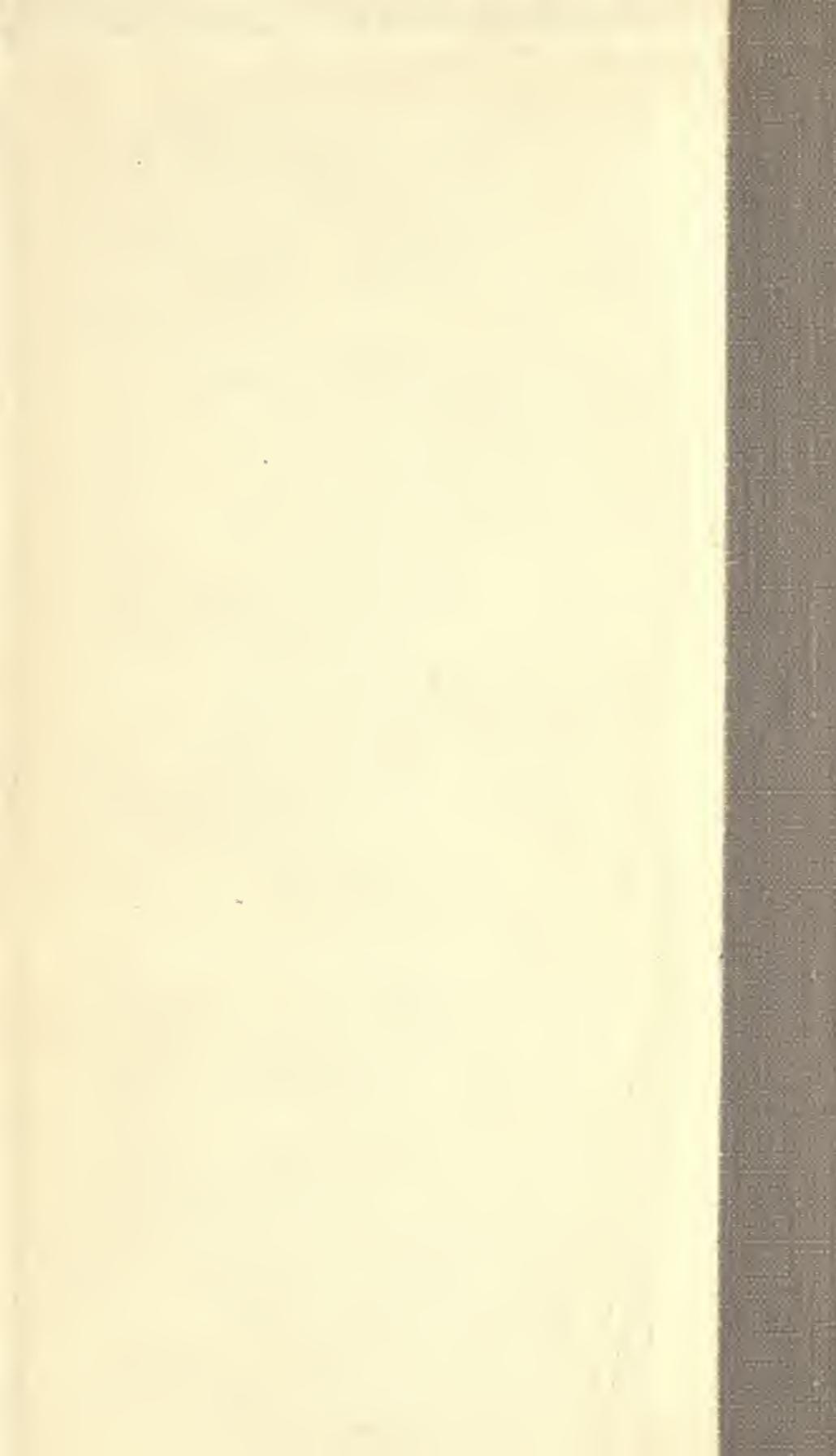




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TRACTS.

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FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

AND THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.

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CONTAINING,

THREE TRACTS, BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

The Christian

L O N D O N :

PRINTED, MDCCXCI.

THREE TRACTS.

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

I. AN APPEAL TO THE SERIOUS AND CANDID
PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY,

(ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS, VIZ.

1. THE USE OF REASON IN MATTERS OF RELIGION,
2. THE POWER OF MAN TO DO THE WILL OF GOD,
3. ORIGINAL SIN,
4. ELECTION AND REPROBATION,
5. THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST; AND,
6. ATONEMENT FOR SIN BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THOSE DOCTRINES,

AND THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH,

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE TRIAL OF MR. E. ELWALL,
FOR HERESY AND BLASPHEMY.)

II. A FAMILIAR ILLUSTRATION OF CERTAIN
PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

III. A GENERAL VIEW OF THE ARGUMENTS
FOR THE UNITY OF GOD.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR, M,DCC,XCI.

A N
A P P E A L

TO THE

SERIOUS AND CANDID PROFESSORS
OF CHRISTIANITY,

ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS, VIZ.

- I. THE USE OF REASON IN MATTERS OF RELIGION,
- II. THE POWER OF MAN TO DO THE WILL OF GOD,
- III. ORIGINAL SIN,
- IV. ELECTION AND REPROBATION,
- V. THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST; AND,
- VI. ATONEMENT FOR SIN BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE RISE OF THOSE
DOCTRINES;

AND THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH,
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE TRIAL OF
MR. E. ELWALL,
FOR HERESY AND BLASPHEMY.

TO US THERE IS ONE GOD, THE FATHER; AND ONE
MEDIATOR, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. I COR. VIII. 6.

—I TIM. II. 5.

A N A P P E A L
T O T H E
S E R I O U S A N D C A N D I D
P R O F E S S O R S O F C H R I S T I A N I T Y.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

PERMIT one who professes obedience to the same Lord, and faith in the precious promises of the same gospel with yourselves, to address himself to you with all freedom and plainness of speech, on subjects relating to our common salvation. I need not tell you that the subjects are interesting. In reality nothing else is interesting, in comparison with them. For what is this world compared with the future! What is time compared with eternity! Believe me, my brethren, it is nothing but the deepest concern for the honour of a religion which is the most valuable inheritance of the human race, and which sets us above all the follies and vices, all the weaknesses and troubles of life, by giving us the most solid hope in death, that has induced me to solicit your attention. But I am confident that you will not think it ill-bestowed, because it is upon a subject that is near and dear to you, and the consideration of which cannot but please and profit you.

If, by the blessing of God upon our common endeavours to *lead* and to *be led into all truth*, I shall be so happy as to bring you to entertain the same views of these things with myself, we shall rejoice together; and if, after all that I may be able to advance, you should still think differently from me, I trust you will, at least, be disposed to think with more candour of some of your fellow-christians, who love the gospel, and are zealous for its honour, though you may think them mistaken in their conceptions concerning it. Let me intreat you therefore, my brethren, to give me a patient and candid hearing. Attend, in the spirit of meekness, to what I shall say from the earnestness of my heart; and exercise the reason which God has given you upon this occasion, which is the noblest on which it can be exercised, and for which you may, therefore, conclude, that it was principally given you.

I. OF THE USE OF REASON IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

BE not backward, or afraid, my brethren, to make use of your reason in matters of religion, or where the scriptures are concerned. They both of them proceed from the same God and Father of us all, who is the giver of every good and every perfect gift. They cannot, therefore, be contrary to one another, but must mutually illustrate and enforce one another. Besides, how can we distinguish one scheme of religion

religion from another, so as to give the preference to that which is the most deserving of it, but by the help of our reason and understanding? What would you yourselves say to a mahometan, whom you would persuade to abandon the imposture of Mahomet, and embrace christianity, but bid him use his reason, and judge, by the help of it, of the manifest difference between the two religions, and the great superiority of yours to his? Does not God himself appeal to the reason of man, when he condescends to ask us, *Whether his ways be not equal?* Ezek. xviii. 29. Does not the apostle exhort us that, *in understanding we be men?* 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Are we not expressly commanded to *prove all things, and then hold fast that which is good?* 1 Theff. v. 21. Also when we are commanded to *search the scriptures*, John v. 39. more must be meant than merely *reading* them, or *receiving implicitly*, the interpretations of others. *Searching* must imply an earnest endeavour to find out for ourselves, and to understand the truths contained in the scriptures; and what faculty can we employ for this purpose, but that which is commonly called *reason*, whereby we are capable of thinking, reflecting, comparing, and judging of things?

Distrust, therefore, all those who decry human reason, and who require you to abandon it; wherever religion is concerned. When once they have gained this point with you, they can lead you whither they please, and impose upon you every absurdity which

their sinister views may make it expedient for them that you should embrace. A popish priest would require nothing more than this, to make you believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, and that a man is infallible; or to persuade you to commit the most flagrant wickedness, as a means of *doing God service*. For the first of these articles they do not fail to urge the words of scripture, which expressly say, concerning the bread that is used in the Lord's supper, that it *is the body of Christ*; Matt. xxvi. 6. and there is no possibility of replying to them, but by appealing to reason, as the necessary and proper judge of the sense of scripture. The papist, therefore, as might well be expected, is forward, on all occasions, to vilify human reason, and to require men to abandon it; but true protestants will not part with it. It is by the help of reason, in conjunction with the scriptures, that we guard ourselves against the gross delusions of the papists, who, after relinquishing reason, have been *made to believe a lie*; and by the diligent and continued use of the same power, let us endeavour to combat every remaining error, and trace out and reform every corruption of christianity, till we hold the pure *truth as it is in Jesus*, and *obey it in the love thereof*.

Do not think that, by recommending the use of reason, I am about to decry the scriptures. My appeal shall be to both, upon every subject on which I address you; and I think you cannot but see that the plainest and most obvious sense of the scriptures is in favour of those doctrines which are most agreeable to
reason.

reason. A good man will rejoice to see them thus go hand in hand, mutually illustrating and enforcing one another.

II. OF THE POWER OF MAN TO DO THE WILL OF GOD.

ONE of the subjects with respect to which I earnestly wish that you would attend to the voice of reason and the scriptures, and with respect to which one mistake will be followed by many others, and mistakes of great consequence, is concerning *the power of man to do the will of God*. It is a favourite opinion with many teachers of religion, that men have *naturally* (or by that constitution and frame which God their maker hath given them) no power at all to do any thing that is good, not even to think a good thought, much less actually to obey any of the commands of God; so that, if men were left to themselves, they could do nothing but sin, and must be under a necessity of aggravating their condemnation, by every thought, word, and action of their lives. But, my brethren, how does this doctrine agree with the scriptures, and particularly with the manner in which the Divine Being constantly expostulates with the sinful sons of men; as when he says to the jews, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, why will ye die, O house of Israel. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Wash ye, make you clean. Cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c. &c. &c. Isa. i. 16.*

Is it not plain from this, that it depends upon men themselves, whether they will repent and turn to God

or not? And how can it depend upon themselves, if they have not, naturally, a sufficient power to do it? You cannot think that God would command, and expect obedience, when he had not given power to obey; and much less that he would urge men to provide for their own safety and happiness, when himself had put an effectual bar in the way of it.

Suppose that any man's children were shut up in a building that was on fire, while he himself was without, and had the key; and that, instead of opening the door, to favour their escape, he should only call out to them to flee out of the place, in order to avoid instant destruction; and that, as the necessary consequence of this, they should all perish in the flames before his eyes; what would you think of such a father? You would want words to express your abhorrence of his cruelty; and yet in this very light do many christian divines represent the conduct of that God *whose tender mercies are over all his works*, and who has solemnly declared, *that he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner but rather that he would turn from his way and live.* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *yea, who would have all men to be saved.* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

The conduct of our *merciful God and Father* is certainly far different from this, and more agreeable to reason and equity. If he designed us to be accountable creatures, and treats us as such, we must have *talents* given us, which we may either improve, or *misimprove*. If we be the subjects of his *moral government*,

government, we must be in a condition either to *observe* or to *break* his laws. A power to do the one necessarily supposes a power to do the other; and without this power we should not be the proper subjects of religion; as, in that case, it would be in vain to propose to us either rewards for obedience or punishments for disobedience.

Nor is the supposition of a power in man to do the will of God any foundation for *pride*. For we must still say with the apostle, *What have we that we have not received? and how then can we glory, as if we had not received it? Every good and every perfect gift comes from God*; and, knowing this, the more we receive of his bounty, the more thankful and the more humble we should be. I shall, certainly, be more solicitous to exert myself in doing the will of God, when I believe that I have a talent to improve, than if I believe that I have no talent intrusted with me at all; so that I cannot do even so much as the *wicked and slothful servant, who hid his talent in a napkin*.

Some of those persons who believe that all mankind are absolutely incapable of doing good, are sometimes heard to invite sinners of all kinds to come to Christ, *as they are*, and to say, that the viler they are, the more welcome they will be to him; as if he was, after this, to cleanse them by some miraculous power. But, my brethren, the invitation of the gospel runs in very different terms. It is, *Repent and bring forth fruits meet*

meet for repentance. Matt. iii. 8. *Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out.* Acts iii. 19. And none are invited *to come to Christ*, but those who *labour and are heavy-laden*; nor can they *find rest for their souls*, 'till they have *actually learned of him to be meek and lowly in heart.* Matt. xi. 28.

What can be more contrary to the maxims above mentioned, than the whole tenor of that serious exhortation with the children of Israel in the prophet Isaiah, part of which I quoted above? *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now (and not before) and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* Isa. i. 16, &c.

Others, who entertain the same opinion of the utter inability of man to do the will of God, act more consistently with those sentiments, but far more inconsistently with the scriptures, in never preaching to sinners at all; though to *call sinners to repentance* was the chief end of Christ's coming into the world. *Matt. ix. 13.*

Whatever represents a state of acceptance with God, as a thing that may be brought about without any efforts of our own, and especially if it may be done in a moment, or in a very short space of time, is sure to be a popular doctrine. Mankind in general
care

care not how little is expected of them, or how little they themselves have to do, in order to get to heaven. But true religion, that alone which affords solid ground of hope towards God, consists in a change of heart, affections, and habits; which can only be brought about by serious resolution, and a vigorous and constant exertion of our powers. Nay, unless a course of virtue be begun, and good habits formed early in life, there is very great danger that the *thorns, briars,* or *bad soil,* will prevent the good seed from ever coming to maturity.

To believe, as the same persons do, that faith and repentance are nothing that we ourselves are capable of, but altogether the miraculous operation of the Spirit of God in us and upon us, supposes that this great and sudden change may as well take place at the *last* hour of life, as at any other: which certainly encourages the most unwarrantable and most dangerous presumption, and is far from having any countenance in the scriptures. The word of God always represents a *safe and happy death* as the consequence of nothing but a good and *well-spent life*. Some, indeed, are said to have been called at the *eleventh* hour, but none at the *twelfth*, when the time for labouring in the vineyard was quite over; and not one of the foolish virgins, who had neglected to provide themselves with oil, was admitted to the marriage-supper.

III. OF ORIGINAL SIN.

As a foundation for this strange doctrine, of the utter inability of men to do what God requires of them, a doctrine so injurious both to our maker and ourselves, it is said that by his first offence our first parent Adam, and all his posterity, lost all power of doing any thing acceptable to God for the future; that he was the representative of all his posterity, so that when he sinned, we all sinned; and every sin being an offence against an infinite God, we all became, from that moment, liable to an infinite punishment, even the everlasting wrath and curse of our maker. And they say, that, on this account only, it would have been just in God to have made us all suffer the most exquisite and endless torments in hell, even though we had never sinned in our own persons.

But, my brethren, you find nothing like any part of this in your bibles. For there you read, *the soul that sinneth, it shall die*. Ezek. xviii. 4. And long after the transgression of Adam, and to this very day, God is continually calling upon men to *cease to do evil, and learn to do well*; which certainly supposes that men always have had, and that we now have, a power to do so. It is allowed that we *suffer* by the sin of Adam, as any child may suffer in consequence of the wickedness of his ancestor; but it is not possible that we should have *sinned* in him. Wherever there is *sin*, there is *guilt*; that is, something that may be the
foundation

foundation of *remorse* of conscience ; something that a man may be *sorry for*, and *repent of* ; something that he may wish he had not done ; all which clearly implies, that sin is something that a man has given his *consent* to, and therefore must be convinced of the reasonableness of his being punished for. But how can any man repent of the sin of Adam, or feel any thing like remorse of conscience for it ; when he cannot but know that he never gave his consent to it, and could not possibly have been, in the least degree, necessary to it ? Good and bad conduct are, in their own nature, personal, and cannot possibly be transferred from one to another. Whatever some divines pretend, nothing of this kind can be *imputed* in this sense of the word. We may receive harm by means of one person, and benefit by means of another ; but no sin of the former, or righteousness of the latter, can be considered as ours, in the eye of an equitable and just God. The contrary is as much the language and the plain meaning of the scriptures throughout, as it is agreeable to the common sense and reason that God has given us.

IV. OF ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

SUPPOSING that all mankind became liable to the everlasting wrath and curse of God for the sin of one man, some divines say, that it was mercy in God to save any, though by an *arbitrary decree*, which left all the rest of the human race under an inevitable
necessity

necessity of perishing. But certainly, my brethren, such *tender mercy is cruelty*. All the creatures of God must look up to him as the author of their being, since it was, undoubtedly, in his power to give, or to withhold it, at his pleasure; and, surely, a good and merciful God would have put a stop to the propagation of such a race of creatures, rather than suffer them to be born in such shocking circumstances; in which he infallibly foresaw, that the greatest part of them must be exposed to, and even actually suffer remediless destruction. As surely as I derive my being from a just and merciful God, I conclude that the terms on which I came into the world are advantageous to me; and therefore, that it must be my own fault only, if I have not reason to rejoice in it, and to be thankful for it. But, indeed, I can hardly think that any man seriously believes, that the greatest part of his fellow-creatures are born into the world under a predetermined necessity of being for ever miserable. For, in that case, it must appear probable, that any children which he himself may be the means of bringing into the world will be for ever miserable; and surely no man of real goodness or compassion would wish to have children, or be accessory to their being born in such circumstances.

If this doctrine be true, what motive can any man have to endeavour to *flee from the wrath to come*; Matt. iii. 7 when, if it is to be his lot at all, nothing that he can do will enable him to escape it; or
 what

what motive can a man have to exert himself to *lay hold on eternal life*; 1 Tim. vi. 12. when, if he is to enjoy it at all, he cannot possibly miss of it, or of any thing belonging to it, or that is necessary to prepare him for it? What reason had the apostle Paul to exhort christians to *take heed lest they should fall*, 1. Cor. x. 12. when none that ever did stand could possibly fall? and what reason had he to *labour, lest after having preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away*, 1. Cor. ix. 27. when being certain of his conversion, he must have known that that consequence was impossible?

This doctrine, of absolute election and reprobation, is certainly a doctrine of *licentiousness*, and not a *doctrine according to godliness*; and let divines employ all the ingenuity they are masters of, it is impossible for them to clear this opinion from being the cause of fatal despair in some, and as fatal a security in others. If this opinion were true, and men were really aware of their situation, I should think it impossible to prevent their falling into absolute distraction, through terror and anxiety. It would be like a man having his *all*, his *life*, nay infinitely more than his life, depending upon the cast of a die; the decree of God being a thing that he has as little power to command. Besides, this doctrine certainly represents the God and Father of us all in such a light, as no man would chuse that he himself should appear in.

V. OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

So fatal have the consequences of the sin of Adam been represented, that you have been told that nothing but the blood of God himself could reverse them; and therefore you have been taught to believe, that Jesus Christ, whose proper title is *the son of man*, as well as *the son of God*, was not merely *man*, but very and eternal *God* himself; without considering that, by thus making more Gods than one, you are guilty of a breach of the first and most important of all the commandments, which says expressly, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.* Exod. xx. 3. But whatever such divines may say, the apostle Paul says, in direct contradiction to them, that *to us there is but one God, the FATHER, of whom are all things; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him,* 1 Cor. viii. 6. And again, after saying that we have *one Lord, one faith, one baptism*, he adds, *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Eph. iv. 5. 6. The creed of all christians, therefore, ought to be, *There is ONE GOD, and one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus.* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

The *Father* is frequently stiled *God*, even with respect to Christ, as well as other beings. *The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you, that ye may know the exceeding greatness of his power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, &c.* Eph. i.

17, &c. Christ himself uses the same language, *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and unto my God, and your God.* John xx. 17. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 26.

Christ who was *the image of the invisible God, and the first-born (or most excellent) of all his creatures,* Col. i. 15. and *in whom dwelt all the fulness of the godhead bodily,* Col. ii. 9, acknowledged that *his Father was greater than he.* John xiv. 28. and indeed, upon all occasions, and in the clearest terms, he expressed his dependence upon God his father, for all his power and glory; as if he had purposely intended to guard his disciples against forming too high an opinion of the dignity of their master. *Verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself.* John v. 19. *I can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.* v. 30. *The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, and the Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.* xiv. 10. *I live by the Father.* vi. 57. *The Father hath given to the son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment.* v. 26, 27. *All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.* Matt. xxviii. 18. He even calls his Father *the only true God.* John xvii. 3. *that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* It appears to me not to be in the power of language to exclude the idea of the

divinity of Christ more expressly than by these solemn words.

Notwithstanding the divine communications with which our Lord was favoured, some things are expressly said to be withheld from him. For he himself, speaking of his second coming, says, Mark xiii. 32. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* In Matthew xxiv. 36. where the same observation is repeated, it is, *but my Father only.*

The apostles, notwithstanding their attachment to their Lord and master, always preserve the idea of his subordination to the Father, and consider all his honour and power as derived from him. *He received from God the Father, honour and glory,* 2 Pet. i. 17. *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.* Col. i. 19. *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him,* Rev. i. 1. *Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,* 1 Cor. iii. 23. *The head of Christ is God.* 1 Cor. xi. 3.

The reason why Christ was so much distinguished by God the Father, is frequently and fully expressed in the scriptures, viz. his obedience to the will of God, and especially in his submitting to die for the benefit of mankind. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.* John x. 17. *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the*

name

name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ* is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 8—11. *Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now sitten down at the right hand of God.* Heb. xii. 2.

Our Lord says, that *he and his Father are one*, John x. 30. but he sufficiently explains himself, when he prays that all his disciples may be *one with him, and his Father, even as they are one*, John xvii. 11. and he gives them the same glory which God had given to him, ver. 22. Besides, at the very time that our Lord says, that he and his Father are one, and in the very sentence preceding it, ver. 29, he says, that *his Father is greater than all*. But how could the Father be greater than all, if there was any other, who was so much *one with him*, as to be, in all respects, *equal to him*?

The mere term *God* is, indeed, sometimes used in a lower and inferior sense in the scriptures, denoting *dominion* only; as when the Divine Being himself says, that *he will make Moses a god to Pharaoh*, Exod. vii. 1. but, surely, there can be no danger of our mistaking the sense of such phrases as these; or if it were possible, our Lord himself has sufficiently guarded against any misconstruction of them when applied to himself, by the explanation he has given of them; informing us, that, if, in the language of scripture, *they are called gods to whom the word of God came*, John x. 35.

(though, in fact, they were no other than mere men) he could not be guilty of blasphemy in calling himself only *the son of God*. Now if Christ had been conscious to himself that he was the *true and very God*, and that it was of the utmost consequence to mankind that they should regard him in that light, this was certainly a proper time for him to have declared himself, and not to have put his hearers off with such an apology as this.

But even this power and dominion, to which Christ is advanced by God his Father, *who gave all power into his hands, and who made him head over all things to his church*, Eph. i. 22. this *mediatorial kingdom* of Christ (as it is sometimes, and with sufficient propriety, termed) is not to be perpetual. For the apostle Paul, speaking, no doubt, under immediate inspiration, expressly says, that when *the end shall come, that God shall have subdued all things to his Son* (in which he observes, that *he must be excepted who did subdue all things unto him*) *he must deliver up the kingdom to God, even the FATHER, and be himself subject to him who had put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* 1 Cor. xv. 24, &c. Nay, he himself says expressly, that he had not the disposal of the highest offices of his kingdom, Matt. xx. 23. *To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

So clear, my brethren, so full, and so express, is the uniform testimony of the scriptures to the great doctrine

doctrine of the proper *unity of God*, and of the subordination of Christ, and all other beings to him, that the prevalence of so impious a doctrine, as the contrary must be, can be ascribed to nothing but to that *mystery of iniquity*, which, though it *began to work* in the times of the apostles themselves, was not then risen to so enormous a height as to attack the supremacy of the *one living and true God*, and give his *peculiar glory to another*. This, my brethren, among other shocking corruptions of genuine christianity, grew up with the system of popery; and to shew that nothing is impossible to the superstition and credulity of men, when they are *become vain in their imaginations*, after exalting a man into a god, a creature into a creator, they made a piece of bread into one also, and then bowed down to, and worshipped, the work of their own hands.

But though it seemed fit to the unsearchable wisdom of God, that all the errors and abuses of popery should not be reformed at once; and though this great error was left untouched by the first reformers, blessed be God the bible is as open to us as it was to them; and by the exertion of the same judgment and spirit, we may free christianity from the corruptions which they left adhering to it; and then, among other excellencies of our religion, *our Lord will be one and his name one*. Zech. xiv. 9.

If you ask *who*, then, is Jesus Christ, if he be not God; I answer, in the words of Peter, addressed to the

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the Jews, after his resurrection and ascension, that *Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him.* Acts ii. 22. If you ask what is meant by *man*, in this place; I answer, that *man*, if the word be used with any kind of propriety, must mean the same kind of being with yourselves. I say, moreover, with the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, that *it became him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, to make this great captain of our salvation in all respects, like unto us his brethren, that he might be made perfect through sufferings,* Heb. ii. 10. 17. *and that he might have a feeling of all our infirmities,* iv. 13. For this reason it was that our Saviour and deliverer was not made of the nature of an *angel*, or like any super-angelic being, but was of *the seed of Abraham.* ii. 16. that is (exclusive of the divinity of the Father, which resided in him, and acted by him) a mere *man*, as other jews, and as we ourselves also are.

Christ being made by the immediate hand of God, and not born in the usual course of generation, is no reason for his not being considered as a man. For then Adam must not have been a man. But in the ideas of Paul, both *the first and second Adam* (as Christ, on this account, is sometimes called) were equally men: *By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead,* 1 Cor. xv. 21. And, certainly, in the resurrection of a *man*, that is, of a person in all respects like ourselves, we have a more
lively

lively hope of our own resurrection; that of Christ being both a *proof* and a *pattern* of ours. We can, therefore, more firmly believe, that *because he lives, we* who are the same that he was, and who shall undergo the same change by death that he did, *shall live also.* John xiv. 19.

'Till this great corruption of christianity be removed, it will be in vain to preach the gospel to jews, or mahometans, or, indeed, to any people who retain the use of the reason and understanding that God has given them. For how is it possible that *three* persons, *Father, son, and holy ghost*, should be separately, each of them, possessed of all divine perfections, so as to be *true, very, and eternal* God, and yet that there should be but *one God*; a truth which is so clearly and fully revealed, that it is not possible for men to refuse their assent to it; or else it would, no doubt, have been long ago expunged from our creed, as utterly irreconcilable with the more favourite doctrine of a *trinity*, a term which is not to be found in the scriptures. Things *above* our reason may, for any thing that we know to the contrary, be true; but things expressly *contrary* to our reason, as that *three* should be *one*, and *one* *three*, can never appear to us to be so.

With the jews, the doctrine of the divine unity is, and indeed justly, considered as the most fundamental principle of all religion. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,* Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 29. To preach

preach the doctrine of the trinity to the jews, can appear to them in no other light, than an attempt to seduce them into *idolatry*, a thing which they dare not entertain the most distant thought of.

The great creed of the mahometans is, that *there is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet*. Now that Mahomet is not the prophet of God, it is to be hoped, they may, in time, be made to believe; but we must not expect that they will so easily give up their faith in the unity of God. To make the gospel, what it was originally, *glad tidings of great joy*; and as at last it certainly will be to all the nations of the world, we must free it from this most absurd and impious doctrine, and also from many other corruptions which have been introduced into it. It can no otherwise appear worthy of God, and favourable to the virtue and happiness of mankind.

Left some common objections should hinder the reception of the great truth here contended for, I shall briefly consider and reply to the principal of them. It is often said that Christ speaks of his *humanity* only, whenever he represents himself as inferior to the Father, and dependent upon him. But the scriptures themselves are far from furnishing the least hint of any such method of interpretation, though, according to the trinitarians, it is absolutely necessary to the true understanding of them.

Besides, when it is applied to the passages in question, it is far from making them either true in themselves,

selves, or agreeable to the obvious purport and design of the places in which they are introduced. I shall just mention a few. Could our Lord say with truth, and without an unworthy prevarication, that *the Father is the only true God*, John xvii. 3. if any other person, not implied in the term *Father*, was as much the true God as himself? Now the term *Father* being appropriated to what is called the *first* person in the godhead, cannot comprehend the *son*, who is called the *second*. This key, therefore, is of no service in this case, and our Lord, by expressing himself as he has done, could not but lead his hearers into what is called a dangerous mistake.

When our Lord said that *his Father was greater than he*, did he make any reserve, and secretly mean, not *his whole self*, but only *part*, and the inferior part of himself, the other part being equal in power and glory with the Father? How mean the prevarication, and how unworthy of our Lord!

When our Lord said that *the time of the day of judgment was not known to himself, the son, but to the Father only*, could he mean that his *humanity* only did not know it, but that his *divinity* (which is supposed to be intimately united with his humanity) was as well acquainted with it as the Father himself? If the human nature of Christ had been incapable of having that knowledge communicated to it, the declaration would have been needless: but as that was not the case, his hearers must necessarily understand

him

him as speaking of himself in his highest capacity ; as he certainly must do, if at all, when he speaks of himself as the *son*, corresponding to the *Father*.

If Christ had not satisfied the jews that he did not mean to make himself equal with God, would they not have produced it against him at his trial, when he was condemned as a blasphemer, because he confessed that he was the Christ only : and yet no jew expected any thing more than a man for their Messiah, and our saviour no where intimates that they were mistaken in that expectation. It is plain that Martha considered our Lord as a different person from God, and dependent upon God, when she said to him, John xi. 22. *I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*

VI. OF ATONEMENT FOR SIN BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

You have been taught by divines, that if Christ be not God, he could not have made an *infinite satisfaction* for the sins of mankind. But, my brethren, where do you learn that the pardon of sin, in a finite creature, requires an infinite satisfaction ; or, indeed, any satisfaction at all, besides repentance and reformation, on the part of a sinner ? We read in the scriptures that we are *justified freely by the grace of God*, Rom. iii. 34. but what free grace, or mercy, does there appear to have been in God, if Christ gave a full price for our justification, and bore the infinite
weight

weight of divine wrath on our account. We are commanded to *forgive others, as we ourselves hope to be forgiven*, Matt. vii. 14. and to be *merciful, as our Father, who is in heaven, is merciful*. But surely we are not thereby authorised to insist upon any atonement, or satisfaction, before we give up our resentment towards an offending and penitent brother. Indeed, how could it deserve the name of forgiveness if we did? If he only *repent*, we are commanded to *forgive him*. Luke xvii. 4.

You read in the scriptures that Christ died a *sacrifice for our sins*. Heb. ix. 26. So he did, and a sacrifice it was of *a sweet smelling savour to God*. To die, as Christ did, in the glorious cause of truth and virtue; to die, as he did, in order to show us an example of patiently suffering death for our religion, and the good of mankind, and in a firm hope of a resurrection to a future and eternal life; to die, as he did, in express attestation of his own divine mission, by his manifest resurrection from the dead, and as the fullest proof of that doctrine, by means of which sinners are continually reconciled unto God, was a noble sacrifice indeed. We also are commanded to *present our bodies a living sacrifice*. Rom. xii. 1. And we are required to offer the *sacrifice of praise to God continually*. Heb. xiii. 15. But it is plain that all these are only figurative expressions, and used by way of comparison. Neither our *bodies*, nor our *prayers*, can be considered as *real sacrifices*; nor, are we, there-

fore, obliged to suppose that Christ was a real sacrifice. And though we, like him, should be called actually to *lay down our lives for our brethren*, 1 John iii. 16. which, in imitation of him, we are enjoined to be ready to do, we should be sacrifices only in the figurative sense of the word.

It is true, that no man who is a sinner (and all men have sinned) can be *justified by his works*. We all stand in need of, and must have recourse to, *free grace and mercy*; but it is a great dishonour to God to suppose that this mercy and grace takes its rise from any thing but his own essential goodness; and that he is not *of himself*, and independent of all foreign considerations whatever, what he solemnly declared himself to Moses, at the time of the giving of the law, to be, namely, *a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth*. Exod. xxxiv. 6. or that he requires any other sacrifices, *than the sacrifices of a broken spirit, and a contrite heart, which he will never despise*. Ps. li. 17.

Can we wish for a more distinct and perfect representation of the manner in which God forgives the sins of his offspring of mankind, than our saviour has exhibited to us in that most excellent parable of the *prodigal son*; in which the good father no sooner sees his child, who had abandoned him, and wasted his substance in riotous living, returning to him and to his duty; but without waiting for any atonement or propitiation, even *while he was yet a great way off, he*

ran to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him, Luke xv. 20. The same representation we see in the parable of the creditor, who freely forgave his servant, because he humbly *desired* him. Let us not then, my brethren, deprive the ever-blessed God of the most glorious and honourable of all his attributes, and leave him nothing but *justice*, or rather *vengeance*, which is expressly said to be *his strange work*, Isaiah xxviii. 21.

It is impossible to reconcile the doctrine of the satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, with the doctrine of *free grace*, which, according to the uniform tenor of the scriptures, is so fully displayed in the pardon of sin, and the justification of sinners. When, therefore, the apostle Paul says, Rom. iii. 24. *That we are justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, the latter clause must be interpreted in such a manner as to make it consistent with the former; and it is far from requiring any force or straining of the text to do it. For it is only necessary to suppose that our *redemption* (or, as the word properly signifies, and and is indeed frequently rendered by our translators, our *deliverance*) from the power of sin, *i. e.* our repentance and reformation, without which there is no promise of pardon, is effected by the gospel of Jesus Christ, who came *to call sinners to repentance*; but still God is to be considered as the *giver*, and not the *receiver*, with respect to our redemption; for we read

that he spared not his own son, but gave him up for us all.
Rom. viii. 32.

To say that God the Father provided an atonement for his own offended justice is, in fact, to give up the doctrine. If a person owe me a sum of money, and I chuse to have the debt discharged, is it not the same thing, whether I remit the debt at once, or supply another person with money wherewith to pay me in the debtor's name? If satisfaction be made to any purpose, it must be in some manner, in which the offender may be a sufferer, and the offended person a gainer; but it can never be reconciled to equity, or answer any good purpose whatever, to make the innocent suffer the punishment of the guilty. If, as Abraham says, it be *far from God to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked*, Gen. xviii. 25. much farther must it be from him to slay the righteous *instead* of the wicked.

I wish the zealous advocates for this doctrine would consider, that if it be necessary, in the nature of things, that the justice of God be satisfied before any sin can be pardoned, and Christ be God as well as the Father, whether the justice of Christ ought not to have been satisfied in the first place. If so, what other infinite being has made satisfaction to him? But if the divine nature of the son required no satisfaction, why should the divine nature of the Father require any?

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If it had been inconsistent with the divine justice to pardon sin upon repentance only, without some farther satisfaction, we might have expected to have found it *expressly said to be so* in the scriptures; but no such declaration can be produced either from the Old or the New Testament. All that can be pretended is, that it may be *inferred* from it. Though good works are recommended to us in the strongest manner, it is never with any salvo or caution, as if they were not *of themselves* acceptable to God. The declarations of the divine mercy to the penitent are all absolute, without the most distant hint of their having a reference to any *consideration* on which they are made. *Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive* Psalm lxxxiv. 5. *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him,* Dan. ix. 3. When David and other penitents confess their sins, and entreat for pardon, they refer themselves to the divine mercy only, without seeming to have the least idea of any thing farther. *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness-sake, O Lord.* Psalm xxv. 6.

It is particularly remarkable, that when sacrifices under the law are expressly said not to be sufficient for the pardon of sin, we are never referred to any *more availing sacrifice*; but to good works only. *Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of the Lord are a*

broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm li. 16, 17. If any of the jews had had the least notion of the necessity of any atonement for the sins of mankind, they could not but have expected a *suffering Messiah*; and yet it is plain that the very best of them had no such idea. And though our saviour frequently explains the reason of his coming, and the necessity of his suffering, it is never on any such account. If he had done it any where, it might have been expected in those discourses by which he endeavoured to reconcile his disciples to his death, in his solemn prayer before his sufferings, at the time of his agony in the garden, or when he was upon the cross; yet nothing of this kind drops from him on any of these occasions.

When our Lord describes the proceedings of the day of judgment, he doth not represent the righteous as referring themselves to the sufferings or merit of their judge for their justification; and the judge himself expressly grounds it on their good works only. Though Peter, in his discourse to the jews on the day of Pentecost, speaks of their sin in murdering Christ as of a heinous nature, he says not a word of the necessity of any atonement, or that an ample satisfaction had just been made, by means of their very wickedness. How would a modern divine have harangued upon the occasion, and what advantage might he have taken of the cry of the jews; *his blood be upon us, and upon our children?* But Peter only

only exhorts to repentance, and speaks of the death of Christ as an event that took place according to the fore-knowledge of God.

All the discourses of Paul upon various occasions in the book of Acts are entirely moral. In his celebrated speech at Athens, he only urges his hearers to repentance, from the consideration of a future judgment. He says not a word of what is now called the true gospel of Jesus Christ. In short, it is only from the literal interpretation of a few figurative expressions in the scriptures that this doctrine of *atonement*, as well as that of *transubstantiation*, has been derived; and it is certainly a doctrine highly injurious to God: and if we, who are commanded to imitate God, should act upon the maxims of it, it would be subversive of the most amiable part of virtue in men. We should be implacable and unmerciful, insisting upon the uttermost farthing.

These, my brethren, are the principal heads on which I proposed to expostulate with you, in the plain and free manner in which I have done. Do you yourselves, *search the scriptures and see whether these things be so. Pray to the God of truth to lead you into all truth, and may he give you understanding in all things.*

VII. PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABOVE DOCTRINES.

THE sound knowledge of christianity is not of importance as a matter of *speculation* merely; though abstract truths, especially truths that relate to God, and the maxims of his moral government, are not without their utility and obligation: but the truths that I here contend for nearly affect the sentiments of our hearts, and our conduct in life; as, indeed, has been shewn in many respects already. Considering God as possessed of the character in which some divines represent him, it is impossible, while human nature is what it is, that he should appear in an amiable or respectable light. Such a God may, indeed, be the object of *dread* and *terror* to his creatures; but by no means of their *love* or *reverence*. And what is obedience without love? It cannot be that of the *heart*, which, however, is the only thing that is of any real value in religion. Also, how can a man love his fellow-creatures in general, when he considers the greatest part of them as the objects of the divine abhorrence, and doomed by him to an everlasting destruction, in which he believes that he himself must for ever rejoice? And what can remain of virtue, when these two great sources of it, the *love of God* and of *mankind*, are thus grossly corrupted? Lastly, how must the genuine spirit of *mercy* and *forgiveness*, which so eminently distinguishes the gospel of

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of Christ, be debased, when God himself (whose conduct in this very respect is particularly proposed to our imitation) is considered as never forgiving sin without some previous atonement, satisfaction, or intercession?

On the other hand, loving God, as the compassionate Father of all his offspring, as *willing that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of his truth*; and also loving all mankind as our brethren, as, together with ourselves, the children of the same gracious Father, we cannot want the most generous and powerful motives *to do the will of God, and to provoke one another to love and to good works*; being in no fear of counteracting the secret designs of the Almighty, which we believe are aimed, not at the destruction, but the happiness of all his creatures.

Think not, however, that I am so uncharitable as to suppose that all those who profess to maintain the doctrines I have been arguing against, are universally destitute of the genuine love of God, or of their fellow-creatures. I am sensible, and truly thankful, that it is not always the consequence; but it is because the hearts of such persons are really influenced by better principles than those which they avow. They by no means habitually regard the Divine Being in the light in which their principles represent him, but as the *true Father* of all the creatures that he has made, and, as such, sincerely desirous to promote their best interests.

Also,

Also, notwithstanding, if they be asked, they will not hesitate to say, that Christ is God, the supremacy of the Father, even with respect to the Son, is, at the same time, the real sentiment of their minds; and when they lift up their hearts to God, it is only *God the Father* that is the proper object of their adoration. The constant tenor of the scriptures is so contrary to their professed creed, that though they dare not call it in question, it is not able to counteract the plainer, the more consistent, and the better principles which will force themselves upon their minds from conversing with the bible.

Besides, it requires more subtlety and refinement to enter into the principles above-mentioned, than the common people are masters of. They cannot conceive how one man should sin, and another person, six thousand years after, be guilty of that sin, and punishable for it; how one person's righteousness should be considered as the righteousness of another; or that three distinct persons should each of them be God, and yet that there shall be no more Gods than one.

Men of plain understandings, in fact, never do believe any such thing; nor can it be supposed that the gospel, which was intended to be the solid foundation of the faith, hope, and joy of common people, should require so much acuteness, as is necessary to give even a plausible colour to these strange assertions. The attempt to explain them (and, 'till they be explained, they

they can no more be believed than a proposition in an unknown tongue) can lead to nothing but endless and unprofitable controversy. It is happy, therefore, that so many persons make a better use of the gospel than their tenets would lead them to do, and that they consider it chiefly as a *rule of life*, and the *foundation of hope after death*. But, as far as the principles I have been arguing against are believed, they cannot but do harm to those who entertain them, as well as bring disgrace upon the christian name; both which every *lover of the gospel* should endeavour to prevent.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DOCTRINES.

I. A CONCISE HISTORY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.

You will say, if Christ be not really *God*, but merely *a man*, though inspired and assisted by God, how came the christian world to fall into so great an error? In return, I might ask, how, if Christ be truly God, equal to the Father, so many christians, and especially the jewish christians, and many others in the very early ages of the christian church, came to think him to be merely a man; when it may be easily conceived that, on many accounts, christians, who were continually reproached with the meanness of their master, would be disposed to *add to*, rather than to *take from* his dignity? But it is not difficult to shew

shew by what *means*, and by what *steps*, christians came to think as the generality of them now do.

It was the universal opinion of philosophers, at the time of the promulgation of christianity, that the souls of all men had existed before they were sent to animate the bodies that were provided for them here, and also that all souls were *emanations*, or *parts detached* from the deity. For at that time there was no idea of any substance being properly *immaterial*, and *indivisible*. When these philosophers became christians, and yet were ashamed of being the disciples of a man who had been crucified, they naturally gave a distinguished rank to the soul of Christ before he came into the world. They even went one step farther, and maintained that Christ had a body in appearance only, and not in reality, and therefore that he suffered nothing at all when he was scourged and crucified.

This opinion the apostle John reprobates with great severity, and even calls it *Antichristian*, 1 John iv. 3. whereas though it is acknowledged that the other opinion, viz. that of Christ being *merely a man*, existed in the times of the apostles, it is remarkable that this apostle takes no notice of it. It was plainly the doctrine of those only who maintained that Christ was not truly a man that gave this apostle any disturbance, or he would never have said as he does, 1 John iv. 2. *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* (that is, was truly a man) *is of God*.

After

After this, philosophizing christians began to add to the pre-existent dignity of Christ in another way, and at length, carried it much higher than those upon whom this apostle animadverted with so much severity. They said that Christ was originally *in God*, being his *reason*, or *logos* which came *out of him*, and was *personified* before the creation of the world, in which he was the immediate agent, and that this new personage was henceforth the medium of all the divine communications to mankind, having been the person who spake to Adam in paradise, to Noah, to Abraham, and all the patriarchs, who delivered the law from mount Sinai, and lastly inhabited the body of Jesus of Nazareth.

On this principle they explained many passages in the Old Testament, in which the *word of God* is spoken of, as that of the psalmist, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, &c.* making this *word* to be a *person*, distinct from God, whose word it was; whereas nothing can be more plain, than that by the *word of God* in this place is meant the *power of God*, exerted with as much ease as men utter words.

These philosophizing christians took great pains to explain how the *reason* or *wisdom* of God could thus become a person, distinct from God, and yet God continue a reasonable being; but their account of it is too trifling to be recited in this place. However, it was far from being pretended, in general, that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was such

a mystery as could not be explained. For by *mystery* they only meant something of a solemn nature, which was unknown till it was revealed or explained. And indeed this is plainly the use of the word *mystery* in the New Testament; and it was also the usual meaning of the word when the present translation of the bible was made; the *mysteries of any particular trade* being the *secrets* of that trade, which yet every master taught his apprentices.

In this state the doctrine continued till after the council of Nice in the year of our Lord 325; but in all this time a real superiority was always acknowledged in the Father, as the only source of divinity; and it was even explicitly acknowledged that there was a time when the son of God had no separate existence, being only the *reason of God*, just as the reason of man is a part, or a property of man. One of the most eminent of the christian fathers says, "There was a time when God was neither a father, nor a judge; for he could not be a father before he had a son, nor a judge before there was sin."

So far were they from supposing the son of God to be *equal to the Father*, that when they were charged, as they frequently were, with making *two Gods* they generally replied, that the son was only *God of God*, as having proceeded from a superior God, which is the language of the Nicene creed; whereas the Father was *God of himself* (*αυτοθεος*) by which they meant

meant *underived*, which they held to be the prerogative of the Father only.

In all this time the jewish christians, who were not tainted with the heathen philosophy, maintained the doctrine of the proper and simple humanity of Christ. Athanasius himself was so far from being able to deny this, that he says all the jews were so fully persuaded that their Messiah was to be a man like themselves, that the apostles were obliged to use great caution in divulging the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. He says, that the reason why Peter, Acts ii. 22. only calls him *a man approved of God*, and why, on other occasions in the course of that book and other parts of the New Testament, he is simply called *a man*, was, that at first the apostles did not think proper to do more than prove that Jesus was the *Christ*, or Messiah, and that they thought it prudent to divulge the doctrine of the divinity of Christ by degrees. He likewise says, that the jews of those times, meaning the jewish christians, being in this error themselves drew the gentiles into it. Athanasius greatly commends the apostles for this address in their circumstances. But what the apostles scrupled to teach, we should be scrupulous in believing. Chrysostom gives the same account of the situation of the apostles with respect to the jews.

It also clearly appears from ecclesiastical history, that the unlearned among the christians were exceedingly averse to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ,

even in the qualified sense above mentioned, opposing, what they called, the supreme *monarchy* of the Father, to the novel doctrine of the divinity of the son; and the philosophizing christians were obliged to make laboured apologies to these early unitarians, acknowledging the perfect inferiority of the son to the Father. But at length these unitarians, who are expressly said to have been the majority of christians in the third century, were overborne by the superior influence and popularity of their adversaries, who, from believing Christ to be God in an inferior qualified sense of the word, came, in the natural course of things, to believe him to be God equal to the Father himself, and to have existed from all eternity independently of him. But it was several centuries before this doctrine was fully established. And the holy spirit was generally considered either as the same thing with *the power of God*, that is, God himself (just as the *spirit of a man* is a man) or else a superangelic being, inferior both to the Father and the son, 'till after the council of Nice.

In the mean time, Arius and his followers, shocked at the doctrine of Christ being of *the same substance* with the Father, maintained that, though he had pre-existed, and had been the medium of all the dispensations of God to mankind, he was, like all other derived beings, *created out of nothing*; the opinion of all souls having been emanations from the supreme mind being then generally denied by christians.

Thus

Thus did it please God, for reasons unknown to us, to permit the rise and general spread of the trinitarian and Arian opinions, as he permitted the rise and amazing power of the *man of sin*, and many corruptions and abuses of christianity utterly subversive of the genuine purity of the gospel, 'till the full time for the reformation of this and other gross corruptions of christianity was come.

II. A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE, ORIGINAL SIN, AND PREDESTINATION.

IT was a controversy about the nature and use of baptism that occasioned the starting of the doctrine of *the natural impotence of man to do what God requires of him*, of the imputation of the *sin of Adam* to all his posterity, and of the arbitrary *predestination* of certain individuals of the human race to everlasting life, while the rest of mankind were left in a state of *reprobation*; and this was so late as four hundred years after Christ. Before that time it had been the universal opinion of christians, and of Austin himself, who first advanced the doctrines above-mentioned, that every man has the power of obeying or disobeying the laws of God, that all men may be saved if they will, and that no decrees of God will be the least obstruction in the way of any man's salvation.

But Pelagius, a man of good understanding, and exemplary morals, in his declamations against some abuses of baptism, asserting, that baptism itself does not wash away sin, as was then generally supposed (on which account it was the custom with many to defer it 'till near death) nor could have been appointed for that purpose, because infants, which have no sin, are baptised; Austin, in opposition to him, maintained that, though infants have no *actual sin* of their own, they have the stain of *original sin* in which they were born; though he was far from asserting that Adam was the *federal head* of all his posterity, and that his sin was properly *imputed* to them. This was an improvement upon the doctrine in after-ages. What Austin maintained was, that men derive a *corrupt nature*, or a *proneness to sin*, from Adam.

Also, having been led, in the course of this controversy, to assert, that by means of original sin no man had it in his power to attain to salvation, he was obliged to maintain that it depended upon the *will of God* only who should be finally saved, and that he *predestinated* whom he thought proper for that purpose, independently of any foresight of their good works, which it was not in their power to perform without his immediate assistance, and in which he must be the first mover.

But notwithstanding this doctrine of the corruption of human nature, the necessity of divine grace for the production of every good thought or action, and
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the predestination to eternal life without regard to good works, advanced by Austin, prevailed in the west, chiefly through the authority of his name; it was never received in the eastern church, and was much controverted, and held with various modifications, in the western. Also together with this doctrine of grace, the divines of the roman-catholic church held the doctrine of *human merit*, founded on the right use of the grace of God to man. And the present doctrines of *grace*, *original sin*, and *predestination*, were never maintained in their full extent 'till after the reformation by Luther, who was a friar of the order of Austin, had been much attached to his doctrines, and made great use of them in opposing the popish doctrines of *indulgence*, founded on that of *merit*.

III. A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

THE doctrine of *atonement*, or of the necessity of *satisfaction* being made to the justice of God by the death of Christ, in order to his remitting the sins of men, arose from an abuse of the figurative language of scripture, as the doctrine of *transubstantiation* also did. But for several centuries these figurative expressions were understood and applied in a manner very different from what they now are.

It was granted by some pretty early writers, that we were *bought* (or *redeemed*) *with a price*; but then,

then, as we had been the slaves of *sin*, and were redeemed by God, who ransomed us by the death of his son, it was maintained 'till after the time of AUSTIN (the principal author of all the rigid doctrines that are now called *Calvinist*) that the price of our redemption was paid not to God, but by God to the *devil*, in whose power we were. Of this opinion was AUSTIN himself, who wrote largely on the subject in his treatise on the doctrine of the trinity. It was long after his time before we find any traces of its being generally thought that the price of redemption was paid to the offended justice of God and the present doctrine of atonement, founded on the idea of the absolute necessity of an infinite satisfaction being made by one infinite being for offences of an infinite magnitude, as committed against another infinite being, is subsequent to the reformation. This doctrine was advanced by the reformers in the course of their controversy with the papists, about the doctrine of human merit, works of penance, and the power of granting indulgences. Now can it be supposed that a doctrine of so much importance, as this is always represented to be, should have been unknown so many ages?

Thus all these boasted ancient doctrines are in fact of late date, either having arisen from the principles of heathen philosophy, or having been started and extended in the course of controversy, one false position making another necessary for its support ;
and

and an air of awful and deep *mystery* has been no small recommendation of them to many of the more ignorant.

The doctrine of the *trinity*, having been one of the earliest corruptions of christianity, will probably be one of the last to be completely eradicated. But the time, I trust, is fast-approaching, when, by means of the zeal of truly enlightened and good men in this great cause, this fundamental error, which gives such great and just cause of offence to jews and mahometans, will be removed, and all that has been built upon it will fall to the ground.

THE CONCLUSION.

MY christian brethren, if the reading of this address give rise to any *doubts* or *scruples* in your minds, with respect to some doctrines which you have been used to consider as true and *fundamental* in the christian religion, inquire farther; and if you be *satisfied* that you have hitherto been mistaken, dare to avow the truth, and act consistently with it. Dread the consequences of joining with an enlightened mind, in the *idolatrous worship of any creature*, though enjoined by any human authority; remembering the words of Christ, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Matt. iv. 10. and also that awful voice from heaven respecting all antichristian corruptions of the gospel in mystical Babylon; *Come out of her, my people,*

people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Rev. xviii. 4.

Think not to avail yourselves of the wretched equivocation of many divines, who imagine that they may safely ascribe all divine honours to Jesus Christ, on account of his *union with the Father*, when they believe no more of his *proper divinity* than professed arians or socinians. By this artifice they secure the reputation of orthodoxy; but let them consider the value of the purchase, and the price they give for it. To mere worldly considerations, to the *praise of men*, or *filthy lucre*, they sacrifice that *integrity*, for the loss of which worlds cannot compensate.

The publisher of these tracts does not conceal his name through the fear of any thing that *men* can *say of him*, or *do to him*, but merely to give what he has written a better chance of being read without prejudice. What he has done is out of a sincere good-will and compassion to the multitude, who believe *they know not what*, or *why*, and what is of more consequence, who *know not what spirit they are of*; but instead of *speaking the truth in love*, mistake bitterness and rancour for a zeal for God and his truth, and also for the sake of a better sort of people, who are unhappily drawn into the same delusions.

Considering the deference which the common people always pay to the judgment of men of learning,

ing, there can be little doubt but that, if those persons who, having studied this subject, have been convinced that Christ is not God, and ought not to be worshipped as God, had openly avowed their opinion, and had had recourse to no mean subterfuge or equivocation, this fundamental article of true and rational christianity had long ago been the prevailing belief; and our religion appearing more worthy of its divine author, there would have been, at this time, fewer unbelievers in all christian countries, and many more converts made to it from other religions. And, compared with this glorious advantage, what has been gained by all the arts and sophistry of ministers, who have concealed their real meaning under ambiguous expressions, lest, as they pretend, they should too much shock the prejudices of their hearers?

That some regard should be paid to the prejudices of the *weak* is allowed; but let not this lead men to criminal dissimulation, or extend to things of so much importance as this, respecting the *unity of God*. In this case, let us keep at the greatest distance from every thing that is *disingenuous*; let the truth be spoken in the most explicit manner, and let the consequences be left to the *power of truth*, and the *God of truth*. Besides, it is impossible that while men retain depraved and unworthy notions of God, their devotion should be such as God requires; so that this pretended tenderness
injures

injures those who are the objects of it, as well as bears an unfavourable aspect on the interests of christianity more at large. Such are the effects of the *wisdom of this world*, when it is put in the place of *sincerity*, and a regard to the plain *truth of the gospel* of Jesus Christ!

Professing the purity of the christian faith, let us be careful, my brethren, to adorn it by a blameless and exemplary life. More especially let us beware that we do not wear *the form of godliness*, when our hearts are destitute of the *power* of it; and that we indulge no secret hope, that by any peculiar strictness and austerity of life, by frequent or long prayers, or by attending on much preaching, and using other *means* of religion, we shall atone for a neglect of *the weightier matters of the law, righteousness, mercy, and truth*. Let the integrity of our hearts appear in the cheerfulness of our countenances; and let us shew that we *love God whom we have not seen*, by loving our *brethren whom we do see*, and by being always ready to do them every kind office in our power.

To judge of our love to God, or of our love to Christ, directly, by what we *feel* when we think of them, especially when we are excluded from the world, as is the custom with many, is to expose ourselves to the grossest and most dangerous delusions. We find in the scriptures a much plainer, and safer method of judging in both these cases.

This

This, says the apostle John, is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. If ye love me, says our Lord, keep my commandments. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you; and this is my commandment, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.

Remember that true christian charity is humble, modest, and diffident; and that he is pronounced to be happy, who *feareth always*, so as to be circumspect in thought, word, and deed; and that, for this purpose, we are to *put on the whole armour of God*, that we may withstand the temptations of the world.

Rather than indulge a pharisaical pride, in recounting your *experiences*, boasting how vile you have once been, or thought yourselves to be, in order to make others believe how holy and sanctified you are now, content yourselves with the language and practice of the humble publican, who, speaking to God and his own heart only, cried, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

Rejoice in all the real good you see done by others, whatever may be their ill-will, or opposition to you; and be especially upon your guard, lest your just aversion to what is corrupt in the principles or practices of others lead you to dislike what is good in them. Let not the *pharisaical rigour* of some throw you into the opposite extreme of *levity*; and let not their laying an undue stress

upon praying, preaching, and other means of religion, make you neglect them, as we are too apt to do with respect to any thing that has been much abused.

Having enough to do with our own hearts, let us be particularly upon our guard against that spirit of *ensoriousness*, which many professing christians indulge with too little restraint. Let us remember that the true christian *beareth all things, and hopeth all things*; and let us never forget the awful warning of our Lord, *Judge not that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

Be not moved, my brethren, by the rash censures and reproaches of others. *Persecution*, of some kind, is what *all who live godlily in Christ Jesus must expect to suffer in this world.* To their *wrath, anger, clamour, evil-speaking, and malice*, answer with *the wisdom that is from above; which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated; full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* Let us even rejoice that we are counted *worthy to suffer shame, and insult, for the sake of Christ*, though our sufferings come not from the professed enemies of Christ, but from *false brethren*; and let us not be concerned at being counted *deceivers*, if we be conscious to ourselves that we truly love the gospel, and that we labour to promote and adorn it.

You

You will be called *arminians* and *socinians* by your adversaries, or something else that shall express more of their hatred and dislike. But let not this offend you. If there be any proper meaning in those epithets, it can only be that you hold certain opinions which they deem to be false, but which you cherish as the only genuine doctrines of the gospel. If nothing more is meant by those terms, besides mere *reproach* and *abuse*, think yourselves happy, as being *reproached for the name of Christ*. 1 Peter iv. 14. With many the appellation of *Lutheran* or *Calvinist* is reproachful, and with many also that of *Christian* is much more so. Besides, both Arminius and Socinus were men who loved the gospel, and who suffered more for their adherence to it, than most others of the reformers, especially Socinus.

If we be christians indeed, we shall consider ourselves as *not of this world*, but as *citizens of heaven*. *The friendship of this world*, therefore, together with popularity, and success in it, ought not to be considered as any object for us. If we *abide in Christ*, and *walk even as he also walked*, not being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the renewing of our minds, we are heirs of a far nobler inheritance, *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us; and when Christ, who is our life, and for whom we suffer reproach, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory*.

I shall conclude this address with a word of advice and exhortation to all *unitarians*, whether they be members of the established church, or of any society of *dissenters* in this country.

Of such great importance is the doctrine of the *divine unity*, that nothing will more fully justify a separation from any christian church that does not openly profess it, and much more from those that avow the contrary doctrine, directing prayers, and paying supreme worship, to any other than the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

It was for the preservation of this great and fundamental doctrine, that Abraham, and his family by Isaac and Jacob, were separated from the rest of the world, and made a distinct people, as it were, to be the depositaries of the true religion, which consists principally in the sole worship of the one true and living God, the maker and preserver of all things. The same important doctrine was uniformly taught by Christ and the apostles; though christians in after-times, like the Israelites after the time of Joshua, relapsed into that idolatry which has generally prevailed to this day.

If it was a sufficient justification of the first reformers, that they considered the church from which they separated as worshipping saints and angels; will it not justify your separation from their partial reformatations, that you consider them as praying to and worshipping one whom you consider

der as a *man* like yourselves, though honoured and distinguished by God above all other men?

To join habitually in public worship with trinitarians, is countenancing that worship, which you must consider as *idolatrous*; and which, however innocent in them, is highly criminal in you. If they think it a point of conscience not to go to mass in popish countries, because, in their opinion, it is idolizing a *piece of bread*, you ought to make a point of conscience of not worshipping with them, because, in your opinion, it is idolizing a *man*, who is as much a creature of God as a piece of bread, and just as improper an object of worship.

Besides, the great offence to jews, mahometans, and the world at large, being the doctrine of the *trinity*, it is highly necessary that societies of christians should be formed expressly on this principle of the *divine unity*, that it may be evident to all the world, that there are christians, and societies of christians, who hold the doctrine of the trinity in as much abhorrence as they themselves can do. For the conversion of jews or mahometans to christianity, while it is supposed to contain the doctrine the trinity, no person who knows, or has heard of jews or mahometans, can ever expect.

You will say we unitarians are but few, even in large towns, and still fewer in villages, and there are no men of leisure or learning among us. But was not this the case with the primitive christians,

and yet this circumstance was no obstruction to the forming of a christian church in any place? We read of churches in private houses.

Assemble together, therefore, in the name and in the fear of God, and according to the order of the gospel, every Lord's-day, if there be no more than *two or three*, or even a single family of you in a place; read the scriptures, and pray together. Also read sermons, or other works of moral instruction, of which there is, happily, no want at this day. Baptize, and administer the lord's supper among yourselves; and as you grow more numerous, form yourselves upon some regular plan of church-discipline, that it may be the means of uniting and keeping you together; and rigorously exclude all persons whose conduct would be a reproach to you.

As to a *learned ministry*, it is acknowledged to be desirable, where it can be had, but it is by no means necessary. The gravest and most respectable persons among you, and those who have the most leisure, will, in the character of *elders*, select and read proper prayers and discourses, and perform all the offices of christian societies, just as well as the elders in the primitive churches, who had no such helps as you now have; and miraculous powers were not of long continuance with them.

If you be at present members of the established church, you will find a *reformed liturgy* ready prepared for your use by Mr. Lindsey. But if you should

should prefer the mode of worship among the dissenters (but men of sense will not make much account of such distinctions) you may in many authors, especially at the end of Mr. Holland's sermons, find forms of such prayers as you have been used to: or you may apply to dissenting ministers of your acquaintance, who will cheerfully give you any assistance in their power.

All these are trifling obstacles to a great design. It requires indeed a proper degree of christian zeal; but the object is worthy of it. The example has been already set in Scotland, where it was least of all to be expected; and the success has been such as should abundantly encourage similar attempts in this country.

The baptists and methodists, not laying much stress upon a learned ministry, flourish greatly; the independents are now taking the same methods, and with the same success; while the rational dissenters, fancying they would be disgraced by the want of a learned ministry, are dwindling away almost every where.

Whatever inconvenience may arise from mere *novelty*, it is soon over; and as the methodists are collecting into bodies in all places, a thing of this kind will excite much less surprize. But what impression ought the censure of the world to make upon those who, as christians, profess to be *above the world*, and to rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer shame in the cause of Christ, and to think themselves *happy* if they be reproached on that account.

count. You should imagine that you hear that awful voice from heaven, recorded in the book of Revelation, ch. xviii. 24. *Come out of her, (i. e. mystical Babylon, the great source of all the corruptions of christianity) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

Be careful, however, to do this in the spirit of christian charity, which should be extended to all men, but especially to all that bear the christian name. Consider them as men who are in an error, which is always involuntary. Endeavour to remove the prejudices they unhappily lie under, but forbear all angry reproaches, all insult, and even ridicule; for religion is a serious thing, and *brotherly love* is the very essence of it. And if this love is to be extended even to *enemies*, much more should it be indulged towards our merely *mistaken friends*.

The author of this address intirely approves of *Mr. Lindsey's Liturgy*, or that which was used at the Octagon Chapel in Liverpool; and he would recommend *responses*, especially to societies formed in this manner, in which it is particularly desirable, that the members, being nearly on a level, should each bear his part in the service. But lest some, from the force of habit, should not be able to reconcile themselves to the use of a liturgy, and object to the scheme on that account, he has drawn up, and published a set of *Forms for all the occasions of unitarian societies*.

THE
TRIUMPH OF TRUTH;
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF
THE TRIAL OF MR. ELWALL,
FOR
HERESY AND BLASPHEMY,
AT STAFFORD ASSIZES.

T H E P R E F A C E.

THIS trial is printed from the author's second edition, even without altering such phrases as are peculiar to that denomination of christians with whom he generally associated, and whose style he adopted; and certainly the quakers ought to think themselves honoured even by this kind of relation to Mr. Elwall. Such firmness in the cause of truth, and such presence of mind in asserting and vindicating it, as appear in this trial, are truly apostolical, and have had but few examples since the first promulgation of christianity. It is impossible for an unprejudiced person to read this account of it (which is written with so much true simplicity, perspicuity, and strength of evidence) without feeling the greatest veneration for the writer, the fullest conviction and love of the truth, and a proportional zeal in maintaining it. I should even think it impossible for the most prejudiced person to read it attentively, but, if he use no violence with his own mind, he will receive some favourable impressions both of the author, and of that cause, which he supports with such becoming dignity, and with a temper and disposition of mind, in every respect worthy of a true christian.

So great was the force of truth on this memorable occasion, that a reputable and honest jury, directed by a good-natured and sensible judge, acquitted the
criminal

criminal contrary to the exprefs laws of this country, according to which this glorious man ought to have been sentenced to a fevere punishment, as a convicted and avowed *blasphemer*. What must a lover of *truth* and of *free enquiry*, as subservient to truth, think of such laws, and of the ecclesiastical constitution of the countries in which they are in force !

It is to be wished that such a monument of the TRIUMPH OF TRUTH might be constantly held out to the view of all mankind, and particularly in this country where it was exhibited.

The dedication of the treatise, on account of which Mr. Elwall was prosecuted, is dated *the eighth day of the second month, 1724* ; he speaks of his trial in a treatise intitled, *A declaration against all kings and temporal powers under heaven*, printed in 1732 : and judge Denton, before whom he was tried, went the Oxford circuit in 1726 and 1728. From these circumstances it may be concluded, that the former of these years is the date of this remarkable trial, especially as in some part of the same year 1726 Mr. Elwall published another defence of the unitarian system, in a treatise which he intitled *Dagon fallen before the Ark of God*, which would probably have been mentioned in the course of the trial, if it had been published at that time.

T R I A L O F M R. E. E L W A L L, &c.

BECAUSE so many persons have earnestly desired to read this trial, I have here published a second edition of it, in order to encourage all honest men, who have the eternal law of God on their side, not to fear the faces of priests, who are generally the grand adversaries of liberty and truth, and the bastions and bulwarks of all ceremonies, fopperies, and absurd doctrines that are in the world.

I do this for the glory of the Most High God, and for the honour of his sacred law, and for the good of all my fellow-creatures; that they may obey God, and not man; Christ, and not the pope; the prophets and apostles, and not prelates and priests; and God knoweth this is my sincere desire, that all religion and spiritual things may be perfectly free, neither forced nor hindered; this being the true liberty of the gospel of *Jesus Christ*, who said, *The kings of the gentiles exercise authority, but it shall not be so with you.*

About fourteen years ago I wrote a book entitled, "A True Testimony for God and his sacred Law; being a plain, honest defence of the first commandment of God, against all the trinitarians under heaven, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.*" I lived then at *Wolverhampton* in *Staffordshire*, where my ancestors have lived

above eleven hundred years, ever-since the *Saxons* conquered the *Britons*.

When this book was published, the priests in the country began to rage, especially the priests of *Wolverhampton*; who had a great hand in the several troubles I underwent. In short, they never ceased 'till they had procured a large indictment against me at *Stafford* assizes; where I felt the power of God, enabling me to speak before a great number of people; being accused of heresy, &c. But I truly answered, as my beloved brother *Paul* did in his day, viz. *In that way which some call heresy, so chuse I to serve the God of my fathers, believing all that is written in the law and the prophets.*

After the long indictment was read, I was asked if I pleaded guilty, or not guilty. I said I was not guilty of any evil, that I knew of, in writing that book; but if they meant whether I wrote the book or not (for they had quoted many pages of the book in that indictment) I owned I did write it; and that if I might have liberty to speak, I believed I should make it manifest to be the plain truth of God.

Then the judge stood up, and said, “Mr. *Elwall*, “I suppose you have had a copy of your indictment?” I told him I had not had any copy of it. Upon which he turned towards the priests, and told them that I ought to have had a copy of it. But they not answering he turned to me, and said,
That

That if I would give bail, and be bound to appear at the next affizes, he would defer my trial 'till then. But I told him, I would not give bail, neither should any man be bound for me; that if the prince of *Wales* himself would, he should not; for, said I, I have an innocent breast, and I have injured no man; and therefore I desire no other favour, but that I may have liberty to plead to the indictment myself.

Upon which he said, very courteously, You may. The judge having given me liberty of pleading to the indictment, I began my speech with the sacred first commandment of God, viz. *Thou shalt have no other gods but Me*. I insisted upon the word *Me* being a singular; and that it was plain and certain, that God spake of himself, as one single person or being, and not three distinct persons. And that it was manifest, that all the church of God, which then heard those words, understood it in the same plain obvious sense as I do; as is most evident from the words of the prophet *Moses*: who said to Israel thus; *Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know, that the Lord he is God, there is none else besides him; out of heaven he made thee hear his voice, &c.* I told them, that from the words *he*, and *him*, and *his*, it was certain God was but one single person, one single *he*, or *him*, or *his*. I told them that all the patriarchs from the beginning of the world did always address themselves to God, as one single
F 2 being,

being. O thou *Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth*; and *Abraham* said to the king of *Sodom*, *I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, &c.* They knew nothing of a trinity, nor of God's being a plurality of persons; that monstrous doctrine was not then born, nor of two thousand years after, 'till the apostacy and popery began to put up its filthy head.

Then I told them, that all the prophets witnessed to the truth of the same pure uncorrupted unitarian doctrine of *one God, and no other but he: Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?* Then I told them the words of God to *Abraham*, *I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be thou perfect*; and by the prophet *Isaiah*, *To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the holy One, not the holy Three.* I told them that the words *Me* and *One* did utterly exclude any other person's being God, but that *One* single *Me*; and that God himself often testifies the same truth, by saying, *Is there any God besides Me?* And then tells us plainly, *There is no God, I know not any: I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me.* *Isaiah* xlv. 5.

Now, said I, let God be true, but every man a liar, that is, every man that contradicteth him; for he is the God of truth; he says, *I lift up my hand to heaven, I say, I live for ever.*

After

After I had pleaded many texts in the Old Testament, I began to enter the New; and told them, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the prophet, like unto *Moses*, held forth the same doctrine that *Moses* had done; for when a certain ruler came to ask him which was the first and great commandment, (or how he expounded it,) he told him the same words that *Moses* had said. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord, not three, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c.* And the scribe said, *Thou hast answered right, for there is but one God, and there is no other but he, &c.* Then I mentioned the words of Christ in the xviii of John and ver. 3. as very remarkable, and worthy of all their observation: *This is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* And then I turned my face directly towards the priests (my prosecutors, who all stood on the right side of the judge) Now, said I, since the lips of the blessed Jesus, which always spake the truth, say his Father is the only true God; who is he, and who are they that dare set up another, in contradiction to my blessed Lord, who says, his Father is *the only true God?*

And I stopped here, to see if any of them would answer; but the power of God came over them, so that all their mouths were shut up, and not one of them spake a word. So that I turned about over my left shoulder, and warned the people, in the fear of

God, not to take their religious sentiments from men, but from God : not from the pope, but from Christ ; not from prelates nor priests, but from the prophets and apostles.

And then I turned towards the judge, and told him, that I was the more convinced of the truth of what I had said from the words of my blessed Lord ; who said, *Call no man Father here upon earth ; for one is your Father, even God. And call no man Master, for one is your Master, even Christ.* From hence, said I, I deduce this natural inference, that in all things that are of a spiritual nature, we ought to take our religion from God and his prophets, from Christ and his apostles. It will be too long to mention all the texts and proofs that I made use of ; I will only add one or two, as that of *Paul*, 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. where the apostle tells us, *There is no other God but one ; for though there be that are called gods (as there be gods many, and lords many) both in heaven and earth ; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things ; so that I told them, here was a plain demonstration ; for he says, there is but one God : and he tells us who that one God is, that is, the Father.* And therefore no other person could be God but the Father only ; and what I had wrote in my book was the plain truth, and founded on God's own words, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.*

In short, I could plainly perceive there was a general convincement through the court. The judge and justices of the peace did not like the prosecution; but saw plainly, that *out of envy the priests had done it*. I then began to set before them the odious nature of that hell-born principle of persecution, and that it was hatched in hell; that it never came from Jesus Christ; and that he and his followers were often persecuted themselves, but they never persecuted any; that we had now a very flagrant instance of it by the papists at *Thorn*; where they first took away the schools where our brethren the protestants educated their children; then they took away the places of their religious worship; then they put them in prisons; then confiscated their estates, and, last of all, took away their lives.

Now we can cry out loud enough against this, and shew the inhumanity, cruelty, and barbarity of it; but, said I, if we, who call ourselves protestants, shall be found acting in the same spirit, against others, the crime will be greater in us than in them; because we have attained to greater degrees of light than they.

However, I told them, that I had put my house in order, and made up my accounts with all men as near as I could; and that as I owed no man here any thing, so I would not pay a penny towards this prosecution: and that I was sure of it,
that

that whatever fine they laid on me, or whatever hole or prison, said I, you thrust me into, I shall find God's living presence with me, as I feel it this day: and so ended my speech.

Upon this a justice of the peace, one *Rupert Humpatch*, got up, went to the judge, laid his hand upon the judge's shoulder, and said, my lord, I know this man to be an honest man; and what I say, I speak not by hear-say, but experience; for I was his next-door neighbour three years. Also, another justice spake to the same effect. Then the judge spake to me; Mr. *Elwall*, I perceive you have studied very deeply into this controversy; but have you ever consulted any of our reverend clergy and bishops of the church of *England*? I answered, Yes, I have; and among others, the archbishop of *Canterbury* himself, with whom I have exchanged ten letters, viz. four I have had from him, and six he has had from me (at which words all the priests stared very earnestly). Well, says the judge, and was not the archbishop able to give you some satisfaction in these points, Mr. *Elwall*? I said, No; but rather quite the reverse; for that in all the letters I sent to the archbishop, I grounded my arguments upon the words of God and his prophets, Christ and his apostles; but in his answers to me, he referred me to acts of parliament, and declarations of state, &c. whereas I told the bishop, in one of my letters, that I wondered a man of his

his natural and acquired abilities, should be so weak as to turn me over to human authorities, in things of a divine nature ; for though in all things that are of a temporal nature, and concern the civil society, *I will be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake* ; even from the king upon the throne down to the meanest officer in the land ; but in things that are of a spiritual nature, and concern my faith, my worship of God, and future state, I would *call no man father here upon earth*, nor regard either popes or councils, prelates or priests of any denomination, nor convocations, nor assemblies of divines, but obey God and his prophets, Christ and his apostles. Upon which the judge answered, Well, if his grace of *Canterbury* was not able to give you satisfaction, Mr. *Elwall*, I believe I shall not ; and so sat down and rested him ; for I think he had stood up for near an hour and a quarter.

Then he stood up again, and turning to the priests talked softly to them. I did not hear what he said, or what they said to him ; but I guessed from what the judge said next ; for, says he, Mr. *Elwall* you cannot but be sensible that what you have writ, being contrary to the commonly received doctrines of the church, it has given offence to some of your neighbours, and particularly to the clergy ; are you willing to promise, before the face of the country here, that you will not write any
more

more on this head? I answered, God forbid that I should make thee any such promise; for when I wrote this book, I did it in the fear of God; and I did not write to please the church of *Rome*, nor the church of *England*, nor the church of *Scotland*; but to please that God who gave me my breath; and therefore, if at any time I find myself drawn forth to write in defence of this sacred first commandment, or any other of the ten, I hope I shall do it in the same spirit of sincerity as I have done this. And I perceived the judge was not in any wise displeas'd at my honest, plain, bold answer; but rather his heart seem'd to be knit in love to me; and he soon declar'd me acquitted: and then the clerk of the arraigns, or assizes, stood up, and said, Mr. *Elwall* you are acquitted; you may go out of court when you please.

So I went away through a very great croud of people (for it was thought there was a thousand people at the trial) and having spoke long I was a-thirst, so went to a well and drank. Then I went out of town by a river-side, and looking about, and seeing no one near, I kneeled down on the bank of the river, and sent up my thank-offering to that good God who had deliver'd me out of their hands.

By the time that I return'd to the town, the court was up and gone to dinner: a justice of peace and another person met me, and would have me to

eat

eat and drink with them, which I did ; and afterwards, as I was walking along the street some persons hove up a great sash-window and invited me up to them ; and when I entered the room, I found ten or a dozen persons, most of them justices of the peace ; and amongst them a priest, whom they called doctor. One of the justices took me by the hand, and said, Mr. *Elwall*, I am heartily glad to see you, and I was glad to hear you bear your testimony so boldly as you did. Yes, says another justice, and I was glad to see Mr. *Elwall* come off with flying colours as he did : upon which the priest said (in a very bitter manner) *He sought to have been hanged.* I turned unto him, and said, Friend, I perceive *thou dost not know what spirit thou art of ; for the son of man came not to destroy, but to save :* but thou wouldest have me destroyed. Upon which one of the justices said, How now, doctor, did not you hear one of the justices say, that he was an honest man, and that what he said was not by hear-say, but by experience, and would you have honest men hanged, doctor ? Is this good doctrine ? So that the priest said but little more for some time : So I took leave of the justices, and took horse for *Wolverhampton*, for I knew there would be great joy in my family, for the common people all expected to hear of my being fined and imprisoned. But a farmer that lived near, who had been upon the jury at *Stafford*, got
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to town before me, and the people went all up and asked him, What have they done to Mr. *Elwall*? Have they put him in prison? He answered “ No, he preached there an hour together, “ and our parsons could say never a word. What “ must they put him in prison for? I told our “ foreman of the jury, Mr. *Elwall* was an honest “ man, and his father was an honest man, I knew “ him very well.” So they were all damped; but there was great joy in my family, and amongst all my friends: Praises, living praises be attributed to that good God who delivered me out of their hands!

Christ never told us of that scandalous popish invention, of his human nature praying to his divine nature; but, like a true obedient son of God, submitted to death, even that cruel death which the hatred and envy of persecuting wicked priests inflicted on him, because he had so plainly and truly told them all of their blindness, covetousness, pride, and hypocrisy. And therefore *God raised him from the dead*; and for his faithfulness *God has exalted him to be a prince and a saviour to all those that obey that pure doctrine which God gave him to teach; that denying ungodliness and sinful lusts, we should live soberly and righteously in this world. Then are we his disciples indeed, when we do those things that he hath commanded.* Then shall we be saved, not by the merits of *Christ*, that is another popish invention; for he never did any thing but
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what it was his duty to do, and therefore could not merit any thing for others ; but he taught us the true way to find acceptance with God, and that was by *doing the will of his Father which is in heaven : and therein he is the way, the truth, and the life, because no one cometh unto the Father, but by that way.*

Neither did he make satisfaction unto God for us. It was impossible ; and what God never required : But *he who had no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn from their wickedness and live,* out of the immeasurable height and depth of his love, directed our lord *Jesus Christ* to teach mankind a never-failing way of being reconciled to God ; and that was by sincere repentance and reformation. This was the gospel or good tidings of *Jesus Christ, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* He tells us, *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ;* and by that beautiful excellent parable of the prodigal son, he illustrates the tender mercy of his God and our God, of his Father and our Father, without any satisfaction. The compassionate Father required none at all, but humble confession and submission, with sincere repentance and reformation, and then comes *the best robe, the ring, the shoes, and the fatted calf,* to demonstrate the paternal acceptance without satisfaction or sacrifice, *but a broken and a contrite heart which he will never re-*

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fuse; for he can as soon cease to be God, as cease to be merciful.

And as to the trinitarians, nothing is more plain, than that they feed upon ashes; *a deceived heart hath turned them aside*, because they will not make use of those rational faculties which God hath given them; nor say, *Is there not a lye in my right-hand?* otherwise they would never flatter the humble *Jefus*, nor make the most high God to be a plurality of persons.

For as to the holy ghost (their third God) it is evidently no distinct person from God, any more than a man's spirit is a distinct person from the man; so that the spirit of God is God's spirit, as is manifest from scripture and reason, Gen. vi. 3. *My spirit shall not always strive with man: And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters: And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. And God made all things by the word of his power.* So that the word of God, and the spirit of God, are not distinct persons from God, but the power of God, and the energy of God. So the word of a man, and the spirit of a man, are not distinct persons from the man, but the man himself; if his word be false, or his spirit be wicked, the man is false and wicked.

The same degree of stupidity that leads trinitarians to call the word of God, and the spirit of
God,

God, distinct persons, would lead them to call the wisdom of God, the goodness of God, the love of God, the peace of God, the power of God, and the mercy of God, distinct persons; and make God to be a trinity of trinities; for it is certain, God is expressly called by all those names.

But whosoever goes about to father this absurd and horrid doctrine of the trinity upon *Jesus Christ*, does egregiously abuse him; who told us plainly, *his Father was greater than he; and that he could do nothing of himself*, which is a demonstration that he is not God: For we are sure God is omnipotent, and can do all things of himself; being self-existent and independent, the supreme creator of the universe; and in this it is, that the unitarians triumph as unanswerable, believing in *Jesus Christ*, who told us his Father was *the only true God*, John xvii. 3.

P. S. By these last words of *Christ*, I myself was convinced many years ago.

A
FAMILIAR ILLUSTRATION
OF CERTAIN
PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE
RELATING TO

THE POWER OF MAN TO DO THE WILL OF
GOD,
ORIGINAL SIN,
ELECTION AND REPROBATION,
THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, AND
ATONEMENT FOR SIN BY THE DEATH OF
CHRIST.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES. JOHN V. 39.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

IN all theological controversies our appeal lies to the *Bible*, which contains the writings of the inspired prophets, and of the apostles and evangelists, who have recorded the precepts and doctrines of Christ. To those who lived in the times in which these books were published, they were, no doubt, very intelligible; the language in which they are written, and the customs to which they allude, being perfectly known to them. But what was easy to *them*, a long course of time has rendered extremely difficult to *us*, who use a very different language, and whose manners and customs are so exceedingly unlike those of the jews. On this account, it may puzzle the greatest scholar of the present age to make out the sense of a passage of scripture, which could not but have been perfectly understood by the most illiterate person in that age. In this state of things, the *ignorant* and *unlearned* are very liable to *wrest the scriptures*, as the apostle Peter says they ever have done, while good sense and sound learning often maintain a very unequal contest.

It is another unfavourable circumstance with respect to the right understanding of the scriptures in this country, that the English translation of them was made at a time when the christian world was but just emerged from the darkness of popery, and while the belief of all those opinions which are combated in the *APPEAL* was almost universally retained. Our translators, therefore, having been educated in the belief of, and in a reverence for, those particular opinions, and not having had their minds sufficiently enlightened to call them in question, it is no wonder that, without any ill design, they should, in many places of their version, have expressed their own sentiments, and not those of the apostles. In all these cases a just translation is all that is necessary to remove the errors into which a wrong translation has led us. But with respect to them, you, my brethren, who are not acquainted with the languages in which the scriptures were originally written, must necessarily depend upon other persons for the interpretation of them. You may however be able, in a great measure, to judge for yourselves concerning different translations, by considering, if you will take pains to reflect upon the subject, which rendering of a doubtful passage is most agreeable to the general strain of the scriptures, and to common sense.

Do not, however, immediately conclude that an interpretation of a passage in scripture is *unnatural*,
because,

because, when it is first proposed to you, it may *seem* to be so; because this may arise from nothing but your having been long accustomed to understand it in a different sense, and from having imagined, though without sufficient grounds, that the tenor of scripture favoured a contrary sense. The roman-catholics, I doubt not, think it very unnatural to interpret the words of our Saviour, *This is my body*, in any other than in the most literal manner; and they think that our lord's saying upon another occasion, *Unless ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*, abundantly confirms their interpretation.

Now, in this little treatise, I desire no greater indulgence in the interpretation of scripture than all protestants think themselves justified in taking, when they assert, that the meaning of these figurative expressions is, not that the *flesh and blood*, but that the *doctrine* of Christ is to be received and digested, that is, to be improved and practised by us, in order to our final salvation. Since the very strongest figures of speech are manifestly used in almost all the books of scripture, it must be very unreasonable to expect that the most literal interpretation should always be the best.

I must farther apprize you, my brethren, that the passages which I have attempted to explain, being, for the most part, highly figurative, are, on that account, peculiarly difficult to understand;

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so that though I may not have hit upon the precise sense of the writers, there may be no doubt, from other considerations, that the sense which I am combating is not the true one, which is quite sufficient for my purpose. It by no means follows that because I am wrong, my adversaries are right. In these cases there is the greatest room for criticism, and diversity of opinion. I have given what at present appears to me to be the real sense of every text of scripture which I have taken into consideration, but I shall gladly avail myself of the new lights, which may be thrown upon any of them in future editions of this pamphlet.

In the mean time, with great diffidence of my own judgment, I recommend what I have now written to your most serious and candid consideration; desiring that you would read it with your bibles at hand, turning to every passage to which I refer, and reading what goes before and after it; because I have no doubt but that, in this manner, you will see much more reason, if not to approve of my interpretations, yet to reject those of my adversaries, than I have suggested in this treatise, in which I have made a point of being as concise as I possibly could, consistently with perspicuity.

The rapid sale of the *Appeal* makes me hope that, inconsiderable as the performance is, it has been the instrument of some good, in the hands of that Being who works by small things as well as by great ones.

I. OF THE POWER OF MAN TO DO THE WILL OF GOD.

THAT the sacred writers consider all mankind as naturally possessed of sufficient power to do what God requires of them, is evident from their earnest remonstrances and exhortations with persons of all ranks and conditions, and their severe censure of them when they refuse to comply with their exhortations. Nor was this the case with the *jews* and *christians* only, who were favoured with divine revelation. The apostle Paul evidently considers the *gentiles* also in the same light; though, much not being given to them, much was not required of them.

In the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans this apostle represents the gentile world, in general, as having grossly corrupted themselves; yet, in that very representation, he not only says, ver. 18, 19, that they had subjected themselves to the *wrath of God, revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest, for God hath shewed it unto them;* but also ver. 32. that *knowing the judgment of God (that they who commit such things are worthy of death) they not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* So that the degeneracy and depravity into which they were sunk were owing, not to want of *ability*, but to *wilfulness*, and a determined opposition

opposition to the powers of conscience with which their Maker had endowed them, and which continued unceasing remonstrances within them. Reasoning with the jews, in the 2d chapter, he gives the following representation of some of the gentiles, ver. 14, 15. *For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law to themselves. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their reasonings between themselves, accusing or else defending* *; and he adds, in the 26 and 27 verses. *Therefore, if the uncircumcision, i. e. the uncircumcised gentile, keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? i. e. shall he not be equally accepted by God as a righteous jew? and shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision, dost transgress the law?* I presume no one will think so meanly of St. Paul's reasoning as to suppose, that he here puts a case which either never was true in *fact*, or possible in *nature*; but if this case either ever was true in *fact*, or *possible*, those uncircumcised gentiles, who should answer his description, must certainly have received from their Maker capacities and powers to do the will of God acceptably. And if others did not act in like manner, it was not owing to their
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* See Taylor.

not having received like natural powers, but to their not making a like improvement of them.

But let us attend to some passages which have been produced in proof that man is not, by nature, able to do the will of God, or that his maker has not given him capacity, and ability to know and do his will acceptably, without the superadded operations of special grace to remedy his natural inability.

I Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Upon this text I would observe first, that the word, which is here translated *natural*, properly signifies *animal*, or *sensual*. Thus **I** Cor. xv. 44, 46, the apostle uses the same word three times for that body which dies, and is buried, to distinguish it from that *spiritual* body which shall rise again; where the word *animal* much better expresses the apostle's meaning than *natural*. Again James uses it, ch. iii. 15. where our translators have rendered it *sensual*. *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* It is also used ver. 19. of Jude's epistle, and rendered *sensual*. *These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit.* These are all the passages of the New Testament where I find this word used. And it appears, that where it denotes the character of persons,

or the moral quality of things, our translators have rendered it *sensual*. Consequently, in consistency with themselves, they should have rendered the text under consideration, *But the sensual man* (who has no higher aims than the gratification of his animal senses) *receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, &c.* This would have been readily understood and acknowledged by all, and is perfectly consonant to what he says to the Romans, viii. 7, *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

Secondly; in this chapter the apostle assures the Corinthians, that the doctrine which he had preached to them did not take its rise from worldly wisdom, or philosophy, but was *that* only which had been revealed to the apostles by the spirit of God, v. 10. That he had preached this doctrine in those terms only which the same spirit dictated, comparing the several particulars of it one with another, and with those things which the same spirit had revealed to the patriarchs and prophets of old: That none of the wise or powerful men of this world had, or could possibly have discovered these counsels of God revealed by the spirit of God in the gospel, which spirit the apostles have received, that they might know, and instruct others in the things that are freely given us of God. *But the sensual man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God,* revealed by it to the apostles, and preached by them to the world,

world, *for they are foolishness to him*, contradicting all his former sentiments and principles, to which he still adheres ; *neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, i. e. by the sole instructions of the spirit, to which he neither attends nor submits. *But the spiritual man discerneth or judgeth all things*, i. e. all the forementioned things of God revealed by his spirit ; all gospel-truths ; *but he himself is discerned or judged of no man*, i. e. he is not subjected in these respects to the judicature of the powers of this world, to the principles of human science, or the rules of human oratory.

Hence I would observe first, that the *deep things of God*, or the things of the spirit of God, which the apostle speaks of in this chapter, are *the doctrines of the gospel-revelation*. Now it is readily allowed, that as men were not endowed with any natural powers whereby they could discover these, they could not know them before they were revealed. But then, they were not under obligation to know or comply with them, 'till they were revealed. Secondly, that they who did not receive and comply with them, when revealed, are not represented as *incapable* through want of natural abilities and powers, but only as *disqualified*, or under a *moral impotence*, through sensual dispositions which they indulged, and habits which they had contracted.

By the *spiritual man* seems to be primarily meant here, the *apostles*, to whom the spirit of God revealed

the truths of the gospel; but they also may be comprehended under the denomination, who receive the gospel-truths, believing in the veracity, and submitting to the authority of the spirit which revealed them.

John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* This single clause of a long sentence, being separated from its connexion with what goes before it, is produced as a proof that man is not able to do the will of God acceptably, without the immediate assistance, or operation, of special grace upon him through Christ: But, if we look into our Lord's discourse, we find him exhorting his disciples to adhere steadfastly to him and his doctrine, *that they might bring forth much fruit.* He reminds them, that they had already gained much spiritual improvement by his instructions; v. 3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.* He intimates that, if they abandoned him and his doctrine, they would deprive themselves of the means of fruitfulness. He is not speaking then of the natural powers of man, but of the importance of the doctrines which he taught to render men fruitful in good works; but this seems necessarily to suppose a *capacity* in man to understand and improve his doctrines to these purposes.

It seems to be treating Christ and his words with great irreverence, to apply them to other purposes than those for which he used them. We all readily agree that (in our Lord's sense of the expression) *without him we can do nothing.* i. e. If we abandon
him

him and the gospel, we cannot be fruitful in holiness or good works; and are very thankful for the provision he hath made, and the assistances he hath afforded us by his word, *that we may bring forth much fruit.*

Philip. ii. 13. *For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

In this passage the apostle exhorts the Philippians to *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*, from a grateful sense of the goodness of God in granting them, for that purpose, the instructions and motives of the gospel, by which such convictions had already been awakened in them, as had excited them both to choose and perform what God required. The *energy*, or operation of God here spoken of, seems to be the energy of *instruction* and *persuasion*. No doubt it is a very reasonable and powerful motive to us all to work out our salvation, that God, in unspeakable love and good-will, is continually working in us, by the truths and motives of the gospel, to choose and perform what he hath required of us.

I Cor. xv. 10. *But by the grace of God I am what I am.*

Let any one carefully attend to the whole case of Paul's conversion, from being a persecutor to become a preacher and an apostle of Jesus Christ, and then say whether it is reasonable to draw general conclusions respecting all men from such a case. However we will all readily adopt his words, and say, *through*

the grace of God, and his favours freely bestowed upon us by the gospel, we are what we are.

Eph. ii. 8. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

The word *that* doth not refer to faith, as is evident from the original, but to the preceding clause of the sentence. *That ye are saved by grace through faith; this is not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.* He is the sole author of this method of salvation.

Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.*

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.

Look into the prophet himself, and I think it will appear, that this is a prediction of the restoration of the people of the jews to their own country at the end of the babylonish captivity, and that afterwards they should no more return to the practice of *idolatry*, to which their fathers had been so prone. Now, the history of that people informs us that this prediction was verified in fact. When God promises to give them a new heart, and to put a new spirit within them, it relates to the particular subject spoken of, viz. *idolatry*: and, in reality, there was a wonderful change

change wrought in the dispositions and practice of that people in this respect. This was effected by the deep impressions made upon them by the righteous judgments of God for the idolatries of their forefathers and of themselves. But the *new heart and new spirit* must not be understood of an universal, or general change from evil to good, because the whole subsequent history of the jews, and particularly in the gospel-times, contradicts it. It may, however, refer to some greater change to be produced in the moral character of the jewish nation, on their return from their present dispersion, produced by the consideration of the hand of God in it, as the just punishment of their former vices. But it seems a strange perversior, to make this particular prediction to the returning captives, a general promise to mankind, at least to christians, of producing in them a thorough change of heart and life by the immediate operation of the spirit of God. This may be called *accommodating* scripture-passages, but it seems taking very bold liberties of making what we please out of them, very inconsistent with a sincere belief in them, as containing the word of God.

Pfalm li. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

We ought not to interpret the figurative expressions of Hebrew poetry too literally, or to expect in it the rigid accuracy of expression of our western prose. The psalmist seems to mean no more by *create*, than *produce*, or *cause*; which does not ex-

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clude the instrumentality of ordinary means, any more than the word *renew*. Nay, the psalmist seems to expect that the clean heart must be *created* and the right spirit *renewed*, not by an immediate operation of sovereign and almighty grace, but by the instrumentality of those ordinary and usual *means* of grace which he had long enjoyed, and experienced the good effects of; and therefore he adds in the following words, v. 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence*, i. e. deprive me not of the ordinances of thy worship in the tabernacle, where thou manifestest thy presence in a glorious manner, *and take not thy holy spirit from me*, i. e. that holy spirit with the illuminations of which he had, as a prophet, been so often favoured, and from which he had reaped great spiritual improvement.

Luke xxiii. 43. *To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

Although certain writers and teachers of religion profess not to mention the case of the penitent thief to encourage presumption and carelessness in any one, yet they mention it so often, and insist on it so much, as an instance of a great and sudden change taking place at the last hour of a poor sinner's life, at the same time insinuating that the same change may take place in others (*for the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy, that it cannot bear*) that I fear they do, in fact, unhappily encourage presumption
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and carelessness in many. Let us therefore consider this case with a little attention.

The abovementioned writers, &c. take for granted what is by no means certain, that the penitent thief's knowledge of Christ, and repentance of his own sins, commenced only at the time of his crucifixion along with Jesus. But is it not possible, that the crime for which he suffered might have been committed a long time before, though he had been apprehended for it only very lately; when, whatever change might in the mean time have been wrought in his character and conversation, the law must take its course, and he must suffer the punishment due to his misdeeds, though he had repented of them very sincerely, and become a new man? The evangelist has said nothing that precludes this supposition, and therefore we are at liberty to make it, especially if it will contribute to render the circumstances of the narrative more consistent and accountable. Let us see then what those circumstances are.

First, observe that this penitent, in the reproof which he gave to his fellow-criminal, makes a candid and ingenuous confession of his crimes, and the justice of his punishment, and *that* grounded upon a just and proper principle, *the fear of God: Dost not thou fear God, seeing that thou also art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds.* This seems
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much more like the language of one who had long reflected upon, been seriously affected with, and formed mature conclusions from the sad subject, than of one who was but just now struck with a conviction of his sins, and a sense of his miserable state.

Secondly, observe also the clear and confident declaration which he makes concerning Jesus. *This man hath done nothing amiss.* Can we suppose this declaration made by a man who had not known any thing of the person to whom he bears this testimony before this unhappy occasion? Doth it not seem rather the attestation of one who had had considerable knowledge of the rectitude of his character and the unblameableness of his conduct?

There are, I readily acknowledge, many difficulties attending the history of the penitent thief, which I have no occasion to consider in this place, it being sufficient for my present purpose to shew that the doctrine of the probability of repentance at the article of death proving acceptable will no longer have countenance from it.

John. vi. 44. 65. *No man can come to me except it were given him of my Father. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father cometh unto me.—No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him.* Now how is it that God is elsewhere said to draw men, but by the force of motives and instructions, which suppose that
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men have a power of attending to them and improving by them. It is also to be observed that, in the whole of the discourse, in which the words quoted above are introduced, Jesus is blaming the jews for their infidelity; and it would be very extraordinary indeed, if for this purpose he should make use of an argument, which would intirely exculpate them, intimating that it was not in their power to do otherwise.

Our Lord sufficiently gives us to understand in what sense he uses the word *drawing* in the passage quoted above. He explains himself v. 45. *It is written in the prophets, (Isaiah liv. 13.) And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the father cometh unto me.* This was the way in which God the Father drew some of the jews to Christ at that time; viz. such of them as, influenced by reverence, love and duty to him, heard attentively, and learned the truths which he had already taught them by Moses and the prophets; but they who were of a different spirit and conduct, with respect to the divine truths already revealed, could not come to Christ, who constantly referred them to the testimonies of Moses and the prophets in proof of his divine mission. To them *it was not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xiii. 11. Agreeably hereto he says on another occasion, *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether*

whether I speak of myself, John vii. 17. And he thus remonstrates against the unbelieving jews, chap. v. 39. &c. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.—But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you—How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only. This appears plainly to be the language of one who considered the cause of the unbelief of these jews as arising, not from natural inability, or the with-holding of the grace of God, but from contracted evil principles and habits, to which they determinedly adhered; as he speaks v. 40. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.

II. OF ORIGINAL SIN.

THAT mankind are considerable *sufferers* in consequence of the fall of Adam, is not denied; but all the evils which Moses specifies as affecting his posterity on that account, are of a corporeal and temporal nature, viz. *labour, sorrow, and death.* It is possible, indeed, that the body being more subject to disease, the mind may be more feeble, and therefore more prone to comply with some temptations; but then it should also be considered, that a sickly constitution is favourable to many virtues, and we see that a state of confirmed health is often highly dangerous in a moral respect; so that

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upon the whole it is probable that our condition is more favourable to virtue than that of Adam. That the sacred writers did not consider it as, upon the whole, worse than his, is evident from their never giving the least hint, that any allowance will be made to men for that natural disadvantage. Nay many of the sinful posterity of Adam are blamed more severely than he was for his sin: and if we consider his situation and the circumstances of his fall, we cannot suppose that he had greater strength of mind to resist temptation than we are now possessed of. Since, however, some particular texts are alledged, to prove that the nature of man is totally depraved by the fall, insomuch that all mankind, without exception, are now altogether incapable of any good thought, word, or action; and, moreover, that we are all subject to the everlasting wrath of God on account of the sin of Adam, I shall give a brief explication of the principal of those texts.

Gen. vi. 5. *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* If we understand this passage literally, it will be contradicted by the character which is immediately afterwards given of Noah, of whom it is said, ver. 9, *that he was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and that he walked with God.* But it is plain that this wickedness of mankind was not ow-

ing to any *natural depravity*, which their derivation from Adam rendered necessary, but that it was a *voluntary corruption*, and had its rise from themselves only; for it is said, ver. 12. that *God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.* Besides, this state of the world is alledged as a justification of the divine proceedings against them, whereas, if they had been corrupt by the *necessity of nature*, it must have operated as a plea in their favour, with that being who considers our frame, and remembers that we are but dust. If he makes suitable allowance for the infirmities of our *bodies*, much more would he consider the natural and necessary disorders of our *minds*.

Job xiv. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* This is a proverbial expression, signifying that nothing can be more perfect than its original; but Job is not speaking in this place of the guilt and pollution of man, but of his sorrows and mortality.

Psaln li. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* This also has very much the air of a proverbial expression, signifying great depravity of heart, and very early habits of vice. That it was not intended to express a natural and invincible propensity to vice, is plain, because that would be inconsistent with the tenor of the whole psalm, in which the humble author seems disposed

disposed to aggravate, rather than to extenuate his offences, to which this last mentioned consideration would have greatly contributed.

Rom. v. 12, 13, 14. *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, &c.*

I think a careful and impartial reader will observe, that the apostle speaks not here of the death of children, whom he does not once mention, or refer to, through the whole argument. But he speaks of those who were not only *capable* of sinning but had *actually* sinned, and refers us to the Mosaic history of mankind in the ages between the fall of Adam and the giving of the law by Moses. Sin and death entered into the world by Adam, and death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, consequently must have transgressed some law, v. 14. *For, before the giving of the law by Moses, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law: and the law of Moses they could not sin against before it was given. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, i.e. by eating the forbidden fruit, or violating any positive law of life given to them. What law then had they sinned against? Most evidently, the law of righteousness which God had written on their hearts; the sanction of which they were also well apprized of (as the apostle speaks of*

the gentiles in general, ch. i. 32, of this epistle) *Who knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* Hence it appears that the apostle does not speak of the sin of Adam being imputed to make men sinners, and subject them to death; but of actual and personal sins, and of death as the recompence of them. Now look into the Mosaic history of this period, and we find before the flood *that the wickedness of men was great in the earth.*—Gen. vi. 5. *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. For all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth,* v. 11, 12. And after the flood, excepting the faith and obedience of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we have little else recorded besides transgressions of the law of righteousness, sins which men committed, though *not after the similitude of Adam's transgression.* As to the death of infants; God, the great giver of life, hath, undoubtedly a perfect right to resume it, whenever it seemeth meet to his infinite wisdom. But I do not recollect that the sacred writers do any where represent it as a *punishment* either for Adam's sin, or their own. In a few cases they speak of it as a punishment of the sin of their immediate parents, but then, as a punishment to their parents, who had sinned, not to the children who had not sinned.

Rom. v. 6, 8. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. But God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Let the intelligent reader judge for himself, whether the apostle does not speak here of the state of mankind (particularly of himself and the persons he writes to) before Christ's death, and the consequent publication of the gospel to the world, and intimate that the case is very different since that happy event? Doth he not plainly make the distinction in both verses, that we might not mistake his meaning, *When we were yet without strength*, and *while we were yet sinners*? But doth the case continue the same, since Christ died, with those to whom the blessings of the gospel are imparted? then hath Christ died, and the gospel been published in vain. Yet some writers represent the state of those for whom Christ died, and who have received the gospel, as just the same, as to *strength*, with them who had not received it, and who lived before it was published. Surely, any of us would be displeas'd to have our words wrested to purposes so different from our intentions; especially, when we had endeavour'd to guard them from such abuse. God our maker hath given us intelligent capacities, suited to those discoveries which he hath made of his will, whether by the light of nature, or revelation; he hath given us also freedom of choice and action for the conduct of

ourselves ; he hath granted us the light and motives of the gospel for our fuller instruction and persuasion ; he is ever present with us and ready to assist our sincere endeavours to know and to do his will : surely then, it is *unjust* and *ungrateful* to him to say that we are still *without strength* ; and if we be sinners, it is wholly our own fault. As for the gentiles, even the worst of them, the apostle no where ascribes their want of strength, to their not having received from their maker sufficient abilities to know and do his will acceptably, but to their having voluntarily corrupted themselves and one another, and thereby lost the abilities which God had given them, and become *dead in trespasses and sins*.

Rom. vii. 7, 8. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

It appears to me that the apostle speaks here only of personal character and conduct, and the effects of them in producing governing habits : but not at all of any corruption or depravity of the *nature* of man effected by Adam's sin, whereby he is become *incapable* of doing that which is good, or of pleasing God. Adam, or his sin, is not mentioned by the apostle in treating of this subject. It is readily acknowledged, that a person who attaches himself to the gratification of his *carnal* or sensual appetites and passions cannot perform the will of God, but
 must

must daily become more and more alienated from *him* and from his duty: but this is saying no more than that a wicked man cannot be a good man, or please God so long as he continues wicked. But it by no means follows that this man is unable to hear, understand, and receive salutary convictions from the truths of God, revealed by his Son Jesus Christ, and thereby become changed in his sentiments, dispositions, and conduct, and from *carnally-minded* become *spiritually-minded*. The various forms of speech which the apostle uses in the preceding and following verses seem only to express one and the same thing, viz. the change produced in the dispositions and conduct of men by preaching the gospel to them, and their attention to it, and sincere reception of it, together with the happy effects and consequences of it.

Ephesians ii. 3. *And were by nature children of wrath even as others.*

If we compare the passages in which the apostle uses the word *nature*, we shall find that he did not mean by it that internal frame, constitution, or condition of being wherewith God our maker hath formed us; but that external condition, or those outward circumstances (especially with relation to God and religious concerns) in which divine providence hath caused us to be born and live. Human nature, in our sense of the phrase, is the same in all mankind; but different persons may be brought

brought forth into life, and spend it under very different natural circumstances, in the apostle's sense of the word *nature*. Thus Rom. ii. 14. He says, *when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, and v. 27. Shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, &c.* He here plainly speaks not of an internal frame, constitution, or powers, or what we call a *nature*, which the gentiles had, different from that of the jews; but of their external, moral, and religious state and circumstances, as destitute of the instructions and assistances of the law of Moses, by which they were much below the jews. Again, in the remonstrance which he tells us he made to Peter, we find these words, Gal. ii. 15. *We who are jews by nature, and not sinners of the gentiles;* when certainly he doth not mean to intimate that the jews had a different sort of nature, or internal constitution, whereby they were jews; but only we who are natural-born jews, and have all along enjoyed the privileges of that people. So likewise in the text under consideration, having spoken of the Ephesians, as formerly *dead in trespasses and sins, wherein, in time past, ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;* he adds, v. 3. *among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the*
flesh

flesh and of the mind. Observe, hitherto he speaks of external condition and circumstances, and of personal character and actual vices, and not at all of internal constitution, or a nature corrupted by the effects of Adam's sin. He adds: *and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.* i. e. (conformable to his use of the word *nature* in other places) in consequence of our birth and situation among children of disobedience, where we were kept ignorant of the truth, deceived by false principles, and misled by bad examples, we ourselves were *children of wrath*, as others about us were, and many still continue. By *children of wrath* I apprehend the apostle does not mean here *objects of the wrath and displeasure of God*, but only describes further the personal character of those whom he so denominates. As in the close of the former verse he had mentioned *children, or sons of disobedience*, i. e. disobedient children, (and Peter, 1 Ep. i. 14. speaks of *obedient children*, in the original it is *children of obedience*) so here he mentions *children of wrath*, i. e. wrathful, furious, malignant, and mischievous persons. In a striking and beautiful figure, he represents disobedience and wrath under the persons of two fruitful mothers, whose offspring they had been. Accordingly, when the apostle comes in the beginning of the fourth chapter to exhort the Ephesian christians to a conversation conformable to *the vocation wherewith they were called*, and quite
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the reverse of the description he gives in this verse of their former character and conduct, he begins with describing it thus, v. 2, 3. *With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* He also concludes the chapter thus; *Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ hath forgiven you.* Do we not see a greater propriety and force in these exhortations, when we consider them as addressed to persons who had formerly been *children of wrath*?

III. OF ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

Rom. ix. 11, &c. *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then, is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid; for he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, &c.*

These

These verses, and the whole of this chapter, relate not to the election of particular persons to eternal life, but to the calling of the gentiles, and the rejection of the jews from the privileges of the gospel; and it is manifest that the apostle is not speaking in this place of the *final state*, or indeed of the *persons* of Esau and Jacob, but of their posterity, and that only with a view to temporal privileges and prerogatives.

The whole body of christians, consisting of jews and gentiles, are frequently stiled the *chosen*, and *elect of God*, on account of their external privileges, as the whole jewish nation had been so named before, on the same account. This is an easy and plain sense of *election*, reflects not at all on the perfections of God, is consistent with the offers and exhortations of scripture, and preserves a harmony between the language of the old and new testament.

It must be acknowledged, however, that in order to vindicate the divine conduct in the calling of the gentiles, the apostle alledges some facts, in which not whole nations, but *particular persons* are spoken of, and which seem to imply, that their minds were under supernatural influence in forming *bad* as well as *good* resolutions; and there are other passages of scripture which at first sight seem to look the same way.

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The hardness of Pharaoh's heart, Exod. ix. 16. Rom. ix. 17. the obstinacy of Sihon king of Heshbon, Deut. ii. 30. and the unbelief of many of the jews, Is. vi. 10. Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8. are all ascribed to the purpose, act, or decree of God, who had important designs to answer by means of these blameable determinations of men. On the other hand, when persons believe and obey the gospel, it is ascribed to the divine influence upon their minds.

Mat. xi. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,* John vi. 27. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.* See also John 17. Acts xvi. 14. *And the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.* Moreover, every thing of this nature is expressly referred to the arbitrary disposition of God, in Rom. ix. 18, 23. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say, then, unto me, Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou, that thou repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour,*

nour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, hath endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared unto glory.

To understand such passages as these, we should consider, that in the language of the scriptures God is said to *do* those things, which come to pass according to the natural course of things, as well as to perform things of a miraculous nature; because they take place in consequence of the laws which he has originally established. And, certainly, if God had not made men liable to be seduced by temptation, they would not have sinned, any more than they could embrace truth without the means of becoming acquainted with it; and it must depend upon the good-pleasure of God whether he will afford men more, or fewer advantages for attaining to knowledge, virtue, and happiness. But, notwithstanding this, if the means have been such as would have been effectual, provided there had been no criminal prejudice to frustrate them, men are blamed, and God is just and wise in punishing them, as well as in rewarding those whose minds are so disposed, as to receive advantage from the means of virtue and knowledge which are afforded them.

Now that in this sense the sacred writers considered God as just to all mankind, is evident from the many earnest exhortations and expostulations addressed to sinners in the books of scripture, and from the blame and reproach which men are represented as incurring, when they continue in vice and ignorance. It is not possible that any persons could be so inconsistent with themselves, as to exhort sinners to repent, and to blame and reproach them for not repenting, if they did not consider them as having a natural power to comply with the exhortation. Nay, in this very passage of the apostle Paul, which is, perhaps, the most favourable to the doctrine of *absolute decrees* of any thing in all the books of scripture, God is represented as *enduring, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*, which evidently implies that they had sufficient power and time to repent, and to prevent their impending destruction; and therefore proves that their destruction was not *decreed*, but in case of their impenitence.

How much soever, therefore, the sacred writers refer to God, upon particular occasions, and whatever use they may suppose that his infinite wisdom will make of the errors and vices of some individuals of mankind, in order to promote the interests of truth and virtue more at large, we cannot but conclude, that they considered every man's own determination as final with respect to his future state; and

and it is to be observed that neither the obstinacy of Pharaoh, nor even the infidelity of the jews, had any necessary connection with their state after death. The former might be hard-hearted with respect to the hebrews, and either rewarded for other virtues, or punished for other vices, in a future state; and if the unbelieving jews were in other respects such men as Paul, who had a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge, they may find mercy in the day of judgment. There is not a single passage in the scriptures which represents the future misery of any individual of mankind as determined by an arbitrary decree of God; but a thousand passages in which it is expressly said, that the future state of all mankind depends entirely upon their own voluntary actions.

After these observations, short remarks on another passage may suffice for the purpose of this section.

Rom. viii. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did fore-know, he did also predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

All that we can fairly infer from this passage is, that the end of the christian dispensation, or of the calling of mankind to the faith of the gospel, is their

sanctification and future glory; for it is manifest that *all* who are *called* are not *justified*. If this term *called* be restricted in its meaning, let it be restricted by St. Paul himself, viz. to those *who love God*; which is sufficiently represented as depending upon men themselves, by being the subjects of precept and exhortation. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, &c.*

IV. OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

NOTHING can be more evident, from the whole tenor of the new Testament, than that the person who is distinguished by the name of the *Father* is the only true God, exclusive of the *Son*, or any other being whatever. Nevertheless, there are some single and unconnected passages, especially in our translation of the bible, which seem to favour the contrary opinion, namely, that of the divinity of Christ. The intimate union which subsisted between God and Christ, the powers communicated to him by God, especially after his resurrection and ascension, and the distinguished honours conferred upon him, easily lead us to the genuine sense of the most considerable of these expressions, and make it evident that nothing was meant by them in the least derogatory from the sole proper divinity, and absolute supremacy of the Father.

I. Christ being appointed the *king* and *judge* of men has powers given him adapted to those offices, especially

especially a knowledge of the human heart, and the prerogative of declaring the forgiveness of sin, which always accompanies regal authority; but being assisted by divine wisdom and discernment, as well as by divine power, in the exercise of this high office, it is, in effect, the same thing as the judgment and mercy of God displayed by the instrumentality of Jesus Christ. We ought not, therefore, to be surprized at such expressions as these. Mat. ix. 4. *And Jesus knowing their thoughts.* John ii. 35. *He knew what was in man.* Mat. ix. 2. *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* The multitude, who saw Christ exerting a miraculous power upon this occasion, and heard him express himself in this manner, had no idea of his claiming any extraordinary power, as *naturally inherent in himself*; for it is said, ver. 8. *that when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power unto men.* The scribes and pharisees, indeed, said within themselves, upon this occasion, ver. 3. *This man blasphemeth.* But the jews called it *blasphemy* to pretend to be the Christ; for when the high-priest solemnly adjured our Lord by the living God, Mat. xxvi. 63. that he would tell him *whether he was the Christ, the son of God,* and our Lord expressly replied that he was the Christ, we read, ver. 65. *then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, he hath spoken blasphemy.*

Col. ii. 9. *In him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily.* This is a very proper expression, being strictly and literally true, though Christ himself was a mere man, since the wisdom and power of the one true God, the Father, were manifest in, and acted by him, agreeably to his own declarations, that *the words which he spake were not his own, but the father's who sent him, and that the father within him did the works.* Nay, this very expression, that the fullness of the godhead *dwelled* or *resided* in him, seems to imply that it did not naturally belong to him. Besides phrases similar to this are applied by way of figure to christians in general. They are said to be *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet i. 4. *to be filled with all the fullness of God*, Eph. iii. 19. and *to be the fullness of him, that filleth all in all*, Eph. i. 13.

These observations will easily help us to understand what is meant by Christ being called the *image of the invisible God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. and *the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. and also his being *in the form of God*, Philip. ii. 6. for they all allude to the divine power and wisdom which were displayed in him when he was on earth, but more especially now that he is ascended into heaven; at the same time, Christ being called only the *image of God*, is a sufficient intimation that he is not *God himself*. Indeed, if this expression was to be allowed to be any proof of the divinity of Christ,

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it would follow that Adam was God ; for it is said, Gen. i. 26. 27. *That God made man in his own image, and after his likeness.*

It is with as little appearance of reason that Christ is argued to be very and eternal God, because he is stiled the *Son of God*; for all christians have the same appellation, 1 John iii. 2. *Now are we the sons of God.* We are also called not only the *children* but also the *heirs of God*, and *joint-heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. Adam is more especially called the *son of God*, Luke iii. 18. and Ephraim is called *his dear son*, Jer. xxxi. 20.

John x. 30. *I and my father are one.* xiv 10. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* That is, we are one in design and interest. But whatever be the union between the Father and the Son; it is of such a kind, that his disciples are capable of it with respect to them both; for, in Christ's prayer for his disciples, he says, John xvii. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:—and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*

John

John v. 23. *That all men should honour the son, even as they honour the Father; that is, as well as the Father.* The same word is used, where it can have no other sense, in John xvii. 23. *And hast loved them as thou hast loved me; that is, not in the same degree, but in like manner as.* To explain the sense of the entire passage in which the words abovementioned occur, let it be observed, that the jews had persecuted Jesus, because he had made a man whole on the sabbath-day. By way of apology, he says, v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, that is, in the course of his providence on the sabbath, as well as on other days, and I work; that is on the sabbath-day also.* Upon this the pharisees were more enraged, *because he called God his father, and because he made himself (not equal with-God, as we render it) but like unto God, assuming so much of his prerogative, as to claim the privilege of working on the sabbath-day as well as God.* However, to shew them that he meant nothing arrogant in what he had said, and that this privilege was given to him by God, he immediately replies, v. 19. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do; for what things soever he doth, these also doth the son likewise.* He then proceeds to represent all his extraordinary power as the gift of his Father, v. 20. *For the Father loveth the son, and sheweth him all things that he himself doth; and he will shew him greater things than these,*

these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son, that all men should honour the son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him. Indeed, this very last clause sufficiently shews that the honour to which Christ is intitled is not on account of what he is, or has *of himself*, but on account of what he derives from God, as his ambassador.

II. Very high titles are justly given to Christ as the founder of the christian religion, and especially as superintending the affairs of his church, and as controuling whatever can affect the interest of his church. Thus the author of the epistle to the Hebrews styles him *the author and finisher of our faith*. Heb. xii. 2. He is also said to be the *head over all things to his church*, Eph. i. 2. These high titles are attributed to Jesus with respect to the state of glory, and universal dominion, to which he is exalted by the Father.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews makes use of a phrase of the same import with this of the apostle John, where he only means to express the unchangeableness of the doctrine of Christ, as the connection of it, with what goes before and after, makes very evident. Heb. xiii. 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto*

you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not carried away with diverse and strange doctrines. The whole is intended to inculcate a stedfast adherence to the genuine doctrine of Jesus Christ.

It is plain, from many passages in the book of Revelation, that the author of it considered Christ as a person subordinate to the Father, and the minister of his will, and therefore no single expression should be interpreted in such a manner as to make it imply the contrary. The very first words of the book sufficiently express this. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him.* ver. 6. *Who has made us kings and priests unto God, and (or rather, even) his Father,* ii. 26. *And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations—even as I received of my Father,* iii. 14. *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God,* ver. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sitten down with my Father in his throne.* Farther, this writer, evidently speaking of Christ in his highest capacity, uses the following expressions, ver. 14. *These things saith the*
amen,

amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning (or the most excellent) *of the creation of God*; which plainly implies that, how excellent soever he may be, he is but a creature.

Matt. xxviii. 29. *And lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* Christ, who is constituted *head over all things* to his church, undoubtedly takes care of its interests, and attends to whatever concerns his disciples; and *being with* a person, and *taking care* of him are, in the language of scripture, equivalent expressions. See Gen. xxi. 20. 22. xxviii. 15. xxxix. 2. Besides, Christ, having a near relation to this earth, may even be *personally present* with his disciples when they little think of it. But it is by no means necessary that he be personally present every where at the same time; since God may communicate to him a power of knowing distant events, of which he appeared to be possessed when Lazarus was sick. This is certainly no greater a power than God may communicate to any of his creatures.

Another passage which seems to suppose the omnipresence of Christ is, Mat. xviii. 23. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*; but if we consider the whole of this passage, in which our Lord is speaking of the great power of which his apostles would be possessed, and especially of the efficacy of their prayers, we shall be satisfied, that he could only mean by this form of expression to represent their power with God,

God, when they were assembled as his disciples, and prayed so as became his disciples, to be the same as his own power with God; and God heard him always. That our Lord could not intend to speak of himself as *the God who heareth prayer*, is evident from his speaking of the Father, in this very place, as the person who was to grant their petitions, ver. 19. *Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.*

III. Considering the great power with which Christ was invested on earth, and more especially the authority to which he is exalted now that he is in heaven, it is certainly right that a very high degree of respect should be paid to him; and from the manner in which this is expressed, and especially because the word *worship* is made use of on those occasions in our English translation, some persons have been confirmed in their opinion, that he is the proper object of supreme or divine worship, and is therefore truly and properly God; but any person, who will consider the real import of the following passages, must see that they afford no foundation for such a conclusion.

Heb. i. 6. *When God bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him.* Also the leper, Mat. viii. 2, the ruler, Mat. ix. 18, the woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. 25, the poor people in the ship, Mat. xiv. 33, and his disciples, Mat. xxviii. 9 - - - 17, are all said to

to have *worshipped* him. But the very circumstances in which this worship was paid to Christ sufficiently prove that *divine worship* was not intended ; because it is well known that the jews had no expectation of any other person than a man for their Messiah ; and when Nicodemus was convinced of the miraculous power of Jesus, he concluded, not that he was *God*, but that he must have been *impowered by God* ; for he says, John iii. 2. *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* Besides, it is well known that the Greek word, which, in the above-mentioned passages, is rendered *worship*, is frequently used to express a very high degree of respect ; but such as may be lawfully paid to men of a proper character and rank. And indeed our word *worship*, though it is now appropriated to that worship which is due to God only, was formerly used with greater latitude, and even in our translation of the bible ; as when a servant, in one of our Saviour's parables, is said to have fallen down and *worshipped* his master, saying, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all* : where certainly divine worship could not be meant. It is also an evidence of this use of the word, that in our marriage-service the man is directed to say to the woman, *With my body I thee worship* ; and the terms *worship*, and *worshipful*, are still applied to several of our magistrates, and bodies of men.

Also, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the same word that we render worship in the New is frequently used where supreme worship could not be intended. Otherwise Abraham must be supposed to have intended to pay supreme worship to the angels, when he took them to be men; and to the sons of Heth, when he was making a bargain with them for a piece of ground to bury his dead.

IV. Arguments have been brought to prove the divinity of Christ from the *names* and *titles*, which are given to him, as well as from the *powers* ascribed to him, and the *worship* that is paid to him; but if we consider the proper meaning of other *scripture-names*, and the occasions on which they were conferred, we must be satisfied, that very little stress is to be laid on such an argument as this.

Isaiah vii. 14. *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emanuel, Mat. i. 23. Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us.* These texts have been thought to imply that Christ is a compound-being, or that he is *God incarnate*; but if we consider other instances of names imposed by the divine direction in the scriptures, we shall find that they do not always express any thing characteristic of the person on whom they are imposed, but that they were intended to be a memorial of some divine promise or assurance, respecting things of a public and general concern.

concern. Thus the prophet Isaiah, vii. 1, &c. was directed to call his son *Shear-Jashub*, which signifies *a remnant shall return*, to express to the jews, that only a small number of their enemies should return from the invasion with which they then threatened them, or that a number of their own people who had been carried captive should return. Another child he was directed to call *Mahershalal-hash-baz*, on a similar account; and of Jerusalem it is said, *This is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness*, to express that God would appear in that character to his people. In like manner the divine being, admitting that he appointed Christ to be called *Emanuel*, might do it to engage to manifest his own presence with his people, by protecting and blessing them, and inflicting vengeance on their enemies and oppressors. For this prediction was given upon the occasion of an invasion by the Israelites and Syrians.

Isaiah ix. 6. *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace.* In this, as in the former case, these titles may not express what *Christ is*, but what *God will manifest himself to be in him, and by him*; so that, in the dispensation of the gospel, God, the wise and benevolent author of it, will appear to be a wonderful counsellor, the everlasting father, and the prince of

peace. If this name be supposed to characterize Christ himself, it will by no means favour the common doctrine of the trinity; because it will make him to be the *Father*, or the first person, and not the *son*, or the second person. Besides, whatever powers or dignities are to be possessed by Christ, it is sufficiently intimated in this place, that he does not hold them *independent*, and *underived*; since he himself, and all the blessings that he bestows, are said to be *given*, that is, by God; and at the conclusion of the prophecy, in the next verse, it is said, that the *zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this*. I would also observe that that part of the title on which the greatest stress has been laid may be rendered *the mighty God my father for ever*, or *the mighty God is my father for ever*, which is exactly agreeable to many declarations of the scripture concerning Christ, and his usual title of *the son of God*; and to this the angel, in his salutation of Mary, might probably allude, when he said Luke i. 32. *He shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest*; and it is very observable, that what he adds corresponds most remarkably with the remainder of this very prophecy of Isaiah. The prophet says, ver. 7. *Of the increase of his government, and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever*. The angel says, *He shall be great, and shall be called the*
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son of the highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

V. Many of the texts, which are usually alledged in proof of the divinity of Christ, relate to God the Father only. One of the most remarkable of these is John i. *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

These words, interpreted in the most literal manner, only imply that *the word*, or Christ, had a being before the creation of the world; that he had the title of *God*, or of a *God*, and was the in-

strument by whom the supreme God made all things; but they by no means imply that he was true and very God; for magistrates and others are sometimes called gods, on account of their power and dominion, in which they resemble God. Nay the derivation of Christ from the Father, and consequently his dependence upon him, is sufficiently expressed by his being called, in the last of these verses, *the only-begotten of the Father*.

To me, however, it appears, that the apostle does not speak of the pre-existence of Christ in this place; but only of the power and wisdom of God, which dwelled, or tabernacled in his flesh; and that he probably meant to condemn some false opinions concerning the *logos* (which is the Greek for *word*) which are known to have prevailed in his time. Now, in contradiction to them, the apostle here asserts, that by the *word of God*, we are not to understand any being distinct from God, but only the *power or energy of God*, which is so much *with God*, that it properly belongs to his nature, and is not at all distinct from God himself; and that the same power which produced all things was manifest to men in the person of Jesus Christ, who was sent to enlighten the world; that though his power made the world, it was not acknowledged by the world, when it was revealed in this manner, not even by God's peculiar people, the jews; and notwithstanding this power was manifested in a more sensible

sensible and constant manner than ever it had been before, dwelling in human flesh, and tabernacling, or abiding, some considerable time among us; so that his glory was beheld, or made visible to mortal eyes, and was full of grace and truth.

Rom. ix 5. *Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever.* This may with equal propriety and truth be rendered, *God, who is over all, be blessed for ever,* the former sentence ending with the word *came*; and since no ancient manuscripts are pointed, all the pointings have been made, and the different sentences have been distinguished, as fallible men have thought the best sense required. It affords an argument favourable to my construction of these words, that it is usual with the apostle Paul to break out into a doxology, or form of thanksgiving to God, after mentioning any remarkable instance of his goodness. See Eph. iii. 21. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 16. See also 1 Pet. iv. 11. Indeed, it is very common in Jewish writings to add a doxology after barely mentioning the name of God.

1 John v. 20. *And we know that the son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.* This last clause is manifestly explanatory of the title *him that is true,* or *the true*

one, in the preceding clauses, of whom the Son of God has given us an understanding, or with whom he has made us acquainted. As the word *even* is a mere addition of our translators, instead of *we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ*, we may read, we are in him that is true, *in or by his Son Jesus Christ*; and this makes a far more consistent sense, and may be considered as an allusion to the words of Christ addressed to the Father, and recorded by this very apostle, John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Without this interpretation, these two texts would flatly contradict one another; for how can the Father be *the only true God*, if the son be true God also?

I Cor. i. 23, 24. *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the jews a stumbling-block, and unto the greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both jews and greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* The meaning of this plainly is, that the power and wisdom of God were displayed in this very circumstance of the crucifixion of Christ, which was such a stumbling-block, and appeared so foolish to men; agreeably to what he immediately adds, *for the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.* That which the jews and greeks had rejected, as foolish and weak, was, in reality, and appeared!

appeared to those who were *called*, and who were taught to understand it better, to surpass the wisdom and power of man.

Tit. ii. 13. *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* In this place God and Christ are mentioned as distinct persons, the judgment of the world being sometimes ascribed to the one, and sometimes to the other; which is easily accounted for by considering that, in that great day, Christ acts by commission from God, and will come in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels, as well as in his own glory, upon that most solemn occasion.

John xx. 28. *Thomas answered, and said unto him, my Lord, and my God.* This is an abrupt exclamation, and no connected sentence at all, and seems to have proceeded from a conviction, suddenly produced in the apostle's mind, that he who stood before him was, indeed, his Lord and master, raised to life by the power of God. The resurrection of Christ and the power of God had so near a connection, that a conviction of the one could not but be attended with an acknowledgment of the other; and therefore they are frequently mentioned together, the one as the *cause*, and the other as the *effect*. Rom. i. 4. *Declared to be the son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.* Rom. vi. 4. *Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.* x. 9. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth*
the

the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thine heart, that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Here we plainly see, that he only who raised Christ from the dead is stiled *God*, and not *Christ*, who was raised by his power.

1 Tim. vi. 13, &c. *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot unrebukable, untill the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, in his times, he shall shew, who is the blessed and only potentate, the king of kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting, amen.* The meaning of this passage, as the construction of the words in the original incontestibly proves, is as follows; *which appearing*, or second coming of Christ to judge the world, he who is the blessed and only potentate, that is, the only true God, the Father, shall shew, or declare. And this exactly agrees with what our Lord himself says, that the day and hour of this his appearing was not known either to the angels of God, or to himself, but to the Father only; and consequently he only could shew, or declare it. Besides, the very verses I quoted above sufficiently demonstrate, that the writer of them considered God and Christ as distinct persons. *I charge*

charge thee in the sight of God and before Jesus Christ; and how could he with truth say of Christ, that no man had seen him or could see him?

Heb. i. 10. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, &c.* As there are several expressions in the first part of this chapter which are not easy to be understood, I shall give a brief explanation of them all, in their order. The great objection which the jews made to christi-
 anity being the meanness of Christ's appearance, and the ignominious death that he suffered; to obviate this, the author of this epistle begins with representing the great dignity to which, for the suffering of death, Christ is now exalted at the right-hand of God. Having said that *God, in these last days, had spoken to us by his Son*, he immediately adds, ver. 2. *whom he hath appointed heir, or Lord, of all things; by whom also he made or appointed, not the material worlds, but the ages; that is, the present dispensation of God's government over mankind, which is established by the gospel, the administration of which is committed to the Son: Who being the brightness of his (that is, God's) glory, and the express image of his (that is, God's) person, and upholding all things by the word of his (that is, God's) power, &c. sat down on the right-hand of the majesty on high.* It is plain from this passage, that whatever Christ is, he is
 by

by divine appointment; *whom he APPOINTED heir of all things.*

Afterwards this writer proceeds to prove that Christ is superior to angels, and at the close of this argument he has these words, *but concerning the son he says, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; or, as it may be rendered, God is thy throne for ever and ever; that is, God will establish the authority of Christ, 'till time shall be no more. A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* From this passage nothing can be more plain, than that, whatever authority belongs to Christ, he has a superior, from whom he derives it; *God, even thy God, has anointed thee.* This could never have been said of the one true God, whose being and power are underived.

In verses 10, 11, 12. the apostle quotes an address to God, as the great creator and everlasting ruler of the universe, but without any hint of its being applied to Christ, from Psalm cii. 25.—27. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* This quotation was probably made with a view to express the great honour conferred on Christ,

Christ,

Christ, on account of the dignity of the person who conferred it. For it immediately follows, ver. 13. *But to which of the angels said he, that is, the great being to whom this description belongs, Sit thou on my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool.* Or, since this quotation from the psalmist describes a perpetuity of empire in God, it may be intended to intimate a perpetuity of empire in Christ, who holds his authority from God, and who must hold it, unless God himself be unable to support it.

ACTS xx. 20. *Feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.* In the most ancient manuscripts this text is, *Feed the church of the Lord*; which generally signifies Christ. Also in some copies it is, *which he purchased with blood*; that is, the blood of his son. As the *blood of God* is a phrase which occurs no where else in the scriptures, we ought to be exceedingly cautious how we admit such an expression. If Christ was God, his blood could not be his blood as God, but as man.

VI. I shall here introduce a few texts, which are not reduceable to any of the above-mentioned heads, being either interpolations, or mis-translations of the scriptures, or having no relation to the subject, in favour of which they have been quoted.

Mat. xxviii. 19. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost.* This form of baptism seems to be intended to remind christians of the different parts which God, and Christ, and the holy spirit, acted in the scheme of man's redemption; God sending his son on this gracious errand; the son faithfully performing the work which God gave him to do, and being made head over all things to the church; and the holy spirit confirming the word of truth by miraculous gifts. But it is quite an arbitrary supposition, that, because they are mentioned together upon this occasion, they must be equal in all other respects, partaking of divinity alike, so as to be equal in power and glory. The apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. x. 2. that *the children of Israel were baptized unto Moses*: but he certainly did not mean that Moses was their God.

Col. iii. 10. *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither greek nor jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision; Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but Christ is all, and in all;* that is, there is no other distinction to be made now, but only whether a man be a real christian.

1 Cor. i. 2. *With all that in all places call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours.*

That

That adoration, such as is due to the one living and true God, was not meant by the apostle in this place, is evident from the very next words; *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ*; where Christ is evidently spoken of as distinct from God. It is probable, therefore, that the apostle meant nothing more than such as call themselves by the name of Christ, or who professed christianity.

Act vii. 59. *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* The word *God* is not in the original, as our translators have signified, by their directing it to be printed in the italic character, so that this text by no means implies that Stephen acknowledged Christ to be God, but only informs us, that Stephen addressed himself to Christ, whom he had just seen in person, in a state of great exaltation and glory; as we read, ver. 55, 56. *He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right-hand of God; and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the son of man standing on the right-hand of God.* This very language clearly implies, that he considered the *son of man*, and *God*, as distinct persons.

The word, which is here and in 1 Cor. i. 2. rendered to *call upon*, is far from being appropriated to *invocation*, as peculiar to the divine Being. It is the same word that is rendered to *appeal to*, as when

Paul appeals to Cæsar; and is used when a person is said to be called by any particular name; as, Judas, *called* Iscariot, &c. There can be no doubt, therefore, but that it has the same meaning both in 1 Cor. i. 2, and also in Acts ix. 21. *Is not this he that destroyed them who called on this name in Jerusalem?* that is, all who called themselves *christians*. It is so rendered, James i. 7. *Do they not blaspheme the worthy Name by which ye are called?* or, as it is more exactly rendered, *which is called, or imposed, upon you?* that is, by which ye are distinguished. Had it implied *adoration*, it would at least have been *which is called upon by you*.

1 John v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.* Sir Isaac Newton, and others, have clearly proved that this verse was no part of John's original epistle, but was inserted in later ages. It is not to be found in any ancient manuscript, and has been omitted in many printed copies and translations of the new Testament, at a time when the doctrine which it is supposed to contain was in a manner universally received. I say *supposed to contain*, because, in fact it expresses no more than that these three agree in giving the same testimony, which is the only kind of union which the *spirit*, the *water*, and the *blood*, in the verse following can have.

1 Tim.

I Tim. iii. 16. *And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* Sir Isaac Newton has fully demonstrated that, in the original, this text was not *God* manifest in the flesh, but *who* was manifest in the flesh, and a very small alteration in the manner of writing greck is sufficient for that purpose. The oldest manuscript in the world, which I have examined myself, has been manifestly altered from the one to the other, as appears by the difference in the colour of the ink. Besides, it is even literally true, that God was manifest in the flesh of Christ; since he himself acknowledges, that *the very words which he spake were not his own, but the Father's who sent him, and that the Father, who was in him, did the works.* It was therefore with the greatest propriety that our Lord said, John viii. 19, *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also,* the wisdom and power of God being conspicuous in him. They who will have this text to be a proof of the godhead of Christ, must suppose him to be the *Father*, or the first person in the trinity, and not the *Son*, or the second.

Zach. xiii. 7. *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.* So says our english version, but the word in the original signifies a person that is *near*, or *joined*

in neighbourhood to another, and, except this single text, it is every where rendered *neighbour* by our translators.

Philip. ii. 5. &c. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation;—Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.—That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* The proper rendering of this text is, *Who being in the form of God, did not think that being equal to God, or a state of equality with God, was a thing to be seized (i. e. by him) but made himself of no reputation.* This makes the whole passage perfectly just and coherent, as a recommendation of humility; and also hints a fine contrast between the conduct of Christ, whom St. Paul elsewhere calls the *second Adam*, and the first, who is also said to have been made *in the likeness of God*, but aspiring to be *as God fell*, and was punished; whereas Christ, who had more of the likeness or *form of God*, on account of his extraordinary powers, not grasping at any thing higher, but humbling himself, was exalted. It is in this sense, or a sense similar to it, in which this very text is quoted by those fathers of the christian church who wrote before the controversy about the divinity of Christ was started. In this manner, even some who maintain the divinity of Christ render the words. Thus, Father
Simon,

Simon, who contends that being in the form of God is equivalent to being truly God, renders the latter part of the verse, *did not imperiously assume to himself an equality with God*. Indeed the word, *but*, which introduces the next verse, evidently leads us to expect some contrast between what goes before and after it, which is very striking in the manner in which I translate this text; but it is altogether lost in our common version. *For he made himself equal to God, but humbled himself*, is not even sense. Lastly, I would observe that the word, which is here rendered *equal to*, is also used to express a very high degree of resemblance, which it is very certain that Christ was possessed of with respect to God; and Dr. Doddridge renders it, *to be as God*.

VII. Christ may be supposed to have *pre-existed*, or to have had a being before he was born of the virgin Mary, without supposing him to be the eternal God; but it appears to me that the apostles considered Christ as being, with respect to his *nature*, truly and properly *a man*, consisting of the same constituent parts, and of the same rank with ourselves, *in all things like unto his brethren*; and the texts which are thought to speak of him as having existed before he came into this world, appear to me to bear other interpretations very well. Some of them have been explained in a different sense already,

ready, and I shall now endeavour to explain the rest.

John viii. 56, &c. *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am.* The meaning of this passage clearly is that Abraham *foresaw* the day of Christ, and that Christ was the subject of prophecy before the times of Abraham. This saying of our Lord is also illustrated by what the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says concerning all the ancient worthies, viz. that *they all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.* In this manner, therefore, Abraham also *saw* the day of Christ. Agreeably to this it is easy to explain John xvii. 5. *Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,* of the glory which was intended for him in the councils of God before all time. Nay this must necessarily be our Lord's meaning in this place; since in many other passages the power and glory which were conferred upon Christ are expressly said to be the reward of his obedience, and to be subsequent to his resurrection from the dead. It is with peculiar propriety, therefore, that this request of our Lord follows his declaration, that he had done the work for which he was to receive the reward; ver. 4. *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest*

gavest me to do ; and now, O Father, glorify thou me, &c. As the connection of this prayer shews that whatever it was that our Lord requested, it depended upon the part which he had to act in the world, it is plain that it could not be any thing which he had enjoyed antecedently to his coming into it.

In the same manner we may explain the following prophecy of Micah concerning Christ, v. 2. *Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be a ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* For this may be understood concerning the promises of God, in which the coming of Christ was signified to mankind from the beginning of the world. The Chaldee paraphrase renders it, *whose name was foretold of old.*

As to those who think that our Lord meant to intimate that he was truly and properly God because he uses that expression *I am*, by which the true God announced himself to Moses, they will perhaps be sensible how little stress is to be laid upon it, when they are informed, that, though the same phrase occurs very often in the history of Christ, our translators themselves, in every place excepting this, render it by *I am he*, that is, I am the Christ. It is used in this sense in the 24th verse of this chapter, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* And again in the 28th verse, *When ye shall lift up the son*
of

of man, then shall ye know that I am he. That the words *I am* in this place do not mean the eternal God, is manifest from the words which are immediately connected with these; *then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

John xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.* In order to understand this text, it should be observed, that by *the world* is not always meant *the material world*, and least of all in the discourses of our Saviour; but the world considered as a *state of trial, exercise and discipline*, and especially the unbelieving and ungodly part of the world. *The world shall hate you,* John xv. 10. *I pray not for the world,* xvii. 9, &c. Our Saviour also speaks of sending his disciples into the world; though, considered as a part of the material system, they had been in it long before. John xvii. 18. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so also send I them into the world.* Since, therefore, the mission of Christ, and that of the apostles, are spoken of in the very same words, and represented as commencing in the same manner, there can be no more reason to suppose that Christ had a being before he came into the world, than there is to suppose that the apostles had pre-existed. Also when our Lord says, John xvii. 11. *Now I am no more in the world,* he could not mean the material world: for, after his resurrection, he

was

was seen by many, and even after his ascension he was seen by Paul, if not by Stephen; and he is probably in this world at present, attending to the affairs of his church; and therefore may even be literally *with his disciples*, upon important occasions, *even to the end of the world*; and the notion of a *local heaven*, above the clouds, is altogether fanciful.

John v. 13. *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man, who is in heaven.* This language is evidently figurative; but if Christ could be in heaven at the same time that he was on earth, conversing with Nicodemus, it is plain that his being said to have come down from heaven cannot necessarily imply that he had ever been any where but on the earth. In fact, the phrases *being in heaven*, *being with God*, or *in the bosom of God*, &c. express a state of very intimate communication with God, such as qualified Christ to speak of heavenly things, as he expresses himself to Nicodemus, and to make his Father known to us. John i. 8. *No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

The omnipresence, and consequently the proper divinity of Christ, could not be meant by his being said to be in heaven at the same time that he was visible on earth, because he is, on this occasion, called *the son of man*, which is always allowed to denote

denote his *humanity*, and which certainly could not be present in two places at the same time.

John vi. 51. *I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* By these and other expressions of a similar nature, our Lord staggered not only those who followed him for the sake of the loaves with which he had fed them, but even many of his other disciples; and perceiving this, he says unto them, ver. 61. *Doth this offend you, what and if ye shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* In this our Lord seems to be reproving the stupidity of his disciples, in not understanding that by *himself*, and *his flesh and blood*, he meant his *doctrine*, which came down from heaven. For if it was his *body* that was to be of such benefit to mankind, what would they say if they should see it taken from them, ascending into heaven, from whence he had spoken of its descending to be the life of the world? They must then be satisfied that his *flesh* could profit them nothing, and therefore must conclude that his *doctrine* must have been the *spirit, and the life*, of which he spake. Or we may, perhaps,
understand

understand our Saviour, in this place, as referring to his ascension, which was an ocular proof of his having had that intimate communication with God, and having been sent of God concerning which he had been speaking. Besides, if this passage be interpreted literally, it will imply that the *body* of Christ came from heaven, which is not pretended.

Col. i. 15. *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist: and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.*

In this passage we have a view given us of the great dignity and dominion to which Christ is exalted by his Father, and of the great and happy change that was made in this world by his gospel; for by *creation* we are to understand *the new creation*, or *renovation*, in which sense the same word is used by the apostle, when he says, *We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Eph. ii. 10. So great a change is produced in the world, in the tempers and conduct of men by the gospel, that both the terms *creation* and *regeneration* are made

use of to express it. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,* John iii. 3. so that by *regeneration*, or *new creation*, we are to understand a *new-modeling*, or *new-constituting*. We shall see less harshness in this figure, when we consider, that what is called the *Mosaic creation* was probably similar to this; since, for any thing we know, it was only the *re-making* or *re-constituting* of the world, out of a former chaos.

There are several passages in which the words, which we generally render to *create*, or *creation*, signify only a *renewal* or *restoration*. Eph. ii. 10. *To make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making peace.* 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.* In 1 Pet. ii. 13. the same word is rendered *ordinance*. *Be ye subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.* The places in which the influence of the gospel is termed a new creation are illustrated by the following prophecy of Isaiah, in which it is described in the same language, Is. lxxv. 17, &c. *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.*

The word *all* must necessarily respect the subject concerning which the affirmation is made, and be limited by it. Thus when *all the world* is said to be taxed, Luke ii. 1. it is plain that nothing but the

Roman

Roman empire could be understood. In like manner, when *all things* are said to be created by Christ, or for him, and also when *all things* are said to be *subject to him*, or *put under his feet*, nothing can be meant but such things as can properly come under his government as the Messiah, and be subservient to him in the conduct of it, including probably the *visible* powers and kingdoms of this world, and the *invisible* administration of angels; and therefore the apostle, with great propriety, concludes and sums up the whole of Christ's authority, by saying that *he is the head of the body the church*.

Before often signifies before in point of *rank*, and *pre-eminence*, and not in point of *time*; so that when Christ is said to be *before all things*, the meaning is, that he is the *chief*, or *most excellent* of all. And when it is said that *in him all things consist*, we are to understand that in him all things are *completed*, and compacted; since the christian dispensation is the last, and most perfect of all, compleating one great and regular scheme of revelation, continually advancing from the more imperfect to the more perfect. I would further observe that the things here said to be created by Christ are not *material things*, as the *heaven* and the *earth*, but things *in heaven* and *earth*, as *thrones*, *principalities*, &c. and therefore are naturally interpreted, of that *power* and *dignity* to which he is advanced, and

which is denoted by God's giving him *all power in heaven and on earth*, after his resurrection.

We shall have a clearer understanding of this passage in the epistle to the Colossians, if we compare it with a parallel passage in the epistle of the same apostle to the Ephesians, i. 17, &c. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom, that ye may know—the exceeding greatness of his power,—which he wrought in Christ Jesus when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.* In this passage we see most clearly that all the power and authority to which Christ is advanced is subsequent to his resurrection.

The origin and extent of the power of Christ are also most distinctly expressed, Phil. ii. 8. - - - - 11. *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue*

tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

To the same purpose also, 1 Pet. i. 20, 21. *Who (Christ) verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.* I should think it hardly possible to read this single passage with attention, and not see that the writer of it considered Christ as a being distinct from God, and subordinate to him; that all his glory was subsequent to his resurrection; and also, that, though he was *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, he was not *manifested*, or brought into being, 'till *these last times*, or those of the gospel.

There are some other passages in the New Testament, which are similar to those which I have quoted above, and may serve to illustrate them, John xvi. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine*, xvii. 10. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

That there is nothing, in any of the passages which I have now quoted, that implies any proper divinity in Christ, is sufficiently evident, even without the addition of such expressions as directly

assert the contrary; as when the apostle Paul says, that *to us there is one God, even the Father*; and our Saviour calls his Father *the only true God*. To signify that the authority of Christ is not underived, like that of God; and at the same time to inform us from whence it does proceed, the apostle says, that *it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell*. In the very same language our Saviour speaks of his disciples, *Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*.

V. OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

THE death of Christ being an event of the greatest consequence to the end of his coming into the world, and being, at the same time, the great *stumbling-block* both to the jews and the gentiles, who could not easily reconcile themselves to the notion of a *suffering saviour*, it is no wonder that the writers of the New Testament speak much of it, and represent it in a great variety of lights, and especially such as would appear the most favourable to the christian converts. In this case we naturally expect bold comparisons and allusions, especially considering how much more figurative is the style of the books of scripture, and indeed of all oriental writings, than ours. But in whatever lights the sacred writers represent the death of Christ,

Christ, there is resemblance enough sufficiently to justify the representation, at the same time that this event being compared to *so many things*, and things of such *different natures*, proves that the resemblance in all of them is only in *certain respects*, and that they differ considerably in others.

For example, the death of Christ is compared to a *sacrifice* in general, because he gave up his life in the cause of virtue and of God, and more especially a *sacrifice for sin*, because his death and resurrection were necessary to the confirmation of that gospel, by which sinners are brought to repentance, and thereby reconciled to God. It is called a *curse*, because he died in a state of suspension, which was by the jews appropriated to those persons who were considered as reprobated by God; and it is called a *passover*, because it may be considered as a sign of our deliverance from the power of sin, as the passover among the jews was a sign of their deliverance from the egyptian bondage. It is also called a *ransom*, because we are delivered by the gospel from sin and misery. On the same account, he is said by his death *to bear, or take away our sins*, since his gospel delivers us from the power of sin, and consequently from the punishment due to it.

These are all bold, but significant figures of speech, the death of Christ really corresponding to them all to a certain degree, but they differ so very
widely

widely from one another, that no one thing can correspond to any of them throughout; for then it must exclude all, or at least most of the rest. The same thing, for instance, could not be a curse, and a sacrifice; because every thing accursed was considered as an abomination in the sight of God, and could never be brought to the altar; and the killing of the paschal lamb was a thing essentially different from a sacrifice for sin.

These observations appear to me to be a sufficient guide to the interpretation of all the language of the New Testament respecting the death of Christ, without supposing that it had any proper influence upon God, so as to render him propitious to his offending creatures, or that it made it consistent with the divine justice to forgive the sins of mankind; which is contrary to a thousand plain and express declarations of scripture, which represent God as being essentially, and of himself, merciful and gracious, without the least reference] to any other being or agent whatever, and as forgiving *freely*, and gratuitously, upon our repentance and amendment, without any other atonement or satisfaction. I shall therefore content myself with reciting a few of the passages in which the death of Christ is represented in these several lights.

Eph. v. 2. *Christ also has loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, of a sweet*

sweet-smelling savour, Heb. vii. 27. *Who needed not daily to offer sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people. For this he did once, when he offered up himself.* With the same idea he says, ix. 22. *And without shedding blood there is no remission.* This view of the death of Christ occurs pretty frequently in this epistle to the Hebrews, but not more than about half a dozen times in all the other books of the New Testament; the principal of which is 1 John ii. 1. *And he is the propitiation for our sins.* But if the great object of the death of Christ was the establishment of that religion by which the world is reformed, in consequence of which the divine being is rendered propitious to them, how natural is it to represent his death as a *sacrifice* to God, for that great purpose? Besides, sacrifices for sin under the law of Moses are never considered as standing in the place of the sinner; but as the people were never to approach the divine presence, upon any occasion, without some *offering*, agreeably to the standing and universal custom of the East, with respect to all sovereigns and great men, so no person after being unclean (which not only moral guilt, but a number of things absolutely indifferent to morality were supposed to render a man) could be introduced to the tabernacle or temple service, without an offering proper to the occasion.

This

This idea may explain 2 Cor. v. 21. *He made him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; because by *sin* in this place may perhaps be understood a *sin-offering*. Or it may correspond to Rom. viii. 3. *What the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (on account of sin, or on the business of sin, i. e. to destroy and take it away) condemned sin in the flesh*. In this case, the sense of the passage will be, that Christ was made, not *sin*, but *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, that is, he was made a man for our sakes.

Many persons are carried away by the sound of the word *redemption*, as if it necessarily implied that, mankind being in a state of bondage, a price must be paid for their freedom, and that the death of Christ was that price. But the word which we render *redemption* signifies only *deliverance* in general, in whatever manner it be effected, and it is frequently so rendered by our translators. Belonging to this class of texts are the following, Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. *The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*. 1 Tim. ii. 8. *Who gave himself a ransom for all*.

In order to judge of the meaning of this expression, let the preceding passages be compared with the following, in which the same Greek word is used,

used, Luke xxiv. 21. *We trusted that it had been he who should have delivered, or (as it might have been translated) redeemed Israel.* In this case, the disciples certainly meant a deliverance, or redemption, from a state of subjection to the Romans, which they could not suppose was to be effected by *purchase*, but by the exertion of wisdom and power. Luke i. 68. *He has visited, and redeemed his people;* which is explained in ver. 71, by *a deliverance from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us.* In Acts vii. 35. Stephen styles Moses a *ruler and deliverer, or redeemer*, but what price did he pay for their redemption? In the Old Testament also God is frequently said to have *redeemed* Israel from the hand of the Egyptians; but he certainly did not redeem them by paying any price for their redemption, and much less by becoming a bondman in their place, but, as it is often expressed, he redeemed or delivered them, with *an high hand and an outstretched arm.* So also may Christ be said to redeem, or deliver from sin, viz. by his precepts, by his example, and by the precious promises of his gospel; by the consideration of which we are induced to forsake sin.

Stress has been laid upon the word *for* in the above-mentioned passages, as if Christ dying a ransom *for* all necessarily implied that he died *in the stead, or in the place,* of all; but the same word has other significations, as *because*, and so it is rendered

dered Luke i. 20. *Because thou hast not believed my word.* Heb. xii. 2. *Who for, or because of the joy that was set before him.* It also signifies *on the behalf, or on the account of*, as Mat. xvii. 27. *That take, and give them for thee and me,* that is, *on the account of*, not *instead of* me and thee. So Christ died, and gave his life a ransom, not instead of many, but *on the behalf of many, or for their benefit.*

Much stress has also been laid on Christ being said to *bear the sins of mankind*; as if they had been ascribed or imputed to him, and he had taken them upon himself, and suffered the wrath of God for them. Is. liii. 11. *He shall bear their iniquities.* 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body, on the tree.* Heb. ix. 28. *So Christ once suffered, to bear the sins of many.*

These, I think, are all the places in which this particular view of the death of Christ occurs. But beside the manifest injustice, and indeed absurdity, of an innocent person being punished for one that is guilty, the word does not signify to *bear or take upon another*, but to *bear away, or to remove*, by whatever means; so that the texts above-mentioned correspond to, 1 John iii. 5, 6. *And ye know that he was manifest to take away sin, and in him was no sin.*

The phrase *bearing sin* is never applied in the Old Testament, but to the *scape-goat*, which was not sacrificed, but turned loose in the wilderness, to
 signify

signify the removal of the sins of the people, which God had freely forgiven, to a place where they should never more be heard of. The goat itself, which was emblematically said to *bear* their sins, suffered nothing in consequence of it; but, as its name imports, was suffered to escape, or was let loose. Perhaps the sending away of the scape-goat was intended for a monitory sign to the people, that they should cease to commit those sins which had been so solemnly confessed over him, and which he was said to *bear away into a land of separation*. See Levit. xvi. 22. in the margin.

The evangelist Matthew had, most evidently, this idea of the meaning of the passage in Isaiah, when he applied it upon the occasion of Christ's healing the bodily diseases of men, viii. 17. For he says that he performed these cures, *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*. Now how did Christ *bear* the bodily diseases which he cured? Not, surely, by taking them upon himself, and becoming diseased, as the poor wretches themselves had been; but by removing them by his miraculous power. In like manner Christ *bears*, or *takes away* sin in general; not by suffering himself to be treated as a sinner, but removing it, by the doctrines and motives of his gospel. Agreeably to this, when Peter had said, *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, he explains his

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meaning

meaning in the words next following; *that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness.*

Christ is said to die a *curse* for us in Gal. iii. 10. *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* Now it is proper enough to say, that Christ died a curse, because the manner of his death was similar to that by which those who were deemed *curfed* under the law were put to death. But if by *accursed* we mean lying under the displeasure of God, this was so far from being the case with respect to Christ and his death, that in this very circumstance he was the object of the divine approbation, and complacency in the highest degree; as he himself says, *For this reason does my Father love me, because I lay down my life:* and it is a general observation in the scriptures, that *precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints.*

Christ is called a *Passover* in 1 Cor. v. 7. *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:* and this view is also alluded to when it is said, *a bone of him shall not be broken.* The reason of this view of the death of Christ was sufficiently intimated before.

As a proof that Christ took our sins upon him, and that we, on the other hand, are justified by the *imputation of his righteousness to us*, some alledge. Jer. xxiii. 56. *And this is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* But, according to the method of interpreting scripture-names,

names, explained above, all that we can infer from this text is, that God will be our Righteousness, or receive us into his grace and favour by means of Christ, or by the gospel of Christ. That we must understand this text in some such sense as this, is evident from the same name being afterwards applied to Jerusalem. Jer. xxxiii. 16. *This is the name wherewith she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*: for certainly it cannot be thought that the merits of Jerusalem are imputed to mankind.

Many divines, finding themselves obliged to give up the notion of Christ's suffering *in our stead*, and our being justified by his righteousness, as contrary to the genuine sense of the scriptures, alledge, however, that God forgives the sins of mankind *on account of the merit of Christ*, and *his intercession for us*; and this opinion, like the former, is favoured by the literal sense of a few passages of scripture: but it is contrary to the general and plain tenor of it, which represents all acts of mercy as proceeding from the essential placability and goodness of God the Father only. Besides, there are many passages in the Old Testament in which God is represented as forgiving the Israelites, and receiving them into his favour, on the account of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and their posterity plead the merit of these their religious ancestors in their prayers. God is also represented as ready to forgive the people of

Sodom at the intercession of Abraham. Admitting, therefore, that God may grant favours to mankind at the intercession of Christ, this is not a privilege *peculiar* to Christ, but is common to him and other good men who went before him; so that the *general system*, of the forgiveness of sin, can by no means depend upon the merit and intercession of Christ only.

The following passages seem to represent the divine being as dispensing mercy to mankind on the account of Christ, 1 John ii. 12. *Because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.* Rom. viii. 34. *Who also maketh intercession for us,* 1 Cor. vi. 3. *But ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus.* Heb. vii. 25. *He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

But let these passages be compared with the following from the Old Testament, Gen. xxvii. 24. *Fear not, I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake.* Moses, pleading in behalf of the Israelites, says, Exod. xxxii. 13. *Remember Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel, thy servants.* Deut. xix. 27. *Remember thy servants, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Look not to the stubbornness of this people, nor to their sin.* There are many other passages to the same purpose with these.

It must also be observed, that *in the name of Christ*, which occurs in some of the abovementioned passages, means *as Christ*, or *in the place of Christ*. Thus our Lord says, *Many shall come in my name*, that is, pretending

tending to be what I am, the Messiah; and again, *the comforter, whom the Father shall send in my name*, that is, in *my place*, as it were, to succeed me in his kind offices to you. *Praying, therefore, in the name of Christ* may mean, in allusion to this sense of it, praying with the temper and disposition of Christ, or as becomes christians, those who follow the directions of Christ, both with respect to prayer, and every other duty of the christian life. So also *being justified in the name of Christ* may signify our being justified, or approved of God, in consequence of our being christians, in deed and in truth, having the same mind that was also in Christ Jesus. Agreeably to this, the apostle Paul exhorts us *to put on Christ*, as if it were to appear like him, the very same person.

If the pardon of sin had universally depended upon the *advocate*ship of Christ only, it can hardly be supposed that the spirit would have had that name given to him, and especially by way of eminence, and distinction; for the word which we render *comforter* is the same that is rendered *advocate* in 1 Joh., ii. 1. *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* The spirit is also said to intercede for us, Rom. viii. 26. *The spirit itself maketh intercession for us.*

Besides, the passages in which any regard is supposed to be had to the merit or intercession of Christ, in dispensing mercy to sinners, are exceedingly few,

in comparison with those which represent this *free gift*, as proceeding from God only; and in some of them we are misled by our translation, as in Eph. iv. 39. *And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has freely forgiven you.* It ought to have been rendered *as God in Christ*, that is, in the gospel of Christ, has forgiven you. Besides, the word which is here rendered *forgive* signifies *conferring favours* in general, and not the forgiveness of sin in particular; and the whole passage was intended to inculcate a benevolent disposition, in imitation of God, who had conferred the most valuable favours upon mankind, in the gospel of Christ.

Many passages in which we are said to be *justified by faith*, and not by *the works of the law*, were intended to oppose the doctrine of the jews, who maintained that the observance of the law of Moses was absolutely necessary to salvation. Writing upon this subject, the apostle Paul expresses himself in the following manner, Rom. iii. 21, &c. *But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe, for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through*
faith

faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.

If we consider the whole of this passage, and the connection in which it stands, we shall be satisfied, that the apostle is here asserting that, in the gospel of Christ, which was confirmed by his death and resurrection, the divine being, as from *a mercy-seat* (which the word ought to be rendered, and not *propitiation*) declares his goodness and mercy to mankind; and since the patriarchs, who believed and obeyed before the law, were justified without the works of the law, so God, acting still upon the same maxims, is just, and the jews have no reason to complain of it, when he justifies sinners who believe and obey, *freely, and without the works of the law of Moses*, under the gospel.

N. B. I do not pretend that this pamphlet contains an illustration of *all* the texts that have been urged in favour of the doctrines which are controverted in the *Appeal*; for then I must have written a commentary upon the *whole bible*, as there is hardly a text in which some persons do not imagine that they see their own peculiar sentiments; but I think

think I have taken notice of all that can well be said to be of *much consequence*. If any considerable omission be pointed out to me, it shall be supplied in future editions.

A P R A Y E R,

RESPECTING THE PRESENT STATE OF
CHRISTIANITY.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the giver of all good, and especially the *Father of lights*, and the fountain of all wisdom and knowledge; we thank thee that *thou hast put a spirit in man, and that thine inspiration giveth us understanding*; that, being formed after thine own image, we find ourselves possessed of a nature superior to that of brute creatures; and being endowed with the faculty of reason are capable of investigating important truth, and of governing our conduct, so as to attain to very distinguished degrees of excellence and happiness.

We thank thee that, in aid of this *light of nature*, thou hast superadded the gift of *revelation*; having, from time to time, communicated to mankind, by thy servants the prophets, the most useful information, concerning thy nature, perfections and government, concerning our duty here, and our expectations hereafter. And we more especially
rejoice.

rejoice that, upon every occasion of thy gracious intercourse with mankind, thou hast represented thyself to us as the proper object of our reverence, love, and confidence; as a being of boundless goodness, and the greatest compassion to those frailties and infirmities, to which it has seemed good to thy wisdom to subject us; as one who expectest no more of us than thou hast enabled us to perform; and who, upon our sincere return to our duty, art ever ready to extend the freest mercy and forgiveness towards us, even after our most aggravated and repeated offences.

We thank thee, more especially, for the last and most perfect revelation of thy will to mankind, in the gospel of Jesus Christ, in whom it hath pleased thee, that *all fulness should dwell*; who has established upon the surest foundations, the great and important doctrines of the proper *unity* and *mercifulness* of thy nature, and thy unrivalled *supremacy* with respect to himself, as well as to all other beings, and all other things; and who has likewise given to us the most satisfactory assurance of a resurrection from the dead, confirmed to us by his own death and resurrection; whereby we are encouraged to expect, that, because he lives, we shall live also.

It has seemed good to thy unsearchable wisdom, (which permits the rise and continuance of evil, in order, we doubt not, to bring about the greatest good)

good) that this most excellent religion, so honourable to thee and so beneficial to mankind, should, by means of the base *artifices* of some, and the general *ignorance* which lately overspread the world, become grossly corrupted; whereby such opinions have prevailed among the professors of christianity, as greatly dishonour thy nature, imply the most unjust reflections on thy righteous moral government, and are highly injurious to the virtue and happiness of men. How has the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed !

The great and important doctrine of thy divine *unity* has been generally abandoned, and objects of supreme worship multiplied. Thy messenger and servant, the meek and humble Jesus, who, upon all occasions, referred his wisdom and mighty works to thee, his God and Father, speaking and acting by him, has been advanced to proper equality with thyself; and even his mother, Mary, and innumerable saints and angels, have likewise, been addressed, as if they were omnipresent beings. By thus dividing thy being, robbing thee of thy essential attributes and perfections, and distributing them among a multiplicity of inferior beings, depraved and unworthy notions of thy moral character have consequently prevailed, and many of the evils of *idolatry* have been introduced among the professors of that religion, which acknowledges but

one living and true God, even thee our Father in heaven, and one mediator, the man Christ Jesus.

Having divested thee, in their imaginations, of the most amiable of all thy attributes, even the essential *placability* of thy nature, they have represented thy free mercy to penitent sinners as purchased by the blood of thy innocent son. Forgetting that thou art good to all, and that thy tender-mercies are over all thy works, and also that thou, the righteous Lord, lovest righteousness, they have ascribed to thee an arbitrary and unreasonable partiality in favour of some of the human race, and a most cruel and unjust severity towards others, as condemning them to everlasting torments for crimes of which they could not be guilty, and expecting of them that which thou hadst not enabled them to do. And, having lost the idea of the *purity* of thy nature and thy regard to moral righteousness, as the only just ground of acceptance and favour with thee, they have had recourse to unmeaning and even base and mischievous superstitions as compensations for their non-observance of thy holy commandments.

To confirm all these, and innumerable other corruptions of thy holy religion, supreme authority has been openly usurped by men over that church, in which thou hast given all power to our Lord and master Jesus Christ; and those of thy faithful servants, who have justly refused to submit to their
usurpations

usurpations, have by them been subjected to the greatest hardships, and even persecuted unto death; so that these temporal antichristian powers are drunk with the blood of thy holy martyrs.

We deeply lament this almost universal departure from the true faith of thy son's gospel, the stop that has by this means been so long put to the propagation of christianity among jews, mahomedans, and heathens, and the prevalence which it has occasioned of infidelity and profaneness in christian countries.

But we thank thee, who, in thine own due time, wilt, we doubt not, bring light out of all darkness, and order out of all confusion, that, in several christian countries, many of these corruptions and abuses have been reformed, and that antichristian tyranny is every where giving place to the power of truth, and the just liberties of mankind, in thinking and acting for themselves in all matters of religion.

For these great and invaluable blessings we are, under thee, indebted to the strenuous labours of thy faithful servants, who have not accounted even their lives dear unto them; but, for the love of thy truth, have renounced all worldly advantages, boldly asserting their christian liberty, and holding themselves accountable to none but thee, the sole and immediate lord of conscience, and to the great
shepherd

shepherd and bishop of souls, acting by commission from thee, Jesus Christ.

We adore the wisdom of thy providence in bringing about the restoration of useful *learning*, and making it subservient to the reformation of thy church; so that thy servants, having recovered the genuine, but long-forgotten sense of the scriptures, were able to discover the false grounds of the reigning superstition, and of the ecclesiastical tyranny of their times. Grant that, by a continued and diligent study of the same word of thy truth, we may, in due time, be led to the full discovery of every remaining corruption of our holy religion, and be brought to receive the whole truth in the love thereof.

Hasten, we intreat thee, the approach of that glorious time when, according to the faithful and true writings of thy servants the prophets, our holy religion shall recover its primitive purity and efficacy; when thou alone, as the only true God, a being of perfect rectitude, spotless purity, and essential goodness and mercy, shalt be the object of supreme worship; when thy creatures of mankind shall have recourse to no method of rendering themselves acceptable to thee, but unfeigned repentance for their transgressions of thy laws, and a sincere endeavour to conform to them for the future, in a course of upright intentions and worthy actions, through the whole of their lives; and when no

apprehension of arbitrary decrees shall alarm the fears of the humble, or encourage the presumption of the confident.

Dispose all who profess the christian name to study the scriptures of truth with unprejudiced minds; and inspire all those who attain to the truth with a iust zeal for the propagation of it, as far as thy providence shall give them ability and opportunity to do it. May neither the love of popular applause, of filthy lucre, or any worldly advantage; may neither the fear of man, of reproach, or of death, be a snare to them, in this work of love; and may they daily rejoice in the testimony of their consciences, and in the happy fruits of their pious and assiduous labours.

May all those powers of this world, which have usurped any authority belonging to our only rightful lord and king in his church, become disposed to relinquish their unjust claims; and may those kings and princes, who will not acknowledge the sovereignty of Jesus in his church, and especially those who obstinately oppose the reformation of it, be utterly confounded, and, by his power, be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. Take to thyself, O Lord God Almighty, thy great power, and reign; and may the gospel of Jesus Christ go forth conquering and to conquer. May the everlasting gospel, in its primitive purity, be preached to all that dwell on the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. By the brightness of our Lord's appearance, may the man of sin

fin be utterly consumed, that all the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our lord and of his Christ, and may he reign for ever and ever.

In the mean time, may we thy faithful servants, in the patient waiting for this coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, be fearless and unwearied in asserting thy truth, be ready to lay hold of every favourable opportunity to promote it, and, more especially, be careful to recommend it by a suitable life and conversation. May we distinguish ourselves by having the same mind that was also in Christ Jesus, by genuine humility, meekness, forbearance, brotherly love, heavenly-mindedness, and habitual cheerful devotion; that when our lord shall return, and take account of his servants, we may be found without spot and blameless, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Now to thee, who alone art eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise, living, and true God, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE CONCLUSION.

THIS publication completes the scheme which was begun in the *Appeal*, and continued in the *Triumph of Truth*; being intended to be a plain and earnest address to the common people, and especially

ally to those of them who have but little money to spare for the purchase of books, or time for the reading of them.

I am not so little acquainted with human nature, as to expect any *great success* in this attempt to overturn long-established errors; and least of all, can I hope to convince those who refuse to read, or to hear (which is the case with too many) on whom even miracles could produce no effect; but the restoration of christianity to its primitive purity and efficacy, after so long and so radical a corruption (which was foreseen and lamented by the inspired writers of the New Testament) is so great and so worthy an object, that every man, who has the interest of religion at heart, will rejoice in every opportunity that divine providence affords him for promoting it, with respect to ever so few, or even a single individual of his fellow-creatures.

A zeal for the truth, and even to *contend earnestly* for it, does certainly well become a christian. Since, however, the inspiring of a *christian spirit* is the great purpose to which purity of *christian faith* is subservient, I hope that, with respect to myself, I have been careful not to lose the *end*, while I have been contending for the *means*. Of this my reader may be a pretty good judge; since that zeal which arises from the love of truth, and of mankind, will easily be distinguished from that spirit which actuates those whom Paul calls the *disputers*

puters of this world, a spirit which favours strongly of *pride, hatred and malice*, and which often induces them to have recourse to unfair and unworthy *artifices* in order to gain a victory.

Some persons think that in these publications I have attacked *too many* long-established errors, and that it would have been more prudent to have attempted one thing at once, and to have proceeded gradually and gently. But it should be considered, that there are in the world persons in every possible state of mind with respect to these things; so that what will stagger some is calculated to make the strongest and best impression upon others. Since, therefore, every thing that is published from the press must be distributed *promiscuously*, we can only take care that what we write be calculated to do good in general; and since a nice calculation of this kind is exceedingly difficult, it appears to me to be the best, upon the whole, for every person to endeavour to establish what appears to himself to be *the whole truth*, and not to trouble himself about any consequences. The gospel-sower must cast his seed promiscuously on all kinds of ground, hoping that in some it may yield a good increase, though he must lay his account with its being lost, and even worse than lost upon others.

I also think it an objection to the slow and cautious proceeding which some persons recommend, that the evidence of any truth is exhibited

to the most advantage in connection with the *whole system* to which it belongs. Nor would I conclude that because the minds of many are staggered by bold and undisguised representations of truth, this mode of proceeding is, upon the whole, less effectual. In many cases it may be the only method of gaining a sufficient degree of *attention* to a subject; and when this only is done, a great point is gained. The horror with which an offensive sentiment is viewed at first may wear off by degrees, and a cool examination succeed. What could give more offence, even to good minds, than the manner in which Luther, and other reformers, attacked the church of Rome? Any person would have imagined, *a priori*, that it could only offend and irritate. We must wait a considerable time before we can form a judgment of the number of converts that any person makes.

I cannot help expressing my surprize that so many persons, and especially of the clergy of the established church, should profess themselves *Arminians*, rejecting the Calvinistic doctrines of election and reprobation, and yet entertain such a horror of *Arianism*, or *Socinianism*, contending with the greatest earnestness for the divinity of Christ, and atonement for sin by his death; when it appears to me, that the literal interpretation of the language of scripture (which is almost all that can be pleaded in favour of any of those opinions) is even more favourable

vourable to the former than to the latter, as, I should think, must appear to any person who will attend to those which I have quoted in this treatise. I know that I have found much more difficulty in my attempts to explain them. I consider it, however, as an undoubted sign of the progress of just thinking in matters of religion, that the *standard of orthodoxy* is so much lower at present than it has been in former times.

Time was, and, though I am not old, I well remember the time, when Arminians would have been reckoned no better than Socinians by those who were reputed the *orthodox* of their day; and yet with what rage have some of these *orthodox-writers*, attacked a *brother-heretic*? How would the manes of those old champions smile to see us *fall out by the way*, when they were confident that we must all come to the same place of torment at last; and the furious zeal of those veterans was far more plausible and respectable, than that of the modern pretenders to orthodoxy?

There is something *striking* and *consistent* in the genuine *Supralapsarian system*, of the eternally destined fall of man, an infinite penalty incurred by one, and, by the imputation of his sin, affecting all, and an infinite atonement adequate to it made by an infinite being; by which means a small remnant of the human race are necessarily saved, while all the rest of mankind, including new-born children,

dren, unbelieving jews, mahometans and heathens, arminians and baxterians, arians and focinians, without distinction (as destitute either of faith, or the right faith) are consigned to everlasting torments with the devil and his angels; from whence results *glory* to a God, who, in all this dreadful scheme, is supposed to have fought nothing else.

These are the *tremendous doctrines* which have over-awed mankind for so many centuries; and, compared with this, all the modern *qualified, intermediate systems* are crude, incoherent, and contemptible things. My antagonists may cavil at *election and reprobation*, or any other single article in the well-compacted system, but every part is necessary to the whole; and if one stone be pushed out of its place, the whole building tumbles to the ground. And when, in consequence of their ill-judged attempts to alter, patch, and repair, they have brought things to this catastrophe, there will be nothing left but the simple belief, that the merciful parent of the universe, who never meant any thing but the happiness of his creatures, sent his well-beloved son, *the man, Christ Jesus*, to reclaim men from their wickedness, and to teach them the way of righteousness; assuring them, for their encouragement, of the free and unbought pardon of their sins, and promising a life of endless happiness to all that receive and obey the gospel, by repenting
of.

of their sins, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.

This is the essence of what is called *Jocinianism*; and though this simple doctrine may, on account of its excellence and simplicity, be a stumbling-block to some, and foolishness to others, I believe it to be the sum and substance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the wisdom and power of God.

Formidable as the greatest adversary of the truth may be, I make no doubt but that, by the help of reason, and the *sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, it will be finally overcome. And whenever the *holy apostles and prophets shall rejoice* at the fall of this last part of *mystical Babylon*, Rev. xviii. 20; happy will they be who may join the chorus, as having employed their efforts, however feeble, with those who, in this great cause, fight under *the banners of the lamb, and who are called, and chosen, and faithful*; Rev. xvii. 14.

A G E N E R A L V I E W
OF THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE
UNITY OF GOD;
AND AGAINST THE
DIVINITY AND PRE-EXISTENCE
O F
C H R I S T;
FROM REASON, FROM THE SCRIPTURES, AND
FROM HISTORY.

GENERAL VIEW.

I. ARGUMENTS FROM REASON AGAINST THE
TRINITARIAN HYPOTHESIS.

THAT the doctrine of the trinity could ever have been suggested by any thing in the course of *nature* (though it has been imagined by some persons of a peculiarly fanciful turn, and previously persuaded of the truth of it) is not maintained by any persons to whom my writings can be at all useful. I shall therefore only address myself to those who believe the doctrine on the supposition of its being contained in the *scriptures*, at the same time maintaining, that, though it is *above*, it is not properly *contrary* to reason; and I hope to make it sufficiently evident, either that they do not hold the doctrine, or that the opinion of *three divine persons constituting one God* is strictly speaking an *absurdity*, or *contradiction*; and that it is therefore incapable of any proof, even by miracles. With this view, I shall recite in order all the distinct modifications of this doctrine, and shew that, upon any of them, there is either no proper *unity*, in the divine nature, or no proper *trinity*.

If, with Dr. Waterland, and others who are reckoned the strictest Athanasians, (though their opinions were not known in the time of Athanasius himself,) it be supposed that there are three persons properly equal, and that no one of them has any

fort of superiority over the rest, they are, to all intents and purposes, three distinct Gods. For if each of them, separately considered, be possessed of all divine perfections, so that nothing is wanting to complete divinity, each of them must be as properly *a God* as any being possessed of all the properties of man must be a man, and therefore *three persons* possessed of all the attributes of divinity must be as properly *three Gods* as three persons possessed of all human attributes must be three men. These three persons, therefore, must be incapable of any strict or numerical *unity*. It must be universally true, that *three things* to which the same definition applies can never make only *one thing* to which the same definition applies. And when by the words *thing*, *being*, or *person* we mean nothing more than, logically speaking, the *subject*, or *substratum of properties or attributes*, it is a matter of indifference which of them we make use of:

Each of these three persons may have other properties, but they must be numerically *three* in that respect in which the same definition applies to them. If, therefore, the three persons agree in this circumstance, that they are each of them *perfect God*, though they may differ in other respects, and have peculiar relations to each other, and to us, they must still be *three Gods*; and to say that they are only *one God* is as much a contradiction, as to say that three men, though they differ from one another

ther as much as three men can do, are not three men, but only one man.

If it be said, with the Antenicene fathers, and with bishops Pearson and Bull, among the modern English writers, that the Father is the *fountain of deity*, and that the son is derived from him, whether necessarily or voluntarily, whether in time or from eternity, they cannot be of the same *rank*: but the Father will be possessed of an original, a real, and proper superiority to the Son; who will be no more than an *effect* upon the Father's exertion of his powers, which is, to all intents and purposes, making the Son to be a *production* or *creature* of the Father; even though it should be supposed with the antients that he was created out of the substance of the Father, and without taking any thing from him. Moreover, as upon this scheme the Son was never capable of giving birth to another person like himself, he must have been originally inferior in power to the Father, the source from which he himself sprang. On this scheme, therefore, there is no proper *equality* between these divine persons; and the Antenicene Fathers did not pretend that there was, but distinguished the Father by the epithet of *αυτοθεος*, *God of himself*, and the Son by the inferior title of *θεος εκ θεου*, *God of God*, or a derived God.

If it be said that there is only one intelligent supreme mind, but that it exerts itself three different ways, and has three different modes of action, or

operation (which was the opinion of Dr. Wallis, and that which was generally ascribed to the ancient Sabellians), with respect to one of which the same divine Being was called the Father, to another the Son, and another the Holy Spirit; there is no proper *trinity* at all. For on the same principle one man, bearing three different offices, or having three different relations or capacities, as those of magistrate, father, son, &c. would be three different men.

Some represent themselves as believing the doctrine of the trinity by asserting with Dr. Doddridge*, that “ God is so united to the derived nature of Christ, and does so dwell in it, that, by virtue of that *union*, Christ may be properly called God, and such regards become due to him, as are not due to any created nature, or mere creature, be it in itself ever so excellent.”

What this *union* is, in consequence of which any creature can be entitled to the attributes and honours of his creator, is not pretended to be explained; but as we cannot possibly have any idea of an union between God and a creature, besides that of God being present with that creature, and acting by him, which is the same thing that is asserted by the *Arians* or *Socinians*, these nominal *trinitarians* must necessarily belong to one or other of these two classes. This is so evident, that it is hardly possible

* See his Lectures, proposition 128, p. 392.

ble not to suppose but that they must have been much assisted at least in deceiving themselves into a belief that they were trinitarians, by the influence which a dread of the odium and other inconveniences attending the Arian or Socinian doctrine had on their minds. The presence of God the Father with any creature, whether it be called an union with him, or it be expressed in any other manner whatever, can be nothing more than the *unity of the Father* in that creature; and whatever it be that God voluntarily imparts, he may withdraw again at pleasure. And what kind of divinity must that be, which is dependent upon the will of another?

Upon none of the modifications, therefore, which have been mentioned (and all others may be reduced to these) can the doctrine of the trinity, or of three divine persons in one God be supported. In most of them the doctrine itself is lost, and where it remains it is inconsistent with reason and common sense.

II. ARGUMENTS FROM REASON AGAINST THE ARIAN HYPOTHESIS.

THE Arian doctrine, of the world having been made and governed not by the supreme God himself, but by Christ, the Son of God, though no contradiction in itself, is, on several accounts, highly improbable.

Our reasoning from effects to causes carries us no farther than to the immediate creator of the visible universe. For if we can suppose that being to have had a cause, or author, we may suppose that his cause or author had a higher cause, and so on *ad infinitum*. According to the light of nature, therefore, the immediate cause or author of the visible universe is the self-existent first cause, and not any being acting under him, as his instrument. However, the scheme itself is not naturally impossible, since a being possessed of power sufficient to produce the visible universe, which is a limited production, may be *finite*, and therefore may derive his power, and his being, from one who is superior to him. But though the Arian scheme cannot be said to be in itself impossible, it is, on several accounts, extremely improbable *a priori*, and therefore ought not to be admitted without very strong and clear evidence.

If this great derived being, the supposed maker and governor of the world, was united to a human body, he must either have retained, and have exercised, his extraordinary powers during this union, or have been divested of them; and either supposition has its peculiar difficulties and improbabilities.

If this great being retained his proper powers during this union, he must have been sustaining the whole universe, and superintending all the laws of nature, while he was an infant at the breast of his mother,

mother, and while he hung upon the cross. And to imagine the creator of the world to have been in those circumstances is an idea at which the mind revolts, almost as much as at that of the supreme God himself being reduced to them.

Besides, if Christ retained, and exercised all his former powers in this state of apparent humiliation, he must have wrought all his miracles by a power properly *his own*, a power naturally *belonging to him*, as much as the power of speaking and walking belongs to any other man. But this was expressly disclaimed by our Saviour, when he said, that *of himself he could do nothing*, and that it was the *Father within him who did the works*. Also, on this supposition, it must have been this super-angelic being united to the body of Jesus, that raised him from the dead; whereas this is an effect which is always ascribed to God the Father only.

If, on the other hand, Christ was divested of his original powers, or *emptied himself* of them upon his incarnation, the whole system of the government of the universe must have been changed during his residence upon earth. Either some other derived being (which this scheme does not provide) must have taken his place, or the supreme being himself must have condescended to do that which the scheme supposes there was an impropriety in his doing. For certainly the making and the governing of the world would not have been delegated to
another,

another, if there had not been some good reason in the nature of things (though it be unknown to us, and may be undiscoverable by us) why the world should have been made and governed by a derived being, and not by the supreme being himself. And this reason, whatever it was, must, as far as we can judge, have operated during the time that Christ was upon the earth, as well as before.

If Christ was degraded to the state of a mere man during his humiliation on earth, reason will ask, why might not a mere man have been sufficient; since, notwithstanding his original powers, nothing was, in fact, done by him, more than any other man, aided and assisted by God as he was, might have been equal to?

If we consider the object of Christ's mission, and the beings whom it respected, viz. the *race of man*, we cannot but think that there must have been a greater propriety, and use, in the appointment of a mere man to that office. What occasion was there for any being superior to man for the purpose of communicating the will of God to man? And as an example of a resurrection to an immortal life (to enforce which was the great object of his mission) the death and resurrection of one who was properly and simply a man was certainly far better adapted to give men satisfaction concerning their own future resurrection, than the seeming death (for it could be nothing more) of such a being

as the maker of the world, and the resurrection of a body to which he had been united. For, as he was a being of so much higher rank, it might be said, that the laws of his nature might be very different from those of ours; and therefore he might have privileges to which we could not pretend, and to which we ought not to aspire.

If the world was created and governed by a derived being, this being, on whom we immediately depended, would be that to whom all men would naturally look. He would necessarily become the object of their prayers, in consequence of which the supreme being would be overlooked, and become a mere cypher in the universe.

As modern philosophy supposes that there are innumerable worlds inhabited by rational and imperfect beings (for all *creatures* must be finite and imperfect) besides this of ours, it cannot be supposed but that many of them must have stood in as much need of the interposition of the maker of the universe as we have done. And can we suppose either that this should be the only spot in the universe so highly distinguished, or that the maker of it should undergo as many degradations as this scheme may require?

The doctrine of Christ's pre-existence goes upon the idea of the possibility, at least, of the pre-existence of other men, and supposes an immaterial soul in man, altogether independent of the body; so that

that it must have been capable of thinking, and acting before his birth, as well as it will be after his death. But these are suppositions which no appearance in nature favours.

The arian hypothesis, therefore, though it implies no proper contradiction, is, on several accounts, highly improbable *a priori*, and therefore ought not to be admitted without very clear and strong evidence.

III. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE TRINITARIAN AND THE ARIAN HYPOTHESES FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

I SHALL now shew, in as concise a manner as I can, that the doctrine of the trinity, and also the arian hypothesis, have as little countenance from the scriptures as they have from reason. The scriptures teach us that there is but one God, who is himself the maker and the governor of all things; that this one God is the sole object of worship, and that he sent Jesus Christ to instruct mankind, empowered him to work miracles, raised him from the dead, and gave him all the power that he ever was, or is now possessed of.

1. The scriptures contain the clearest and most express declarations, that there is but *one God*, without ever mentioning any exception in favour of a *trinity*, or guarding us against being led into any mistake by such general and unlimited expressions.

pressions. Ex. xx. 3. *Thou shalt have no other God before me.* Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* Mark xii. 29. *The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we in him.* Eph. iv. 5, 6. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

On the other hand, not only does the word *trinity* never occur in the scriptures, but it is no where said that *there are three persons in this one God*: nor is the doctrine explicitly laid down in any other direct proposition whatever. Christ indeed says, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one*; but he sufficiently explains himself, by praying that his disciples might be one with him in the same sense in which he was one with the Father. John xvii. 21, 22. *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; and the glory which thou gavest to me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.*

2. This one God is said to have created all things; and no intimation is given of his having employed any *inferior agent* or *instrument* in the work of creation. Gen. i. 1. *In the beginning God created*
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the heaven and the earth—ver. 3. God said, let there be light and there was light, &c. Ps. xxxiii. 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth—ver. 9. He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. Is. xlv. 24. Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.

3. This one God is called *the Father*. i. e. the author of all beings; and he is called God and Father with respect to Christ, as well as all other persons. John vi. 27. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.* John xvii. 3. *That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* John xx. 17. *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God, and your God.* Eph. i. 17. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.* Col. i. 3. *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4. Christ is said expressly to be inferior to the Father, all his power is said to have been given him by the Father, and he could do nothing with-

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out the Father. John xvi. 28. *My Father is greater than I.* 1 Cor. iii. 23. *Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.* 1 Cor. xi. 3. *The head of Christ is God.* John v. 19. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself.* John xiv. 10. *The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, and the Father that dwelleth in me he doth the works.* Matt. xxviii. 18. *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.* 2 Pet. i. 17. *He received from God the Father honour and glory.* Rev. i. 1. *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him.*

It is now alledged that Christ did not mean that he was inferior to the Father with respect to his *divine nature*, but only with respect to his *human nature*. But if such liberties be taken in explaining a person's meaning, language has no use whatever. On the same principles, it might be asserted that Christ never died, or that he never rose from the dead, secretly meaning his divine nature only. There is no kind of imposition but what might be authorized by such an abuse of language as this.

5. Some things were with-held from Christ by his Father. Mark xiii. 32. *But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man; no not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* Matt. xx. 23. *To sit on my right-hand and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

6. As all the dominion that Christ has was derived from the Father, so it is subordinate to that of the Father. 1 Cor. xv. 24, &c. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign 'till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith that all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued to him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

7. Christ always prayed to the Father, and with as much humility and resignation, as any man, or the most dependent being in the universe, could possibly do. Our Lord's whole history is a proof of this; but especially the scene of his agony in the garden, Matt. xxvi. 37, &c. *And he began to be sorry and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death, tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

8. Christ is not only stiled a man even after his resurrection, but the reasoning of the apostles, in some of the passages where he is spoken of, requires that

that he should be considered as a man with respect to *h's nature*, and not in *name* only, as their reasoning has no force but upon that supposition. Acts ii. 22. *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of by God, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you.* Heb. ii. 17. *Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren.* Heb. ii. 10. *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* 1 Cor. xv. 21. *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead: for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

9. Whatever exaltation Christ now enjoys it is the gift of his Father, and the reward of his obedience unto death. Phil. ii. 8, 9. *And being in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.* Heb. ii. 9, *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* Heb. xii. 2. *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy which was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is sitten down at the right-hand of the throne of God.*

Let it also be considered, that no use whatever is made of the doctrine of the incarnation of the

maker of the world, in all the New Testament. We are neither informed why so extraordinary a measure was necessary for the salvation of men, nor that it *was* necessary. All that can be pretended is, that it is *alluded to* in certain expressions. But certainly it might have been expected that a measure of this magnitude should have been expressly declared, if not clearly explained; that mankind might have no doubt what great things had been done for them; and that they might respect their great deliverer, as his nature, and his proper rank in the creation required.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews evidently considered Christ as a being of a different rank from that of angels; and the reason why he says that he *would* to be so, is, that he might have a feeling of our infirmities. But, certainly, we shall be more easily satisfied that any person really *felt* as a man, if he was truly a man, and nothing more than a man; than if he was a superior being (and especially a being so far superior to us as the maker of the world must have been) degraded to the condition of a man; because, if he had any recollection of his former state, the idea of that must have borne him up under his difficulties and sufferings, in such a manner as no mere man could have been supported: and it is supposed by the arians that *Christ had* a knowledge of his prior state, for they suppose him to have referred to it in his prayer to the Father for

for the glory which he had with him before the world was; and yet this is hardly consistent with the account that Luke gives of his *increasing in wisdom*.

No person, I think, can, with an unprejudiced mind, attend to these considerations, and the texts of scripture above recited (which are perfectly agreeable to the tenor of the whole) and imagine that it was the intention of the sacred writers to represent Christ either as the supreme God, or as the maker of the world under God.

There is another hypothesis, of some modern arians, which represents Christ as having pre-existed, but not as having been the creator or governor of the world, or the medium of all the dispensations of God to mankind. But those texts of scripture which seem to be most express in favour of Christ's pre-existence do likewise, by the same mode of interpretation, represent him as the maker of the world; so that if the favourers of this hypothesis can suppose the language of these texts to be figurative, they may more easily suppose the other to be figurative also; and that whatever obscurity there may be in them, they were not intended to refer to any pre-existence at all.

The passages of scripture which are supposed to speak of Christ as the maker of the world are the following, viz. John i. 3. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 15, Heb. i. 1. &c. These, I will venture to say, are the texts that most strongly favour the notion of Christ's

pre-existence, and no person can doubt but that, if they must be interpreted to assert that Christ pre-existed at all, they, with the same clearness, assert that he was the maker of the world. But if these texts admit of a figurative interpretation, all the other texts, which are supposed to refer to the *pre-existence only*, will more easily admit of a similar construction. These two opinions, therefore, viz. that Christ pre-existed, and that he was the maker of the world, ought, by all means, to stand or fall together, and if any person think the latter to be improbable, and contrary to the plain tenor of the scriptures (which uniformly represent the supreme being himself, without the aid of any inferior agent, or instrument, as the maker of the universe) he should abandon the doctrine of simple pre-existence also.

In what manner the proper unitarians interpret these passages of scripture may be seen in my *Familiar illustration of particular texts of scripture*, in several of the *Jocinian tracts*, in three volumes quarto, and especially in *Mr. Lindsey's Sequel to his Apology*, p. 455, to which I refer my reader for a farther discussion of this subject.

It is only of late years, that any persons have pretended to separate the two opinions of Christ's pre-existence, and of his being the maker of the world. All the ancient arians maintained both, as did Dr. Clarke, Mr. Whiston, Mr. Emlyn, Mr. Pierce,

Pierce, and their followers; and I do not know that any other hypothesis has appeared in *writing*, except that it is alluded to in the Theological Repository.

IV. *Arguments from History against the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ; or a summary view of the evidence for the primitive christians having held the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ.*

N.B. To each article is subjoined a reference to publications in which the subject is discussed: H. signifying the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. vol. 1. R. *Reply to the Monthly Review*, and L. *Letters to Dr. Horsley*. To each article is also subjoined a reference to the following *Maxims of Historical Criticism*.

1. It is acknowledged by early writers of the orthodox persuasion, that two kinds of heresy existed in the time of the apostles, viz. that of those who held that Christ was simply a man, and that of the Gnostics, of whom some believed that Christ was man only in appearance, and others that it was only *Jesus* and not the *Christ* (a pre-existent spirit who descended from heaven and dwelt in him) that suffered on the cross. 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 12. H. p. 9.

2. The great objection that jews have always made to christianity in its present 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 Jerusalem 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 offensive to them as that of the divinity of Christ must have been. Maxim 12, 13. L. p. 59.

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 been able to trace the *time* and the *circumstances* in which so great a discovery was made to them; and also that we should have perceived the effect which it had
upon

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 the person whom they at first took to be *a mere man* was not a man, but either God himself, or the maker of the world under God? Maxim 13. L. p. 55.

4. All the jewish christians, after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was immediately after the age of the apostles, are said to have been *Ebionites*; and these were 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 6. H. p. 7. R. p. 3: L. p. 14.

5. Had

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 14. L. p. 18.

6. Athanasius represents the apostles as obliged to use great caution 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. He adds, that the jews, being in an error on this subject, drew the gentiles into it. Chrysoptom, and the christian fathers in general, agree with Athanasius in this representation of the silence of the apostles in their first preaching, both with respect to the divinity of Christ and his miraculous conception. They represent them 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. Maxim 13. H. p. 12. L. p. 37. 53.

7. Hegesippus, the first christian historian, himself

self a jew, and therefore probably an Ebionite, 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 that all the churches 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 8. H. p. 8. R. p. 8.

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

adherence to the law of Moses. Maxim 5. H. p. 14. L. p. 25.

9. The *Apostles creed* is that which was taught to all catechumens before baptism, 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 Tertullian, 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 7. L. p. 27.

10. It is acknowledged 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. Maxim 2. H. p. 18. R. p. 25.

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 12. H. p. 17. R. p. 15. L. p. 127.

12. Irenæus,

12. Irenæus, who was after Justin, and who wrote a large treatise on the subject of heresies, says very little concerning the Ebionites, and he only calls them *heretics*. Those Ebionites he speaks of as believing that Christ was the son of Joseph, and he makes no mention of those who believed the miraculous conception. Maxim 12. H. p. 15. L. p. 32. 118.

13. Tertullian represents the majority of the common or unlearned christians, the *Idiotæ*, as unitarians; and it is among the common people that we always find the oldest opinions in any country, and in any sect, while the learned are most apt to innovate. It may therefore be presumed, that as the unitarian doctrine was held by the common people in the time of 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 4. 10. R. p. 26. L. p. 49.

14. The first who held and discussed the doctrine of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ acknowledge 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 10. H. p. 54.

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. Austin says, that he considered Christ as no other than a most excellent man, and that he had no suspicion of God being incarnate in him, or how “the catholic faith differed from the “the error of Photinus” (one of the last of the proper unitarians whose name is come down to us) ’till he read the books of Plato; and that he was afterwards confirmed in the catholic doctrine by reading the scriptures. Constantine, in his oration to the fathers of the council of Nice, speaks with commendation of Plato, as having taught the doctrine of “a second God, derived from the supreme “God, and subservient to his will.” Maxim 11. H. p. 20.

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 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 to have a *permanent personality,*

personality, distinct from that of the source from which it sprang. And it was not 'till 400 years after that time that 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 times 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 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 9. H. p. 20. &c. L. p. 73. 134.

V. *Maxims of Historical Criticism, by which the preceding Articles may be tried.*

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 disre-

putable ; but the account given by the one may be balanced by that of the other. Summary View, No. 10.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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

received their denomination. Summary View, No. 4.

7. When a particular description is given of a class of persons within any period of time, any person who can be proved to have had the proper character of one of that class may be deemed to have belonged to it, and to have enjoyed all the privileges of it, whatever they were. Summary View. No. 9.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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 V. No. 15.

12. If any particular opinion has never failed to excite great indignation in all ages and nations, in which 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 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.

13. 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. If, therefore, no alarm was given, and no defence of it

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.

14. 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.

It will be perceived that the whole of this historical evidence is in favour of the proper unitarian doctrine (or that of Christ being a mere man) having been the faith of the primitive church, in opposition to the arian no less than the trinitarian hypothesis.

As to the arian hypothesis in particular, I do not know that it can be traced any higher than Arius himself, or at least the age in which he lived. Both the gnostics and the platonizing christians were equally far from supposing that Christ was a being *created out of nothing*; the former having thought him to be an emanation from the supreme being, and the latter the logos of the Father personified. And though they sometimes applied the term *creation* to this *personification*, still they did not suppose it to have been a creation out of nothing. It was only a new modification of what existed before. For God, they said, was always *rational* (λογικός) or had

had within him that principle which afterwards assumed a personal character.

Besides, all the christian fathers, before the time of Arius, supposed that Christ had a human soul as well as a human body, which no arians ever admitted; they holding that the *logos* supplied the place of one in Christ.

Upon the whole, the arian hypothesis appears to me to be destitute of all support from christian antiquity. Whereas it was never denied that the proper unitarian doctrine existed in the time of the apostles; and I think it evident that it was the faith of the bulk of christians, and especially the unlearned christians, for two or three centuries after Christ.

To the preface to the account of the trial of Mr Elwall in p. 59, 60, Dr. Priestley in 1788 made the following addition.

SINCE the writing of the above the editor has had the pleasure of knowing many of Mr. Elwall's acquaintance, and particularly Mr. John Martin, of Skilts-Park, between Birmingham and Alcester, who was present at the trial. He is now in his eighty-fourth year, and perfectly remembers that it was in 1726, and he thinks it was the summer-assizes, because the weather was very hot. The reputation of the trial drew many persons to hear it, and himself among the rest; and being acquainted with some of the sheriff's men he got a very convenient station, at about an equal distance from the judge on his left-hand, and Mr. Elwall on his right, where he saw and heard to the greatest advantage. The trial, he says, was in the morning, and the figure of Mr. Elwall, who was a tall man, with white hair, a large beard and flowing garments, struck every body with respect. He spake about an hour with great gravity, fluency and presence of mind, but what is printed is the substance of what he said. The judge gave the most obliging attention to him, and the confusion of the clergy, when he paused and waited for their answer, as mentioned in the trial, was very visible. During the trial, Mr. Martin says he was struck with the resemblance of
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it to that of Paul. He does not recollect that the jury brought in any verdict, but the judge said he was at liberty to go where he pleased. It is possible that the trial might not come to a regular termination, on account of Mr Elwall not having had a copy of the indictment, as mentioned in this account.

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