῷ.*  
Hær. 64. Opera, vol. I. p. 527.

“nor can men see angels\*.” That in this manner Origen only meant to express inferiority, or a difference in rank, and not in nature, is evident. For, as both men and angels are creatures, though of different ranks, so the Father, Son, and Spirit might each be God, though they differed in rank and dignity; which was the universal opinion in the time of Origen. Jerom also says, that “the heresy of Origen was, that “the Son was not generated, but made, “and that he could not see the Father †.”

Origen was likewise said to be heretical with respect to the Holy Spirit. Jerom says, that “Origen’s heresy consisted in “part in placing the Spirit the third in “dignity and honour after the Father and “Son; and in his saying that he did

\* Ως ε δυναται οραν τον πατερα ο υιος, και το αγιον πνευμα ε δυναται ιδειν τον υιον. και παλιν, οι αγγελοι ε δυναται ιδειν το αγιον πνευμα, και οι ανθρωποι ε δυναται ιδειν τας αγγελους. Ancoratus, sect. 63. Opera, vol. 2. p. 66, 314.

† Christum filium dei non natum esse sed factum deum, patrem per naturam invisibilem etiam a filio non videri. Opera, vol. 1. p. 439.

“ not know whether he was made or not  
 “ made\*.” But in this he was very far  
 indeed from being singular. Justin Martyr,  
 Tertullian, and other writers before the  
 council of Nice, having expressed them-  
 selves in the very same manner with respect  
 to the Holy Spirit.

Origen, however, though condemned by  
 many, did not want able defenders. Atha-  
 nadius, who wrote in defence of Dionysius,  
 likewise declared himself the advocate of  
 Origen †. Socrates observes this with re-  
 spect to Athanasius ; and says that they who  
 condemn Origen, condemn Athanasius also ‡.  
 That Eusebius should defend Origen, is  
 not to be wondered at, as he himself lay

\* Tertium dignitate et honore post patrem et filium  
 asserit spiritum sanctum, de quo cum ignorare se dicat  
 utrum factus sit an infectus, &c. Opera, vol. 1. p. 440.

† Syn. Nic. Decretum, Opera, vol. 1. p. 277.

‡ Αθανασιου δὲ ο τῆς ὁμοουσιᾶς πίστεως υπερασπιστῆς. ἐν τοῖς κατὰ  
 Ἀρειανῶν λόγοις. μεγάλη τῆ φωνῆ, μαρτυροῦσα τῆς οικειᾶς πίστεως τοῦ ἀνδρᾶ  
 καλεῖ, τῆς ἐκεῖνος λόγους τοῖς ἰδίοις συναπτῶν, καὶ λεγῶν . ο θαυμαστῆς,  
 φησι, καὶ φιλοπονῶντος Ὀριγενῆς, τῆδε περὶ τῆς υἱὸς τῶ θεοῦ τῆς ἡμέτερας  
 δόξης μαρτυρεῖ, συναιδίον αὐτὸν λεγῶν τῶ πατρὶ . ελαδον ἐν εαυτῆς οἱ  
 λοιδορησαίντες Ὀριγενῆν, βλασφημῶντες καὶ τοῦ ἐπαινεῖν αὐτὸν Ἀθανασίου.  
 Hist. lib. 6. cap. 13. p. 329.

under

under the same suspicion. As Jerom says, “Eusebius defends Origen, that is, he proves him to have been an Arian\*.” That the writers before Arius had expressed themselves in such a manner as to give advantage to him and his followers, was generally allowed.

Photius, in giving an account of the writings of Pierius, says, that “they contain many things contrary to the then established faith of the church, but perhaps after the manner of the ancients †;” meaning, probably, that he expressed himself without sufficient caution and accuracy.

\* Sex libros, ut ante jam dixi, Eusebius, Cæsariensis episcopus, Arianæ quondam signifer factionis, pro Origine scripsit, latissimum et elaboratum opus: et multis testimoniis approbavit Originem juxta se catholicum, id est, juxta nos Arianum esse. Opera, vol. 1. p. 492.

† Πολλα δε εξω των νυν εν τη εκκλησια καθεστηκυων, αρχαιθροπως ισως, αποφαινεται. Cod. 19. p. 300.

## SECTION II.

*Of the Tenets of the ancient Arians.*

I Shall now consider what were the tenets which the ancient Arians avowed, or with which they were charged. The principal article, for which no particular authority can be necessary, was that Arius said that the Son, *logos*, or Christ, was created *ἐκ τῶν ἐκ οὐθέν*, or, *out of nothing*, like other creatures; and this was certainly very different from the received doctrine. For all those who had the character of orthodox before him, even including Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen, held that the *logos* had always been *in the Father*, as his proper *attribute*.

The second article in the Arian creed was, that there had been a time when the Son was not. This had frequently been asserted by the orthodox, and at first was, I

doubt not, the universal opinion, if by the existence of the Son be meant his *personal existence*, which was supposed to have commenced in time; but, as an attribute of the Father, they maintained that he had always existed.

In the third place, the Arians denied that Christ had any human soul. This is asserted concerning the Arians in general by Athanasius\*, and by Epiphanius†. Theodoret asserts the same of the Arians and Eunomians‡; and so does Glycas§. It does not appear, from Arius himself that he asserted this; but it is the necessary

\* Αρειος δε, σαρκα μονην προς αποκριφην της θεοτης ομολογει : αυτη δε τε εσωθεν εν ημιν ανθρωπη, τελεσι της ψυχης, τον λογον εν τη σαρκι λεγει γεγονεναι, την τε παδης νοησιν, και την εξ αυθ αναστασιν, τη θεοτητι προταγειν τολμων. De Adventu Christi, Opera, vol. 1. p. 636.

† Αρειου της ψυχην αυτον ανθρωπειαν ειληφεναι. Hær. 69. Opera, vol. 1. p. 743. 771.

‡ Οι δε τα Αρειου εϋνομοις φρονευσες σωμα μονον ανειληφεναι τον θεον λογον φασιν, αυτον δε της ψυχης εν τω σωματι πληρωσαι την χρεϊαν. Ep. 104. Tom. 4. pt. 2. p. 1174.

§ Των Αρειανων λεγοντων αφυχον ειναι την τε κυριε σαρκια. Annales, pt. 3. p. 244.

consequence



consequence of his principles, and it was universally adopted by his followers. Indeed, it would have been exceedingly absurd to suppose that there were two intelligent principles, both created beings, inhabiting the same body. This, however, is a decisive proof of the novelty of the Arian doctrine. For, as I have observed, all the ancients, Origen himself included, supposed that there was a proper human soul in Christ, besides the logos.

In after times, some Arians made concessions to the orthodox, and on that account were called *Semiarians*. Thus Austin says, that “some of the later Arians “acknowledged that Christ had no beginning\*. The Semiarians in general also said, “that though Christ was not of the *same substance* with the Father, he was of a *like substance* †.” “This term, ομοιουσιον, *of like*

\* Unde quidam posteriores Arriani objecerunt istam sententiam, fassique sunt non ex tempore coepisse filium dei. De Trinitate, lib. 6. cap. 1. Opera, vol. 3. p. 326.

† Οι περι Βασιλειον, φημι, κ̅ Γεωργιον, κ̅ της ημαρτων ταυτης της αρεσεως προσαιλαι φασιν, & λεγομεν ομοουσιον, αλλ̅ ομοιουσιον. Epiphanius, Hær. 73. Opera, vol. 1. p. 845.



Such were the tenets of the Arians, and they by no means differed so much from the established doctrine at the time that they were first advanced, as they did from the orthodoxy which grew out of this controversy. And, accordingly, before there had been much disputing about it, it appears to have been viewed in a very different light from that in which it appeared afterwards.

Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, under whom the Arian controversy arose, after hearing many debates on the subject between Arius and his opponents, and after having called a synod on the subject (the question appearing to him to be of a doubtful nature) was at first distressed what part to take; favouring sometimes one side, and sometimes the other, but at length acceded to those who affirmed that the Son was consubstantial with the Father, and co-eternal with him\*.

\* *Αμφηρις δὲ τῆς ζήτησεως εἰς δοκίμης εἶναι, πεποῦθε τι καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρος τὰ πρῶτα, πῶς μὲν τῆς, πῶς δὲ ἐκεῖνος ἐπαινοῦν. τελευτῶν δὲ, τοῖς ὁμοῦσι καὶ συναϊδίον εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν ἀποφαινομένους ἐθέλο.*  
Sozomen, Hist. lib. 1. cap. 15. p. 32.

Constantine, in his letter to Alexander and Arius, represents the difference between them as a thing of no consequence\*.

So little was Alexander himself used to the distinctions, and the precise phraseology which took place afterwards, that, in his letter to Alexander of Constantinople upon this subject, he calls the Father and Son *two things*, inseparable from each other; the very language which had been used in answer to the Sabellians †.

\* Μανθανω εκειθεν υπηρχθαι τὸ παρόντος ζήτημαὸς τὴν καὶ αἰσθησιν·  
οὐ γὰρ σὺ ὦ Ἀλεξάνδρε ἐξήλεις παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, τί δηποῖς ἑκάστος  
αὐτῶν ὑπερ τινὸς τοπικῶν τῶν ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γεγραμμένων, μάλλον δὲ ὑπερ  
τινὸς μάλα ζήτημαὸς μερῶς πυνθανοιο. Socratis, Hist. lib. 1.  
cap. 7. p. 16.

† Προνοημένος γὰρ ὁ θεὸς δεικνύναι διδασκαλὸς, ἀλλήλων ἀχωρίστα  
πραγματὰ δύο, τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, οὐκ αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς κόλποις τῶν  
πατρὸς ὠνομάσεν. Theodoret, Hist. lib. 1. cap. 4. p. 12.

S E C T I O N III.

*The Arguments of the ancient Arians.*

WE shall be assisted in forming a just idea of the nature of the Arian controversy, by considering the *arguments* which the ancient Arians used in defending their doctrine.

It was probably some impropriety in the language of Alexander, in his dispute with Arius, that gave the latter an advantage. Alexander was thought by Arius to advance something too favourable to the Sabellians, as he laid great stress on the necessity of maintaining the unity of the three persons in the trinity; and it was always said by the ancients, that this circumstance drove Arius into the opposite extreme; and it was probably the means of procuring Arius so many friends.

Nicephorus says, that almost all the churches in the east, except that of Jerusalem,

falem, were Arian\*. Jerom, speaking of the council of Ariminum, says, that the term *ουσια* was abolished, all the world groaned, and wondered to find itself Arian †.

The orthodox considered themselves as holding a middle opinion between the Sabellians and the Arians, the former confounding the three persons, and the latter separating them too far; the former making too much of the divinity of Christ, and the latter too little. Thus, at least, things stood at the beginning of the controversy.

It is possible that Alexander had represented the Son as *αγεννητός*, *unbegotten*, as well as the Father; since Eusebius of Nicomedia, in his letter to Paulinus of Antioch, says, “ We never heard of two that were “ unbegotten †.” And considering Christ

\* Σχεδόν δε πλην Ιεροσολυμων των ανα την εω εκκλησιων οι εξ Αρεισ ειραειν. Hist. lib. 12. cap. 2. vol. 2. p. 225.

† Tunc usæ nomen abolitum est, tunc Nicenæ fidei damnatio conclamata est. Ingemuit totus orbis, et Ariannum se esse, miratus est. Ad Luciferianos, Opera, vol. 1. p. 427.

‡ Οτε γαρ εις δυο αγεννησια ακηνοσαμεν. Theodoriti, Hist. lib. 1. cap. 6. p. 24.

as being the original *logos* of the Father, or his necessary attribute, which was certainly the orthodox doctrine of the times, he was justifiable; but considering him as an *actual person*, the language was evidently improper. For the commencement of personality in the Son had always been called a *generation*; and therefore the Father and Son had been distinguished from each other, by the former being said to be  $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\iota\sigma\iota$ , *unbegotten*, and the latter  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\iota\sigma\iota$ , *begotten*, and sometimes  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\mu\alpha$ , &c.

But according to more ancient usage, the terms  $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\iota\sigma\iota$  and  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\iota\sigma\iota$  had been used to distinguish the *Creator* and the *creature*; and the distinction between  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta\iota\sigma\iota$  and  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\iota\sigma\iota$  (as if the former signified *created*, and the latter *generated*) was peculiar to christian theology, and, as I have shewn, was not universally observed by christians. This gave Arius an advantage. For if Christ was properly  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta\iota\sigma\iota$ , he must have been a creature; and if a creature, he must have been made as other creatures were. Arius says, “ I am  
“ persecuted, because I said that the Son  
“ is

“ is made out of nothing, since he is not  
 “ a part of God, nor made out of other  
 “ matter\*.”

Here we see the proper ground of Arius's opinion, and that it was evidently a departure from the fundamental principle of established orthodoxy. It was a virtual denial of the Son being an attribute of the Father. Arius, no doubt, saw the absurdity of the received doctrine concerning the generation of the Son from the Father, and thought it must imply the taking from him part of his substance. He, therefore, argued, that since Christ was not taken out of the substance of the Father, and it was acknowledged that he was not made of *other matter*, he must necessarily have been made out of *nothing*; which was the christian doctrine that had taken place of the great maxim of heathen philosophy, which supposed that such creation was impossible.

\* Δια τῆλο διακομεθα, κῆ οἱ εἶπαμεν, οἱ εἰς ἕκ οὐλων εἰν· ἕως δὲ εἶπαμεν, καθὼι ἕδε μέρος θεοῦ εἰν· ἕδ εἰς ὑποκειμενῶ τινος· δια τῆλο διακομεθα. Theodoreti Hist. lib. 1. cap. 5. p. 23.



It appears that the Arians ridiculed, and very justly, the distinction which the orthodox made between *creation* and *generation*; and therefore Chrysostom, in reply to them, says, “how do you know that to *generate* “and to *create*, is the same thing with “God\*?” In that age, however, it was thought necessary to lay the greatest stress on the difference between these two things, as every thing in orthodoxy depended upon it. But though the orthodox always said that the Father could generate, and that the Son was *generated*, γεννηθῆ, they would not allow that he could not be called γεννημα. Basil says, “that the Father has generated; “we learn in many places, but that the Son “is γεννημα, we learn no where †.” This, they thought, was putting Christ upon a level with *creatures*, properly so called.

The doctrine of the derivation of the Son from the Father, without diminishing his

\* Ποθεν οιδας οτι το κτισαι και το γεννησαι ταυτου. De dicto Abraham, Ser. 4. Opera, vol. 6. p. 43.

† Γεγεννηκεναι μεν γαρ τον πατερα, πολλαχθς δεδιδαγμεθα . γεννημα δε ειναι τον υιον εδεπω και τημερον ακηκοαμεν. Ad Eunomium, lib. 2. Opera, vol. 1. p. 731.

substance,

substance, had certainly been very ill defended by the orthodox of the age before Arius; but nevertheless it *was* the orthodoxy of the age, and of this Arius took a very proper advantage. “The Arians,” says Hilary, “derived the Son from nothing, lest the Father should be diminished by the generation of the Son, so that he would remain less perfect\*.”

Arius, in his letter to Alexander, says, “If the phrase *coming forth*, and *coming from the Father*, be understood by any as of a part of the same substance, and as a *proboule*, then is the Father a compound being, divisible, changeable, and a body; and, as far as in them lies, they make an incorporeal God to have the same affections as a body †.”

\* Ne si ex patre fit filius, deus fit imminutus in filium, solliciti nimium, ne patrem filius ab eo natus evacuet: atque idcirco deo in filii creatione subveniunt, eum non de extantibus comparando, ut intra naturæ suæ perfectiorem pater, quia nihil ex eo fit genitum, perseveret. Lib. 2. p. 23.

† Και ει το, εκ γαγρος, και το, εκ παλρος εξηλθον, και ηγω, ως μερ  
 τς ομοσις, και ως προβουλη υπο τινων νοειται, συνθετος εσαι ο πατηρ,  
 και

Arius had a still more plausible handle against the orthodox, with respect to their doctrine concerning the Son being of the *same substance* with the Father, because, in the controversy with the Sabellians, this language had been constantly reprobated. The Arians, therefore, had a very good pretence for calling the orthodox Sabellians, because they adopted their peculiar language. “The Arians,” says Austin, “call us Sabellians, though we do not say that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one, which the Sabellians did; but we say that they are of one nature\*.” “They who dislike the word *consubstantial*,” says Socrates, “charged those who introduced it as favouring the opinion of Sabellius and

και διαίρετος, και τρεπλος, και σωμα και αυτε, και το οσον επ' αυτοις τα ακολυθα σωματι πασχων ο ασωματι θεος. Epiphanius, Hær. 69. vol. I. p. 733.

\* Sed sicuti Arriani Sabellianos nos esse criminantur, quamvis non dicamus, unum eundemque esse patrem et filium, et spiritum sanctum, quod Sabelliani dicunt: sed dicimus unam eandemque esse naturam patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti, quod catholici dicunt. De Nuptiis, Opera, vol. 7. p. 849.

“Montanus,

“ Montanus, and therefore called them  
 “ blasphemers, as taking away the substance  
 “ of the Son of God ; while they who were  
 “ attached to the word *consubstantial*,  
 “ charged the others with polytheism, and  
 “ as introducing heathenism \*.” But, as I  
 have observed, it was contrary to their pro-  
 per principles, that the orthodox ever dis-  
 claimed the term *consubstantial*. For if the  
 Son was the proper *reason* of the Father, it  
 must have been right to say, that he was *of*  
*the same substance* with him.

The Arians had no less advantage with  
 respect to their other position, viz. that *there*  
*was a time when the Son was not*; because, with  
 regard to his personality, this had been the  
 declared opinion of the orthodox before that  
 age, and he had never been considered as  
 having existed from eternity, except as the  
 proper *logos*, or *reason* of the Father, without

\* Οι μεν γαρ τα ομοσσια την λεξιν εκκλινοντες, την Σαβελλιου κη Μοντανου δοξαν εισηγησθαι αυτην τες προσδεχομενες ενομιζον κη δια-  
 τειλο βλασφημιας, εκαλεν, ως αναρηνιας την υπαρξιν τα υια τα θεα ·  
 οι δε παλιν τω ομοσσιω προσκειμενοι, πολυθειαν εισαγειν τες ειερες νο-  
 μιζοντες, ως ελληνισμον εισαγουιας εξειρεποντο. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 23.

which he would not have been λογικόν, a rational being.

Arius, in his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, says concerning Alexander, “ the  
 “ bishop violently persecutes us, moving  
 “ every thing against us, so as to expel us  
 “ from the city as atheists, because we can-  
 “ not agree with him, when he says in  
 “ public, there was always a Father, and  
 “ always a Son, Father and Son at the same  
 “ time ; that the Son exists together with  
 “ God in an ungenerated state ; he was al-  
 “ ways generated from him that was unge-  
 “ nerated. God did not precede the Son  
 “ even a thought, or an atom \*.” And yet  
 in this Alexander advanced nothing con-  
 trary to the anciently received doctrine, ex-  
 cept in saying, that the generation of the  
 son was from eternity.

\* Οτι μεγαλως ημας εκπορθει η ενδιωκει, η παλαια καλων κινει  
 καθ ημων ο επισκοπος \* ως τε η ενδιωξει ημας εκ της ποσειως ως  
 ανθρωπος αθεος, επειδη ε συμφανεμεν αυτω δημοσια λεγοντι, αι ο θεος,  
 αι ο υιος \* αμα πατηρ, αμα υιος \* συνυπαρχει αγεννητως ο υιος τω θεω,  
 αι γεννης εστιν, α γεννητογεννης εστιν \* εις επινοια, εις ατομω τιμω παραγει ο  
 θεος τω υιο. Theodoriti, Hist. lib. 1. cap. 5. p. 22.

The

The Arians, however, rejecting the difference between *generation* and *creation*, said, according to Athanasius, “ God was not always a Father, and afterwards became so. “ The Son was not always ———. The “ Son of God was made out of nothing, “ and there was a time when he was not; “ that he was not before he was generated \*.” Hilary also says, “ the Arians “ take advantage of the expression, *he was “ not before he was generated*, as if the nature of his subsisting origin was denied †;” i. e. the principle from which he sprung, which existed in the Father.

The Arians derived the same advantage from the doctrine of the primitive Fathers, that the Father generated the Son *volunta-*

† Ουκ αει ο θεος πατηρ ην, αλλ' ην οτε θεος μονος ην, και ετω πατηρ ην, υστερον δε επει γεγονε πατηρ, εκ αει ην ο υιος· παντων γαρ γενομενων εξ εκ ουλων, και παντων ουλων κτισματων και ποιηματων γενομενων, και αυτος ο τε θεος λογος εξ εκ ουλων γεγοθεν· και ην ποτε οτε εκ ην, και εκ ην πριν γεννηθη. *Contra Arianos, Or. 1. Opera, vol. 1. p. 310.*

\* Excusationem, dicens: non erat antequam nasceretur: ut in eo quod non fuit antequam nasceretur, naturam ei subsistentis originis denegaret. *Lib. 6. p. 106.*

*rily.*

rily. “The Arians,” says Epiphanius, “say, did God generate the Son voluntarily, or involuntarily? If we say involuntarily, then we subject God to necessity. If voluntarily, we allow that a volition preceded the Son. — But these things, he says, bear no relation to God. He neither generates the Son voluntarily, nor involuntarily; for the divine nature is above all will, and is not subject to time, or necessity\*.”

Such were the metaphysical arguments of the ancient Arians. They likewise proved from the scriptures, that Christ was a creature; and as they supposed that the *wisdom* in the book of Proverbs referred to Christ, they laid great stress on its being there said that God *created* this wisdom. The Arian, in Athanasius’s disputation, says, “but do

\* Θελων ἢ ἐγεννησεν, ἢ μὴ θελων; εἰν εἰπῶμαι μὴ θελων, ἀναγκη περιβαλλομεν το θειον. και εἰν εἰπῶμαι οἱ θελων, διδοσμεν οἱ ἢν το θελημα πρὸ τῆ λογῆ. Ουκ εἰν δὲ τῶν ἔθεν εἰς θεον, ὡς υπολαμβανεις, ὡ κενοδοξοι. παρὰ θεω γαρ ταῦτα εχ εἰν. εἰε θελων τῶν ἐγεννησεν, εἰε μὴ θελων, ἀλλ’ ὑπερβολη φυσεως. ὑπερβαινει γαρ ἡ θεια φυσις βελον, και εχ υποπιπλει χρονῶ, εἰε ἀναγκη ἀγέλαι. Ancoratus, sect. 51. Opera, vol. 2. p. 55.

“ thou answer me with respect to *the Lord*  
 “ *created me.* The Lord acknowledged  
 “ that he was created by his Father\*.”  
 “ When they are defeated,” he says, “ they  
 “ have recourse to *the Lord created me* in  
 “ the beginning of his way †.” They like-  
 wise alledged Christ being called *the first*  
*born of all the creation ‡.*

I shall conclude this article with observ-  
 ing, that, if what Theodoret says be true, it  
 will be probable, that the Arians imagined  
 that there was something unfavourable to  
 their sentiments in the epistle to the He-  
 brews; for he says that they thought it to  
 be spurious §.

\* Πλην συ αποκριθή μοι περι τε κυριος εκλισε με, τε κυρια ομολο-  
 γησαντες εαυτον εκλισθαι υπο τε ιδις πατρος. Opera, vol. 1. p.  
 120:

† Εν ω γαρ ητλωνται πεποιθασιν ενταις παρομιαις τω λεγοντι·  
 κυριος εκλισε με αρχην οδων αυτη εις εργα αυτη. Sermo Major, de  
 fide Montfaucon's Collectio, vol. 2. p. 10.

‡ Nomen primogenitus simplicioribus objicientes.  
 Coll. 1. 15. Cyrilli Alex. Thesaurus, lib. 10. cap. 3.

§ Θαυμαστον εδεν δρωσιν οι την αριανικην εισδεξαμενοι νοσον, καλα  
 των αποστολικων λυτικων γραμματων, και την προς Εβραιους επιστολην  
 των λοιπων αποκρινουτες, και νοσον ταυτην αποκαλειντες. Ad. Heb. i.  
 1. Opera, vol. 3. p. 512. Ed. Halæ.



S E C T I O N IV.

*Of the Arguments of the Orthodox against the Arians.*

HAVING seen on what principles the ancient Arians defended their tenets, and particularly what advantage they took of the received language of the orthodox, I shall likewise give a view of the light in which the orthodox of that age considered the principles of Arianism; by which means we shall have a pretty clear idea of the nature of the controversy.

The capital argument of the orthodox was, that the Son, being the *logos of God*, was the proper *reason of the Father*, and therefore could not have been made out of nothing, but must have been from eternity *in him*, and *consubstantial* with him. Eusebius says, “the Father produced the Son from himself\*.” “God the Father,” says

\* *Αυτος ἐξ εαυτου γεννητας.* De Laudibus Con. p. 746.

Ruffinus, “ is, therefore, the true God, and  
 “ the Father of truth, not *creating* from  
 “ within, but *generating* the Son from what  
 “ he himself is, as a wise man generates  
 “ wisdom, a righteous man righteousness,  
 “ &c. as light generates splendor, and as a  
 “ man generates a word [or thought]\*.”

Cyril of Alexandria says, “ If the Arians  
 “ attack us, and ask whether there be *two*  
 “ that are unbegotten, and on our saying  
 “ there is only *one*, and that one the  
 “ Father, they say that then we make  
 “ the Son a creature; we answer, If the  
 “ Son be the wisdom, the power, and the  
 “ word of the Father; and the word, wis-  
 “ dom, and power were always in the Fa-  
 “ ther, the Son cannot be said to be made  
 “ afterwards; but he is *God of God*, and  
 “ *light of light*. So that the begotten is

\* Est ergo deus pater verus, tanquam veritatis pater, non extrinsecus creans. sed ex eo quod ipse est. filium generans, id est, quia sapiens, sapientiam, quia justus justitiam, quia sempiternus sempiternum, quia immortalis immortalem, quia invisibilis invisibilem, quia lux splendorem quia mens verbum. In Symbol. Opera, p. 172.

“ from

“ from him that is unbegotten, and from  
 “ him that was not made, himself also not  
 “ made\*.”

It was acknowledged by the orthodox, that many of the ancient writers had expressed themselves as if they had considered Christ as being a proper creature; but it was observed, that what was innocent in them, was not so afterwards. Basil says, that “ many words were innocently used in  
 “ former times, of which the heretics now  
 “ take advantage; as the words *creature*,  
 “ and *a work*, &c. †”

\* Si Ariani nos aggrediantur, interrogantes utrum unum sit quod ingenitum est, an duo: ut quum unum certe dixerimus, et in patrem id retulerimus, inter creaturas filium connumerare cogamur: sic respondere oportet.— Si sapientia et virtus, et verbum patris filius est, eratque semper in patre verbum, et sapientia et virtus, non est factus postea filius, qui sic appellatur et sic est. Sed quemadmodum ex deo deus, et de lumine lumen effulsit: sic ex ingenito genitus, hoc est, ex non factio non factus. Thesaurus, lib. 1. cap. 1. Opera, vol. 2. p. 215.

† Διο ὅτι ἐξ πολλῶν ἀν εὐροῖς ἐκεῖ φωνῶν, τὰς νῦν τοῖς αἰρετικοῖς μεγίστην ἰσχυρὴν παρεχομένης. ὡς τὸ κλισμα, ἐξ τοῦ ποιημα, καὶ εἰ τι τοιῶτον. Epist. 61. Opera, vol. 3. p. 101.

Gregory Nazianzen says, that “ accord-  
 “ ing to the doctrine of Arius, Christ must  
 “ not only be a creature, but the meanest of  
 “ creatures, being created merely for the  
 “ sake of creating other things ; and adds,  
 “ that for the purpose of creation, the mere  
 “ will of God was sufficient\*.”

Another great advantage which the or-  
 thodox had over the Arians arose from the  
 latter considering Christ, though a creature,  
 as having been the creator of the world, and  
 entitled to be called God, and to be wor-  
 shipped. This arose from their ascribing  
 to their *created logos*, all that had been  
 ascribed to the *uncreated one*, which all the  
 ancient Arians, without exception, did.  
 This, the orthodox said, was setting up  
*another God*, and incurring the guilt of *poly-*  
*theism* ; whereas their *logos*, they said, was  
 uncreated, and being the *logos* of the Fa-

\* Τα δε ολι μικρα και μη κτισματα μονον, αλλα κη παλιων κτισμα-  
 των ποιεις αιμιμοερα, ειγε τειων ενεκεν υπεση. κη ποιε, ωσπερ οργανα  
 τεχνιη, προ των τεχνιων προτερον εκ οηα, εδ' αν αλλως γενομενα,  
 ει μη τι κτισαι δι' αυτων εβεληθη δεθ, εκ ως αρκενιος τε βελεσθαι.

Or. 13. p. 209.

ther, was *one with him*, so that they did not make two different Gods. This charge we find from the earliest stage of this controversy to the last.

Athanasius represents St. Anthony as saying “ they, calling the *logos* which “ is from the Father a *creature*, do not “ differ from the heathens, who worship “ the creature instead of the creator \*.” Hilary says, “ Let the heretics blot out “ from the gospel, *I am in the Father, and “ the Father in me, and I and the Father “ are one* ; that they may either preach two “ Gods, or one God †.” In this he has a view to both the Arians and the Sabellians. Basil says, “ they who say that the only be- “ gotten is a creature, and then make a god

\* Ὑμεῖς γὰρ, εὐσεβῆνες, χριστιανοὶ ἐσε̅· ἐκεῖνοι δὲ κῆσιμα λεγόντες τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, μίον τῶ θεῶ καὶ λόγον, ἔδεν διαφέρουσιν ἐθνικῶν λατρευόντες τῆ κῆσει παρὰ τὸν κῆσιμα θεόν. Vita Antonii, Opera, vol. 2. p. 491.

† Deleant hæretici evangelicam filii de se professionem : ego in patre, et pater in me ; et ego et pater unum sumus ; ut possint vel duos deos prædicare, vel solum. Lib. 7. p. 151.

“ of him, and worship him ; by worship-  
 “ ping the creature rather than the creator,  
 “ evidently introduce heathenism ; but,”  
 alluding to the unitarians, “ they who deny  
 “ the logos to be *God of God*, while they  
 “ confess the Son in word, they in rea-  
 “ lity deny his existence, and renew Ju-  
 “ daism \*.”

“ To make a created god,” says Gregory Nyssen, “ is an agreement with the error  
 “ of the heathens †.” “ The Arians,” says Epiphanius, “ are the most impious of all  
 “ heretics, who divide the Son from the  
 “ Father’s substance, and therefore make  
 “ him *another principle ‡*.” “ We,” says

\* Οι μεν γαρ εργον θεσ ειναι λεγουσιν τον μονογενη, κ̅ ποιημα, ει̅α  
 προσκυνουσιν κ̅ θεολογουσιν . εκ τε λατρευειν τη κ̅ισει κ̅ μη τω κ̅ισ-  
 αν̅ι . τα των ελληνων αν̅ικρυς επ̅ισαγχεσιν . οι δε τον εκ θεσ θεου λογον  
 αρ̅νεμενοι, κ̅ ονομα̅ι μεν ομολογουσιν υιον, εργω δε και αληθεια την  
 υπ̅αρξ̅ιν αδ̅ελφ̅ις, τον Ισ̅δαισμον πα̅λι αν̅ανεσ̅ιναι . Hom. 27.  
 Opera, vol. i. p. 519.

† Τω μεν γαρ κ̅ισον αναπλαττειν θεον, της των ελληνων απα̅της  
 συνηγο̅ρ̅ γινε̅ται . Contra Eunomium, Or. 12. Opera, vol.  
 2. p. 300.

‡ Αρειομαν̅ι̅αι δε οι παν̅ων ασεβεσ̅α̅ι, οι τον υιον απο της πα̅ρω̅ας  
 εσ̅ια̅ς διαιρειν, και απολλο̅β̅ειν το̅λω̅ν̅ι̅ς, εκ αξ̅ια̅ς τον υιον ομο̅ιμον

Ambrose, “ say there is one God, not two,  
 “ or three, like the impious heresy of the  
 “ Arians, which falls into the very guilt  
 “ with which it charges others. For he  
 “ says there are three Gods, who separates  
 “ the divinity of the trinity\*.” Agreeably  
 to this, Austin writing against the Arians,  
 quotes, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is  
 one Lord*, and then says, “ Why will you  
 “ make us two Gods, and two Lords? You  
 “ say that the Father is Lord and God, and  
 “ you say that Christ is Lord and God. I  
 “ ask, whether these two are one? You  
 “ answer, they are two Gods. It remains,  
 “ then, that you erect temples and images  
 “ to them †.” Fulgentius also considered

ειναι τω πατρι, εδε εκ της εστιας τε πατρος αυτου γεγεννησθαι. An-  
 coratus, sect. 118. Opera, vol. 2. p. 120.

\* Unum ergo deum, non duos aut tres deos dicimus, ut  
 impia Arianorum hæresis dum criminatur incurrit. Tres  
 enim deos dicit, qui divinitatem separat Trinitatis. De  
 Fide, cap. 1. Opera, vol. 4. p. 114.

† Audi Israel, dominus deus tuus, deus unus est. Quid  
 nobis vultis facere duos deos et duos dominos? Dicitis  
 dominum patrem, et deum patrem, dicitis dominum  
 Christum et deum Christum: interrogo, utrum ambo  
 simul

the Arians as worse than the Sabellians. "These," says he, "did ill to join the  
"divine persons, but the Arians did worse  
"to separate them\*."

It is also with great justice that the orthodox exposed the doctrine of the Arians on the idea of a creature being capable of *creating*. Austin says, "If Christ was *made*,  
"he must have been made by himself; for  
"without him was not any thing made  
"that was made †." "If the power of  
"God," says Cyril of Alexandria, "cannot  
"be received by the nature of a creature,  
"how can a Son created out of nothing be  
"capable of this, according to you ‡?"

simul unus fit? Respondetis, duo dii: superest ut eis et  
templa et idola faciatis. Contra Max. Opera, vol. 6.  
p. 683.

\* Quia et Sabellius male conjunxit, et Arrius sceleratius separavit. Adv. Pent. p. 719.

† Noli putare factum esse inter omnia: nam si et ipse factus est, non per illum facta sunt omnia; sed inter cetera factus est ipse. Ser. 3. Opera, suppl. p. 32.

‡ Verum si capi non poterat dei virtus a natura creaturarum, quomodo creatus a nihilo filius capax ejusdem secundum vos est? Thesaurus, lib. 4. cap. 2. Opera, vol. 1. p. 265.

Gregory



Gregory Nazianzen emphatically says, “ he is not God who is created ; nor can  
“ he be our master, who is our fellow-  
“ servant\*.

Athanasius says, “ there is no created ma-  
“ ker of all things. For all things were  
“ made by the logos ; but he could not make  
“ all things if the logos himself had been  
“ made. Nor can angels create, being them-  
“ selves created, though Valentinus, and  
“ Marcion, and Basilides think so, and you  
“ are imitators of them †.”

He charges the Arians with divesting the Father himself of his divinity, by depriving him of his logos, and denying that he is properly a Father. After speaking of Arianism as the worst of heresies, he says, “ some err in one respect, and

\* Ου γαρ θεος το κτισμενον, εδε δεσποικον το ομοδελον. Or. 13. p. 210.

† Των γαρ γενομενων εδεν εστι ποιητικον αυτιον • πασιλα γαρ δια τε λογη γεγογεν • εκ αν εργασαμενε κη αυτη τα παντα, ει κη αυτη ο λογος των κτισματων ην • εδε γαρ εδε αγγελοι δημιουργειν δυνασσειλαι κτισμα οσες και αυτοι • καν Ουαλεινιου, και Μαρκιων, και Βασιλειδης, τοιαυτα φρονωσι • και υμεις εκεινων ζηλωται τυγχανετε. Contra Arianos, Or. 3. vol. 1. p. 392.

“ others

“others in another. Some, like the Jews,  
 “say that the Lord was never incarnate.  
 “This alone, with great madness, attacks  
 “the divinity itself; saying, that there is  
 “no logos, and that God is no father\*.”  
 But this argument seems to affect the uni-  
 tarians as much as the Arians.

It was on the idea of the Arians setting  
 up *two principles of divinity*, and thereby  
 making more Gods than one, and of the  
 Sabellians making no difference between the  
 persons of the trinity, that the orthodox  
 always represented themselves (as I have  
 observed) as holding the middle between  
 two extremes. The idea occurs a thousand  
 times in their writings. They are con-  
 stantly guarding their hearers against *con-*  
*founding* the persons with Sabellius, or *se-*  
*parating* them with Arius. Thus Gregory  
 Nazianzen speaks of the orthodox, as “in

\* Αἱ μὲν εἰως, αἱ δὲ ἐκείως καὶ ἀψευδομέναι, ἢ μηδολῶς ἐπιδημη-  
 κεναι τῶν κυρίων, ὡς Ἰουδαῖοι νομιζόντες, ἐπλανήθησαν· αὐτὴ δὲ μονή, μα-  
 κροτέρου εἰς αὐτὴν θεοῦ τὴν τέλει μνησθε, λεγέσθαι, μηδὲ ὅπως εἶναι τὸν λόγον,  
 μηδὲ τὸν θεὸν πατέρα εἶναι. *Contra Arianos, Or. i. Opera,*  
*vol. i. p. 300.*

“ a middle way between Sabellianism on  
 “ the one hand, and Arianism on the other,  
 “ the former confounding the persons, and  
 “ the latter dividing them\*.” Again,  
 speaking of the supreme power, he says,  
 “ it consists of the *cause*, the *demiurgus*, and  
 “ the *perfecter*, I mean the Father, Son, and  
 “ Holy Spirit; which are neither so far  
 “ removed from each other, as to be sepa-  
 “ rated by nature, nor so closely united as  
 “ to be circumscribed within one person.  
 “ The former is the Arian atheism, and  
 “ the latter the Sabellian †.”

On this principle, he, as well as many  
 others, compares the Sabellians to Jews,  
 and the Arians to Gentiles. Isidore Pelu-

\* Προσκωνόμεν ἐν πατέρα, καὶ υἱόν, καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τοὺς μὲν  
 ἰδιοτήτας χωρίζουτες, ἐνέντες δὲ τὴν θεότητα. καὶ εἰς εἷς ἐν ταῖς τρεῖς συνα-  
 λειφομέν, ἵνα μὴ τὴν Σαβελλιανὴν νόσον νοσησώμεν. εἰς διαίρεσιν εἰς τρεῖς  
 ἐκφυλά καὶ ἀλλοθρία, ἵνα μὴ τὰ Ἀρεῖα μανώμεν. Or. 29. Opera,  
 p. 489.

† Καλεῖται δὲ ἡ μὲν θεός, καὶ ἐν τρεῖσι τοῖς μεγίστοις ἰσάται, αἰῶν,  
 καὶ δημιουργὸς καὶ τελειοποιὸς, τῷ πατρὶ λέγω καὶ τῷ υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ  
 πνεύματι. ἃ μὴ ἐξ ἄλλων ἀπερρήται, ὡς φύσει τεμνεσθαι. μήτε  
 ἐξ ἑστέων, ὡς εἰς ἐν πρόσωπον περιγραφέσθαι. Τοῦ μὲν γὰρ τῆς  
 Ἀρειανίας, τοῦ δὲ τῆς Σαβελλιανικῆς ἀθείας ἐστίν. Or. 24. p. 428.

fiota also says, “ Let this be said, that Sabellius and the Jews may be silenced, and those that Arius, Eunomius, and the Gentiles, may be demolished \*.”

The orthodox Fathers were perpetually complaining of the difficulty they were in between the two extremes of Arianism and Sabellianism, and of the address which it required to keep clear of them both. Hilary is particularly pathetic on this subject. “-I am always,” says he, “ in danger, always in fear of falling into straits, or caverns, or of being entangled in snares. For when I preach, according to the law, the prophets, and the apostles, that there is but one God, Sabellius is upon me, ready to seize upon me, and devour me whole, as a most delicious morsel; but if, preaching against Sabellius, I deny that there is only one God, and acknowledge that the Son of God is truly God,

\* Τα μὲν γὰρ εἰρησῆαι ἰνα Σαβελλιῶ και Ἰουδαιοι ἐπισωμισθῶσι, τα δὲ ἰνα Ἀρειῶ, και Εὐνομιῶ, και Ἐλληνας ἐηλιευθῶσιν. Epist. lib. 3. Opera, p. 267.

“ the

“ the new heresy waits for me, and tells  
“ me that I preach two Gods\*.”

Arianism was always considered as a *new heresy*, and unitarianism as an old one. Ambrose says, that “ the Arians were the anti-  
“ christ intended by John, being the last of  
“ the heresies, and drawing poison from  
“ them all †.”

Theodoret having distributed his work on *heretical fables* into five parts, and having mentioned his treating first of the sect of the Gnostics, then that of the unitarians, from Ebion to Photinus, as holding opposite opinions; then those who held middle

\* Mihi vero, aut in augustias decidere, aut in defossa incidere, aut plagis illaqueari, semper in periculo semper in metu est. Prædicaturo enim secundum legem et prophetas et apostolos unum deum, adest mihi Sabellius, totum me sub hujus verbi professione, tanquam desideratum cibum morfu scævissimo transvorans. Negantem me rursum, contra Sabellium, unum deum, et consententem verum deum, dei filium, expectat nova hæresis, et a me duos deos ac prædicari. De Trinitate, lib. 7. p. 131.

† Et Joannes dicit hæreticos esse antichristos Arianos utique designans. Hæc enim hæresis post omnes hæreses cæpit, et ex omni hæresi venena collegit. Opera, vol. 4. p. 143.

opinions

opinions between them, says, “ In the  
 “ fourth place I shall explain the *later*  
 “ *heresies*, viz. those of Arius and Euno-  
 “ mius\*.”

I do not, indeed, find any such pretences to high antiquity made by the Arians, as the unitarians laid claim to. They only appeal to the language of the scriptures, which all persons interpret so as to favour their own opinions, and such expressions of the orthodox Fathers, especially Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen, as have been already mentioned, and which I have shewn to be sufficiently agreeable to the orthodoxy of the age in which they lived; the principles of which were very remote from those of Arianism.

One of the weak sides of the orthodox hypothesis, was the stress that was laid upon the difference between *generation* and *creation*. From this the Arians had derived considerable advantage, especially with re-

\* Εν δε τω τελειω της νεωτερας επιδειξομεν αιρεσεις την Αρειου φημι. και Ευνομιου, και οσαι μελ εκεινας εφυσαν. Opera, vol. 4. p. 188.

spect to what is said concerning *wisdom* in the book of Proverbs. In the translation of the septuagint we read *the Lord CREATED me the beginning of his ways*, which certainly had the appearance of making this *wisdom* (or *Christ*, supposed to be intended by it) a *creature*. In what manner the orthodox interpreted this passage, so as to evade the force of the argument, without rejecting the translation of the septuagint, we have seen already. Here I shall only observe, that, notwithstanding the dislike which the orthodox had for the translations of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, as being unitarians, they were glad to avail themselves of their interpretation of this passage. For they rendered it, *the Lord POSSESSED me the beginning of his ways*, a rendering which is much approved by Eusebius \*.”

\* Εἰ γὰρ τις ἐξακριβωσαίῳ τοῦ ἀληθῆ ἔν τῆς θεοπνεύστῃ γραφῆς, εὐροὶ ἀν τὴν ἑβραϊκὴν ἀναγνώσιν ἔ περιεχέσαν το, ἐκίσε με . διόπερ ἀδὲ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐρμηνευτῶν, ταύτῃ τις κερήλαι τῆ λέξῃ . αὐλικα δ' ἐν ο μὲν Ἀκυλας, κυριος ἐκίσαλο με κεφαλῖον τῶν οδῶν αὐλῆ, εἰρηκεν . οδὲ Συμμαχος, κυριος ἐκίσαλο με ἀρχὴν οδῶν αὐλῆ . ο δὲ Θεοδοτίων, κυριος ἐκίσαλο με ἀρχὴν οδῆ αὐλῆ. Ec. Theol. lib. 3. cap. 2. p. 152.

That the word *made* does not always imply a proper *creation*, the orthodox attempted to prove from other passages of scripture; and the extreme weakness of their reasoning may serve to shew how much they felt themselves pressed by this argument. Cyril of Alexandria says, “ We read that God “ is *made* a refuge, but this does not imply “ that God was *created*\*.” That Christ was only *generated*, and not *made*, Austin proves from its being said, “ *This day is “ born unto us a Saviour, not made †.*” Hilary also proves that “ Christ was not made “ out of nothing, but was derived from the “ substance of the Father, because he said, “ *I came forth from the Father ‡.*”

\* Et factus est mihi dominus in refugium? Nunquid concedes factum esse deum. De Trinitate, lib. 4. Opera, vol. 2. p. 422.

† Christus non factus sed natus est, dicente angelo pastoribus, ecce natus est vobis hodie salvator qui est Christus dominus. Questiones ex N. T. 50. Opera, vol. 4. p. 735.

‡ Quod dixit: ex patre exivi, et veni, utrum ambiguitatem reliquerit, quin intelligeretur non aliunde quam ex patre esse quod deus est.—A patre enim venisse, et ex deo exisse, non est significationis ejusdem: et quantum interest  
inter



That Christ had a proper *human soul*, having the same affections with the souls of other men, the orthodox proved from our Saviour being said to *grieve*, and to be *in an agony*, &c. Thus Athanasius, in answer to the Apollinarians, alledges Christ being *disturbed in spirit*. “This,” he says, “cannot arise either from the insensible body, or the unchangeable Godhead\*.” In another place he alledges, against this part of the Arian system, that, according to it, the divinity must have suffered and have risen from the dead †. “How can any one say that the body of Christ was without soul, or without understanding

inter nasci et adesse, tantum a se uterque fermo discernitur: cum aliud sit a deo in substantia nativitatis exisse, aliud sit a patre in hunc mundum ad consummanda salutis nostræ sacramenta venisse. Lib. 6. p. 108.

\* Και πως ην λυπεμενθη, και αδημονων, και προσευχομενθη, και ελαραχθη δε τω πνευμαλι ο Ιησους γεγραπται. ταυτα δε ελε σαρκος ανοητε αν ειη, ελε θεοτηθη αιρεσις, αλλα ψυχης νοησιν εχουσης, λυπεμενην, και ταραττομενην, και αδημονεσαν, και νοηως επαισθανομενην τω παθες. De Incarnatione, Opera, vol. 1. p. 628.

† Αρειθη δε σαρκια μονην προς αποκρυφην της θεοτηθη ομολογει. ανη δε τω εσωθεν εν ημιν ανθρωπω, τειεσι της ψυχης τον λογον εν σαρκι λεγει γεγονεναι, την τω παθες νοησιν και την εξ αυθ αναστασιν τη θεοτηθη προσαγειν τοημων. Ibid. p. 635.

“ —Terror, and grief, and anxiety, are affec-  
 “ tions of the soul; labour, and sleep, and  
 “ wounds are of the body, the weakness of  
 “ the flesh \*.” Epiphanius also, in the  
 same controversy, alledges, but with much  
 less propriety, 1 Cor. ii. 6. *We have the  
 mind of Christ †.* Fulgentius argues, that  
 if Christ had had only a body, and not a  
 soul, he could not have saved more than the  
 bodies of men; but having recovered the  
*whole* of the lost sheep, and not a part of it  
 only, he infers that he was able to save  
 both ‡. He also observes that, if Christ

\* Πως δε αν λεγοι τις, αφυχον και ανοηλον, το σωμα τε χριστου—  
 Ταραχη γαρ και λυπη, και αδημονια, ψυχης νοσηματα · κοπος δε και  
 υπνος, και τρωσις σωματος, σαρκος ασθενηματα. Anathemas, as-  
 cribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus, Opera, p. 6.

† Ancoratus, sect. 76. Opera, vol. 2. p. 81.

‡ Quapropter cum error iste animæ simul intelligatur,  
 et corporis, si dei filius absque anima rationali solam acce-  
 pit hominis carnem, inferiorem partem illius ovis domum  
 retulit, meliorem vero (quod absit) errori perpetuo dereli-  
 quit: nam manifestum est, quoniam hoc revocavit, quod  
 propriis humeris reportavit: si autem ipse totam se profi-  
 tetur ovem propriis humeris impositam reportasse, totus  
 homo cognoscatur in Christo: quoniam tunc est hominis  
 credenda redemptio: si in filio dei suscepti onis humanæ, id  
 est,

had not had a human soul, there would have been nothing extraordinary in his being without sin, as the divinity cannot possibly sin \*. That all the orthodox Fathers held that Christ had a proper human soul, as well as a human body, I have produced abundant evidence. Vol. 2. p. 198.

Lastly, Athanasius urges the Arians with the conformity of their principles to those of the Gnostics, on the idea that, according to them, Christ was a being of the same nature with the angels. “ If,” says he, “ the Son be not of the things that are made, but of the Father’s essence, the reasoning of the Arians concerning the word *made* is foolish; and if they impudently assert that it is used only by way of comparison, and that things com-

est, ovis illius reportatæ, non deficit plenitudo. Ad Trifundum, lib. I. cap. 10. p. 451.

\* Nam si dei filius animam humanam in carnis susceptione non habuit, et hoc beatus Petrus de ejus creditur divinitate dixisse, quid est, quod pro magno in laudem dicitur Christi? Quia divinitas ejus immunis esse potuit a labe peccati, cum dei sit proprium, non solum non peccare, sed etiam a peccato salvare. Ibid. cap. 11, p. 452.

“pared must be similar, so that the Son  
 “must be of the same nature with the an-  
 “gels, they ought to be the more ashamed,  
 “as adopting the opinions of Valentinus,  
 “Carpocrates, and other heretics; of whom  
 “the former said, that the angels were of  
 “the same nature with Christ, and the  
 “latter, that angels were the makers of  
 “the world. For they must have learned  
 “of them to compare the logos of God  
 “with the angels. But they who ima-  
 “gine such things are put to shame by  
 “the Psalmist, who says, Who among the  
 “Sons of God is like unto the Lord; who  
 “among the gods is like unto thee, O  
 “Lord \* ?”

\* Ουκεν ει των μεν γενήτων αλλος εστι, της δε τε πατρος ἰστίας μονος  
 ιδιον γεννημα ο υιος, μεμαλαιωται τοις Αρειανοις η περι τε γενομενος  
 προφασις . καν γαρ εν τέτοις αισχυνηδες βιάζονται παλιν λεγειν συγ-  
 κρητικως ειρησθαι τα ρητα \* και δια τειο ειναι το συγκρινομενα ομογενη,  
 ωτε τον υιον της των αγγελων ειναι φυσεως, αισχυνηθησονται μεν προηγου-  
 μενωσ ως τα Ουαλεντινου και Καρποκρατη και των αλλων αιρειτικων ζητησ-  
 τες, και φθεγγομενοι . ων ο μεν τες αγγελωσ ομογεγεισ ειρηκε τω χριστω .  
 ο δε Καρποκρατησ αγγελωσ τε κοσμου δημιουργωσ ειναι φησι . παρ’ αυτων  
 γαρ ισωσ μαδοντες και ειοι, συγκρινωσι τον τε θεω λογον τοις αγγελωισ \*  
 αλλ’ ειπραπησονται τοιαυτα φανιλαζομενοι παρα μεν τε υμνωδε λεγοντοσ,  
 τισ ομοιωθησειαι τω κυριω εν υιοισ θεω, και τισ ομοιοσ σοι εν θεοισ κυριε.  
 Con. Ar. Or. 2. p. 363.

S E C T I O N V.

*General Observations on the Arian Controversy.*

**T**HUS have I given the best view that I have been able to collect of the principles on which the Arian controversy was conducted in early times; and the following circumstances clearly prove, that, notwithstanding the advantage which the Arians derived from the concessions and absurdities of their antagonists, their doctrine was really a *novel one*. All the orthodox Fathers before the age of Arius considered the *logos* which made the world, and which was the medium of all the divine communications to the patriarchs, as having been the proper *attribute of the Father*, and therefore *uncreated*. They also all supposed that Christ had a human soul, as well as a human body, and that the *logos* was united to *the man*, and not to the *body* only.

The Arian doctrine, therefore, that Christ, or the *logos*, was a created super-angelic spirit, the creator of the world, and the medium of the divine communications to the patriarchs, &c. (which all the Arians of that age believed; for, as I have more than once observed, they all transferred to their *created logos*, whatever had been supposed to have been the office of the *uncreated one*) and that this great spirit animated the body of Jesus in the place of a human soul, was altogether a novel doctrine, and not older than the age of Arius himself.

As to the doctrine of Christ being a pre-existent super-angelic spirit, and not the creator of the world, or not the medium of the divine communications to the patriarchs, it is much more novel; probably not older than a single century. In the same predicament also is the notion that the great powers of this super-angelic spirit were in a state of suspension, so that while upon earth he was reduced to the condition of a mere human soul; a strange notion, which nothing but the most insuperable difficulties

difficulties attending the original Arian hypothesis, could have led any man to adopt.

That the Arian doctrine, in any form, was not older than the age of Arius, is an insuperable objection to its truth, or to its being the doctrine of the scriptures. For they were always admitted to be the rule of faith by all christians. And certainly those who lived nearest to the age of the apostles, for whose use the books of the New Testament were written, and who had not the difficulties that we labour under, of learning foreign languages, and investigating ancient customs and ancient idioms, to embarrass and mislead them, must have been better qualified to understand the true sense of scripture than we are. Can that, then, be the true sense of scripture (how much soever we, with all the prejudices of education about us, may fancy it to favour any particular hypothesis) which, it is evident, no person in the three first centuries put upon it? This consideration ought certainly to check the confidence of those who are ever so well satisfied that their doctrine

is taught in the scriptures. Much more ought it to stagger those whose opinions had no existence before the reformation, which is the case with many of the modern Arians.

On the contrary, it cannot be denied, that the great body of the common people in early times were properly *unitarians*, that their doctrine existed and prevailed in the time of the apostles, and that they had as great a veneration for the books of the New Testament as we can have at this day; and yet they never found in them that doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, which many now think to be clearly and repeatedly taught in them. This is certainly an argument of great weight in favour of the unitarian interpretations of those particular texts, which, according to their literal meaning, seem to favour the doctrine of pre-existence, and ought to lead us to suspect, that it is owing to nothing but our early prejudices, that such interpretations, on the first proposal of them, appear unnatural.

It



It is pretty remarkable that the *common people* seem to have taken little or no part in the Arian controversy. For a long time at least, it was confined to the bishops and clergy. Indeed, the Arian doctrine was of such a nature, that it was not likely to interest the common people, who were then generally unitarians. They who had been accustomed to consider the *logos* as nothing more than *the wisdom and power of God* (which, we have seen, was the case with all the ancient unitarians) could not be supposed to take any part in a debate, in which the disputants on both sides agreed that the *logos* was *a person*, and the difference between them was, whether he was *created*, or *uncreated*.

Neither does it appear that the Arian doctrine served as an intermediate stage, by which the common people, who were unitarians, were brought to the trinitarian doctrine, which was universally prevalent in after ages; though this would not seem to be improbable, as it is very common at this day for persons to pass from Athanasianism

to Arianism, and then from Arianism to proper Unitarianism.

It is evident, from the writings of Basil, and especially from his letters, that the odium he lay under was chiefly with the common people, and that they were unitarians; and there are many other marks of the more ignorant of the common people being unitarians in a very late period, but none that I have found of their being generally Arians. Indeed, there was too much of *philosophy* in the Arian doctrine for the common people to enter into it. What a *prophet* was, a *prophet mighty in word and deed*, they could understand; but the doctrine of a *created logos*, a *created creator*, must have appeared strange to them; though, perhaps, not quite so much so as that of a *personified attribute*.

That the Arian doctrine gave no more satisfaction to the learned unitarians than that of the orthodox, may be concluded from the peculiar animosity with which the Arians always pursued the unitarians, as we see in the writings of Eusebius against Marcellus,

cellus, and in the persecution of Photinus, which was carried on chiefly by Arians. The same may also be inferred from the orthodox of that age speaking more favourably of the unitarians than they do of the Arians.

Nor is this so much to be wondered at; for, besides the respect with which unitarianism would be treated as an *ancient doctrine*, and still held by the generality of the common people, the Athanasians thought at least that they were agreed with the unitarians in an article which was deemed to be of much more consequence in that age than it was afterwards, which was the preserving of the *unity of God*. This the Athanasians maintained that they did, by supposing the *logos* to be what the unitarians said it was, viz. *the wisdom and power of God the Father*, differing from them only with respect to its *personification*. On the other hand, it has been seen, that they considered the Arians as absolutely *polytheists*, holding the doctrine of *two Gods*; from which charge, while the Arians consider Christ

as the *maker of the world*, and the *object of prayer*, I do not see how they can exculpate themselves. No doubt, however, a great part of the animosity of the orthodox against the Arians, arose from the opposition they met with from them; there being more men of learning among the Arians than among the unitarians.

It is much to be lamented that there are no remains of any controversy between the ancient Arians and unitarians, especially of the conference between Photinus and Basil of Ancyra. This would, no doubt, have thrown much more light than we now have on the subject of these differences, and on the state of ancient opinions in general.

CHAPTER II.

*Of the Nestorian Controversy.*

THE opinion of Nestorius being nearly allied to that of the ancient unitarians, it may not be improper to give some account of it, and of the controversy that was occasioned by it.

The master of Nestorius was Theodorus, bishop of Mopsuestia, who is said to have held the same opinion before him\*. From what Facundus has said in his justification, it should seem that he was more properly an unitarian, such as Photinus was. But it is probable, that their doctrine was so much alike, that few persons in that age thought there was much difference between them; and Theodorus is said to have had his instruction from Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus, while he was a presbyter at Antioch †.

\* Αλλα τῷ Νεστοριε δογμα, εἰ τῷ παρὸ Νεστοριε υπηρχεν υπερευγουμεν. Photii. Bib. sect. 39. p. 23.

† Lardner, *Credibility*, vol. 9. p. 351.

Upon

Upon the condemnation of Nestorius, his partisans, not being able to avail themselves of his writings, published those of Theodorus, in the Greek, Syrian, Armenian, and Persian languages; also an epistle of Ibas, bishop of Edeffa, and some pieces of Theodoret, which they thought favourable to them. These were generally denominated the *three chapters*; and it was thought necessary to hold a particular council for the purpose of condemning them \*. The same is observed by Justinian himself, in his epistle †. The Nestorians still preserve the writings of Theodorus with great care, and consider him as a saint of the first rank ‡.

There must have been something very popular in the doctrine of Nestorius. Jus-

\* See the preface to the works of Justinian, &c. by Bandini.

† Οτι τινες το Νεστοριον ονομα σιωπαν προσποιημενοι δια των προειρημενων, αυτον Νεστοριον, κη την κακοδοξιαν αυτη εισαγαγειν επεχειραν, την ασεβειαν των κεφαλαιων τειων τη καθολικη εκκλησια προσαπιοντες.  
Vol. 1. p. 6.

‡ Mosheim's Hist. vol. 1. p. 208. Jortin's Remarks, vol. 4. p. 288.

tinian says, that he drew many into error \*. Proclus, in an epistle to the Armenians, A. D. 435, in which he condemns the errors of Nestorius and Theodorus of Mopsuestia, did not, as Cave says, mention the name of Theodorus, lest he should too much offend the Armenians, to whom his memory was dear †.

Socrates says, that “Nestorius was accused by many as making Christ a mere man, and as introducing the opinion of Paulus Samosatensis and Photinus into the church ‡.” Marius Mercator also considered the heresy of Nestorius as “in part that of Paulus Samosatensis, in part that of Ebion, that of Marcellus of An-

\* Θεωδωρος δε & μονον διδασκαλος ην της Νεστοριε δυσσεβειας, αλλα & πολλους δια των απεθων αυτε συγγραμματων ηπαλησεν. Epist. p. 124.

† Anno 435, data ad Armenos epistola, Nestorii et Theodori Mopsuesteni errores damnavit, intacto tamen Theodori nomine, ne Armenos, quibus cara erat istius memoria, nimis offenderet. Historia Literaria, vol. 1, p. 423.

‡ Νεστοριος δε δοξαν παρα τοις πολλοις ειχεν, ως Ψιλον ανθρωπον λεγων τον κυριον, & ως Παυλε τε Σαμωσαλειως & Φωτεινε δογμα εις την εκκλησιαν αγων. Lib. 7. cap. 32. p. 381.

“cyra, and Photinus\*.” And Theodorus de Rhaita says, that “Theodorus of Mopsuestia held Christ to be a mere man, who, by the grace of God, deserved to be called God †.” “The Nestorians,” says Cyril of Alexandria, “called Christ *homo deiferus*, a man bearing a God ‡”—“a man actuated and impelled by the deity, and that he worked miracles by a power not his own §;” and that “the sonship and divinity of Christ belonged to the logos only ||.” He likewise says, that Nestorius ascribed the title of *son of God* in one sense to the logos, and in another

\* Aut cui est, vel fuit, vel erit aliquando possibile, persecruti omnia, et omnia commemorare, quibus probetur non novella hunc, sed vetere, partim Pauli Samosatani, partim Ebionis, partim Marcelli Galatæ, et Photini esse eum impietate distortum. Epist. p. 50.

† Qui et per gradus promovens, accepta a deo gratia promeruit nominari deus. Bib. Pat. vol. 8. p. 661.

‡ Si quisquam Christum deiferum hominem audit dicere, et non magis deum secundum veritatem, anathema esto. Epist. vol. 2. p. 26:

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid. p. 51.

“sense



“ sense to him that was born of a woman \*,” meaning the one by nature, and the other by adoption. According to Cassian, Nestorius said, it was “ the Spirit that made Christ “ formidable to dæmons †.” According to Theophylact, Nestorius said, that “ Christ “ was deified after his resurrection ‡ ;” meaning probably, that he received power and glory as a God, in consequence of his sufferings, which was the doctrine of the proper unitarians.

On the other hand, if we may depend on Marius Mercator, Nestorius denied that his doctrine was the same with that of Paulus Samosatensis and Photinus, as they held

\* Nestorius simulat quidem in exegesibus suis dicere se quod unus filius, et unus dominus, sed filiationem ac dominationem ad solum dei verbum refert.—Non sicut Nestorius, qui alias deo verbo separatim, alias ei qui ex muliere sit, tanquam alteri filio, adscribit. Epist. p. 52.

† Dicis quoque quod spiritus eum fecerit dæmonibus metuendum. De Incarnatione, lib. 7. cap. 19. Opera, p. 1111.

‡ Πῶς ἐστὶ Νεστοριὸς ἐνλαυθ’ ὁ λεγών, ὅτι μετὰ τὴν ἀναστάσιν ἐθεοποιήθη ὁ Χριστός. In John, cap. 6. vol. 1. p. 648.

that Christ had no divinity at all\*. He said, “it was a calumny by which he was charged with asserting that Christ was a mere man; for that he was God and man †.” According to Cassian, also, Nestorius said that “Christ was not a man as Adam was ‡.” And if we may presume that there is a faithful representation of the principles of Nestorius in the dialogue of Maxentius, who says, that “he supposed the word of God to have been united to Christ in the womb of the virgin ||,” he did not in fact differ from the orthodox, except in words. But he is much more generally represented as approaching to an unitarian.

\* Sic et quæ apostolorum sunt prædicabis, et hæreticorum prudentur effugies, et maxime quæ sunt Samosatani Pauli atque Photini, quæ tu scire confingens, prorsus ignoras. Nam Paulus et Photinus nesciunt filii deitatem. Opera, p. 79.

† Sed non nudus homo Christus, O calumniator, sed homo simul et deus. Ibid. p. 61.

‡ De Incarnatione, lib. 7, cap. 6. p. 1093.

|| Quia antequam nasceretur, non erat qui fieret dominus, nec posteaquam natus est, factus est dominus, sed in ipsa prorsus vulva unitione filii dei factus est dominus. Bib. Pat. vol. 5. p. 532.

Glycas

Glycas says that Nestorius considered Christ as a mere man, who received the Spirit at his baptism\*. Justinian, quoting the words of Theodorus, represents him as saying, “It is absurd to say that “ God was born of a virgin; for what “ is that but to say that he was of the “ seed of David, made of the substance “ of the virgin, and formed in her †.” This is of a piece with the remarkable speech of Nestorius, and six others, at the council of Ephesus, “ We cannot call him a God “ who is only two or three months old ‡.”

\* Μέλα τείλες Θεοδώρος ο Μοψουετίας πόλεως εσσης εν Κιλικια την ηγεμονίαν λαχών, δυσφημών τον κυριον ενά των καθ ημάς και κοινον είναι αλλά προκοπήν την χάριν δεχομενον, και εν αυτω τω βαπτισματι της τε παναγης πνευματος δωρεας γενομενον μέλοχον. *Annales*, pt. 3. p. 245.

† Εστι μεν γαρ ανοήλον το τον θεον εκ της παρθενε γεγενησθαι λεγειν · τειλο γαρ εδεν ελερον εστιν, η εκ σπερματος αυλου λεγειν Δαβιδ, εκ της εσσιας της παρθενε τέλειμενον, και εν αυτη διαπεπλασμενον. *Epist.* p. 38.

‡ Ο δε δυσσεβης Νεστοριος συν εξ ομοφροσιν αυλις ελεγεν · ολι διμηταιον και τριμηναιον ε δυναμαι λεγειν θεον. *Glycæ Annales*, pt. 4. p. 261.

It should seem, however, that Nestorius would not expressly say, that *Christ* was not God, but only that *what was born of Mary* was not so. But his enemies drew the inference for him. “They,” says Justinian, “who do not acknowledge that the  
 “ word of God was made flesh, plainly  
 “ make Christ to be a mere man, and to  
 “ be the Son of God by favour only, ac-  
 “ cording to the heresy of Nestorius, and  
 “ his master Theodorus\*.”

Cassian more particularly compares the opinions of Nestorius and those of the unitarians, saying, “They maintain that Christ  
 “ was a man born of Mary, and thou the  
 “ same. They say that Christ was made a  
 “ Saviour at baptism, thou that he became  
 “ the temple of God in baptism. They do  
 “ not deny that he was made God after his  
 “ sufferings. Thou deniest that he was

\* Οι δε αυτον τον θεον λογον ενανθρωπησαι μη ομολογησιντες, φανεροι εισι τον χριστον ψιλον ανθρωπον ειναι, και καλα χαριν υιον θεου ονομαζεσθαι λεγοντες, ως η καινοδοξια Νεστοριου, και Θεοδωρου τω διδασκαλω αυτου λεγει. Epist. p. 14.

“ so even after his ascension \*.” This was making him more heretical than the unitarians. But then Cassian had no authority for saying that the unitarians held that Christ was God, in any proper sense of the word, after his sufferings. Indeed, if he was not God before, it was impossible that he should become so afterwards.

From all these circumstances, it is possible that Nestorius might consider *Christ* to have been as much *a mere man* as the proper unitarians did, till after his baptism; after which he said that the logos (whom he perhaps considered as the second person in the trinity) was united to him, so that from this time he was the same compound being that the orthodox supposed him to be. Justinian says, that “ Nestorius distinguished *God the word* from *Christ a mere*

\* Illi solitarium hominem ex Maria natum adserunt, et tu idem. Illi servatorem aiunt per baptismum Christum esse factum, tu in baptismo templum dei factum. Illi eum deum non negant factum post passionem, tu negas eum etiam post ascensionem. De Incarnatione, lib. 6. cap. 14. p. 1066.

“ man, and ascribed to the man only all  
 “ the low things that were said of him\*.”

But it will appear by his own arguments in defence of his principles, that whatever he might occasionally give out, he differed very little from the unitarians.

It is something remarkable that, as the Pelagians were charged with being unitarians, or Nestorians; so the Nestorians are likewise charged with being Pelagians, asserting, that “ Adam and Eve were created  
 “ mortal, and that none of their posterity  
 “ receive any injury from their transgression †.” They who held this doctrine

\* Οἱ δὲ Νεστοριανοὶ δύο υἱοὺς εἰσαγεῖν βεβηλωμένοι, κεχωρισμένως λέγουσι τὸν θεοῦ λόγον, καὶ κεχωρισμένως τὸν χριστὸν ψῆλον ἀνθρώπου, καὶ μόνῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὰ ταπεινά ἀπονεμασιν. *Epist.* p. 70.

† *Quæstio contra catholicam fidem apud nonnullos Syrorum, et præcipue in Cilicia, a Theodoro quondam episcopo oppidi Mopsuesteni jamdudum mota, nunc usque penes paucos eorum admodum roditur, nec ea palam profertur sed abipsis qui de ea fornicantur, velut catholicis, intra ecclesias interim retinentur, progenitores videlicet humani generis Adam et Evam mortales a deo creatos, nec quemquam posterorum sui prævaricatione transgressi læsisse; sed sibi tantum nocuisse, seque mandati*  
 reos

are here supposed to have been in the church. And yet there are extant in the translation of Mercator, some sermons of Nestorius against Pelagius\*.

If we consider the *arguments* that Nestorius is represented as making use of in the defence of his principles, we shall not find that they differed at all from those of the unitarians. It is not even absolutely certain that he made any trinity in the godhead, or that he held the doctrine of the personification of the logos. He certainly did not think that there was any proper divinity in Christ, till after his birth, or indeed before his baptism.

According to Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius said, “How can he, who cannot be  
“comprehended, be confined in the womb  
“of a virgin†?” Urging the words of the gospel, *The book of the generation of Jesus*

reos apud deum fecisse, alterum penitus nullum. Mar. Mercatoris Commonitorium, p. 1.

\* Opera, p. 119, &c.

† Quomodo qui comprehendi nequit in utero virginis comprehensus est. De Incarnatione, vol. 2. p. 66.

*Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,* he said, “It is plain that God the word was “not the son of David\*.” According to Marius Mercator, Nestorius said, that “they “who said that Mary brought forth a God “gave occasion to the Pagans to reproach “christianity †.” Cassian says, that Nestorius asserted, with respect to the virgin Mary, that “no person could bring forth “another older than herself ‡;” and that “no creature could bring forth any thing

\* Liber, inquit, generationis Jesu Christi filii David filii Abrahæ. Manifestum vero est, quod deus verbum non fuerit filius Davidis. Ep. vol. 2. p. 21.

† Qui deum simpliciter dicit de Maria natum, primo omnium nobilitatem gentilibus profituit dogmatis, atque exponens in medium, vituperandum id ridendumque proponit. Statim enim paganus, cum reprehensione accipiens, quia de Maria deus natus est, infert adversus christianum. Necessario enim qui dicit similiter de Maria natum deum, et non illum conjunctione duarum naturarum, divinæ scilicet et humanæ, esse reputaverit, audiet; ego natum et mortuum deum et sepultum adorare non queo. Opera, p. 70.

‡ Nemo enim, inquis, antiquiorem se parit. De Incarnatione, lib. 2. cap. 2 p. 973.



“unlike itself\*.” With this view he acknowledged, John ii. 1. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh †.*

Like the proper unitarians, Nestorius argued from Christ being called *a man*; as from Paul saying, *By man came death, and by man came also the resurrection of the dead ‡*; and from his being called *a child*, *Take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt §.* *Against thy holy child Jesus, Herod and Pon-*

\* Quod dissimilem sibi res quælibet parere non possit. De Incarnatione. lib. 2. cap. 2. p. 1089.

† Cum deus dicat, quod de carne natum est, caro est, quod autem natum est de spiritu, spiritus est; quomodo puerum natum ex fœmina non unitione, sed natura, deum asseris? Maxentius in Bib. Pat. vol. 5. p. 521.

‡ Quoniam enim inquis, per hominem mors, ideo et per hominem resurrectio mortuorum. Cassian De Incarnatione, lib. 7. cap. 7. p. 1095.

§ Tolle, inquit, puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Ægyptum, futurum est enim, ut Herodes quærat perdere puerum. Et rursus: defuncti sunt omnes, qui quærebant animam pueri. Nunquid nam dictum est. Defuncti sunt, qui quærebant animam dei? Aut: tolle deum et fuge in Egyptum? Maxentius in Bib. Pat. vol. 5. p. 518.

*fius*

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*tius Pilate have conspired\**. He likewise urged the absurdity of supposing the logos to have been suckled, and to increase in wisdom †.

According to Cassian, Nestorius likewise argued from Christ being said to be *justified in the spirit* ‡.

Theodorus, who preceded Nestorius, said, that being baptized into the name of Christ was no more a proof that Christ was God, than being baptized into the name of Moses is a proof that *he* was God; as we learn from an extract from a book of his, produced at the council of Constantinople,

\* Convenerunt enim vere in civitate ista adversum sanctum-puerum tuum Jesum quem unxisti, Herodes et Pontius Pilatus. Maxentius, in Bib. Pat. vol. 5. p. 520.

† Necessè est enim eos qui appropriationis nomen ita vexant, et in diversum trahunt, deum verbum participem constituere lactationis, et incrementi paulatim accepti, timiditatisque tempore passionis declaratæ, &c. Cyril of Alexandria, Ep. Opera. vol. 2. p. 21.

‡ Jam primum enim hoc quod ais, quia justitia repleverit quod creatum est; et hoc apostolico vis testimonio comprobare, quod dicat, apparuit in carne, justificatus est in spiritu. De Incarnatione, lib. 7. cap. 18. p. 1110.

A. D.

A. D. 553\*. He likewise said that Thomas's exclamation, *My Lord and my God*, was no acknowledgment of the divinity of Christ, but an expression of praise to God for raising up Christ from the dead †. These are properly unitarian arguments.

Nestorius evidently considered Christ as being a mere man in his sufferings. “ He  
 “ said he knew no God the word, the maker  
 “ of all things, who was impassible, invi-  
 “ sible, and unalterable, and not to be cir-  
 “ cumscribed, suffering death on the cross,  
 “ on a vile piece of wood ‡.” In reply to

\* Ejusdem Theodori ex commento quod est in actis apostolorum, libro primo, in quo dicit, quod baptizari in nomine Jesu Christi, simile est scripto illi, quod baptizati sunt in Moyse, et vocari christianos, simile est illi, quod vocantur Platonici, et Epicurei, et Manichæi, et Marcionistæ ab inventoribus dogmatum. Binnii Concilia, vol. 2. pt. 2. p. 57.

† Thomas quidem cum sic credidisset, dominus meus et deus meus, dicit, non ipsum dominum et deum dicens (non enim resurrectionis scientia docebat et deum esse eum qui resurrexit) sed quasi pro miraculoso facto deum colaudat. Ibid.

‡ Quomodo deus verbum omnium conditor, impalpabilis, invisibilis, inalterabilisque, et circumscriptionem non sustinens,

this language of Nestorius, his antagonist scrupled not to talk in a style that nothing but the heat of controversy would have led him to adopt. "I answer," says he, "that  
 " the word of God suffered death on the  
 " cross, in his own flesh, that he might  
 " deliver us from death and corruption\*,"  
 But when he explained himself, he only meant that the divine logos, without actually feeling any pain, only appropriated to itself the sufferings of the body to which it was united, as has been explained before.

If this account of Nestorius's principles and mode of reasoning may be depended upon, he did not in fact differ from the unitarians; and the popularity of his doctrine, and the spread of it in the east, may be considered as a proof of the leaning that the common people still had for their original principles. Sandius says, It is easy

*sustinens, in vili ligno crucem passus est et mortem? Respondeo. Verbum dei mortem et crucem in propria carne passum esse dicimus, ut nos a morte et corruptione liberaret.*  
 Cyril of Alexandria, *De Incar. Opera*, vol. 2. p. 66.

\* *Ibid.*

to prove that there are five times more Nestorians than papists. Hist. p. 119. They were probably in all parts of Europe, as well as in Asia. It appears from the proceedings of the council of Hispalis, A. D. 657, that there were both Nestorians and Eutychians in Spain at that time\*.

If we consider the answers that were made to Nestorius, we shall find that his opponents went upon the same principle that they would have done in answering Paulus Samosatensis or Photinus; except that his making a trinity in the divine Being laid him open to some attacks, to which the proper unitarians were not exposed.

Cassian treated him as a proper unitarian, when, in reply to him, he said, “ There

\* Tertia decima prosecutione breviter narrandum putavimus, ad refutationem eorundem hæreticorum qui duas naturas Christi post unionem delirantes confundunt, et passibilem in eo divinitatis substantiam asserunt. Contra quorum blasphemias oportet nos in una persona Christi geminæ naturæ proprietatem ostendere, passionemque ejus in sola humanitatis susceptione manifestare; ut si forte aliqui stultorum, hujus sententiæ errore decepti sunt, dum ista legerint, resipiscant, rectæque fidei veritatem firmiter teneant. Binnii Concilia, vol. 2. pt. 2. p. 329.

“ will

“ will be no difference between Christ and  
 “ the saints, as they had God in them \* ;”  
 and so did Theodoret, when he said, that  
 “ Nestorianism is a denial of the whole  
 “ œconomy of the Son of God ; since it  
 “ was not God who undertook it ; for the  
 “ logos did not empty itself, nor assume the  
 “ form of a slave.” Opera, vol. 5. p. 57.  
 On the same principle Cyril of Alexandria,  
 in answer to Nestorius, says, “ If Christ  
 “ was a mere man, how could his death  
 “ profit us † .” On the same princi-  
 ple also an orthodox bishop in Zonaras,  
 charged Nestorius with worshipping a  
 man ‡.

But Nestorius being supposed to hold  
 that there was a proper *Son of God* in the  
 trinity exposed him to the objection of

\* Hoc modo ergo nihil inter eum et omnes qui fuerunt  
 sanctos homines esse asseris : quia omnes utique sancti ho-  
 mines deum in se habuerunt. De Incarnatione, lib. 5. cap.  
 3. p. 1021.

† Εἰ δὲ ἀνθρώπος ἦν κείνος ὁ Ἐμμανυὴλ, πῶς αὖν ὠφελεῖσε τὴν ἀν-  
 θρώπου φύσιν ὁ ἀνθρώπος θανάτος. Binnii Concilia, vol. 1. pt.  
 2. p. 45.

‡ Καὶ τὴν Νεστορίου τὰ ἀνθρώποπαλὰ προσηγορίαν. p. 585.

making *two Christs*, and *two Sons of God*, of which great advantage was taken by his opponents \*. Theodoret, who was thought at one time to favour Nestorius, says, that he fell under the same censure. Because he said that there were two natures in Christ, they charged him with holding that there were two Sons †. Cyril says, “ If there be two Sons of God, how “ is the faith one, and baptism one, and “ into which of them are we baptised ‡ ? ”

In consequence of making two natures in Christ, which was said to be making *two Christs*, Nestorius was charged with holding a *quaternity*, instead of a *trinity* ||. This *quaternity*, consisted of the three per-

\* Annon atque manifestissime duos esse Christos dicit. Cyril of Alexandria, *Epist. Opera*, vol. 2. p. 48.

† Αλλα τω τας δυο φυσεις ομολογειν τε δεσποικα χριστε, δυο λεγασι κηρυτλειν υιους. *Epist. 145. Opera*, vol. 3. p. 1023.

‡ Πως δε και μια πισις ; η πως εν το βαπτισμα ; ει γαρ υιοι δυο καλα τινας εις τινα πιστευομεν ; της εκεινων αμαθιας εργον αν ειη λεγειν, εις τε τινος ονομα βεβαπτισμεθα ; και ται βαπτισμαλιος ονλος ενος. *Binnii Concilia*, vol. 1. pt. 2. p. 45.

|| Qua proptem trinitatem non quaternitatem adoramus, Cyril of Alexandria, *Hom. Opera*, vol. 2. p. 73.

sons in the orthodox trinity, one of which was the logos, or the Son, and the fourth was Jesus who was born of the virgin.

Had Nestorius contented himself with saying that there were *two natures* in Christ; there would have been nothing in his doctrine that could justly have offended the orthodox of his age; but it was his not making a sufficiently perfect and inseparable *union* between the divine and human nature of Christ, that gave the offence. The orthodox supposed that the *hypostatical union*, as it was afterwards called, commenced at the moment of the existence of the human nature, or the very instant of the conception of Jesus in the womb, and that it was never afterwards dissolved, not even by the separation of the soul and body of Christ by death. Whereas Nestorius considered Jesus as having been a mere man till the Spirit of God came upon him at his baptism; and also that he was a mere man in his sufferings and death. Perhaps they thought that after Jesus was grown to be a complete man, it was too late for the hypostatical union



to take place. Otherwise, as all depended upon that *union*, it could not, one would imagine, have been thought to be of much consequence at what *time* that union took place. But as Theodorus is quoted by Justinian, he did not make a sufficiently perfect union between the divine and human nature of Christ. For he compared it to the union between man and wife\*." Justinian had just before observed, that Theodorus used the term *nature*, when he ought to have used *person* †.

It is not to my present purpose to take any notice of the doctrine Eutyches, who, in opposition to the Nestorian doctrine, of two natures in Christ, held that he had only *one nature*. Both he and Apollinarius are said to have had an opinion with respect to the body of Christ, the same with that of some of the Gnostics,

\* Ως τε οπερ ο κυριος επι τε τῶ ἀνδρὸς, καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς φησιν, ὡς τε ἐκεῖ ἐῖσι δύο, ἀλλὰ σαρκὲς μία, εἰποῖμεν ἂν καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰκότως κατὰ τοῦ τῆς ἐνωσεὸς λόγον, ὡς τε ἐκεῖ ἐῖσι δύο πρόσωπα, ἀλλ' ἐν δηλοσί τῶν φύσεων διακεκριμένων. Epist. p. 74.

† Αποδειξάντες τοῖνον τὸν δυσσεβῆ θεοδώρον τὰς φύσεις ἅντι πρόσωπων λεγούσα. Ibid.

viz. that it came from heaven, and was not derived from his mother. This opinion is ascribed to him, as well as to Valentinus, and Marcion, by Vigilus Martyr\*. It appears that the orthodox of that age had great difficulty in keeping equally clear of the two opposite opinions of Nestorius and Eutyches, of which Vigilus Martyr makes great complaint †.

\* Quoniam Eutychniana hæresis in id impietatis prolapsa est errore, ut non solum verbi et carnis unam credat esse naturam, verum etiam hanc eandem carnem, non de sacro Mariæ virginis corpore adsumptam, sed de cœlo dicat, juxta infandum Valentini et Marcionis errorem fuisse deductam. Contra Eutychen, lib. 1: Bib. Pat. vol. 5. p. 560.

† Si enim paululum in utramque partem nutantia volueris inferre vestigia, illico capieris. Inter Nestorii ergo quondam ecclesiæ Constantinopolitanæ, non rectoris sed dissipatoris, non pastoris sed prædatoris sacrilegum dogma et Eutychetis nefarium et detestabilem sectam, ita serpentinæ grassationis sese calliditas temperavit, ut utrumque sine utriusque periculo plerique vitare non possint, dum si quis Nestorii perfidiam damnat Eutychetis putatur errori succumbere, rursus dum Eutychnianæ hæresis impietatem destruit, Nestorii arguitur dogma erigere. Contra Eutychen, lib. 1. Bib. Pat. vol. 5. p. 546.

What

What is something more to my purpose is, the language of Peter Fullo, who distinguished himself by an addition to the famous *trifagion*, the sentiment of which was, that *one of the trinity was crucified for us*, as this was thought to favour the unitarian doctrine, in the form in which it was held by the Patripassians, or the philosophical unitarians. That the divine nature of Christ suffered, we have seen to have been the language of Cyril of Alexandria and others who opposed Nestorius; and therefore it might be thought to be the highest orthodoxy of the times. But extraordinary as it may seem, the very same expressions were adopted by those who were most highly orthodox, and by the philosophical unitarians. Some of his contemporaries say, that Peter Fullo favoured the doctrine of Nestorius and Sabellius. He is particularly charged with this by Faustus, bishop of Appollonia\*. By Justin, a

‡ Εκ πολλων γαρ επαρχιων των κατὰ την ανατολην γραμματιστα  
εδεξαμεθα, τα σημειονισια ημιν, ως ολι η ση θεοφιλια το παλαι σιωπη-  
θεν Ουαλεντινυ δογμα ανελαβε, και αθετειται παρ υμιν η σωτηριος εναν-  
θρωπησις, και ολι εις το Μανιχαϊων δογμα, Αρειυ τε, και Απολλωνα-  
ριυ, και Παυλυ τε Σαμοσαλειωυ περινηχθητε. Zonaras, p. 533.

bishop in Sicily, he was charged with holding the opinion of Paulus Samofatenfis\*, and by Pope Felix III. with going beyond Paulus Samofatenfis, Photinus, and Artemon†. But notwithstanding this, it is pretty clear that P. Fullo held a doctrine opposite to that of Nestorius, viz. that Christ had but one nature, which was *the divine*, and consequently that this divine nature suffered; from which he and his partizans were called *Theopaschites*, a word of the same signification in Greek that *Patripassians* is of in Latin, though they were applied to very different kinds of men. Nicephorus expressly asserts, that Peter Fullo introduced the Theopaschite doctrine ‡.

\* Zonaras, p. 538.

† Αρα εκ ενενοστας ασεβεστρον σεαυλον οριζομενος Παυλς τε Σαμοσαλεως, η Φωλεινς, η Αρλεμα. Zonaras, p. 543.

‡ Προς δε ταυλεις το κατ' εκεινο καιρς και η των Θεοπασχιων αιρεσις αυθις καλια μικρον αναζησασα, εις αυξην πλειστην προπει καθ εκαστην επιδιδασα. μικρον γαρ παυσαμενην, Σεηρος παλιν ταυτην και η εξ εκεινς πολυκεφαλος υδρα, σφοδροτερον ανεργριπιζε. ταυλεις δε πρωτος γεννητωρ Πεηρος εκεινος εγενελο, ω Κναφευς ην το επωνυμιον. ος τω τρισαντω υμνω, ως μοι και ανωθεν ειρηλαι, προσδηκην δειναι δυσσεβως απελολησεν. Hist. lib. 18. cap. 52. vol. 2. p. 879.

## C H A P T E R     I I I .

*An Account of the Priscillianists and Paulicians.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the opposition between the principles of the unitarians, and those of the Gnostics, in the early ages of christianity, they being always considered as *opposite heresies*, the former consisting chiefly of the common and unlearned people, and the latter of the philosophical and learned; yet, in the fourth century, we find a mixture of both these systems in the Priscillianists in the west, and some time after in the Paulicians in the east. This mixture, however, did not relate to the doctrine concerning the *person of Christ* (for in that respect the tenets of the unitarians, and those of the Gnostics were necessarily different and opposite) but to other opinions belonging to the sys-

tem of Gnosticism. As the Priscillianists and Paulicians, may be said to have been unitarians, I shall give the best account that I have been able to collect concerning both these sects, though I am sensible that it must be very defective; since their enemies, from whom alone we hear any thing of them, appear to have been so violently prejudiced against them, that what they say of them must be heard with great allowance.

The Priscillianists had their name from Priscillian, a person of rank and fortune in Spain, and afterwards bishop of Abila, who is said to have received his principles from one Mark, who came from Memphis, in Egypt, and who is said to have been a Manichæan. The bishops of Spain taking umbrage at the spread of the doctrine of Priscillian, procured an order from the emperor Gratian, for his banishment from that country. He was permitted to return, but was banished a second time; and by order of the emperor Maximus, was put to death A.D. 384. This cruelty was much exclaimed

claimed against by the bishops of Gaul, and of Italy; the opinions of Priscillian spread much more after this time than they had done before, and they continued, says Sandius (Hist. p. 117.) till the twelfth century.

That the Priscillianists held some Gnostic principles can hardly be doubted, because they are universally ascribed to them. Leo the Great, their bitter enemy, is justly suspected of calumniating them. But if there be any colour of truth in his account, they must have considered *matter* as the cause of all evil, and have thought unfavourably of the body. According to him, they thought that the devil was not made by God, but arose from chaos and darkness (Opera, p. 167.) they condemned marriage; they said that the bodies of men were made by the devil, and they denied the resurrection. The souls of men, they said, were of a divine substance, and that, having offended in heaven, they were sent into bodies as a punishment of their sins. They  
moreover

moreover said, that men are subject to a state of necessity, to the power of the stars, and to sin.

With respect to the person of Christ, Austin, who is rather a more unexceptionable evidence than Leo, says, that “ they agreed  
 “ with Sabellius, and maintained, that the  
 “ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were one\*.”  
 The same is advanced by Leo, who also says, that “ they agree with the Arians, in  
 “ saying, that the Son is inferior to the Fa-  
 “ ther; that there was a time when the Son  
 “ was not, before which time God could  
 “ not be called a Father, and that Christ is  
 “ called the Son of God because he was  
 “ born of a virgin, which,” he says, “ they  
 “ would not have dared to do, if they had  
 “ not drawn in the poison of Paulus Samo-  
 “ satensis and Photinus †.”

\* De Christo Sabellianam sectam tenent eundem ipsum esse dicentes; non solum filium, sed etiam patrem, et spiritum sanctum. Catalogus, Hær. Opera, vol. 6. p. 29.

† Patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti, unam atque eandem asserunt esse personam; tanquam idem deus nunc pater nunc filius, nunc spiritus sanctus, nominatim nec alius sit qui genuit,



Priscillian is charged with saying, that the Son of God could not be born; and this expression of his is particularly censured in a council held at Toledo, A. D. 438\*.

That the Priscillianists were not, in all respects, Gnostics, or Manichæans, is evident from their receiving, according to Austin, all the books of scripture, and even the apocryphal ones; though he says they misinterpreted, or perverted them †.

genuit, alius qui genitus sit, alius qui de utroque processit  
 — quod blasphemix genus de Sabellii opinione sumpserunt  
 cujus discipuli etiam Patripassiani merito nuncupantur. Cap. 1. p. 166 Arianorum suffragantur errori,  
 dicentium quod pater filio prior sit, quia fuerit aliquando  
 sine filio et tunc pater esse cœperit quando filium genuerit.  
 Cap. 2. ibid. Afferunt, ideo, unigenitum dici filium dei  
 quia solus sit natus ex virgine, quod utique non auderent  
 dicere nisi Pauli Samosatani et Photini virus hausissent.  
 Cap. 3. Ibid.

\* Ubi Priscillianus innascibilem esse filium dixit, constat hoc contra Nicænam fidem esse dictum: atque ideo Priscillianum hujus dicti authorem, cum ipsius dicti perversitate, et quos male condidit libros, cum ipso autore condemnato. Binnii Concilia, vol. 1. p. 601.

† Priscillianistæ vero accipiunt omnia, et canonica, et apocrypha simul. Sed quæcunque quæ contra eos sunt,  
 in

The Priscillianists were chiefly famous for their austerity and mortifications, and therefore they were probably the same that Philaster calls *Abstinentes*, in Gaul, Spain, and Aquitain.

Similar, in many respects, to the Priscillianists in the West, were the *Paulicians* in the east, who had their name, as it is said, from one Paul, who adopted and modified the doctrine of Manes. But we are as unable to collect a satisfactory account of the Paulicians, as we are of those of the Priscillianists. When this sect arose is uncertain, but it is said to have been revived by one Constantine in the seventh century. They were cruelly used, and almost suppressed by some of the Emperors. They were encouraged by Nicephorus in the ninth century; but after a short interval of rest, they were persecuted with more violence than ever by Leo the Armenian, and the Empress Theodora. During this persecution some of the Pauli-

*in suæ perversitatis sensus, aliquando callida et astuta, aliquando ridicula et hebeti expositione pervertunt. Epist.*  
251. Opera, Sup. p. 480.

cians

cians settled in Bulgaria. But being oppressed there, they took refuge in Italy, and other parts of the west, where they were called *Patarini*, and *Cathari*, or *Gazari*, and in France *Albigenses*, from the town of Albi, where a synod that condemned them was held. Of their tenets, under this last denomination, an account was given, vol. 3. p. 368. But it is very possible that a considerable change might have taken place in their opinions.

What they held of the Manichæan system does not distinctly appear. Peter of Sicily intimates, that they did not own themselves to be Manichæans \*. But they pretended to great purity and simplicity. They rejected, it is said, all external ordinances, as baptism and the Lord's supper, and did not chuse to call their ministers *priests*, but *scribes*, or *secretaries*, or *companions in travel* †.

That the Paulicians were unitarians, is evident, from their being said by Theo-

\* Lardner's Credibility, vol. 6. p. 426.

† Ibid. p. 427.

phanes to deny the incarnation\*. They were numerous, Sandius says, in 1191 †.

Notwithstanding the obscurity in which this subject is involved, it is sufficiently evident, that, among the great numbers who separated themselves from the communion of the Catholic church (among whom there would, no doubt, be a great diversity of opinions in a variety of respects) and by whatever names they were distinguished in different countries, and different ages, there were always many who rejected the doctrine of the trinity, and who joined the reformers of the sixteenth century. But unhappily the great leaders in that reformation, Luther and Calvin, retaining that doctrine, and laying great stress upon it, the anti-trinitarians were in most places

\* Οι δε πολλοί των ταύτα βλασφημούντων χημάη μόνον ησαν χριστιανοί τη δε αληθεια Παυλικιασσι, ούτως μη δυναμένοι τα μυστα εαυτων δογματα παρεμφανειν τη τοιαυτη προφασει τες αμαθεις παρεποδουν, Κωνσταντινον του Ιεδαιουφρονα μομαριζούνης ως προφήτην κ' νικητήν, κ' την κωνσταντινιαν αυτην επ ανάλροπη της ενι σαρκι οικουμενίας τε κυριε ημεων Ιησε χριστε ασπαζόμενοι. Chronographia, p. 425.

† Hist. p. 393.

treated as the worst of heretics, and cruelly persecuted by all other denominations of christians.

For some time the unitarians found an asylum in Poland, and they are said to be at present in considerable numbers in Transylvania, and other provinces in the eastern parts of Europe. But in this country we are very ignorant of the real state of christianity in those parts. However, as the overbearing influence of the church of Rome is decreasing every day, and freedom of enquiry is encouraged, it may be hoped that great numbers of intelligent christians, who have been secretly unitarians, will declare themselves openly to be so; and as truth and good sense have an infinite advantage over absurdity and error, half a century will probably produce a great revolution in the christian world. Men will awake from the miserable delusion they have been so long under, as from a dream, and wonder at the long continuance of their infatuation. Such a history as I am now

con-

concluding, if it be thought worth while to read it at all, will then be perused with astonishment; and if the original writers, from which it is collected, were not in being, the strange tale would gain no credit.

T H E

T H E  
C O N C L U S I O N .

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S E C T I O N I.

*A connected View of all the principal Articles  
in the preceding History.*

AFTER so particular a detail as I have given in this work of a variety of *doctrines*, and of the *arguments* by which they were supported, together with the *causes* of their rise and progress, it may not be unuseful, at the conclusion of the whole, to recite the order in which they arose and succeeded one another, especially as it is a history that is particularly complex in its own nature, and perhaps unparalleled for

V O L . I V .                      T                      the

the greatness of the effects which the subject of it has produced in the world, and the simplicity of the causes from which every successive step in the progress of it has arisen.

The opinions concerning the person of Jesus Christ have always been thought, though without any sufficient reason, to be of the greatest consequence to christianity itself. Whereas his business, like that of any other prophet, being nothing more than to deliver a message from God, and to confirm it by miracles, it was not, in reality, of any consequence whatever, *who*, or *what* he himself was. But, being the founder of a new religion, his disciples and followers, who bore his name, soon began to think themselves interested in the *personal character and dignity* of their master; and as they were frequently reproached with being the disciples of a man who was nothing more than a crucified malefactor, they were solicitous, by every method they could devise, to remove this reproach. Not content with alledging, that though their master died the death of a malefactor, he had not  
lived.



lived the life of one, that his death had answered the greatest purposes in the plan of divine providence, and that God had shewed his approbation of him, by raising him from the dead (which was certainly sufficient for their purpose) the more learned among them availed themselves of the philosophy of their age, and said that Christ was a person of much higher rank than he appeared to be, even much higher than that of any other man.

Their philosophy taught them that man consists of two principles, or parts, viz. *soul* and *body*, and that the souls of all men had pre-existed, having been originally unimbodyed spirits, which, for some reason or other, had been sent down from heaven to animate mortal bodies; that souls were of very different origins, and that some of them which were sent into the world for great and particular purposes, might be immediate emanations from the Divine Being himself. However, as before this philosophy was introduced among christians, it was the universally received opinion, that

Christ was in himself a *mere man*, and it was even generally thought that he was born as other men were, viz. of two human parents, and that he continued to be nothing more than a mere man, till he was of full age, when he was impowered to work miracles, and came into public life; all that these philosophers could advance at first, with any probability of being attended to (and indeed all that they would naturally think of themselves) was, that some great super-angelic spirit had been sent down from heaven, and was attached to the man Jesus, or the soul of Jesus, in some such manner as it was usually supposed that dæmons possessed the souls of men; and that it was this super-angelic being that was properly *the Christ*, or the person sent down, or commissioned by God, to come into the world for so great a purpose. This was the doctrine of the earlier Gnostics, such as Cerinthus.

But, as it had been the opinion of many, that angels were only temporary and unsubstantial forms, in the shape of men, so  
as

as to appear like men to the senses, but that they did not really consist of flesh and blood; others of these philosophers thought, that what was called the man Jesus, was nothing more than one of these unsubstantial forms of men; so that the super-angelic spirit, or *the Christ*, had no proper body or soul at all, that it was incapable of feeling, and not subject to death. These were those Gnostics who were called Docetæ; and this progress had been made in the time of the apostles.

Presently after the death of the apostles, and perhaps before that of John, some of these philosophers professing christianity, introduced more of their system into it; and considering *matter* to be the source of all evil, and the world to have been the work of a malevolent being, they thought that this same evil being, or one of a similar disposition, had been the author of the law of Moses, and that the Supreme God, who was a being of perfect goodness, had not been known to mankind till Christ came to reveal him. Also holding *matter* and the

*body*, which was composed of it, in great contempt, they did not believe the resurrection; which, indeed, had been denied by all their predecessors, in the time of the apostles.

The doctrines which contain the outline of what was called *Gnosticism* (from the the holders of them boasting of the superiority of their *knowledge*) having been directly opposed by the apostles, and treated by them with great indignation, the generality of christians held the Gnostics in abhorrence, considered them as *heretics*, and refused to admit them into their societies. But the same causes continuing to operate, christians being still held in contempt for the meanness of their master, and being still desirous to remove this reproach, by advancing his personal rank and dignity, they had recourse to another method of doing it.

Having been taught by the Platonic philosophers, among whom they received their education, that there were three great principles in nature, viz. the Supreme Being, or the *good*, his mind (*nous*) and  
*the*

*the soul of the world*; and the Jewish philosophers who had embraced these doctrines having already advanced, that the second of these principles, which they denominated *logos*, was an emanation from the supreme Being, and the cause of all the appearances of God recorded in the Old Testament, some of which were in the form of men; and having also taught that it was this *logos* that, by the order of the supreme Being, had made the visible world; that he was the image of God, his only begotten Son, and that he was even entitled to the appellation of *God* in an inferior sense of the word; these christian philosophers imagined that it was this *logos* that was united to the man Jesus Christ, and that, on this account, he might be called God.

For some time, however, the more learned christians contented themselves with supposing, that the union between this divine *logos* and the man Christ Jesus was only temporary. For they held that this divine *efflux*, which, like a beam of light from the sun, went out of God, and was attached to

the person of Christ, to enable him to work miracles while he was on earth, was drawn into God again when he ascended into heaven, and had no more occasion to exert a miraculous power. This system may be called *philosophical unitarianism*, being that which was held by Sabellius, Marcellus, and other learned unitarian christians.

It was afterwards maintained (and Justin Martyr, who had been a Platonic philosopher, was perhaps the first who suggested the idea) that this union of the logos to the person of Christ was not temporary, but permanent. With the Jewish philosophers the learned christians likewise held that this logos was emitted from God when he made the world, and was the medium of all the divine communications under the Old Testament, before he became united to the man Christ Jesus, who, they said, had also a proper human soul, as well as a body, like other men. For the great body of christians having always considered him as being *a man*, the philosophers among them did not at first depart so far from this opinion, as to say that

that he had no proper human soul ; and the *logos*, which they spake of as being united to him, they always represented as an *efflux* from, or an *attribute* of the Father, being his proper *wisdom*, *power*, and other operative perfections.

Still, however, out of respect to the opinion which prevailed among the unlearned christians, who knew nothing of this doctrine of the *divine logos*, but thought Christ to be a man and a prophet, and who would have been shocked at the doctrine of *more Gods than one*, the philosophical christians, though they said that Christ, on account of the divine logos that was united to him, might be called *a God*, acknowledged that it was in an inferior sense, that the *divinity*, and even the *being* of the Son, was derived from the Father ; and that when *the one God* was spoken of, it was the Father only (who was the proper *fountain of deity*) that was intended. Nay, in opposition to the philosophical unitarians, who asserted that the divinity of the Father, and that of the Son, were the very same, they maintained

maintained that they were different; since the Father and the Son could not be said to be of the same nature. For the Platonic philosophers considered the *nous*, or *logos*, as a middle principle between the supreme God and the soul of the world; and they sometimes spake of it as an intermediate principle between God and the world itself.

As it had always been maintained by the earliest platonizing christians, that the *logos* came out of God just before the creation of the world, and consequently that there had been a time when God was alone, and the Son was not; and as they had always held, that when the Son was produced he was greatly inferior to the Father, there arose some who said, that he ought to be considered as a mere *creature*, not derived from the substance of God, but created *out of nothing*, as other creatures were. For by this time, the christian doctrine of a proper *creation out of nothing* had begun to take place of the philosophical doctrine of the emanation of souls from God. These (who were the Arians) considering the *logos* as  
being



being the intelligent principle in Christ, thought that there was no occasion to suppose that he had any other soul. They, therefore, said that Christ was a super-angelic being, united to a human body; that though he was himself created, he was the creator of all other things under God, and the instrument of all the divine communications to the patriarchs, which had before been supposed to be the province of the uncreated logos.

In opposition to the Arians, those who, from the final prevalence of their doctrine, obtained the name of *orthodox* and *catholics*, considering that the logos had never before been represented as *a creature*, but as the proper *reason* or *wisdom* of the Father, maintained that he must have always been in the Father, and therefore (correcting their former language, and carrying their principle to its proper extent, which a respect for the unitarians, now greatly diminished in number, had hitherto prevented) they maintained that he must be of the same substance with the Father, and have  
been

been co-eternal with him. In the course of the controversy they were likewise led to advance upon their former doctrine, so as to say, that that act of the Father, to which they gave the name of *generation*, had taken place from eternity, and was not something that had passed just before the creation of the world; so that the Son had always existed as a son, and the Father as a father; and that there was no difference between them, but that of Father and Son, and the different offices that belonged to each of them respectively, as the Father, or the Son.

This was the state of things soon after the council of Nice, when there arose a controversy concerning the *Holy Spirit*, which was said in the scriptures to proceed from God, or to be sent by God, or by Christ. On this subject it is remarkable, that there had been no controversy among christians before that council, though there had been a difference of opinion among them. Some of the Antenicene Fathers described the Spirit as if they had conceived it to be nothing but a *power* communicated,

communicated by God, though others of them supposed it to be a *person*, inferior to God, and even to Christ. For it was generally asserted, that the Spirit was one of the beings that had been made by Christ, *without whom*, they said, *nothing was made that was made*. Such doctrine as this did certainly pass without censure before the council of Nice, and it is the less to be wondered at, as the third person in the Platonic trinity, viz. the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , had never been described as having been any part of the Supreme Being, or necessarily belonging to him, which the *nous*, or *logos*, had been.

There were some who, while they held the *permanent personality* of the Son, thought that the Holy Spirit was only an *occasional efflux* from the deity, resembling a beam of light from the sun. This opinion also was not deemed to be heretical.

From this time, however, those who had distinguished themselves the most by their defence of the doctrine of the *consubstantiality* of the Son with the Father, did likewise

wife maintain both the proper *personality* of the Spirit, and also his consubstantiality with the Father and the Son. This doctrine of the *consubstantiality* of the three divine persons soon led to that of their perfect *equality* with respect to all divine perfections ; and this completed the whole scheme. According to it, though there is but *one God*, there are *three divine persons*, each of which separately taken, is *perfect God*, though all together make no more than one perfect God ; a proposition not only repugnant to the plainest principles of common sense, but altogether unknown before the council of Nice, as is acknowledged by many learned trinitarians. Among others, the famous Mr. Jurieu said, that “ the fundamental articles of christianity were not understood by the Fathers of the three first centuries, that the true system began to be modelled into some shape by the Nicene bishops, and was afterwards improved by the following synods and councils.” Jortin’s Remarks, vol. 3. p. 50.

A little

A little reflection, however, one would think, might satisfy any person, that a doctrine which was unknown in the christian church till the fourth century could be no genuine doctrine of christianity. Least of all can it be supposed, that any novel and late doctrine can be of so much *consequence* as that of *the trinity* has always been conceived to be by those who have maintained it. For effectual measures would, no doubt, have been taken by divine providence, that every doctrine of real importance to christianity should be so clearly expressed, and so well explained in the scriptures, as that it would not have remained undiscovered, or ill understood, till so late a period as the fourth century.

## SECTION II.

*An Account of the Remains of the Oriental, or Platonic Philosophy, in modern Systems of Christianity.*

IN the next place, it may not be unuseful to reflect how much remains of the oriental or Platonic philosophy in the religion that is established in the greater part of the christian world at the present day, though those systems themselves are now no more. It is obvious to remark, in the first place, that one single doctrine common to both those schemes of philosophy, has been the foundation on which almost every corruption of christianity rests, and this is the belief of an *immaterial soul* in man, capable of subsisting, and also of having both sensation and action, when the body is in the grave. Had this doctrine, (countenanced by no appearances in nature, but utterly discordant with them, and also with the whole system of revelation) never

been known, it is hardly possible to suppose, that the pre-existence of Christ would ever have been imagined, or that any of the doctrines which arose from it, or are connected with it, would have been adopted. In this case, also, we should never have heard of the worship of dead saints, or the doctrine of purgatory, which are among the most enormous abuses of popery.

Another principle, common to both the systems of philosophy above mentioned, was, that *matter* is the source of all evil, a doctrine which led either to making light of the most criminal sensual indulgences, or to that rigour and austerity which was imagined to purify and elevate the soul, by neglecting or macerating the body. This principle induced numbers of both sexes, to seclude themselves from the world, and to pass their lives in a manner equally useless to themselves and others. It also gave rise to the favourite doctrine of the superiority of the unmarried to the married state, and to the injunction of celibacy on those who were called *priests*.

The monastic life was also greatly promoted by the Platonic doctrine of the *union of the soul to God*, attainable by contemplation and prayer, which was eagerly adopted by many christians, who thought it wise to neglect and mortify the body, and to give their whole attention to the soul.

These three doctrines, viz. that of the immateriality of the soul, that of matter being the source of evil, and that of the union of the soul to God, by contemplation and abstraction from matter, have done unspeakable mischief to the scheme of christianity, affecting the whole character of of it, and almost every thing in doctrine, or in practice, relating to it. It may not be amiss, however, just to notice a few other things of a less general nature, in which Gnosticism, or Platonism, have left traces of themselves in the creeds of christians.

That the Supreme God was not himself the maker of the world, was a capital article in the creed of the Gnostics, and this was also a doctrine of the platonizing christians,



christians, with this difference that, according to the Gnostics, the maker of the world was one of those intelligences which was derived, mediately or immediately, from the Supreme Being; whereas, according to the platonizing christians, the maker of the world was *the logos*, which had been an *attribute* of the Supreme Being. The former also thought that the world was made with a malevolent intention, and the latter with a benevolent one.

The Arians approached something nearer to the doctrine of the Gnostics, than those who were called catholics, maintaining that the world was made by *a creature* properly so called. For according to that philosophy from which Gnosticism was derived, all intelligent beings subordinate to the Supreme, were supposed to be so far *of the same nature*, as to have been derived mediately or immediately from his substance, though they were not created *out of nothing*. According to both systems, the world was made by a being who might be called, if not an angel, at least a super-angelic spirit.

And all the three systems, viz. that of the Gnostics, that of the catholics, and that of the Arians, go upon this common principle, that it is unworthy of the Supreme Being himself to condescend to do any thing; he being supposed to be immoveably employed in contemplation only, and chiefly that of his own perfections.

The Docetæ among the Gnostics held that Christ had no body, but only the appearance of one, and that he was incapable of feeling pain. And though the platonizing christians believed that Christ had a proper body, consisting of real flesh and blood, some of them imagined it was incapable of feeling pain, and that in consequence of its union with the logos, the body as well as the soul of Christ, had various privileges superior to those that were possessed by other souls and bodies; as that besides feeling no pain, it did not necessarily require the recruits of food or sleep, &c. and that it was not liable to corruption. It was from the Gnostics also, that the catholics derived the whimsical notion of  
Mary

Mary continuing a proper virgin after she was delivered of Jesus, so that she was, in all respects, the very same that she had been even before the conception; a doctrine which is still held sacred in the church of Rome.

Lastly, it is not absolutely impossible, but that Austin might have been somewhat influenced by his former Manichæan principles, in forming his doctrines of predestination and reprobation. The Manichæans held that souls had different origins, in consequence of which some were necessarily good, and would be saved, and others necessarily wicked, and would be damned. And though Austin thought that all souls were, in themselves, of the same nature, it was, he said, the mere arbitrary decree of God that made the difference between them with respect to their future destination; so that there is some resemblance between the two systems.

## SECTION III.

*Maxims of Historical Criticism.*

ALL reasoning may be reduced to certain *first principles*, and all propositions are more easily examined by having recourse to them. *Mathematicians*, who reason in the most exact and rigorous manner, always proceed in this way, beginning with *axioms*, the truth of which cannot be disputed, and reducing the most complex propositions to them; so that the truth of the one can no more be controverted than that of the other. In like manner, *critics*, have laid down what they call *canons of criticism*, of which they make a similar use.

As I wish to apply a species of reasoning equally strict to such historical discussions as that which is the subject of this work, I have likewise drawn up *maxims*  
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*of historical criticism*, the truth of which cannot, I think, be controverted, and to those I wish to reduce every proposition that I have advanced that is of an historical nature.

I have, however, made no general system, but have only noted such particulars as I myself have had occasion for; and even this I am far from pretending to have executed with perfect accuracy; but I give it as a *sketch*, to be examined at leisure, and to be rectified where it shall appear to be requisite.

These maxims are chiefly adapted to the following *summary view* of those arguments, which I apprehend establish my principal position, viz. that the christian church was originally unitarian; and therefore I have annexed to most of them the number of that article in the *summary view* to which they correspond, that they may be compared together. I wish that trinitarians and Arians, would in like manner reduce into axioms the principles on which *they* proceed, that they may be compared

with these; and perhaps we may by this means be assisted in coming to a proper issue in this controversy.

## 1.

When two persons give different accounts of things, that evidence is to be preferred, which is either in itself more probable, or more agreeable to other credible testimony.

## 2.

Neither is entire credit to be given to any set of men with respect to what is reputable to them, nor to their enemies with respect to what is disreputable; but the account given by the one, may be balanced by that of the other. Summary View, No 10.

## 3.

In order to establish the credibility of any fact, it must not only be related by a sufficient number of cotemporary witnesses, but it must appear to have been believed by their cotemporaries in general. Otherwise, the testimony of a few, will be overbalanced by that of many.

## 4. Ac-

4.

Accounts of any set of men given by their enemies only, are always suspicious. But the confessions of enemies, and circumstances favourable to any body of men, collected from the writings of their adversaries, are deserving of particular regard.

5.

It is a strong argument against the credibility of any pretended fact, that it was not believed by those who were so situated as to have been competent judges of its truth, and who were at the same time interested to believe it.

6.

It is natural for men who wish to speak disparagingly of any sect to undervalue their numbers, as well as every thing else relating to them; and it is equally natural for those who wish to speak respectfully of any party, to represent the members of it as more numerous than they are. Summary View, No. 13.

7. When

7.

When persons form themselves into societies, so as to be distinguishable from others, they never fail to get some *particular name*, either assumed by themselves, or imposed by others. This is necessary in order to make them the subject of conversation; long periphrases in discourse being very inconvenient. Summary View, No. 8.

8.

When particular opinions are ascribed to a particular class of men, without any distinction of the time when those opinions were adopted by them, it may be presumed, that they were supposed to hold those opinions from the time that they received their denomination, Summary View, No. 4.

9.

When a particular description is given of a class of persons within any period of time, any person who can be proved to have the proper character of one of that class,



clafs, may be deemed to have belonged to it, and to have enjoyed all the privileges of it, whatever they were. Summary View, No. 9.

## 10.

When an historian, or writer of any kind, professedly enumerates the several *species* belonging to any *genus*, or general body of men, and omits any particular species, or denomination, which, if it had belonged to the genus, he, from his situation and circumstances, was not likely to have overlooked, it may be presumed that he did not consider that particular species as belonging to the genus. Summary View, No. 7.

## 11.

When any particular doctrine is a necessary part of a system, and it can be made to appear that within a given period that doctrine was not known, it may be concluded that the system had no existence within that period. Or when any doctrine inconsistent with the system is held in that period, it equally proves the same thing. Summary View, No. 17, 18.

## 12.

Great changes in opinion are not usually made of a sudden, and never by great bodies of men. That history, therefore, which represents such changes as having been made gradually, and by easy steps, is always the more probable on that account. Summary View, No. 16.

## 13.

The common or unlearned people, in any country, who do not speculate much, retain longest any opinions with which their minds have been much impressed; and therefore, we always look for the oldest opinions in any country, or any class of men, among the common people, and not among the learned. Summary View, No. 13, 14.

## 14.

If any new opinions be introduced into a society, they are most likely to have introduced them, who held opinions similar to them before they joined that society. Summary View, No. 15.

15. If

## 15.

If any particular opinion has never failed to excite great indignation in all ages and nations, where a contrary opinion has been generally received, and that particular opinion can be proved to have existed in any age or country when it did not excite indignation, it may be concluded that it had many partizans in that age or country. For the opinion being the same, it could not of it itself be more respectable; and human nature being the same, it could not but have been regarded in the same light, so long as the same stress was laid on the opposite opinion. Summary View, No. 1. 11, 12.

## 16.

When a time is given, in which any very remarkable and interesting opinion was not believed by a certain class of people, and another time in which the belief of it was general, the introduction of such an opinion may always be known by the effects which it will produce upon the minds, and in the conduct of men; by the alarm which it will give to some, and the defence of it by others.

others. If, therefore, no alarm was given, and no defence of it was made within any particular period, it may be concluded that the introduction of it did not take place within that period. Summary View, No. 2, 3. 6.

## 17.

When any particular opinion or practice is necessarily or customarily accompanied by any other opinion or practice ; if the latter be not found within any particular period, it may be presumed that the former did not exist within that period. Summary View, No. 5.

## S E C T I O N IV.

*A summary View of the Evidence for the primitive Christians having held the Doctrine of the simple Humanity of Christ.*

1. **I**T is acknowledged by early writers of the orthodox persuasion, that two kinds of heresy existed in the times of the apostles, viz. that of those who held that Christ was simply a man; and that of the Gnostics. Now the apostle John animadverts with the greatest severity upon the latter, but makes no mention of the former; and can it be thought probable that he would pass it without censure, if he had thought it to be an error; considering how great, and how dangerous an error it has always been thought by those who have considered it as being an error at all? Maxim 15.

2. The great objection that Jews have always made to christianity in its present state

state is, that it enjoins the worship of more gods than one; and it is a great article with the christian writers of the second and following centuries to answer this objection. But it does not appear in all the book of Acts, in which we hear much of the cavils of the Jews (both in Jerufalem and in many parts of the Roman empire) that they made any such objection to christianity *then*; nor do the apostles, either there, or in their epistles, advance any thing with a view to such an objection. It may be presumed, therefore, that no such offence to the Jews had then been given, by the preaching of a doctrine so shocking to them as that of the divinity of Christ must have been. Maxim 15, 16.

3. As no Jew had originally any idea of their Messiah being more than a man, and as the apostles and the first christians had certainly the same idea at first concerning Jesus, it may be supposed that, if ever they had been informed that Jesus was not a man, but either God himself, or the maker of the world under God, we should have

have been able to trace the *time* and the *circumstances* in which so great a discovery was made to them; and that we should have perceived the effect which it had upon their minds; at least by some change in their manner of speaking concerning him. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the Gospels, in the book of Acts, or in any of the Epistles. We perceive marks enow of other new views of things, especially of the call of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of the gospel; and we hear much of the disputes and the eager contention which it occasioned. But how much more must all their prejudices have been shocked by the information that a person whom they first took to be a *mere man*, was not a man, but either God himself, or the maker of the world under God? Maxim 16.

4. All the Jewish christians, after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was immediately after the age of the apostles, are called Ebionites; and these were in the time of Origen, only of two sorts, some of them holding the miraculous conception

of our Saviour, and others believing that he was the son of Joseph, as well as of Mary. None of them are said to have believed either that he was God, or the maker of the world under God. And is it at all credible that the body of the Jewish christians, if they had ever been instructed by the apostles in the doctrine of the divinity, or pre-existence of Christ, would so soon, and so generally, if not universally, have abandoned that faith? Maxim 8.

5. Had Christ been considered as God, or the maker of the world under God, in the early ages of the church, he would naturally have been the proper object of prayer to christians; nay, more so than God the Father, with whom, on the scheme of the doctrine of the trinity, they must have known that they had less immediate intercourse. But prayers to Jesus Christ were not used in early times, but gained ground gradually, with the opinion of Christ being God, and the object of worship. Maxim 17.

6. The christian Fathers in general represent the apostles as obliged to use great caution



tion not to offend their first converts with the doctrine of Christ's divinity, and as forbearing to urge that topic till they were first well established in the belief of his being the Messiah. Athanasius, in particular adds, that the Jews being in an error on this subject, drew the Gentiles into it. They all represent the apostles as leaving their disciples to learn the doctrine of Christ's divinity, by way of *inference* from certain expressions; and they do not pretend to produce any instance in which they taught that doctrine clearly and explicitly before the publication of the gospel of John. Maxim 16.

7. Hegefippus, the first christian historian, enumerating the heresies of his time, mentions several of the Gnostic kind, but not that of Christ being a mere man. He moreover says, that in travelling to Rome, where he arrived in the time of Anicetus, he found all the churches that he visited held the faith which had been taught by Christ and the apostles, which, in his opinion, was probably that of Christ

being not God, but man only. Justin Martyr also, and Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote after Hegesippus, treat largely of heresies in general, without mentioning, or alluding to, the unitarians. Maxim 10.

8. All those who were deemed *heretics* in early times, were cut off from the communion of those who called themselves the *orthodox* christians, and went by some particular name; generally that of their leader. But the unitarians among the Gentiles were not expelled from the assemblies of christians, but worshipped along with those who were called orthodox, and had no particular name till the time of Victor, who excommunicated Theodotus; and a long time after that Epiphanius endeavoured to give them the name of *Alogi*. And though the Ebionites, probably about, or before this time, had been excommunicated by the Gentile christians, it was, as Jerom says, *only* on account of their rigid adherence to the law of Moses. Maxim 7.

9. The *Apostles creed* is that which was taught to all catechumens before baptism,  
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and additions were made to it from time to time, in order to exclude those who were denominated *heretics*. Now, though there are several articles in that creed which allude to the Gnostics, and tacitly condemn them, there was not, in the time of Tertulian, any article in it that alluded to the unitarians; so that even then any unitarian, (at least one believing the miraculous conception) might have subscribed it. It may, therefore, be concluded, that simple unitarianism was not deemed heretical at the end of the second century. Maxim 9.

10. It is owned by Eusebius and others, that the ancient unitarians themselves, constantly asserted that their doctrine was the prevailing opinion of the christian church till the time of Victor. The trinitarians denied this, but the truth of it may be proved from their own concessions, especially their abundant acknowledgment that the doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ were not taught with clearness and effect, till it was done by the evangelist John, which

was supposed to be after the death of the other apostles. Maxim 2.

11. Justin Martyr, who maintains the pre-existence of Christ, is so far from calling the contrary opinion a *heresy*, that what he says on the subject is evidently an apology for his own: and when he speaks of *heretics in general*, which he does with great indignation, as *no christians*, and having no communication with christians, he mentions the Gnostics only. Maxim 15.

12. Irenæus, who was after Justin, and who wrote a large treatise on the subject of heresy, says very little concerning the Ebionites; and the Ebionites he speaks of, he describes as believing that Christ was the son of Joseph, without mentioning those, if such there then were, who believed the miraculous conception. Maxim 15.

13. Tertullian represents the majority of the common or unlearned christians, the *Idiotæ*, as unitarians. It may therefore be presumed that, as the unitarian doctrine was held by the common people in the time of Tertullian,

Tertullian, it had been more general still before that time, and probably universal in the apostolical age. Athanasius also mentions it as a subject of complaint to the orthodox of his age, that *the many*, and especially, persons of *low understandings*, were inclined to the unitarian doctrine. Maxim 6. 13.

14. The first who held and discussed the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, acknowledged that their opinions were exceedingly unpopular among the unlearned christians; that these dreaded the doctrine of the trinity, thinking that it infringed upon the doctrine of the supremacy of God the Father; and the learned christians made frequent apologies to them, and to others, for their own opinion. Maxim 13.

15. The divinity of Christ was first advanced and urged by those who had been heathen philosophers, and especially those who were admirers of the doctrine of Plato, who held the opinion of a *second* God. Maxim 14.

16. There is a pretty easy gradation in the progress of the doctrine of the divinity

of Christ; as he was first thought to be a God in some qualified sense of the word, a distinguished emanation from the supreme mind; and then the *logos*, or the *wisdom of God* personified; and this *logos* was first thought to be only occasionally detached from the Deity, and then drawn into his essence again, before it was imagined that it had a *permanent personality*, distinct from that of the source from which it sprung. And it was not till the fourth century, that this *logos*, or Christ, was thought to be properly equal to the Father. Whereas, on the other hand, though it is now pretended that the apostles taught the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, yet it cannot be denied that in the very time of the apostles, the Jewish church, and many of the Gentiles also, held the opinion of his being a mere man. Here the transition is quite sudden, without any gradation at all. This must naturally have given the greatest alarm, such as is now given to those who are called orthodox, by the present Socinians; and yet nothing of this kind can be perceived. Besides, it is  
certainly

certainly most probable that the christians of those times, urged as they were with the meanness of their master, should incline to *add to*, rather than *take from*, his natural rank and dignity. Maxim 12.

17. The doctrine of Christ having no *human soul*, besides the *logos*, is necessary to the Arian hypothesis. But all the Fathers who wrote upon the subject before the time of Arius held that Christ had a proper human soul, and this doctrine was never objected to any of them as wrong. It may, therefore, be concluded, that Arianism had no existence before the age of Arius. Maxim 11.

18. The *logos* of all christian writers before Arius, was an attribute of God the Father, which the catholics supposed to have become a proper *person*. That the *logos* had even *not been*, and that it was *created out of nothing*, is a doctrine that cannot be traced any higher than the age of Arius. It, therefore, could not be the doctrine that was taught by the apostles. Maxim 11.

To this summary view of the arguments in favour of the christian church having been originally unitarian, I shall subjoin a similar abridgment of the arguments for and against the *miraculous conception*.

The history of the miraculous conception is contained in our present copies of the gospels of Matthew and Luke. It was certainly believed by Justin Martyr, and no doubt by many other christians of that age, and we have no account of any time in which the introductions which contain that history were added to the gospels. And that of Luke in particular is so much of a piece with the style of the rest of the history, that there can be little doubt of its having made an original part of it. We have, therefore, the testimony of two contemporary historians in its favour.

On the other hand, as all the writings of the ancient unitarians are lost, and especially that of Symmachus, on this very subject, there may have been complaints of interpolations, of which we have now no



account. And had it been always understood that those introductions were really written by Matthew and Luke, especially that of Matthew, it is not easy to account for the disbelief of the story by any christians, especially those of the Jewish race, who had the highest respect for what they really thought to be the genuine gospel of Matthew. Whereas a disposition to add to the personal dignity of Christ, which discovered itself very early, may be supposed to have led others to adopt the opinion of the miraculous conception on insufficient grounds.

No satisfactory reason can now be imagined, why Christ should not have been born of two human parents; nor can we find any tradition of such a reason in the early christian writers. There might even be a suspicion, that he was not properly a *man*, if he was not produced as other men are; and consequently the peculiar advantages of the unitarian doctrine will be in some danger of being abandoned.

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The miraculous conception does not appear to have been asserted in the time of the apostles ; there being no mention of it, or allusion to it, in the New Testament (except the introductions to the gospels above mentioned) and there being no account of any objection made to it by unbelievers in that age, as there were afterwards. And if there was no sufficient evidence of the fact in that early period, it would be too late to ascertain it to satisfaction afterwards. We are not informed that either Mary, or any other person who could properly attest the fact, was questioned on the subject.

The only gospel that was received by the Jewish christians (who, from their situation, must have been the best judges) as the authentic gospel of Matthew, did not contain the two first chapters.

The introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke contain, each of them, several improbable circumstances, and are hardly compatible with each other. The  
genealo-

genealogies in particular, which are both said to be that of Joseph, are wholly different. Matthew's account of Jesus's receiving the visit of the wise men at Bethlehem, cannot easily be reconciled with Luke's account of his parents living at Nazareth, and only going to Bethlehem for the purpose of the census. The account of this census is full of improbabilities, especially as it supposes an obligation on Mary, a woman big with child, to attend there at that time.

Had the history contained in these two introductions been true, Jesus must have been publicly announced to be the Messiah from the time of his birth; whereas, both his education, and the manner in which he conducted himself after the commencement of his public ministry, shew, that no person had such an idea of him, and he did not, for a considerable time, claim that character, except to a few.

Had the history of the miraculous conception been well founded, it is hardly possible to account for the omission of it  
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by John, but more especially by Mark, whether he was an epitomizer of Matthew, as some have supposed, or not ; because the fact being quite singular, and of an extraordinary nature, he could not have thought it unworthy of being recorded in a professed history of Christ.

All the Jewish christians are by Irenæus called *Ebionites*, and he always describes them as believing Jesus to have been the son of Joseph ; and only Origen, and Eusebius, who probably copied him, speak of any of them as believing the miraculous conception, and this is only in one passage of Eusebius. In another passage he speaks of the Ebionites in general (and he has no other name for any Jewish christians) as disbelieving it.

It is probable also, that many Gentile christians disbelieved the miraculous conception. Justin Martyr speaks of no unitarians but such as were of this opinion. Some of them certainly were so in the time of Origen ; and from the circumstance of the followers of Paulus Samosatensis saying that

that Jesus was born at Nazareth, it is probable the ancient Gentile unitarians in general gave no credit to the account of his being born at Bethlehem, and consequently not to the miraculous conception. In that early age, therefore, the unitarians had seen no reason which induced them to believe it, and no new authority has been discovered since that time.

The early Gnostics did not believe the miraculous conception, though their system would have inclined them to admit it; and Marcion expressly maintained, that the original copy of Luke's gospel did not contain that history.

If Jesus be not the son of Joseph, there is no evidence of his being descended from David, which the Jews consider as a necessary characteristic of the Messiah, and there is no prophecy that announces his miraculous birth.

## S E C T I O N V.

*Some of the Uses that may be derived from the Consideration of the Subject of this Work.*

I. FROM the variety of opinions that we have been reviewing, we may see the great use of what is generally called *Metaphysics*, or the importance of gaining clear ideas concerning subjects of the most general and comprehensive nature. A little good sense and discernment of this kind would have intirely prevented the rise of the doctrine of the trinity. It would have been seen at once, that it was absurd to suppose, that a mere *attribute* of any being could be converted into a *substance*; and therefore that Christ, or the Son, could never have been the original and proper *wisdom*, or *power* of the Father; at first, a mere *property*, as *reason* is in man, and afterwards a *person*, truly distinct from him, and capable of having sentiments, and a sphere  
 I of

of action of his own, so as to become incarnate, while the Father remained in heaven. Still more evident, if possible, is it, that sound metaphysics would have revolted at the supposition of *three divine persons* making no more than *one god*. This must have been immediately perceived to be an express *contradiction*, such as no miracles could prove.

2. The subject of this work may likewise serve to shew us the use of true *Philosophy*. Had not this science been in its very infancy at the time of the promulgation of christianity, the doctrine of *prolations* would have been entirely exploded. For we see nothing in *nature* that could authorize us to suppose, that a part, *protruded* from an intelligent being (whether separated from it or not) could of itself become a distinct intelligent being of the same kind. A branch or slip from a tree is by no means a case of simple *prolation*, much less would it ever have occurred to any person, that the beings thus prolated and derived from another, could be drawn back into that being from

which they sprung, which was a doctrine in the oriental philosophy. Besides, if natural prolations be the foundation of analogical reasoning, with respect to the Supreme Being, we must admit both a power of infinite multiplication, and also that there may be numberless derived intelligences in all respects fully equal to the original stock, which was never admitted, even by the Gnostics. The doctrine of prolation can only be exemplified by the derivation of a river from a spring, or a canal from a river; but this is very remote indeed from the case of any thing that is endued with *life*, and still more remote from that of beings which have *intelligence*.

Had the nature of *light*, and its relation to the *sun*, been known to Philo, and the christian Fathers, they could never have availed themselves of it, to favour their doctrine of the occasional personification of the divine logos, which led to that of its permanent personification, as this led to the doctrine of the perfect equality of the Son to the Father.

Light



Light was, in that age, imagined to be an *efflux*, protruded from the sun in the day time, always connected with it, and drawn back into it again at night; and such was the *logos* supposed to be with respect to God, by Philo and the philosophical unitarians. Had they understood the true nature of *light*, they would hardly have entertained such an absurd idea of the *logos*, and of its relation to the supreme mind. We should, therefore, never have heard of their notion concerning the protrusion of the *logos* from God. Consequently Christ could never have been thought to be this *logos*, but would always have been supposed to have been a mere prophet, like Moses, and others, who had gone before him. As to the Arian *created logos*, I have shewed that the idea of it was subsequent to that of the trinitarian *uncreated logos*, and was what would never have been thought of, if this other had not preceded it.

To their *new logos*, however; the Arians attributed all the functions of the *old one*, even that of being the creator of the world;

and, extraordinary as this may seem, yet the idea of a *subordinate creator* being once established, and having been received both by the Gnostics and the catholics, the greatest difficulty was already surmounted. For to suppose that to be done by a created being, which had before been supposed to be done by a *being* inferior to the deity, though *uncreated*, was no great step, especially considering how little it is that we can pretend to know of the nature of *creation*. But whatever it be, it is always represented in the scriptures as the sole prerogative of the supreme Being.

How disgraceful is it to the present age, in which philosophical and metaphysical knowledge are so much improved, that we cannot forbear to smile at the systems of ancient times, and are apt to treat them with perhaps too much contempt, that we yet retain those doctrines in theology which owe their rise to them. The perusal of this work, in which are exhibited the absurd notions and reasonings of those who have obtained the name of *Fathers*, and  
I especially

especially their truly ridiculous interpretations of scripture, cannot but tend to abate our reverence for the doctrines for which they contended, and which, indeed, they introduced.

3. I flatter myself, however, that this work, together with those which I have already published on these subjects, may be the means of exciting a more general attention to these early christian writers, by giving a just idea of the proper *use* of them. This is that of supplying authorities for ancient facts relating to christianity, such as the existence of particular opinions at particular times, and the actual progress of them; which may enable us to ascertain their causes and consequences. With respect to the writers themselves, they ought to be judged of by their situation and advantages. Notwithstanding the contempt into which they are fallen, yet as *men*, and as *writers*, they were, no doubt, equal to men and writers of any other age; and as *philosophers* and *metaphysicians*, it will be seen that they were equal, and indeed, superior

to the very ablest of the Platonists. Their ideas were less confused, and their reasoning from their premises quite as clear and conclusive. They are generally charged with *inconsistency*; but this accusation has been much aggravated. Taking any of them singly, I will venture to say, that they were not more inconsistent with themselves than writers of any other age, who lived as long, and who wrote as much as they did; and the variety of character and manner in the different writers is exactly similar to that of any other set of writers. Had Mr. Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, or Dr. Clarke, lived in those times, and had enjoyed all the advantages of liberal education which the age afforded, they would not, I am persuaded, have made a greater figure than Origen, Jerom, or Austin; and I would be far from answering for it, that their good sense would have made them such men as Paulus Samosatensis, Marcellus of Ancyra, or Photinus.

The christian Fathers have been likewise highly censured for their loose manner of interpreting

interpreting the scriptures, and Origen has been particularly blamed in this respect. But in this they had a precedent in Philo, whose allegorical interpretations of the Old Testament are even more wild and absurd than theirs. And it is very unjust to blame Origen more than others of the Fathers in this respect. Austin, Jerom, and even Eusebius, interpret the scriptures in the same allegorical and fanciful way.

But whatever be the character, or real value, of the christian writers in the three or four first centuries, in them only can we find monuments of the state of things in their age; and therefore they who really wish to know how christians thought, felt, and acted, in the age immediately subsequent to that of the apostles, must study them. Besides, with respect to several important articles, they are the only guides we have to a knowledge of the true state of things in the time of the apostles; the book of Acts being a very concise and imperfect history, though sufficient for the purpose

for which it was written ; and its real value is hardly less than that of the gospels.

4. Lastly, after perusing such a work as this, we may have peculiar satisfaction in reflecting that, notwithstanding every corruption of christianity, even that which affects the doctrine of the *unity of God* (an article of the first magnitude in speculation, which has even serious practical consequences, and which must prevent the cordial reception of it by the greatest part of the world, and which therefore calls aloud for all the zeal of its friends to expose and remove it) it has, in every state, been infinitely superior to the religion which prevailed in the world before its promulgation. Moreover it has always, in a great measure, answered its professed object, which was to reform the world, by inculcating with proper authority, evidence, and effect, the great doctrine of rewards and punishments after death.

This article of christian faith was held even by the Gnostics, and in every stage of popish darkness and delusion. False notions

tions of virtue have been taught ; but the common sense, the daily observation and experience of mankind, as well as an attention to the genuine principles of the gospel, have always been able to keep those deviations within some bounds ; and whatever it be that any persons, calling themselves christians, have deemed *wrong conduct*, they have firmly believed to draw after it an adequate punishment ; as whatever they have thought to be *right conduct*, they have had no doubt would be entitled to an abundant reward in the life succeeding the present.

It is greatly to be wished that all christians would attend more to this great *bond of union* among them (an article of agreement of such magnitude as almost to annihilate all their differences) this *common faith* which is equally held by them all, by the Jews who were before them, and by Mahometans who have learned it of them. This consideration would help to extinguish mutual animosities, and give us a cool and dispassionate temper of mind, which  
is

is necessary to that calm discussion of our differences, from which alone we can expect a desirable termination of controversy, in the discovery and universal reception of all truth.

This general agreement among christians, in the great principles of their faith, especially those of the *unity of God*, and the *humanity of Christ*, will make their religion appear infinitely more respectable (because more rational) to the whole world, and cannot fail to put an end to all infidelity, and bring on those glorious times, when, according to the *sure word of prophecy*, *the whole earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord*, and *the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*.

I shall not live to see this event, but I clearly see the operation of those *causes*, which will certainly bring it to pass; and this faith is able to give the greatest consolation through life, and in death. The faintest hope that my writings, notwithstanding the mistakes I may have fallen  
into,



into, and which I shall always be ready to correct, may have been the smallest means, in the hands of providence, of accomplishing so great an end, does much more than enable me to bear, it makes me rejoice in, all the hatred and opposition that I draw upon myself by them.

S E C-

## SECTION VI.

*Of the present State of Things with respect to the Trinitarian and Arian Controversies.*

OF late years the attention of learned christians has been much drawn to the doctrine of the *trinity*, and it is highly desirable that this should be continued till the controversy come to some regular issue. There was a remarkable æra of this kind occasioned by the publication of Dr. Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*; in less than twenty years after which a great majority of learned christians in this country were, I believe, pretty well satisfied concerning the supremacy of one God the Father, and that Christ is only a creature.

If learned men will give equal attention to the subject of this work (I do not say to the work itself, for I hope to see other treatises which shall have the same object) we may expect that in an equally short space  
of

of time the controversy between the Arians and unitarians will be decided. For every fact of any consequence to forming our judgment may in that time be produced, and when that is done, there will be little more *halting between the two opinions*. I speak of those who are of a proper age for inquiries of this kind, and such as the rising generation will follow; while those who are past the age of inquiry will go off the stage, and carry their prejudices with them.

It certainly most imports those who enjoy superior stations in established churches to defend the system from which they derive their wealth and honours. The communities, which give them their rank in their respective countries, will look up to them for it. And the same unfavourable conclusion will be drawn, whether they leave the work to inferior hands, unequal to the discussion, or themselves come forth, and be foiled in the contest.

Such is the attention that is already given to this subject, and such the general expectation

tion from the Arians in particular, that their silence will be considered in the same light as a giving up of the cause. And the consequence of a continued silence on the part of both Arians and trinitarians must be that, excepting those who are called *methodists* (in whose adherence to the established system there is generally more zeal, without learning or knowledge) none will be left, or hereafter rise up, to enjoy the first stations in the church, but such as will be sufficiently known to be unitarians. And can it be expected that the system can stand long with such heterogeneous supports?

Human establishments may for a period bear down reason, and they have, no doubt, a great advantage in the contest. But notwithstanding this, the progress of *truth*, is as certain as that of *time*, and whatever system has not the support of truth must fall. During the gradual progress of truth, her enemies must be filled with secret confusion, and her friends, with the fullest confidence and most joyful expectation. In  
this

this age, all attempts to stifle inquiry by *silence*, will be as unavailing as former attempts to overbear it by *force*. The time is come when truth will be heard, and it will be impossible either to over-awe, or to suppress it.

The common people are now much interested in theological discussions, the appeal being made to the *scriptures*, and to *reason*, of which they are judges, as well as to *antiquity*, with respect to which they are less qualified to determine; though even as to this, by a careful attention, and a comparison of the allegations on both sides, they may be enabled to come to a satisfactory conclusion. And when the minds of a sufficient number of the more intelligent of the laity are enlightened, they will be followed by the less intelligent; and then the concurrence of the state, and of the clergy, to a reformation of the public forms of worship in favour of unitarian principles, will come of course. They who make and administer laws, are necessarily directed in their pro-

ceedings by the spirit and inclination of the people, whose servants they really are, and whose will they must consult. How glorious then is the prospect which the daily spread of unitarianism is opening to us!

I had intended to have enlarged on this topic in this place; but having done it in my late *Sermon* for the 5th of November, and the *Reflections* subjoined to it, I take the liberty to refer my readers to that publication.

ΜΟΝΩ ΘΕΩ ΔΟΞΑ.

*Articles*

*Articles omitted to be inserted in their proper Places.*

Vol. I. p. 19. after the last paragraph add,

**T**HE manner in which the apostles, and those of the disciples of Christ who respected him the most, lived and conversed with him, shews clearly enough, that they considered him in no higher light than that of a prophet, or such a Messiah as the Jews in general expected; one who was destined to be a temporal prince. But what a small matter must this have appeared to them, if they had thought him to be the being who made the world, to say nothing of his proper *divinity*. Had they seen him with the eyes of an Arian, they must have considered his appearing in the character *of the Messiah*, as a state of great humiliation, instead of a state of exaltation and glory; which, however always appears to have been their idea of him in that character.

VOL. IV.

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Besides,

Besides, the freedoms which they took with him, as those of Peter reproving him for talking of his sufferings, and for speaking of a person touching him in a crowd, and other little circumstances, shews that they had not that awe of him upon their minds, which they could never have divested themselves of, if they had considered him as being *their maker*. A person who can think otherwise, must never have attempted to realize the idea, or have put himself in the place of the apostles, so as to have imagined himself introduced into the actual presence of his maker, in the form of man, or any other form whatever. He would be overwhelmed with the very thought of it. Or if any particular person should have had the courage, and unparalleled self-possession, to bear such a thing, must there not have been numbers who would have been filled with consternation at the very idea, or the mere *suspicion*, of the person they were speaking to being really God? And yet we perceive no trace of any such consternation and alarm in the gospel history,



no mark of astonishment in the disciples of our Lord in consequence of their belief of it, and no marks of indignation or exclamation of blasphemy, &c. against those who disbelieved it.

Vol. I. p. 66, after the first paragraph add,

IT is acknowledged that these two passages, viz. from the epistles to the Ephesians, and Colossians, correspond to each other, and that they are to be interpreted on the same principles. Now if the phraseology in the epistle to the Ephesians be attended to, it will be clearly seen, that the writer explains his own meaning with respect to what he calls *creation*. In the second chapter, he represents the Gentiles as being in a state of *death*, and *quickened*, or brought to *life*, by the gospel. Consequently they might be said to be *created again*, as he says, ch. ii. 10. *We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works*. Does not this sufficiently explain what he meant, ch. iii. 9. by *creating all things by Jesus Christ*? With the same

idea he calls the heathen state of the Ephesians *the old man*, and their christian state, *the new man*, ch. iv. 22. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

In the idea of the apostle, the preaching of christianity made a new and distinguished æra in the history of the world, from which things might be said to have a *new origin*, and this he terms *creation*, as he says, 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.* And this language is countenanced by, and was perhaps adopted from, Isaiah; who, looking into future times, says, ch. lxxv. 17. *Behold I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create. For behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.*  
By

By this language the prophet only meant to describe a glorious revolution in favour of the Jews.

Vol. III. p. 30. after the last paragraph add,

THE Rabbi Nachmanides, in his public disputation before the king of Arragon, in 1263, lays the greatest stress imaginable on the doctrine of the Messiah being a mere man ; and his address to the young king on the subject is pertinent and affecting. “ The greatest subject of controversy between us and the christians,” says he, “ lies in this, that you make the Messiah “ to be a God, which is not to be borne,” (literally, it is *a very bitter thing* — מר מאד) “ You, my king, are a young man, born of “ christian parents, and have all your life “ heard monks and preachers discoursing “ about the nativity of Jesus, and they have “ filled your bones with this doctrine as “ with marrow ; and from use it is grateful “ to you. But what you believe on this “ subject is contrary to found reason. It is

“ not agreeable to common sense, to the  
 “ nature of things, or to the writings of  
 “ the prophets. The enormous prodigy is  
 “ utterly inexplicable.—For could the  
 “ creator of heaven and earth, and of all  
 “ things that are in them, go into the  
 “ womb of a Jewish woman, be there  
 “ nourished nine months, be afterwards  
 “ born a boy, then grow to a man, be de-  
 “ livered into the hands of his enemies,  
 “ who should pass sentence of death upon  
 “ him, and execute it, then come to life  
 “ again, &c. These are things that neither  
 “ the reason of a Jew, nor that of any other  
 “ man, can bear. It is in vain, there-  
 “ fore, and to no purpose, to dispute about  
 “ other things; it is on this that the hinge  
 “ of our controversy turns \*.”

\* Cæterum, principalis causa quæ inter Judæos ac  
 præputiatos dubia ac controversa est, in eo latet, quod vos  
 Messiam inter divinitatis septa admittitis, quæ res est duris-  
 sima. Tu vero, mi rex domineque, juvenis es, patre  
 christiano, et matre christiana progenitus, totaque vita tua  
 audivisti monachos, homunciones et concionatores de nati-  
 vitate Jesu verba facientes, ii hac quasi medulla repleverunt  
 offa

Vol. 4. p. 10. after the first paragraph insert this *Note*.

AS I am confident it will will give pleasure to many of my readers, I shall give them a specimen of true candour in a modern trinitarian, the late excellent Dr. Watts. It is copied from his *Useful and important Questions concerning Jesus the son of God*, p. 11. &c. “ This title, *Son of God*, is

ossa tua, et ex hac consuetudine suavis est ingenio tuo. Sed vero res quam creditis, sanæ rationi adversatur, nec enim vel intellectus, vel rerum natura tale quid concedunt, neque prophetæ hoc enunciarunt. Amplius, nec explicari potest prodigii enormitas, prout demonstrabo rationibus evidentibus suo loco et tempore. Nunquid enim creator cœli et terræ, rerumque quæ his continentur omnium, reciperit sese in uterum Judaicæ mulieris, ibique aleretur, per menses novem, et puer postea nasceretur, educeretur deinde, traderetur in manus inimicorum suorum, qui capitalem sententiam adversus illum pronunciarent, et neci traderent, dicatur autem postea revixisse, et reversus esse in locum suum, quæque alia sunt ejus generis? Ista nec Judæi hominis nec cujusquam mortalium sana ratio suffert, in vanum igitur, et in nihilum, de aliis verba facitis, nam in his vertitur cardo nostræ controversiæ. P. 40.

“ given to Christ, sometimes upon the ac-  
“ count of his incarnation and miraculous  
“ birth ; but this cannot be the chief mean-  
“ ning of the name *Son of God*, in the texts  
“ before cited. For surely the belief that  
“ the man Christ Jesus was begotten of  
“ God, and born of a virgin, without an  
“ earthly father, was not made the term of  
“ salvation any where that we can find in  
“ in the New Testament. It is not this  
“ sort of *sonship* that Christ and the apostles  
“ lay so great a stress on, nor make the mat-  
“ ter of their sermons, and the labour of  
“ their arguments, to convince the world  
“ of it, in order to their salvation. This  
“ circumstance of his extraordinary birth  
“ doth not seem to have any such special  
“ connexion with the redemption and sal-  
“ vation of men, as to have it made the pe-  
“ culiar matter of their faith, and the very  
“ article on which their salvation was to  
“ depend.

“ Doubtless many a poor creature might  
“ become a true believer in Christ, when he  
“ was

“ was upon earth, by the sight of his mi-  
“ racles, and hearing his doctrine, without  
“ the knowledge of this particular circum-  
“ stance of his incarnation or birth; and  
“ doubtless many a one was converted by  
“ the apostles, without any notice of this  
“ part of the history of Christ. For we  
“ scarce find so much as the mention of it  
“ in their preaching or writings. This,  
“ therefore, cannot be the meaning of this  
“ name in those scriptures.”

Vol. IV. p. 25. add,

IT has been said that the use of the mi-  
raculous conception was to be a motive  
with the parents of Jesus, to give him a  
pious and proper education. But to this it  
may be replied, in the first place, that his  
parents, being of themselves pious persons,  
would, of course, give their child a religi-  
ous education; and, therefore, could not  
stand in need of so extraordinary a measure  
as this to engage them to attend to it.  
Besides, no motive is naturally so strong as  
the

the love that a parent bears to his own child, to do for him every thing that he believes will be for his advantage; which, on the part of Joseph, would be wanting on this hypothesis.

The task of the education of the Messiah would, in all probability, have quite overwhelmed the minds of such persons as Joseph and Mary, who were in a low condition in life, and had enjoyed no particular advantage with respect to education themselves. Without express instruction from heaven, it is most probable that they would have put him under the care of some of their rabbies, and certainly would never have brought him up to the trade of a carpenter. Or they might naturally presume, that being born in a supernatural manner, he would be instructed, and prepared for his office, in a supernatural manner.

It does not appear that any particular care of the education of Jesus was at all necessary. A learned education he evidently had not; for the Jews expressed their astonishment



nishment at his doctrine, on the account of his *not knowing letters*, meaning that he had not had the education of one of their rabbies. As far as appears, Jesus had not been taught any thing more than to read and write his own language; and all the use that he had made of this learning was in his private study of the scriptures; and that, before his baptism, he had given more attention to these than other pious Jews usually did, may be supposed, but cannot be proved.

We see no reason to think that Jesus's appearing as the Messiah at thirty years of age, required any particular previous knowledge. He, like other Jews, would, of course, be brought up in the expectation of the Messiah; and, till his baptism, he might be under the same mistake with respect to his character and kingdom, that other pious Jews were. But, at that time (for we cannot be sure that it was before) he would be informed that *he* was the person, and would be instructed what he must *teach* and *do*, and also be apprized of what he must  
*suffer*

suffer in that character. And his supernatural illumination, and his private meditations, during the forty days which he passed in absolute retirement, will sufficiently account for the part that he acted, and the temper of mind that he discovered afterwards.

His first preaching was nothing more than John had taught before him. Mat. iv. 17. *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Nor do I perceive any thing in his subsequent teaching, which any other good man may not be supposed to have been always ready to deliver, on receiving instructions from God on the subject. His *miracles* evidently required no particular education, preparation, or instruction, for they were not *his*. The Father within him did the works.

Why then should we suppose that the miraculous conception was provided as a means to a certain end; when neither the *existence*, nor the *propriety* of that end, can  
be

be proved from the scriptures. We are nowhere told, that any particular attention to the education of Jesus by his parents was requisite, nor do we find that such attention was given. This then is a case in which both the *fact*, and the *hypothesis* to account for it, are alike imaginary.

*The Names of the principal Persons mentioned in this Work, with the Times in which they lived, in the order of the Alphabet, corresponding to the Biographical Chart, which fronts the Title-page of the first Volume.*

- A** MBROSE, died A. D. 397. aged 57.  
 Anastasius Sinaita, died 599.  
 Apollinarius, jun. flourished 370.  
 Aquila, flourished 128.  
 Arius, died 336.  
 Arnobius, flourished 303.  
 Athanasius, died 371.  
 Athenagoras, flourished 177.  
 Austin, died 430. 76.  
 Bardesanes, flourished 172.  
 Basil the Great, died 378. 51.  
 Basil of Seleucia, flourished 448.  
 Basilides, flourished 112.  
 Beryllus, flourished 230.  
 Caius, flourished 210.  
 Cassian, died 448. 97.  
 Celsus, flourished 150.  
 Cerinthus, flourished 80.  
 Christ, died 29. 36.  
 Chrystom, died 407. 53.  
 Clemens Alexandrinus, died about 220.

Clemens

Clemens Romanus, died 102.

Cosmas Indicopleustes, flourished 535.

Cyprian, died 258.

Cyril of Alexandria, died 444.

Cyril of Jerusalem, 386.

Didymus of Alexandria, flourished 370.

Dionysius of ———, died 265.

Donatus, died about 355.

Ephrem Syrus, flourished 370.

Epiphanius, died 403. 71.

Evagrius, born 535. lived after 595.

Eunomius, died about 394.

Eusebius, died about 340. about 70.

Eutyches, flourished 448.

Facundus, flourished 540.

Firmilian, died 270.

Fulgentius, died 529. 66.

Gregentius, died 552.

Gregory the Great, died 604. 60.

——— Nazianzen, died 389. 65.

——— Nyssen, died 395.

——— Thaumaturgus, died 266.

Hegesippus, flourished 170.

Hermas, or Hermes, flourished 150.

Hermias, flourished 177.

Hermogenes, flourished 170.

Hilary,

Hilary, died 372. 80.

Hippolytus, flourished 220.

Ibas, flourished 436.

Ignatius, died 108.

Irenæus, died 202. 62.

Isidorus Pelusiota, died after 431.

Jamblichus, died about 333.

Jerom, died 420. 78.

Job the monk, flourished 530.

John, the apostle, died 99. 92.

Josephus, died 93. 56.

Julian, died 363. 31.

Julius Africanus, flourished 220.

Justin Martyr, died 163.

Justinian, died 565. 83.

Lactantius, flourished 311.

Leo the Great, died 461.

Leucius, flourished 180.

Manes, flourished 277.

Marcellus of Ancyra, died 372.

Marcion, flourished 134.

Marius Mercator, died about 451.

——— Victorinus, died about 370.

Maxentius, flourished 520.

Maximus Taurinensis, flourished 433.

Melito, flourished 170.

Methodius,

Methodius, flourished 290.

Minutius Felix, flourished 220.

Montanus, flourished 173.

Novatian, flourished 251.

Nestorius, died after 439.

Oecumenius, flourished 990.

Optatus, flourished 368.

Origen, died 254. 69.

Orosius, flourished 416.

Pamphilus, the martyr, flourished 294.

Papias, flourished 110.

Paul the apostle, died 67.

Paulinus, died 431. 78.

Paulus Samosatensis, flourished 270.

Pelagius, died about 420.

Peter the apostle, died 67.

Philaster, died 387.

Philo, flourished 40.

Philostorgius, born 367, lived after 425.

Photinus, died 377.

Photius, flourished 858.

Plotinus, died 270. 66.

Polycarp, flourished 108.

Porphyry, died about 304. 71.

Priscillian, died 386.

Proclus, the philosopher, flourished 510.

354 *Names of the principal Persons, &c.*

Proclus of Constantinople, died 446.

Procopius Gazæus, flourished 520.

Rufinus, died 411.

Simon Magus, flourished 35.

Socrates the historian, flourished 440.

Sozomen, died about 450.

Sulpicius Severus, died 420.

Symmachus, flourished 201.

Synesius, flourished 410.

Tatian, flourished 171.

Tertullian, died about 220.

Theodotion, flourished 183.

Theodoret, died after 460.

Theodorus, died 428.

Theodotus, flourished 192.

Theophanes, died about 816. 68.

Theophilus, flourished 168.

Theophylact, died after 1077.

Valentinus, lived after 160.

Victor, died 201.

Vigilius Tapsensis, flourished 484.



A N  
A C C O U N T  
O F T H E  
E D I T I O N S O F T H E A N C I E N T W R I T E R S  
Q U O T E D I N T H I S W O R K.

---

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Cassiani Opera, per Gazæum, Atrebatii, 1628.

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Cypriani Opera, per Feil, Oxonii, 1682.

Cyrilli Alexandrini Opera, 2 vols. Lat. Parisiis, 1572.

Cyrilli Hierosolomitani Opera, Gr. & Lat. per Milles, Oxon, 1703.

Damasceni Opera, per Billium, Parisiis, 1619.

Dionysii

Dionysii Areopagitæ Opera, Gr. & Lat.  
per Lampelium, Lutetiæ, 1615.

Ephraim Syri Opera, Oxon, 1709.

Epiphaniï Opera, per Petavium, 2 vols.  
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gelicæ, &c. Gr. & Lat. 2 vols. Parisiis,  
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et Philostorgii Historiæ, Gr. & Lat. 3  
vols. per Reading, Cantab. 1720.

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per Morellum, Parisiis, 1615.

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Q U A R T O.

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OCTAVO.

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siæ, 1709

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When two editions of any work are mentioned, the former is that which I have generally quoted, and the latter is not intended except it be particularly specified; the former being that which I first procured, and made my collections from. But the Apologies and Dialogue of Justin Martyr, are always quoted from the edition of Thirlby.

When no particular volume of any work is mentioned, the first is always intended.

Whenever any writer is quoted, whose work makes part of a set, as Socrates, Sozomen, &c. it was thought unnecessary to mention the *volume* of the set, but only the page of the particular work. In like manner,

manner, it was thought sufficient in several cases, to quote the page of any particular treatise, without distinguishing the volume, as *Eusebius contra Marcellum*, which is annexed to his *Demonstratio Evangelica*.

All the authors are quoted in the original, except those in Hebrew or Arabic, with respect to which the Latin translations are given in the notes. This is also the case with respect to the works of Cyril of Alexandria, which I could not procure in Greek, except his books against Julian, which are annexed to Spenheim's edition of the works of Julian. These are always quoted in Greek.

In my edition of Jerom, the pages are continued till the fourth volume, so that it makes no difference whether the first, second, and third be distinguished or not.

*That*

*That the Reader may form a clearer Idea of the Distribution of all the Parts of this Work, I shall here give the Titles of all the Books and Chapters, omitting those of the Sections.*

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The reader is desired to take notice, that sometimes the quotations from the Psalms are copied from the ancient writers, who, following the version of the Septuagint, make one Psalm of the first and second; and, therefore, the number of any Psalm must be considered as one less than according to our translation.

A N

A P P E N D I X.

HAVING employed much time and labour in the composition of this work, which, on account of the necessary expensiveness of it, and the nature of the subject, is not likely to meet with many purchasers, and consequently may not soon be reprinted, I was willing to make this edition as perfect as I could; and for this purpose requested some of my learned friends, to peruse it with care, and favour me with their remarks. All of them were by no means persons whose sentiments on the subject were the same with mine; and indeed, I chose to apply to them in preference to those who were of the same opinion with myself.

Being favoured with their remarks, and having myself re-considered every part of the work, I have thought it most advisable to subjoin such *additional observations*, as since the printing of the work have been suggested by them, or have occurred to myself. They con-

sist of corrections of the text, improvements in the translation of passages, replies to objections, or observations tending to throw farther light on the subject; whether in favour of what I have advanced, or not. Those of them to which is subjoined the letter (X) were written by a person to whom I am more particularly obliged for his attention to this work, but whose name I do not know that I am at liberty to mention.

In general, the articles of this Appendix, are such things as the less critical reader is not much concerned in. But if the work should be translated, I desire that all the *corrections* may be made in the body of the work, and that the *remarks* of a different nature may be subjoined to the whole, as is done here. I hope I need not add that those who may think proper to criticize this work (and I neither expect, nor wish, that it may escape criticism) will consider all the corrections as if they had been actually inserted in their proper places.

The more material of those corrections, which could be expressed in a few words, are inserted in the lists of *errata*, annexed to each volume.

If, after the work is published, I should, in consequence of the farther remarks of friends or enemies, see reason to make any other alterations,



tions, I shall not fail to take some opportunity (either by means of the *Theological Repository*, or in a separate publication, as circumstances shall direct) of giving my readers information concerning them.

Considering the great variety of objects that fall within the compass of this work, and the great number of references to original writers, and of translations of passages in them (of which the last are about eighteen hundred) no candid person will expect that, with all my care, and that of my friends, it should be without faults. Such errors of the press, or lesser oversights of any kind, as any person who can discover, will also be able to rectify, are in general not noticed; and considering how much *Greek*, and that in a small type, is contained in these volumes, I hope it will be thought to be, upon the whole, not incorrectly printed.

#### ADDITIONS and CORRECTIONS in Vol. I.

N.B. (*b*) signifies from the bottom of the page.

Page 67. l. 12. *for* he does say, *read*, he is thought to say.

P. 100. l. 6. *read*, that we ought to avoid.

P. 117. l. 5. — the same things.

\* B b 2

P. 173.

P. 173. l. 3. (*b*) *after* patriarchs, add, Thus they alledged the same texts to prove that he who had intercourse with Abraham, &c. was not the supreme being himself, but one different from him.

P. 174. *after note †*, add, See Thrilby's note on the place.

P. 180. l. 6. (*b*) *Instead of the sentence beginning with* Indeed, *insert the following.* And as they agreed with them in holding the pre-existence of Christ as a great created spirit, not indeed the maker of the world, but superior to him that made it, and that this great spirit condescended to become incarnate for the salvation of men, they were agreed with respect to every sentiment that could excite reverence and gratitude. Both the schemes had the same object, viz. the exaltation of the personal dignity of Christ, though a created being, and they had the same effect upon the mind.

*Remark on p. 188. l. 4. (b) and l. 11. p. 189.*

The apostle observes (1 Cor. iii. 11.) that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ; and this he lays down as a principle, not only true in itself, but admitted to be so by his opposers in the church of Corinth. They all professed to inculcate his  
I
religion,

religion, to own him as the author of their faith, and to speak as his ministers (2 Cor. ii. 13. 23) and though they wretchedly perverted his doctrine, assumed to themselves the character of his followers. If they had any desire indeed to pass for christian preachers, they could not do otherwise. That the Corinthians might not, however, implicitly believe what they said on this account, St. Paul reminds them (ver. 12.) that it was very possible for persons pretending to lay this foundation, to build upon it both doctrines and practices very unsuitable to the design of the gospel; and such he intimates to them, though in an indirect manner, were several of the tenets advanced among them by their new instructors.

Persons teaching doctrines under the name of christianity, so inconsistent with what the Corinthians had received from St. Paul, could have no prospect of succeeding in their attempts by any other method than by depreciating his apostolic character and authority; and this they endeavoured by various ways. In opposition to their arts, the apostle makes it his business to lay open the vanity of their objections against him, and to show that as he was not in the least inferior to the very chiefest of the apostles, so none who thus vilified him deserved to be accounted equal

to him. And this point being clearly established, the Corinthians could have no excuse for casting off their regard to him. But then it is obvious, that all the pertinence of his arguments to this purpose, rested upon this supposition, that his antagonists professed to adhere to the same Lord of their faith with himself. Had they declared themselves advocates for any other system of religion than his whom Paul preached, the state of the question between the apostle and his adversaries, would have been entirely altered. The competition would then have been between one religion and another, not between ministers of the same religion; and the Corinthians, without doubting in the least of St. Paul's eminence as a christian preacher, might have been inclined to hear what was said by one who addressed them under a different denomination.

The apostle, in the words under consideration, appears to admit, therefore, that if he who came undertook to direct them to any other Jesus, as the author of their salvation besides him whom he, the apostle, had preached; or if they had received from his ministration any other spirit, different from, or superior to, what they had already received, there might be some reason for their regarding him; but as this could not be

so

so much as pretended, their conduct in suffering themselves to be so perverted was capable of no defence.

If this view of the apostle's reasoning with the Corinthians in his own vindication be just, it should seem that he does not *in this place* refer to any as actually preaching another Jesus, but only supposes a case, the only one which could apologize for their behaviour, a case which they knew did not exist; and from the non-existence of it, lets them see how indefensible they were in preferring others to him, who, as a minister of Christ, was, as he goes on to shew, in the qualifications by which they endeavoured to recommend themselves, equal, or far superior to them.

As to the rest, I have no doubt but that Gnosticism had, when St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, made its appearance in the church, and amongst them in particular, nor that the apostle makes it his business, in these epistles, to shew the falsity and pernicious nature of its doctrines.

The date assigned to the first epistle to Timothy by Bishop Pearson, is about the year of Christ 65. But Lightfoot and Lord Barrington place the writing of it between the times of the writing of the first and second epistle to the Corinthians, but before the epistle to the Romans; and Theodoret mentions it in the same order, and says he takes

it to be the fifth epistle of those which we have of St. Paul's writing. The patrons of this opinion differ about the year, but all place it much sooner than Pearson.

If this early date of this epistle could be clearly established, it would be a great confirmation of Dr. Priestley's opinion of the introduction of Gnosticism into the church of Corinth, at the time of the writing the first epistle to it. But perhaps it is too doubtful, or at least it will be too much disputed to admit of laying stress upon it; though it appears from p. 153, that the Doctor has not entirely overlooked it. (X)

P. 200, l. 7 (*b*) *read*, we may perhaps infer.

P. 248, l. 9, *after* people, *add*, whose opinions were sufficiently known to be heretical.

P. 263, l. 1, *dele* the interpolated edition of.

P. 283, *after the paragraph*, *add*,

It may be said that, since Irenæus condemns the Ebionites for holding an opinion which he also condemns in the Gnostics, he must have considered them as *heretical* on that account. And had this common opinion been a principal feature in the character of the Gnostics, and such as had originally a great share in rendering them odious to other christians, the inference must have been admitted. But there are many reasons to prevent our thinking so, especially the consideration, that,  
both

both from the nature of the thing, and the superabundant acknowledgment of the Fathers, the great body of the primitive christians *must have been, and actually were*, unitarians, knowing nothing either of the pre-existence or divinity of Christ, and not immediately, at least, hearing any thing of his miraculous conception. Such plain christians could never have been considered as *heretics* in the age in which they lived, though circumstances might arise which should make their opinions very obnoxious afterwards; and Irenæus, without making the distinction that he ought to have done, might enumerate their opinions among other offensive ones of the Gnostics, and even as a part of their heresy. And hence might arise his embarrassment in calling the Gnostics heretics, and yet never calling the Ebionites so. It is a conduct that I cannot account for in any other way.

P. 321, l. 6, *dele* or something like it.

P. 332. I know not whether the following passage in Casaubon's Exercitationes in Baronium has ever fallen in Dr. Priestley's way. If not, it may not be disagreeable to him to see it. "Adfert Cyrillus, libro septimo contra impium Julianum, εν ω διεξερχεται τον αυτε πολλον ξυνοπιθελων κοσμου, ου ειαξε λογον, ο παντων θεοδατος οραλον. Ecce hic habes λογον per quem, ait Plato, factum esse mundum aspectabilem.

“ tabilem. Videtur dicere idem cum Johanne, et  
 “ hoc est quod Cyrillus ait. Ceterum si rem pe-  
 “ nites spectemus, λογος Platonis, id est ratio illa  
 “ quam ait a deo summo adhibitam in conditura  
 “ mundi, longe est aliud quam verbum *Cbristus*  
 “ apud Johannem, et illo λογος ενυποστατος, folis notus  
 “ iis quibus sacra scriptura innotuit. Talia mul-  
 “ ta habentur apud patres, in quibus homonymia  
 “ possit parum cautis imponere.”

And a little before these words, having quoted an observation from Basil relating to the same subject, he says, “ Hæc viri summi admonitio in  
 “ legendis veterum patrum scriptis apprime est  
 “ necessaria. Multa enim in illorum monumen-  
 “ tis occurrunt, ad hujus vocis illustrationem ele-  
 “ ganter, ingeniose, addam et utiliter, pro tem-  
 “ pore, excogitata, quæ tamen doctrinam parum  
 “ solidam contineant. Sic accipienda sunt quæ-  
 “ cunque ab illis proferuntur ex antiquis philo-  
 “ sophis, ut probent etiam sapientibus inter gen-  
 “ tes verbum fuisse notum quod celebrat Johan-  
 “ nes.” p. 3. Col. 2. Edit. Genevæ, 1663. (X)

P. 337, l. 2 (*b*) for Here, read In this and the preceding passage.

## V O L. II.

P. 37. l. 2 and 1 (*b*) “ And being the imme-  
 “ diate maker and governor of all things.” The





to be put upon several of those passages of Eusebius, in which he seems to coincide with the sentiments of the antenicene orthodox. However, that he often speaks the same language with them, or approaches very nearly to it, is certain.

cation of the application he had just been making of these terms to the Son, *καὶ ἐπιθετο αὐτοκαλον καὶ αὐταγαθον ἐπινοειν ἐν ταῖς γενητοῖς θεμῖς*, which may leave some room to question whether he understood these epithets in the same sense with the uncontrovertibly orthodox. In the oration on the dedication of the churches (Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 10. cap. 4. addressed to Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, and ascribed by many to Eusebius himself) p. 384 of the Mentz edition, the speaker, mentioning the soul of man, calls it *αὐτονοεραν κτισταν*, produced by the Son *ο θεοπαῖς ἐκ τῆ μηνοῦτος*, certainly not meaning that the intelligence was underived, or the intelligence of the Son who formed it; but rather that intelligence is its essential quality, its proper characteristic, inseparable from its being; or, to come nearer, if possible, to the force of the Greek word, that pure intelligence is its *definition*, that which constitutes it what it is. And, in like manner, I have sometimes been ready to think Eusebius might intend no more by several of these expressions than to give his very high sense of the person to whom he applies them. The Son is *αὐτονεος, αὐτολογος, αὐτοσοφια*, i. e. intelligence, reason, and wisdom itself, according to the same figure of speech (though in a much more exalted meaning) by which some persons, intending to display the excellence of a wise and good man, would say he is wisdom and goodness itself. But all this is to be considered merely as a query.

Two

Two of the passages here quoted are evident instances of this. But I am not quite certain whether the last passage which Dr. Priestley produces as an example of this, I mean that from Eusebius's Epistle ad Cæsarienses [Theodoriti Hist. Eccles.] is the most full to the Doctor's purpose. For immediately after the words here quoted it follows not only, *οἷος πατρὸς αἰεὶ πατρὸς*, but *ὡς καὶ βασιλευσ αἰεὶ, καὶ σωτηρὸς δυνάμει πάντα οὐρίοι, αἰεὶ τε καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὠσαυτίως ἐχούσι*. In the same sense in which the Father, according to Constantine, was always father, he was always king and saviour. But as it could never be Constantine's intention to say that the subjects of God's government and salvation were *always*, any otherwise than all his works may be said to be always with him, as comprehended in his fore-knowledge and purposes; so neither does it follow from this reason alone, that the Son had any existence in the Father prior to his being begotten, in any other sense, i. e. as the Doctor has very properly rendered the word *δυνάμει*. See Le Clerc's *Ars Critica*, vol. 3. p. 49. edit. 1700. See also quotation \*, p. 130, where the same manner of conceiving and reasoning seems to occur in the following words. *Ὁ μὲν δεσπότης τῶν ὅλων αὐτὸς ὑπαρχῶν τε πάντος ἢ ὑποσασίς, καὶ μὲν τὴν μηδέπω γεγενημένην ποίησιν Μένος ἦν, καθὼς δὲ πᾶσα δύναμις οὐραίων τε καὶ ἀοράτων αὐτὸς ὑποσασίς ἦν συν αὐτῷ πάντα.* In the next words Tatian may be thought

thought to carry the matter farther with respect to the *logos*. But what I have here transcribed may be sufficient to throw some light on Constantine's notion. Indeed his whole argument is little better than a quibble, and though it might suit Eusebius's purpose to avail himself of it, could never satisfy him, nor, I should think, any other person in the council. (X)

P. 80, Quotation \*, l. 14 of the text. "Eusebius says there is one *logos* in God," more exactly the *one word of God*, or *one the word of God* εἰς ὁ τὸ θεὸν λόγος. I have some doubt about the sufficiency of this passage from Eusebius to prove the Doctor's point. Eusebius is here shewing, that, as there is but one Father, so there ought to be but one *logos*, and animadverting upon the unreasonableness of those who might complain that there were not *more*; and to shew this, he remarks that they might as well complain that there were not more suns, more moons, and more worlds, or systems created. To evince the weakness of such objections as these, he says that, as one sun in visible things enlighteneth the whole sensible world, so in intelligible things the one *logos* of God enlighteneth all things τα συμπάντα. And as an illustration of this he adds, that one soul, and one rational power in man, was the performer of many different works at the same time:

From

From this view of Eusebius's subject and reasoning, it does not seem to have been at all necessary to his subject, or indeed at all his business, directly to draw a parallel between the relation of the soul to man, and of the logos to God; but to shew the relation of each to the several objects under their direction, and to evince by the sufficiency of one soul to preside over various employments, the ample sufficiency of one logos to direct and controul all things in the universe; and to explain and confirm his argument by this comparison, appears to me to be the sole intent of this passage. But the quotation from Origen, which follows this, contains in it all for which the Doctor produces it. (X)

P. 160. paragraph 1. l. 5. "and it is void of all foundation." If it be supposed that the meaning of the observation referred to is that  $\text{θεος}$  with the article never signifies the one true God, it is indeed without all foundation, and is contradicted by such a multitude of instances, both in the Old and New Testament, that for this very reason I should be almost ready to conclude, that neither Philo, who must have been well acquainted with the language of one testament, or Origen, or Eusebius (for he makes the same remark) who must have known the style of both testaments, could ever intend to assert it:

But

But if the design of the observation was only this (though I allow that if no more was meant it is very inaccurately expressed) that though *ο θεος* denotes the one true God, *θεος* without the article *may*, not *must*, have a different signification, I should think it is not wholly without ground. The case appears to me to be this. *Ο θεος*, especially when made the subject of a proposition, denotes some particular person, who is pointed out by that title; and when it is used absolutely, and without restriction, denotes him to whom the appellation super-eminently, or in that high sense, exclusively belongs. *Θεος* without the article, on the other hand, *may*, I repeat the distinction, not *must*, denote not so directly a person, as a general description, and represent properly only dignity, power, and pre-eminence. Deut. xxxii. 21. *Αυλοι παρεξηλωσαν με επ' ε θεω, καγω παρεξηλωτω αυλις επ' εκ εδνει.* 2 Kings xix. 18. *Οτι ε θεοι εισιν, αλλ' η εργα χειρων ανθρωπων.* Acts xix. 26. *λεγων οτι εκ εισι θεοι οι δια χειρων γινομενοι,* in which, and in other really parallel places, the addition of the article would, I conceive, be either disagreeable to the genius of the Greek language, or else vary the sense considerably; and this I am apt to think, is the real use which some comparatively modern writers in this controversy designed to make of this distinction; not that when it is said *και θεος ην ο λογος*, the word, cannot

cannot, merely on account of the omission of the article, means the same with *ο θεος* just before mentioned; but that there is no *necessity* that it should be thus understood, and consequently that it is no conclusive proof against their system. If any have carried this observation farther, they have done it without sufficient reason, and Philo's application of it in the passage cited from him, p. 14. has nothing of real support to it in the words that gave occasion to his remark. (X)

P. 162. l. 4. *read*, if Christ had been conceived to be

P. 183. l. 4. (*b*) *read*, by the prophets foretelling things to come, and by himself when made like us, &c.

P. 221. l. 13. With respect to Irenæus, Origen's words quoted p. 208 †, are also decisive as to this point; since he there says, that the soul of Christ, divested of the body, preached to souls divested of bodies; which can never be understood of the merely sensitive soul. (X)

P. 226. l. 3. *read*, so the divinity is not changed by the body of Christ

P. 352. l. 4. (*b*) *read*, Socrates, however, says

P. 411. l. 3. (*b*) *read*, can only be founded on the circumstance of the name of God occurring three times in the verses that he quotes.

## V O L. III.

- P. 57. l. 11. *read*, begin higher
- P. 106. Note l. 3, 4. "Perhaps the first θεος " should have been χριστος." Perhaps an easier emendation would be υιος. ε γαρ ειπεν ο [υιος] ελαλησεν καιλοιγε κ. λ. αλλ' επειδη κ. λ. φησιν ο θεος δι αυτης [the text is εν υιω] ελαλησεν. (X)
- P. 98. l. 6. *Besides*, &c. omit from this word to the end of the paragraph; as not being sufficiently to the purpose
- P. 101. l. 1. (b) *read*, the whole of his discourse
- P. 193. l. 1. *read*, Then first was Marc, a Gentile, bishop at Jerusalem
- P. 197. l. 11. *read*, he seems to say
- P. 228. l. 10. (b) *read*, The manner in which Hegeſippus quotes the gospel of the Hebrews, was such as led Eusebius to think, &c.
- P. 264. l. 8. *read*, and any other that professes himself to be the logos of God.
- P. 305. l. 5. *read*, hardly consistent
- P. 308. l. 5. *read*, that, except Theodotus, we read
- P. 340. l. 4. *read*, impiously brought up
- P. 371. l. 7. *read*, very probably, among the Albigenſes



P. 407. *after the paragraph, add,*

Though none of the following authorities go so far back as the age of the apostles, there being no writers to connect with those of the age of Justin Martyr, &c. yet as the oldest unitarians that we hear of express surprize at the orthodox sense of the *logos*, it is evident that they took it for granted, that their sense of it was that which had been put upon it by the unitarians of the age before them.

P. 416. l. 2. *read*, had much recourse to reasoning.

## V O L. IV.

P. 31. l. 10. *read*, appears to have been intended

P. 49. l. 1. *read*, to whom Mary was related, that the family of Mary might be known

P. 63. l. 6 (*b*) *read*, if any circumstances in the story itself, can be pointed out

P. 64. l. 6. *read*, was not generally known

P. 84. l. 7. (*b*) *read*, he mentions as holding

P. 85. l. 3. (*b*) *read*, some who disbelieved it

P. 104. *after the paragraph add,*

It must be acknowledged, however, that, according to the account we have of Marcion's gospel of Luke, it contained many things which we cannot but think must have been different from the original. If, therefore, he would have

maintained the genuineness of it *in all respects*, it would lessen the weight of his testimony in this case. Having nothing of Marcion's own writing, we cannot form any certain judgment in the case.

P. 118. l. 1. (b) *read*, kept at Bethlehem at least one complete year

P. 135. *after the paragraph, add,*

It clearly appears from John vii. 41, 42. 52. that the Jews in general, knew nothing of Jesus having been born at Bethlehem. *Others said this is the Christ. But some said shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? They answered and said to him, Art thou also of Galilee. Search and look for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

At this Whitby very naturally expresses much surprize. "It is wonderful," he says, "that not  
"the multitude only who had heard the shepherds  
"declaring from an angel that Christ was born at  
"Bethlehem (Luke ii. 15, 16) and had wondered  
"at the words which had been told them by the  
"shepherds, ver. 18, should make this objec-  
"tion, ver. 41; but that the chief priests and  
"pharisees who knew that the wise men went to  
"Bethlehem, to worship him who was born king  
"of the Jews, should insist upon it. This is an  
"instance of the power of prejudice to shut the  
"eyes

“eyes against the clearest truth.” Indeed, that Christ should have been born at Bethlehem in such remarkable circumstances, as the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke suppose, and yet that all people should take it for granted, that he was a native of Nazareth, is not easily accounted for.

P. 136. l. 4 (*b*) *read*, Matthew, indeed, or rather the Jews of that age, supposed

P. 138. l. 1 (*b*) *read*, has been supposed to be alluded to

P. 152. l. 5. *read*, the supposed circumstances

P. 163. l. 6 (*b*) *read*, came to gain ground

P. 167. l. 6 (*b*) *read*, the immediate instrument

P. 236. l. 1. (*b*) *read*, Eusebius, who was at least suspected of Arianism

P. 338. l. 3 (*b*) *read*, being really God, or their creator.

To the list of names *add*,

Artemon flourished 187.

Constantine died, A. D. 337. 66.

Manuel Caleca flourished 1360.

Nicephorus Callistus flourished 1333.

Noetus flourished 250.

Photius flourished 886.

Sabellius flourished 260.

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P. 334. l. 8, *for more, read, mere*

P. 300.

P. 300. to the twelfth article subjoin this *note*,

The sudden spread of Arianism may seem to be an exception to this observation. But, besides, that I imagine it spread chiefly among *the learned*, the way had been well prepared for it in the manner that I have explained.

After noticing the preceding remarks upon *particular passages* in this work, I must observe, that some of my friends think that the evidence I have produced, in order to prove that the bulk of common christians in the early ages, were simply unitarians, is not sufficient for the purpose. They think that “the passage from Tertullian, quoted vol. III. p. 266, proves only that “the major part of christians in his time were “offended with the new and unintelligible notions then introduced (not of Christ’s pre-existence) but of an *æconomy* and *trinity*, which they “could not reconcile to the supremacy and unity “of the deity. “The like,” they say, “is true “of the passages from Origen, in p. 262, &c.”

But, with respect to this, I would observe, that if there was any evidence whatever, presumptive or positive, of any christians in those ages believing the pre-existence of Christ, and not believing either with the Gnostics that he was a pre-existent spirit superior to the creator of the world,

world, or with the Platonizing Fathers, that he was the uncreated *logos* of the Father, their objection might have some weight. But there is no trace of any such thing, either among the learned, or the unlearned.

As to the *common people* of Tertullian, and Origen, they certainly were not Gnostics, but of a character the very reverse of them, the one rude in their conceptions, and the other too refined. On the other hand, they certainly did not relish the notion of Christ being the uncreated *logos*; for that was part of the same system with the *æconomy*, and *trinity*, at which they were so much shocked; and there is no mention whatever of any intermediate kind of pre-existence, such as that of a *created logos*, till a much later period.

As to the *writers* that have come down to us (if we omit the author of the Clementines, who was an unitarian) they were all, without exception, from Justin Martyr to Athanasius, Platonizing trinitarians.

In the whole of that period, all who held the pre-existence of Christ either believed him to be the creator of the world, or a being superior to the creator of it. But the *rude and simple faith*, which the learned complained of, was evidently that which they were supposed to have derived from

from the primitive Jewish converts, which was merely founded on the consideration of the miracles and resurrection of Christ, by which he was only declared to be *a man approved of God, by signs and wonders, and mighty deeds which God did by him.*

The pre-existence, no less than the divinity of Christ, was an article of faith which all the Fathers say, the first christian converts were not prepared to receive, which it required much caution to teach, and the enforcing of which was not seriously attempted by any of the apostles before the writing of John's gospel, in the very latest period of the apostolic age. According to this, the idea that the Jewish christians must necessarily have had of Christ, was the same that they had been taught to entertain concerning the Messiah, which never went beyond that of his being *a man.* The first Gentile converts would naturally adopt the same opinion; and considering how numerous the christians were, and how they were dispersed over all the Roman empire, before the publication of John's gospel, can it be supposed that they should have passed from this simple faith, to the doctrine of Christ having been the creator of the world, in the time of Tertullian and Origen; and so completely as that

that this opinion should have been universal even among the common people, without our being able to trace the progress of this prodigious change?

Besides, it cannot be doubted but that the *simple* and *ignorant* people of Tertullian and Origen, were the same with those that were complained of by Athanasius, as persons of *low understanding*; and these were the disciples of Paulus Samosatensis, or proper unitarians. They must also have been the same with the *grex fidelium* of Facundus, in a much later period; who are represented by him as having no higher opinion of Christ than that of Martha, Mary, and others of his disciples at that time, who, he says, were *imperfect in faith*, but not *heretics*. From the nature of the thing, the case could not have been otherwise.

Moreover, Artemon, Theodotus, and Praxeas, against whom Tertullian wrote the very treatise in which he speaks of the *majority of the common christians*, were cotemporary with him, as Beryllus was with Origen; and Noetus, Sabellius, and Paulus Samosatensis followed within twenty years. As the disciples of all these persons were proper unitarians, it is morally impossible that Tertullian or Origen should refer to any other. These must have been considered as far more *simple* and *ignorant* than those who held the doctrine of pre-existence.

The acknowledgments that John was the only apostle who taught with clearness and effect the *difficult* and *sublime* doctrines (as they were then called) of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, began with Origen, and continued without interruption to the latest period. And if these writers had not made these acknowledgments (which they certainly would not have done without very good reason) the scripture history alone would prove the fact, on the supposition that a sight of the miracles and resurrection of Christ could teach nothing more than that he was *a man approved of God*, and the Messiah. For neither in the gospels, nor in the book of Acts, are there any traces of higher doctrines being taught.

A highly valued friend, after reading my work, states his general opinion as follows:—“ It was to  
 “ be expected that, whatever was the original  
 “ opinion concerning Christ, the converts to  
 “ christianity, and particularly the Platonizing  
 “ Fathers, would soon raise their opinions of him  
 “ too high, and that this would make one of the  
 “ first corruptions of christianity. This we find  
 “ to have actually happened, and the principal  
 “ occasion for it was given by the introduction to  
 “ St. John’s gospel. By making Christ the *per-*  
 “ *sonified logos* of the deity, he was raised so high,  
 “ as to be impassible; and the consequence of  
 “ this was, that these Fathers, finding a difficulty  
 “ in conceiving how such a being could be born  
 “ and



“ and suffer and die, were led to speak of him as if  
 “ this was true only of a *human soul* that he had  
 “ assumed. At last they carried their ideas of him  
 “ so high as to reckon him *very God*; and it being  
 “ impossible that any human mind should believe  
 “ that God himself suffered and died, the present  
 “ established doctrine of the *God-man*, and the *by-*  
 “ *postatical union* was necessarily introduced. This  
 “ very naturally produced *Arianism*, by leading the  
 “ christians who embraced this doctrine to lower  
 “ Christ, in order to avoid making him a mere  
 “ man united to God, and to deviate so far from  
 “ the opinions (or at least some of the language  
 “ of the Antenicene Fathers) as to make him not  
 “ only inferior to the Father, but capable of suf-  
 “ fering and dying. And this again led the or-  
 “ thodox party to still higher notions of Christ’s  
 “ divinity, and consequently a still greater ne-  
 “ cessity of providing a human soul for him, and  
 “ dividing him into two beings. This, I am in-  
 “ clined to think, was the progress of the opinions  
 “ concerning Christ in the first four centuries.”

This, it will be perceived, corresponds very  
 nearly with my own ideas. Only I think there is  
 a necessity of supposing that the original doctrine  
 (by a departure from which the Platonic corrup-  
 tions began) was that of Christ being a *mere man*,  
 who had no pre-existence at all. For this is the  
 very opinion universally ascribed to *the vulgar* in  
 the life-time of Christ, in the age of the apostles,

and in that of the Antenicene Fathers. There is also no trace of any christians denying that Christ had a proper human soul before the time of Arius. That he had one is as expressly asserted by the earliest writers, as it is by the latest. However, all the *facts* that I have been able to collect are fairly before the reader, and all I wish is, by this means, to assist him in forming a true judgment.

At the close of this *Appendix* I had intended to have replied to two opponents, who have lately appeared in the controversy relating to the subject of this work. But I think it more adviseable not to connect with it any thing of so temporary a nature. The work itself, I am confident, will be deemed, by all impartial and proper judges, more than a sufficient answer to any thing that has yet been published on the other side. If, however, any thing shall appear that shall be thought to deserve particular consideration, my readers may be assured that I shall not pass it without notice. This is a discussion from which I feel no inclination to shrink. If I have fallen into any mistake of consequence, I shall frankly acknowledge it. But as to things that do not affect the main argument, I shall not be very solicitous about them. They will only hurt *myself*, and not the *cause* for which I contend.

BIRMINGHAM,

April 5, 1786.

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