

A RATIONAL VINDICATION
OF
THE CATHOLIC FAITH:

BEING
THE FIRST PART
OF
A VINDICATION OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY;

INSCRIBED
TO THE REV. DR. PRIESTLEY.

BY JOHN FLETCHER,
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LEFT IMPERFECT BY THE AUTHOR, AND NOW REVISED, AND FINISHED,
AT MRS. FLETCHER'S REQUEST.

BY JOSEPH BENSON.

"Unto what, then, were ye baptized?" Acts xlv, 9.

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

1. It seems necessary, here, to acquaint the reader that, as Dr. Priestley had asserted the doctrine of the trinity to be *irrational*, and that of our Lord's divinity to have no foundation either in the Old Testament or the New; Mr. Fletcher, in opposition to these assertions, had intended this work to consist of three parts; the first containing a *Rational Defence of the Catholic Faith*, respecting the trinity and the divinity of our Lord; and the two last, a *Vindication of the Prophets and Apostles*, "from the antichristian service, (as Mr. Fletcher's phrase is,) to which the doctor had pressed them." But being unexpectedly called to his reward, he left them all in a very imperfect state. Even of this *first* part (which indeed seems to have been begun after the others) he had only written the introduction, the first letter, and four chapters; and of these the third and fourth seem not to have been quite finished.

2. I was in doubt, for some time, whether it would not be best just to correct the manuscripts and give them to the public in their unfinished state; especially as I could not learn, either from any hints left in writing, or from any thing he had said to Mrs. Fletcher or any one else, what plan Mr. Fletcher intended to have pursued in the farther prosecution of the subject. But after more maturely considering the matter, it appeared that this would by no means answer the end the pious author had in view in beginning this work, as he did not seem to have proceeded far enough to have formed what could be called a proper *vindication* of the doctrine of Christ's divinity. It was judged necessary therefore to carry the argument at least a little farther, in order that the work might, in some tolerable degree, be complete. In doing this, as I could form no judgment concerning Mr. Fletcher's intentions, I have been under the necessity of pursuing that plan which seemed most likely to answer the end proposed; endeavouring, however, to preserve such a connection between the part I have added and that which Mr. Fletcher had written, that the whole might appear one continued treatise, and not a kind of patchwork.

3. As to the *style*, indeed, the reader will doubtless observe a material difference between that which is Mr. Fletcher's and what I have composed; and will regret that (with respect to this first part) he must take leave of so entertaining as well as instructive a writer as the ingenious author of the Checks, so early as at the conclusion of the fourth chapter,

and join company with one much less able to mix the *agreeable* with the *useful*, and render a needful and profitable subject also pleasing. Truth, however, is of more consequence than the garb in which it appears; and in what I have written I have attended chiefly to that; and, therefore, have endeavoured, in imitation of the very pious and truly reverend author of these unfinished papers, to keep close to the Scriptures as my guide, and that both with respect to sentiment and expression. It seems to me to be a dangerous thing, especially in a subject of such importance, concerning which we can know nothing but by Divine revelation, to depart from the Bible, or to go a hair's breadth farther than God hath therein plainly revealed, or than we can fairly infer from what he hath so revealed. I am fully persuaded that most of the errors and controversies which have darkened, perplexed, and divided the Church in all ages, respecting this matter, have arisen from a desire to be wise above what is written, not being contented with the information God hath seen fit to give us in his holy word, the sole rule of faith as well as practice.

4. It is undoubtedly a most desirable thing to know as much as we can concerning the *person* of our adorable Saviour, on whom all our hopes depend: but after all we can know, his person is and will remain a mystery. Of this the Scriptures fail not to give us warning. "Wherefore inquirest thou after my name? (says he, Judges xiii, 18,) seeing it is secret," or *wonderful* as the word $\nu\beta$ also means. "His name," says Isaiah, ch. ix, 6, "shall be called $\nu\beta$ wonderful, or *secret*." "He hath a name written which no one knoweth but himself," saith St. John. "No one knoweth the Son," says the Lord Jesus, "but the Father, even as no one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." It is true, he has revealed himself in some degree by his apostles and prophets, and reveals himself still more, or rather gives us the true understanding of what he has revealed, by the inward illumination of his Spirit. But this respects his *offices* rather than his *person*: what he is *to us* and the rest of the creatures rather than what he is *in himself*. And to know this, viz. what he is to us, as it most concerns us, so it is the principal thing meant in Scripture by the "knowledge of Christ."

5. And I may say the same concerning the knowledge of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. It does not consist in having abstracted and speculative ideas of the nature and attributes of God and the distinctions in the Divine essence; but is the *beholding*, (as St. Paul says, 2 Cor. iii, 18,) with *open*, $\alpha\nu\alpha\kappa\epsilon\alpha\lambda\upsilon\mu\mu\epsilon\nu\omega$, with *unveiled* face, (the veil of unbelief being rent from our minds,) in the *glass* of his word and works, and especially in the person of his Son, "his glory," so as to be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Surely he only knows the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus,"

who being made his child by adoption and grace, and having the "Spirit of adoption sent into his heart, crying, Abba, Father," so "beholds what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon him," as to "love God who hath first loved him." For "he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love;" whereas "he that loveth," and *only* he, is "born of God," and "knoweth God." He *only* knows the Lord Jesus who knows him as "the way, the truth, and the life;" as the *way*, through whom he "*comes to the Father*;" as the *truth*, whose testimony he fully receives, and on whose veracity he absolutely depends; and the *life*, who has quickened his soul, dead in sin, and by his grace made him a "living branch" in himself the "living vine," a living member in his mystical body, vitally united to the living head. And he only knows the Holy Spirit, who being born of him and possessed of his witness and his fruits, even "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance," is become a "temple of the Holy Ghost, a habitation of God through the Spirit."

6. On the other hand, if this be wanting, whatever speculative knowledge we may have of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and of their natures and relations to each other, we are properly unacquainted with the Christian doctrine of the trinity, and have not received that real benefit from it which the revelation of it was designed to produce. Nay, and for any spiritual or saving advantage we derive from it, it might as well not have been revealed to us. Thus Dr. Jer. Taylor, "He that goes about to speak of the mystery of the trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, talking of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, priorities in co-equalities, &c, and unity in pluralities; may amuse himself and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk something he knows not what; but the good man that feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," and in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed abroad,—this man, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the Christian doctrine of the trinity." (Jer. Taylor on John vii, 17.)

7. The apostle teaches us the true knowledge and use of this doctrine, and at the same time informs us who they are that understand it aright, when, Eph. ii, 18, he says, "Through him," viz. Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, "we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit unto the Father." But when this is not our experience; when we do not approach or have not access to the Father, through him and by the Spirit; when we are strangers to the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the soul, and of consequence are devoid both of true repentance and saving faith, which are both of the operation of God; see Col. ii, 12, 13;—when, though we have "free liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, in that new and living way

which he hath consecrated for us through the veil," that is to say, "his flesh," and have "a great High Priest over the house of God;" yet we do not use our liberty, and "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," as well as "our bodies washed with pure water;" when we do not 'believe in Christ, with our heart unto righteousness," so as to be 'justified by faith in Christ," find "peace with God," and obtain "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us,"—then is the whole doctrine of Christ concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost hid from us, or abused by us.

8. There is indeed *one* mystical *body* of Christ, but we do not belong to it, are not members of it; *one Spirit*, but we have not received him, he does not dwell in us, does not quicken and renew our souls; there is *one Lord*, but we are not subject to him, he does not reign in and over us, and therefore he is not *our* Lord; *one faith* in that *one Lord*, even a "faith working by love, purifying the heart, and overcoming the world," but we have it not; *one baptism*, but we are not baptized with it, or if we have had the sign, have not had the "thing signified thereby," even a "death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness;" there is *one God and Father of all*, who in and through that *one Lord*, and by that *one Spirit*, "is above all, and through all, and in all" real believers; but he is not *our* Father, nor are *we* his children, nor do we worship him "in spirit and in truth."

9. This I apprehend is that ignorance or denial of the blessed trinity, which is most to be dreaded, because most destructive. It leaves the soul in its fallen and disordered state, immersed in sin, and exposed to wrath; an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenant of promise, having no [lively, well grounded] hope, without Christ and without God in the world:" it leaves it devoid of the true "grace of Christ," the real "love of God," and ennobling and comforting "communion of the Holy Ghost." Such, not having received the "Spirit of Christ, are none of his;" and not belonging to Christ, not "having the Son, they have not the Father," and not having the Father, have neither "the true God nor eternal life." "He that hath the Son," indeed, "hath life," but he that hath not the Spirit, as we have just seen, hath not the Son, and therefore "hath not life," but abideth in death spiritual, and is in the high road to death eternal. Nor will his pretended regard to the Father save him: for "he that honoureth not the Son," especially in his *mediatorial* character, and in the *offices* he sustains for a lost world; he that believeth not on him with a living faith, as "made of God unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, honoureth not the Father," who hath appointed him to execute those offices and bear those characters for our salvation.

10. I said with a *living faith*, for it is not a cold, languid, lifeless

assent to the truths of the Gospel that will save us; nor such a dependence on Christ and on the promises of God through him, as being neither preceded by repentance nor accompanied with love, leaves the soul as a withered branch upon a tree; or a dead member in a body. But the faith that is effectual to salvation is a lively, vigorous, active, and powerful principle, which, coming to Jesus, and confiding in him, unites the soul to him, so that it derives out "of his fulness grace upon grace," and becomes fruitful in every holy temper, word, and work.

11. By this faith we receive Christ in all his offices and characters. Viewing him as a "Teacher come from God," the "prophet like unto Moses," whom on pain of eternal destruction we are commanded to hear, whose every word is veracity and truth, whose doctrine is as infallible as it is extraordinary; with the simplicity and teachableness of little children, we sit at his feet, and with humble reverence and dutiful submission, we hear and receive the gracious words that proceed out of his mouth, desiring above all things to be doers of the word, as well as hearers. Considering him as the "High Priest of our profession, a great High Priest passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, who, by one offering of himself, once made, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and who, when he had by himself purged our sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, expecting till his enemies be made his footstool:" considering him (I say) in his priestly office, "delivered for our offences, raised for our justification," and appearing in the presence of God, as our Advocate and Intercessor, we come with boldness to a throne of grace, and thus "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." By the help of this grace, he who is thus made of God unto us "wisdom and righteousness," is also made of God unto us "sanctification and redemption:" he who is heard with submissive reverence as a "Prophet," and relied on with loving confidence as a "Priest," is also received with obedient loyalty as a "King." His kingdom of "righteousness, peace, and joy," is set up in our hearts, and his "holy, just, and good laws," are made the rule of our lives from day to day. He reigns *in* and *over* us; his *love* is the *principle*, his *will* the *rule*, and his *glory* the *end* of our words and actions; and we "live no longer to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again."

12. Thus, being "in Christ, we are new creatures, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given [to his apostles and servants] the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: for he hath made him to be sin [viz. a sin offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," might be justified, and made righteous through

him. Though, therefore, in time past, we might be "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another; yet the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appearing, not by works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy, he saved us—by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace we might be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life." Thus the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are acknowledged in their several offices and characters, and each performs his proper work in saving our lost souls. We worship "one God" in and through "one Mediator," by the inspiration and aid "of one Spirit," without perplexing ourselves with curious inquiries after, and vain reasonings about, what we can no more know in this world, than a child in its infancy can understand how the several offices, powers, and prerogatives of the king, lords, and commons, constitute one supreme and legislative authority in Great Britain. And with the simplicity of a child, and the loyalty of a good subject of the King of heaven, who commands our hearts, and governs our lives in and through his Son, and by his Spirit, we confess with our lips, what we believe with our hearts, that though in the Church and in the world there are diversities of gifts, it is the same Spirit from whom they all proceed; and though there are differences of administrations or offices to be sustained by the servants of Christ, it is the same Lord that appoints them all; and though there are diversities of operations or effects produced, it is the "same God who worketh all in all through that Lord, and by that Spirit."

13. It is true, some acquaintance with the *persons*, as well as *offices* of the *sacred Three*, into whose name we have been baptized, is very desirable, and indeed, absolutely needful, to lay a foundation for that Christian experience and practice, those devout and benevolent affections, and holy and righteous actions, so necessary in order to our pleasing God here, or enjoying him hereafter. And, in particular, it seems impossible we should apply to Christ, even in his *mediatorial* character, in which character he is most frequently held forth to us in Scripture, without considering him as "God manifest in the flesh," a person in whom dwells "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." For what benefit can we derive from a mediator, at least, an *invisible* mediator, a mediator in *heaven*, who is a *mere man*, or a *mere creature*, circumscribed in his being, and confined in his presence and operations? Who can have no access to us, nor we to him; can neither see, nor hear, nor help us; and to whom, as being unseen, and at a distance, we can neither signify our wants, nor with any confidence look up for a supply of them? A mediator, who cannot be present with us at all times, and in all places, in private and in public, at home and abroad, by sea and by land, night

and day, in England and in China, throughout the habitable globe? Surely *omnipresence* and *omniscience*, at least, yea, and *omnipotence* too, are necessary to the character of a complete mediator—a mediator between God and all mankind. And such is the mediator in whom we trust: “Where two or three (says he) are met in my name, I am there in the midst of them. Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world: behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me: all the Churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the heart.”

14. Not that his *human nature* (for he is “*perfect man*, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting”) can be thus present in all places, and acquainted with all things. This is not supposed, I believe, by any. No: these manifestly Divine perfections are ascribed to the “eternal Word” of the Father, the *indwelling Deity*, to which his humanity is joined by a close and indissoluble union, and by which alone he is every where present, acquainted with every thing, has all power in heaven and earth, and will judge men and angels at the last day.

15. Accordingly, those that deny this perfect, everlasting union of Deity with manhood, do, in general, also deny his mediation, and consider him merely in the character of a “Teacher sent from God,” who, by his doctrine and example, directs us in the will of God, and in the way to his kingdom, but who neither made any atonement for our sins, nor intercedes for our souls. Nay, and if they follow Dr. Priestley, they will not put any great confidence in him, even in the character of a *Prophet*, persuaded that he was liable to err, even in *that* respect. Thus every ground of hope being withdrawn, even the hope of a sure guide to heaven, and all intercourse cut off between God and man, they naturally disbelieve all visitations of supernatural grace, all influences of the Spirit of God upon the soul, and therefore deny the Father, Son, and Spirit, in every sense in which they could be profited by them, having, in fact, neither God, nor Saviour, nor Comforter.

16. It being, therefore, manifestly necessary that we should believe Christ to be “Immanuel, God with us,” God “manifest in the flesh,” *omnipresent*, and *omniscient*, I have the more willingly suffered myself to be prevailed upon to revise the following sheets, and make such additions to them as may afford sufficient proof of that important point of Christian doctrine. I wish the difficult task had been committed to an abler hand. But Mrs. Fletcher and her friends having assigned it to me, I have endeavoured, to the utmost of my power, that the work might not be entirely unworthy of the public eye. As I have made it my care fairly to represent Mr. Fletcher’s sentiments on the weighty subject under consideration, so I have in general retained his language; rather choosing to let some expressions pass, which probably, had he lived to put the

finishing hand to this work, he would have corrected himself, than to alter what he might design to stand. Mr. Fletcher's friends, I knew, would prefer what was his to any thing I could substitute in the place of it: and, as I should have thought it a *crime* to misrepresent his sentiments, so I did not think I could mend his *style*, which, in general, is most pure and excellent. I have not, indeed, thought myself under any obligation to publish *all* the papers he hath left on this part of the subject, some of them being loose and unconnected paragraphs, and not capable of being introduced here: but what I have been able to bring into any proper connection with the rest, and what seemed calculated to prove or illustrate the doctrine under consideration, I have published; and the public may be sure they are not mistaken in receiving as Mr. Fletcher's what is presented to them as his.

J. BENSON.

HULL, *November 15, 1788.*

INTRODUCTION.

1. THE catholic Church is openly attacked, in our day, by enemies so much the more dangerous as they are friends to *some* of her doctrines, and, as to many things, highly commendable in their *moral* conduct, putting to the blush the loose livers who acknowledge a *trinity*. Thus they persuade the world, that their incessant attacks upon the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity are directed by *virtue* itself.

2. Those who cordially believe in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, are publicly treated as gross idolaters, because "at the name of Jesus they bow the knee, and call for salvation upon the only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Phil. ii, 10, and Acts iv, 12. We are even invited to come out of the Church of England, as if she were mystic Babylon, because she directs us to call upon the *Son*, as we do upon the *Father*; an act of worship which the enemies of our Lord's divinity consider as "idolizing" Christ, if we may judge of them by their learned champion, who says, in his *Appeal to the Professors of Christianity*, "If the Trinitarians think a point of conscience not to go to mass in Popish Churches, because in their opinion it is *idolizing* a piece of bread, you ought to make a point of conscience not to worship with them, because, in your opinion, it is *idolizing a man*, who is just as improper an object of worship, as a *piece of bread*." Thus "the Lord of glory" is put on a level with a piece of bread; and doing the chief work of a Christian, "calling upon the Lord Jesus" for salvation, is compared to the worshipping of an idol, which hath not so much life and sense as a dog.

3. So incessant have these onsets been of late, that we might fear for the catholic Church, if the Lord had not promised that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her," and that "all things shall work together for good to them that love him." But, comforted and encouraged by these promises, we may be confident, that even the repeated attacks of Dr. Priestley against our Lord's divinity will show the strength of "the Rock of ages," as billows, which incessantly beat upon a rock that breaks them all, show their own weakness, and the solidity of the rock against which they foam and dash themselves.

4. In the meantime, new modes of attack will render new methods of defence necessary; for God forbid that Christ's worshippers should be less ready to confess him as their Lord and their God, than the despisers of his divinity are to degrade him into a mere man! The learned

archdeacon of St. Alban's, the Monthly Reviewers, the Rev. Messrs. Ryland and Shepard, &c, have already stood forth in defence of the catholic faith: and, in the author's judgment, they have done it so effectually, that when he saw their publications, he laid these papers aside as needless: and if he now resumes them at the desire of some friends, it is merely upon considering that Dr. Horsley and his judicious allies having chiefly written for the learned, some *farther* remarks, suited to persons of all ranks and capacities, might have their use also.

5. The Lord needs no man's pen to support his divinity, which supports the pillars of earth and heaven: nevertheless, as he once used the voice of an ass to check a prophet's madness, and that of a cock to stop an apostle's imprecations, he may, (if he condescend to bless these sheets,) soften, by them, the prejudices of a philosopher. But the principal end, which the author proposes, by sending them to the press, is to confirm his own faith, and that of the unprejudiced reader, by scattering the mists of some growing errors, and by collecting the beams of Christ's divine glory, which lie diffused in the sacred pages.

6. It is humbly hoped that the friends of the pure Gospel will not (under pretence that they hate controversy) be afraid to increase their light, and to warm their devotion, at a fire made up of coals taken from the altar of sacred truth. No man's time was ever lost, no believer's love was ever injured, by reading St. John's Gospel or his epistles, in which our Lord himself, and his loving disciple, carry on against the scribes and the Pharisees, against the Jews and the Gnostics, the very same controversy which we now maintain against the Unitarians and the philosophers of the present age.

7. In the meantime, let no one be surprised that men, noted for their learning and virtue, should be permitted to enforce their errors so publicly, and with such apparent sincerity. Providence has its wise ends. There must be heresies among us, that they who are approved may be made manifest. Light and darkness, truth and error, the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge, must be set before us, that we may stretch out our hand, according to our choice, and be judged according to the works of our faith, or those of our unbelief. Add to this, that, by God's overruling providence, error often whets the edge of truth, manifests its solidity, and makes its sparkling glories break forth with greater advantage: thus, in a picture, the shades heighten the surprising effect of the lights; and truth never appears so transcendently bright, as when the blackness of error, like a foil, sets it off in our sight. What is chaff to the wheat, before the winnowing fan? And what are thorns to the fire?

8. Truth is a devouring flame, and will one day consume all the bulwarks of wood, hay, and stubble, which are raised to stop its progress. Dr. Priestley pictures out this power of truth, in the fine frontispiece of his *Disquisitions*. There he sets before us wooden scaffolds all on fire,

while a temple of marble, adorned with pillars of silver, gold, and precious stones, stands the conflagration. "The application of this scene (says he) is sufficiently obvious:" for he fondly supposes that his philosophical and historical Disquisitions are the fire of truth, burning up the doctrine of the soul's immortality, of the divinity of Christ, and of the trinity; which doctrines he compares to wood, hay, and stubble. Far from thinking, as he does, about his frontispiece, to us "it is sufficiently obvious," that the catholic faith is the fire, which, sooner or later, will burn up Materialism, Socinianism, and antichristian philosophy, like thorns, briers, and chaff.

9. Judicious reader, come and see who mistakes in a point of such vast importance. Providence has given you two lights, *reason* and *revelation*: take the hint of the doctor's frontispiece; bring them near, and use them instead of touch-stones. Touch the adamantine pillars of truth, and they shall shine. Touch the mountains of error, which bear the Socinian temple, and they shall smoke. Touch the stately doom, and it shall blaze. Nor let a mistaken respect for the learned architect make you spare the wall, if it be daubed with untempered mortar. When the whole shall come down, the builder shall gain more than tongue can tell: for if he lose a little of his reputation, he will get a soul and a Saviour, yea, an immortal soul, and a Divine Saviour, to whom, with the rapturous joy of St. Matthew, St. Thomas, and St. Stephen, he will say, "Emmanuel, God with us, My Lord, and my God!" I shall not die like a brute; I have a soul! Lord, save it to the uttermost, save it for ever! "Into thy hands I commit it, for thou hast redeemed it, O Lord, thou God of truth." May it be the sincere wish of the reader, as it is of the author, that all who name the name of Christ, may soon agree in such an evangelical confession; and that the names of *Unitarian*, and *Trinitarian*, may for ever be lost in the sweeter names of *Christian* and *brother*!

AN EXPOSTULATORY LETTER

TO

THE REV. DR. PRIESTLEY,

OCCASIONED BY HIS HISTORY OF THE CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

REV. SIR,—While you invite archdeacons and bishops to defend their Church, and the divinity of their Saviour, may the voice of a poor country vicar be heard amidst the groans of the press, which repeats your challenges? Will not your sense of honour feel too great a disappointment in seeing so mean a person step forth to present you with an expostulatory letter, and to break a spear with you on the very ground where you think yourself invincible—philosophy, reason, and common sense?

Conscious of the variety of your learning, and the greatness of your reputation, I apologize for my boldness, by observing, that the Church is my mother: that the feeblest child has a right to cry out when his mother is stabbed to the heart; and that when the Divine crown of our Lord is publicly struck at, the least of believers may show his astonishment at the antichristian deed. Nay, he is bound to do it by the two tables of the law: for the first bids him manifest his zeal for the Lord God his Saviour, who, by the Gospel, brought him out of spiritual Egypt, out of the house of heathenish and Popish bondage; and the second table enjoins him to expostulate with his brethren when they sin through inattention, perverseness, or ignorance.

FIRST EXPOSTULATION.

When the Socinians of the last century said that it was impossible to believe that God and man were united in the person of our Lord, the Catholics replied, It was as easy to believe that God and man make one Christ, as to believe that the immortal soul and the mortal body are one man. And Dr. Sherlock added, that *the best way* for the Socinians to set aside this argument against the mystery of our Lord's incarnation, was to deny the union of soul and body, because they could not understand it; and openly to maintain that man is a body without a soul, a compound of mere matter.

When that judicious divine dropped this hint, he little thought that some philosophers of our day would be so desperately bent upon divesting Christ of his Divine glory, that if even their own souls, and the souls of all mankind, stood in the way, they would freely give them up—they would run into Fatalism and Materialism—they would absolutely renounce the immortality of the soul, and even be content to die like dogs, without leaving any surviving part of themselves, so they might win the day against the catholic Church, and the divinity of our Lord.

I am sorry to observe, Rev. sir, that you have the dangerous honour to be at the head of these bold philosophers. Dr. Berkley was so singular as to deny the existence of matter; and so bold as to obtrude upon us a system which annihilates the bodies of all mankind: according to his doctrine, there is nothing but spirit in the world, and matter exists only in our ideas. As a rival of his singularity, you run into the opposite extreme; you annihilate our souls; you turn us into mere machines: we are nothing but matter; and if you allow us any spirit, it is only such as can be distilled like spirits of wine. Thus (if we believe you both) being ground, not only to atoms, but to absolute nonentity, between the two mill stones of our preposterous and contrary mistakes, we have neither form nor substance, neither body nor soul!

Glad am I, sir, that when you made so free with the souls of men, you did not pass your philosophical sponge over the existence of "the Father of spirits," the great Soul, which gives life and motion to the universe. But, though you spare the Father's dignity, you attack the Son's divinity: you deny the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, and, by hasty strides, you carry us back to (what appears to me) a dwarf, mongrel Christianity, made up of Materialism, Judaism, and the baptism of John.

To gain this inglorious end, in your *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, you collect the capital errors invented by fallen Christians in the corrupt ages of Christianity; then, taking some of the most precious Gospel truths, you blend them with those errors; and, rendering them all equally odious, you turn them promiscuously out of the Church, as "the corruptions of Christianity." Thus you cleanse the temple of truth, as our Lord would have cleansed that of Jerusalem, if he had thrown down the tables which bore the shew bread as well as the tables of the money changers; and if he had turned out the cherubim of glory as he did the beasts which defiled that holy place: in short, you treat our Lord's divinity as the Jews treated his humanity, when they numbered him with felons, that the hurrying mob might cry with a show of piety, "Away with him! Crucify him," with the thieves, his accursed companions!

SECOND EXPOSTULATION.

If this method should fail, you seem determined to carry your point by pressing the primitive Church into the service of your cause. In the fourth century the Christian world was astonished to see itself Arian: but, if we believe you, there was no reason for this astonishment, for in the second century it was Socinian already.

Happily for your attentive readers, your zeal has outrun your prudence; for in your eagerness to heap up the testimonies of the fathers, which you thought would prove that the primitive Church was a stranger to the catholic doctrine of the trinity, you have produced some which (if I mistake not) are alone sufficient to overthrow all your historical proofs.

To instance only in one particular. In your *History* (page 60) you quote Tertullian, a learned and pious father of the second century. And

the two passages you produce from him are some of the strongest that could be brought to prove, that in his time none but stubborn Jews, and stupid or perverse hearers of the Gospel, objected to the doctrine of the trinity. Permit me to lay those passages at full length before the English reader, who is desired to remember that they are a part of Tertullian's defence of the sacred trinity against Praxeas, a man who, by the antichristian manner in which he stood up for the Divine unity, may be called the Priestley of that age.

"It is the property of the faith of a *Jew* (says the learned father) so to admit the Divine *unity*, as not to include therein *the Son*, and after him *the Spirit*. For what difference is there between the *Jews* and us but this? What need of the Gospel, if it do not clearly hold out to us *the Father, the Son, and the Spirit*, as constituting the Divine *unity*? God [by changing circumcision for baptism] has so ordered this new sacrament, that his *unity* should now be believed in a new [that is, in a far more explicit] manner, as inclusive of *the Son*, and of *the Spirit*; and that God, whose *unity* was not clearly apprehended, as comprehensive of *the Son*, and of *the Spirit*, when he was preached in time past [to the Jews] might now be openly known according to his *proper names* and *persons*."* [Namely, according to the names and persons of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.]

Tertullian pursues: "When I say that the Father is one, the Son another, and the Spirit another, a *sottish*, or a *perverse* man, takes that expression in a wrong sense, and supposing that it implies a diversity [of gods,] from this mistaken diversity, he pretends that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are separate."†

Should you, sir find fault with my translation of these two passages, you will not dispute the exactness of your own translation of a *third* passage from Tertullian's works, which is a glorious testimony, that (according to the catholic faith, the *Regula Fidei*,) the Son not only pre-existed, contrary to your favourite error, but was with the Father, the Maker of the world. You give us this wholesome antidote in your *Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Badoock's Review* of your Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 18.

* The laconic style of Tertullian has obliged me to add little parentheses, in italics, to render his obvious meaning plain to an English reader. However, that Dr. P. may not complain, I shall transcribe, from his own book, the original quotation:—*Judaica fidei ista res sic unum Deum credere, ut Filium adnumerare ei nolis, et post filium Spiritum. Quid opus Evangelii sic non exinde Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus, unum Deum videntur? Si Deus voluit novare sacramentum, ut nove rursus crederetur per Filium et Spiritum, et coram jam Deus in suis propriis Nominibus et Personis cognosceretur, qui et retro per Filium et Spiritum predicatus non intelligebatur.* Ad Praxeam, sec. 30, p. 518.

† *Ecce enim dico alium esse Patrem, et alium Filium, et alium Spiritum. Male accipit Idiotas quisquis aut Perversus hoc dictum, quasi diversitatem sonet, et ex diversitate separationem prætendit Patris, Filii, et Spiritus.* Ad Praxeam, sec. 8, p. 504. I do not translate the word *idiotes*, "unlearned," (as Dr. P. does,) but "idiot," or "stupid." (1.) Because this sense of it suits best the tenor of the whole book, and of this particular sentence: and, (2.) Because it is the primary meaning which Ainsworth ascribes to *idiota*, and which he proves to be classical, by observing, that Cicero opposes the word *idiota* to an *intelligent* and *sensible* person. Dr. Horsley has, by the same reasons, rescued another capital passage of Tertullian, which Dr. P. has pressed into his service by the mistake I guard against.

Regula Fidei (the Rule of Faith; you say after Tertullian in the Treatise *De Præscriptione*) "by which we are taught to believe, that there is but one God, and this no other than the Maker of the world, who produced every thing out of nothing, by his own *Word* then first sent down; that the *Word* was called his *Son*; that he appeared variously in the name [that is, in the character] of God to the patriarchs; that he was afterward conveyed by the Spirit and power of God the Father, into the Virgin Mary; that he was made flesh in her womb, and from her appeared in the person of Jesus Christ," &c. We, worshippers of God the Son manifest in the flesh, are much obliged to you, sir, for thus informing your readers, that the *rule of faith taught* the primitive Christians, *first, that the Word and Son of God was sent out from the Father to produce the world out of nothing: secondly, that this very Word or Son appeared variously to the patriarchs in the character of God: and thirdly, that he afterward was made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and appeared in the person of Jesus Christ.* This is all we contend for: you prove that it was the catholic faith, and yet you are so forgetful of your own quotations as to pretend to prove from the fathers, that our Lord was a mere man.

From these three quotations it appears that Dr. P., instead of demonstrating that the primitive Church was, in general, of his way of thinking, has only proved that the primitive rule of faith was against him, and that in Tertullian's days, about two hundred years after Christ, some *mistaken* persons took exception against the doctrine of the trinity: but who were these persons, beside the unbelieving Jews and the heretic Praxeas? Truly the *stupid* or *perverse* people, who chanced to hear the Gospel; and Dr. P. is welcome to all the weight they can add to his cause, and to all the honour they can confer upon his party.

What effect the learned doctor's book will have upon the unwary, and upon those who take his partial quotations upon trust, I do not know. But I can say with truth that the sixtieth page of his long *History* has confirmed *me* in the faith which I vowed to Christ at my baptism, and seems to me sufficient to prevent the mischief of the whole. When God suffers us to be tempted to dangerous errors, he always *opens*, with the temptation, a door that we may escape. Through his overruling providence the learned doctor himself has here opened us the door, by informing us that it was *NOT* judicious and good Christians, but *SOTTISH* and *PERVERSE* people, who formerly mistook and cavilled at the catholic doctrine of the trinity. We thank the doctor for the door; and making our easy escape at it, we bless the Keeper of Israel, who takes the wise in their own net; and adapting the second Psalm to the builders, who, in our day, reject the Head Stone of the corner, we sing, The wise ones of the earth "stand up, and take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed. But he that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." Be wise now, therefore, ye philosophers: be learned, ye that are doctors in Israel. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry," and so ye perish in the *sottishness* or *perverseness* of your unbelief.

THIRD EXPOSTULATION.

Bear, dear sir, with the plainness of this application. Did you err only in the less important truths of the Gospel, we would pass over in silence your *theological* mistakes, as resulting almost necessarily from your numerous avocations, and from the intensesness of your philosophical studies. But is this the case? Do you not bend yourself against the *fundamentals* of Christianity, against those very doctrines which (excepting Mohammed's mission) most peculiarly distinguish the Bible from the Koran? Mohammed forbids us to pay Divine honours to any but the Father; whereas our Lord teaches us to honour the Son as we honour the Father, and to honour the Holy Ghost as we do the Son; enjoining us to be equally "baptized in the name [equally consecrated to the service] of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" commanding us to receive, with the same reverential awe, the testimony of the "Three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit;" and directing us to pray and wait equally for "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the love of God the Father, and for the fellowship of the Holy Ghost." But, endeavouring to break the sacred bonds of this adorable trinity, you *indirectly* exhort us to make void the covenant of our baptism; urging us to renounce the adoration of the Son, together with all dependence on his merits, and to disclaim all expectation of the influences of the *Holy Spirit*. And if he that "honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father;" and if we have liberty of access to the Father only "through the Son and by the Spirit," Eph. ii, 18, then, it appears, if we follow you, we shall not even worship the Father, but shall in truth be *αθεοι εν κοσμου*, *Atheists in the world*, rejecting altogether the one true God, who, from the first step of our Christian race, manifests a trinity to us, as the grand object of our religious confidence.

Nor do we advance a groundless charge, when we complain, that you weaken or destroy the foundations of Christianity: for when you assert that the Son is a mere man, you indirectly tell us, that he is as improperly joined with the Father to be the great object of our faith in baptism, as a taper would improperly be joined with the sun to enlighten the universe. And when you represent the Holy Ghost as a senseless power, and a power whereby we must not now hope to be influenced, you might as well tell us, that he is as unfit to have a place among the "Three who bear record in heaven," as your power of motion, or the energy of your mind, would be absurdly mentioned as parties in a contract, where your name and person are particularly specified. Thus, you take from us the two Comforters, with whom we are particularly blessed under the Gospel. If we believe you, the one is a mere man, who cannot hear us; and the other is a mere property, or an unconscious energy, by which we shall be no way benefited, and as insensible to our faith as to our unbelief. And when our Lord bids all nations to be "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (if the word *Son* do not mean *the proper Son of God*; if it mean only the son of the carpenter Joseph, and if the Holy Ghost be only the Father's energy, and an energy whereby we can neither be quickened nor comforted,) this Gospel charter is far more extraordinary, than would be the royal patents, by which gentlemen are

created lords, if they all began thus, "Be it enacted in the name, or by the supreme authority, of King George the Third, of Joseph the carpenter's son, and of the royal power or energy, that A. B. Esq., be numbered among peers of the realm." Such is the wisdom displayed by the philosophers, who call the divinity of the Son the leading corruption of Christianity, and who pretend to reform all the Reformed Churches!

FOURTH EXPOSTULATION.

Permit me, sir, to say one word more upon your last grand publication. Our Reformers had sufficiently proved, that the worshipping the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels, is an antichristian practice; and we English Protestants, for whom you chiefly write, had no need to be reclaimed from that idolatry. If, then, you spend so much time and paper in exposing the Christian idolatry, it is evident, that your chief design is to attack the Divine honours which we pay to the Lord Jesus; and that your account of the Popish errors, &c, comes in only, by the by, to mask the battery, from which you think you can attack our faith more decently, and with greater advantage. Hence, through nine hundred pages, you chiefly labour to prove, that our Saviour is a *mere creature*, and that the blood of the Son of God hath no more atoning virtue than the blood of the sons of Zebedee.

Had you been as open as you are prudent, you would at once have called your *History of Corruptions*, "an attempt to prove that all Christians are cursed idolaters, if they trust in Christ for salvation;" for it is written, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man" for that salvation which God alone can bestow.

Your friend, Mr. Lindsey, to whom you dedicate your work, may praise you for it; but will you, sir, have any thanks from HIM, who said on the banks of Jordan, and upon the holy mount, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him" with a believing confidence? Will you have any thanks from HIM, who said, "Ye believe in God [the Father,] believe also in me?" Will you be praised by St. Paul, who gloried in his being of the number of those "who first trusted in Christ?" Will you even be exculpated by one of those martyrs, confessors, or believers, who, for 1700 years, have said to Christ, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!"

But how do you prove, sir, that this cloud of godly witnesses is a company of idolaters, who trusted in a mere arm of flesh, when they believed in Christ? Truly, by three assertions, as paradoxical as the arguments by which you would prove that we have no souls, or only such as turn to a mephitic vapour when we die. The first of those assertions is, that the doctrine of the trinity is irrational; the second is, that the doctrine of our Lord's divinity has no proper foundation in the Old Testament; the prophets speaking of the Messiah only as of a man like themselves; and the third is, that Christ's Deity is likewise unsupported by the New Testament—the apostles never giving our Lord any higher title than that of a man approved of God.

In opposition to the first of these assertions, I here present you, sir, with a rational, as well as Scriptural, vindication of the doctrine of our

Lord's divinity; and in opposition to the two last, (as my health shall permit,) I design to prepare a work which shall, I trust, fully rescue the prophets and apostles from the antichristian service to which you continue to press them.

In reply to the *History*, where you try to prove from the fathers that "the doctrines of the divinity of Christ, and of his being any more than a man, are an innovation, and the dreadful corruption of Christianity, which has been the fruitful source of many others,"* I designed to add a fourth part; but considering that you have already refuted your own error, (witness your quotations from Tertullian, p. 60,) I shall spare myself the trouble of doing it otherwise than indirectly.

Though I am conscious that all the fathers are, upon the whole, against you, with regard to the charge of *innovation*, I choose to meet you chiefly upon *Scripture* ground, (1.) Because, having chosen it yourself, you nobly defend it against Deists and Atheists. (2.) Because, being firm and holy ground, it can be fully trusted. (3.) Because it is a ground open to all our readers: the Bible is in every house, but the fathers are in few libraries. (4.) Because this field hath proper limits, and a strong inclosure. The works of the sacred writers are short and concise, but those of the fathers are so voluminous and diffuse, that an unfair disputant may turn, wind, and hide himself in them, as a fox in a great forest full of dens and lurking holes. (5.) Because the fathers themselves, by their constant appeals to Scripture, invite us to make choice of that solid and Divine ground. And, lastly, because Dr. Horsley, and the Monthly Reviewers, who have entered the lists against you, have already sufficiently exposed your mistake, with respect to the fathers.

If this little work, which I inscribe to you, sir, because you have been the occasion of it, do not soften your prejudices against what appears to me the capital doctrine of Christianity, I hope it will confirm some wavering professors of the Christian faith, and settle the thoughts of candid inquirers after truth. It will at least give me an opportunity of thanking you for the service you have done to religion, by taking the part of revelation against some classes of unbelievers; and of testifying my esteem for you as a humane moralist, and a wise, indefatigable inquirer into the secrets of nature. And although I greatly differ from you with regard to the fundamental principles of Christianity, yet as I hope that, like Saul of Tarsus, you sin against the Son and Holy Ghost out of a well-meant, but dreadfully mistaken zeal for the Majesty of the Father, I am glad of an opportunity to assure you publicly, that, till we meet in the fulness and unity of the faith taught by our Lord; in reference to that part of it which you have defended against some bare-faced infidels, I have the honour to be, with great truth, reverend sir, your affectionate brother, and obedient servant,

JOHN FLETCHER.

* Corruption, p. 13, and Disquisitions, p. 51.

A RATIONAL
VINDICATION OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

A general view of the Catholic faith concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and of the great question in debate, between the Catholics and the Deists of every description.

THAT there is a supreme, infinite, and eternal Mind, by which the world was made, is evident from the works of creation and providence. Those works every where confirm David's observation, "The heavens declare the glory [the glorious existence] of God." The firmament magnificently displays his wisdom, power, and love. Every leaf of the trees, which cover a thousand hills; every spire of the grass, which clothes a thousand vales, echoes back the same ravishing truth, "There is a God!" But the peculiar mode of his existence is far above our reach. Of this we only know what he plainly reveals to us, and what we may infer from what he hath plainly revealed. For sooner shall the vilest insect find out the nature of man, than the brightest man shall, of himself, discover the nature of God.

But if this adorable Being hath been pleased to declare something concerning himself, it is arrogance in the most exalted creatures to quarrel with such a declaration, under a pretence that, in their conception, he must have a different mode of existence. For common sense tells us, that God hath a clearer knowledge of himself, than the deepest philosophers, and the highest angels, can possibly have.

It is agreed on all hands that the Supreme Being, compared with all other beings, is *one*. One Creator over numberless creatures: one infinite Being over myriads of finite beings: one eternal Intelligence over millions of temporary intelligences. The distance between the things made, and him that made them, being boundless, the living God must stand for ever, far higher above all that lives, than the sun stands superior to all the beams it emits, and to all the tapers lighted at its fire. In *this* sense, true Christians are all *Unitarians*. God having plainly revealed his *unity* by the prophets, by the apostles, and by our Lord himself, there is no doubt about this point. And may the hand which writes these sheets, wither a thousand times over, rather than it should designedly write one word against this glorious and ever adorable *unity*.

But although the Supreme Being is *one*, when he is compared to all created beings, shall we quarrel with him, when he informs us, that, notwithstanding he hath no second in the universe of creatures, yet, *in himself*, he exists after a wonderful manner, insomuch that his *one* eternal and perfect essence subsists, without division or separation, under three

admirable distinctions, which are called sometimes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and sometimes the Father, the Word, and the Spirit? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" or, Why dost thou exist after such a manner?

According to the catholic faith, three sorts of people in our day capitally err in this matter.

1. **TRI-THEISTS**, or the *worshippers of three gods*, who so unscripturally distinguish the Divine persons, as to divide and separate them into three Deities; and who, by these means, run into *Polytheism*, or the belief of many gods.

2. **DI-THEISTS**, or the *worshippers of two gods*. They are generally called *Arians* from *Arius*, their chief leader, who maintained, that there is one *eternal* God; namely, *the Father*, and one who is *not* eternal; namely, *the Son*, who was *made* some time or other before the foundation of the world. Thus they worshipped two gods, a great god and a little god; the former uncreate, the latter created; the former, God by nature; and the latter, only by courtesy.

3. **DEISTS**, who so unscripturally maintain the *unity* of the Divine essence, as to admit but one Divine subsistence; namely, that of the *Father*; thus excluding both the Word and the Holy Ghost from their place in the Divine nature.

There are three sorts of these Deists, beside the Mohammedans. (1.) Those who reject and scoff at all the Bible, as Voltaire, Hume, and the like infidels. (2.) Those who reject the New Testament, and explain away those parts of the Old which do not suit their notions of the Messiah, as the *modern Jews*: and (3.) Those who profess to receive the New Testament, but reject or explain away what they dislike of it. Of this sort are the *Socinians*, so called from Socinus, an Italian, who, at the time of the Reformation, revived the ancient heresy of some Judaizing Christians, concerning the mere humanity of our Lord. And to this class belongs the learned Dr. Priestley, who says, in his letters to Dr. Horsley, "I have frequently avowed myself not to be a believer in the inspiration of the evangelists and apostles, as writers: I therefore hold the subject of the miraculous conception to be one, with respect to which any person is fully at liberty to think as the evidence shall appear to him." And, consistently with this profession, he does not scruple to say in his *History of Corruptions*, vol. ii, p. 370, "The Apostle Paul often reasons inconclusively, and therefore wrote as any other person, of his turn of mind and thinking, and in his situation, would have written, without any particular inspiration."

Detesting the Di-theism of the Arians, and equally distant from the error of Deists, and that of Tri-theists, the faithful maintainers of the catholic faith worship the one Supreme Being, according to the three-fold display which he hath made of himself. Did we worship three gods, as some Deists suppose we do, we should worship three separate beings. But, abhorring Polytheism, we say with the Scripture, Although "there are three that bear record in heaven," yet οὐτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰδί, *Hi tres Unum sunt*, "These three [Divine subsistences] are one" substance. These three Divine persons are one Jehovah. And we believe and affirm it, for the solid reasons which shall soon be produced.

Never did we say or think, either that three persons are one person,

or three gods are one God. These contradictions never disgraced our creeds. We only maintain, that the one Divine essence manifests itself to us in three Divine subsistences most intimately joined and absolutely inseparable. With the Scripture, we assert, that, as these subsistences bore each a particular part in our creation, so they are particularly engaged in the securing of our eternal happiness; the Father chiefly *planning*, the Son chiefly *executing*, and the Holy Ghost chiefly *perfecting*, the great work of our new creation.

All the difficulty, with regard to this mystery, consists, then, in believing a plain matter of fact; namely, that we are commanded to "be baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," or, to take for our one God, the one Supreme Being, manifesting himself to us as our Friend and Father, in and through the Son, and by the Spirit; Jehovah, who is perfectly acquainted with his own nature, our wants, and our dispositions, having seen, that, to win our love, and to inflame our zeal for his service, it was proper to inform us, that, in his adorable essence, there is a trinity of subsistences; each of whom is specially concerned in the stupendous work of our salvation, and each of whom now bears the most endearing relation to mankind in general, and to the Church in particular.

These Divine subsistences, (for so we beg leave to call them, according to the most literal meaning of the word *υποστασις*, used by St. Paul, Heb. i, 3,) were soon called persons by the Latin fathers, as appears from Tertullian, a writer of the second century, who, in his book against Praxeas, frequently mentions the person of the Son, and the Divine Persons, (*Personam Filii, divinas Personas, &c.*)

The primitive Christians, finding it inconvenient to repeat always at full length the names of the three Divine subsistences, as our Lord enumerates them in his charge of baptizing all nations, began about the same time, both for brevity and variety's sake, to call them *the TRINITY*; and if, by renouncing that comprehensive word, we could remove the prejudices of Deists against the truth contended for, we would give it up, and always say, "The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost," which is what we mean by the trinity:

In the meantime, if to worship the Son and the Spirit, as comprehended in the unity of the Father's Godhead, be to deserve the name of Trinitarian, we glory in the appellation, provided it do not exclude that of Unitarian; for we do not less worship the unity in mysterious trinity, than the trinity in the most perfect and unfathomable unity.

Hence it appears, that, if the word Unitarian mean a maintainer of the Divine unity against idolaters of every description, there are two sorts of Unitarians, who differ as widely, as the catholic faith differs from Socinianism.

1. The Christian, or Catholic Unitarians, who maintain the Divine unity against all sorts of Polytheists, the Arians themselves not excepted; but who, at the same time, assert, that this unity necessarily includes the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; it being far more unevangelical to suppose, that the Father is the one Supreme Being in the universe, exclusively of his Word and Spirit, than it is unconstitutional to say, that the king is the one supreme legislative power in England, exclusive of the lords and commons.

2. The Jewish, or Socinian Unitarians, who not only confine the Father to a barren, lonesome unity, but, so far as their influence reaches, tear from him his beloved Son, and even despoil him of his paternity. Nor is it surprising, that when we consider them in this light, far from giving them the name of *Unitarians*, we are tempted to call them *dividers*, *dividers of God*, and *manglers* of the Divine nature.

Judge, candid reader, between these Unitarians, so called, and us. Like the false mother, who, to deceive Solomon, gave up to the dividing sword, the child she claimed as her own; do not these dividers betray their want of love to the true Scriptural unity? And when they try to disunite God the Father from his beloved Son, with the sword they borrow from Caiaphas and Mohammed, do they not, before the judicious, attack the Divine unity defended by St. John? And is not their attempt far more absurd and unnatural than that of making a rent between the sun and its glorious effulgence?

Man is not only prone to leave the narrow way of truth, but to run from one extreme to the other. When the Divine unity was chiefly revealed, mankind madly ran into idolatry. The Creator was forgotten; almost every creature was deemed a god. But since the Creator has revealed, that, in the unity of the Divine essence, there are three Divine subsistences, human perverseness starts back from that glorious discovery, and the philosophers of this world, under pretence of standing up for the Divine unity, and for the dignity of the Father, refuse Divine honours to the second and to the third subsistence, without which the Deity cannot exist, and the Father can be no Father.

Hence it appears that idolatry and impiety are the two precipices between which the Christian's road lies all the way to heaven. Dr. Priestley supposes that we are fallen into the former; and we fear that he and his admirers rush into the latter. Let us see who are mistaken. It is one of the most important questions that was ever debated. Either we are idolaters in worshipping that which by nature is not God, or the Socinians are impious in refusing Divine worship to that which is really God; and what is more dreadful still, they worship a mangled notion of Deity, and not the God revealed to us in the sacred Scriptures.

Not to worship the Word and the Spirit, when they were not explicitly and directly revealed, was more excusable; but what can be said for the baptized people who set at naught the Deity of two of the Divine hypostases so clearly revealed to them? If the Word and the Spirit partake of Godhead jointly with the Father, can those who deny them Divine honours trust in them for salvation? Do they not take large strides to meet the danger which our Lord describes in these words, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father?" And does not a punishment, peculiarly aggravated, await those who perversely and finally "sin against the Holy Ghost;" as, we fear, all baptized people do when they deny his influences upon the soul, as well as his vitality and rationality? For it is evident, that if the Word and the Spirit have an essential place in the Divine nature, by which we were created, to treat them as mere creatures is far worse than not to render unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's; for it is refusing unto God that which is God's—it is slighting the proper Son of God on account of that very humiliation by which he came to over-

come our pride ; and it is resisting and grieving that Holy Spirit which is to comfort us on earth, and to glorify us in heaven.

Having thus taken a general view of the catholic faith, let us now consider the arguments which the wise men of this world bring to make us ashamed of calling upon our Redeemer and our Sanctifier.

CHAPTER II.

A view of the sources whence the philosophers of the age draw their popular arguments against the catholic faith.

THE royal academy of Paris having offered a prize to the man who should write the best copy of verses upon the Divine nature, many wrote largely on the awful subject ; but Professor Croussaz sent only two lines, of which this is the sense ; “ Cease to expect from man a proper description of the Supreme Being : none can speak properly of him but himself.” And the judicious academicians agreed to crown this short performance, because it gave the most exalted idea of him whose dazzling glory calls for our silent adoration, and forbids the curious disquisitions of our philosophical pride.

“ Canst thou, by searching, find out God ?” says he in Job : “ this knowledge is as high as heaven, what canst thou do ? It is broader than the sea, it is deeper than hell : what canst thou know ?” Job xi, 7. “ As the heavens are higher than the earth,” saith the Lord, “ so are my thoughts [much more my nature] above your thoughts,” Isaiah lv, 9. It is therefore one of the loudest dictates of *reason*, that, as we cannot grasp the universe with our hands, so we cannot comprehend the Maker of the universe with our thoughts.

Nevertheless, a set of men who make much ado about *reason*, after they have candidly acknowledged their ignorance with regard to the Divine nature, are so inconsistent as to limit God, and to insinuate that he can exist only according to their shallow, dark, and short-sighted ideas. Hence it is, that, if he speak of his essence otherwise than they have conceived it to be, they either reject his revelation, or so wrest and distort it as to force it to speak their pre-conceived notions, in direct opposition to the plain meaning of the words, to the general tenor of the Scriptures, to the consent of the catholic Church in all ages, and to the very form of their own baptism.

Is not the learned Dr. Priestley a striking instance of this unphilosophical conduct ? Great philosopher in natural things, does he not forget himself in things Divine ? Candid reader, to your unprejudiced reason we make our appeal. With a wisdom worthy of a Christian sage, he speaks thus in his *Disquisitions on matter and spirit* : “ Of the substance of the Deity *we have no idea at all* ; and, therefore, all that we can *conceive or pronounce*, concerning it, must be *merely hypothetical*.” (pp. 109, 110.) But has he behaved consistently with this reasonable acknowledgment ? And may we not, upon his just concessions, raise the following query ?

When a doctor has granted that *we have no idea at all of the Divine substance, &c.*, is he not both inconsistent and unreasonable, if, so far

from *pronouncing hypothetically* concerning it, he absolutely declares that the Divine substance, of which he has *no idea at all*, is incompatible with the three Divine subsistences which the Scriptures call the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ?

But Dr. Priestley, after having granted the former proposition in his *Disquisitions*, absolutely pronounces the latter in his *Corruptions, &c.* Is not, therefore, Dr. Priestley both inconsistent and unreasonable ?

We truly honour him for his parts, and sincerely love him for his many social virtues ; but if he continually attack our Saviour's Divine glory, (which is dearer to us than life itself,) he is too candid to refuse us the liberty of trying to defeat his attacks by plainly pointing out the flaw of his arguments, and the errors of his polemical conduct.

The learned doctor, continuing to speak as a true philosopher, says, "We know there must be a first cause, because things do actually exist, and could never have existed without a cause, and all secondary causes necessarily lead us to a primary one. But of the nature of the existence of this primary cause, concerning which we know nothing but by its effects, we cannot have any conception. We are absolutely confounded, bewildered, and lost, when we attempt to speculate concerning it. This speculation is attended with *insuperable difficulties*. Every description of the Divine Being in the New Testament gives us an idea of something filling and penetrating all things, and therefore of no *known mode of existence*." (*Disquisitions*, pp. 111, 146.)

Upon these second concessions we raise this second argument : a doctor who grants that we know nothing of the first cause but by its effects ; that we have no conception of its nature, that it has no known mode of existence, and that this speculation is attended with insuperable difficulties, must have an uncommon share of assurance or inattention, if he pretend to argue the catholic Church out of the belief of the trinity, because we have no (clear) conception of its nature, because it has no known mode of existence, and because (in our present state) the speculation of it is attended with some insuperable difficulties.

But Dr. Priestley has made all these fair concessions in his *Disquisitions*, and yet he pretends to argue us out of our faith in the trinity, because we have no clear conception of its nature, &c. Hath not, therefore, the doctor an uncommon share of assurance, or of inattention ?

Continuing to speak like a Christian philosopher, he says, "In two circumstances that we do know, and probably in *many others of which we have no knowledge at all*, the human and Divine nature, finite and infinite intelligence, *most essentially* differ. The first is, that our attention is necessarily confined to one thing, whereas he who made, and continually supports all things, must equally attend to all things at the same time ; which is a most astonishing but necessary attribute of the one supreme God, of which *we can form no conception*, and consequently, in this respect, *no finite mind can be compared with the Divine*. Again : the Deity not only attends to every thing, but must be capable of either producing or annihilating any thing : so that in this respect also *the Divine nature must be essentially different from ours*." (p. 106.) "There is, therefore, upon the whole, manifold reason to conclude, that *the Divine nature, or essence, beside being simply unknown to us*, has properties most

essentially different from every thing else." (p. 107.) "God is, and ever must remain, the *incomprehensible.*" (p. 108.)

Upon this set of unavoidable concessions, made by Dr. Priestley, we raise this third argument: a philosopher who grants that God is the incomprehensible, that the human and Divine nature (of consequence human and Divine personality) most essentially differ—and that the Divine essence has properties most essentially different from every thing else: a philosopher, I say, who publicly grants this, must be one of the most prejudiced of all men if he reject the sacred trinity, into whose name he was baptized, because the trinity is in some sense incomprehensible, and because he insists that three Divine persons must be divided and separated like three human persons; just as if he did not himself maintain that the Divine essence, or personality, hath properties most essentially different from men, angels, and every thing else.

We could fill several pages with arguments equally demonstrative of the inconsistency and irrationality of the learned doctor's attacks upon the catholic faith: but, not to tire out the reader's patience in the second chapter of this work, we shall produce but one more set of the *philosophical* concessions of which Dr. Priestley loses sight in his *theological* works.

"In the first place," says he, "it must be confessed, with awful reverence, that we know but little of ourselves, and therefore *much less* of our Maker, even with respect to his attributes. We know but little of the *works* of God, and therefore certainly *much less* of his *essence*. In fact, we have *no proper idea* of any *essence* whatever. It will hardly be pretended, that we have any *proper idea* of the substance even of matter, considered as divested of all its properties." (*Disquisitions*, pp. 108 and 104.)

From these last concessions, and from the tenor of Dr. Priestley's Corruptions, it appears, that men who confess they know little of God's works, and much less of his essence; and who have not even any proper idea of the essence of a straw, pretend, nevertheless, to know clearly what is consistent with the Divine essence; insomuch, that setting up as reformers of the three creeds, they try to turn the doctrine of the trinity out of the Church, and the Lamb of God out of his Divine and everlasting throne.

Now is not this as absurd as if they said to the catholics, we have indeed been all baptized in the name of the God of the Christians, that is, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" but we new Gnostics, we modern reformers, who know nothing of the Father's essence, nor even of the essence of an insect—we are, nevertheless, so perfectly acquainted with the Divine essence as to decide that it is absolutely inconsistent with the nature of the Father, to have a living Word, of a proper Son, and a rational Spirit; and, therefore, reforming our God himself, we strike the Word and the Holy Ghost out of the number of the Divine persons, whom at our baptism we vowed to serve jointly for ever.

O ye philosophers of the age, can men of sense admire your philosophy any more than men of faith admire your orthodoxy? May we not hope, that when the blunders of your logic are brought to light, they will be a proper antidote for the poison of your errors? And will your

admirers be still so inattentive, as not to see, that your capital objections against the trinity are sufficiently answered by applying to them the short reply you make on another occasion: "This is an argument, which derives all its force from *our ignorance?*" (See *Disquisitions*, p. 82.)

But if the philosophers, who attack the catholic faith, cannot overthrow the doctrine of the trinity by the arguments they draw from their avowed ignorance of the Divine nature, they seem determined to make us give up the point by arguments drawn from fear and from shame. Availing himself of our dread of Popery, and of our contempt for the Popish error of transubstantiation, the learned doctor loses no opportunity to compare that pretended mystery, that despicable absurdity, with the awful mystery of the trinity; exhorting us to reject them both, as equally contrary to reason and common sense. Thus, in his *Appeal to the Professors of Christianity*, speaking of the divinity of Christ, he says, "The prevalence of so impious a doctrine can be ascribed to nothing but that mystery of iniquity which began to work in the times of the apostles themselves. This, among other shocking corruptions of Christianity, grew up with the system of Popery." After exalting a man into a God, a creature into a Creator, men made a piece of bread into one also, and then bowed down to, and worshipped the work of their own hands." And in the *Preface to his Disquisitions*, he writes, "Most Protestants will avow they have *made up their minds* with respect to the *Popish* doctrine of *transubstantiation*, so as to be justified in refusing even to lose their time in reading what may be addressed to them on it; and I avow it with respect to the doctrine of the *trinity*."

As these comparisons are the second store house, whence the learned doctor draws his arguments against our supposed idolatry, it is proper to show the unreasonableness of his method. For this, three remarks will, I hope, be sufficient.

1. The question between Dr. Priestley and us is, Whether there are three Divine subsistences in the one Divine essence? Now it is plain, that to deny this proposition, as reasonably as we deny that bread is flesh, and that wine is human blood, we must be as well acquainted with the nature of the Divine essence, and of Divine personality, as we are with the taste of bread and wine. But how widely different is the case, the doctor himself being judge! Do not his *Disquisitions* assert, that "the Divine essence hath properties most essentially different from every thing else,—that of God's substance we have no idea at all—and that he must for ever remain the incomprehensible?" Therefore, if God hath revealed, that he exists with the three personal distinctions of Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, the learned doctor, after his concessions, can never deny it, without exposing at once his piety, his philosophy, his logic, and his common sense; unless he should make it appear, that he is the first man who can pertinently speak of *what he has no idea at all*, and who perfectly comprehends what *must for ever remain incomprehensible*. But,

2. The question between the popes and us, with respect to *transubstantiation*, is quite within our reach; since it is only whether *bread* be *flesh* and *bones*; whether *wine* be *human blood*; whether the same identical body can be wholly in heaven, and in a million of places on earth,

at the same time ; and whether a thin round wafer, an inch in diameter, is the real person of a man five or six feet high. Here we only decide about things known to us from the cradle, and concerning which our experience, and our five senses, help us to form a right judgment, agreeable to the tenor of the Scriptures. Therefore,

3. Considering that the two cases are diametrically contrary, and differ as much as the depths of the Divine nature differ from a piece of bread ; as much as the most incomprehensible thing in heaven differs from the things we know best upon earth,—we are bold to say, that, when the learned doctor involves the Protestant worshippers of the trinity, and the Popish worshippers of a bit of bread, in the same charge of absurd idolatry, he betrays as great a degree of unphilosophical prejudice, and illogical reasoning, as ever a learned and wise man was driven to in the height of a disputation for a favourite error.

“Do what you can,” replies the learned doctor, “you must either sacrifice the *unity* to the trinity, or the *trinity* to the unity ; for they are incompatible.” But who says it ? Certainly not our Lord who commands all nations to be baptized into the one name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; and if Dr. Priestley say it, then he says it without knowing it ; for, speaking like a judicious philosopher, he has just told us, that “probably the Divine nature, beside being simply *unknown* to us, more essentially differs from the human in *many* circumstances of which we have *no knowledge at all.*” To this sufficient answer we beg leave to add an illustration which may throw some light upon the doctor’s unphilosophical positiveness.

Modern physicians justly maintain the circulation of the blood, which being carried from the heart through the arteries, flows back to it by the veins. But a learned doctor, very fond of *unity*, availing himself of the connection which the *arteries* have with the *veins* in all the extremities of the body, insists that *one* set of vessels is more agreeable to the simplicity of the human frame. What ! says he, *arteries ! veins ! and lymphatic vessels too !* I pronounce that one set of uniform, circular vessels is quite sufficient. You must, therefore, sacrifice the *arteries* to the *veins*, or the *veins* to the *arteries* ; for they are quite incompatible. This dogmatical positiveness of the Unitarian anatomist would surprise us the more, if we had just heard him say that there are *many things* in anatomy of which he has *no knowledge at all*, and assert that the minute ramifications, and delicate connections of the vessels which compose the human frame are, and must for ever remain *incomprehensible* to those who have such feeble and imperfect organs.

From this simile, which, we hope, is not improper, we infer, that if positiveness on this anatomical question would not become the learning and modesty of a *doctor in physic*, a like degree of peremptoriness and assurance, in a matter infinitely more out of our reach, is as unsuitable to the humble candour of a *doctor in divinity*, and to the cautious wisdom of a philosopher.

Having thus taken a general view of the principal sources whence the philosophers of the age draw their popular arguments against the catholic faith : and having, we hope, by this means removed some prejudices out of the way, the cautious reader will more candidly consider the main question which is proposed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

That, according to the Scriptures, God the Father has a proper Son, by whom he made, governs, and will judge the world.

WE cannot read the Divine oracles without finding out this capital truth, that God, considered as Father, has an only begotten Son, called the *Logos* or the *Word*, whom "he loved before the foundation of the world," John xvii, 24; "who is the express image of his person," Heb. i, 3; "by whom he made the worlds, who was in the beginning with God, and was God," John i, 1.

We need only to consider the first verse of Genesis, to find an intimation of this capital truth. "In the beginning," says Moses, "ELOHIM, the gods, [in the plural number, or God considered in the distinctions peculiar to his nature,] he created the heaven and the earth." The learned know that *Elohim* is a word in the plural number, signifying more exactly *gods* than *God*; and accordingly it is sometimes so translated in our Bible: "Thou shalt have no other *Elohim* [no other *gods*] but me," Exod. xx. "The *Elohim* doth know, that ye shall be as the *Elohim*;" which is rendered by the Septuagint, and in our version, "God doth know, that ye shall be as *gods*," Gen. iii, 5; a proof this, even to an illiterate reader, that the very first line of the Bible gives us some notice of the mysterious distinctions in the Divine nature, one of which is called *the Spirit* in the very next verse: "and the SPIRIT of the Elohim moved on the face of the waters."

"In the beginning was the Word," the Son the second of the distinctions in the Godhead, says St. John, "and the Word was with God" the Father, "and was God," partaking of the Divine nature in union with the Father, John i, 1.

Is man to be created? these Divine subsistences consult together: the Elohim says, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness:" and when man is fallen in attempting to be like the Elohim, God says, "Behold, he is become like one of us—to know good and evil!"

Light is thrown upon this mysterious language, where David, speaking of the Son manifested in the flesh, introduces Jehovah as saying to the Messiah, "Thou art my SON, this day have I begotten thee." Struck with the awfulness of this decree, or Divine declaration, the psalmist cries out, "Serve Jehovah with fear, kiss the Son," give him the kiss of adoration by trusting in him as Jehovah Saviour, "kiss him, lest ye perish out of the way" of saving faith, if his "wrath" (the terrible wrath of the Lamb, described Rev. vi, 16,) "be kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," Psalm ii, 7, 11, 12. And to prove that this *Son* of Jehovah, whom we are to "trust in" under pain of destruction, is not a *mere man*, as Dr. Priestley supposes, but the proper Son of God, we need only compare with the above these two scriptures: "Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in him is everlasting strength. Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah," Isa. xxvi, 4, and Jer. xvii, 5.

Agur had a sight of the mystery revealed in the second Psalm, when he asks, "Who hath established the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name?" Prov. xxx, 4. And that this everlasting Son was,

at times, the object of the religious addresses of prophets and kings, appears from these words of the psalmist: "All kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him," Psalm lxxii, 11. "And worship him, all ye gods," Psalm xcvi, 7, the very passage to which St. Paul alludes, where he writes, "When God bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him," Hebrews i, 6.

But what was only on particular occasions taught the prophets, was continually held out to view by the apostles. God the Son, or "the Son of God," or "God manifested in the flesh," is the sum of the New Testament. He plainly spoke of God the Father; and with the blood of the human nature, which he assumed for our salvation, he publicly sealed this great truth, "I am the Son of God: before Abraham was, I am."

He speaks of his eternal Father, as of his proper and natural Father, with whom he shared Divine honours before he appeared upon earth. "And now, O Father," says he, "glorify thou me, [in my complex nature,] with thine own self, [at thy right hand,] with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," John xvii, 5. Speaking of his appearance as Son of man, he calls himself both "the Son of God," and "the Son of man, whom God the Father hath sealed," John x, 36, and vi, 27. St. Paul speaks the same language when he mentions "the Church in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. i, 1. If he wishes "peace to the Ephesians," it is "from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," Eph. vi, 23. If he prays that Titus and Timothy may be filled with grace, he looks up to "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus i, 4. St. Jude salutes those who are "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ," Jude 1. St. Peter, full of the glorious idea of the trinity, writes to them that "are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit," unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of "Jesus Christ," 1 Peter i, 2. In his second epistle, he adds, "We were eye witnesses of his Majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," 2 Peter i, 17. And St. John, who declares, "the Son of God is come, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father;" St. John, I say, salutes the elect lady, by wishing her "mercy from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father," 2 John 3; John i, 1, 14; 1 John v, 20.

It is not possible that an unprejudiced person should read the Scriptures without being struck with this thought, If the Gospel teaches us that there is in the Godhead one who is called God the Father, it teaches us, at least indirectly, that there is another who may with propriety be called the only begotten, or proper Son of God—a Son by nature, and not barely a Son by creation, as Adam, or by adoption, as St. Paul and St. John, or by the resurrection from the dead, as those saints who came out of their graves when our great High Priest died and rose again to overcome death and the grave. And, therefore, unless the Gospel sets before us the most strange temptation to idolatry, (the bare supposition of which is not to be allowed for a moment,) there is in the Godhead a Son, who was in the beginning with God the Father, and who was as

truly God with him, as Isaac, the proper son of the man Abraham, was truly man, like his father.

This will appear beyond all doubt, if the reader weigh the following Scriptural remarks upon our Lord's Sonship.

! (1.) Some are the *created* sons of God, whether they are supernaturally formed out of nothing, as angels, or of pre-existent matter, as our first parents. (2.) Others are the *reputed* sons of God, as all those who profess to serve him with filial reverence. (3.) Others are *titular* sons of God, as all those to whom a share of God's supreme authority has been delegated. (4.) Others are (in one sense) the *adopted* sons of God, as St. John, and all those who, receiving by faith the proper Son, and being led by the Spirit, receive the initial adoption—namely, “the redemption of their soul.” And (5.) Others, (as Enoch, Elijah, and the saints who now share in the first resurrection,) being sons of the resurrection, are the *adopted sons of God in the full sense of the word*; for they have *received the full* “adoption, namely, the redemption of their body,” Luke xx, 36, and Rom. viii, 14, 23.

The first and last of these five degrees of sonship are the most extraordinary: but neither is peculiar to our Lord. For if with respect to his humanity, he was miraculously and supernaturally formed of the substance of his virgin mother, Mary, Adam was thus formed of the substance of our then virgin mother, the earth; and if our Lord burst triumphantly out of the womb of the grave, on the day of his resurrection, so did several of the saints, their graves three days before being opened miraculously, when he entered as Prince of Life into the territories of death; for, when “he gave up the ghost, the earth did quake, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” It could not be said, therefore, that, as *Son of the resurrection*, he is God's “only begotten Son,” seeing many rose with or immediately after him, even the multitude of rescued prisoners, who graced his triumph when “he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive.” It follows, then, that our Lord hath a peculiar and incommunicable Sonship, of which these are some of the principal characters.

1. Though he is a *created* Son of God, as well as Adam, with respect to his *humanity*; yet, with regard to his superior nature, he is such a Son “by whom *the Father* made the worlds,” Heb. i, 2. “The world was made by him: for by him all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made,” John i, 3, 10. Hence St. Paul, speaking of Adam and of Christ, says, “The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy: but the second man is the Lord from heaven,” 1 Cor. xv, 4, 5, 47.

2. Hence our Lord spake in the most positive manner of his coming from heaven: “I proceeded forth and came from God,” John viii, 42. “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world and go to the Father,” John xvi, 28. “I came down from heaven to do the will of him that sent me. This is my Father's will that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

And when the Jews murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven"—when they whispered, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" Our Lord saith, "Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before!" John vi, 38, 40, 42, 62. And, alluding to "the glory which Christ had with the Father before the world was," John xviii, 5, John the Baptist says of him, "He that cometh from above, is above all: he that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all," John iii, 31. Who does not see, that if our Lord and his forerunner be allowed to have spoken the words of soberness and truth, he reigned in glory with the Father before his incarnation?

John the Baptist was older than our Saviour according to his *humanity*, and began to preach *before* him; nevertheless, with regard to his *Deity*, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world: this is he of whom I spake: he that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me," John i, 15, 29. And well might he say so, since our Lord himself says, "Before Abraham was, I am;" since St. John declares that the "Word was, in the beginning, with God, [the Father,] and was God;" and since David and St. Paul agree to say of him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest: they 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 fail not."

3. He is a Son so exalted above all that are called gods upon earth, that St. Paul fears not to say, "He is the image of the invisible God," as a son is the image of his father, "the first born of every creature," that is, begotten before any creature:—"For," adds the apostle, showing that this is his true meaning, "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, [before all creatures,] and by him all things consist," Col. i, 15, &c.

4. He is such a Son as can say, "All things that the Father hath, are mine," being fully possessed of the most incommunicable attributes of the Supreme Being. If the Father say, "I Jehovah search the heart: I try the reins," Jer. xvii, 10,—the Son says, with equal truth, "I am he that searcheth the reins and the heart," Rev. ii, 23. If Solomon said to the Father, "Thou, even thou, only knowest the hearts of all the children of men," 1 Kings viii, 39,—the apostles say to the Son, "Thou knowest the hearts of all men," Acts i, 24; John ii, 24. Doth the Father say, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God?" Isa. xlv, 6,—the Son says, "I am the first, and I am the last; I and the Father are one," Rev. i, 17; John x, 30. Doth the Father say, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end?" Rev. i, 8,—the Son, his adequate image, echoes back the awful declaration, and says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," Rev. xxii, 13. Is the Father called "King of kings, and Lord of lords?" 1 Tim. vi, 15,—the Son is proclaimed "Lord of lords, and King of

kings," Rev. xvii, 14. Doth St. Paul call the Father "Lord of all?" Rom. x, 12,—St. Peter says of the Son, "He is Lord of all," Acts x, 36. And to crown these glorious testimonies, if Isaiah names Jehovah "the mighty God," Isa. x, 21, he gives the very same title to the Son, chap. ix, 6,—and the apostle calls him, "Over all, God blessed for ever," Rom. ix, 5. And if the Father is so incomprehensible, that "no one knoweth him fully but the Son," the Son is likewise so incomprehensible that "no one knoweth him fully but the Father," Matt. xi, 27. "If no man cometh to the Father but by the Son," John xiv, 6, "no man can come to me (says the Son) except the Father draw him," John vi, 44. And as Philip did not satisfactorily know the Father before the joyful day in which the Son revealed him to the apostles by the Spirit, see John xiv, 8, 20, 23, and Acts ii, 1, so St. Paul did not satisfactorily know the Son till "it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, by filling him with the Holy Ghost," who alone can savingly teach us to "call Jesus Christ Lord, my Lord, and my God!" Gal. i, 16; Acts ix, 17, and 1 Cor. xii, 3.

From this common, equal, and full participation of the highest titles, and most distinguishing perfections of the Supreme Being, it follows, that the Son (with respect to *Deity*) is as perfectly equal to the Father, though all the Son's Deity came from his *Divine* Father; as Isaac (with respect to *humanity*) was equal to Abraham, though all the humanity of Isaac came from his *human* parent.

5. Accordingly our Lord was not only declared "Son of God with power," by his rising from the dead; but he declared himself the very source and fountain of life: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," John xi, 25. Could the Father speak stronger words to "declare himself the true and living God?" Nor ought we to wonder that the Son should speak in so lofty a manner; for being the truth itself, he must speak the truth—he must speak as the oracles of God, which represent the Father and the Son as so perfectly united, that they are one inexhaustible spring of life and action, of grace and peace. "No man hath seen God, [the Father,] at any time: the only begotten Son, who is [even while on earth] in the bosom of the Father, [and who came in the flesh,] he hath declared him," John i, 18. "I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me," John viii, 16. "Believe that the Father is in me, and I in him," John x, 38. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: I am in the Father, and the Father is in me," John xiv, 9, 11. "They have not known the Father nor me," John xvi, 3. "Whoso denieth the Son, hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also," 1 John ii, 23, &c. "Mercy from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: he that abideth in Christ, hath the Father and the Son," 2 John, 3, 9. "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also," John xiv, 7. "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father," John v, 23. "Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son," 1 John i, 3.

From these and the many scriptures where mercy and all blessings are equally and jointly implored from God the Father, and from the Son of God, we conclude that, as the natural sun, and the blazing radiance which it continually generates, make one wonderful luminary—so the

Father and the Son, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, make but one God over all, blessed for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

That our Lord claimed the Divine honour of being the proper Son of God the Father, and laid down his human life in proof of this very truth.

JESUS CHRIST, says St. Paul, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. ii, 6, &c. Hence the carnal Jews, who judged of him merely according to their carnal reason, being offended at him, verified the truth of Isaiah's prophecy: "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." But "who shall declare his generation?" The Jews, I say, judging of him according to the flesh, charged him with blasphemy, and "sought to kill him because he said that God was his [*ιδιου* proper] Father, making himself equal with God;" although, like a true Son, he acknowledged that the Father (in point of *paternity*) was greater than he, yet he never cleared himself of the supposed blasphemy, but defended himself by proper appeals to his works: "I and the Father are one," [*εγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεός*,] so intimately one, that "the Son can do nothing of himself, but [like a Divine Son, in the most perfect unity with his Father who precedes him] he does what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever the Father doeth, those also doeth the Son likewise," whether they be the creation, or the preservation of worlds, the fixing, or the controlling the laws of nature. "For as the Father hath [a Divine and quickening] life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have [a Divine and quickening] life in himself. For as the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. [Nay, added our Lord, there is one thing which the Father leaves entirely to the Son:] for the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father," John v, 18, 26; x, 30. Thus our Lord, far from pleading not guilty to the charge of "making himself equal with God," proved, by two unanswerable reasons, that Divine honours are due to him as well as to the Father: (1.) He does the very works of his Father jointly with him: and (2.) The Father hath, over and above, committed to him the most awful and tremendous of all works—that of judicially killing and saving alive; "for the Father judgeth no man," in the daily course of providence, as well as in the great day: this Divine work is the Son's honourable prerogative, that none should scruple to "honour him as they honour the Father."

Let us see how this Divine Son defended himself against the same charge on another occasion. When he had asserted that "he and his Father were one, the Jews took up stones again to stone him, saying, We stone thee for blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God." What a fair opportunity had our Lord here to disclaim Divine honours, and to set kindly the Jews to rights, if they had mis-

taken his meaning! But far from doing this, he tries to convince them of his divinity by a rational argument, and by a farther appeal to his godlike works.

1. By a rational argument: "Is it not (saith he) written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" John x, 31, &c. The force of this argument may be better understood by a short paraphrase. It is just as if our Lord had said, If the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, gives the honorary title of gods to the prophets, judges, and kings of Israel, whom God appointed to be types of me, the Head of the prophets, and the Judge of all the earth, do ye not act very inconsistently with the Scriptures, which cannot be broken, when you suppose that I blaspheme, by saying, "I am the Son of God?" If the bare types and forerunners of me are titular gods in your own account, are you not as unreasonable as you are unjust, to be offended at me for saying, "I am the Son of God?" whereas I might have roundly said, that I am in union with my Father, "God over all, blessed for ever." If my shadows are called gods without blasphemy, do ye not break at once through the word of God, and through the bounds of common sense, when ye say, that I, the sum and substance of all types and figures—I, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, who am sent by my Father, with godlike credentials, blaspheme, when I declare that "I am the Son [the proper Son] of God?"

2. After our Lord had advanced this convincing argument, he proceeded to an argument, the strength of which was felt by all those who had eyes and a grain of candour, I mean an appeal to his works. "If I do not the works of my Father, [the works of God,] believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; so shall ye know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him, [or to use his former expression,] that I and my Father are one." John x, 30, 37, 38.

The effect of this last argument shows, that our Lord, far from having made any concession to the Jews, stood to his point, viz. that "he and the Father are one:" that being the proper "Son of God," he is, in union with his Father, the "one true God;" which he instantly proved by a Divine work: for the Jews, enraged at what appeared to them confirmed blasphemy, "sought again to take him;" but (notwithstanding their impetuous fury) "he escaped out of their hands," John x, 39.

And when at last he suffered himself to be apprehended by them, for the establishment of our faith, and to leave the enemies of his divinity, and the inconsistent admirers of his humanity, without excuse, he sealed with his blood the glorious truth, for which he had been stoned again and again; namely, that he was the very Son of God, to whom the psalmist says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: therefore God, thy God [and thy Father] hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness," or hath appointed thee Christ for ever, Psalm xvi, 6. For when the high priest, standing "up in the midst, asked him, Art thou the Christ? [that very Christ of whom the Prophet Micah saith, 'Out of Bethlehem shall come forth he that shall be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting?' Micah v, 2.] Art thou the Son of the Blessed?" that very Son, of whom the Prophet Isaiah says, Unto

us "the Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace?" To this double question, which the Jews certainly understood in the high sense of the well-known prophecies by which I illustrate them, as appears from Matt. ii, 4, &c.—to this awful question Jesus answered, "I AM; and ye shall see the Son of man [whom ye now reject because his form of God is veiled under the form of a servant] sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming [in his form of God] in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and said, Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death," Mark xiv, 61, &c. So true it is, that the open or secret enemies of our Lord's Deity, who, when we speak of his pre-existence, and of the adoration due to him, as the everlasting Son of the blessed and everlasting Father, cry out, Absurdity! Blasphemy! Idolatry! and, in their indignation, rend the Church as Caiaphas rent his garments, have drunk into the very spirit of the priests and the Pharisees, who led the van of the Jewish mob when it cried, "Away with him!" He is only Joseph and Mary's son, and of course a proud blasphemer; for "he says that God is his [real and proper] Father, making himself equal with God," John v, 18.*

CHAPTER V.

The view which the apostles give of Christ, after their most perfect illumination by the Spirit of truth.

1. If we wish to see the true character of our Lord more fully ascertained, we cannot do better than attentively consider the view which the evangelists and apostles have given us of it. The Lord Jesus had informed them, "that he had many things to say unto them," but, adds he, "ye cannot bear them now: howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: he shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you: all things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you," John xvi, 12. Now, it is well known, they wrote all their epistles and the four Gospels after the accomplishment of this gracious promise; that is, after the "Spirit of truth had guided them into all the truth," after he had "glorified Christ, by receiving and showing unto them of the things which are his." We may, therefore, notwithstanding Dr. Priestley's unbelief in this matter, be fully assured of their inspiration, as *writers* as well as *speakers*; and may absolutely depend upon the certain truth of what they have delivered, especially respecting so important a point as the real character and dignity of their Master and Saviour, the true knowledge of whom it was the chief office of this *Spirit of truth* to reveal, and their chief business to teach.

2. Now, in looking over their writings, we not only meet with many expressions and sentences dropped, as it were, by the by, when they had

* Thus far Mr. Fletcher had proceeded when he was called to his reward.

principally some other subject in hand, which expressions and sentences, however, give us great light in this matter; but we find several passages, written professedly, and of set purpose, to acquaint mankind with the character of Christ. And these passages we must especially attend to, if we desire to form a true judgment concerning him. Most of them, indeed, have already been transiently mentioned by Mr. Fletcher in the third chapter; in which the doctrine of the peculiar and proper Sonship of Christ has been stated and explained in the language of the inspired writers: but it may be well to review and examine two or three of those passages more particularly, that we may be more fully informed of his true dignity and glory.

3. The first paragraph of this kind that claims our attention is that which occurs in the beginning of St. John's Gospel. "In the beginning (says that greatly favoured and peculiarly enlightened apostle) 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," ver 8. John was "not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light—which 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 to his own, and his own received him not: but as many as received him, to them gave he the privilege to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. 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."

4. "These words (says Bishop Burnet) seem very plain, and the place where they are put by St. John, in the front of his Gospel,—as it were an inscription upon it or an introduction to it,—makes it very evident that he, who of all the writers of the New Testament, has the greatest plainness and simplicity of style, would not put words here, such as were not to be understood in a plain and literal signification, without any key to lead us to any other sense of them. This had been to lay a stone of stumbling in the very threshold; particularly to the Jews, who were apt to cavil at Christianity, and were particularly jealous of every thing that savoured of idolatry, or of a plurality of gods. And upon this occasion I desire one thing to be observed, with relation to all those subtile expositions, which those who oppose this doctrine put upon many of those places by which we prove it: that they represent the apostles as magnifying Christ, in words, which, at first sound, seem to import his being the true God; and yet they hold, that in all these they had another sense, and a reserve of some other interpretation of which their words were capable. But can this be thought fair dealing? Does it look like their being honest men to write thus, not to say men inspired in what they preached and wrote? and not rather like impostors, to use so many sublime and lofty expressions concerning Christ, as God, if all these must be taken down to so low a sense, as to signify only that he was miraculously formed, and endued with an extraordinary power of miracles, and an authority to deliver a new religion to the world: and that he was, in consideration of the exemplary death, (which he underwent so patiently)

raised up from the grave, and had Divine honours conferred upon him? In such a hypothesis as this, the world falling in so naturally with the excessive magnifying, and even the deifying of wonderful men, it had been necessary to have prevented any such mistakes, and to have guarded against the belief of them, rather than to have used a continued strain of expressions that seem to carry men violently into them, and that can hardly, nay, very hardly be softened by all the skill of critics, to bear any other sense.

5 "It is to be observed farther, that when St. John wrote his Gospel, there were three sorts of men particularly to be considered. The Jews who could bear nothing that savoured of idolatry: so no stumbling block was to be laid in their way, to give them deeper prejudices against Christianity. Next to these were the Gentiles, who, having worshipped a variety of gods, were not to be indulged in any thing that might seem to favour their Polytheism. In fact, we find particular caution used in the New Testament against the worshipping of angels or saints. How can it, therefore, be imagined, that words would have been used, that in the plain signification which arose out of the first hearing of them, imported that a man was God, if this had not been strictly true? The apostles ought, and must have used a particular care to have avoided all such expressions, if they had not been literally true. The third sort of men in St. John's time were those of whom intimation is frequently given, through all the epistles, who were then endeavouring to corrupt the purity of the Christian doctrine, and to accommodate it so both to the Jew and to the Gentile, as to avoid the cross and the persecution on the account of it. Church history, and the earliest writers after St. John assure us, that Ebion and Cerinthus denied the divinity of Christ, and asserted that he was a mere man. Controversy naturally carries men to speak exactly; and among human writers those who let things fall more carelessly from their pens, when they apprehended no danger or difficulty, are more correct both in their thoughts and expressions, when things are disputed; therefore, if we should no otherwise regard St. John than as an ordinary, cautious, and careful man, we must believe that he weighed all his words in that point which was then the matter in question; and to clear which, we have good ground to believe, both from the testimony of ancient writers, and from the method which he pursues quite through the whole, that he wrote his Gospel: and that, therefore, every part of it, but this beginning of it more especially, was written, and is to be understood in the sense which the words naturally import."

6. This being premised, I would observe upon this passage, *first*, here is a person spoken of termed the *Logos* or *Word*, ver. 1; and the "only begotten of the Father," ver. 14. *Secondly*, this person is distinguished from God the Father, whose Word he is, for he is said to be with God, "The Word was with God;" and again, "The same was in the beginning with God, $\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$." *Thirdly*, He is said to have existed in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word;" that is, as plainly appears from the third verse, in which "all things" are said to be "made by him," before any creature was created, before any man or angel existed. *Fourthly*, He is then said by the apostle to have been God, not a titular god, or a god by office, a governor, surely, for there was then no creature for him to govern, or with respect to whom he could bear

the title or sustain the office of a god in that sense. He must therefore have been God by nature, partaking of real and proper Deity, in union with the Father, whose Word he was.* This appears manifestly from the apostle's assuring us, *fifthly*, that "all things were made by him, and that without him was not any thing made that was made," ver. 3, and in particular, ver. 10, that "the world [viz. this world] was made by him," it being perfectly certain and allowed on all hands, that as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares, he "that built all things is God," properly so, creating power being undoubtedly Divine, if any power is so. See Rom. i, 20, 25.

7. It appears also from St. John's affirming, *sixthly*, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." For this life which was in him, in the beginning, and was "the light of men," that is, the source of all their wisdom, holiness, and happiness, before their fall, and which, after their fall, "shineth in the darkness,"—that is, amidst the ignorance, sin, and misery of their fallen state: this life, I say, speaks him to be a living agent, and that agent to be Divine. It appears, *seventhly*, from his being termed, ver. 9, "the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world:" for as no particular messenger from God hath ever appeared upon earth, whose doctrine hath been a mean of enlightening all flesh, those that went before him and had lived from the beginning, as well as those that were his cotemporaries, or should come after him; so we must of necessity understand this of that internal light, which, shining upon the understanding and conscience of even the most barbarous and brutal, and least civilized of mankind, enables them, in many instances, to distinguish right from wrong, and is a check upon them in their behaviour from day to day, restraining them from many vices, or accusing or condemning them when they commit those vices, and at the same time prompting them to some virtues. Now, as the Word here spoken of is affirmed to be this light, he must be one with that omnipresent and eternal Being, who, through the several ages of the world, has been and is visiting the minds of all mankind, by his presence, not leaving himself without witness in any, being, in the fullest sense of the word, "the light of the world," even of the whole world. Accordingly he declares, Rev. iii, 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," viz. at the door of every heart. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me;" words which no mere creature can possibly use with truth.

* "It is to me most incredible," says Dr. Doddridge, "that when the Jews were so exceedingly averse to idolatry, and the Gentiles so unhappily prone to it, that such a plain writer as this apostle should lay so dangerous a stumbling block in the very threshold of his work, and represent it as the Christian doctrine, that in the beginning of all things there were two gods, one supreme, and the other subordinate: a difficulty, which, if possible, would be yet farther increased, by recollecting what so many ancient writers assert, that this Gospel was written with a particular view of opposing the Cerinthians and Ebionites, on which account a greater accuracy of expression must have been necessary. On the other hand, to conceive of Christ as a distinct (or separate) and co-ordinate God, would be equally inconsistent with the most express declarations of Scripture, and far more irreconcilable with reason. The order of the words in the original, (*θεος ην ο λογος*) is such, that some have thought the clause might more exactly be translated, *God was the Word.*"

8. Hence, *eightly*, St. John, in a parallel passage in his first epistle, i, 1, 2, not only terms him "the Word of life," (an expression which, however, would but ill suit a mere external messenger,) but the life itself, yea, the "eternal life," that "was with the Father, and has been manifested unto us;" and here, ver. 14, assures us, he "is full of truth and grace;" and again, ver. 16, that "out of his fulness they had all received grace for grace," or, as *χαριν ἀντὶ χάριτος* may be rendered, "grace upon grace;" which things are certainly too much to be affirmed of any creature, however exalted. How can a creature be "life," the "eternal life," "full of truth and grace" himself, and a fountain of truth and grace to others? This "the Word that was in the beginning with God" was, even after he had laid aside his "form of God," and had taken the "form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man;" after he "was made flesh and dwelt among us." He was even then "life," the "eternal life," and "full [for all] of truth and grace." Accordingly, he declared himself to be "the living bread that came down from heaven, and the living vine," of which the holiest men are but branches, and "the head of his body the Church." He complained that men "would not come to him that they might have life," and invited, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink: let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the fountain of the water of life freely." These are certainly not the words of a mere man, or mere creature.

9. Two things more are to be observed in this remarkable passage. St. John tells us, verse 10, *ninthly*, that "he was in the world," viz. in his pre-existent and Divine nature, appearing to the patriarchs and prophets; and that when he came in the flesh to the Jews, "he came to his own," he having been, through all the ages of their commonwealth, (in union with the Father,) the "God of Israel," and "King of the Jews." These particulars also I hope to make fully appear, in the farther course of this work.

10. In the meantime, as a confirmation of the sense in which I understand St. John, let me observe in the words of Bishop Pearson on the creed,* "This [doctrine of St. John concerning the creation of all things by the Divine Logos] was no new doctrine, but only an interpretation of those scriptures which told us, God made all things by his Word. For God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' And so, 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. From whence we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.' Neither was it a new interpretation; but that which was most familiar to the Jews, who, in their synagogues, by the reading of the paraphrase, [or the interpretation of the Hebrew text in the Chaldee language,] were constantly taught that 'the Word of God' was the same with God, and by that Word all things were made; which undoubtedly was the cause why St. John delivered so great a mystery in so few words, as speaking unto them who, at the first apprehension, understood him."

11. In proof of this, the bishop produces in his notes divers passages from the paraphrase, in which (מִטְבַּח) the "Word of God" is used for

* Fifth edition, p. 117.

(*mff*) *God himself*, and that especially with relation to the creation of the world. "As upon Isaiah xiv, 12, where the Hebrew text says, 'I made the earth, and created man upon it.' The Chaldee translatheth it, 'I by my Word made the earth,' &c. In the same manner, upon Jer. xxvii, 5, and Isa. xlvi, 13: and Gen. i, 27, where the text is, 'God created man,' the Jerusalem Targum has it, 'The Word of God created man.' And Gen. iii, 8, 'They heard the voice of the Lord God;' the Chaldee paraphrase interprets it, 'They heard the voice of the Word of the Lord God.' Now this which the Chaldee paraphrase calls *מְדַבֵּר*, the Hellenists, [the Jews that used the Greek language,] named *λογος*, as appears from Philo the Jew, who wrote before St. John, and reckons in his divinity first, *πατερα των ολων*, the *Father of all*, and then, *δευτερον Θεον, ος εστιν εκεινος λογος*, the *second God, who is his Word*, whom he calls *ορθον Θεσ λογον πρωτογονον υιον*, the *unerring Word of God, and first begotten Son*. Nor ought we to look on Philo Judæus in this as a Platonist, but merely as a Jew, who refers his whole doctrine of the *λογος* to the first chapter of Genesis. And the rest of the Jews before him, who had no such knowledge out of Plato's school, used the same notion. For as, Isa. xlvi, 13, 'The hand of God' is, by the Chaldee paraphrase, translated 'Word of God;' so in the Book of Wisdom, *η παντοδυναμος δε χειρ και κτισασα τον κοσμον*, xi, 17, *thy almighty hand which created the world*, is changed into *ο παντοδυναμος δε λογος απ' ερανω*, xviii, 15, *thy almighty Word from heaven*. And, Eccles. xliii, 26, *εν λογω αυτη συγγιεται παντα*, by his Word all things are established. Nay, the Septuagint hath changed Shaddai, the undoubted name of the omnipotent God, into *λογος*, the Word. And, therefore, Celsus, writing in the person of a Jew, acknowledgeth that the Word is the Son of God; *Ει γαρ ο λογος εστιν υμιν υιος εκ Θεσ, και ημεις επαινεμεν*,—*If with you the Word is the Son of God, this we also approve of.*"

12. Agreeable to this extract from Bishop Pearson, Dr. Doddridge, in his note on John i, 2, observes, "It would be the work of a *treatise*, rather than a *note*, to represent the Jewish doctrine of the creation of all things by the Divine *λογος*, or *Word*." And he presents us with the following remarkable passage from Philo, as a specimen of the rest. (De Profug. p. 465.) "Speaking of the cherubim on the mercy seat as symbolical representations of what he calls the creating and governing powers, Philo Judæus makes this additional reflection, 'The Divine Word, *λογος*, is above these, of whom we can have no idea by the sight, or any other sense—he being the image of God, the eldest of all intelligent beings, sitting nearest to him who is truly the only one, there being no distance between them. And, therefore, he (that is God) says, "I will speak unto thee from the mercy seat; between the two cherubims;" thereby representing the *Logos* or *Word*, as the charioteer by whom the motion of those powers is directed; and himself who speaks to him as the rider (or person carried) who commands the charioteer how he is to manage the reins.'" This, Doctor Doddridge thinks, is a key to a great many other passages in Philo. He quotes another (from his book de Agricult. p. 195,) where Philo represents God as "governing the whole course of nature, both in heaven and earth, as the great shepherd and king, by wise and righteous laws, having constituted his unerring Word, his only begotten Son, to preside as his viceroy over his holy flock."

For the illustration of which, he (Philo) quotes Exod. xxiii, 23, though in a form somewhat different from our reading,—“Behold, I ΔM : I will send my angel before thy face, to keep thee in the way.” (See Doddridge’s Family Expositor.)

13. But not to dwell any longer on the testimony of Philo and the Chaldee paraphrast, let it be observed that He, who is by St. John termed the *Logos* or *Word*, and the “only begotten” of the Father, is, by St. Paul, Col. i, 15, called “the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature,” or as *πρωτης κτισεως* means, *of the whole creation*, and, by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is said to be “the brightness of his Father’s glory,” [*απαυγασμα της δοξης, the effulgence of his glory,*] and “the express image, [*χαρακτηρ της υποσαςεως αυτου, the character, exact delineation, or perfect resemblance*] of his person.” By the “first born of the whole creation,” the apostle must mean either *begotten before the existence of any creature*,* viz. from everlasting, as Micah has it, or *the head, the Lord, the heir* of the whole creation, *the first born* being *heir* and *lord* of all. Hence the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, the Father hath appointed him “heir of all things,” and St. Peter entitles him “Lord of all,” Heb. i, 2; Acts x, 36. “The image of the invisible God,” is an expression, which must at least signify, that he exactly resembles his Father, and is the person *in* and *by* whom the invisible God is, as it were, made *visible*; in and through whom the glory of God is displayed, and shines forth to his creatures. According to the words of St. John, “No one (*σδεις*) hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him :” and according to the words of our Lord himself to Philip, when Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us;” and Jesus replied, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Show us the Father?” In the same sense he is undoubtedly said to be “the brightness [or effulgence] of his glory,” and “the express image [or exact delineation] of his person.”

14. Now that he, whose person is characterized in this language, is not a mere creature, is plain, because the apostle distinguishes him from all creatures, even from the most exalted—from angels, and that in four respects: **FIRST**, he is a Son, and the angels are but servants. “Being so much better than the angels,” says he, verse 4, 5, “as he hath by inheritance obtained [*κσκληρονομηκσεν, hath inherited*] a more excellent name than they,” viz. the name of a Son. “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee?” And again, “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be unto me a Son.” Not but that the angels may be called, and are “sons of God,” as Mr. Fletcher has observed above: but not in a proper sense; for being mere creatures, they have no natural right to the appellation: they do not *inherit* it, as the apostle’s expression is: it is

* “The first born of every creature,—that is (says Bishop Pearson) begotten by God, as the Son of his love, antecedently to all other emanations, before any thing proceeded from him, or was framed and created by him. And that pre-cedency is presently proved by this undeniable argument,—that all other emanations or productions came from him, and whatsoever received its being by creation, was created by him.” (Pearson on the Creed, p. 127, 2d edit. 1662.)

not theirs by *birthright*. Not so the *Son*; he being the *Word* of the Father, begotten of him before any creature, "the brightness of the everlasting Light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness," see Wisdom vii, 26, is *properly a Son*; and, therefore, when he takes upon him the character and form of a *servant*, he empties himself of his original and proper dignity, and uses great condescension, (as the apostle informs us, Phil. ii, 7,) in so doing.

15. Again. As a *SECOND* reason why he is "better than the angels," and therefore not a mere creature, the inspired penman applying to him a passage quoted from the 7th verse of the 97th Psalm, viz. "Worship him all ye gods," says, "When he bringeth his first begotten into the world," he saith, "And let all the angels of God worship him." Now certainly he who hath forbidden idolatry to *men*, would not enjoin it to *angels*. Surely he would not command those bright intelligences to fall down before one like themselves, a mere creature, at an infinite distance from true and proper Deity.

16. As a *THIRD* reason why he is to be preferred before angels, and therefore before the most exalted creatures, the apostle next reminds us that his character is drawn in language very different from that in which theirs is described, in the Old Testament, verse 7-12: "Of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire:" but unto the Son he saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom:" and, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest, and they 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 fail not." And, *FOURTHLY*, no creature, not even the highest angel, hath been exalted to the dignity, authority, and power, to which the Son is exalted: for (verse 13,) "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Their highest honour is, (verse 14,) to be "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation."

17. In perfect consistency with all this, he infers, lastly, in the beginning of the next chapter, from this manifest superiority of the Son to angels, that the guilt of those who reject or slight the Gospel spoken by him, is greater than that of those who formerly transgressed the law delivered by them. "Therefore," says he, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, [viz. the law delivered by their ministry,] and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,—how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him, God also [viz. the Father] bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will!"

18. It appears, therefore, beyond dispute, *First*, That the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews considered the Son of God as a being superior to angels, that is, to the most exalted creatures, as he expressly,

and of set purpose, distinguishes him from them all, giving us, regularly, four explicit reasons why he is better than they. And, *Secondly*, It appears that he believed him to be possessed of a nature truly and properly Divine, because, among other passages quoted from the Old Testament, he produces two, and applies them to the Son, which David undoubtedly meant of Jehovah the true God—I mean the passages taken from the 97th and the 102d Psalms. Now whether we reflect that the author of this epistle (most probably St. Paul) was Divinely inspired, and therefore could not be mistaken, at least, in so important a point as that which respected the true character of his Master, whether he was truly God, or only a mere creature; or whether we consider the conclusiveness of his reasoning from the writings of the Old Testament, (which, as our Lord says, cannot be broken; or are infallible,)—we are certainly authorized to believe and maintain, that the *Logos*, the *Word*, “the only begotten of the Father,” who “was in the beginning with God,” and therefore, in some sense, is to be distinguished from God, nevertheless was God, and that in the true and proper sense of the word, even the “true God and eternal life,” 1 John v, 20.

CHAPTER VI.

That the apostles, in their quotations from the Old Testament, apply to Christ many passages which were most manifestly spoken of the true God, the God of Israel, and consider all the appearances of Jehovah made to the patriarchs and prophets of old, to be made in his person.

1. THE true character of Christ will more fully appear, if we attend to another point, viz. that the apostles not only call him *God*, and that repeatedly and absolutely, as “The Word was God, Emmanuel, God with us, God, manifest in the flesh, My Lord and my God;” but they apply to him, without scruple, divers passages of the Old Testament, which were manifestly intended of the true God, the “God of Israel.” Of this we have had two remarkable instances already. “The Lord reigneth, (says David, Psalm xcvi, 1, &c.) let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world. The earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, and boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.” Now to this last clause the inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews undoubtedly refers, in the passage above quoted, from chap. i, ver. 6, when, as we have seen, applying it to the Son, he says, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” And with what propriety he could do this, if the Son, the Word, were not, in union with his Father, the true God, I confess I am at a loss to say.

2. The other instance we have had is full as remarkable. “My days,” says David, are like a “shadow that declineth; and I am with-

ered like grass: but thou, O Lord, [Heb. *Jehovah*,] shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance to all generations: thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion, for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. When Jehovah shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory," Psalm cii, 1, &c. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years fail not," verse 24. Now as no one can doubt that the true God is the person spoken of by the psalmist in these words; so no one that compares herewith the above cited passage, Heb. i, 10, 11, 12, can question whether the author of that epistle considered the words to be applicable to Christ, and indeed to be intended of him.

3. Another instance of the same kind we find Eph. iv, 8-10, where the apostle quotes and applies to Christ a passage of the sixty-eighth psalm, in which David manifestly celebrates the praises of the true God, the God of Israel, who had brought the people out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, established them in the possession of Canaan, and had taken up his abode first in the tabernacle, and then in their temple. "O God," says he, "when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness, the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel," ver. 7. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place: thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, [Heb. *בְּאִדְמַת אִישׁ* in the man, that is, in the human nature,] yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them," ver. 17. Now, as this last verse undoubtedly had a reference to something farther and greater than the ascent of the ark (an emblem of the Divine presence) to Mount Zion, even to the ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven, (as recorded Acts first,) so it is accordingly applied to this remarkable event in the passage above mentioned. And it is applied in such a manner as to show that the apostle considered it as chiefly intended of Christ. "Unto every one of us," says he, "is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ: wherefore he [David, or the Holy Spirit by David] saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now, he that ascended, what is it? [what does it imply?] but that he descended first into the lowest parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, and he gave some apostles," &c. And is it a mere man, or a mere creature, of whom the apostle speaks in this passage: to whom he applies the words of David, thus manifestly spoken of the God of Israel, and of whom he says that he first descended before he afterward "ascended up far above all heavens, and that he fills all things?"

Nor is this the only passage in which it appears that St. Paul considered Him who brought Israel out of Egypt, gave them the law on Sinai, led them through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day, and

fire by night, and dwelt in their tabernacle and temple, to be Christ his pre-existent and Divine nature. There are sundry other passages of his writings which manifest the same. For instance: "They do of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and we destroyed of serpents," 1 Cor. x, 4 and 9. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake of the earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth, but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but heaven also," Heb. xii, 25, 26. "They stumbled at that stumbling stone: as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix, 32, 33. The apostle not only refers in these words to Isaiah xxviii, 16, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious stone; a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste;"—but he also and especially refers to Isaiah viii, 14: "Sanctify Jehovah of hosts, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel:" words to which St. Peter also refers,—“To you who believe, he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, to those that stumble, disobeying the word, unto which also they are disposed,” 1 Pet ii, 7, 8. And, to the same passage old Simeon alludes, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against,” Luke ii, 34. In all which passages, Isaiah’s words concerning Jehovah are plainly applied to Christ, and represented as fulfilled in him. Compare also Rom. x, 13 and 14, with Joel ii, 32, and Rom. xiv, 11, with Isaiah xlv, 23.

5. In this last mentioned passage, the only living and true God, the God of Israel, is undoubtedly the person who speaks: “I am Jehovah,” says he, “and there is none else: there is no God beside me. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me: I am Jehovah, and there is none else. They shall go into confusion together, that are makers of idols: but Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. For thus said the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it, I am the Lord, and there is none else. Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed: in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

6. Now as it is the Lord Christ, the “Word made flesh,” that is in a special and peculiar sense, “the Saviour,” the person to whom we must “look and be saved;” as it is in him especially, that “we have righteousness and strength,” and in him that all the true Israel of God “are justified, and glory;” so we find the apostle, in the passage above

amed, viz. Rom. xiv, 11, applying these words, so manifestly spoken by the true God, to Christ. "We shall all stand (says he) before the judgment seat of Christ: for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God: so then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." How plain is it, from hence, that the apostle considered the God of Israel the "only living and true God," as dwelling by his eternal Word in the human nature of Christ, and so intimately united therewith, that he who bowed to the *visible man*, bowed to the *invisible God*; and he who gave an account to the man, gave an account to God dwelling in him, and judging mankind by him. For otherwise, that is, on the supposition of Christ's being a mere man, or a mere creature, how could the words of Jehovah, "Every knee shall bow to me," be a proof that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ*? And if Christ were not God, how could our giving an account to him, be properly termed by the apostle "giving an account to God?"

7. Nor was the conduct of St. Paul, in applying passages of the Old Testament, manifestly meant of the true God, to Christ, any way peculiar. We find other apostles doing the same, St. John in particular. In the twelfth chapter of his Gospel, he applies to the Lord Jesus that remarkable and well-known description of the appearance of Jehovah to Isaiah, recorded in the sixth chapter of his prophecy. "In the year that Uzziah died," says the prophet, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: and one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who shall go for us? [Heb. *ו* in the plural for *us*.] Then said I, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed." Now, John xii, 37, we read, "Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts: that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." In St. John's opinion, therefore, it was the glory of Christ which Isaiah saw, and of him that he spake in the above-mentioned passage.

8. In like manner, what is manifestly spoken of the true God in the fortieth of Isaiah, is, by all the evangelists, applied to Christ: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," says "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," "make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, &c. And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." Now, if the reader will be at the pains of examining Matt.

iii, 3; Mark i, 3; Luke i, 76, and iii, 4, and John i, 23, he will find all these evangelists understanding this voice crying in the wilderness, to be John the Baptist, and the *God* whose way he prepared, to be the *Lord Christ*: in whom "dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and through whose humanity the Deity so shone forth, that he could truly say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Hence the words of God by Zechariah, chap. xi, 13, "Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them:" and chap. xii, 13, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced," are, it is well known, understood by St. Matthew and St. John, as spoken of Christ, and are applied to him accordingly.

9. We have seen, then, that the apostles made no difficulty of applying to Christ those passages of the Old Testament which contain the most essential characters of the supreme God. "Now (as a French writer justly asks) how could they have dared to do this if Christ were not the true and supreme God? Had they been instructed only in the school of nature, they might have learned not to apply to any creature those things which had been spoken of the Creator alone, exclusive of all creatures. If, then, we regard them as brought up in the school of the prophets, we can never suspect them of such madness. For can any thing equal the circumspection of the prophets in this particular? They are continually apprehensive of confounding the Creator with any creature. And this apprehension sufficiently guards them from applying to the one the most essential characters of the other."

10. To illustrate this let it be observed, "The descriptions which the apostles make of Christ are not more sacred than those which the prophets make of the supreme God. As, then, one would not dare to apply to any other those descriptions of Jesus Christ, neither would one dare (were he not such) to apply to Jesus Christ these descriptions of the supreme God. Should we not accuse him of impiety, who treated a man, suppose St. Peter, as the "only begotten Son of God, the Lamb of God, our Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec, the Father of eternity, the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God with us: the Word that was in the beginning with God, the Alpha and Omega; the first and the last?" Could we suffer man to say of Peter, that he had "bought the Church with his own blood?" Had "made atonement for our sins, and borne them in his own body on the tree?" That Peter "dwells in our hearts by faith," and that "there is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved, neither is there salvation in any other?" That "he is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption?" Would you not regard him who spoke thus of St. Peter as a most impious blasphemer? Although he had told you withal, that St. Peter was less than Christ, this would not satisfy you. You would have reason to say that this very acknowledgment left him without excuse: seeing hereby he flatly contradicted himself, and made his impiety more glaring. It would not excuse him to say that he applied these characters to St. Peter only by way of allusion, or accommodation. You might justly answer, If it be an allusion, it is an impious allusion; if it be an accommodation, it is a profane accommodation: be it an application of whatever kind it will, it is an application full of blasphemy.

11. But if you regard as blasphemous an application of the chief

characters of Jesus Christ to so great an apostle as St. Peter, it must be a still greater blasphemy to apply to Christ (if he be not the Most High) the chief characters of the supreme God. For, not to urge that Peter was a teacher sent of God, an inspired prophet, and, according to the Socinians, Christ was no more; allowing that Christ was a greater prophet than St. Peter, and that "there was a great disproportion between him and his apostle; yet if our adversaries be right, there is a far greater disproportion between Christ and the supreme God; seeing the former, however great, is finite, whereas the latter is infinite. If, then, one cannot, without great blasphemy, apply to St. Peter the most essential characters of Christ, one cannot, without infinitely greater blasphemy, apply to Christ the essential characters of God."

12. "This will appear still more evident, if we suppose farther, that he who made these applications to St. Peter, knew that it was already a point in debate, whether St. Peter were not equal to Christ: and foresaw that this error would generally prevail, and that men, for several ages, would confound St. Peter with Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. Such a man, in this case, would be guilty of astonishing impiety, to dare to make such an application of the characters of Jesus Christ, as he knew would be attended with so dangerous, so fatal a consequence. There is nothing easier than to apply this to the apostles. They could not be ignorant that the question, whether Jesus Christ was equal with God, had been already started; yea, and that the Jews had persecuted him under colour of this pretended blasphemy. They who foresaw that, in the last times, false teachers would arise, and who characterized their doctrine, were not ignorant that Christians would fall into this error of confounding Christ with the most high God. How, then, could they who knew both these things, without manifest impiety, apply to Christ those ancient oracles which express the glory of the Most High, those in particular which express the glory of God, exclusively of all his creatures?"

13. From all this it is plain beyond a doubt, that the inspired writers of the New Testament considered the King of Israel and God of the Jews, who had anciently dwelt in their tabernacle and temple, and manifested his presence in Divine glory in the holy of holies, as being incarnated in the flesh of the holy Jesus. Hence St. John, speaking of his incarnation, uses the word *ἐσκηνώσεν*, he *tabernacled*—"The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us," alluding most manifestly to his having dwelt of old in their tabernacle and temple. And hence God promises, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple," Mal. iii, 1. Observe, "His temple,"—for it had been his in all the ages of their government—only before the time of the Babylonish captivity he forsook it; and the glorious tokens of his presence were seen no more, till he was manifested in the flesh of Christ Jesus: then he appeared again in his temple, and by speaking "as never man spake," and performing miracles such as no man had ever performed, he gave that latter house, built after their return from Babylon, a glory such as even Solomon's temple had never known. But inasmuch as that was to be only for a very short time, and inasmuch as the human nature of Christ was to be the true and everlasting dwelling place of the Deity,

where he would be found by penitent, believing souls, and from whence he would give forth oracles and communicate blessings; therefore the Lord Jesus calls his body a temple, and says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up." For the evangelist assures us he spake of the "temple of his body," John ii, 21.

14. Well might St. John say, therefore, in the passage quoted above, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." He came to his own, and his own received him not. For, if the apostles had a right view of him, and understood his true character, he was the immediate Creator of the world, and the person who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and styled himself "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," who led the people of Israel out of Egypt, and gave them the law from Mount Sinai; who took up his abode on that mount, where his appearance was like that of devouring fire, till the tabernacle was prepared for his reception, when he condescended to remove his presence thither, and fill the most holy place, yea, and the whole tabernacle, with such glory that Moses (though accustomed to the Divine presence, having been twice forty days with the Lord on the mount) was not able to enter even into the tent of the congregation, Exod. xl, 34, 35. He it was who dwelt first at Shiloh, and then at Jerusalem, and from between the cherubim upon the mercy seat gave answers to the high priest, being the King as well as God of Israel. He it was who manifested his glory to Isaiah and the other prophets; and having been their true King in all ages, and having been "in the world" from the beginning, appearing in various forms, and superintending his ancient Church from the calling of Abraham to the Babylonish captivity,—he it was, I say, who, when he came in the flesh, "came to his own," but because he came without the ensign of his former glory, having put off the Divine "Shekinah," the form of God, in which he had been wont to appear, "his own received him not:" nay, they rejected him, they crucified him; but not without his title providentially put over his head: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," a title which had been previously acknowledged by Nathanael: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel." This the Jews did, not knowing who he was; for had they known it, doubtless "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

15. As a farther confirmation of this doctrine, I would observe, *First*, That it is the constant testimony of the apostles that the Father in his own proper person, by which we are to understand, perhaps, the simple Divine essence, never was seen by man. "No man hath seen God at any time," John i, 18, and 1 John iv, 12. "The King eternal, immortal, invisible," 1 Tim. i, 17. "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see," 1 Tim. vi, 16. These declarations of his apostles are confirmed by our Lord: "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he who is of God, he hath seen the Father." And yet it is manifest from divers passages of the Old Testament quoted already, and from a great many more that might be quoted, that a person did appear, at sundry times, to the patriarchs and prophets of old, who styled himself the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, the true God."

16. One very remarkable appearance of his has been already noticed,

as recorded in the sixth of Isaiah : " Mine eyes (says the prophet) have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." Another is related, " Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ; and they saw the God of Israel ; and there was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand ; also they saw God, and did eat and drink," Exod. xxiv, 9-12. Now as certainly as St. John, St. Paul, and our Lord himself, (who all affirm that no one hath seen the Father,) were not mistaken, so certainly this person whom Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel saw, and whom Isaiah saw, was not the Father in his own proper person. Who then could it be save the Word, the image of the invisible God, the " brightness of his glory, and express image of his person ?" And that it was he is certain, from St. John's declaration, chap. xii, 41, above cited.

17. Let it be observed, *Secondly*, That in most of the appearances of God recorded in the Old Testament; though the person appearing speaks as *God*, the *true God*, yet he is called an *angel*, or *messenger*, of God, and often appears as a *man*. Thus Exod. iii, 2, " The angel of the Lord appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob : and Moses hid his face, for he was ashamed to look upon God. And Jehovah said, I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt : and I am come down to deliver them," ver. 14. " And God said unto Moses, I am that I am." Now this same person, who here styles himself the " God of Abraham," appeared to that father of the faithful as a man, and conversed familiarly with him. See Gen. xviii. And yet the historian assures us, ver. 1, that it was Jehovah that appeared unto him ; and in the course of the narration he is frequently styled *Jehovah* : as ver. 13, " Jehovah said unto Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh—is any thing too hard for Jehovah ? At the time appointed I will return unto thee : and Sarah shall have a son. And Jehovah said, ver. 17, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do ? They then [two of the three] turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom : but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah," ver. 22. From hence to the end of the chapter follows a long conversation between this person (Jehovah under the form of a man,) and Abraham ; in which he is repeatedly styled *Jehovah* by the historian, and is acknowledged by Abraham, ver. 25, as " Judge of all the earth."

18. After this, the same person appeared to Jacob at Bethel : " Jacob dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top reached to heaven ; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it ; and Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac," &c, Gen. xxviii, 12. And yet, chapter xxxi, verse 11, we find this person, who is here styled *Jehovah*, called an " angel of God." " The angel of God (says Jacob to Rachel and Leah) spake unto me, saying, I am the God of Bethel where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowedst a vow unto me."

19. Concerning another remarkable appearance of this same person,

we are informed, Gen. xxxii, 24, "Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day: and he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: and he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me: and he said, Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and men, and hast prevailed; and Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name? And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him, and Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, that is, the face of God: for I have seen God (said he) face to face, and my life is preserved." Hosea manifestly alludes to this, chap. xii, 3, of his prophecy: "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us: even Jehovah God of hosts, Jehovah is his memorial."

20. I shall only mention two more appearances of this person. "When Joshua was by Jericho, he lift up his eyes, and behold, there stood a man over against him with a sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay: but as captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What said my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so," Josh. v, 13. The other passage is Judges vi, 11: "And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak that was in Ophrah, and said unto Gideon, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, O! my Lord, if Jehovah be with us, why then has this befallen us? And Jehovah looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said, O! my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

21. Now as in these and many more appearances of God, the same person is both styled Jehovah and an angel of Jehovah, (or as מַלְאָכִי is, with equal propriety, rendered *the angel, messenger, or envoy Jehovah*.) surely it was not the Father, in his own proper person, not only because, as the apostles testify, "No man hath seen him, or can see him," but because, if ever he had appeared, surely it would not have been in the character of a messenger or envoy. For by *whom* should he be sent? *Whose* messenger or envoy should he be? And there is no trace, in any part of the Bible, of his ever sustaining any such character as that of angel, messenger, or envoy. But the Son, the Word of the Father, as he may properly be sent by his Father on errands worthy of redeeming power and love, so it is certain he has often sustained this character. Malachi calls him the "angel [or messenger] of the covenant;" and yet, to prevent our thinking him a created angel, styles him, in the same place, "The Lord that should come to his temple," Mal. iii, 1. Isaiah terms him the angel of the Divine presence. "The angel of his presence saved them," chapter lxiii, 9. And doubtless of him it to be understood, "I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way,

and to bring thee unto the place which I have prepared : beware of him, and obey his voice ; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name [that is my nature] is in him," Exod. xxiii, 20, &c. And what is still more remarkable, Jacob terms him "the angel that had redeemed him from all evil ;" and yet to show that he did not mean any created angel, he prays him to "bless the lads," and styles him "the God before whom Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God that had fed him all his life long unto that day," Gen. xlviii, 15, 16.

CHAPTER VII.

That the inspired writers give him those names and titles, and ascribe to him those perfections which the true God claims as peculiarly his own, and whereby he is distinguished from all other beings in the world.

1. It can hardly have escaped the observation of the attentive and learned reader, that in almost all the passages quoted from the Old Testament in the last chapter, and shown to be applied by the New Testament writers to Christ—the true God, the God of Israel, is spoken of under the name of *Jehovah*. According to the apostles and evangelists, therefore, the Lord Jesus is repeatedly termed, and is, *Jehovah*; a name which Jeremiah foretold should be given him, as we learn from the twenty-third chapter of his prophecy, "This is the name whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah our righteousness*."

2. Indeed the appellation *Lord*, *κύριος*, so continually given to Christ in the New Testament, is the word whereby the name *Jehovah* is constantly translated in the old. Bishop Pearson reasons very conclusively upon this subject : "It is most certain that Christ is called *Lord*, *κύριος*, in another notion than that which signifies any kind of human dominion, because, as so, there are many lords ; but he is in that notion *Lord*, which admits of no more than one. They are only '*masters according to the flesh*.' He the '*Lord of glory, the Lord from heaven, King of kings, and Lord of all other lords*.'

3. "Nor is it difficult to find that name [*κύριος, Lord,*] among the books of the law, in the most high and full signification ; for it is most frequently used in the name of the supreme God, sometimes for *El* or *Elohim*,—sometimes for *Shaddai*, or the *Rock*,—and often for *Adonai*,—and most universally for *Jehovah*, the undoubted proper name of God, and that to which the Greek translators, long before our Saviour's birth, had most appropriated the name of *Lord*, *κύριος*, not only by way of explication, but distinction and particular expression. As when we read, 'Thou, whose name alone is *Jehovah*, art the most high in all the earth,' and when God says, 'I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty ; but by my name *Jehovah* was I not known unto them.' In both these places for the name *Jehovah*, the Greek translation, which the apostles followed, hath no other name but *κύριος, Lord*, and therefore undoubtedly by that word did they understand the proper name of God, *Jehovah* ; and had they placed it there as the exposition of any other name of God, they had made an interpretation contrary to the manifest intension of the Spirit : for it cannot be denied

but God was known to Abraham by the true import of the title *Adonai* as much as by the name of *Shaddai*; as much by his dominion and sovereignty, as by his power and all sufficiency: but by an experimental and personal sense of fulfilling his promises, his name Jehovah was not known unto him: for though God spoke expressly unto Abraham, 'All the land thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever;' yet the history teacheth us, and Stephen confirmeth us, 'that he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on, though he promised that he would give it to him for a possession.' Wherefore, when God saith that he was not known to Abraham by his name *Jehovah*, the interpretation of no other name can make good that expression. And, therefore, we have reason to believe the word which the first Greek translators, and, after them, the apostles used, [*κύριος, Lord,*] may be appropriated to that notion which the original requires, [*viz. the word Jehovah,*] as indeed it may, being derived from a verb of the same signification with the Hebrew root,* and so denoting the essence or existence of God, and whatsoever else may be deduced from thence, as revealed by him to be signified thereby.

4. "Seeing, then, this title *Lord* signifieth the proper name of God, *Jehovah*; seeing the same is certainly attributed unto Christ, in a notion far surpassing all other lords, who are rather to be looked upon as servants unto him, it will be worth our inquiry next, whether, as it is the translation of the name *Jehovah*, it belongs to Christ; or whether, though he be Lord of all lords, as subjected under his authority, yet he be so inferior unto him, whose name alone is *Jehovah*, as that in that propriety and eminency in which it belongs unto the supreme God, it may not be attributed unto Christ.

5. "This doubt will easily be satisfied, if we can show the name of *Jehovah* itself to be given to our Saviour; it being against all reason to acknowledge the original name, and deny the interpretation in the sense and full importance of that original. Wherefore, if Christ be the *Jehovah*, as so called by the Spirit of God, then is he so the Lord in the same propriety and eminency in which *Jehovah* is. Now whatsoever did belong to the Messiah, that may and must be attributed unto Jesus, as being the true and only Christ. But the Jews themselves acknowledge that *Jehovah* shall be known clearly in the days of the Messiah, and not only so, but that it is the name which properly belongs to him.† And if they cannot but confess so much who only read the prophecies as the Eunuch did without an interpreter,—how can we be ignorant of so plain and necessary a truth, whose eyes have seen the full completion, and read the infallible interpretation of them? If they could see '*Jehovah* the Lord of hosts' to be the name of the Messiah, who was to them for a 'stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence,'—how can we possibly be ignorant of it, who are taught by St. Paul, that in Christ this

* "It is acknowledged by all that יהוה is from היה or הוה, and God's own interpretation proves no less, אלהים אשר יהוה, Exod. iii. 14. And though some contend, that futurity is essential to the name, yet all agree the root signifieth nothing but 'essence or existence,' that is *εἶναι* or *υπαρχειν*. Now as from היה, in the Hebrew, יהוה so in the Greek, ἀπο το υπαρχειν, κυριος: and what the proper signification of *κυριος* is, no man can teach us better than Hesychius, in whom we read *κυριος, υπαρχειν, τυγχανει*. Hence was *κυριος* by the Attics used for *εἶναι*, 'sit.'"

† As *Misdrach*, Tillim, on Psalm xxi, and *Echa Rabati*, Lam. i. 6.

prophecy was fulfilled, 'As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.'

6. "It was no other than Jehovah who spake these words, 'I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God, [or as the Chaldee paraphrase has it, *בְּיְהוָה* by the word of Jehovah] and will not save them by bow nor sword.' Where not only he who is described as the original and principal cause,—that is, the Father who gave his Son, but also he who is the immediate, efficient cause of our salvation, and that in opposition to all other means and instrumental causes, is called Jehovah, who can be no other than our Jesus, because there 'is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' As in another place, Zech. x, 12, he speaketh, 'I will strengthen them in the Lord [Jehovah] and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord, [Jehovah,'] where he that strengtheneth is one, and he by whom he strengtheneth is another, clearly distinguished from him by the personal pronoun, and yet each of them is Jehovah, and 'Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.' Whatsoever objections may be framed against us, we know Christ is the 'righteous branch raised unto David: the King that shall reign and prosper, in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: ' we are assured that 'this is the name wherby he shall be called, *Jehovah* our righteousness; ' *Jehovah*, the expression of his supremacy, and *our righteousness*, can be no diminution to his Majesty. If those words in the prophet, 'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come and dwell in the midst of thee,' saith Jehovah, did not sufficiently of themselves denote our Saviour who dwelt among us, (as they certainly do,) yet the words which follow would evince as much: 'And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day: and shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee,' Zech. ii, 10, 11. For what other Lord can we conceive dwelling in the midst of us, and sent unto us by the Lord of hosts, but Christ?'"* (*Pearson on the Creed*, pp. 145-148.)

7. Now the name *Jehovah* is so sacred, that the Supreme Being claims it as peculiarly his own: as for instance,—“I am Jehovah, and there is none else,—there is no God beside me,” Isaiah xlv, 5. And, “I am Jehovah, that is my name, my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images,” xlii, 8. It follows, therefore, that Christ is the Supreme Being, or that God is so united with man in his person, that the names of the Supreme Being, even the incommunicable name *Jehovah*, may be properly given to him.

8. As to the name of *God*: it is not denied that this is frequently given him in Scripture, but it is contended that it is *improperly* given, and only meant to be taken in a subordinate and metaphorical sense: in other words, that he is only God by *office*, and not God by *nature*. And much

* As a farther and demonstrative proof of Christ being called *Jehovah*, compare Psalm xcvi, 1, 3, 7, with Heb. i, 6; Psalm cii, 1, 12, 18, 19, 25, with Heb. i, 10; Psalm lxxviii, 17, 18, with Eph. iv, 8; Isaiah xlv, 23, 24, 25, with Rom. xiv, 11; and especially Isaiah vi, 1, 3, 5, with John xii, 41; Isaiah xl, 3-5, and Mal. iii, 1, with Matt. iii, 3; and Zech. xi, 13, and xiii, 10, with Matt. xxvii, 9, 10, and John xix, 34, 37.

stress has been laid upon the Greek article in this controversy: and because in John i, 1, the original is θεος and not ο θεος, it has been urged that it ought to be rendered, "the Word was a God," viz. a subordinate, inferior God, a God by *office*, a *magistrate*. But (as Dr. Doddridge justly observes, and as has been intimated above) "it is impossible Christ should be here called *God*, merely as a *governor*, because he is spoken of as existing before the production of any creatures whom he could govern. And there are so many instances in the writings of this apostle, and even in this chapter, see verse 6, 12, 13, 18, where θεος without the article is used to signify *God* in the highest sense of the word, that it is something surprising such a stress should be laid on the want of an article, as a proof that it is used only in a subordinate sense." Add to this, in Matt. i, 23, the article is found ο μεθ' ημων ο θεος, "God with us;" as also, John xx, 20, ο κυριος μω, ο θεος μω,—*"My Lord, and my God,"* or rather, *"The Lord of me, the God of me."*

9. The pious and judicious author last mentioned, justly remarks on these last words, "The irrefragable argument arising from these words of Thomas, in proof of the Deity of our blessed Lord, cannot be evaded by saying that they are only an *exclamation of surprise*, as if Thomas had said, "Good God, is it indeed thus?" For it is expressly declared, he spoke these words *to him*. And no doubt Christ would severely have reprov'd him, if there had not been just reason to address him thus." This is set in a clear light by Dr. Abbadie, from whom the following paragraph is extracted:—"It is a surprising thing (if Christ were but a mere man) that he should permit Thomas to say to him,—*"My Lord, and my God,"* without saying a word to him about the impiety and blasphemy of treating the creature as if he were the Creator. Thomas before was an unbeliever: now he is an idolater. Till that instant he would not believe that Jesus was risen,—he considered him as a man lying under the power of death; but now, on a sudden, he addresses him as God,—he bows and adores. Of the two extremes, the latter is most commendable; for *unbelief* is not so criminal as *idolatry*: *that* dishonouring Jesus Christ, *this* usurping the throne of God. Better for Thomas, therefore, to have perished in his unbelief, than by renouncing it to fall into idolatry. And yet,—strange indeed! strange to astonishment! who can account for it?—Jesus upbraids him only with the *former*, not at all with the *latter*.* Beside, as our Lord could not but know what an impression these words of his amazed and adoring apostle would make on the minds of men; as he knew that the Jews, deceived by expressions less exceptionable than these, had accused him of blasphemy: and as he knew that these very expressions would give occasion to Christians, in succeeding ages, to treat him as the true God; it is evident that he ought, for the good of mankind, to have strictly prohibited all expressions which tended to make such a dangerous impression: and yet he not only permits his disciples to speak after this manner, but directs them to record the expressions for the perusal of all future generations; and that without giving the least hint that the terms

* Nay, the Lord Jesus is so far from upbraiding Thomas with idolatry on account of this expression, that he even commends him for it: for "Jesus said to him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

are used in a new and uncommon sense, though they appear so impious and blasphemous."

10. Let me observe farther, that, 1 John v, 20, he is styled the *true God*. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, in or through his Son Jesus Christ: ΟΥΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΙ Ο ΑΛΗΘΙΝΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΖΩΗ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΣ: he, or this person, is the true God and eternal life." St. John adds, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." A most necessary caution. But how did the apostles and primitive Christians keep themselves from idols, when they worshipped Jesus Christ, (as Thomas did in the instance just mentioned, and as I shall show, by and by, that they in general did,) if Jesus Christ be not truly God? What is idolatry, if it be not idolatry to worship one that is not the true God? But that he is the person meant here is plain, not only from the relative pronoun οὗτος, he, or this person, which the rules of construction require us to understand of the person last named, who is not the Father, but his Son Jesus Christ; but also from being termed the eternal life, which is an appellation before given, once and again, by St. John to the Lord Jesus,—and never, that I remember, to the Father. "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. He that hath the Son hath life. These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life," 1 John i, 2, and v, 12, 13.

11. Hence, too, he is termed the "mighty God," Isaiah ix, 6; and "the great God," Titus ii, 13; and "God blessed for ever," Rom. ix, 5. His name shall be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, Ω ΛΑ: looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing τὴ μεγάλη θεῶν καὶ σωτηρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, [literally of our *great God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, or,] of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ: of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Now all these epithets are peculiar to proper and absolute Deity, as appears from the following passages:—"Jehovah our God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, and mighty and terrible," Deut. x, 17. "The great, the mighty God, Jehovah of hosts is his name," Jer. xxxii, 18. And "who worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever," Rom. i, 25. These epithets, therefore, being added to the name of God, fix the sense, and show, to a demonstration, that real, proper, and supreme divinity is intended.

12. This will appear still more manifestly, if we consider, secondly, that Divine titles are also given to him. As it has been proved, that he was the person who appeared to Moses at the bush, and to Jacob at Bethel and Peniel, so it is manifest he repeatedly styles himself, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And in Hosea xii, and Isaiah vi and viii, we have seen him entitled *Jehovah*, God of hosts." In like manner, 1 Cor. ii, 1, and James ii, 1, he is styled "Lord of glory;" a title of the same import with that of "King of glory;" an appellation whereby the true God is distinguished. Psal. xxiv, 7, 8, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? *Jehovah*, strong and mighty; *Jehovah*, mighty in battle. Who is the King of glory? *Jehovah* of hosts. He is the King of glory."

13. "King of kings, and Lord of lords," is another of those titles which are appropriated to the supreme God in the Holy Scripture. "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, says Moses, Deut. x, 16, 17, and be no more stiff necked, for the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords." And St. Paul, describing the only true God, calls him "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light, which no man can approach unto," 1 Tim. vi, 15, 16. And yet this title is repeatedly given to the Lord Jesus, as Rev. xvii, 14, "The Lamb shall overcome them, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords:" and again, "He hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords," chap. xix, 16.

14. In like manner, *The first and the last* is a title peculiarly claimed by the one living and true God, as appears from Isaiah xli, 4, "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, *Jehovah*, the first and with the last, I am he." And again, "Thus saith *Jehovah*, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, *Jehovah* of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no other God," Isaiah xliv, 6. And yet this title also is assumed by the Lord Jesus: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest, write. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breast with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire: and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen! and have the keys of hades and of death," Rev. i, 2-18.

15. I have quoted this passage at large, that we may have the better view of him whom Dr. Priestley, with Photinus of old, thinks a *mere man*, ($\Psi\iota\lambda\omicron\nu\ \alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\nu$), a weak, fallible, and peccable creature. But who can read this description of his wonderful person, given by an eye witness of his glory, and yet, after all, be of the doctor's mind? Who can behold, though but by faith, that face which displays the glory of God with a brightness like that of the sun shining in his strength, and yet doubt whether the Godhead inhabits the manhood? Especially who can hear these most august titles, peculiar to the Eternal, to him that had "no beginning of days," and will have "no end of life," so repeatedly claimed, and yet hesitate to pronounce, that the person thus claiming them, if he do it justly, (and surely "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness," would not advance a false claim,) must, in union with his Father, be the one living and true God, possessing, in his complex person, a nature properly Divine?

16. Add to this, that it is supposed by many, that the words contained

in the 8th verse, also, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty," were spoken by the Lord Jesus. And the context seems to make this probable. But as Dr. Doddridge observes in a note on that verse, "If the words should be understood as spoken by the Father, our Lord's applying so many of these titles afterward to himself plainly proves his partaking with the Father, in the glory peculiar to the Divine nature, and incommunicable to any creature." For, were he a *mere creature*, would it not seem strange, not to say impious and blasphemous, after the Father had characterized his person by his peculiar titles, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," that he should immediately echo back the same words, and say, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," and that he should do this a second time; and that after displaying glories, surely above any thing conceivable in man or angel, affirming, "I am the first and the last:" nay, and should do it a third time, in the same words, within a few sentences, as is recorded in the 8th verse of the next chapter, "These things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive?"

If, then, we were in any doubt in what sense to understand the prophets and apostles, when they call Christ God, (as we have seen they frequently do,) we can be in doubt no longer, when we see epithets descriptive of true and proper Deity; joined with the name, and the highest titles of the supreme God, frequently claimed by him and given to him. But when, added to this, we find also the incommunicable *attributes* of the Godhead ascribed to him, surely this, at least, must settle our faith as to this matter.

17. To know the heart of man, is the province only of *Omniscience*, and is claimed by the Lord as his peculiar prerogative in Scripture. Thus, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins; even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings," Jer. xvii, 9, 10. And as it is Jehovah's prerogative, so it is his only. "Thou, even thou only, says Solomon, 1 Kings viii, 39, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." But the Lord Jesus is represented in the same infallible records, as possessing this Divine perfection. "Lord, thou knowest all things, says St. Peter, John xxi, 17, thou knowest that I love thee." "Jesus knew their thoughts," says Matthew, chap. xii, 25, "Jesus knew all men, says St. John, chap. ii, 24, 25, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." And in confirmation of this testimony, borne by his three disciples, Jesus himself speaks from heaven, Rev. ii, 23, and says, "All the Churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the heart." Jehovah only searches the heart: but the Lord Jesus searcheth the heart; therefore the Lord Jesus is Jehovah. Or, in his person there is such a wonderful union of Jehovah with manhood, and when the man speaks, and says, "I am he that searcheth the heart," Jehovah speaks in and by him. And lest we should suppose, that though he possesses this branch of Divine knowledge, yet that there are other branches thereof which he does not possess, St. Paul assures us, "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii, 3.

18. *Omnipresence* is another peculiar glory of the infinite Jehovah.

"Am I a God at hand, says he, Jer. xxiii, 23, 24, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." And yet this glory also is claimed by Jesus Christ. Thus, "Where two or three are met together in my name, I am there in the midst of them," Matt. xviii, 20. And again, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii, 20. And yet again, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii, 20. And who but an *infinite Being* can be present in every congregation, and in every place, yea, in ten thousands of congregations, at one and the same time, and that in parts of the earth most remote from each other? Who that is not present every where, can be present at the door of every heart, and in the heart of every true believer, that opens the door, and admits him in? Surely this shows, at least, that his presence is as universal throughout the globe, as the presence of the light, or of the air. Nor is it confined to this world of ours, but is extended through universal nature, through all his immense and boundless works; for "by him" (the apostle assures us, Col. i, 17,) or rather [*ἐν αὐτῷ*] "in him, all things consist," *συνεστηκε*, stand together, are upheld or supported, even by his universally diffused, all-pervading, presence. For he "upholdeth all things by the word of his power," Heb. i, 3, "and filleth all things," Eph. iv, 10, especially his "Church, which is his body;" to which he is a head of vital influence, and which he so enriches with gifts and graces, that it is called by the apostle, Eph. i, 23, his fulness, *Τὸ πληρωμα ἐκ τὰ παντὰ ἐν αὐτῷ πληρωμενὸς*,—"The fulness of him that filleth all in all."

19. How plainly does it appear, then, that he is possessed of a nature truly and properly Divine, *omniscience* and *omnipresence* being most certainly *incommunicable* attributes of that immense and infinite Jehovah, concerning whom the psalmist speaks with great propriety, as well as sublimity of thought and expression, in Psalm cxxxix, in words which, primarily meant of the Father, are, nevertheless, very applicable to the Son: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me: thou knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising: thou understandest my thoughts afar off: thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways: for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether: thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth or sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me: yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike: for thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb: my substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, being yet imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them."

20. This *omniscience* and *omnipresence* of the Lord Jesus are represented in the book of the Revelation, chap. v, 6, by the "seven eyes" of the Lamb; and in the same passage, his *almighty power* is represented by the emblem of "seven horns." And that this is also an attribute of Christ, appears from the apostle's declaring that he is "able to subdue all things to himself," Phil. iii, 21, which surely speaks the omnipotence of God. Accordingly, he affirms to the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. What things soever the Father doth, these doth the Son likewise. As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom he will," John v, 17. Hence, too, all the godlike works which he wrought in the days of his flesh, and which he often appealed to in proof of his mission, and in proof of his Deity, saying, "If I do not the works of my Father, [such works as the supreme God does,] believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him," John x, 37.

21. Two more Divine attributes I shall mention, as ascribed to Christ in the Holy Scriptures; viz. *eternity* and *immutability*. Moses well describes the *eternity* of Jehovah, where he says, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth or the world; even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night," Psalm xc, 2. And what do the inspired penmen speak of the *Word*, that was in the beginning with God, and was God? Does not Solomon say of him, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old? I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men," Prov. viii, 22, &c.

22. Or if it be doubted whether this was not rather meant of wisdom as a quality or attribute of the Deity, and not of the substantial, living wisdom and word of the Father; yet surely it must be allowed, if compared with other scriptures, to be perfectly applicable to him. For our Lord himself assures us, "that he had glory with the Father before the world was," John xvii, 5; and the Prophet Micah declares, "that his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;" or, as the original means, from of old, "from the days of eternity," Micah v, 2. And the passages just quoted from the first chapter of the Revelations, in which he applies to himself the high titles of the *eternal God*, express the same, or still more. Hence the apostle, speaking of his type Melchizedec, King of righteousness, and King of peace, describes him as "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God," that is, a proper type of him who is everlasting.

23. I mentioned also *immutability*, another peculiar attribute of the eternal God. "I am Jehovah, says he, Mal. iii, 6, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. The Father of lights, (says

St. James,) with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." And is not this attribute also ascribed to Christ? We have already seen that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to him the 25th, 26th, and 27th verses of Psalm cii; and surely no words can more strongly express immutability. "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 fail not." And, chap. xiii, 8, of the same epistle, he assures us, that "Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and on this his unchangeableness, grounds an argument against our being "carried about with divers and strange doctrines." But why should I dwell upon particulars? He himself assures us; John xvi, 15, "All things that the Father hath, are mine:" *all the names, titles, and attributes of the Father.* And no wonder, for the Father himself is his, and dwells in him in all his fulness; and their union is perfect, indissoluble, and eternal; so that the Son is never without the Father, nor the Father without the Son.

CHAPTER VIII.

That the apostles represent Him as the immediate author of all the Divine works, even of the creation and preservation of all things.

1. We have already seen, in that remarkable passage quoted at large from the beginning of St. John's Gospel, that he represented the *Word*, who was "in the beginning with God," as the immediate Creator of all things. His words are very express: "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made," ver. 3. And again, ver. 10, "The world was made by him." St. Paul, it is well known, taught the very same doctrine: "By him (*εἰς αὐτὸν*) 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."

2. It is true, the Father, who is the fountain of Deity and of Divine power, is also the *primary cause* of all the Divine works. But it is plain, from these passages, that the apostles considered the *Word* that was in the beginning with God, as the immediate author of them, the operative Creator, (if I may so express myself,) the *real* and *proper framer* of all things, visible and invisible, temporal and eternal. Hence it is that they apply to him (as we have seen) the words of David in Psalm cii: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands:" which words certainly represent the person of whom they are spoken, not as an *instrument* in the hands of another, but, in a true and proper sense, the *Maker of the world*. And this was certainly the opinion of the ancient fathers, as innumerable passages in their writings show. For the illustration of the subject, I shall quote two or three pages from *Bishop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith*; in which, it will generally be allowed, he fairly represents the sentiments of these eminently holy men, who, living so

near the apostolical age, (some of them being disciples of the apostolic fathers,) and being so constantly conversant with their writings, could not easily be ignorant what the doctrine of the apostles was upon this subject.*

3. The following passage the bishop gives us (vol. i, p. 128) from Justin's Epistle to Diognetus, (p. 498 :) "He, the Almighty, the Creator of all things, the invisible God, hath implanted among men, and engraven in their hearts, the heavenly truth, the Word, holy and incomprehensible: not sending, as any one would conjecture, a servant, an angel, a prince, an earthly potentate, or one to whom he had intrusted the administration of heavenly things; but the Artificer and Maker of all things, by whom he formed the heavens, and shut in the sea in its proper bounds: whose mysteries all the elements faithfully observe; from whom the sun has received his charge to measure out the day; whom the moon obeys when he commands her to shine in the night, and the stars which follow the course of the moon; by whom all things are ordered and bounded, to whom all things are subject, the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is; the fire, the water, the abyss; what is in the heights and depths, and between them: him he hath sent to them. For what end? As a man would think, to tyrannize over them? To awe and terrify them? No: he sent him as a king sends a king, his Son, in clemency and meekness: he sent him as a God: he sent him to man; he sent him to save."

4. The bishop quotes Athenagoras to the same purpose, (p. 131 :) "The Son of God is the Word of the Father, in idea, and energy. All things were made by him, and for him: the Father and the Son being one; the Son in the Father, and the Father in the Son, by the unity and power of the Spirit. *The Son of God is the Mind and Word of the Father.*" And (pp. 143, 144) produces from Irenæus, disciple of Polycarp, a passage still more explicit: "Nor shall any thing made, and in subjection, be compared with the *Word of God*, by whom all things were made, who is our Lord Jesus Christ. Because, whether they are angels or archangels, or thrones or dominions, they are made by him who is God over all, by his Word. So St. John hath told us. For when he had said of the Word of God, that he was in the Father, he added, 'All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made.' David also, when he had particularly enumerated his praises, added, 'For he commanded, and they were created; he spoke, and they were made.' Whom did he command? *The Word*, by whom the heavens were made, and the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Now the things that are made, are different from him that made them; and those appointed, from him that appointed them. He is unmade, without beginning, without end; he wants nothing, is self sufficient, and gives to all other things their being. The things made by him had a beginning, and, as such, may have an end; are subject, indigent. It is altogether necessary they should have a different name, especially among men of any discernment in such things; so that he who made all things with his Word, be justly and alone called God and Lord; but not that those which are made should participate, or justly take to themselves the name of their Creator."

* I make use of the translation of Fran. Holland, A. M., rector of Sutton, Wilts.

5. In the two following pages, the bishop quotes two more passages from Irenæus to the same purpose. "The Son, who is the *Word* of God, laid out these things from the beginning, the Father not standing in need of angels for the creation of the world, and the making of man, for whom the world was created; nor again wanting a ministerial power for making these things that are made, and the disposing the affairs of the world, after the formation of man, but having a sufficient and ineffable one. For his own offspring, and impress, ministers to him in all things, that is, the Son and Holy Spirit, the Word and Wisdom, to whom angels are subject, and minister." Again: "'All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made.' Here is no exception; but the Father made all things by him, whether visible or invisible, sensible or intellectual, temporal, for a certain purpose, or eternal. He made all things, not by angels, or powers different from his mind; for the God of all things wants nothing, but by his Word and Spirit makes, disposes, and governs all things, and gives being to them."

6. The same doctrine Irenæus delivers in another place, (p. 214:) "There is only one God, the Creator, who is above all principality and power, and dominion and dignity. He is the Father, the God, the Creator, the Builder, the Maker, that made those things by himself: that is, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, by his Son and Holy Spirit." Again, (p. 369, of Irenæus' Works:) "The angels then did not make, did not form us: they could not make the image of God, nor any but the *Word of God*: no power distinct (separate) from the Father. Nor did the Father stand in need of them to make what he had before designed, as if he had not hands of his own. He has always with him his Word and Wisdom, the Son and Spirit, by whom, and in whom he freely made all things, and to whom he spake, saying, *Let us make man after our image and similitude.*"

7. To these testimonies of Justin, Athenagoras, and Irenæus, disciples of the apostolical fathers, I shall add from the bishop, (p. 197,) a passage of Origen, which the bishop defends as perfectly orthodox. "The Word, the Son of God, is the immediate, and, as it were, the very framer of the world: the Father of the Word, in that he ordered the Word, his Son, to make the world, is primary Creator." (Origen, p. 317.)

8. The fathers, therefore, at least in these passages, (which it will not be doubted Bishop Bull has fairly represented,) approve this doctrine, that though the Father is primary Creator, yet that the Son, his Word, is the immediate creator and framer of the world. But that he did not act in this work as a being separate from the Father, but in such a sense one with him, that the Father, creating the world by him, might be said to create it by his own hands, as Irenæus' phrase is, or by himself; according to the words of Isaiah, chap. xlv, 24, "I am Jehovah that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." For as the Holy Spirit, who is undoubtedly of a nature properly Divine, is the "Spirit of the Father, and proceedeth from the Father," but though *sent forth*, is never *separated* from him; so, in like manner, the Word is the Word of the Father: and though he says he "proceeded forth, and came from God, and that he came not of himself, but the Father sent him," John viii, 42, yet he is still united to him, and one with him; is still "in the Father, and the Father in him."

9. What I have said of the *creation*, must also be said of the *preservation* of all things. "By him," St. Paul assures us in the above-mentioned passage, "all things consist," *συνεστηκε*, are upheld or supported: "Upholding all things," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. i, 3. Both passages are designedly and professedly spoken of Christ, but not of him as a being separate from the Father, but in, and with him; for, in and through the Son; all creatures, as St. Paul declares, Acts xvii, "live, move, and have their being" in the Father, who, we are assured, "is above all, and through all, and in all;" creating, preserving, governing, and pervading the universe, and giving life and energy to every thing through his Son, and by his Spirit. Nay, as all things acknowledge the Son as their Creator and Preserver; so also as their Owner and Lord; for all things were created for him, Col. i, 16, and he is said to be heir of all, as being the "first begotten, and only begotten of the Father, and Lord of all." See Heb. i, 1, and Acts x, 36.

10. Now have we considered those many and mighty works, of which he is declared to be the Creator, Preserver, and Lord? At least those of them that come under our observation? Has that glorious luminary, the sun, engaged our attention, so immense that the mind of man can scarce comprehend it; and so bright that no eye can steadily behold it; and the source of light to a whole system of worlds? Have we viewed the moon, walking in brightness, and marked the wonderful phenomenon of her waxing and waning glory? Have the stars of light attracted our notice, those glittering diamonds, wherewith the firmament is studded and enriched, and rendered the most grand and striking, as well as the most beautiful object that the human eye can behold? And have we considered their astonishing distances from the earth, and from each other; distances so immense, that the whole circuit of the solar system is but a point, when compared thereto? Have we reflected how probable it is, that each star is a sun, and each sun a fountain of light to revolving worlds?

11. Have we marked the planets, whether primary or secondary, that surround our own sun, and observed their different magnitudes, distances, and revolutions? And if we have not been able to determine, as to the probability of their being inhabited, and stored with sundry kinds of creatures like our earth; yet have we considered their wonderful influence upon the surrounding atmosphere of our own globe, and their use as "a horologe,—machinery Divine?" appointed for signs and for seasons, for days and for years? Dividing time into sundry periods, longer or shorter, by their different revolutions, and thus measuring it out to those, whose grand business it is, and whose chief concern it ought to be, to improve it to the glory of their great Maker?

12. Have we surveyed our own globe, that large and valuable estate, given by the Father of all, as a rich and ample inheritance, to Adam and his posterity? Have we traversed, not with a measuring line, indeed, but with the eye of the mind, the boundless tracts of land and water of which it is composed? Have we taken the height of the perpetual hills, (as Moses calls them,) the everlasting mountains, covered with eternal snows; and from bubbling fountains, pure brooks, and descending torrents, dispersing streams and rivers of clear and refreshing water, in many and meandering courses, through the largest conti-

nents? Have we fathomed the depths of the ocean, admired the flux and reflux of its waters, or ascertained the number of its scaly inhabitants, and marked their different species?

13. Have we ascended into the regions of the air, and learned the nature and properties of the particles which compose that subtile and invisible fluid? Have we observed how it surrounds the earth as a swaddling band, binds old ocean in its bed, and, by its pressure, is the spring of life to the animal and vegetable creation? Have we marked the rise of vapours, observed the balancing of the clouds, listened to the grumbling of thunder, and gazed when the forked lightning played? Have we considered the treasures of hail and snow, and viewed attentively the hoar frost of heaven? Have we admired the provision made for the ascent of waters into the air, and for their conveyance to the remotest distance over sea and land, that they may descend in dews and showers, as well to refresh the high places of the wilderness, as to water the cultivated and fertile country?

14. Have we descended below the surface of the earth, examined the different strata through which we passed, and taken a full and comprehensive view of the mineral kingdom? Have we beheld the quarries of stone, the mines of copper and lead, and the immense magazines of fuel, wonderfully formed, and commodiously hid, below the surface of the earth? Has the glittering ore of silver, the admired metal of gold, and the brilliant and sparkling lustre of diamonds and other precious stones, caught our eyes, and engaged our attention?

15. From the mineral, have we passed to the vegetable kingdom? Have we noticed the innumerable kinds of grass that clothe the meadows, the different species of corn that enrich the fields, the variety of flowers, of different hues and forms, that beautify the parterre, and the sundry kinds and ranks of stately trees that wave in the forest? Have we considered the different seeds from which they spring, the provision made for dispersing and planting them in a proper soil, and the astonishing progress of their vegetation? Have we admired the contrivance, and adored the power that causes the same spot of earth, with the same kind of culture, to produce fruits of such different tastes and qualities, and flowers so endlessly diversified in form and colour? And have we praised and glorified the wisdom and goodness which, in the warmest climes, and most sultry seasons, furnishes us with fruits of the most cooling nature, and such as are most replete with juices calculated to refresh and allay our thirst?

16. From vegetables, have we ascended to animals? And have the innumerable species and kinds with which we are acquainted, passed in review before us? Have we considered the myriads of animalcula, of different kinds, possessed of various degrees of life and activity, of all shapes and forms, too small to be discerned by the naked eye, but rendered visible by the microscope, sporting and taking their pastime in one single drop of water, like leviathan in the deep? Have we viewed the thousands of thousands of insects of a larger kind, of all forms and sizes, varied endlessly, possessed of powers and qualities most astonishingly different from each other, but all suited to the state and manner of subsistence assigned them? Have the sundry kinds of creeping things and beasts of the earth engaged our attention? The subtile serpent, the

wily fox, the stately horse, the majestic lion, the half-reasoning elephant? Have we marked the amazing difference of their inward dispositions, as well as of their outward forms, and the wonderful provision made for their support, and the preservation of their different species? Have the feathered fowl, and birds of every wing, been considered by us? Their beautiful figure, their rich plumage, their swift motions, and the sweet harmony of their diversified notes and artless music? Have we admired the pride of the peacock, the innocence of the dove, the affection of the stork, the rapacity of the vulture, and the strength and swiftness of the eagle? Have we marked with what regularity, foresight, and care, they build their nests, and provide for the safety and subsistence of their young?

17. Has man, that masterpiece of Divine workmanship, engaged our attention? Have we considered the wonderful structure of his body? The more astonishing formation of his mind? Have we observed his erect form? His exact proportions? His comely figure? His Divine face? His majestic appearance? Have we marked the number and variety of his senses and members? How suited to each other, and to his state and place upon the earth, and his rank among the creatures? Have we reflected upon their contrivance and usefulness, and upon the profit and pleasure arising from each in particular, and from all in general? Have we observed the multiplicity of parts employed in the structure of each member or sense, and their happy union in forming one perfect whole? Have we examined the eye or ear? The hand or foot? The head or heart?

18. Have we considered the provision made for the nutrition and growth of the wonderful machine and all its parts, so that the very hairs of our head, and our finger nails, both useful and necessary, do not want their proper nourishment? Have we reflected upon the various means provided for preparing, receiving, digesting, and extracting nourishment from our food, and throwing off the superfluous parts? Have we viewed the astonishing apparatus of veins and arteries, ministering to the circulation of the blood, and the life of the body?

19. Have we considered the nervous system, the chief mean of animal life and sensation? The wonderful structure of the brain, lodged in the golden bowl, (as Solomon seems to call the membrane that encloses it,) and the various and multiplied branchings of the silver cord, the spinal marrow, spread over all the body, and rendering every part keenly sensible? And have we observed how the animal appetites and propensities strangely ensure the preservation of life, and propagation of the species?

20. Have we noticed a spirit in man? A soul in body? A mind in matter?—an intelligent and free principle? A power that perceives, thinks, reasons, judges, approves, condemns, wills, desires, loves, hates, hopes, fears, rejoices, mourns?—that pervades the earth, encompasses the heavens, measures the sun, ascends above the stars, rises from the creature to the Creator, beholds his glory, admires his beauty, feels his love, tastes his pleasures, imitates his perfections, and aspires after a conformity to him, and fellowship with him, through everlasting ages?

21. Have we reflected that there are minds that were never joined to

matter,—spirits that never dwell in flesh? ethereal beings, flames of fire, angels of light, pure and perfect intelligences? All life, all activity, all power? All eye, all ear, all sensibility? Whose knowledge is intuitive and certain, whose love is sincere and flaming, whose praise is cordial and ardent, and whose obedience is free and constant? Whose duty is unintermitted, whose loyalty is untainted, whose services are disinterested, and whose happiness is complete, established, and eternal? Have we remembered that there are innumerable ranks and orders of these beings, of which we have no knowledge, and of whose nature and state we can form no conception? “Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers?”

22. Have we taken a survey of these wonderful works, both above and below, both material and immaterial,—and have we considered that we know not one thousandth part of their number, magnitude, or minuteness, or of the contrivance manifested in the formation of the meanest of them, of a blade of grass, a grain of sand, a drop of water, or a particle of air or light? And after all, dare we pronounce that a mere creature, an angelic, or super-angelic being, was, and is, sufficient for the creation, preservation, and government of all these and other creatures? If so, the sacred Scriptures will reprove our rashness, and inform us that “he who built all things is God:” and that this God is Christ. For the apostle, in this passage, professedly speaks of him. Ver. 3, he says: “This person was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.” The apostle’s argument is manifestly this: he that buildeth the house, hath more honour than the house he buildeth, or any part of it.

But Christ built the Jewish Church, yea, the whole creation, of which Moses was but a small, inconsiderable part:—

Therefore Christ is worthy of more honour than Moses: yea, is as much above him as the Creator of all things is above one of his creatures. Again: he that built all things is God: but Christ built all things: therefore Christ is God; yea, (in union with his Father,) “the everlasting God, Jehovah—the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary; and there is no searching of his understanding,” Heb. iii, 4; Isa. xl, 28.

CHAPTER IX.

That Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and Saviour of lost mankind.

1. As the inspired penmen represent the Word, that was in the beginning with God, as the Creator, Preserver, and Lord of all,—so it will readily be allowed that they point him out as the Redeemer and Saviour of fallen man. “Unto you is born, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost; looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem

us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

2. The foundation of this doctrine of our redemption and salvation by Christ Jesus, it is well known, is laid in the depravity and guilt of mankind. "All have sinned (says the apostle) and come short of the glory of God: the whole world is guilty before God;" and Jews and Gentiles, even all mankind, are "by nature children of wrath," Rom. lii, 19-23; Eph. ii, 3. According to the Scriptures, all have forfeited the everlasting life and happiness for which they were created, and have deserved death and everlasting destruction: for "the wages of sin is death," even such a death as stands opposed to that "eternal life which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. Now it is the uniform doctrine, both of the Old and New Testament, that the Lord Jesus hath ransomed our lives by laying down his own. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many; he gave himself a ransom for all; he died for our sins according to the Scriptures; he died for all, when all were dead; tasted death for every man: the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree; was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our Iniquities, and bore the chastisement of our peace; was made sin (a sin offering) for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," or might be justified through him. Hence we are said to be "redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ," 1 Pet. i, 18; to be "bought with a price," and therefore not to be "our own," 1 Cor. vi, 20; "and to have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins."

4. But if Jesus Christ, whose life is thus represented to be laid down as the price of man's redemption from everlasting death and destruction to everlasting life and salvation: if Jesus Christ (I say) be but a mere man, it is certain his life must be of incomparably less value than this eternal salvation of all mankind, thus said to be procured by it. For however holy and excellent we may suppose him to be, yet his life could not be worth the lives of all men—especially his temporal life could not be worth the eternal lives of all men. His parting with a short, uncertain, and afflicted life, and coming under the power of death with regard to his body merely, and that only for two or three days, (his soul in the meantime neither dying nor suffering the loss either of its holiness or happiness;) and doing this in sure and certain hope of being raised again, and receiving, in exchange, after that short space of time, an eternal and most blessed life: this surely was no such great thing, as that it could be any proper consideration, or redemption price, on account of which Divine and infinite justice should deliver an innumerable multitude of rational and immortal beings, of exactly the same nature with this man thus dying for them, not only from temporal, but also from eternal death; and should put them in possession of glory and felicity greater beyond conception than that which they had forfeited, and lasting without end.

5. According to the apostle, one principal end of the death of Christ was to demonstrate "God's righteousness;" that is, the purity of his nature, implying his infinite hatred to sin; the authority of his law, which

denounces vengeance against the sinner; and the equity of his government, or, in one word, his justice. "Justified freely (says he, Rom. iii, 24, &c.) by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [viz. the blood he hath shed, Eph. i, 7, the price he hath paid, 1 Cor. vi, 20,] whom God hath set forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness, by [or on account of] the remission of past sins, through the forbearance of God, for a demonstration [I say] of his righteousness, in this present time, that he might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." But surely, if satisfaction could be made for the injury done to the glory of God by all the sins of all mankind, and their salvation from eternal destruction into everlasting life and happiness, could be rendered consistent with the Divine attributes, (in consequence of their repentance,) upon such easy terms as the giving up one mere man to temporal death for two or three days, and then rewarding him with supreme dominion and glory at God's right hand for ever: whatever inference the intelligent creation of God might draw from hence in favour of his clemency, they could draw none in favour of his righteousness or justice. They could not learn from this to form more exalted views of this: but, on the contrary, their ideas of it would become more contracted; and they would be inclined to suppose, both that sin is no very great evil, and that God is not much displeased with it; inasmuch as he would forgive the complicated and aggravated guilt of so many myriads of sinners, forbear to execute upon them the vengeance threatened in his holy and righteous law, and even raise them to glory and felicity inconceivable and eternal, merely because one mere man, like themselves, died for them. Surely to talk of God's righteousness being demonstrated by such a scheme as this,—to say that all this was done to save the honour of his justice, that he might be (and appear to be) just, while he is the merciful "Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," would be highly absurd and ridiculous.

6. "If we be truly sensible of our sins, (says Bishop Pearson,) we must acknowledge that, in every one, we have offended God; and the atrociousness of every offence must needs increase proportionably to the dignity of the party offended, in respect of the offender: because the more worthy any person is, the more reverence is due unto him, and every injury tendeth to his dishonour: but between God and man there is an infinite disproportion, and, therefore, every offence committed against him must be esteemed as in the highest degree of injury." Hence we know (as the apostle hath assured us) "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins;" and we may very well doubt how the blood of him, who hath no other nature than that of a mere man, can take away the sins of other men; there appearing no such difference as will show a certainty in the one, and an impossibility in the other.

7. "But since we may be 'bought with a price,' well may we believe the blood of Christ sufficiently precious, when we are assured," that, through the union of the human nature with the Divine, "it is the blood of God, (as St. Paul calls it, Acts xx, 28,) nor can we question the efficacy of it in 'purging our conscience from dead works,' if we believe Christ 'offered up himself through the eternal Spirit.'" For, "as the atrociousness of the offence beareth proportion to the person offended,

so the value of reparation ariseth from the dignity of the person satisfying, because the satisfaction consisteth in a reparation of that honour which by the injury was eclipsed: and all honour doth increase proportionably as the person yielding it is honourable." Notwithstanding, therefore, "by every sin we have offended God, who is of infinite eminency, according unto which the injury is aggravated;" yet we may be "secure of our reconciliation with God, because the person who hath undertaken to make the reparation is of the same infinite dignity, so that the honour rendered by his obedience is proportionable to the offence, and that dishonour which arose from our disobedience."

8. This point is set in a clear light by Dr. Abbadie:—"If Jesus be God-man, the intimate union of the humanity with his divinity may well be conceived to render his life and blood infinitely precious. Of this we may assure ourselves by reasoning from the less to the greater. A clod of the valleys, for instance, is of no worth or dignity; we do not care how many blows it receives: it makes no difference whether it be preserved or destroyed. But if it be united to a spirit, the union will immediately confer a dignity upon it; so as to give a proportionate value to its actions, or sufferings, on the behalf of any one. Then suppose it exalted to a union with the Divine essence, and its intimate relation to God will render its vicarious obedience and suffering of infinite worth. Or thus: If the sufferings of a person of quality be of more value than those of a peasant; if those of a king's son, than those of a person of quality; and if those of the king himself than those of his own son: it follows, if we proceed in this gradation *ad infinitum*, and can find a person whose dignity has no bounds, his sufferings will be of infinite value. Such, according to our hypothesis, is Jesus Christ, for he is God "manifest in the flesh." In all his sufferings, and in the depth of his humiliation, he possessed the glories of the Godhead; which ennobled and dignified beyond conception, and beyond bounds, all that he did, and all that he underwent for the salvation of sinners.

9. "Such a Saviour, being the gift of the Divine Father to miserable men, must be a present of infinite value;" and as it could proceed from nothing but infinite mercy and love, so it renders our salvation consistent with infinite justice and purity. "But after all that can be said for the contrary sentiment, a man is but a man; and we should exalt the mercy (and justice) of God at a childish rate, were we to exclaim, 'Unspeakable love! unbounded mercy! which gave (awful justice! tremendous holiness! which required) the temporal life of a mere man for the eternal salvation of all mankind.' Nor would an exclamation of this kind be much more pertinent on the Arian hypothesis." For, "is there any proportion—let common sense judge—between the temporal life of any mere creature (laid down for two or three days) and the eternal felicity of all the redeemed?"

10. And as it is not conceivable that the temporal life of a mere man, or a mere creature, could be an adequate ransom for the whole human race, innumerable as they are, so as to procure from Divine and infinite justice their forfeited everlasting life and happiness: as it is not conceivable that the blood of such a one, shed for them, should have so much more virtue than the blood of thousands and millions of bulls and goats, as to be able to effect what the blood of such creatures could not

effect : as, in this sense especially, "no man can redeem his brother, or give unto God [כִּפּוּר, his atonement or] ransom," Psalm xlix, 7 ; so every branch of the salvation wherewith Christ came to save sinners, manifests its author to be more than a mere man, or mere creature. According to the Scriptures, he is "the Light of the world," and enlightens the amazing darkness of millions of minds : he is the "Life of the world," and softens the extreme hardness of myriads of hearts : he is "the Sun of righteousness," and arises upon multitudes of cold, benighted, bewildered, desponding mortals, with "healing in his wings," so that they "go forth and grow up as calves of the stall," as Malachi has it : he is the Physician of souls, and while he pardons the aggravated guilt, he renews and heals the fallen and disordered nature of all that apply to him. He is present with his people, all in general, and each individual in particular, at all times, and in all places throughout the whole earth ; protecting them against all their enemies, ghostly and bodily, succouring them in all their temptations, comforting them in all their troubles, and supplying all their wants : he watches over them by night and by day, wherever they are, at home or abroad, in town or country, by sea or land, in Britain or in China, as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, feeding them "in green pastures," leading them "beside the still waters," and restoring their souls : he "preserves them from falling," keeps them "by his power through faith unto salvation, and presents them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

11. Now let these various branches of the salvation wherewith Christ came to save sinners be considered, and then let it be determined whether he must not be more than a mere man or mere creature ? Surely to save sinners with so great a salvation, must be a work of equal difficulty with that of the creation or preservation of all things. Accordingly, the apostle joins them all together in the passage quoted from Col. i. For after he has spoken of Christ as the Maker, Upholder, and Lord of all, he goes on to tell us that he is "the Head of his body, the Church ; the beginning, the first born from the dead also, that in all things [in those of grace as well as those of nature] he might have the pre-eminence." For, adds he, "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," viz. all the fulness of wisdom, power, and love : all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, (nothing short of this being sufficient for such a mighty undertaking,) "and having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself,—by him [I say,] whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

12. Hence the apostle assures us, that "God is in Christ, [the Divine nature in the human,] reconciling the world to himself ;" and the Prophet Isaiah having a prophetic view of Emmanuel, "God with us, God manifest in the flesh," for the redemption and salvation of lost man, exhorts us as follows :—"O ! thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, [see Bishop Lowth's translation,] get thee up into the high mountain : O ! thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid ; say to the cities of Judah, Behold,"—a mere man ? No :—"Behold your God ! Behold, (adds he,) the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm will rule for him : behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and

carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isaiah xl, 9-11.

13. And to the same purpose, in the 35th chapter, speaking of the happy effects of this manifestation of Jehovah in our nature, he declares, verse 2, "They shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God," and exhorts,—*"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a feeble heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God, with a recompense: he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing,"* ver. 3, 4. All this, it is well known, was literally fulfilled, when the *"Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and men beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* Then were all these miracles, and many others, really and continually performed. Day by day the *"blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised up, and the poor had the Gospel preached unto them."*

14. And these mighty works were done in a way and manner that manifestly showed that the person performing them was more than man. Man he was undoubtedly, but not man only: Jehovah, by his eternal Word, dwelt in that man, and did the works by him. Hence, in doing this mighty work, Christ spake, and acted with an authority and power, such as neither Moses nor Elijah, nor any of the prophets or apostles ever manifested. *"Lord, if thou wilt,"* said the leper, *"thou canst make me clean: Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. Speak the word only, (said the centurion,) and my servant shall be healed. Jesus said, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."* When Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, he only *"touched her hand, and the fever left her."* When the *"devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go into the herd of swine; he said unto them, Go: and they went into the herd of swine. When the people were put forth, he went in and took her by the hand, and the maid arose,"* Matt. ix, 25; see Mark v, 29; Matt. xiv, 34-36; Luke vi, 17, 19. *"When they came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she a widow: and much people of the city with her: and when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not: and he came and touched the bier, and said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise: and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother,"* Luke vii, 12.

15. Now was it thus that the prophets and apostles wrought miracles? Did they speak in this authoritative manner, as having life and power in themselves to raise the dead, and do cures? Quite the reverse. *"In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk. I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to come out of her. Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. And Elijah cried unto the Lord his God, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the*

voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." See a similar instance concerning Elisha, 2 Kings iv, 18-36.

16. But these works of mercy done by the Lord Jesus upon the bodies of men, were nothing in comparison of those done for men's souls. See one or two instances among a thousand. "Behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay: and when Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God only? And Jesus knowing their thoughts, [and was he who knew their thoughts a mere man?] said, Wherefore think ye evil in your heart? For whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine own house; and immediately he arose, and took up the bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion," Mark ii, 3-12.

17. We see him performing another work of still greater mercy, a relation of which is given us by an eye witness, who was also the subject of it, in the following words: "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; which things I also did. But as I went to Damascus, at midday, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me: and when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying, in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks; and I said, Who art thou, Lord? and he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me," Acts xxvi, 9-19. And is this lustre, exceeding the brightness of the sun, the glory of a mere man? Is this voice, "Why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest;" the voice of a mere man? Is it a mere man that here appears to make a minister, and promises to deliver him "from the people, and from the Gentiles, to whom he sends him?" And is it by faith in a mere man that they receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified?

18. Let us attend to this wonderful story a little farther. Because the amazing splendour of Divine glory that had surrounded Saul, upon the appearance of this august personage, had so dazzled his eyes as to deprive him of sight; the same gracious Lord, who arrested him in his

mad career to shed the blood of the saints, and of a blasphemer and persecutor made him a preacher and an apostle, commanded Ananias to go to him to restore him: and when Ananias hesitated, saying, "Lord, I have heard from many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name; the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Mark these expressions, "Thy saints that call on thy name; a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles; how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Are the saints the property of a mere man? Do they call on a mere man for salvation? Is it the name of a mere man that apostles are constituted chosen vessels to bear? And is it for the sake of a mere man that they suffer such great things?

19. Now, as it is certainly the sole prerogative of God to forgive sins, and receive guilty sinners to mercy, so our Lord manifested himself to be God, by exercising this power, not only in these instances, but in a great many others recorded in the Gospel. Indeed, all believers are represented in the Scriptures, not only as having "redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, and being accepted in Christ the beloved," but as being actually forgiven, and accepted by him. "Forgiving one another, (says the apostle, Col. iii, 13,) even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Receive ye one another, Rom. xv, 7, as Christ also hath received us to the glory of God." And as for illumination, regeneration, sanctification, consolation, and the whole work of grace upon the soul, we have already seen he is represented as the author thereof, conjointly with the Father; and accordingly he is addressed as such in the beginning of almost all St. Paul's epistles, and in divers other places. He is "full of truth and grace," and out of his fulness all true believers "receive, and grace upon grace." It is his grace that is "sufficient for them," 2 Cor. xii, 9; and through him "strengthening them, they can do all things," Phil. iv, 13. He is the author and finisher of their faith," Heb. xii, 2; the source and object of their love, Eph. iii, 17-19; the spring and end of their obedience, 2 Cor. v, 14, 15; Rom. xiv, 8, 9. They are "more than conquerors through him who hath loved them," Rom. viii, 37. "He delivers them from every evil work, and preserves them unto his heavenly kingdom," 2 Tim. iv, 18; and confers upon them eternal life. "I give unto my sheep (says he, John x, 28) eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

CHAPTER X.

That Christ is the universal judge.

1. FROM works of grace and mercy proceed we to those of justice and judgment. "Who is this that cometh from Edom? with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to

save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like unto him that treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me; and I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my fury, and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment: for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my zeal it upheld me. And I trod down the people in mine anger, and made them drunk in my fury, and brought down their strength to the ground."

2. Do we wish to see another description of this godlike personage, this captain of the Lord's host? This generalissimo (shall I call him?) of the armies of heaven? or rather, this Jehovah Sabaoth, this Lord of armies? Then let us open the 19th chapter of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, by his servant John, and if the eyes of our understanding be not enlightened to see the glorious sight; if "he that commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath not shined in our hearts to show us the light of the glory of God, in the face (*ἐν προσώπῳ*, *in the person*) of Christ Jesus;" let us at least attend to the highly-favoured disciple, who learned to know his Master by leaning on his bosom, and hearing the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. "I saw heaven opened, (says he,) and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and, [N. B.] HE HAD A NAME WRITTEN THAT NO MAN KNEW BUT HIMSELF: and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God: and he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

3. Such is the person who says, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And who that considers these descriptions of his glory given by Isaiah and St. John, the most evangelical prophet, and the most enlightened apostle, can forbear to comply with the heavenly injunction, and honour him "even as they honour the Father," by submitting to him, falling at his footstool, supplicating his mercy unto eternal life, and fleeing for refuge to him, the only hope set before lost and perishing sinners? And O! how necessary it is to do this without delay! How necessary to "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and we perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled, yea, but a little!" how much more, when it burns with unabating fury! and the "great day of his wrath is come!" For then who shall be able to stand?

4. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, even so, Amen?" Rev. i, 7. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel,

and the trump of God," 1 Thess. iv, 16. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory: and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another," Matt. xxiv, 29-31. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," Matt. xxv, 31, 32. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them: and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works," Revelation xx, 11, 12.

5. Now can we behold this glorious person, and doubt of his divinity? Can we see

On an empyreal, flying throne,
Awfully raised, heaven's everlasting Son!
Virtue, dominion, praise, omnipotence,
Support the train of their triumphant prince!
Night shades the solemn arches of his brows,
And in his cheek the purple morning glows?

Can we (I say) fix our eyes upon him, and still pronounce that he is a mere man? Can we observe him as the "resurrection and the life," manifesting infinite wisdom and almighty power, in raising from the dust of death the bodies of all mankind, and by a secret and invisible energy, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, forming those of his saints after a conformity to his own glorious body? Can we see them suddenly caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air? Can we view all nations gathered before him—all the posterity of Adam—all that have ever inhabited this spacious globe? Can we mark with what infinite discernment of the characters of men, founded on his perfect knowledge of the human heart, in all its unfathomable depths of deceit, and endless labyrinths of iniquity, in all its counsels and designs, motives and ends, thoughts and desires, he "separates them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats?" Can we observe the righteous justice wherewith he condemns the wicked to fiery torments, and that in exact proportion to their demerit, and the boundless mercy whereby he raises his followers to heavenly bliss, rewarding them, unworthy as they are, according to their works? Can we (I say) fix our eyes upon the Judge himself, and behold the most awful process of this most awful day, and remember that our eternal fate depends upon it, and yet believe that the Person upon the throne, before whose bar all nations of men, and legions of angels, tremble, and to whom, according to the prophecy, "every knee bows;" that he (I say) is but a mere man, and that a mere man determines the states, the final and everlasting

states of all the immense multitudes of men, and the various ranks of fallen angels? Surely this would be a stretch of faith indeed, not to be found in the most orthodox believer in the Christian mysteries!

But let us hear the Scriptures upon this subject. They are so plain that it is hardly possible to mistake their meaning. "The mighty God, even Jehovah, (says the psalmist, Psalm 1, 1,) hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above," (viz. the inhabitants of heaven, the heavenly hosts, who will attend and minister unto him,) "and to the earth that he may judge his people. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is Judge himself." Mark that word, "God is Judge himself," even the same God, who, conversing with Abraham ages before, concerning the destruction of Sodom, is styled by him "Judge of all the earth," and who, as a pledge of his future manifestation in the flesh, often appeared (as we have seen) in a visible human shape, to the patriarchs and prophets of old. Of him St. Paul speaks, when he says, that, "being in the form of God," (viz. before his incarnation when he appeared to his ancient servants, in all ages from the beginning,) "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God," being his very "word and wisdom, his face, effulgence," and "express image," assuming, as we have seen, all the Divine names, titles, and attributes, as belonging to him, in union with the Father; yet "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself" still more, "becoming obedient unto death, the death of the cross: therefore God also hath highly exalted him," not only his Word that had glory with him before the world was, but the humanity assumed for our sakes, "and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and those in earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

7. It is not denied but that the Judge is man, yea, very man, and, as man, is distinct from pure and proper Deity: and to this, his manhood, the apostles often refer in the New Testament. As for instance, Acts x, 38-42, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him: whom they slew and hanged on a tree; him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, and he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he that is ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and dead," viz. he that was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, he whom they slew and hanged on a tree, he whom God raised up, and showed openly, even the "man Christ Jesus." He is the appointed and visible Judge. But to prevent our mistaking, (were it possible to mistake in so plain a case,) to prevent our supposing that a mere man, however dignified and exalted, could, of himself, be able to judge all the ten thousand millions of men and angels, to know perfectly, and remember distinctly, every action of every individual of that immense multitude—every word, every temper, every desire, every thought; to discern and

unfold all the secret workings of every heart—of every son and daughter of fallen Adam, and of every fallen angel; to bring to light all the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest all the counsels of the heart; to discover all the motives and ends, as well as words and works, schemes and pursuits arising therefrom, and to know and make known, the true state and character of every one, so as to pronounce a right sentence, and assign every saint and every sinner, every man and every angel, his proper share of praise or blame, happiness or misery: to prevent our mistaking (I say) in this case, we are repeatedly assured that the Divine nature is joined to the human, and that God (in and by his eternal Word and Wisdom) is with and in the man.

8. Thus St. Paul, preaching at Athens, declares, "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof (says he) he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," Acts xvii, 31. Again, Rom. ii, 16, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel." So that God, in and by man, the Divine nature in and by the human, brings (as Solomon says) "every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Thus, though the dead, small and great, stand before a visible man, yet, as St. John assures us, they also "stand before God," Rev. xx, 12; and though "every knee of those in heaven, and those in earth, and those under the earth, bow, and every tongue confess" to that *man* whom God hath highly exalted; yet, in bowing and confessing to him, they bow and confess to God.

9. The man, therefore, the visible Judge, is not alone when he judges the world, any more than he was alone when he walked upon the water, rebuked the wind and the sea, said, "Lazarus, come forth; destroy this temple, [my body,] and in three days I will raise it up;" pronounced to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" proclaimed "I am the resurrection and the life. I quicken whom I will. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. My grace is sufficient for you, my strength is made perfect in weakness. Where two or three are met in my name, I am there in the midst of them. I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Upon this rock I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But as when he did these wonders, and pronounced these words, (too great, surely, for any creature to perform and pronounce,) the "Word that was in the beginning with God," and in union with him, "was God," dwelt in the human nature, and spoke and acted by that nature; and as the Father was in the Son, and the Son in the Father: so when he comes to judge the world in righteousness, the man does not come alone, but the "fulness of Deity" that dwelt, and does dwell, and ever will dwell in him bodily, comes along with him, and perceives, and knows, and speaks, and acts, in and by him, as much as the soul perceives, and knows, and speaks, and acts, in and by the body. So that, as David says, "God is, *indeed*, Judge himself;" and yet the man Jesus of Nazareth is appointed "Judge of quick and dead."

10. And how exceeding reasonable and proper does all this appear to be, even to us, little as we know in Divine things! Hereby, first, the

Judge is visible—he is a man like ourselves, and we may have access to him. We need not say, with Job, xxiii, 3, &c, “O! that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments: I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. For he may reply, If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. Behold I am, according to thy wish, in God’s stead. I also was formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid; neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.”

“In this (says Bishop Pearson) appeareth the wisdom and goodness of God, that, making a general judgment, he will make a visible Judge, whom all may see who shall be judged. ‘Without holiness no man shall ever see God;’ and therefore if God, as God only, should pronounce sentence upon all men, the ungodly would never see their Judge. But that both the righteous and unrighteous might see and know who it is that judgeth them, Christ, who is both God and man, is appointed Judge: so, as he is man, all shall see him; and, as he is God, they only shall see him who by that vision shall enjoy him.

11. “And, secondly, whom can we desire to appear before, rather than Him, who is of the same nature with us? If the children of Israel could not bear the presence of God as a lawgiver, but desired to receive the law by the hand of Moses,—how should we appear before the presence of that God, judging us for the breach of that law, were it not for a better Mediator, of the same nature that Moses was, and we are of, who is our Judge?” Having dwelt in flesh, and in the days of his flesh, “having suffered, being tempted,” he perfectly knows our frame—knows what sore temptations mean, and is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Beside, he is our near kinsman, our own brother, a descendant of our father Adam, of our flesh and of our bone; and, therefore, “for his affinity with our nature, for his sense of our infirmities, as well as for his appearance to our eyes, he is most fit to represent the greatest mildness and sweetness of equity, in the severity of that just and irrelative judgment.

12. “Nor is this a reason only in respect of us who are to be judged, but, thirdly, in regard of Him also who is to judge; for we must not look only upon his being the Son of man, but also what he did and suffered as Son of man. He humbled himself so far as to take upon him our nature; in that nature, so taken, he humbled himself to all the infirmities which that was capable of—to all the miseries which this life could bring—to all the pains and sorrows which the sins of all the world could cause; and, therefore, in regard of his humiliation, did God exalt him; and part of the exaltation due unto him was this power of judging. The Father, therefore, who is only God, and never took upon him either the nature of men or angels, “judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;” and the reason why he hath committed it to him is, “because he is” not only the Son of God, and truly God, but also the Son of man, and so truly man; because he is the Son of man, who suffered so much for the sons of men.”

13. And “certainly it is a demonstration of the justice of God, so highly to reward that Son of man as to make him Judge of all the

world, who came into the world, and was judged here ; to give him absolute power of absolution and condemnation, who was by us condemned to die, and died that he might absolve us ; to cause all the sons of men to bow before his throne, who did not disdain, for their sakes, to stand before the tribunal, and receive that sentence, ‘Let him be crucified.’” He, therefore, who “for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels,” nay, lower than the generality of men,—who was arraigned as a criminal at the bar of Pilate, and expired as a malefactor on a cross on Calvary, is now rewarded and crowned with glory and honour, comes in the clouds of heaven, sits on a throne of judgment, summons all nations to his bar, and passes an irreversible sentence on men and angels !

14. In the meantime, fourthly, his enemies are humbled and degraded, by being placed at the bar of a man, once poor, mean, and afflicted ; whom, in former days, they despised and insulted, hated and persecuted, arrested, tried, condemned, and crucified. “They who pierced him, now wail because of him ; and they who would not have him to reign over them, are now brought forth and slain before him.”

Well might Daniel say, “They shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt !” For, surely, they shall be ashamed and confounded, to bow to him whom they deemed a lunatic—to stand at the bar of him whom they arraigned at theirs—and to receive their sentence, their final, irreversible sentence, from the lips of one whom they formerly condemned to the most ignominious and disgraceful of all deaths.

Nor man alone ; the foe of God and man,
From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain,
And rears his brazen front, with thunder scared,
Receives his sentence, and begins his hell.
All vengeance past, now seems abundant grace !
Like meteors in a stormy sky, how roll
His baleful eyes ! he curses whom he dreads,
And deems it the first moment of his fall.

Milton supposes that he fell through refusing allegiance to God’s Messiah, to the Word and only begotten of the Father, concerning whom he says, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” If so, if he refused to acknowledge him as Lord, by whom himself and all the heavenly hierarchies had been created, though appearing in a nature superior to angels in his “form of God,”—how must it mortify that proud spirit, and all the associates of his revolt, to bow at the footstool of the same person, when united to flesh, and inhabiting a nature formed out of the clay !

15. As to Christ’s loyal subjects, fifthly, whether men that have been restored, or angels that never fell,—how must they applaud the wisdom, revere the justice, and rejoice in the mercy and grace of this dispensation ! The holy angels must rejoice to see one so exalted and honoured, toward whom they had maintained their allegiance, when millions of their companions revolted and rebelled ;—one, whose amazing condescension and love to mankind, when immersed in sin and ruin, they had admired and glorified ; of whose wonderful birth they had brought tidings to our world ; whom they had constantly attended, and to whom they had ministered in the days of his humiliation, when he was a man

of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and of whose agony in the garden, and tragical death upon Mount Calvary, they had been witnesses,—and whom, therefore, they now rejoice to see upon a throne of glory, judging his judges, and passing sentence upon all the enemies of his government.

For lo! now, twice ten thousand gates thrown wide,
 Pour forth their myriads, potentates, and powers,
 Of light, of darkness; in a middle field,
 Wide as creation! populous as wide!
 A neutral region! there to mark th' event
 Of that grand drama, whose preceding scenes
 Detain'd them close spectators, through a length
 Of ages, ripening to this grand result;
 Ages as yet unnumber'd but by God;
 Who now, pronouncing sentence, vindicates
 The rights of virtue, and his own renown.

As for his own brethren of mankind, as he condescended to call them, they acknowledge the reasonableness, and praise the wisdom of the appointment, whereby he who bore their sins, acquits their persons, who preserved them from falling, presents them faultless before the presence of his glory, and who purchased heaven for them with its various mansions, determines their happiness, and assigns each individual his proper and proportionate reward. They were under his government on earth, and he was always present with them, searching their hearts, observing their works, affording them aid, and exactly marking all their advantages and disadvantages, their helps and hinderances: they own, therefore, that he is perfectly qualified to be their judge, and applaud the righteous and equitable appointment, acknowledging that God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works! Indeed, assembled worlds will see and confess the equity of his proceedings, and men and angels unite in one great burst of universal praise!

O! how sublime the chorus of the skies!
 O! how sublime these shouts of joy that shake
 The whole ethereal! how the concave rings!
 To see creation's god-like aim and end
 So well accomplish'd! so Divinely closed!
 To see the mighty dramatist's last act
 (As meet) in glory rising o'er the rest.
 No fancied God, a God, indeed, descends,
 To solve all knots—to strike the moral home—
 To throw full day on darkest scenes of time—
 To clear, commend, exalt, and crown the whole.
 Hence, in one peal of loud, eternal praise,
 The charm'd spectators thunder their applause;
 And the vast void beyond applause resounds!

16. "And I heard a voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah, salvation and glory, and honour and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the earth, and avenged the blood of his servants; and again they said, Hallelujah! and the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen! Hallelujah! And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard, as

it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipoteth reigneth! Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her it was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: now the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he saith unto me, write, Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship; and he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God," Rev. xix, 1-10.

17. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people: and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new: and he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh, shall inherit all things: I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

18. "And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God, and of the Lamb, shall be in it, [the city,] and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads: and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. And I John saw these things, and heard them, and when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. Then he saith unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant; worship God. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen! even so. Come Lord Jesus!"

CHAPTER XI.

That Divine worship has been, is, and must be paid to him.

1. In two passages quoted from the 19th and 22d chapter of the Revelation by St. John, at the conclusion of the last chapter, we saw a

glorious angel absolutely refusing to be worshipped. "I fell down at his feet to worship him, and he said to me, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant." And again: "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel,—and he said, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant; worship God." Instances of a similar kind occur in divers parts of Scripture. Thus, Acts x, 25, 26, "As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him: but Peter took him up, saying, Stand up, I myself also am a man." And again, chap. xiv, when the inhabitants of Lystra were about to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, "they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, Sirs, why do ye those things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."

2. Well did these holy men and holy angels understand that Jehovah alone is the proper object of religious worship, according to what is repeatedly commanded in the Holy Scriptures. As, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," Exod. xx, 3. "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. vi, 4. "Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, (for the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you,) lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth," ver. 13. Again: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God: him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God," chap. x, 20. To these and such like passages, the Lord Jesus undoubtedly referred, when he said, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," Matt. iv, 10.

3. Now, notwithstanding this, it is certain, *first*, that the same God who gave the above precepts concerning the proper objects of Divine worship, hath commanded his Son to be worshipped: *secondly*, that he hath accordingly been worshipped, and that both before and after his incarnation, both while he was on earth, and after his ascension into heaven; and, *thirdly*, that not one instance can be produced in which he hath ever refused the worship addressed to him.

First, God hath commanded him to be worshipped: as by David in the 45th Psalm: "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." "Worship him all ye gods," Psalm xcvi: or as it is expressed, "when he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i, 6. But this is still more clearly and fully declared by our Lord himself, John v, 19, in a passage which is the more remarkable, as it contains an answer to the Jews, who, the historian tells us, "sought the more to kill *our Lord*, because he had not only broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his own (*ἰδίον*, *proper*) Father, making himself equal with God." Even to them upon such an occasion as this, among other things, Jesus said, "What things soever the Father doth, these doth the Son likewise. 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." See also to the same purpose, Phil. ii, 9-11, compared with Rom. xiv, 11.

4. Now that this was a proper religious worship and honour, which was commanded to be given to the Son of God, is plain, *secondly*, from this consideration,—that such a worship and honour was actually paid to him by those who undoubtedly understood the meaning of the Divine command. This appears from innumerable passages, both of the Old Testament and the New. It has been proved, that all the appearances of God made in days of old to the patriarchs and prophets, were made in his person, "no man ever having seen the Father at any time." Now, it is certain, they all worshipped the person that appeared to them. Jacob worshipped him at Bethel, "Jehovah is in this place, (said he,) and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And he took the stone which he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it: [an act this of religious worship.] And he called the name of that place Bethel, [that is, the house of God.] And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace,—then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee," Genesis xxviii, 12-19. Here again, in this prayer and vow, and promise, is every mark of religious worship. In like manner, he worshipped him at Peniel. For he "said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," Genesis xxxii, 25; which certainly implied prayer, with faith in his power, and love, and faithfulness. Moses worshipped him at the bush, and put off the shoes from off his feet, in token of his respect for the very place where so glorious a person had manifested his presence, hiding his face also in sign of the holy shame and confusion he felt. Isaiah worshipped him, (compare Isaiah vi, 5, with John xii, 13,) and said, "Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Nay, and what is more, he assures us, he saw and heard the seraphim also worshipping him, and crying one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory!"

5. And as Divine worship was paid to him before his incarnation, when he appeared as the angel, or envoy Jehovah, or the "angel of God's presence," in whom his name, that is, his nature, is, so also, after his manifestation in the flesh, when he was God-man. Many instances of this occur in the Gospels: as, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, [viz. the blind man, whom he had restored to sight,] and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? And he answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him," John ix, 35. Now this act of worship was grounded on his faith in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and was attended with a confession of it; and, therefore, must imply more than such homage and respect

as may be paid to men of high rank and character. It must imply religious worship, in which grateful and devout affections, to the benevolent author of so great a mercy as he had received, were felt in his heart, and manifested by the prostration of his body at the feet of Jesus. This appears from the case of the lame man healed at the beautiful gate of the temple, who, though suddenly and wonderfully restored by Peter and John, and full of joy and gratitude for so extraordinary a deliverance, yet did not attempt to worship them on the account. The reason of this plainly was, he knew Peter and John were but mere men, and had not healed him by their own power or holiness, having heard them say, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Hence though, no doubt, he was thankful to them as the instruments of the cure, and, in token of this, held them, (as we are told,) yet knowing that they were not the proper authors thereof, instead of worshipping *them*, the sacred historian informs us, he *praised God*.

6. Nor is that the only instance of Christ's being worshipped because of his mighty works. Many more occur in the history the evangelists have given us of his life. Thus, "When the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves, the wind being contrary, in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. And when they [viz. Christ and Peter] were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God," Matt. xiv, 22, 23. It seems, from these instances, that their ideas of the Son of God, or true Messiah, included something Divine, as immediately upon their discovering that Jesus was he, they worshipped him.

7. Sometimes he was worshipped by those that applied to him before the cure was wrought, as by the ruler, "who came and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is now dead; but come and lay thine hand on her, and she shall live," Matt. ix, 18. And by the woman of Canaan, who "came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me," Matt. xv, 25. And, methinks, when it is considered that these outward acts of prostration of the body were accompanied with petitions for that help which God alone can afford, it can hardly be doubted whether they implied proper religious worship: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David," verse 22, "Lord, help me," verse 25, "Lord, save me!" chap. xiv, 30. But if this be doubted, surely, when there arose "a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves, and the disciples came to him and said, Lord, save us, we perish, and he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm;" surely (I say) on this occasion, prayer was addressed to him for such deliverance as God alone can give. And, as the persons who applied to him, by making such a request, manifested that they believed our Lord to be more than a mere man; so by his granting their request, he gave full proof that he was indeed the God of nature as well as grace, having sove-

reign power even over the winds and the waves, the most unruly of all the elements.

8. But whether these be acknowledged to be instances of proper prayer, addressed to Christ while on earth or not, certainly that recorded Luke xvii, 5, must be allowed to be such. "Take heed, said Jesus, to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." The apostles, struck with the propriety and importance of this precept, and convinced of their own inability to observe it, without more grace, and especially more faith, immediately say to the Lord Jesus, "Lord, increase our faith." And the Lord, not in the least offended with them, nor rebuking them for addressing such a prayer unto him, replied, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it would obey you."

9. And if his disciples worshipped him, and called upon his name, while he was on earth, in his state of humiliation, they did this much more after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven, when he entered into his state of exaltation. Of this we have abundant proof, both in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles. I shall refer to particular passages, when I have just mentioned the instances, recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke, which occurred between his resurrection and ascension. "As they went, (says the former of these evangelists,) Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." And again: "When they saw him, they worshipped him," chap. xxvii, 9-17. To the same purpose, St. Luke, chap. xxiv, 50, "He led them out as far as Bethany, and lift up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven, and they (*προσκυνησαντες αυτον*, *having worshipped*, or rather) worshipping him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing and praising God." They worshipped him, therefore, after his resurrection, before and at his ascension; and that they continued so to do, appears beyond a doubt, from the proofs now to be produced.

10. The passage quoted above from the ninth chapter of the Acts is full to this purpose: "Lord, said Ananias, I have heard by many of this man [Saul] how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name," *τους επικαλουμενους το ονομα σου*. And lest we should suppose that it was the practice of only a *part* of the first Christians to call on the name of the Lord Jesus, or that they did this only in some particular places, we find this same person who had persecuted and destroyed those that called on the name of Jesus, describing all real Christians every where by this title in the beginning of his first Epistle to the Corinthians; and distinguishing them hereby from all other people. For he inscribes his epistle unto "the Church of God at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." From these passages it appears plain, beyond contradiction or

dispute, that in the first and purest ages of the Church it was the practice of all who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to "call upon his name."

11. And that proper invocation or prayer is meant in these passages, appears so manifestly upon the very face of them, that it would be idle to spend time in endeavouring to prove it. However, if any doubt it, let them turn to the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the very same phrase, both in the original and in our translation, necessarily signifies invocation or prayer as proper to God. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him, *εγκαλουμενους αυτων*: for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This last clause, it is well known, is a quotation from the prophecy of Joel: and there it is indisputably spoken of Jehovah, the only living and true God, and yet it is here manifestly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. For the words immediately preceding are, "The Scripture saith, [viz. Isaiah xxviii, 16,] Whosoever believeth on him [Christ] shall not be ashamed." And the words following, "How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." So that this passage proves, to a demonstration, three things: it proves, *first*, that the phrase, "calling upon the name of the Lord," means *proper invocation* or *prayer*. It proves, *secondly*, that the Lord Jesus may, and must be thus called upon by all that believe in him and would not be ashamed, by all who desire and expect salvation; and if compared with Joel, it proves, *thirdly*, that this Lord Jesus is Jehovah, *Jehovah* being the word used, and Jehovah the person spoken of by that prophet.

12. And as it is plain, from these passages, that prayer was addressed to the Lord Jesus by the primitive Christians in the first and purest ages of the Church, according to the prediction of David, "Prayer shall be made unto him, and daily shall he be praised," Psalm lxxii, 15; so if we come to particulars, we shall find several individuals, whose example, in this instance, we need not fear imitating, actually and repeatedly praying to him. The case of Stephen, recorded Acts vii, 59, is well known, and has occasioned infinite trouble to the Socinian party. They have been forced, at last, to this strange and weak subterfuge,—that, however Stephen might be justified in praying to the Lord Jesus when visible at the right hand of God, we cannot be justified in praying to him, who do not see him, and, therefore, cannot be sure that he is present with us, or hears our prayers.

13. Accordingly, Dr. Priestley tells us, in his *History of Corruptions*, (p. 141,) "It is something extraordinary that the Socinians in Poland thought it their duty, as Christians, and indeed, essential to Christianity, to pray to Jesus Christ, notwithstanding they believed him to be a mere man, whose presence with them, and whose knowledge of their situation, they could not, therefore, be assured of; and though they had no

authority whatever in the Scriptures for so doing, nor, indeed, in the practice of the primitive Church, till near the time of the council of Nice." How far the doctor is right in these plain and peremptory affirmations, that there is "no authority whatever in the Scriptures" for praying to Jesus Christ, "nor in the practice of the primitive Church, till the time of the council of Nice," the testimonies now adduced sufficiently show: but with regard to the Socinians of Poland, or any others, "thinking it their duty, as Christians, and indeed, essential to Christianity, to pray to him, notwithstanding they believed him to be a mere man, whose presence with them, and knowledge of their situation, they could not, therefore, be assured of,"—it surely is, as he says, something extraordinary. The case, however, is plainly this: notwithstanding the erroneous opinion they had entertained concerning his mere humanity, and the prejudice they therefore must have been under against addressing prayer to him, as "not being assured," as the doctor has it, "of his presence with them, or his knowledge of their situation;" yet the evidence was so strong from the Scriptures, and the earliest accounts we have of the primitive Church, that the apostles, evangelists, and first Christians prayed to him, that they could not but think it their duty, as Christians, to pray to him also, and that it was even essential to Christianity so to do.

14. But to return:—Instead of arguing, as Dr. Priestley, Mr. Lindsey, and others of the present Socinian writers do, that Stephen's worshipping Christ when he saw him, and was in immediate danger of death, or rather, was actually dying by the hands of his enemies, does not authorize those to do it who see him not, and are in no such danger; I should incline to draw a directly opposite conclusion from the fact: I should say, if Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, and under the immediate, clearest, and fullest vision of Christ's true character, and real state, dignity, and glory, saw it proper to pray to him, and say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" then, as we may be perfectly sure that Stephen in these circumstances could not be mistaken, it must be right and proper for all men to pray to him. And if Stephen, in the most critical and dangerous situation a mortal can be in, surrounded with enemies, visible and invisible, and in the most awful moment of his life, on the very verge of death and eternity, offered to Jesus the most important petition that ever came from the lips of any creature, and committed even his immortal spirit into his hands, in full assurance of his taking charge of it, then we may safely pray to him on any occasion, and for any blessing that we want whatsoever; persuaded there is nothing that he cannot and will not do. And perhaps I may add a third observation:—If Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, and looking steadfastly into heaven, not only saw the "heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," but saw also "the glory of God," viz. the Father; yet, in this full vision of the Father and the Son, did not immediately address the Father, but the Son, on this most critical and important occasion,—then surely we are authorized, at least sometimes, to do the same, and to direct our prayers immediately to the Son, and only remotely to the Father.

15. And here I beg leave to observe, that the Socinian practice of addressing the Father *immediately*, without the mediation of his Son, and discarding the atonement, intercession, and whole mediatorial office of the Lord Jesus, as it is in direct opposition to the general tenor of the

oracles of God, and the practice of the apostles and first Christians, so it appears from the plain, express declarations of our Lord, that it is, at best, lost labour. For the Lord Jesus has positively affirmed, "that no man cometh unto the Father but by him." Add to this, that the apostles and primitive Christians seem manifestly to have considered the Father as being in the Son, and the Son in the Father, in such a sense, that, when they prayed to the one Divine and sacred person, they prayed to the other also. When they prayed to the Father, they considered him as in the Son, and only to be approached through the Son; and when they addressed their prayers to the Son, they did not consider him as divided from the Father, but beheld the Father in him, and him in the Father, by an indissoluble and eternal union. Nor did they consider Christ, in his mediatorial character, as the ultimate object of their prayers and praises, and other acts of worship, but viewed them as terminating in the Father, and ultimately redounding to his glory. See, to this purpose, John xii, 44, 45; Phil. i, 11; 1 Peter i, 21. And, I trust, we consider these things in the same light. So that the Socinians, or Unitarians (as they rather choose to call themselves) need be under no apprehension that we are robbing God, the Father, of his honour; for as "Christ is his," (as the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. iii, 23,) his *Truth*, his *Wisdom*, his *Son*, his *Image*, and neither is, nor can be, separated from him, being (as Philo says of the Logos) *παρὸς οἶκος ἐν ᾧ διασκαύει*, the Father's house in which he dwells; and as he is constituted by the Father both Lord and Christ, Acts ii, 36, so all the honours which we pay to him, we pay not only on account of his own personal dignity, and with a view to his own particular glory, but also in obedience to the Father's command, and with a view to his honour and glory, in whose honour and glory they ultimately terminate. Indeed, the great danger, in this affair, seems to be the separating the one Divine subsistence from the other, and the opposing the one to the other, as though they had distinct wills and different interests. Were we to divide the Son from the Father, and consider him as a separate being, and worship him as such, then, indeed, we should worship another God. Or were we to oppose him to the Father, and view him as having an interest, or honour, or will of his own, distinct from, and unconnected with the interest, honour, and will of his Father, in that case, also, we should have another object of supreme adoration. But inasmuch as we firmly believe our Lord's declaration, "I and my Father are one;" inasmuch as we consider them as having but one interest, one honour, one will, and as being indissolubly and eternally united; so we believe when we honour the Son we honour the Father, and when we honour the Father we honour the Son: for we honour the Son in obedience to the Father, and as the Son of the Father, and behold the name, nature, and authority of the Father in him: and we honour the Father as the Father of this Son, view him as dwelling in the Son, and approach him through the Son.

16. But to return:—As Stephen prayed to the Lord Jesus, and committed his departing spirit to his care, as the man Christ, in similar language, had commended his into the hands of his Father; so St. Paul assures us he "besought him thrice," that the "thorn of the flesh, the messenger of Satan," sent to "buffet him, might depart from him," see 2 Cor. xii, 7-9. For that the Lord Jesus is the person meant here is

plain, from the answer given by the Lord to this importunate and repeated prayer, and from the apostle's resolution upon it. And he (the same Lord to whom he prayed) said unto me, "My grace is sufficient for thee: my strength [*ἡ δύναμις, my power*] is made perfect in weakness: most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ, *ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, [the very same word] may rest upon me." Now who does not see that the Lord, to whom he prayed, and who answered him, and said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my power is perfected [or perfectly displayed] in weakness," is Christ, whose power rested upon the apostle, and was gloriously manifested, both in supporting him under all his infirmities, afflictions, and persecutions, and in rendering these things, which appeared to be for the hindrance of the Gospel, subservient to its greater progress?

17. And, indeed, nothing can be clearer than that, throughout all his epistles, St. Paul considered Christ as a person in whom "all fulness dwells," and, therefore, looked up to him, as well as to the Father, in and through him, both for success in his labours, and for grace to be conferred upon himself and upon all the Churches to which he ministered. Hence it is that he begins almost all his epistles with such expressions as the following: "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. i, 7; 1 Cor. i, 3; 2 Cor. i, 2; and concludes them with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," Rom. xvi, 24; Phil. iv, 23; 2 Thess. iii, 18; or, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," 1 Cor. xvi, 23; or, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit," Gal. vi, 18; or, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," 2 Tim. iv, 22: all which expressions are proper prayers, and certainly imply that the Lord Jesus is more than a mere man, yea, than a creature; otherwise whatever grace he might have himself, he could have none to spare for others.

18. Add to this, that in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, we find this same apostle addressing two set, solemn, and formal prayers to the Lord Jesus, together with the Father. "Now God himself," (says he, first epistle, iii, 11-13,) "even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you, and the Lord [viz. Christ] make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end that he [Christ] may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father." And, in the second epistle, chap. ii, 16, 17, we read, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work." Doubtless Dr. Priestley had overlooked these passages, when he carefully searched the New Testament, and found, upon the most accurate examination, that the Socinians in Poland "had no authority whatever in the Scriptures, nor, indeed, in the practice of the primitive Church, till after the council of Nice, for praying to the Lord Jesus."

19. Or, perhaps, as he thinks St. Paul to be an "inconclusive reasoner," he may not consider his epistles to be a part of what he calls "the Scriptures." And inasmuch as it is plain St. Paul worshipped the Lord Jesus, and the doctor is sure it is *idolatry* to worship him, he must judge that, though an apostle, he could be no member of the true primitive Church.

So that his example is set aside, together with his doctrine, and, according to the doctor, there is no authority in either that can justify so vile a practice as that of worshipping Christ. As to the other apostles, as the doctor has "often avowed himself not to be a believer in their inspiration as writers," I presume he can hardly think their writings to be sacred Scripture any more than St. Paul's. So that with him the Scriptures must lie in a little compass, the whole New Testament, at least, being discarded. And as to the Old, it would seem, from what he says of the books of Moses, (the foundation of all the others,) that he has not a much higher opinion of it. For he tells us, "he thinks himself at liberty to consider the history which Moses has given us of the creation and fall of man *as the best he could collect from tradition*;" and adds, "In my opinion, also, there are many marks of its being a lame account; and far from solving the difficulty which it seems intended to answer, namely, the introduction of death and calamity into the world." The authority, therefore, of neither Testament can be great with the doctor, to justify any doctrine or practice whatever, which does not suit his pre-conceived notions.

20. But to return:—It deserves to be inquired by those who deny the divinity of Christ, how a mere man, or mere creature, could use the following and such like expressions; and whether such expressions do not fully authorize prayer to be addressed to him? "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water: whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up to everlasting life. To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." It seems to me if such declarations, invitations, and promises as these, do not encourage and authorize us to pray to the Lord Jesus for such blessings of grace and glory as we want, and he, the faithful and true Witness, so solemnly and repeatedly testifies he can and will give to all that properly apply to him for them, there are no passages in Scripture that encourage or authorize us to pray even to the Father: for there neither are, nor can be, passages more express and full than these are. But if these and such like passages do authorize and encourage us to apply to the Lord Jesus in prayer, then why does Dr. Priestley, and other Socinians, take upon them to forbid us to do so? And how will they answer it to him who says, "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

21. As we have clearly seen that prayer has been, and is to be, made to the Lord Jesus, so we shall see that praise has been, is, and ought

to be addressed to him. And this certainly is another act of proper, religious worship. St. Peter, in his two short epistles, furnishes us with a full proof that this is to be offered to the Son as well as to the Father. For he concludes his first epistle with ascribing it to the Father, and his second epistle with ascribing it to the Son, in language of exactly the same import. Speaking of the Father as "the God of all grace, who hath called us to his own eternal glory by Christ Jesus," he says, "To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen!" And speaking of the Son, in whose grace, and in the knowledge of whom he exhorts us to grow, he says, "To him be glory now and for ever! Amen!" Similar to this is the language of St. John, "Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!" Rev. i, 5, 6. And well might St. John ascribe glory to his Lord; for he had seen him worshipped, and had heard glory ascribed to him by angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven. Thus, "And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever," Rev. v, 11-14.

22. Now let it be observed, that *prayer* and *praise* imply every other act of worship, whether internal or external. *Prayer*, when it is sincere, necessarily implies *desire*, *confidence*, and *hope*; and *praise* implies *gratitude* and *love*. If, therefore, prayer is to be addressed to the Lord Jesus, this implies that our desire is to be to him, our confidence in him, and our expectation from him, for such blessings as we stand in need of. And if praise is to be offered to him, this signifies that he is to be the great object of our love and gratitude. Accordingly, we find this was the case with the apostles and primitive Christians: their desire was directed unto the Lord Jesus, and their confidence and hope were placed in him, for the greatest of all blessings, even for eternal salvation: and he, in union with his Father, was the great object of their unlimited gratitude and love. If I were to quote all the scriptures that would be to my purpose, I might transcribe a great part of the New Testament. The epistles of St. Paul, especially, abound with instances of it. A few passages of Holy Writ I shall produce as specimens of the rest:—"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii, 16. "Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed," Rom. x, 11. "He that believeth in him shall not be confounded," 1 Pet. ii, 6. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," John xiv, 1. "There shall arise a root of Jesse, and he that shall arise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust," Rom. xv, 12. "That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ, in whom ye also trusted," Eph. i, 12, 13. "Jesus Christ, our hope," 1 Tim. i, 1. "Christ in you, the hope of glory," Col. i, 27. "I thank Christ Jesus

our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry," 1 Tim. i, 12. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Grace be with all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," Eph. vi, 24. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema, maranatha," 1 Cor. xvi, 22.

23. Now all these, and such like passages, show that the Lord Jesus was worshipped, and that in the highest sense, viz. in spirit and in truth, and with the best and purest worship, the worship of the heart. They show that he was the object of the religious confidence and hope, gratitude and love of his ancient servants, and that in an unlimited degree, which surely no mere creature ever was, or could be. And as a fruit of this, their whole life was dedicated to him: "the love of Christ constrained them, so that they lived not unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. v, 14, 15. Yea, "none of them lived to himself, and none of them died to himself, but whether they lived, they lived unto the Lord, [Christ,] or whether they died, they died unto the Lord. Living or dying, therefore, they were the Lord's." Considering themselves as his *servants*, Phil. i, 1; James i, 1; 2 Pet. i, 1, they were wholly devoted to do his will, and promote his glory, not "accounting their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and Christ might be magnified by their bodies, whether by life or death."

24. "Had we, then, hitherto doubted whether Jesus Christ would have men regard him as God, we could doubt of it no more, when we see him permitting and requiring men to worship him. If he be God by nature, he has reason to claim adoration; but if he be not, we cannot pay it him without a kind of sacrilege. Certainly, were all the rest supportable, this could not be borne or excused in any wise: for a creature to make himself equal with the Most High, not by words only, but actions too.

25. "It is pretended, indeed, that there are two sorts of worship: a subaltern, or inferior kind, which may be paid to creatures; and a supreme, which can be paid to the supreme God only. But this avails nothing: for, first, we see that Christ laid claim to the highest adoration, and would have us to do for him what was never done but for the Most High. We ought to give our hearts to God, to love him above all, and it is to God alone that we owe this: but we owe it to Jesus Christ. We ought to love him above what we love most, even our life. 'If any man hate not his own life (saith he) for my sake, he is not worthy of me.' We owe to God, not the sacrifice of bullocks and lambs, but the sacrifice of our blood, and of our life; a spiritual sacrifice, worthy of a religion, and a covenant, more perfect than that of the law. But Jesus Christ requires us to pay him this; which was never done for any but God. It is, therefore, every way plain, that he would have us worship him as (in union with the Father) the most high God.

26. "That inferior or subaltern kind of [religious] worship, of which some love to speak, was not known either by our lawgiver, or the prophets, or Christ himself, or his apostles, or the holy angels.

"Two considerations show that this subaltern worship was not known to the lawgiver. The *first* is, that he forbids, in general, all worship but

that of the supreme God. Now this he would not have done, if there had been a sort of subaltern [religious] worship, which was still lawful; lest he should lay a snare for men, by so ambiguous an expression as would naturally entangle them in error. He would not have forbidden us, in general, to worship any but God; but to worship any other with supreme worship. The *second* is, that the lawgiver manifestly designed to stop the course of heathen idolatry. Now, the idolatry of the heathens properly lay in paying this subaltern worship to many gods: for they also, generally, as well as the Jews, acknowledged one Supreme Being.

27. "I say, in the *second* place, that the prophets knew nothing of this subaltern worship: for they had no example of it before their eyes. They had never heard it spoken of. They never mentioned it themselves. They scoff at those subaltern gods of the heathens, as not being able to comprehend how they could regard or worship, as gods, any other being than Him who governs the world, and who created heaven and earth. But this they certainly could not have done, had they known that there was, or would be, in the fulness of time, a subaltern and dependent God, who ought to be worshipped, though he did not make or govern the world.

28. "*Thirdly*, the apostles knew nothing of this distinction between supreme and subaltern worship. They thought that all, even outward worship, paid to a creature, was an injury to the Creator. When Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet, he did not take him for God. He knew him well to be but a man: this, therefore, could be but a subaltern worship. Yet, as even this outward worship was an action, consecrated by custom, to denote the honour paid to the Supreme Being, St. Peter could not suffer that to be done to him, which ought to be done to God only. 'Arise, (said he,) I also am a man:' giving us hereby two invincible proofs, that it is in no case lawful to worship any other than the supreme God. The first, that St. Peter condemns this action from a concern for the glory of God: whence it appears, that subordinate worship, as well as all other, paid to any-but God, is contrary to his glory. The second, inasmuch as it appears from hence, that whoever is by nature a mere man, has no right to any worship at all, supreme or subaltern.

29. "In the *fourth* place, the angels know nothing of this subaltern worship: otherwise, this angel, who spake to St. John, would not so earnestly have rejected that which the apostle was willing to pay him. St. John did not take him for God; for he had just been saying, 'The Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent his angel to show his servants the things which must be shortly.' St. John, therefore, would have worshipped him because he was an angel of God, not because he thought he was God himself. But this angel, who made none of these distinctions, said to him, 'Worship God;' showing, in the plainest manner, that worship, of whatsoever sort, must be paid to God alone." (*Abbadie abridged.*)

30. The reader will pardon my subjoining another short extract here. "It is something surprising, that when this religion, with this duty (worshipping Christ) in it as a part of it, was first published in Judea, the Jews, though implacably set against it, yet never accused it of idolatry: though that charge, of all others, had served their purpose

the best, who intended to blacken and blast it. Nothing would have been so well heard, and so easily apprehended, as a just prejudice against it, as this. The argument would have appeared as strong as it was plain : and as the Jews could not be ignorant of the acts of the Christian worship, when so many fell back to them from it, who were offended at other parts of it ; so they had the books, in which it was contained, in their hands. Notwithstanding all which, we have all possible reason to believe, that this objection against it was never made by any of them in the first ages of Christianity.

31. "The silence of the apostles, in not mentioning nor answering any such objection, is a plain proof of the silence of the Jews on this head : for it would indeed disparage all their writings, if we could think, that while they mentioned and answered the other prejudices of the Jews, which, in comparison of this, are small and inconsiderable matters, they passed over this, which must have been the greatest and plausiblest of them all, if it was one at all. Therefore, as the silence of the apostles is a clear proof of the silence of the Jews, and since their silence could neither flow from their ignorance, nor their undervaluing of this religion, it seems to be certain that the first opening of the Christian doctrine did not carry any thing in it that could be called the worshipping of a creature. For it is not to be imagined, that they would have been silent on this head, if a creature, a mere man, had been thus proposed among the Christians as the object of Divine worship.

32. "As it follows, from hence, that the Jews must have understood this part of our religion in such a manner as agreed with their former ideas, so we must examine these. Now they had this settled among them : that God dwelt in the cloud of glory, and that, by virtue of that inhabitation, Divine worship was paid to God as dwelling in the cloud ; that it was called ' God, God's throne, his holiness, his face, and the light of his countenance.' They went up to the temple to worship God, as dwelling there bodily ; that is, substantially—so bodily sometimes signifies—or in corporeal appearance. This seems to have been a person that was truly God, and yet was distinct from the Father ; for this seems to be the import of these words : ' Behold, I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee to the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice. Provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions ; for my name is in him.' These words do plainly import a person to whom they belong ; and yet they are a pitch far above the angelical dignity. So that angel must here be understood in a large sense, for one sent of God ; and can admit of no sense so proper as that the eternal Word, which dwelt afterward in the man Christ Jesus, dwelt in that cloud of glory. It was also one of the prophecies received by the Jews, ' That the glory of the second temple was to exceed the glory of the first.' The chief character of the glory of the first, was that inhabitation of the Divine presence among them. From hence it follows, that such an inhabitation of God in a creature, by which that creature was not only called God, but that adoration was due to it upon that account, was a notion that could not have scandalized the Jews, and was indeed the only notion that agreed with their former ideas, and that could have been received by them without difficulty or opposition. This is a strong inducement to believe that

this great article of our religion was, at that time, delivered and understood in that sense." (*Burnet on the Articles.*)

CHAPTER XII.

That Jesus Christ is also very man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh, subsisting.

1. INASMUCH as it appears from the preceding chapters, that the Holy Scriptures afford such clear and abundant proof of the divinity of Christ, it may justly appear strange that any, who sincerely desire to know the truth, and with a view thereto diligently search these sacred records, should entertain any doubt concerning it. But one reason of this may be, the same Divine oracles which represent him as God, do also, in many other passages, speak of him in a very different and inferior character; nay, and affirm things of him absolutely incompatible with true and proper Deity. They tell us, that he was conceived and born, was an infant, a child; that he "grew in wisdom and in stature;" nay, and "in favour with God and man:" that he was subject to all the infirmities of human nature; felt hunger, thirst, weariness; eat, drank, slept; that he was sensible of mere human affections, such as *sorrow*, Matt. xxvi, 38; *joy*, Luke x, 21; *love*, John xi, 5. They signify that he was weak and ignorant in some things, not being able to do any thing of himself, and not knowing the day of judgment; that he loved God, obeyed his commandments, and sought his glory; that he frequently prayed to him as to "One that was able to save him," and once in particular "offered up strong cries and tears, and was heard in what he feared;" that at that time his "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and he entreated his disciples to "watch with him;" that he then 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;" that after returning to his disciples, he "went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done;" that he "went away a third time, and prayed, saying the same words, and there appeared an angel unto him, strengthening him: and being in an agony, he prayed the more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground;" that when on the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and gave up the ghost."

2. Now, how shall we account for all this? Surely by allowing what the true catholic Church has allowed, and believed, in all ages; that he who is *God* is also *man*; that he who is the *root* is also the *offspring* of David, Rev. xxii, 16. As the root of David, he is David's Creator, the author of his existence, the source of his being, and, therefore, his King and Lord, Psa. cx, 1; and Matt. xxii, 43. As David's offspring, he is his true son, his real descendant. Now, as in the former character he is very God, possessed of a nature truly Divine, so in this latter he is very man, possessed of a nature truly human. Thus Bishop Pearson:—

“When we say that he was conceived and born, we declare he was made really and truly man, of the same human nature which is in all other men, who, by the ordinary way of generation, are conceived and born. For ‘the mediator between God and man, is the man Christ Jesus:’ that since ‘by man came death, by man’ also should come ‘the resurrection of the dead.’ As sure, then, as the first Adam, and we who are redeemed, are men, so certainly is the second Adam, and our Mediator, man. He is therefore frequently called the Son of man, and in that nature he was always promised; first to Eve, as her seed, and consequently her son; then to Abraham, ‘In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,’ and that ‘seed is Christ,’ and so is the son of Abraham. Next to David, as his ‘son to sit upon his throne,’ and so he is made of the ‘seed of David according to the flesh; the son of David, the son of Abraham,’ and consequently of the same nature with David and Abraham; and as he was their son, so are we his brethren, as descending from the same father, Adam, and ‘therefore it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren.’ For ‘he laid not hold on angels,’ but on the seed of Abraham, and so became, not an *angel*, but a *man*.

3. “As, then, man consisted of two parts, body and soul, so doth Christ: he assumed a body at his conception, of the blessed virgin. ‘Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.’ The verity of his body stands upon the truth of his nativity; and the actions and passions of his life show the nature of his flesh. He was first born with a body prepared for him of the same appearance with those of other infants; he grew up by degrees, and was so far from being sustained without the accustomed nutrition of our bodies, that he was observed, even by his enemies, to come eating and drinking; and when he did not so, he suffered hunger and thirst. Those ploughers never doubted of the true nature of his flesh, who ‘ploughed upon his back, and made long furrows there.’ The thorns which pricked his sacred temples, the nails which penetrated through his hands and feet, the spear which pierced his side, give sufficient testimony of the natural tenderness and frailty of his flesh. And lest his fasting forty days together, lest his walking on the water, and traversing the seas, lest his sudden standing in the midst of his disciples, when the doors were shut, should raise an opinion that his body was not true and proper flesh, he confirmed first his own disciples, ‘Handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.’ As, therefore, we believe the coming of Christ, so do we confess him to have come in the verity of our human nature, even in true and proper flesh. Thus it was always necessary to acknowledge him. ‘For every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is not of God.’ This spirit appeared early in opposition to the apostolical doctrine, and Christ, who is both God and man, was as soon denied to be man as God.

4. “And certainly if the Son of God would vouchsafe to take the frailty of our flesh, he would not omit the nobler part, our soul, without which he could not be man. ‘For Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,’ one in respect of his body and the other of his soul. Wisdom be-

length not to the flesh, nor can the knowledge of God, which is infinite, increase: he, then, whose knowledge did improve, together with his years, must have had a subject proper for it, which was no other than a human soul. This was the seat of his finite understanding, and directed will, distinct from the will of his Father, and consequently of his Divine nature, as appeareth by that known submission, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' This was the subject of those affections and passions which so manifestly appeared in him: nor spake he any other than a proper language, when before his suffering he said, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' This was it which, on the cross, before the departure from the body, he recommended to the Father, teaching us in whose hands the souls of the faithful are. For 'when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit; and having said this, he gave up the ghost.' And as his death was nothing else but the separation of his soul from his body, so the life of Christ, as man, did consist in the conjunction and vital union of that soul with the body. So that he who was *perfect God, was also perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh, subsisting.*"

5. Now this being allowed to be a truth, as it undoubtedly must, we need not wonder if this human nature of Christ, consisting of body and soul, and constituting as complete and proper a person as the human nature of any man—we need not wonder, I say, if it should frequently be represented in the Holy Scriptures as a complete and proper person, and should speak and act as such: surely this is what one might reasonably expect, notwithstanding its union with the "Word of the Father." For though the union was such that he might properly be termed "Emmanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh," yet the two natures were preserved distinct, and the personality of the man was not destroyed.

6. "If both natures (says the last mentioned author) were not preserved complete and distinct in Christ, it must either be by the conversion and transubstantiation of one into the other, or by the commixion and confusion of both into one. But neither of these ways can consist with the person of our Saviour, or the office of our Mediator: for if we should conceive such a mixion and confusion of substances as to make a union of natures, we should be so far from acknowledging him to be both God and man, that thereby we should profess him to be neither God nor man, but a person of a nature as different from both as all mixed bodies are distinct from each element, which concurs into their composition. Beside, we know there were in Christ the affections proper unto the nature of man, and all those infirmities which belong to us, and cannot be conceived to belong to that nature, [which is Divine, or,] of which the Divine is but a part.

7. "And as the confusion, so the conversion of natures is impossible: for, *first*, we cannot, with the least show of probability, conceive the Divine nature of Christ to be transubstantiated into the human nature. There is a plain repugnancy even in the supposition; for the nature of man must be made, the nature of God cannot be made, and consequently cannot become the nature of man. The immaterial, indivisible, and immortal Godhead, cannot be divided into a spiritual and incorruptible soul, and a carnal and corruptible body; of which two, humanity consisteth. *Secondly*, we must

not, on the contrary, invent a conversion of the human nature into the Divine, as the Eutychians of old did fancy: for sure the incarnation could not at first consist in such a conversion, it being unimaginable how that which had no being should be made by being turned into something else. Therefore the humanity of Christ could not at first be made by being the divinity of the Word: nor is the incarnation so preposterously expressed, as if the flesh were made the Word; but, 'the Word was made flesh.' And if the manhood were not in the first act of incarnation converted into the Divine nature, as we see it could not, then is there no pretence of any time or manner in or by which it was afterward so transubstantiated.

8. "Vain, therefore, was that old conceit of Eutyches, who thought the union to be made so in the natures, that the humanity was absorbed and wholly turned into the divinity, so that by that transubstantiation the human nature had no longer being. And well did the ancient fathers, who opposed this heresy, make use of the sacramental union between the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ, and thereby showed that the human nature of Christ is no more really converted into the divinity, (and so ceaseth to be the human nature,) than the substance of the bread and wine is really converted into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, and thereby ceaseth to be both bread and wine."

9. Now because these two natures of our Lord were preserved thus distinct, therefore, as, in the preceding pages, we have frequently seen the Divine nature represented as a complete and proper person, even after its union with the human, without any reference to that union: so we meet with the same in respect to the human nature: this is also represented to our view as a complete and proper person, without any reference to its union with the Divine: and, indeed, had it been otherwise, we should have had reason to doubt of his manhood, as the overlooking the important particulars, stated above, makes many doubt of his Godhead.

10. Accordingly, in the sacred Scriptures we read the following, and many more such like passages: "I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken, according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured upon thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

"A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel: butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear

of Jehovah, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth."

"Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people, from far; Jehovah hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name, and said unto me, Thou art my servant, in whom I will be glorified. Their said I, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again unto him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth. Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, To him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of Jehovah that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he wakeneth, morning by morning, he wakeneth my ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be confounded. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee: (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:) so shall he sprinkle many nations.

"He shall grow up before the Lord as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken; and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though

he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

“The Spirit of Jehovah Elohim is upon me, because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Thus saith the Lord God, I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall be their shepherd. I Jehovah will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them. I Jehovah have spoken it. He shall give them up until the time that she that travaileth hath brought forth—and he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of his God.”

11. Our Lord and his apostles, in a great variety of passages in the New Testament, illustrate and confirm these declarations of Moses and the prophets, concerning the real and proper humanity of the Messiah. A few of these I shall quote.

“The child grew and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. Ye seek to kill me, a man that have told you the truth which I have heard of God. Labour for the meat which endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man will give you; for him hath God the Father sealed. I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which sent me. The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself that hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. I seek not mine own glory. I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

“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. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I say, I go to my Father, for my Father is greater than I. My Father who gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven: but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but my Father only. All power is given unto me in heaven

and on earth. I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.

“God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him: whom they slew and hanged upon a tree, whom God raised up the third day, and showed him openly,—and who is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you; him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up, having loosed the bands of death. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. He was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested 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.”

12. Now, as in these, and such like passages, which occur in a great abundance throughout the Scriptures, the name Jehovah, God, or Father, includes the whole Godhead, (not the Father as distinguished from his Word and Spirit only as in 1 John v, 7, and Matt. xxviii, 19, but the Word and Spirit also,) so, in them, the purely human nature of Christ is chiefly spoken of, and held up to our view as a complete and proper person, as truly dependent upon the Deity for knowledge and power, holiness and happiness, as the human nature of any man. And, doubtless, this is a just representation of things: for this human nature of our Lord, this body and soul of the holy Jesus, was properly a creature, derived from, and dependent upon God, as all other creatures are. Whatever knowledge he had, therefore, as man—whatever power, purity, or comfort, it was communicated. And, it is probable these communications were made, especially while he was yet a child, in a gradual manner, viz. as his faculties opened and he was susceptible of them, which accounts for his “increasing in wisdom,” as well as in stature, and “in favour with God and man,” and “waxing strong in Spirit.” Nay, and it is manifest, that throughout his life his manhood could be no further conscious to or acquainted with the ideas of the divinity than they were imparted, it being absolutely impossible that any creature should know the ideas of the Deity by immediate intuition as a man is conscious of the thoughts of his own heart.

With the same propriety, therefore, wherewith Christ could speak of himself things that referred to his *body or animal nature* only, and say, “I am weary with my journey, I am hungry, I thirst,” he might also affirm things which belonged only to his *soul or rational nature*, as, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, I rejoice in Spirit, I increase in wisdom, I know not the day of judgment, I can do nothing of myself.” For these things were as precisely and perfectly true as the other, and it was the manhood alone, without any reference to the Godhead, that spoke them,

even as it was the Godhead alone, without any reference to the manhood, (though by its lips,) which said, "Before Abraham was, I am. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

13. Such proofs as these, of his true and proper humanity, we might expect to meet with, and meeting with them accordingly, why should we be staggered or surprised? The Godhead, as we have seen, was not converted into flesh, but only dwelt in it, and manifested himself to mankind by it as far as he saw fit; and the manhood, while on earth at least, was not so taken up into God, as to be quite absorbed and lost therein. Nay, this is not the case, now he is in heaven, but the "Lamb in the midst of the throne" is still of a nature distinct from pure and proper Deity, and knows not the secrets of the Divine counsels any farther than they are communicated to him. Hence he is represented as receiving the book containing these counsels from the right hand of Him that sitteth on the throne, and hence we meet with that expression, "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him."

14. And yet, to signify that these two natures, though preserved complete and distinct, were nevertheless most closely united in the person of the Redeemer, we frequently, in the Scriptures, meet with what is termed a *communication of properties*: viz. the one nature speaks things, or has things spoken of it, which are only proper to the other nature. As for instance, Acts xx, 28, we read, "The Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood;" and 1 John iii, 16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us;" which is speaking of the *Divine* nature things proper only of the *human*. And, John iii, 13, we read, "No man hath ascended up into heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven"—which is affirming of the human nature, the Son of man, things that could only be true of the Divine. For as God cannot die, and has no blood to shed; so the Son of man, the human nature, had not then been in heaven, and much more, could not be there while on earth. Nay, and our Lord, at one and the same time, and with one breath, often said things proper to both his natures, as in the passage above quoted: "I am the root and offspring of David," the root as God, and the offspring as man. Again: "I lay down my life for the sheep. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." I lay down my life as man: I have power to take it again as God.

15. Bishop Burnet speaks well on this subject. "What a person is that results from a close conjunction of two natures, we can only judge by considering man, in whom there is a material and a spiritual nature joined together. They are two natures as different as any we can apprehend among all created beings; yet these make but one man. The matter of which the body is composed, does not subsist by itself—is not under all those laws of motion to which it would be subject, if it were mere inanimated matter. But by the indwelling and actuation of the soul, it has another spring within it, and another course of operations. According to this, then, to subsist by another, is when a being is acting according to its natural properties, but yet in a constant dependence upon another being; so our bodies subsist by the subsistence of our souls.

16. "This may help us to apprehend, how as the body is still a body, and operates as a body, though it subsist by the indwelling and actuation

of the soul ; so in the person of Jesus Christ, the human nature was entire, and still acted according to its own character. Yet there was such a union and inhabitation of the eternal Word in it, that there did arise out of that a communication of names and characters, as we find in the Scriptures. A man is called *tall, fair, and healthy*, from the state of his body ; and *learned, and wise, and good*, from the qualities of his mind. So Christ is called *holy, harmless, and undefiled* ; is said to have *died, risen, and ascended* up into heaven, with relation to his human nature. He is also said to be in the 'form of God,' to have 'created all things,' to be 'the brightness of the Father's glory,' and 'the express image of his person,' with relation to his Divine nature. The ideas that we have of what is material, and what is spiritual, lead us to distinguish in a man those descriptions that belong to his body, from those that belong to his mind ; so the different apprehensions that we have of what is created and uncreated, must be our thread to guide us into the resolution of those various expressions which occur in the Scriptures concerning Christ.

17. "The design of the definition that was made by the Church, concerning Christ's having one person, was chiefly to distinguish the nature of the indwelling of the Godhead in him from all prophetic inspirations. The Mosaic degree of prophecy was, in many respects, superior to that of the subsequent prophets ; yet the difference is stated between Christ and Moses, in terms that import things of quite another nature : the one being mentioned as the servant, the other as the Son that built the house. It is not said that God appeared to Christ, or that he spoke to him ; but God was ever with him, and in him ; and while the 'Word was made flesh,' yet still 'his glory was as the glory of the only begotten Son of God.' The glory that Isaiah saw, was his glory ; and, on the other hand, God is said to have purchased the Church with his own blood. If Nestorius, in opposing this, meant only (as some think it appears by many citations out of him) that the blessed virgin was not to be called simply the 'mother of God,' but 'the mother of him that was God ;' and if that of making two persons in Christ was only fastened on him as a consequence, we are not at all concerned in the matter of fact, whether Nestorius was misunderstood and hardly used or not ; but the doctrine here asserted is plain in the Scriptures ; that though the human nature of Christ acted still according to its proper character, and had a peculiar will, yet there was such a constant presence, indwelling, and actuation on it from the eternal Word, as did constitute both human and Divine nature one person. As these are thus so entirely united, so they are never to be separated. Christ is now exalted to the highest degrees of glory and honour ; and the characters of 'blessing, honour, and glory,' are represented in St. John's vision, as offered 'unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'" (*Burnet on the Articles.*)

CHAPTER XIII.

Some objections answered.

1. WHAT has been advanced in the last chapter upon the humanity of Christ, will, I presume, if thoroughly considered, be found to contain a sufficient answer to most of the arguments brought to disprove his

divinity. For they seem, in general, to be built on a supposition, that those who believe him to be God, either deny him to be man, or imagine his manhood to have been absorbed by, or converted into his Godhead, so as no longer to retain its proper nature, and possess an understanding and will distinct from those of the Deity. Nay, some speak as if they thought we believed the man, strictly speaking, to be God—the creature to be the Creator. But none of these things is, in the least, supposed or intended. We only believe and wish to establish such a union between this humanity of our Saviour and the Divine essence, through the indwelling of the eternal Word of the Father, as will justify the conduct of the apostles, in applying to Christ so many passages of the Old Testament, manifestly intended of the true God, will account for his bearing Divine names and titles, and having Divine perfections and works ascribed to him, and will lay a proper foundation for that dependence upon him as a Mediator and Redeemer, without which there is no salvation; and for that honour and worship, which, according to the Scriptures, are his due.

2. But it will be objected by those who admit the pre-existence of Christ, and yet deny his Godhead, that “what has been said concerning his humanity does not come up to the point: that he uses a variety of expressions concerning himself, even before his incarnation, which seem incompatible with true and proper Deity; such as—‘I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me: I proceeded forth, and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me: I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.’”

3. In answer to this, I observe, *first*, we find expressions, similar to these, used even of the Holy Ghost, whom the Unitarians themselves allow, though not to be a proper person, yet to be truly Divine. Of him Jesus uses the following language. “The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,” John xiv, 26. Again: “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me,” John xv, 26. And again: “I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you: all things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you,” John xvi, 7–13, 15. Now if these, and such like expressions, when used of the Holy Spirit, do not imply that he is a created being, separate from, and of a nature inferior to the Father, and even to the Son; neither do similar expressions, when used of the Word, necessarily imply that he is a created being separate from, and of a nature inferior to the Father. They may, indeed, imply that the Father is the principle both of the Word and Spirit, the fountain (so to speak) from whence they flow—their source and original. And this is undoubtedly implied in the

very names, Father, Son, Word, Spirit, and is what the primitive Church uniformly believed and taught. But as to any thing farther, we cannot fairly infer it from such like expressions, which are manifestly accommodated to our weakness, and must be understood in such a sense as not to militate against other passages which speak so clearly of their divinity.

4. I observe, *secondly*, If expressions of this kind might be used of the Holy Ghost, they may much more be used of the *Logos*, who, according to the Scriptures, though the living Word of the Father, and a Son, took upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. Hence being *θεανθρωπος*, *God-man*, he both has, and may have things predicated of him which, properly speaking, belong only to the human nature; nay, only to the inferior part thereof, viz. the body. And probably the passages objected above, and others of a similar nature, are to be understood either wholly of the human nature, or if of the Divine, of it only because of its union with the human, in the same sense as when God is said to "lay down his life," or to "purchase the Church with his own blood." Add to this, that this Word and Son of the Father, having condescended to become a servant, and having accordingly taken the form of one, we need not wonder to find him acting in character, and not "doing his own will," nor seeking "his own glory," but doing *his* will, and seeking *his* glory, whose servant he undertook to be, in the work of man's redemption.

5. I observe, *thirdly*, Though it seems to me that the most proper name of our Lord before his incarnation, (I mean the name most descriptive of his nature,) is that given him by St. John in the beginning of his Gospel, viz. *ο λογος*, *the Word*, or, as he is called, "The Word of God," Rev. xix, 13; yet it appears from what has been advanced in the former part of this work, that he is also properly called "the Son of God." Accordingly we read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made [man] of a woman: God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh: God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." It seems plainly implied in these, and such like passages, that he who was "given, sent forth, sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, sent into the world," &c. was previously God's Son. This is still more manifest from Heb. i, 2: "God hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son, by whom he made the worlds." He was God's Son, therefore in his pre-existent state, when God made the worlds by him. And there are divers other texts, many of which have been quoted above, which speak a similar language. He is indeed called the Son, even in the Old Testament, and that, it seems, without any reference to his future incarnation, as by Agur, "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" A question this which our Lord answers, when he says, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him:" which words our Lord surely did not speak of his human nature, as if this were such an unsearchable mystery that no one could know it, but of his Divine. Add to this, that it appears, by the passages quoted above from Philo, that the Jews were wont to call the *Logos* or *Word* the first born and only begotten Son.

6. Now if this language of our Lord himself, and his inspired apostles and prophets, to whom he revealed himself by his Spirit, be allowed to be proper, then, as Bishop Pearson argues, "we may safely observe, that, in the very name of Father, there is something above that of Son. And some kind of priority or pre-eminence we must ascribe unto him whom we call the first, in respect of him whom we term the second person: and as we cannot but ascribe it, so we must endeavour to preserve it." And "upon this priority or pre-eminence may safely be grounded the congruity of the Divine mission. We often read that Christ was sent, from whence he bears the name of an apostle himself, as well as those whom he therefore named so, because as the Father sent him, so he sent them. The Holy Ghost is also said to be sent, sometimes by the Father, sometimes by the Son: but we never read that the Father was sent at all, there being an authority in that name which seems inconsistent with this mission. In the parable,—'A certain householder, who planted a vineyard, first sent his servants to the husbandmen, and again other servants; but last of all he sent unto them his son.' It had been inconsistent, even with the literal sense of an historical parable, as not at all consonant to the rational customs of men, to have said, that last of all the son sent his father to them. So God, placing man in the vineyard of his Church, first sent his servants, the prophets, by whom 'he spake at sundry times, and in divers manners;' but 'in the last days, he sent his Son.' And it were as incongruous and inconsistent with the Divine generation, that the Son should send the Father into the world." The Father, then, "is that 'God who sent forth his Son, made of a woman,' that God, 'who hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' So the authority of sending is in the Father: which, therefore, ought to be acknowledged, because upon this mission is founded the highest testimony of his love to man; for 'herein is love,' saith St. John, 'not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

7. "Neither can we be thought to want a sufficient foundation for this priority of the first person in the trinity, if we look upon the numerous testimonies of the ancient doctors of the Church, who have not stuck to call the Father the *origin*, the *cause*, the *author*, the *root*, the *fountain*, and the *head* of the Son."* "By which titles it clearly appeareth, *first*, that they made a considerable difference between the person of the 'Father, of whom are all things,' and the person of the 'Son, by whom are all things;' and *secondly*, that the difference consisteth properly in this,—that as the branch is from the root, and river from the fountain, so the Son is from the Father, and not the Father from the Son, as being what he is from none." Accordingly we find, "that the name God, taken absolutely, is often in the Scriptures spoken of the Father; as when we read of 'God sending his own Son;' of 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God;' and, generally, where-soever Christ is called the 'Son of God,' or the 'Word of God,' the name of God is to be taken particularly for the Father, because he is no Son but of the Father. From hence he is styled one God, the true God, the 'only true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:'

* Of this the bishop produces numerous and indubitable testimonies in his notes.

which, as it is most true, and so fit to be believed, is also a most necessary truth, and therefore to be acknowledged, for the avoiding multiplicity and plurality of gods. For if there were more than one which were from none, it could not be denied but there were more gods than one. Wherefore this origination in the Divine paternity hath anciently been looked upon as the assertion of the unity; and therefore the Son and Holy Ghost have been believed to be but one God with the Father, because both from the Father, who is one, and so the union of them.**

8. The Father, therefore, is the fountain of Deity, and of Divine power: and hence it is, that as the gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost are ascribed to him in Scripture, (because they really are his gifts and operations, in and by the Holy Ghost, his own Spirit,) so, in like manner, respecting the Word, the Son. His manifestations and works are ascribed to the Father, because they really are the Father's works and manifestations, in and by the *Logos*, his own Word. If it be asked, "How far are the Word and Spirit distinct, and how do they differ from the Father, and from each other?" I answer, How far they are distinct, and how they differ, is impossible for us fully to say, because it is not told us. We only know that they are manifestly distinguished, and have personal actions attributed to them in the Holy Scriptures; and that the Father is spoken of as the source and principle, both of the Word and Spirit, and is represented as calling creatures into existence, and revealing himself and his will to the intelligent part of those creatures by that Word, and communicating himself and his nature by that Spirit. So that, as he is distinguished from them both, as the sun is distinguished from his rays, and a fountain from its streams; so they are distinguished from each other, the Word chiefly appearing, and as the express image of the Father's person, externally revealing the Deity; and the Holy Ghost remaining invisible, and internally communicating him. And, no doubt, there is in the nature of the Godhead a reason for this, though we cannot comprehend it. We have, therefore, only one Jehovah, one living and true God, manifesting himself and his will by his Word, and communicating himself and his nature by his Spirit.

9. Hence we may put the question which the prophet puts, with as much propriety as any Unitarian in the world, "To whom, then, will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Or, in the language of the Lord himself, "To whom will ye liken me? or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One?" And yet, with St. Paul and St. John, we may answer, The Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." For as Jehovah did not exclude, but comprehend his own Spirit when he said, "To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?" so also he did not exclude, but comprehend his own Word. And when we say God's Word and Spirit are equal to God, we do not mean to separate them into two other gods, but only to signify that they are not

* I had made, and thought to have added here, farther extracts from Bishop Pearson, as well as a large one from Bishop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith to the same purpose; but as it would be little better than a repetition of what has now been observed, I forbear to insert them. Bishop Beveridge and Mr. William Stephens, have considered the matter in the same light. And, of late, Dr. Horsley, in his letters to Dr. Priestley, has observed that "three co-ordinate persons would be manifestly three gods."

creatures at an infinite distance from true Deity, but really Divine, partaking of the nature of that Godhead from which they proceed, and in which they are comprehended.

10. The Socinians and Arians, indeed, with a view to get rid of the irrefragable argument which the text just referred to furnishes against their scheme, would fain force a very different sense upon it, and translate it, "Being in the form of God, he coveted not after, or did not eagerly catch at an equality with God." But there are two insuperable objections to this translation, (if it may be called one;) the *first* is, that the words will not bear it, *ἤρνησάτο ἀπαιτῆσαι*, signifying not "he coveted not after," or "did not eagerly catch at," but simply and only, *he thought it not an act of robbery*, or any usurpation of another's right; and the following words, *εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ*, meaning only—to be equal with God. The *second* objection to this forced translation is, that it would make the apostle very absurdly represent it as a great instance of Christ's humility, that he was not as proud as Lucifer; who, (as is supposed,) though highly exalted in the scale of being, yet being a mere creature, and, as such, infinitely inferior to God, manifested insufferable pride in eagerly coveting and catching at an equality with God. Now, surely, if Christ had been a mere creature, the apostle would never have mentioned it as a great proof of his humility, that he did not, like Satan, aspire after an equality with one infinitely above him!

11. We must, therefore, of necessity, abide by the grammatical and literal sense of the words above mentioned; which we may do with the greater satisfaction, having seen it confirmed, in the preceding chapters, by so many testimonies of the same apostle in other places, as well as of other apostles and inspired writers. For surely he who appeared to the patriarchs and prophets, at sundry times, in the character of God; he to whom the apostles, speaking by inspiration of God, applied many passages of the Old Testament, containing proper descriptions of the Most High; he to whom Divine names and titles are given, and Divine attributes are ascribed; he who is represented as the immediate author of all the Divine works, and who has been, is, and is to be worshipped as God—he must be equal with God; or, in other words, he must be God, possessed of true and proper Deity, in union with the Father, whose Word and only begotten Son he is, and from whom he never can be separated.

12. "But if the Word and Son of God be really a Divine person, how could he 'empty himself,' (which in this very text he is said to do,) 'leave the glory' he had with the Father, or 'become poor?'" See John xvii, 3; 2 Cor. viii, 9. I answer, it is easy to conceive that he might do this, as far as these texts signify that he hath done it. They do not say that his nature underwent any change, that his wisdom, power, or love, his holiness, truth, or justice, were either lost or lessened: they only speak of his form or mode of manifestation. This passage in the Epistle to the Philippians being much more particular, is plainly a key to the other two; and all that he asserts is, that (when in the "form of God, and equal with God," the Godhead of the Father being his Godhead,) he emptied himself, taking the "form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." So that the emptying of himself, which the apostle speaks of, manifestly consisted in his taking the form of a ser-

vant, which form he took when he was made in the likeness of men. It consisted in this, in that though he was the Word and Son of the Father, who had spoke the universe into being, and had manifested himself to the patriarchs and prophets of old, as the Creator, Preserver, and Lord of all, he now appeared in the form of a creature; yea, of a mere and mortal creature,—a creature compassed about with infirmity, liable to pain and misery, and subject to dissolution and decay! And surely ~~this~~ might very properly be termed an emptying himself, a leaving his glory, and becoming poor. For how great the contrast! He had given the law on Sinai, amidst thunder and lightning, storm and tempest, earthquake and devouring fire: he had appeared in glory to the nobles of the children of Israel, when there “was under his feet, as it were, a paved work, of a sapphire stone, and, as it were, the body of heaven in its clearness.” Isaiah had seen him “upon a throne, high and lifted up, when his train filled the temple, and the seraphim cried one to another, Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts! the whole earth is full of his glory!” And now that same Word and Son of the Father dwells in the flesh; in the meek and lowly Jesus, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected of men, having neither form nor comeliness that we should desire him;” whose greatest triumph was to ride into Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of an ass, amidst the acclamations of children and a few poor people; and who, at last, was executed upon a cross, between two thieves, as a malefactor!

13. “It is a vain imagination (says the author last quoted) that our Saviour then first appeared a servant, when he was apprehended, bound, scourged, and crucified: for they were not all slaves who ever suffered such indignities, or died that death;—and when they did, their death did not make, but find them, or suppose them, servants. Beside, our Saviour, in all the degrees of his humiliation, never lived as a servant unto any master on earth. It is true, at first he was subject, but as a son, to his reputed father and undoubted mother. When he appeared in public, he lived after the manner of a prophet, and a doctor sent from God, accompanied with a family, as it were, of his apostles, whose master he professed himself, subject to the commands of no man in that office, and obedient only unto God. The ‘form, *then*, of a servant,’ which he took upon him, must consist in something distinct from his sufferings or submission unto men, as the condition in which he was when he so submitted and so suffered. In that he was ‘made flesh,’ sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, subject unto all the infirmities and miseries of this life, attending on the sons of men, fallen by the sin of Adam: in that he was ‘made of a woman, made under the law,’ and so obliged to perform the same; which law did so handle the children of God, as that they differed nothing from servants: in that he was born, bred, and lived in a mean, low, and abject condition: ‘as a root out of a dry ground, he had no form nor comeliness; and when men saw him, there was no beauty that they should desire him; but he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: in that he was *thus made man*, he took upon him the form of a servant:’ which is not mine but the apostle’s explication; as adding it, not by way of *conjunction*, in which there might be some diversity, but by way of *opposition*, which signifieth a clear identity.

14. "And, therefore, it is necessary to observe that our translation of that verse is not only not exact, but very disadvantageous to that truth which is contained in it: for we read it thus, "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Where we have two copulative conjunctions, neither of which is in the original text, and three distinct propositions, without any dependence of one upon another, whereas all the words together are but an expression of Christ's exinanition, with an explication showing in what it consisteth; which will clearly appear by this literal translation: "But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." Where, if any man doubt how Christ emptied himself, the text will satisfy him, "by taking the form of a servant:" if any still question how he took the form of a servant, he hath the apostle's resolution, by being "made in the likeness of men." Indeed, after the expression of this exinanition, he goes on with a conjunction, to add another act of Christ's humiliation: "And being found in fashion as a man," being already, by exinanition, in the form of a servant, or the likeness of men, "he humbled himself and became (or rather *becoming*, γενόμενος υπήκοος) obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

15. "As, therefore, his humiliation consisted in his obedience unto death, so his exinanition (or emptying himself) consisted in the assumption of the form of a servant, and that in the nature of man. All which is very fitly expressed by a strange interpretation in the Epistle to the Hebrews. For whereas these words are clearly in the psalmist, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened," the apostle appropriateth the sentence to Christ, "When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." Now, since the *boring of the ear*, under the law, was a note of perpetual servitude; since this was expressed in the words of the psalmist, and changed by the apostle into the *preparing of a body*, it followeth, that when Christ's body was first framed, even then did he assume the form of a servant."

16. As the bishop's reasoning upon this text is strong and conclusive, and sufficiently refutes the Socinian interpretation, (which supposes that Christ had no existence before he was born of the virgin, and that he was no otherwise in the form of God than as working miracles,) I shall transcribe a paragraph or two more:—"It appeareth out of the same text that Christ was in the form of God before he was in the form of a servant, and consequently before he was made man. For he who is presupposed to be, and to think of that being which he hath, and upon that thought to assume, must have that being before that assumption; but Christ is expressly said to be in the form of God, and being so, to think it no robbery to be equal with God, and, notwithstanding that equality, to take upon him the form of a servant: therefore it cannot be denied but he was before in the form of God. Beside, he was not in the form of a servant but by emptying himself, and all exinanition necessarily presupposeth a precedent plenitude; it being as impossible to empty any thing which hath no fulness, as to fill any thing which hath no emptiness. But the fulness which Christ had, in respect whereof, assuming the form of a servant, he is said to empty himself, could be in nothing else

but the form of God in which he was before. Wherefore, if the assumption of the form of a servant be cotemporary with his exinanition, if that exinanition necessarily presupposeth a plenitude as indispensably antecedent to it; if the form of God be also coeval with that precedent plenitude; then must we confess Christ was in the form of God before he was in the form of a servant.

17. "Again: it is as evident from the same scripture, that Christ was as much in the form of God as in the form of a servant, and did as really subsist in the Divine nature as in the nature of man. For he was so in the form of God, as thereby to be 'equal with God.*' But no other form beside the essential, which is the Divine nature itself, could infer an equality with God. 'To whom will you liken me, and make me equal, saith the Holy One?' There can be but one infinite, eternal, and independent Being; and there can be no comparison between that and whatsoever is finite, temporal, and depending. He, therefore, who did truly think himself equal with God, as being in the form of God, must be conceived to subsist in that one infinite, eternal, and independent nature of God. Again: the phrase, 'in the form of God,' not elsewhere mentioned, is used by the apostle with a respect unto that other, the 'form of a servant,' exegetically [explanatorily] continued 'in the likeness of men;' and the respect of one unto the other is so necessary, that if the 'form of God' be not real and essential as the 'form of a servant,' or the likeness of man, there is no force in the apostle's words, nor will his argument be fit to prove any great degree of humiliation upon the consideration of Christ's exinanition. But by the form is certainly understood the true condition of a servant, and by the likeness infallibly meant the real nature of man, nor doth the fashion in which he was found destroy, but rather assert, the truth of his humanity. And, therefore, as sure as Christ was really and essentially man, of the same nature with us, in whose similitude he was made, so certainly was he also really and essentially God, of the same nature and being with him, in whose form he did subsist. Seeing then we have clearly evinced, from the express words of St. Paul, that Christ was in the form of a servant as soon as he was made man, that he was in the form of God before he was in the form of a servant, that the form of God in which he subsisted doth as truly signify the Divine as the likeness of man the human nature; it necessarily followeth that Christ had a real existence before he was begotten of the virgin, and that the being which he had was the Divine essence, by which he was truly, really, and properly God." (*Pearson on the Creed*, pp. 122, 123.)

CHAPTER XIV.

The use of this doctrine.

AND now, having proved our Lord's divinity, and answered (I hope) the most material objections that are made to it, I shall close this treatise when I have added a few words respecting the use of this doctrine.

* *To εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ. Pariari Deo, Tertull. Esse se æqualem Deo, Cypr. Esse æqualis Deo, Leporius.* Thus all express the notions of equality, not of similitude; nor can we understand any less by *το εἶναι ἴσα*, than *τῆν ἰσότητά* *ἰσῶν* and *ἴσα* being indifferently used by the Greek.

1. And its use appears, *first*, in that it is closely connected with all the offices, which, according to the Scriptures, Christ sustains, and, in the execution of which, he is our Saviour and Redeemer. It is closely connected, even with his office of a prophet. "This is my beloved Son (says the Father) hear ye him." In order that we may hear him with becoming reverence, entire confidence, and ready obedience, it is necessary that we should regard him as the Father's "beloved Son;" and that in a higher sense than any prophet, or apostle, or angel, ever was, or can be—his Son: a Son in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell: yea, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Hence, as we have seen, he is the very Word of the Father, and what he speaks, the eternal truth, wisdom, and love of God speaks in him. He is the Divine Oracle, and all he says is as important and infallible as what was uttered of old from between the cherubim, upon the mercy seat; and should be received with as much implicit faith, and dutiful submission, as the high priest, or people of Israel of old, received answers from that most holy place.

2. It is true, what was delivered by Moses and the prophets, by the evangelists and apostles, is also the word of God; for "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:" but not in so high a sense as what was spoken by Christ. When God spoke by them, he spoke by his servants; when he spoke by Christ, he spoke by his Son. They had the Spirit "by measure," he "without measure." They deliver his truths and declare his laws; he is the truth itself, and the lawgiver among his people. They come to us with authority from another, and say, "Thus saith the Lord." He speaks as one having authority in himself, and his language is, "I say unto you."

3. And if the doctrine of the proper and peculiar Sonship of Christ be closely connected with his prophetic office, it has still a closer connection with the office of a priest. We have already seen that the virtue of his atonement depends upon it, and that, if he had been but a mere man, or a mere creature, his single and temporal life could not have been a ransom, or "redemption price," for the innumerable and eternal lives of all men. And with regard to his appearing in the presence of God for us, as our Advocate and Intercessor, let those who deny his divinity inform us how we are to obtain access to him, that we may acquaint him with our wants and griefs, and put our cause into his hands? Or how we are to be assured that he knows, and therefore is touched with the feelings of our infirmities, so that he does and will sympathize with us, and afford us grace to help in time of need?

4. Nay, and even as to his kingly office,—what sort of a king would he be, who could neither know his subjects, nor deliver, nor protect, nor govern them? Ποιμένα λαων, "The shepherd of his people," is a common phrase with a heathen poet, when speaking of a heathen king. All good kings, whether heathen or Christian, are the shepherds of the people, and, as such, watch over, protect, and govern them. It is true, this can only be done very imperfectly by men, as men are very imperfect in knowledge, and power, and goodness. But the King whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion, is the "good Shepherd," who "gave his life for the sheep," and who says, "I know my sheep, and am known

of mine ;” and again, “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. He comes with a strong hand, and his arm rules for him : he feeds his flock like a shepherd, gathers the lambs with his arm, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.”

5. As a King, he reigns *in*, as well as *over* his subjects, subdues their lusts and passions, casts down their imaginations, and even brings into captivity their thoughts to the obedience of himself. He “ dwells in their hearts by faith ;” is “ in them their hope of glory ;” and his kingdom of “ righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” being set up in their hearts, is to them, at once, a preparation for, and a pledge of his kingdom of glory. Now all these particulars suppose his divinity ; suppose him to be omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent ; possessed of boundless wisdom, power, and love, and every Divine perfection.

6. Add to this, *secondly*, that the Holy Ghost, speaking by David, connects our worshipping of him with his sustaining this office of a king : “ He is thy Lord, and worship thou him.” And we have seen, in a former chapter, how certainly it is our duty to comply with this Divine injunction. Herein, then, especially appears the use of this doctrine concerning the divinity of Christ—that while we worship him, (which we are in duty bound to do,) we may know, and be persuaded, we are not guilty of idolatry, in worshipping a mere creature. “ We are commanded to ‘ fear the Lord our God, and serve him,’ and that with such an emphasis, as by him we are to understand him alone, because the ‘ Lord our God is one Lord.’ From whence, if any one arose among the Jews, teaching, under the title of a prophet, to worship any other beside him for God, the judgment of the rabbins was, that notwithstanding all the miracles which he could work, though they were as great as Moses wrought, he ought immediately to be strangled ; because the evidence of this truth, that one God only must be worshipped, is above all evidence of sense. Nor must we look upon this precept as valid only under the law, as if, then, there were only one God to be worshipped, but since the Gospel we had another ; for our Saviour hath commended it to our observation, by making use of it against the devil in his temptation, saying, ‘ Get thee hence, Satan ; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.’ If, then, we be obliged to worship the God of Israel only ; if we be also commanded to give the same worship to the Son, which we give to him, it is necessary we should believe that the Son is the God of Israel. When the Scripture ‘ bringeth in the first begotten into the world, it saith, Let all the angels of God worship him ;’ but then the same Scripture calleth that ‘ first begotten Jehovah, and the Lord of the whole earth,’ Heb. i, 6, and Psa. xcvi, 6, 7. For a man to worship that for God which is not God, thinking that it is God, is, although not in the same degree, yet the same sin. To worship him as God, who is God, thinking that he is not God, cannot be thought an act, in the formality of it, void of idolatry. Lest, therefore, while we are obliged to give unto him Divine worship, we shall fall into that sin, which, of all others, we ought most to abhor, it is necessary we should believe that Son to be, (in union with his Father,)

that eternal God, whom we are bound to worship, and whom only we should serve."

7. *Thirdly*, our belief of this doctrine is necessary "to raise us to a thankful acknowledgment of the infinite love of God, appearing in the sending of his only begotten Son into the world to die for sinners. The love of God is frequently extolled and admired by the apostles. 'God so loved the world,' saith St. John, 'that he gave his only begotten Son.' 'God commendeth his love toward us,' saith St. Paul, 'in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; in that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' 'In this,' saith St. John again, 'was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' If we look upon all this as nothing else but that God should cause a man to be born, after another manner than other men, and when he was so born, after a peculiar manner, yet a mortal man, should deliver him to die for the sins of the world, I see no such great expression of his love, in this way of redemption, more than would have appeared in any other way.

8. "It is true, indeed, that the reparation of lapsed man is no act of absolute necessity, in respect of God, but that he hath as freely designed our redemption, as our creation: and, considering the misery from which we are redeemed, and the happiness to which we are invited, we cannot but acknowledge the singular love of God, even in the act of redemption itself. But yet the apostles have raised that consideration higher, and placed the choicest mark of the love of God, in the choosing such means, and performing in that manner our reparation; by sending his 'only begotten Son into the world;' by 'not sparing his own Son;' by giving and delivering him up to be scourged and crucified for us. And the estimation of this act of God's love must necessarily increase proportionably to the dignity of the Son so sent into the world; because the more worthy the person of Christ was before he suffered, the greater was his condescension to such a suffering condition; and the nearer his relation to the Father, the greater his love to us, for whose sakes he sent him so to suffer. Wherefore to derogate any way from the person and nature of our Saviour, before he suffered, is so far to undervalue the love of God, and consequently to come short of that acknowledgment and thanksgiving which is due unto him for it." (*Pearson on the Creed*, pp. 143, 144.)

9. Let me illustrate this in the words of a translation of Abbadie: "In the deliverance of the ancient Israelites from Egyptian bondage, two things may be remarked. God redeems them from the slavery under which they groaned; and previous to their deliverance, he commands them to kill the paschal lamb, and to sprinkle its blood on the door posts of their houses. The love of God to the tribes of Jacob, in granting them deliverance, is greatly to be admired; for they were reduced to a sad extremity, and had long desired to be relieved. But we should think ourselves much abused, if any one endeavoured to persuade us, that the love of God to them appeared in a wonderful manner, because the blood of a lamb was the sign to the destroying angel to spare their first born, or because the sacrifice of the passover was a mean, in the hand of

God, of working out their deliverance. Should any one exclaim, 'Behold, how God loved the Israelites! He loved them so that he put a lamb, nay, many lambs to death, that he might redeem them from slavery!' would you not think him delirious?

10. "But here I shall be reminded, 'That the life of Christ, as a mere man, is incomparably more precious than the life of a sacrifice under the law.' Suppose it be; yet as the life of a lamb bears no proportion to the temporal deliverance of the Israelites, the temporal life of Jesus, as a mere man, or a mere creature, can bear no proportion to the eternal life of mankind. Nay, in the former of these two cases there is some proportion, and a comparison may be formed; but none at all in the latter. For as the life of a lamb is temporal, so was the life of an Israelite, which was redeemed by it; and it must be allowed, that, between temporal and temporal, there is some proportion. But the life of Christ, as a mere creature, is temporal and of a limited worth; whereas, the life he purchased for us is eternal, and of infinite value; between which there is, there can be no proportion." To dwell a little longer upon this:—

11. "The love of God appears, it may be said, not in giving a man, simply considered, but in giving one, that is, his own Son. But is Jesus the Son of God in a proper, or in a figurative sense? If only in the latter, I desire to be informed, whether it be an extraordinary and an astonishing effort of Divine love, to give a man for our redemption, who is the Son of God only by a metaphor? Suppose a sovereign were obliged to destroy a great number of his subjects, to assert the rights of justice, and maintain the honour of his laws, except some person were found worthy of being admitted as their substitute, who, by laying down his life, should deliver them from death. Suppose, farther, this prince, being moved with compassion, should engage to give the life of his own son for their redemption; you could not but conceive the highest idea of his mercy and love to his offending subjects. But if, afterward, you should be well informed, that he did not give his own son, and be also assured, that, properly speaking, he never had a son of his own; but that all the mystery of this astonishing love, which made such a noise in the world, consisted in this,—he adopted one of his subjects; took him out of a state of extreme indigence; educated him like the son of a prince; determined to give him up to death, as a ransom for his perishing subjects; and then, if it were possible, to reward his sufferings by making him the heir of his crown: in such a case it would be immediately said, 'Though the conduct of this prince is very extraordinary, and though his clemency is worthy of admiration, in pardoning attainted rebels, and in redeeming those who deserved to perish; yet it is a childish hyperbole to exclaim, 'Behold, how he loved his kingdom! He so loved it, that he gave his son, his own son, his dearly beloved, and only begotten son, to die for his offending subjects!'

12. "Still more to illustrate the point, we may borrow an instance from the sacred Scriptures. The offering up of Isaac, it is allowed, was a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Isaac, the delight of his father, and his only son, was bound in order to be sacrificed by Abraham himself, notwithstanding all the yearnings of parental bowels. Thus he became a lively type of Christ, of him, who is the only begotten of the

Father, and in whom he takes infinite and eternal delight. As Abraham offered up his only son, so the Divine Father delivered up to death his only begotten Son. Suppose, then, any one were to persuade and convince you, that Abraham did not offer up his only son, nor his own son, but that he took the son of Eliezer, gave him the name of Isaac, and, if you will, put on him the clothes of Isaac; you would immediately forbear to wonder at the obedience and faith of the renowned patriarch, in making no scruple to sacrifice his own and only son. We have been wont to look for the image only, in a type, and for the reality in its accomplishment; but, if we believe our adversaries, we must look for the reality in the type, and the image in its accomplishment. According to this new mode of interpretation, Abraham performed a great and wonderful act of obedience, by which his faith in the promises, and his love to God, have been rendered illustrious to all generations; for he offered up his own son, his dear and only son, and this he did in reality, not in appearance only. But God, in delivering up Jesus to death, gives us only a servant, whom he calls his Son, that there might be a greater appearance of love in his dying for us."

13. "If, then, (as Bishop Pearson adds,) the sending of Christ into the world be the highest act of the love of God which could be expressed; if we be obliged unto a return of thankfulness, some way correspondent to such infinite love; if such a return can never be made without a true sense of that infinity, and a sense of that infinity of love cannot consist without an apprehension of an infinite dignity of nature in the person sent; then it is absolutely necessary to believe that Christ is so the 'only begotten Son' of the Father, as to be of the same substance with him, of glory equal, of majesty coeternal."

14. A fourth use of this doctrine, and the last I shall mention, is to convince us, that (as our poet says)

No man too largely from heaven's love can hope,
If, what he hopes, he labours to secure.

For, as the apostle argues: "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up unto death for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" But then this implies that Christ was more than a mere man, or mere creature: for, "would it be logical, would it be rational, thus to argue? If God, in his great love, delivered up one mere man, or mere creature, to death, we may safely conclude he will deliver millions from it. If he delivered up one to temporal sufferings, he will certainly deliver vast multitudes from eternal torments: if he gave a person infinitely inferior to himself, to endure the pains of crucifixion for us; he will undoubtedly grant us the enjoyment of himself, to make us completely and everlastingly happy. How different the apostle's manner of arguing in this passage! Whoever duly considers how he speaks of God's own Son, of us all, and of all things, cannot but observe he supposes it quite evident, that there is no proportion between Jesus Christ and all the redeemed, though taken collectively; nor between the gift of him and the grant of all other blessings. But such a way of speaking is absolutely unaccountable, is highly absurd, on the hypothesis opposed:" but, on our principles, God's "not sparing his own Son, but freely delivering him up unto death for us all," gives us the highest

assurance that he will perform all his gracious promises, and "freely give us all things." For he that has done us the greater favour, will surely do us the less: he that hath given us such a gift as his own Son, a gift, according to our doctrine, infinite in value, will surely give us every other inferior blessing; especially considering that his Son was given for this very end; that atonement being made for sin, and all the demands of justice being satisfied, Divine mercy and love might have free course, and God, in a way consistent with his attributes, might bestow upon us all blessings—temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

SOCINIANISM UNSCRIPTURAL:

OR,

THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES VINDICATED

FROM THE CHARGE OF HOLDING

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S MERE HUMANITY:

BEING

THE SECOND PART

OF

A VINDICATION OF HIS DIVINITY;

INSCRIBED

TO THE REV. DR. PRIESTLEY,

BY THE LATE REV. JOHN FLETCHER,

VICAR OF MADELEY, SALOP.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

IN A LARGE DETAIL OF INSTANCES,

A DEMONSTRATION OF THE WANT OF COMMON SENSE

IN THE

NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS,

ON THE SUPPOSITION OF THEIR

BELIEVING AND TEACHING THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DOCTRINE.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

TO THE LATE REV. JOHN WESLEY,

BY JOSEPH BENSON.

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

PREFACE.

THE reader will easily observe, that the following letters, by the late Rev. Mr. Fletcher, are almost all unfinished, and are here presented to the public in an imperfect state. It is much to be regretted, especially, that the last of them, on the Epistles of St. Paul, is so incomplete, as only two of these epistles had been considered ; and very many passages of great importance upon this subject, and such as afford incontestable proof of our Lord's divinity, are to be found in those that he had not examined. It is true, many of these passages have been introduced in the former part of this work, and have been there improved, in some measure, in defence of that important doctrine ; yet still, as this was not done by the masterly pen of Mr. Fletcher, the friends of our Lord's divinity cannot but consider it as a loss to the Church of Christ, and therefore as an afflictive providence, that this able and pleasing writer was not spared to finish his work, and fully rescue the apostle of the Gentiles, as he has done the other apostles, out of the hands of those who so miserably mangle his writings, and cast so great a stain upon his character.

St. Paul has for many ages been looked up to with respect as an apostle, as a Christian, as a scholar, and as a man of genius. But this new Socinian doctrine, still more adventurous than the old, dares to strip him of his honour in all these respects. It degrades him as an apostle, for it denies that he wrote by inspiration ; as a Christian, for it makes him an idolater, and an encourager of idolatry ; as a scholar, for it affirms that he reasons inconclusively ; and as a man of genius and parts, for, if it is to be credited, he had not even common sense, or at least did not write as if he had.

This last particular, which, as far as I know, has not yet been touched upon in the present controversy between Dr. Priestley and his antagonists, I have attempted to set in a clear point of view, in some letters which I have annexed to those of Mr. Fletcher. I thought that, in doing this, I should perhaps render a more essential service to the cause of truth, than if, endeavouring to follow Mr. Fletcher's plan, and prosecute the subject in his method, I should make such additions to his letters as would be necessary to render them in some degree complete. Indeed, I had two reasons for declining this. The first was, that the former part, already published, being enlarged beyond what Mr. Fletcher had intended, had in some measure precluded the necessity of this second part. For instead of being, as he plainly meant it, merely a *Rational Vindication of the Catholic Faith, respecting the trinity and the*

divinity of our Lord, it now assumes another form, and rather appears as a *Scriptural* vindication of these doctrines. The other was, I knew my inability to treat the subject in his masterly manner, and that at best it would seem a very heterogeneous composition. I concluded therefore to let these letters go abroad in their unfinished state, as the imperfect and posthumous works of a great and good man, who hardly ever dropped a word from his lips, or a sentence from his pen, but what was one way or other calculated to do good.

What Dr. Priestley will think of these unfinished letters, should he condescend to cast his eye over them, is easy to see, after the judgment he has passed upon the deservedly celebrated writings of Dr. Horsley, now Lord Bishop of St. David's. "We consider (says he, p. 1 of his last letters to his lordship) your publications in this controversy, as contributing, in an eminent manner, to the propagation of that great truth for which we think it glorious to contend, and which you oppose." And again, p. 2, "Had I been permitted to choose my own antagonist, by exposing of whose arguments and manner of conducting the controversy I might avail myself the most, I should certainly have made choice of your lordship. After seeing your first set of letters to me, I said to several of my friends, that if I could have dictated the whole of your performance myself, it should have been just what I found it to be: your arguments were so extremely futile, and your manner of urging them giving me even more advantage than I wanted or wished for." If even the arguments of Dr. Horsley, the force of which has been felt and acknowledged so universally, have made no impression upon the mind of the doctor, what can be expected from these publications? Surely, should he condescend to honour them with his notice, (a favour which, however, is not to be expected,) in one half hour he might demonstrate their futility: and were not the opponents of too little note to afford the doctor much honour in the conquest, we might again hear him proclaiming his victory in terms similar to those he uses when, p. 4, he assures his lordship, in great triumph, that "he [the bishop] has been completely foiled in all his attempts to discover any error [in the doctor's writings] of the least consequence to his main argument." And many, no doubt, would take the doctor's word for it, and save themselves the expense of purchasing, and trouble of reading a book, the authors of which had been so "completely foiled" in the whole of their argumentation! It will remain a truth, however, when Dr. Priestley and his publications are no more, that "not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

As to the Scriptures, arguments drawn from that source can have but little weight with the doctor. "You think it extraordinary (says he to the Rev. James Barnard, p. 83,) that I should have recourse to such guides as the fathers, to settle my opinion concerning the doctrine of the

trinity, thinking, I suppose, that the study of the Scriptures might render all other helps unnecessary. Now, I have more than once given my reason for this conduct. It is in short this: Christians are not agreed in the interpretation of Scripture language; but as all men are agreed with respect to the nature of *historical evidence*, I thought that we might perhaps better determine by history what was the faith of Christians in early times, independently of any aid from the Scriptures: and it appeared to be no unnatural presumption, that whatever that should appear to be, such was the doctrine of the apostles, from whom their faith was derived; and that by this means we should be possessed of a pretty good guide for discovering the true sense of Scripture."

It appears, therefore, that in the doctor's opinion, though the apostles exhort us to "strive together for the faith of the Gospel," and to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" and though they wrote many epistles designedly to tell us what that faith was; yet that these epistles are so unintelligible, that if we wish for information concerning this faith, we must not have recourse to them, though written in a language perfectly understood, but to the histories and other writings of persons who lived some centuries after them! According to this hypothesis, if, some ages hence, any one should be wishful to know what the faith of that great philosopher and divine, Dr. Priestley, was, he must not apply to the doctor's own writings for information, though those writings should happen to be extant, and should be preserved entire, but must recur to histories of England, memoirs of the lives and writings of eminent men, and other books composed and published some ages after the doctor's death, and by men, perhaps, either ill informed on the one hand, or prejudiced on the other! According to the same plan, the faith of the old Puritans might be learned from the books of the present Presbyterians, that is, the Socinians, their successors; and the faith of our reformers from the sermons and other publications of the present clergy of the Church of England! On the same principle, too, it may be learned from some future Socinian historian, how the bishop of St. David's managed the controversy with Dr. Priestley, and how just and Scriptural his lordship's sentiments were on the important subject debated between them.

I would not be understood as insinuating here, either that the ancient fathers of the Church, or the members of it in general, in the first ages, departed from the faith held by the apostles and first Christians. I am persuaded they did not, and that their holding the doctrine contended for in these sheets, is capable of as clear and satisfactory proof as any subject of history whatever. But be this as it may, it appears to me that any man's faith is best learned from those discourses and writings of his own, in which he professedly declares that faith; unless, indeed, on the one hand there be reason to question his sincerity, or on the other

to suppose him deficient in common sense, or at least in ability to make himself understood. Accordingly, I think, without intending to detract at all from the character or writings of those holy and eminent men, the ancient fathers, that the faith of the apostles is best learned from what they themselves have delivered concerning it. And Dr. Priestley may use what arguments he pleases, I am satisfied he never will be able to convince any of the contrary, but those whom he has first persuaded that these sacred penmen were deficient in integrity or in understanding, that they either would not or could not give a just and intelligible account of their sentiments.

The doctor has already carried his researches very far, not only in philosophy, but also in divinity: he has greatly outstripped all his predecessors. In philosophy he has discovered, to the utter confusion of the wisdom of former ages, that man has no soul, no rational and immortal spirit; that he is a mere piece of organized matter, and that of consequence all his motions are purely mechanical; all his tempers, words, and works, previously fixed, necessary, and unavoidable; a doctrine this, published by him to the world some years ago, and still openly avowed, as appears by his late letters to the Rev. John Hawkins, in which he declares himself to be "professedly a Unitarian, a Necessarian, and a Materialist." In divinity he has not only adopted and confirmed the discoveries (or tenets, as I should rather call them) of Socinus, respecting the mere humanity of Christ, with all the train of consequences which that doctrine draws after it; but he questions the authenticity of the account, given in the beginning of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, respecting the miraculous conception of the child Jesus. Of course he has inferred that Jesus Christ, sent indeed of God, and a great prophet, yet was weak, fallible, and peccable, like other men: that, as to the evangelists and apostles, whatever might be the case with them as *speakers*, concerning which, I think, he has not pronounced positively, yet that, as *writers*, they certainly were not inspired: that as to St. Paul, in particular, he often reasons very inconclusively, and both misunderstands and misapplies sundry passages quoted from the Old Testament.

But it will be impossible for the doctor to stop here. He must of necessity either advance farther, or come quite back. As to *philosophy*, indeed, the philosophy, I mean, that concerns the nature of man, he seems to be arrived at the *ne plus ultra*. It being a plain, undeniable fact, that we do move, it would be in vain to endeavour to persuade us that we do not. All that can possibly be done in this case is, what he has effected long ago, that is, to prove that we move mechanically. But in *divinity*;—unless, as I hinted, he should think proper to make a retreat, and return into the paths of orthodoxy, which, at his time of life, and after the attention and admiration he has excited for a number of years by the singularity of his discoveries, he is well aware he could not do

with credit to himself;—in divinity, I say, he must go much farther. Added to what he has demonstrated respecting St. Paul's reasoning inconclusively, and all the apostles and evangelists writing without inspiration, he must make it evident that they all in general, and St. Paul in particular, wrote without common sense. This, on the one hand, would be perfecting his work, and would for ever free him, and all other great and learned philosophers and divines, from what has long been found to be a prodigious clog upon the feet of those who are in haste to make discoveries, I mean that obsolete book, the Bible. And, on the other, it will be found absolutely necessary to gain credit to the discoveries already made, and especially to procure them a firm and lasting establishment. And then neither the doctor, nor any of his brethren of the school of Socinus, need give themselves any farther trouble, in fruitless endeavours to reconcile their sentiments with the antiquated doctrines taught by St. Paul, St. John, or any other of the New Testament writers, any more than they would to reconcile them with the reveries of a madman, or the dreams of an enthusiast.

As a specimen of what might be done in this way, and because it is reasonable to think that the doctor has not time, in the midst of his many and severe studies, and voluminous publications, to search the Scriptures for the examples which seem necessary to be produced in proof of so important a point, I have taken the pains to look over the New Testament, and especially the Epistles of St. Paul, and have put down many instances of this kind. I will not say they are all of them the most remarkable that could be found, but they are such as struck me most in the perusal, and I here take the liberty of presenting them to the public, along with these unfinished letters of the Rev. Mr. Fletcher. Whether I shall have the doctor's thanks for this my forwardness to serve him, I know not; but I can in truth say, I mean his good, as well as the good of all into whose hands these sheets may fall; and what is well meant, he will allow, should be well taken. His wisdom and learning, I doubt not, will direct him as to the use to be made of these quotations from the writings of the evangelists and apostles. They may properly be considered (like experiments in natural philosophy) as so many instances, demonstrating, in fact, not only the truth and certainty of the late discovery, that the persons who could write in such a manner, could not have been Divinely inspired; but, as I said, that they could not have had even common sense. The way will then be perfectly open for all that remains, and he may make an easy transition to Atheism, Deism, or what he pleases.

JOSEPH BENSON.

BIRMINGHAM, *February* 25, 1790.

LETTERS

TO

THE REV. DR. PRIESTLEY,

BY THE

LATE REV. JOHN FLETCHER, &c.

LETTER II.

Doctor Priestley is mistaken when he asserts that the prophets always spoke of the Messiah as of a mere man like themselves, and that the Jews never expected that the Messiah could be more than a man. In opposition to this error, this letter proves that our first parents expected a Divine Messiah, and that the Divine person who appeared to the patriarchs and to Moses, was Jehovah the Son, or Christ in his pre-existent state.

REV. SIR,—You might have given us, at least, twenty lines of plain, uncontroverted truth in the beginning of your history; but regardless of so decent a caution, you stun us at once by a glaring, antichristian paradox. In the sixteenth *line* of your huge work, (for we need not go by *pages* to reckon up your errors,) speaking of the thoughts which the Jews entertained of the Messiah, you say, “None of their prophets gave them an idea of any other than a man like themselves in that illustrious character, and no other did they ever expect.”

Now, sir, in opposition to this strange assertion, I shall show you, not only that the prophets gave the Jews an idea of a *Divine person* to appear in the character of the Messiah, and that accordingly they expected such a one; but that even our first parents must have formed a much higher notion of that “seed of the woman which was to bruise the serpent’s head,” than that of “a mere man like themselves.” In proof of this, I shall not produce the expression of Eve upon the birth of Cain, whom, it is highly probable, she thought to be that seed, though according to the Hebrew it is, “I have gotten the man, the Jehovah.” But I shall go upon surer grounds than any particular expression can afford. I shall argue from facts and from the reason of the case. However unwilling you may be to allow it, it is nevertheless, as we have already seen in the former part of this work, an unquestionable truth, that the *Logos*, the *Word*, who “was in the beginning with God and was God,” was the immediate Maker of our first parents, of that beautiful world in which he placed them, and of all the creatures over which he set them, nay, and of all things visible and invisible. Now

can we suppose that Adam, who, as he came out of the hands of his Maker, had such knowledge, that at first sight he gave names to all the creatures as they passed in review before him, and names perfectly descriptive of their natures; can we suppose, (I say,) that he did not know who was his Creator, and the Creator of all these creatures he had named? Certainly we cannot. But if he knew who was his Creator, he could hardly be ignorant who would be his Redeemer. For, considering the holy and happy state he and his partner had been in before their fall, the serenity of their minds, the vigour of their bodies, and the beauty and fertility of the blissful spot where their bounteous Lord had placed them; and considering the sad change that had now taken place, the dreadful ruin they had brought on themselves and their posterity by their transgression; considering their crime itself, with its awful retinue, shame, the curse, sorrow, toil, death, and corruption; it was reasonable, surely, to think, that the repairer of the breach, the restorer of a ruined world, would be that Divine person by whom it was created. Thus, when we see an exquisite piece of mechanism, capitally injured in all its parts, we reasonably conclude, that none can completely mend it but the maker, or an artist who equals him in skill.

Nor was it unreasonable for our first parents to think, that their Redeemer would be he whom St. Paul calls "the Lord from heaven:" for, he who made and married them, who gave them the garden of Eden, and warned them not to eat of the forbidden fruit; he who came to them "walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and from whose presence they hid themselves, when they heard his voice;" he, who, after he had convicted them, and had passed sentence of death upon them, so kindly saved them from despair, by the unexpected promise of a deliverer; he, who already carried his merciful condescension so far as to strip them of their "fig leaves, to make them coats of skin," and to clothe them with needful and decent apparel;—he might, in some future period, condescend to unite himself, some way or other, to the woman's seed, and become the destroyer of death and the serpent.

The reasonableness of this hope is evident, if he taught our first parents (as it is highly probable he did) to offer in sacrifice the beasts, "of whose skins he made them coats," and thus already showed himself "our passover, the Lamb of God," typically "slain from the foundation of the world." Nor can we more reasonably account for the original notion and the universal custom of expiatory and propitiatory sacrifices, than by the supposition, that mankind were led to this part of Divine worship by a peculiar revelation, or by a positive command of that Divine person, who familiarly conversed with Adam, and who is called God, or Lord God, twenty-six times, in the second and third chapters of Genesis.

The same Scriptures which inform us, that "No man hath seen God [the Father] at any time, but *that* the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him," John i, 18, teach us, nevertheless, that God appeared to several of the patriarchs, and sometimes even in a human shape. Hence it follows, that we must either reject St. John's declaration, above quoted, or admit that he who thus appeared, is the Son, the *Logos*, who "was in the beginning with God, and was God."

The truth of this conclusion will appear more clearly, if we take a view of the design and circumstances of these ancient manifestations, these preparatory, and transient incarnations (if I may so call them) of the Word, who in a fixed period was to be really and lastingly manifested in the flesh.

Whether we consider his expostulating with Cain, about the murder of Abel, his trying and condemning that murderer, as he had done Adam, and his "setting a mark upon" the guilty vagabond, "lest any finding him should kill him;" or whether we take notice of the manner in which he directed Noah to build his ark, made him enter into it, shut him in, saved him and his family from the flood, and then "speaking unto him, said, Go forth out of the ark," &c. Whether we advert to the friendly manner in which he appeared to, and conversed with Abraham, in his various stations and journeys; or, whether we attend to the familiarity with which, accompanied by two of his angels, he came to that patriarch in a human shape, condescended to eat with that friend of God, as he ate with Simon, and was worshipped and invoked by him, as the "Judge of all the earth," who claimed the absolute right of sparing Lot, and destroying Sodom, as he had spared Noah, and destroyed the whole world by water; and who actually destroyed that wicked city by raining, as Jehovah, fire from Jehovah upon it, when the two angels, who accompanied him, had made Lot and his daughters escape out of that accursed town: whether, I say, we consider these or any other of the Lord's appearances, he is represented as Jehovah, coming to do beforehand the work of the Messiah.

As *supreme Prophet*, he leads Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, opens the eyes of Agar, instructs Moses and all the prophets, Bezaleel and all the ingenious artists. As *supreme High Priest*, he directs Abraham and Aaron how to offer up proper sacrifices. As "*Lord of Hosts*," or "*Captain of the Lord's Host*," he overthrows five kings before Abraham; Pharaoh before Moses; the kings of Canaan before Joshua, and the Philistines before David. As *Angel of the covenant*, he strengthens, wrestles with, and blesses Jacob; he visits, directs, and animates Gideon; he assumes a human shape to promise a son to Abraham, and to Manoah: and as he said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am," so speaking to Moses from the burning, unconsumed bush, which was an emblem of his eternal power and glory, he shows that, with his Father, he is "the First and the Last," and declares their common name, "I am that I am."

These manifestations of Jehovah's glory had circumstances characteristic of the Son's person, as appears by the accounts handed down to us in the sacred writings. When "Moses, Aaron, and seventy-two of the elders of Israel went up, and saw the God of Israel," it is said, "There was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness: and that upon these nobles he laid not his hand." He appeared therefore as a man, since he had "feet and hands," which it cannot be shown the Father ever did.

Accordingly the apostle, speaking of the preference which Moses' faith gave to the God of Israel over the idols and riches of the Egyptians, says that "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," Heb. xi, 26, the Israelites being then as

much reproached by the Egyptians for worshipping "the God of Israel," as we are by you, sir, for worshipping the *Logos*. And St. Paul, alluding to these words of Moses: "The children of Israel tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us or not?" Exod. xvii, 7; says to the Corinthians, "Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them [the children of Israel] also tempted [him] and were destroyed of serpents, 1 Cor. x, 9; which shows the apostle believed that Jehovah, leader of Israel through the wilderness, was the very *Logos*, who sustained openly the office of Messiah, when he was at length manifested in human flesh.

And as the Scriptures show that these transient manifestations of Jehovah are in general to be understood of Christ in his Divine nature, or in his "form of God," see Phil. ii, 6, your own reason, sir, prejudiced as it is, must see the propriety of this doctrine. For if there be, in union with the Father's Godhead, a Word, a Son, "whose goings out are from everlasting," "who was in the beginning with God [the Father] and was God," insomuch that he can say, as "the only begotten Son of the Father, I and my Father are one," in a sense which can be true only with respect to him who is the proper Son, and the "express image" of the Father, see Rom. viii, 32, in the original, and Heb. i, 3;—if there be, I say, such a Being, whom St. John calls the *Logos*, and whom the Father names his "well beloved Son;" and if the Scriptures testify, that the Father sent this Son to redeem mankind, and to bless all nations; is it not more reasonable to believe that the Father occasionally sent him first to redeem the Israelites from the Egyptian captivity, and to bless that favoured people, than to believe that the Father, who never personally appeared, no, not for the redemption of all mankind, appeared, nevertheless, sometimes as a man, and sometimes as an angel, for the redemption of the children of Israel from their house of bondage?

A Son, even the proper Son of God, may, with the greatest propriety, be sent by his Father, to do works worthy of omnipotence, such as the redemption of a world, or the deliverance of a favourite people; but to suppose the Father personally to appear as a partial Saviour in a cloud or in a flame, on a mountain or in a temple; to suppose him to show himself sometimes as an angel, and sometimes as a man, is contrary both to the analogy of faith and the dictates of reason.

Beside, the Scriptures inform us, that "by faith Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible," because "he dwells in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see," Heb. xi, 27, and 1 Tim. vi, 16. And they declare, that if the Father be visible, it is in his Son, John xiv, 9. From these *rational* and *Scriptural* premises, I conclude that Jehovah, who appeared to Moses, and to the seventy-two elders, and who said to the people of Israel, "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the house of bondage," is that "express image of the Father," that "Prince of life," who said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: I and the Father are one."

The reviewers* have proved to you, sir, that this was the opinion of

* *Monthly Review* for January, 1784, p. 61,—“To prove (say these gentlemen) beyond the possibility of dispute or evasion, that by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Justin meant Christ, we refer the reader to his celebrated apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, (pp. 93, 94,) in which this expression is not only applied to Christ, but even vindicated as his own appropriate and distinct character.

Justin, one of the most ancient and respectable fathers, who had the honour of sealing the truth of the Gospel with his blood, one hundred and thirty years after our Lord. And Bishop Bull confirms the proofs brought against you, where he writes, "That the Son of God was he who appeared to Moses in the bush, and said, 'I am the existent Being,' Justin, in his dialogue with Trypho, eagerly contends. The case is this: That description of God, in Moses, I AM, equally agrees to the Father and the Son, as to one God; always saving the distinction of persons: which is excellently explained by Justin, after this manner:—God the Father is [*ο ων*] *the Existent*, as always existing of himself; God the Son is [*ο ων*] *the Existent*, as existing with the Father, and eternally begotten of him." (*Bull by Grabe*, vol. i, p. 347.)

Meaning to resume the important subject the first opportunity, I now release you, and subscribe myself your sincere friend, and obedient servant, in the Word made flesh,

JOHN FLETCHER,

LETTER III.

The subject of the former letter continued.

REV. SIR,—Should you deny that Jehovah who "appeared to Abraham" in the plains of Mamre, accompanied by two angels, was the Logos, we prove our assertion thus. The Scriptures nowhere speak of any transient incarnation of the Father; it is therefore unscriptural to suppose, that the person who "did eat of the butter, milk, and cakes," which Abraham did set before him, and who kindly inquired after Sarah, was the "Father." Nevertheless, that he was God, is evident; for he is called eight times Jehovah in the context. And therefore the analogy of faith requires us to believe that it was Jehovah the Son, who already condescended to quit his "form of God," and to appear in the form of a servant, that he might "receive sinners and eat with them:" compare Gen. xviii, 8, with Luke xv, 2, and John xxi, 12.

The same reasons prove that the Divine person, who stood above the mysterious ladder which Jacob saw in Bethel, was "Jehovah the Son." "Behold," saith the historian, "Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; behold, I am with thee in all places whither thou goest, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And Jacob waking out of his sleep said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not: it is none other but the house of God and the gate of heaven," Gen. xxviii, 13–17. Now the God who appeared to Abraham, Gen. xxii, 1, to Isaac, Gen. xxvi, 24, to Jacob, Gen. xxviii, 13, and to Moses, Exod. iii, 6, is again and again called the angel of Jehovah, or rather Jehovah the angel, as appears from Gen. xxii, 11, 12, 18; Exod. iii, 2, and Mal. iii, 1. Now that this Jehovah, angel both of the Jewish and of the Christian covenant, is "the Son," appears from these three reasons: (1.) The Father never sustained the part of an angel, a messenger, or an envoy. Who should send him? (2.) The Son, who can with propriety be sent by the Father, is frequently said to have been delegated on errands worthy of redeeming love. And (3.) The Scriptures expressly declare that Jeho-

vah, Angel of the covenant, is our Lord Jesus Christ. Compare Mal. iii, 1, &c, with Mark i, 1, &c.

Nor will it avail to say that the Jews, not having the New Testament, could not find out the truth I assert: for, as has been observed in the former part, the Old Testament clearly indicates that, in the Deity, there is a mysterious *distinction* of interlocutors and agents, though without any division. The Jews who, as we have seen, had this key given them at the very beginning of their revelation, could not but take notice, that although each of these interlocutors is called Jehovah, yet one of them is Jehovah the envoy, the ambassador, or the angel. And they might as well deny the veracity of Moses, as deny that Jehovah, who appeared to Jacob in Bethel, is Jehovah the envoy. For Jacob said to Rachel and Leah, "The angel of God appeared to me in a dream, saying, I am the God of Bethel where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land," Gen. xxxi, 11, 13. Now the God of Bethel declared to Jacob in Bethel, that he was the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and therefore every attentive Jew could not but see that Jehovah-envoy, or the angel of the Jewish covenant, was the God of the patriarchs, viz. the *Logos*, the Son, who, being "Jehovah, rained from Jehovah fire upon Sodom," after he had told Abraham that he could not spare that wicked city.

Christ is represented in the New Testament as the Captain of our salvation, armed with a sword, Heb. ii, 10, and Rev. xix, 15. And the Old Testament exhibits Jehovah-envoy as sustaining the same character. "When Joshua was by Jericho, he lift up his eyes, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went to him and said, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy:" the very charge which the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob gave to Moses from the flaming bush in Horeb. And when Joshua had obeyed, the man, who appeared as Captain of the Lord's host, gave him directions about the taking of Jericho, as the God of Abraham had given directions to Moses about the delivering his people from the Egyptian bondage. These orders are thus expressed: And "Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hands Jericho; ye shall compass the city six days," &c, Josh. v, 13, &c, and vi, 2, &c.

Unless we absurdly suppose that the Captain of the Lord's host appeared merely to bid Joshua loose his shoes from off his feet, it follows from this narration, that the personage who appeared to Moses' successor, was Jehovah God of Abraham. This is evident, (1.) From his being called Jehovah, and (2.) From his requiring and accepting religious worship from Joshua. And that it was Jehovah the Son is equally plain, (1.) From his assuming the form of a servant: (2.) From his styling himself the Captain of Jehovah's armies; for according to the analogy of faith, the Son, Jehovah-envoy, may be called the Captain of his Father's host, but the Father can never be sent on an expedition, as Captain of his Son's armies.

That *Jehovah-envoy*, so frequently styled *the envoy of Jehovah*; or as

we have it in our translation, "the angel of the Lord," was known to the Jews, as the "mighty God," whose name is *Wonderful*, appears from the following account: "The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said, Jehovah is with thee: and Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, [the might which I impart unto thee,] and thou shalt save Israel: have I not sent thee?" And when Gideon drew back, "Jehovah [namely, the angel Jehovah] said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Hence the Israelites, when they fell upon the Midianites, shouted, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." When Jehovah-envoy, who appeared only as a traveller, with "a staff in his hand," disappeared, after giving a proof of his divinity, by showing he was God that answereth by fire, see Judges vi, 21, Gideon perceived the infinite dignity of the personage who had spoken to him, and remembering that Jehovah had said to Moses, "No man shall see me [in my form of God] and live," Exod. xxxiii, 20; and thinking he was to die immediately, cried out, "Alas! O Lord God, for because I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face: and Jehovah [as he disappeared] said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die: and Gideon built an altar there unto Jehovah, and called it Jehovah-Shalom," that is, *The God of peace*. From this account it is evident, (1.) That the angel, who appeared to Gideon, is the very angel Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham on Mount Moriah, to Jacob in Bethel, and to Moses in Horeb. (2.) That he is Jehovah, who answers by fire, seeing he manifested his glory to Gideon as he did to Moses and Elijah, by a supernatural fire. (3.) And that as the analogy of faith does not permit us to believe that God the Father ever appeared as a man with a staff in his hand, it was without doubt Jehovah Jesus, who, as the great Saviour of the Israelites, appointed saviours for the deliverance of his people, and Gideon among others; as afterward in the days of his flesh, as the great apostle of our profession, he appointed twelve apostles to instruct mankind.

This doctrine is confirmed by the account we have of the manner in which Samson was raised to the office of a temporal saviour of the Israelites. A personage, who is called several times the angel of the Lord, or the envoy Jehovah, appeared as a man to Manoah and his wife, to whom he promised the birth of Samson. Manoah, not knowing his dignity, asked him his name: and the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret, or wonderful? PELL, the very word afterward used by the prophet, who saith, His name shall be called Wonderful, PELL, Isa. ix, 6. "So Manoah took a kid, with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto Jehovah; and the angel of the Lord [or Jehovah-envoy] did wonderfully," for showing himself the God that appeared in the burning bush to Moses, and accepting the propitiatory sacrifice, which Manoah and his wife offered, "he ascended in the flame of the altar as they looked on, and fell on their faces to the ground. Then Manoah knew that he was [Jehovah-envoy, or] the angel of the Lord; and he said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God: but his wife [perceiving that it was Jehovah-Shalom, the God of Gideon, the God of peace, who had appeared unto them] said to him, If Jehovah were pleased to kill us, he would never have received a burnt offering at our hands," Judges xiii, 23.

The same reasons which prove that the person who appeared to Gideon is Jehovah Jesus, prove also that the person who appeared to Manoah and his wife, whom they at first called a man, and before whom they trembled when they knew him to be God and Jehovah, is that very Emmanuel, that God manifested in the flesh, whom Christians worship as Jehovah-Shalom, coming to make peace and reconciliation. * * *

LETTER IV.

The foundation of the proofs of Christ's divinity from the writings of the prophets, is laid in the three original prophecies recorded by Moses concerning the Messiah.

REV. SIR,—In the two last letters I have endeavoured to show, both from Scripture and reason, that the Israelites might *reasonably* expect a *Divine* Messiah, and that it is *most unreasonable* and unscriptural to suppose, that, whereas the Son appeared on Mount Calvary for the redemption of all mankind from the tyranny of sin, death, and Satan, God the Father appeared on Mount Horeb *merely* to redeem one single nation from the tyranny of Pharaoh. Coming now to the point, I shall confront your first fundamental proposition with the prophecies of the Old Testament. Speaking of the Messiah as a *mere man*, and repeating in your *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, what I have already quoted from the beginning of your *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, you write, p. 331: "Nor can it be said that any of the ancient prophecies give us the least hint of any thing farther."

In direct opposition to this doctrine, I shall show that* *all* the prophetic books of the Old Testament contain strong *hints* or express declarations of the Messiah's divinity; and I enter upon this task the more willingly, as I hope to present you with some new observations on this important subject.

The oldest book is Genesis: Moses, the writer of it, is the first prophet of the Jews, the oldest people in the world. And in that book we find the three original promises relative to the Messiah. The *first* was made immediately after the fall, in these words: "I will put enmity between thee [O serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. iii, 15. As if the Lord had said to the tempter, "By the instrumentality of a serpent thou hast triumphed over the woman, and by her over the man, but the day is not lost: a long and dreadful war shall be waged between thee and my Church, the spiritual mother of all living souls, the mystical woman of whom Eve is a type: and another Eve shall one day bear a Son, the second and better Adam, whom I call the seed of the woman, because he shall be miraculously formed of the substance of a woman without the interposition of a man, as Eve was miraculously formed of the substance of Adam without the interposition of a woman. Armed with Divine power, he shall enter the field against thee, and thy forces. By the help of the wicked, who are thy seed, thou shalt indeed bruise

* Had it pleased the Lord to spare Mr. Fletcher, he had purposed to do this

his heel, wound to death the inferior part of his wonderful person, the body which he shall assume from his mother, and by which he shall be allied to the earth. But his deadly wound shall be fatal to thee ; for, showing himself the Prince of life, even with his bruised heel ' he shall bruise thy head,' he shall destroy thee and thy seed. Then shall the woman and her seed possess the gates of their enemies ; then shall the curse brought upon the earth by the first Adam, be turned into a blessing by the second ; and the world redeemed, instead of being full of cruel habitations, shall become like this forfeited garden." That this is a just exposition of this first prophecy, appears both from what is already come to pass, and from other predictions descriptive of the events foretold to the mystical serpent.

And do not say, sir, that this paraphrase makes too much of Christ ; for if " the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil," 1 John iii, 8, is it not evident, that none can turn " thorns and thistles" into paradisiacal shrubs, anguish into bliss, death into life, and the general curse into a universal blessing, but He who said at first, " Let there be light, and there was light ;" and who, when he first acted the part of a righteous Judge, thundered these words in the ears of guilty man, " Cursed is the ground for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee : dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return !" For supposing the sun, by withholding his quickening beams, had caused a general winter and a universal night ; is it not plain that the only remedy adequate to the greatness of such an evil, would be the return of the solar light ?

The *second* original promise respecting the Messiah was made to Abraham, when he dwelt in Haran, and confirmed upon Mount Moriah, on an occasion which reflects a great light on the sufferings, character, and work of the Messiah. " By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, [who can swear by no other being than himself,] because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ; that in blessing I will bless thee : thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," Gen. xxii, 16, &c. St. Paul, alluding to this promise, saith, " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree : that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ. For to Abraham and his seed were the promises [to a universal blessing] made : he [God] saith not, And to seeds, as [if this blessing were to be the desert] of many [of Abraham's children,] but as of one [one of them,] And to thy seed, which is CHRIST," Gal. iii, 13, 16.

Being enlightened by this, and other parallel scriptures, we clearly see that the sense of this promise is as follows :—" O thou father of the faithful, Heaven is pleased with thy steady obedience : thou hast exemplified the holy purpose of God the Father, who will not spare his Son, his only begotten Son ; but will deliver him up as a Divine sacrifice for a guilty world : and Isaac hath shadowed out the meek obedience of the Son of God, that heavenly Lamb, which God will provide, that wonderful descendant of thine, who shall be so superior to all his brethren, as eminently to deserve the name of ' the Son of God,' according to ' his outgoings from everlasting,' and the name of thy seed, according to the

human nature, which he shall assume from thee, by a virgin of thine offspring. It is he whom I peculiarly mean by thy seed. He shall be thine Isaac, thy laughter, and thy joy: by faith 'see his day and be glad,' John viii, 56. Rejoice in him evermore, for he shall be 'the desire of all nations,' and 'the joy of the whole earth:' for through him shall all the families and people be filled with righteousness, peace, and joy; when he shall 'possess the gates of his enemies,' and cause righteousness to cover the earth, as the mighty waters cover the bottom of the sea."

The *third* prophecy, relative to the Messiah, was uttered by dying Jacob. "Gather yourselves together," said he to his sons, "that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp, he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall be the gathering of the nations," Gen. xlix, 8-10.

This ancient prophecy, explained according to the parallel scriptures, amounts to the following prediction:—"Judah my son, as the lion is king among the beasts of the forest, so shall thy tribe be the most honourable, powerful, and warlike in Israel. But thy greatest honour shall arise from David, one of thy descendants, and from the line of kings, who shall spring up from his loins: for they, together with the Levites and priests, who shall adhere to them, shall continue to give princes and rulers to the Israelites, till the Shiloh shall come, who shall sustain four most important offices. (1.) Being typified by Moses and Aaron, two of Levi's grandchildren, he shall be a meek Lawgiver, a powerful Prophet, and a majestic High Priest. (2.) Being represented by David, an invincible captain, and a victorious prince, whose offspring he shall be, he shall subdue or destroy all his enemies, and shall deserve the titles of 'Lion of the tribe of Judah,' and 'Captain of our salvation.' And (3.) Being shadowed out by Solomon, another of his ancestors, a peaceful and prosperous king, who by his wisdom and power shall secure the admiration and respect of all the east, he shall show himself the Shiloh, the mighty Redeemer, promised to our fathers; for he shall redeem Israel from all his sins, and from all his troubles. Nor will he confine his royal benefits to our posterity. For when he shall have finished his work as lawgiver and prophet; when he shall have been persecuted by his brethren as Abel; when he shall have been offered for us, and restored back to us as Isaac, his law shall be preached to distant nations, and he shall long remain as a couching lion: but he shall at last be roused up by the groans of his oppressed people, and by the crying sins of all mankind. Then 'shall his hand be on the neck of his enemies;' then shall he do his strange work as 'the lion of Judah's tribe:' but soon coming up from the slaughter, as Abraham from the defeat of the five kings, he shall show himself, not only the promised bruiser of the serpent's seed, but the Prince of Peace, both for our posterity and for all mankind; for 'all the families of the earth shall be blessed through him, and unto him shall the gathering of the nations be; the fulness of the Gentiles coming in,' after the Jews, to enjoy the

blessings of his holy, peaceful, and prosperous reign. And then shall be fulfilled another prophecy: 'His *righteous* dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.' I say his *righteous* dominion, for when 'the kingdoms of this world' shall become the happy provinces of his kingdom, righteousness shall cover the earth: 'The whole earth shall be filled with his glory,' and all his subjects shall sing, 'Blessed be [Emmanuel] the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever! Amen, and Amen!' Psalm lxxii, 8, 20.

You will see, sir, that this sense of Jacob's prophecy is confirmed by the prophecies of the other men of God; all the other oracles respecting the same subject being only confirmations and explanations of the three original promises handed to us by Moses. He hath so clearly described the Messiah, by the Divine works appointed for him, that to prove Christ's divinity, by the concurrent testimony of all the prophets, I need only prove that they unanimously declare, that the wonderful person, who shall reverse the curse, bruise the serpent's head, destroy the wicked, possess the gate of his enemies, unto whom all people shall be gathered, and in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, is a person truly Divine, even Jehovah, the Son, or "Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh," to be both the "King of the Jews," the "Saviour of the world," and the "King of the princes of the earth."

OBJECTION. You will probably say, sir, that "Moses himself overturns the sense, which I put upon the three original promises recorded by him, with respect to the Messiah; and that when Moses foretells Christ's coming, he only speaks of him as "of a prophet, like unto himself;" and that if Christ were a prophet "like unto Moses," so sure as Moses was a *man only*, the Messiah was a *mere man*."

ANSWER. We grant that Christ, as "Son of man," is like Moses, in several respects. Was the son of Amram saved in his infancy from the cruelty of a jealous tyrant, who had doomed him to die with a multitude of other children? So was the son of Mary. Was Moses the lawgiver of the Jews? So is Christ the legislator of the Christians. Was Moses remarkable for his meekness? So was he who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek in heart." Both being appointed as mediating prophets, stood in the gap to turn away the wrath of Heaven from a guilty people. Both, as shepherds of the Lord, led his straying sheep through a wilderness to a delightful land. Did Moses smite Pharaoh, king of Egypt, Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan? So will Christ "wound kings in the day of his wrath." Did Moses heal the dying Israelites, by lifting up the serpent in the wilderness? So Christ heals believers by being lifted up on the cross. Did Moses fast forty days, and receive the law on Mount Sinai? So did Jesus fast forty days, and deliver his law on a mount of Galilee. Was Moses rejected, and almost stoned by the Israelites? So was Christ by the Jews. Did Moses despise the glory of Egypt, that he might suffer for, and with the people of God? So did our Lord despise all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, that he might suffer for, and with his people. In a word, is Moses the great prophet of the Old Testament? So is Christ of the New. This was ground sufficient for the comparison which Moses made of Christ with himself.

But, to conclude that because Christ, according to his human nature, was a prophet like unto Moses, he must be a mere man as Moses, is illogical.

Dying Jacob, to express the toil, strength, and patience of Issachar's tribe, says, "Issachar is [like] a strong ass, couching down between two burthens." But must we infer from thence, that Issachar had long ears, and really carried two panniers as an ass? It is by such injudicious pressing of comparisons, that monstrous doctrines are obtruded upon Christians, and that while some turn Socinians, others become even Materialists.

But although the Scriptures show that there is proper ground for a comparison between Christ and Moses, they take care to keep us from the rock against which you split; for they not only tell us that Christ is "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," but that he is the "chiefest among ten thousand" prophets, priests, and kings; because their divers offices all join in his Divine person. When the Israelites were in the desert, God was their king, Moses their prophet, Aaron their priest, and Joshua their general; but Christ sustains alone all their parts.

I have shown (in letter ii) that under the law, the Logos, or God, manifest sometimes in flames of fire, and sometimes in a human form, was the King of Israel, and Moses was his prime minister: a leading truth this, which Nathanael acknowledged, when discovering our Lord's glory, he cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel," John i, 49. As if he had said, Thou art he, whose patience our fathers tried in the desert, and whom they rejected in the days of Samuel, as appears by that prophet's expostulation, "Ye said to me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your King," 1 Sam. xii, 12. But under the Gospel, when the Logos is continually manifested in the flesh, he sustains both characters; and, in that sense, may be compared to those great monarchs, who, like Frederic, the late king of Prussia, are their own prime ministers.

Hence it is that, although as a prophet, or a minister, Christ is like Moses, yet as *Logos*, and King of Israel, he is infinitely superior to the Jewish lawgiver. "Consider Jesus Christ," says the apostle, "He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses," on two capital accounts: (1.) Moses was faithful as a "servant in the house of him who had appointed him: but Christ was faithful as a son, over his own house." (2.) "Moses was worthy of glory," inasmuch as he was a fundamental stone in the house of God; but "Christ is worthy of more glory, inasmuch as he who built the house hath more honour than the house," or any part of it: "for every house is built by some man; but he who hath built [the Jewish Church and] all things, is God," Heb. iii, 1, 4. These words, with which I shall conclude this letter, are both a full answer to the objection I consider, and a full proof of our Lord's divinity. I remain, dear sir, &c.

LETTER V.

All the prophets bear witness to the Messiah as the bruiser of the serpent, and the prosperous King reigning in righteousness over the subject nations: in other words, they foretell the days of vengeance, and the days of refreshing which shall succeed them, under his administration.

To open the prophecies relative to the Messiah's glory, we must have a Divine key. I have already shown that Moses gave it us, when he described the Redeemer as the destroyer of the serpent, and as the Shiloh, the prosperous King, who, after having "laid his hands on the neck of his enemies as a lion," shall sway the sceptre of his mercy over the submissive nations, or (to use the prophet's laconic style) "unto whom shall the gathering of the people be," Gen. xlix, 10.

The Messiah's achievements, in this two-fold point of view, were typified by the exploits of David and Solomon, the two first of his royal ancestors. David is long poor, despised by his brethren, and unknown to Israel. When he is anointed king of Israel, he is hated and pursued by a jealous and bloody prince; but he kills the giant who defied the armies of the living God, routs the Philistines, and after having acted the part of the lion of the tribe of Judah, and given the Israelites victory on all sides, he leaves the crown to peaceful Solomon, "unto whom is the gathering of the people," and who "builds the magnificent temple of the Lord," and heaps upon Israel the blessings of a peaceful and prosperous reign.

St. Peter, in his second sermon, preaches the Messiah according to these two displays of his redeeming power. "It shall come to pass (says he) that whosoever will not hear that [royal] Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. Repent ye, therefore, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, who was before preached unto you [under the names of Wonderful, mighty God, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, &c.] whom the heaven must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things, which God, since the world began, hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets. For all the prophets from Samuel, [who appointed David, the first royal type of the Messiah,] as many as have spoken have foretold these days" of vengeance, in which the Messiah will bruise the serpent and his brood, and these days of refreshing, when the Lord Jesus, having destroyed "those who would not have him reign over them," will give rest to his faithful subjects in all his dominions, which "shall extend unto the ends of the earth." For, adds St. Peter, "God said unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," Acts iii, 19-25.

As inattention and unbelief have cast a veil over this glorious part of the Gospel, permit me, sir, to remove a corner of this veil, and to show how the prophets have all spoken of the glorious days of the Messiah, and of the days of vengeance, which shall precede them. My dwelling on this point will not be a needless digression, but the very ground on which I shall rest one of my strongest proofs of your error, and of Christ's divinity. I now begin with Samuel, whom St. Peter particularly mentions.

Before I had found the key of Scripture knowledge, I own to you, sir, that I wondered how that apostle could say to the Jews, that Samuel had prophesied of Christ. I found no such prophecy in the books of Samuel. But now I see that St. Peter had in view the most glorious typical predictions concerning Christ, as our king, prophet, and priest.

I have proved that the "King of Israel," who brought his people out of Egypt, was Christ in his pre-existent nature. Moses was the prime minister of this great King; Joshua, the general of his armies; the tabernacle his palace; the mercy seat his throne; the ark his royal standard; the priests his officers; the Levites his guards; and the shekinah the visible display of his presence. In the days of Samuel, whom he had chosen for his prophet, minister, and representative, the Jews, tired of their invisible King, said to Samuel, "Make us a king, to judge us, [personally and visibly,] like all the nations. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Hearken to the people: they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. As they have done since the day that I brought them out of Egypt, so do they also unto thee," 1 Sam. viii, 5. And when Samuel expostulated with them, he said, Your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king, when Jehovah "your God was your King." And to back this reproof, Jehovah sent such "thunder and rain for a whole day in wheat harvest," as made the rebellious Jews afraid of instant destruction, 1 Sam. xii, 12, 19. From this important passage, we learn three things. (1.) The King of Israel, who was rejected by the Jews in Samuel's days, is truly Jehovah, that very "Lord of glory," whom the Jews rejected a second time, when, appearing "in the form of a servant, he came to his own, and his own received him not," but crucified him with this remarkable title, "Jesus, the King of the Jews," the very title given him, both by the wise men, when they inquired after him "that was born King of the Jews," and by the "Israelite without guile," when, seeing the form of God shining in Christ through the form of a servant, he confessed that Christ was the Son of God, "the King of Israel," John i, 49. (2.) We see the ground of that "good confession, which our Lord made before Pontius Pilate," when he declared himself both "the Son of God," and "the King of the Jews." Nor do I see how this confession could be true, if Christ, in his form of God, was not that very Jehovah envoy, who spake to Moses in Horeb, and who, by indefectible right, was the King of the Jews, and of the whole earth, even after his unruly subjects had rejected him. And that this was the true question in debate is evident from these taunting words of the unbelieving Jews: "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him," Matt. xxvii, 42. (3.) If this is the truth for which our Lord (as faithful witness and Divine martyr) thought it proper to lay down his life, does it not follow, that the doctrine of Christ's divinity, or of his absolute right, as "Lord of glory," to be the "King of the Jews," and "of the whole earth," is the capital doctrine of the Old as well as of the New Testament?

But, methinks you rise with indignation against this inference. What becomes of the glory of the Father, if the Son was the King of Israel in Samuel's time, and is still the King of the whole earth? But you

need not fear that our doctrine gives a wrong touch to the ark of the Father's monarchy; for as the "Son, the Lord of glory," is the ostensive King of the Church and of the whole earth, in and by whom the Father now governs the world: so there will come a time when the "Father of glory" will himself be the ostensive King, governing all the nations of men, whom the Son hath redeemed and brought into subjection, immediately in his own proper person, without the mediating ministry of the Son, the Son, however, still reigning in and with the Father. For, says an apostle, the Son "must reign till he hath put death," and "all enemies under his feet." And when the kingdoms of this world shall have been made worthy of the Father's peculiar acceptance; when Emmanuel "shall have put down all those earthly and infernal powers destructive of the perfect order and complete happiness of the universe, "then shall come the end" of the Son's mediatorial kingdom; then shall the Son of God "deliver up the kingdom to God the Father," in whom nevertheless the Son and the Spirit will still have the dominion belonging to their Divine rank: and thus, while the man Christ, still united to the Word, shall be the first "subject of him who put all things under him," God (namely the Father, including the Word, and the Holy Ghost) will be all in all for ever, 1 Cor. xv, 24, &c. But I return to Samuel.

Although, in his time, the Jews incurred already the horrible guilt of rejecting the Lord of glory from being their ostensive king, they did not, they could not put an end to his supreme authority. The theocracy, though impugned, was not destroyed. Jehovah, King of the Jews, still exercised his prerogative, in appointing worshipful types of that Divine Prophet, who was to declare and do the will of God better than Samuel, and of that Divine Priest and King, on whom he would transfer the shekinah, the Divine glory, which rested in the tabernacle, when Jehovah filled it with adorable displays of his presence. Hence he continued Samuel as his prophet, and by his means foretold, both by words and typical actions, the removal of all ungodly priests, the destruction of all wicked kings, and the appearance of Christ, the man after his own heart, who should do all his pleasure, and of whose Divine anointing, that of Aaron, David, and Elisha, was but a faint shadow.*

As Job speaks of the Messiah, when he says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," Job xix, 25; so his afflictions were a type of the tribulation of the righteous, and his happy end was an emblem of the prosperity of the Church, in the day when our Lord shall "stand on the mount of Olives," and "gather his saints," that they may "see the vengeance, and wash their feet in the blood of the ungodly," Psalm lviii, 10.

David, in the beginning of the 22d Psalm, describes the amazing sorrows of the Messiah, and the manner in which his heel was bruised, when "his hands and his feet were pierced" by the seed of the serpent. And at the end of that Psalm, he declares that the gathering of the people shall be unto Shiloh: that "the ends of the world shall remember

* Here there seems to be a chasm in the work. Mr. Fletcher undoubtedly meant to have drawn more proofs or illustrations of his doctrine from the historical books before he came to the poetical and prophetic.

themselves, and turn unto the Lord" in his Son, "and all the kindreds of the earth shall worship before him," for (after the day of vengeance) "the kingdom shall be the Lord's, and he shall be the Governor among the nations. Then shall the meek inherit the earth, then shall they eat, worship, and be satisfied;" enjoying without alloy the days of refreshing, which the Lord's presence will bring to those who shall have been faithful unto the end, whether they shall be of those dead saints, who shall have a part in the first resurrection, which shall take place in the beginning of the days of refreshing; or whether they shall be among the saints, who then shall be found alive.

Isaiah is full of this doctrine: take one or two instances out of a hundred. You know, sir, that in the language of the prophets, as Jacob and the house of Joseph signify the godly, so Edom and the house of Esau stand for the wicked, the enemies of God's holy Church. Isaiah had a prophetic view of the Messiah, performing his strange work, his work of judgment, and "travelling in the greatness of his strength," as Lion of the tribe of Judah, when he says, Isaiah lxiii, 1-6, "Who is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, (Rev. xix, 12,) travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, (answers Shiloh,) mighty to save: and I will tread [all the Edomites] in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and my garments shall be sprinkled with their blood, for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. In mine anger I will tread down the people, [who obstinately trample my blood and my followers under foot,] I will make them drunk in my fury, and will bring their strength down to the ground." The prophet, struck with awe, breaks out into a song of praise to the Lord for his "great goodness toward the house of Israel," the righteous to whom the Lord condescends to give rest from those who turned the earth into cruel habitations, and who made the very houses of God dens of thieves, murderers, and hypocrites, verses 7, 8. This song of thanksgiving and praise was echoed back by St. John, when he had a prophetic view of the Messiah "coming in righteousness to judge and make war" on all the antichristian powers, Rev. xix, 1-11.

Isaiah speaks next of the days of refreshing which shall follow those days of vengeance, which shall have such an effect upon the nations that they shall flock into the Church as pursued doves to their windows. "The Lord (says he to the righteous) shall appear to your joy; and those who cast you out for my name's sake shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! A voice of the Lord who rendereth recompense to his enemies!" Now for the effect of these voices mixed with the sound of the Gospel trumpet: "Before she [the New Jerusalem] travailed, she brought forth: before her pain came she was delivered. Shall the earth be made to bring forth in a day, or shall a nation be born at once? Yes, saith the Lord. Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? saith thy God. [It is done!] Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, ye that love her: be glad with her, ye that mourned for her. Come, that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations: that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles, [converted,] like a flow-

ing stream. Then shall ye suck; ye shall be borne on her sides and dandled on her knees: as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem: your hearts shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish, when ye thus see the hand of the Lord toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies," Isa. lvi, 5-14. The dawn of this "day of refreshing" was seen in the earthly Jerusalem, when three thousand and five thousand people entered at once into the New Jerusalem, the holy Church, the spiritual "kingdom, which is righteousness, peace, and joy, through the Holy Ghost, in whose comfort they walked, when great grace was upon them all."

Isaiah points out these days of the Messiah in so many ways, that you will excuse me, sir, if I copy one more of his striking pictures:—"Behold," says he, "the Lord [Jehovah our Saviour] will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire: for by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of Jehovah shall be many." What follows is his last description of the days of refreshing, which Jehovah Shiloh will usher in by the destruction of the wicked. "It shall come to pass that [after those days of vengeance] I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. I will send *my heralds*, those that shall escape [from the great tribulation] unto the nations and to the isles afar off, which have not heard my fame; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will *then* make, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, shall all flesh come [by turns 'to my holy mountain Jerusalem'] and shall worship before me, says the Lord: and they shall go forth [to the valley of Jehoshaphat] and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence of all flesh," Isa. lvi, 15-24. Here ends Isaiah's account of that glorious reign of Jehovah Shiloh, which the fathers called the millennium, as being to last a thousand years, and during which it is probable that our Lord will use these extraordinary means to keep all the nations in the way of obedience. (1.) A constant display of his goodness over all the earth, but particularly in and about Jerusalem, where the Lord will manifest his glory, and bless his happy subjects with new manifestations of his presence every Lord's day and every new moon. (2.) A distinguished interposition of Providence, which will withhold the Messiah's wonted blessings from the disobedient: "For it shall be that whoso will not come up, of all the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain," Zech. xiv, 27. (3.) The constant endeavours of the saints, martyrs, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, raised from the dead, and conversing with men, as Moses and Elijah did with our Lord's disciples upon the mount, where they were indulged with a view of his glorified person, and of his "kingdom come with power." These glorified high priests and kings, as ministers and lieutenants of the Messiah, will rule all Churches and states with unerring wisdom and unwarped fidelity. (4.) The care that the Lord himself will take to set apart for the ministry under his glorified saints, those

who in every nation shall distinguish themselves for their virtue and piety. This seems to be the meaning of his own words: "And when they shall come out of all nations to my holy mountain, I will take of them for priests and Levites, saith the Lord," speaking to the prophet in the language of the Jewish Church, Isa. lvi, 20, 21. (5.) A standing display of the ministration of condemnation, as appears from Isa. lvi, 24, above quoted, and from other parallel scriptures.

6. At the same time that the ministration of condemnation will powerfully work upon the fears of mankind to keep men in the way of duty, an occasional display of the ministration of righteous mercy will work upon their hopes. How will those hopes be fired when they shall "see the Lamb of God standing on the Mount Sion, and with him his hundred and forty-four thousand worthies, having his Father's name [Divine majesty, irresistible power, ineffable love, and bliss inexpressible] written on their foreheads!" Rev. xiv. But,

7. What will peculiarly tend to keep men from relapsing into rebellion against God, will be the long life of the godly, and the untimely death of those who shall offer to tread the paths of iniquity. The godly shall attain to the years of the antediluvian patriarchs, and the wicked shall not live out half their days, they shall not live above a hundred years, or, to speak after our manner, they shall die in their childhood. This seems to be Isaiah's meaning in the following description of the days of refreshing: "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people [to be nothing but a] joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her: there shall be no more thence [a burial of] an infant of days, nor [a godly] old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old, but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are speaking I will hear." The very beasts of the field will partake of the happiness and glorious liberty of the sons of God: for "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord," Isa. lvi, 17-25.

Having dwelt so long upon the account which the evangelical prophet gives us of the day of vengeance, and of the days of refreshing, I shall dismiss this part of the subject by giving two or three short extracts from some of the remaining prophets.

Daniel fixes, in the days of Messiah the Prince, the great tribulation which shall come upon the ungodly, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was but an emblem; God's judgments beginning at his own house. And when the Messiah shall thus have sitten in judgment, and shall have consumed and destroyed the wicked, or bruised the serpent's head in the person of antichrist and his adherents, "the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," of Jehovah Shiloh, "whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominion shall serve and obey him," according to the decree recorded in Psalm ii, 7; Dan. vii, 26, 27.

Joel also describes, in the most lively manner, the work of the Mes-

Messiah, both as he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the peaceful Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people shall be. Speaking of our Lord under the first of these characters, he says: "In those days, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat,* [the valley of judgment,] and I will plead with them there for my people, whom they have scattered. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen. Come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen, [saith the Son, the mighty God, to whom all judgment is committed, as he is Son of man.] Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe, the press is full, the fats overflow, the wickedness [of the earth] is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake:" for, as the apostle expresses it, in speaking of our Lord, "He hath promised, saying, Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," Hebrews xii, 26; Joel iii, 1, 2, 11, 16.

As Joel hath thus described the Messiah as Son of David, shaking and destroying his adversaries, the wicked, so he represents him also as Son of Solomon, procuring days of peace and prosperity to the Israel of God. Be glad, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, "for the Lord will do great things" for you. Fear not, for "who-soever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered;" for "in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance." Egypt shall be a desolation; "and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for their violence against Judah: but Judah shall dwell for ever, and [the new] Jerusalem from generation to generation: for I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed, for the Lord [Jehovah Shiloh] dwelleth in Zion." And the prophet describes the means of this cleansing, in this noted promise, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," &c. A capital promise this, of which our Lord gave an earnest on the day of pentecost, when he sent a gracious shower on his little vineyard, as a pledge of the mighty rivers of righteousness which will, by and by, cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, Joel ii, 21-28, and iii, 19-21.

Should you deny, sir, that the Lord, who will thus roar out of Zion, and then pour out his Spirit on all flesh, is the Messiah, "the mighty God" described by Isaiah, I prove it by the following reasons, which I entreat you never to forget. (1.) The bruising of the serpent's head belongs to the wonderful seed of the woman, to the child born to us, whose name is "the mighty God," and not to "the Father, who hath committed all judgment unto the Son." If you deny this, sir, you not only represent Christ as a *mere man*, but as a man who renounces one of the Messiah's titles, which is "the true and faithful Witness;" for he hath expressly laid down, in John, the proposition on which I built my argument. (2.) The nineteenth chapter of the Revelation contains a description of the strange work in the place which Joel calls the "valley of decision," or of Jehoshaphat; and that terrible work is there declared

* The word Jehoshaphat means, "God is the Judge," or the judgment of God.

by St. John to be specially the work of the Son, whom he calls "the Word of God." (3.) Joel promises that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered;" and St. Paul, in Rom. x, 12, 13, applies the words to our Lord Jesus Christ, as appears from the apostle's doctrine in Rom. i, 16, and Acts xvi, 31. (4.) The Lord, who in Joel acts the part of a deliverer, is "the Lord" who "shall call the remnant" of the Jews, and shall at last reconcile Jews and Gentiles in himself; and therefore is indubitably the Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the people shall be: compare Joel ii, 32, with Genesis xlix, 10. And (5.) "The Lord who dwelleth in Zion," and who cleanseth the blood and sins of mankind by pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh, is certainly the Messiah, or Jehovah Shiloh, to whom the very words of Joel are applied by St. Peter, in Acts ii, 16, 38.

Hoping, sir, that you will not lose sight of these five arguments, I proceed to show you how some of the other lesser prophets speak of the Messiah's days of vengeance, and of refreshing.

Amos, as the other prophets, shows the apostasy of the Church, foretells her sifting punishment, her preservation during the great tribulation, and the day of vengeance, in which "God with us," the Messiah, will destroy all the wicked.

When the Church shall thus have been cleansed, and the wicked destroyed, the times of refreshing will come, which are thus foretold by this prophet. "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old," as in the days of Solomon, a type of the Prince of Peace, who is the mighty God, the Lord of David as well as his Son. Then shall the prosperity of God's people keep pace with their righteousness, and overflow their peaceful habitations. They "shall possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, who are called by my name, saith the Lord who doth this; then shall the ploughman overtake the reaper, and the treader of the grapes him that soweth the seed, and the mountains shall drop sweet wine. I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and plant them in their own land [rendered like the garden of Eden:] and they shall no more be pulled out of it, saith the Lord God;" Emmanuel, the Shiloh, to whom shall be the gathering of the converted nations, Amos ix, 11, &c.

Micah thus speaks of the second coming of the Messiah to do this strange work as Lion of the tribe of Judah: "Hear, all the people, hearken, O earth, and let the Lord God be witness against you from his holy temple. Behold, the Lord will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth: the mountains shall be molten under him as wax before the fire, and the valleys shall be cleft," Micah i, 2-4. But this terrible judgment shall begin at the house of the Lord, even at Zion and Jerusalem. "Hear, ye heads of the house of Jacob, that pervert all equity, and say, Is not the Lord among us? No evil can come upon us! Zion, for your sake, shall be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps," Micah iii, 11, 12.

When the Lord's people shall have borne his indignation, Shiloh will gather the purified remnant of them, and use them as his glorious instruments for the conversion, or the punishment of the wicked: "I will surely gather the remnant of Israel, I will put them together as the

stock in the midst of the fold. The breaker [the bruiser of the serpent] is come up before them; their king shall pass before them, and the Lord [Jehovah] on the head of them, to redeem them from the hand of their enemies," Micah ii, 12; iv, 10.

The Messiah's strange work in the valley of decision is thus described by this prophet: "Many nations are gathered against thee, O Zion, who say, Let her be defiled. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel; for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and thy hoofs brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people," Micah iv, 11-13.

After this day of vengeance the days of refreshing shall come, and they are thus foretold by Micah, who had the brightest discoveries of the glory of Shiloh, and of the gathering of the people unto him, after the destruction of the antichristian powers. But "in the last days," saith that prophet, "the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains; people shall flow unto it, and many nations [both awed by the Lord's tremendous judgments, and encouraged by his offers of grace and pardon] shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law [of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus making men free from the law of sin and death] shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he [Jehovah Shiloh] shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more: but they shall sit every man under his vine, and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth even for ever," Mic. iv, 1-7.

That the Lord Jehovah, who shall thus reign in Mount Zion, when all spears shall be beat into plough shares and into pruning hooks, is our Melchisedec, the King of Salem, the Solomon of the Christian Church, "the Prince of Peace, whose name is called the mighty God," by Isaiah, and "of whose government and peace, upon the throne of David, there shall be no end," can be proved even to a Jew by the following reasons:—(1.) This Divine King is described as doing the things which characterize the Messiah, namely, bruising the serpent, destroying the wicked, gathering Israel, and reigning over the nations: for "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (2.) Micah calls him the "Ruler of Israel," the Messiah, and describes his human and Divine nature as clearly as does Isaiah: "Thou Bethlehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth He that is to be ruler in Israel, [here we see the child born unto us in Bethlehem,] whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And in these last words we behold the eternal generation and divinity of the Son of God, Mic. v, 2. And that Herod himself, with the Jewish priests and the scribes, made no doubt but this prophecy related to the Messiah, is evident from the account given by St. Matthew: for when King Herod had heard that "the King of the Jews was born," and when he "had gathered the chief priests," &c, by quoting this very prophecy of Micah, they

proved to him, that the Messiah, he "whose goings forth have been from everlasting," was to be born at Bethlehem.

The Prophet Habakkuk, in that sublime hymn called his prayer, has many expressions very descriptive of the days of vengeance. "God came from Teman (says he) and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth: he beheld and drove asunder the nations, and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed. Thou didst wound the head out of the house of the wicked." And as the prophet considers these desolating judgments as being preparatory to the salvation of God's people, so, speaking in the name of the whole Church, he describes the greatness of that salvation, when he says, a few verses after, "Although the fig tree should not blossom, and there should be no fruit in the vine; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me walk upon mine high places." For, as he assures us in the preceding chapter, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," a passage which contains a most glorious testimony to the days of refreshing, during which, as Isaiah bears witness, "the people shall be all righteous, the work of his hands, and the branch of his planting, that he may be glorified."

Zephaniah is very express upon this subject. Having described, at large, in the first and second chapters of his prophecy, the ruin that should come upon Judea, and the neighbouring countries, he proceeds, chap. iii, 3, to foretell the vengeance that should come upon all nations. "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." In prospect of this glorious time, the prophet calls upon the Church under the ancient name of Zion, Jerusalem, and Israel, to break forth in praise to Jehovah the Redeemer, who will then be indeed "Emmanuel, God with us. Sing, O daughter of Zion: shout, O Israel: be glad and rejoice with all thine heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments: he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt see

evil no more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not ; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty : he will save : he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love : he will joy over thee with singing. Behold at that time, (adds the Lord,) I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out ; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time I will bring you again, even the time that I gather you, for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord." Now, sir, who is this King of Israel that is in the midst of us and is mighty, and who declares he will save, but the " Word made flesh, that dwelt among us, and came to save his people from their sins ?"

Zechariah speaks to the same purpose. In the second chapter, having mentioned the vengeance that should be taken upon the Babylonians and other nations, that had spoiled God's people of old, an emblem of wrath that will be poured upon the modern Babylon, he describes the days of refreshing in the following words :—" Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion. For, lo ! I come, and dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord : [this seems to refer primarily to the coming of Christ in the flesh :] and many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, [viz. the Gentile nations,] and shall be my people. And I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again ;" which plainly foretells the conversion of the Jews, and their restoration to their own land. And, perhaps, the following words, " Be silent all flesh before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation," may be intended as an intimation of the conversion of all mankind, their attendance upon the Lord in his ordinances, and their worshipping him in spirit and in truth.

Malachi, also, the last of the prophets, foretells, and that with great clearness, this two-fold work of the Messiah. Having pointed him out as " the Lord that should come to his temple, the messenger of the covenant, in whom (to be shortly revealed) the pious Jews delighted, rejoicing, like faithful Abraham, in the foresight of his day ;" he next informs us what would be the effect of his manifestation in our flesh. " But who," says he, " may abide the day of his coming ? And who shall stand when he appeareth ? For he is like refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, [and by the spirit of judgment, as well as spirit of burning,] he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Then the times of refreshing shall succeed the days of vengeance, " and the offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in the former years." For while the Lord comes " near to judgment," and is a " swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn away the stranger from his right, and fear not the Lord ;" they that fear him " speak often one to another, and the Lord hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is written for those that fear the Lord and think

upon his name ; and they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels. Then shall ye turn and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." And he speaks more clearly still in the next (the last) chapter. He first describes the days of vengeance. "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble : the day cometh that shall burn them up, and leave them neither root nor branch." He then foretells the days of refreshing which shall succeed. "But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

Now, sir, he before whose face Jehovah's messenger, John the Baptist, was sent, and before whom he cried, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;" he who suddenly comes to his temple, and, appearing in it as the Desire of all nations, gives it a glory, such as even Solomon's temple had not, though beside the splendour and magnificence of the wonderful fabric, overlaid with silver and gold, it had five signs of the Divine presence, as the Jews themselves have acknowledged, which were wanting in this second temple, viz. the Urim and Thummim, by which the high priest was miraculously instructed in the will of God ; the "ark of the covenant," containing the two tables of the law written with the finger of God ; the "fire upon the altar," which came down from heaven ; the "shekinah," or visible display of the Divine glory, and the "Spirit of prophecy." He, who is like refiner's fire and fuller's soap, and who sits upon the souls of men, as a refiner and purifier of silver, purifying them from all pollution of flesh and spirit : he who comes near, by his spiritual presence, as a swift witness against sinners of every description, while as the "Sun of righteousness" he rises upon those that fear the name of the Lord, with healing in his wings, so that they go forth and grow up as calves of the stall : he surely must be more than a mere man. Leaving you to reflect, sir, on the contrariety of your doctrine, to that of the prophets, I remain, &c.

LETTER VI.

The testimony borne by the prophets to the Godhead of Christ.

REV. SIR,—How could you assert that none of the prophets gave the Jews any other idea of the Messiah, than that of a man like themselves, when Isaiah had given him names which are above every name, that at the names of our Saviour every knee should bow, and every believing Jew should confess that the Messiah is Lord God omnipotent ? Had you forgotten this prophetic exultation : "Unto us the child is born, unto us the son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace ?" Isa. ix, 6.

Your assertion is so much the more astonishing, as Isaiah in other places speaks of the Messiah in terms as magnificent. Take two or

three instances. That prophet describes the Messiah's humanity as a branch growing out of the roots of Jesse, as a holy Prince which shall judge with righteousness, reprove with equity, smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, slay the wicked with the breath of his lips, and so perfectly restore peace in the earth, that they shall not hurt nor destroy in all his holy mountain, or happy dominions, where even the Gentiles shall enjoy a glorious rest: "for the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off, and Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor shall Judah vex Ephraim; and the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea," Isa. xi, 1, &c. After this description of the Messiah, the Son of God manifested as Son of David and Jesse, to destroy the works of the devil, and to reign with his ancients gloriously, the prophet, in the name of the Church, sings, beforehand, a song of thanksgiving to God our Saviour, for these mighty achievements. In that day (says he) thou shalt say, The work of redemption is finished: "Behold, God is my salvation, the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things. Cry out, and shout, thou inhabitant of Sion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee," Isa. xii, 1, &c. It was impossible for a spiritual Jew to read this description of the Messiah's peaceful kingdom, without seeing that this root of Jesse, this Holy One of Israel, so great in the midst of Zion, was the same wonderful person whom the prophet had just before called the "Son given," and the "mighty God." And our Lord gave the Jews an assurance of it, when he cried, on the great day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And this he did when they had just been singing (as they did at that feast) those words of Isaiah: "You shall draw with joy water out of the wells of salvation;" plainly intimating to them, as he had done to the woman of Samaria, that he was the Divine spring of our joy, the Holy One of Israel in the midst of us, and the Jehovah become our salvation, and sung by Isaiah.

The same prophet, personating John the Baptist, and foretelling the coming of the Messiah, says: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, [the way of Jehovah;] make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall be made low, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, [or, as the bishop of London reads it, *O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, O thou that publishest the Gospel,*] lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, his reward is with him, and his work before him," Isa. xl, 3, 10. This pompous description of the Messiah is again and again applied to our Lord in the New Testament. If Isaiah says to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God," John the Baptist crieth to them, "Behold the Lamb of God!" If the Lord God says, (by his prophet,) "Behold, the Lord will come, his reward is with him, &c: thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the First and the Last, and beside me there is no God," Isa. xl, 10, and xlv, 6; our Lord applying to himself these lofty expressions of Isaiah, saith,

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," Rev. xxii, 12, 18.

And if the Jews had not the New Testament, they had a number of prophecies which confirmed and explained each other. Thus, suppose pious Jews would know who that God was, for whom they were to make the highway straight, and the rough places plain, Isaiah xi, 3, they needed only read on to the eleventh verse, where we find this additional description of him: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are big with young." And if they had not the Gospel of St. John, where our Lord says, "I am the good Shepherd," they had the prophecy of Zechariah, where this Divine Shepherd is thus described: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man who is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts, smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," Zech. xiii, 7, and Matt. xxvi, 31. And they saw in Isaiah how it pleased the Lord to bruise this Shepherd, when he made his soul an offering for sin; how he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; how all we like sheep have gone astray, and how the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii, 5, 6, 10. They had the prophecy of Ezekiel, where this great Shepherd is thus described: "I will save my flock, I will set one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd: I the Lord have spoken it. And they shall no more be prey to the heathen, neither shall the beasts of the land devour them, but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid," Ezekiel xxxiv, 22, &c. They had this prediction of Hosea: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an ephod: afterward they shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days," Hosea iii, 4.

From these consentaneous prophecies the spiritual Jews saw, that the Messiah, their king, would appear both as the wonderful child promised to David, and as "the mighty God," called sometimes "the Lord of hosts," and sometimes "the fellow of the Lord of hosts," according to the description which St. John gave afterward of him: "In the beginning he was with God, and he was God; and we have seen his glory, which is the glory of the only begotten of the Father, [made flesh, and dwelling among us,] full of grace and truth."

The Jews met some of these shining descriptions of the Messiah, as often as they searched the oracles of God; the Holy Ghost having taken care to multiply them, that the unbelieving in all ages might be without excuse.

Moses saith: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come: unto him shall the gathering of the people be," Gen. xlix, 10. Now the spiritual Jews, wanting to know who this Shiloh should be, did not fail to read over the other prophets sent to enlarge upon this promise recorded by Moses, and they found this parallel description of the days of the Messiah: "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and the

Lord [Jehovah] shall set his hand the second time, [a plain account of the restoration of the Jews!] to recover the remnant of his people, and he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel from the four corners of the earth," Isa. xi, 10, &c.

Haggai confirms this prophecy, where he writes: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will yet once more shake the sea and the dry land; I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house [the temple of Jerusalem] with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house [built by Zerubbabel] shall be greater than of the former, [built by Solomon,] saith the Lord of hosts. And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts," Haggai ii, 6-10. If a Jew inquired who this "*desire of nations*," this Shiloh, should be, who was to come and fill the second temple with his glory, David gratifies this pious wish, where he says, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory," Psalm xxiv, 7, &c.

But how could this King of glory be "a prophet like Moses, raised to the Jews from among their brethren?" Deut. xviii, 18. Moses and Isaiah solve this difficulty; the former, where he saith, "The seed of the woman shall [be strong enough to] bruise the serpent's head;" and the latter, where he declares, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel," which, being interpreted, is "God with us, God manifested in the flesh," Isa. vii, 4; Matt. i, 23, and 1 Tim. iii, 16.

Read, dear sir, the Scriptures without the veil of your system, and you will see that the Messiah, the wonderful person whom you so constantly endeavour to degrade, was to be a *mediating prophet*, like Moses; an *atonement priest*, like Aaron; a *peaceful king*, like Solomon; a *royal prophet*, like David; a *kingly priest*, like Melchisedec; *the everlasting Father*, as the *Lagos*, by whom all things were created; and the *mighty God*, as the *proper Son* of him, with whom he shares, in the unity of the Divine Spirit, the supreme title of *Jehovah, Lord of hosts*.

Jeremiah gives us as noble a view of the Messiah: "Behold (says he) the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name, whereby he shall be called the Lord [Jehovah] our righteousness," Jer. xxiii, 5. Pious Jews could not but see that the "righteous King" of David's family, who was promised by Jeremiah, was the same as the "Prince of Peace" sitting upon "David's throne," who would extend his peaceful government to the end of ages, according to Isaiah's prophecy; and both prophets agree to call this wonderful King "Jehovah, the mighty God."

If Isaiah, speaking of him, and predicting our Lord's incarnation, saith, "A virgin shall bear a son;" Jeremiah, alluding to the same mystery, says, "The Lord createth a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with Israel: I will put my laws in their hearts, they shall all know me: I will forgive their iniquity," Jer. xxxi, 22, 31.

And that these pardons shall come by believing in the righteous "branch raised unto David," who shall be called "the Lord our righteousness," appears from the description which the same prophet gives us of the Church made all glorious, by partaking of that sanctifying Spirit, which makes believers look at Christ's glorious righteousness, till they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory. "In those days (saith he) Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxxiii, 10. As if he had said, Every one who shall come to Zion, and the New Jerusalem, shall be so grafted in the righteous branch raised unto David, and so filled with the sap of that Divine tree of life, that they shall in some degree be transformed into it, and be called by the same name, as a wife is called by the name of her husband. And, methinks, I see this glorious prophecy accomplished, when I find believers so christened, so completely united to Christ, as to be righteous as he is righteous. Of this stamp was certainly he who said, I "will know nothing but Christ, and him crucified; I live not, it is Christ who liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," Gal. ii, 20, and 1 Cor. i, 30.

Ezekiel. Our Lord's divinity is not so fully declared by Ezekiel as by Jeremiah: glorious hints of it may, nevertheless, be collected from his writings, if they are searched for, with the light supplied by the harmony of the Scriptures.

I need not inform you, reverend sir, that till the end come, the Father hath committed all authority and judgment to the Son, John v, 22, and that the Father will gloriously reign on the earth in and by his Son, his other self: or the express image of his glory; for you have read these words of a prophet: "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, and there was given him [as he is Son of man] dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away: and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed:" though he will, in a future period of time, "give it up to the Father," and then the Son shall only reign in the Father, Dan. vii, 13. But it is proper to remind you that Emmanuel (being both "the mighty God," and "the child born" to bruise "the serpent's head,") may be considered sometimes as God, or proper Son of God the Father, and sometimes as man, or proper son of a woman; and in either case he bears very different names. (1.) As proper Son of God the Father, he is called "Jehovah, Lord of hosts, God our Redeemer," &c. (2.) As son of a virgin, he is called a branch of Jesse, David, son of David, son of man, and servant of God," because he is equally obedient to the commands of the Father, the will of the *Logos*, and the motions of the Holy Ghost: and, (3.) when he is considered in his complex nature, as being the proper Son of God, and the real son of Mary, wonderfully united in the person of the Messiah, he is called "Emmanuel, God manifested in the flesh, the Word made flesh, or Jehovah Shepherd."

This being premised, you will understand me, sir, if I observe, that Ezekiel declares the glory of the Messiah considered in these three dif-

ferent points of view. Thus he represents God our Saviour as *Jehovah Shepherd*, where he says: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will search out my sheep: As a shepherd seeketh out his scattered flock, so will I seek out my sheep, and will gather them from the countries where they have been scattered in the cloudy day: and I will feed them in a good pasture, upon the mountains of Israel; I will seek that which was lost, bring again that which was driven away, bind that which was broken, strengthen that which was sick, but I will destroy the fat and the strong [the stubborn and the proud.] Behold, saith the Lord God, I judge between the sheep and the goats," Ezek. xxxiv, 11-17.

Now, reverend sir, that this *Jehovah Shepherd* is Emmanuel, I prove to you both from the Old and the New Testament. (1.) From the New, where our Lord, applying to himself these very words of God in Ezekiel, says: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory [in the glory of the Godhead into which he hath been assumed] he shall separate the sons of men one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:" and (2.) from the Old Testament: for, in this very chapter of Ezekiel under consideration, we see God our shepherd pointing out to us the Divine obedient man, in whom he condescended to become visible, and whom he calls his servant, because Christ, as son of David, is as perfectly obedient to the Father, and to the Word, considered as David's Lord, as in a good man the body is perfectly obedient to the dictates of the rational soul to which it is united. For in the complex person of our Lord, God and man is one Christ. "I will save my flock, saith *Jehovah Shepherd*, they shall no more be a prey, and I will judge between cattle and cattle." But will he do it as invisible God, or by means of a Mediator, a man in whom he will become visible? Here the Lord answers by Ezekiel, who thus points out the *humanity*, as he had before asserted the *divinity* of our Lord: "And I will set up one Shepherd over them, even my servant David: he shall be their [visible] shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David, a [visible] prince among them, I the Lord have spoken it." And the Lord that speaks here is the Logos, the Word of the Father, the Word of the Lord which came to the prophets, and manifested to them the will of the Father by the Holy Spirit: for so intimately one are the Father and the Son that the Son can do nothing of himself (as if he were divided from the Father) but *what things* soever the Father doth, these also the Son doth likewise, John v, 19, and Ezekiel xxxiv, 22, &c.

The *Jehovah Shepherd* and Feeder, whom Ezekiel declared in the twenty-fourth chapter of his prophecy, is next extolled as *Jehovah, Subduer*, and *Purifier*.

Thus saith the Lord God to the house of Israel: "I will gather you out of all countries, and then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and cleanse you from all filthiness and all your idols. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, [or to be my faithful and obedient subjects,] and ye shall be my [happy] people."

Now, reverend sir, that the Lord will thus subdue and purify Israel, in and by a Mediator, in whom he will become visible, and by whom he will operate all the wonders here promised, I prove both from the New and Old Testament. (1.) From the New: John the Baptist, pointing

out this Divine purifier, said, as he showed our Lord, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world; I indeed baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost:" he shall pour out the Spirit promised by Ezekiel, John i, 29, 33. From the Old Testament: for we read in the next chapter of Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will gather the children of Israel on every side, and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation, and one King shall reign over them all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with idols, nor with any of their transgressions, but I will save and cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God, and David [here comes in our Lord considered as Son of man] my servant shall be king over them, and they all shall have one Shepherd, and [by his example and help] they shall walk in my judgments. And my servant David shall be their prince for ever, and I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore," Ezek. xxxvii, 21-26. And St. John describes this glorious sanctuary, where he saith, "I saw no temple in the new Jerusalem, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb," or Jehovah and the Divine Mediator, in whom he manifests himself, are "the temple of it," Rev. xxi, 22.

It remains now to show that Ezekiel speaks also of our Lord as *Jehovah quickener*: nor need I go beyond the chapter last quoted, to find a reasonable proof of it; for, in the beginning of that chapter, "the Lord God" shows to the prophet the deplorable state of corruption and death in which were mankind in general, and the Jews, in particular, by the striking emblem of a valley full of dry bones, and "saith to these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live, and know that I am the Lord, when I have brought you up out of your graves, and put my Spirit in you," Ezek. xxvii, 1, 14. If you ask, Will not the Lord God do this himself immediately? I answer in the negative, for three reasons: (1.) Even in the emblematic vision God did not raise the dry bones till the prophet, who was a type of our great Prophet, had prophesied to the Spirit, and called for the quickening breath to come from the four winds that the slain might live, ver. 9 and 10. (2.) This mediating and quickening Prophet is immediately mentioned, and called David, the servant of God, and the Prince of the people for ever, ver. 24 and 25. (3.) It could not be the son of Jesse, David, who had been dead some hundreds of years when Ezekiel prophesied. (4.) It was then he whom Daniel calls Messiah the Prince, and whom the evangelists name Jesus, the son of David by the Virgin Mary. And (5.) That our Lord, considered as Son of man, is the wonderful agent of Jehovah quickener, who dwells in him bodily, is evident from his own words: "I am come that they might have life, and come that they might have it more abundantly. I am the resurrection and the life: the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live: for as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." And this Son of God having joined himself to our nature, that he might raise us from our fall, is now, and for ever will be, that Messiah the Prince, whose sufferings and glory were foretold by Daniel, and by Ezekiel, and whom St. Paul calls a quickening Spirit, and "the Lord from heaven." From these five reasons we may, I think, safely conclude, that Ezekiel hath foretold the glory of the Messiah, as

the mighty God, and the child born to us. I have dwelt the longer on this proof of our Lord's divinity from this prophet, because even good Mr. Henry says that Ezekiel speaks less of Christ than almost any of the prophets.

Should you say, sir, that the Jews, not having the proofs which I adduce from the New Testament, could not possibly find out that the great Shepherd, who is to gather Israel, and the King of David, who shall reign over God's people for ever, is more than man: I reply in the language of our Lord, Search the Old Testament, and you will find that it testifieth of our Lord's Divine glory.

Do you believe, sir, that all the Jews put a veil upon their faces when they fathomed the depth of the second Psalm? Did none make such obvious remarks as these? (1.) Jehovah hath a King, to whom he will give the heathen [all nations, and the utmost parts of the earth, all kingdoms.] (2.) To take counsel against this anointed King, is to take counsel against Jehovah. (3.) He that sitteth in the heavens shall vex, in his sore displeasure, those judges of the earth that will not serve him of whom he saith, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." (4.) So little is the Father jealous of the Divine honours paid to his Son, that he says, even to kings, by the psalmist, "Kiss [adore] the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way" of salvation and eternal bliss. (5.) This Son is not a Son by creation, as Adam was, nor by adoption, as godly men are, but he is a Son by nature and real communication of divinity; for the eternal Father says, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (6.) The prophet being persuaded that adoration is due to this Son, says, "Kiss him, lest he be angry" at your ingratitude, injustice, and insolence. (7.) The Father, "declaring his decree," concerning the proud opposers of his Son's dignity, says, "in his wrath, Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (8.) So terribly glorious is the majesty of this Divine Son, that his enemies shall be dashed in pieces "if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little." But (9.) What convinced the humble Jews that the Messiah would have Divine honours paid him by all the nations, was the conclusion of the Psalm, "Blessed are they that put their trust in him." For they could not but reason thus, consistently with the Scriptures, on which they "meditated day and night:" this Son, anointed with so much solemnity, King of kings, and Lord of the universe, must be so intimately one with the Father, as to be one and the same Jehovah. Were he a mere man, it would be gross idolatry to rely upon him for salvation; for, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and whose heart departeth from the Lord," Jer. xvii, 5, 7. But instead of denouncing such a curse on every one who trusteth in the Messiah, the prophet declares, by a positive command, that this wonderful Son is Jehovah: for the law and the prophets agree to say, "All flesh is grass, trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in him is everlasting strength," Isa. xxvi, 4. From these nine observations, it is evident, that all the spiritual Jews, who had read the second Psalm, with humble attention, must be convinced that the Father had a Divine and everlasting Son, who deserved the name of mighty God and Father of eternity. Nor were they surprised at this doctrine; for (1.) They had looked with reverential fear into the mystery dimly

seen by Solomon, and by Isaiah, when they asked, "Who shall declare his generation? Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath established the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" Isa. liii, 8, and Prov. xxx, 4. Moses had intimated to them, in the first line of Genesis, that some diversity of subsistences existed in the unity of the Divine essence: he had positively declared, that man's creation was the result of the deep counsel of these subsistences: and that, after the fall of man, they [to speak after the manner of men] again consulted about that sad event, Gen. i, 1, 26, and iii, 22. And they had reason to think that the Divine subsistence, which their prophets sometimes called "the Word of the Lord," and the Son, was that living and active "Wisdom by which God established the heavens and founded the earth," and which speaks thus in the book of Proverbs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old: I was set up from everlasting: when there were no depths, I was brought forth: when he prepared the heavens, I was there; I was with him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight; rejoicing always before him: and my delights were with the sons of men," Prov. iii, 19, and viii, 22, &c.

Permit me to lay before you another striking proof of the Messiah's divinity, when he is considered in his form of God. "How beautiful," saith Isaiah, (and St. Paul after him,) "how beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, publisheth salvation, and said unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isa. lii, 7; Rom. x, 15. But who is this King, this reigning God? The sacred penmen answer, with one accord, It is the wonderful child born to us, whose name shall be the "mighty God, and the Prince of Peace," because "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 justice for ever," Isa. ix, 7. "Rejoice greatly, O Zion," saith Zechariah, whose words are echoed by two apostles: "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is just, having salvation, lowly, and riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass. He shall speak peace to the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth," Zech. ix, 9, 10, cited in Matt. xxi, 5, and John xii, 15. When the prophet had thus described the coming of the Messiah, the King, in his state of humiliation, he immediately describes his glorious advent to destroy those who would not have him to reign over them. "When I have bent Judah for me, (saith this Divine King,) and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, the Lord [Messiah, the Prince, in his Divine majesty] shall be seen over them, and his arrows shall go forth as lightning: the Lord God [heading the sons of Zion] shall blow the trumpet [or give the war-like signal] and go with whirlwinds of the south [with the most impetuous power] and shall save them in that day, as the flock of his people. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!" Zech. ix, 13-17.

Though this proof of our Lord's divinity seems to me a demonstration, I shall, nevertheless, strengthen it still more by parallel testimonies of the other prophets.

It is not in the second Psalm only, that David declares the divinity of Christ, our anointed King. He is not afraid of tautology, when he

dwells on so glorious a subject. What can be plainer than the forty-fifth Psalm, which an apostle justly applies to our Lord? Addressing the Messiah, emphatically styled the King, the psalmist says, under a prophetic view of him, both as the mighty God, and the child born unto us, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thy arrows are very sharp in the heart of the King's enemies. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a righteous sceptre, therefore God, thy God [the Father] hath anointed thee [his only begotten Son] with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows," above all kings on earth, and in heaven, Psalm xlv, 1-7, compared with Heb. i, 8, 9. Thus you see, sir, that this "most mighty" King of Israel, and of the universe, is called God, as well as the Father who hath anointed him.

Nor ought we to wonder, that after such a display of his divinity, the psalmist addresses the Jewish and the universal Church in a strain suitable to the Divine honours which he pays to the Messiah. Calling her "daughter," and "queen, all glorious within," whom St. John styles "the wife of the Lamb: forsake thy own people," says he, [the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Babylonians, among whom thou wast born, and by whom thou hast been corrupted:] "so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Then, turning again to this King of kings, he concludes the psalm by saying, "The people shall praise thee for ever and ever," Psalm xlv, 10, 17. Thus you see, sir, that a prophet, considering the Messiah's glory, calls him the Lord and the God of the Church, whom he charges to worship him, and does solemnly what an apostle did afterward, when, worshipping Christ, he cried out in an ecstasy of joy, "My Lord, and my God!" But, what peculiarly deserves notice is, that when David is about to declare our Lord's divinity, he begins by saying, "My heart is inditing a good matter;" calling that a "good matter" which you call *idolatry*, and the capital *corruption* of our Divine worship.

While you consider how you can reconcile yourself with the royal prophet, I shall confront your paradox with three other Psalms, where he continues to indite the same glorious matter, the 47th, 68th, and 110th. Prophesying of our Lord's glorious kingdom, of which he began to take possession on the day of his ascension, the psalmist says, "Clap your hands, all ye people, shout unto God with the voice of triumph. The Lord most high is terrible: he is King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises unto our God; O sing praises unto our King: for God is the King of all the earth. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon his holy seat," Psalm xlvii, 1-8. Is it not evident to those who candidly compare scripture with scripture, that this Divine King, whom the psalmist so often calls God, and who is gone up with a joyful noise, is the anointed King, of whom the Father saith, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion: thou art my Son. Kiss the Son, ye kings, lest ye perish?" Is he not the Almighty, of whom the psalmist speaks as follows: "This is God's hill, in which it pleaseth him to dwell: the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even

thousands of angels, and the Lord is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai. Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. He is our God, even the God of whom cometh salvation—the Lord, by whom we escape death; who shall wound the head of his enemies: who gave the word, [on the day of pentecost,] and great was the company of the preachers,” inasmuch that the armies of his enemies were scattered, and they of his household divided the spoil? Psalm lxxviii, 11–21.

A Jew might be convinced from the bare comparison of those psalms; but the conviction will admit of no shadow of doubt for those who receive the New Testament, where St. Paul, after quoting these words of David: “Thou [O God, who ‘of thy goodness hast prepared gifts for the poor’] hast ascended up on high, and led captivity captive,” &c, applies them to our Lord, and concludes thus: “Now, that he [the Messiah] ascended, what is it [but a demonstration] that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth. He that descended [as the child born unto us] is the same who [after his resurrection] ascended up far above all heavens, that [as the mighty God] he might fill all things.” And to prove that he was this gracious God, “out of whose fulness the poor [humble believers] receive grace for grace, he gave them [beside his Holy Spirit] apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers,” that they might all come to the stature of a perfect man, or “to the measure of Christ,” considered as the Son of man, Eph. iv, 8, 13.

The last Psalm I shall produce in vindication of our Lord’s divinity, is the 110th, where David, still considering him as that mighty God who became the wonderful seed of the woman, and the Son given unto us, expresses himself thus: “The Lord [God the Father] said unto my Lord, [to the Son whom he had commanded the Church to worship, see the 45th Psalm above quoted,] Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Rule thou in the midst of them,” with the rod of thy power, that rod of iron which will dash them in pieces “like a potter’s vessel,” Psalm ii, 9. “The Lord [who made the decree, Psalm ii, 7, and at whose right hand thou sittest, as sharer in his supreme dominion] hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.”

The Father compares here his only begotten Son to Melchisedec for five reasons. (1.) That monarch was king of Salem, where stood Mount Sion, a well-known type of that mountain which is to command all other mountains, or (to speak without metaphor) of that kingdom which is to swallow up all other kingdoms: see Isa. ii, 2, and Dan. ii, 44. (2.) Because that prince’s name, signifying both King of righteousness, and King of peace, was the most proper name to give the Jews a true idea of the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, which the Messiah, “the Lord our righteousness,” was to set up. (3.) Because sacred history throws a mysterious veil upon the genealogy of Melchisedec, that he might be a proper type of that “wonderful Prince of Peace,” whom Isaiah describes, when he asks, “Who shall declare his generation?” Who shall show how he is David’s Son, and David’s Lord? A deep mystery this, of which the apostle gives us an idea, when, speaking of the king of Salem, he says, Consider how great this personage was [the word *man* is not in the original] unto whom even the patriarch

Abraham gave the portion of the high priest, and the capital share of the spoil, as unto his own king. This prince of peace, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, and abiding a priest continually," blessed Abraham himself, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed; and, without contradiction, the less is blessed of the greater, Heb. vii, 3, &c. (4.) Because as Abraham and his righteous servants, strengthened by Melchisedec's pious wishes, smote the ungodly kings, who had carried away righteous Lot, so the sons of Zion, (to use the words of Zechariah,) shall smite the sons of Greece when under the influence, and by the blessing of our Melchisedec, they shall do the strange, but necessary work, described in Psalm cxlix, and in Rev. xix. (5.) Because the joyful manner in which they were met, refreshed, and blessed by Melchisedec, was an emblem of those times of refreshing, which, after the overthrow of all wicked powers, will come from the presence of the Lord, when all the prisoners of hope, turning to the strong hold, shall be more than conquerors, through him that loved us; shall reap the fruit of the victory described in Zech. ix, 12, 17, and in 2 Thess. i, 5-10; and shall enjoy the blessing pointed out in Isa. lxxv, 13, 25; Dan. vii, 27; 2 Pet. iii, 13, and Rev. xx, 1.

This being premised, I return to the psalm where "Jehovah our righteousness" is pointed out to us, under the glorious emblem of Melchisedec. David, foretelling the victories of the Messiah, and the destruction of his enemies, says: "The Lord at thy [the Father's] right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath: he shall act the part of a judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries." But the heel of the woman's seed shall be bruised, the Prince of Peace shall suffer in his human nature, which is represented by the inferior part of his person: "The floods shall overflow him" for three days and three nights, as they did Jonah, "the waters shall come in, even unto his soul," he shall drink of the cup of affliction, or as David expresses it, "he shall drink of the brook by the way, therefore shall he lift up his head:" his Divine nature shall make him emerge from a sea of sorrow; having saved himself, he will save his people; and as "he bowed his head," saying, "It is finished," when he had finished his atoning work, as our great high priest; so shall he triumphantly "lift up his head" and reign. Then will the Church, with all the nations in her bosom, sing the psalm where David describes the works, and foretells the glory of Emmanuel: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, [or as Zechariah expresses it, "The Lord God blew the trumpet," chap. ix, 14,] and the earth melted away: come, behold the works of the Lord, [of Emmanuel, our Melchisedec, executing judgment among the heathen, and striking through kings in the day of his wrath," Psalm cx, 4,] see what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, cutteth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire." Emmanuel, Messiah, the mighty God, and Prince of Peace, lifting up his head, as an almighty Conqueror, and vouchsafing to enter into the universal song of triumph, says: "Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth." And

ravished with admiration, the Church, joining in a grand chorus, bursts into this joyful exclamation, "The Lord of hosts is with us, Emmanuel reigns, and the God of Jacob is our refuge," Psalm xlvii, 1, 11.

Some persons, who mistake an unrighteous weakness of mind, and an effeminate softness of temper for mildness and charity, will be ready to think these terrible descriptions of our Saviour's judicial work inconsistent with the gentleness of our Lord; but St. John speaks of the righteous wrath of the Lamb, and when he represents the Messiah as the bruiser of the serpent's head, he does not scruple to call him "the Lion of the tribe of Judah;" alluding to Jacob's prophecy, which foretold that Judah, from whose tribe Shiloh was to spring, would be like the lion, whom none should rouse without imminent danger.

As for St. Paul, he was so far from thinking this judicial work of our Lord incompatible with his character, that, speaking of the great tribulation of the wicked, and of the righteous judgment which shall make way for the Messiah's glorious kingdom, he says, "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble the righteous, and to give rest [even in this world] to those who are troubled by the wicked." And he observes, that this rest, these times of refreshing from the Lord, will take place "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, [the wicked heathen,] and on them who obey not the Gospel, [wicked Christians,] who shall be punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come, [in that day of tribulation,] to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

This work of the mighty God, before the setting of his glorious empire, as King of Salem, and Prince of Peace, is thus farther described by a prophet: "The Lord [Jehovah our Saviour] shall go forth and fight against those [ungodly] nations: and his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, on the east." Then shall be fulfilled the saying of the two angels, on the day of our Lord's ascension, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner [in a visible, human, and glorious form] as ye have seen him go into heaven." And, it is remarkable, that this prophecy was delivered on that very mount of Olives, whence our Lord gloriously ascended, and where, according to Zechariah, he will alight at his return from heaven. See Acts i, 12, and Zech. xiv, 4.

The prophet, continuing his description of those times of refreshing, consequent on the return of our Melchisedec, observes, that many wonderful interpositions, of a judicial and kind providence, will be displayed for the preservation of the righteous, and for the destruction or conversion of the wicked; and then sums up his prediction, by saying, "In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts. Holiness unto the Lord shall be written upon the very bells of the horses;" and their drivers, who are now stupid, and profane to a proverb, will be among the saints of the Most High. In a word, "the living waters," the streams of truth, righteousness, peace, and bliss, which gladden the city of God, the city of the great king, "shall go out from Jerusalem," and gladden the whole world; for the Lord [that very Jehovah mentioned just before, whose feet shall stand on the mount of

Olives] shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one," Zech. xiv, 3, 8, 9, 20, 21.

Methinks, Rev. sir, I hear you triumph, and say at these last words of the prophet: "We, Unitarians, shall then win the day at last, and the worship of God in trinity will be abolished for ever." Not so, sir; Zechariah, and the Holy Ghost who inspired him, do not contradict themselves. Read again the whole chapter, and you will see that Jehovah who will be King over all the earth, is Jehovah manifested in the flesh, whose "feet shall stand in the mount of Olives;" so that whoever is excluded from the dominion, it cannot be the Son, who is so described as to leave no doubt that he is to be "King over all the earth." Thus your unscriptural unity, which rejects the Son's divinity, is completely overthrown by Zechariah. The truth which he wants to inculcate is, that when Christianity shall have removed all Atheism and all idolatry, the one Divine essence will be known and worshipped every where. And if you please to call the Father Jehovah *invisible* to his creatures, the Son Jehovah *visible*, and the Holy Ghost Jehovah *sensible* to his rational creatures, we will not contend with you. Grant us that in the Supreme Being there is an ineffable and adorable trinity, and we will readily grant you that this trinity is such as by no means breaks the ineffable unity which we adore as well as you, though we do not, with the Jewish zealots, take up stones to throw at the Son, under pretence of asserting the Father's glory: such a defence of the Divine unity appearing unto us as unnatural as it is unscriptural.

Take a proof that Zechariah by no means wants to exclude our Lord from divinity, though he stands up for the Divine unity: a prophet says: "The children of Israel [after their rejection of the Shiloh] shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice; afterward they shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days," Hos. iii, 5. Now this David the king, who shall reign in the latter days over the converted Jews and Gentiles, is the same King who is described in the 2d, 45th, 46th, 110th Psalms, &c, as the Lord God of David, and of the whole world: and that Zechariah calls him Lord, as he does the Father, I prove by this Divine promise: "I will save the house of Joseph, and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am the Lord their God. I will gather them, for I have redeemed them; and I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord," Zech. x, 5, 12. From these words I conclude that Zechariah, far from overturning that unity of God, which is consistent with the divinity of the Father and the Son, teaches us that these two Divine subsistences jointly bear the name of Jehovah, in the one Divine essence. And if you ask who this Lord is, that says I will strengthen them in or by the Lord, that they may walk in his name, I answer, that the consistent tenor of the Scriptures proves that it is the same mighty God, who, when he appeared as the Son given unto us, said to the eleven apostles, "Without me ye can do nothing;" and who strengthened St. Paul by saying to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and whom the apostle had in view when he wrote, "Son Timothy, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Of all the gracious means which the Lord will use to overcome those

of his enemies whom he shall not find completely obdurate, one will be attended with the greatest success; and as it is recorded both in the Old and New Testament, and affords us a strong proof of our Melchisedec's divinity, I shall describe it here.

Speaking of our Lord who punishes faithless Jerusalem, and makes her triumph when she repents and returns, Zechariah says: "Thus saith the Lord, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him, In that day I will make Jerusalem a burthensome stone for all people, and Judah shall be like a torch of fire in a sheaf, they shall devour all the people round about, and Jerusalem shall be rebuilt and inhabited again in her own place. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem: and I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, [in the person of Messiah, the Prince, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily,] and they shall mourn for him [the Prince of Peace pierced] as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born, [pierced in his sight.] In that day [of Shiloh's return, when he shall overcome unbelieving Jews, even faithless Christians, in the same manner in which he overcame the unbelieving of Thomas] there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon," from which the Israelites brought back to Jerusalem their good King Josiah, wounded to death by the Egyptians, Zech. xii, 1-11. Behold, says St. John, confirming this prophecy, "He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him," Rev. i, 7. If you ask St. John of whom he speaks, he immediately mentions the "mighty God of" Isaiah. As for Zechariah, he hath already told us that he means Jehovah, who "formed the spirit of man within him," the creating *Logos*, by whom all things were made, and who, by assuming our nature, became Emmanuel, that he might make atonement, and give himself a ransom for his sinful brethren.

LETTER VII.

The evangelists and apostles bear testimony to the divinity of Christ.

REV. SIR,—In your *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, (vol. i, p. 144,) you assert, that "they [the apostles after their supernatural illumination] never gave him [our Lord] any higher title than that of a man approved of God," Acts ii, 22. Now, sir, if this assertion be true, the Scriptures are on your side; but if all the apostles, whose writings are come down to us, rise against it, you will please to remember that your doctrine is built upon the sand.

We grant you, sir, that St. Peter, considering the furious prejudices of the Jews, in the beginning of his first sermon, did not preach to them the divinity of Christ, which would have been an absurd step; because, far from being disposed to believe that our Lord was "very God of very

God," many of them did not so much as believe that he was a good man. Wisdom, therefore, forbade that apostle to dazzle his hearers at once, by the glorious light of this doctrine. Hence he at first called his Divine Master "a man approved of God." But did he not, before he concluded, represent him as taken up to the very throne of the Father, and placed on the highest seat in heaven, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as one whom the Father will see honoured with himself, by all men and all angels? In a word, did not Peter apply to our Lord these words of the royal prophet, Psalm cx, 1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Acts ii, 34. Words these so strongly expressive of a dignity superior to that of any *mere man*, that they represent the Father himself as determined to see the partner of his throne worshipped by all the creation, according to the psalmist's prophecy: "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him," Psalm lxxii, 9, &c.

St. Peter, in his second discourse to the Jews, far from calling our Lord a *mere man*, as you do, calls him "the Prince of Life," and names him emphatically "the Holy One," a sacred title, which, in the futures, is never given to any *mere man*; but in the Old Testament, those twenty-nine times appropriated to "Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel," Acts iii, 14, 15.

Proceed, sir, to St. Peter's third and last discourse handed down to us, and you will also find that, far from intimating to his hearers that Jesus Christ is a *mere man*, he has no sooner mentioned the Saviour's adorable name, but he makes a solemn pause, guards Cornelius against the error into which you are fallen, and, speaking of him whom you debase to a *mere man*, cries out, "He himself is Lord of all!" *Αυτος εστι παντων κυριος*, Acts x, 36. Now, sir, he who hath the title of Lord of all, hath certainly a title higher than that of a *mere man* "approved of God;" for he hath the title of Lord of men and angels, Lord of earth and heaven. St. Peter, therefore, hath already confuted your unscriptural assertion.

But let us hear the testimony of the other inspired authors of the New Testament, and let us see, sir, if they confirm your assertion better than he whom you have quoted with so little attention. Do not they represent our Lord as the Divine Son of God? (1.) By his eternal generation, as the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God. And (2.) By his being conceived of a pure virgin (as to his human nature) by the miraculous interposition of the Holy Ghost. Thus, although he was a real man, yet he was really a *Divine man*, as appears by these following scriptures:—

When the Angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary to inform her that she should bear a son, who should be "the Son of the Highest," and Emmanuel, "God with us," she replied, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The heavenly messenger replied, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy [conception] which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i, 32, &c.

Lest this capital doctrine should stand upon the testimony of one

evangelist only, St. Matthew says, "Before Joseph and Mary came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." And when Joseph entertained suspicions concerning her virtue, "the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy [espoused] wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Thus was fulfilled that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, or God with us," Matt. i, 18, 20, 23. Hence it appears that, even without taking the incarnation of the *Word* into the account, the human nature to which the *Logos* condescended to unite himself, when he took upon him the form of a servant, bore a stamp of divinity; and therefore our Lord, far from being a mere man, was in his whole complex person fitted for Divine honours by his ineffable generations, both as immortal Son of God, and mortal son of David. And if this was the case, even when he lay in the manger and hung on the cross, how much more now that he shines in the midst of his everlasting throne, where mortality is so completely swallowed up of life, and his refulgent manhood so gloriously taken up into God!

By preaching this wonderful generation of our Lord, Philip, the evangelist, kindled Christian faith in the heart of a pious Ethiopian, who meditated on these words of Isaiah: "Who shall declare [or fully explain] his [the Messiah's] generation?" &c. If we believe you, sir, you are the man raised to explain this mystery. You teach that the *Logos*, "the Word made flesh," had no glory, no glorious existence "with the Father before the world began:" thus, indirectly charging falsehood upon our Lord's sacerdotal prayer, you make an end of his eternal generation. As for his *human* generation, you boldly cut the knot by declaring that the Messiah was a mere man, naturally born of an honest tradesman and of Mary his wife. And thus you deny the Lord who bought you, both with respect to his eternal Godhead, and to the glory of his manhood.

When you have so deeply wounded our Lord's glory, you think to salve the matter over by treating the evangelists with as little ceremony as you treat their Divine Master. "I have frequently avowed myself (do you say to Dr. Horsley) not to be a believer of the inspiration of the evangelists and apostles, as writers: I therefore hold the subject of the miraculous conception to be one, with respect to which any person is fully at liberty to think, as evidence shall appear to him, without impeachment of his faith as a Christian." Thus, sir, you are so pressed by Scripture, that honestly pulling off the mask, you give up the veracity or the wisdom of the sacred writers as incompatible with your doctrine. We thank you for this declaration; and we look upon it as a public acknowledgment, that if Socinus and Mr. Lindsey are for you, the evangelists and apostles are for us. To convince you still more of it, I shall continue to try by Scripture your assertion, that the apostles never give our Lord any higher title than that of "a man approved of God."

We have already seen what St. Peter, St. Matthew, and St. Luke say on the subject: let us hear St. Mark: taking us to the holy mount, with St. Peter, he shows us our Lord transfigured, while some beams of the Divine glory, of which he had "emptied himself," shine through

the veil of his flesh, insomuch that his very garments become gloriously resplendent. And while the greatest prophets, Moses and Elias, attend him, the Father "speaks from the excellent glory," or from a cloud refulgent with Divine glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I delight, hear him," Mark ix, 7, and 2 Pet. i, 7. Nor is it here so much St. Peter and St. Mark, who speak, as matter of fact, and the first of the three witnesses in heaven. We hope, therefore, sir, that you will either recant your assertion, or show that the Father ever gave such a testimony to Moses his servant, to Abraham his friend, to any of the men whom he hath approved of in all ages, or to John the Baptist, who was so "great in the sight of the Lord," that "among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than he;" and nevertheless this greatest of men said: "There cometh after me one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose," Mark i, 7.

I grant you, however, sir, that you will find in St. Mark some of the favourite expressions of your system: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? the brother of James and Simon? and are not his sisters with us?" Mark vi, 3. But before you adopted such a system, should you not, sir, have gone on to the end of the verse, and taken notice that the people who thus speak, are those who are "offended at our Lord," those "who stumble against the precious corner stone laid in Sion," even those proud, unbelieving, stubborn Jews, to whom our Lord declared it would be more tolerable for the sinners of Sodom in the day of judgment than for them? But if you will know farther what St. Mark's own sentiments were on the subject, we consider, he will tell you, after the second witness in heaven: "The Son of man [the Messiah, even while he appears in the form of a servant] is Lord also of the Sabbath. Supreme and Divine Lawgiver, he hath power to dispense with his own law, and of consequence with the fourth commandment, Mark ii, 28. And who hath this supreme Lordship, but the "Lord God of Sabaoth," the "Lord of the Sabbath" and of the heavenly hosts? Unless, therefore, you can prove that Moses, Samuel, or some man approved of God, hath been called the Lord of the Sabbath by St. Mark, you must grant that your assertion is overthrown by that evangelist.

St. James uses indifferently the titles of God and of Lord, the latter of which you yourself, sir, will grant to be the ordinary title of Jesus in the New Testament, as it is of Jehovah in the Old. "If any man (says that apostle) lack wisdom, let him ask it of God; but let him ask in faith; for let not the man who wavers think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord," James i, 5, 7. And accordingly he begins the next chapter by pointing out the Messiah, not as a mere man, but as the great object of faith, jointly with the Father. "Have not," says he, "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons," James ii, 1. The second Lord is not in the original, but it is properly supplied in our translation, because it is the only word which can be grammatically supplied to complete the sense, and Jehovah, the Lord, giver of wisdom, object of our faith, and Lord of glory, is certainly a title never given by the inspired writers to any mere man, let him be ever so approved of God. St. James, therefore, confutes your assertion, as well as St. Mark.

St. Jude wrote but one short epistle, and yet attention and candour can see a beam of our Lord's divinity shining through the very first verse. St. James calls himself "the servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ;" but St. Jude, calling himself "the servant of Jesus Christ" only, inscribes his epistle "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in [or by] Jesus Christ." Now what unprejudiced person does not see, (1.) That if there is "*God the Father*," there must (by necessity of opposition) be also *God the Son*: and (2.) That this Divine Son is the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the faithful are preserved; it being impossible that any one, who is not God, should preserve a countless number of men through all countries, and for hundreds of generations, see Pet. i, 5.

Hence it is that St. Jude, in the fourth verse, represents it as the same capital offence to "deny* the only Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ," the words "only Lord God" being put here, (as in John xvii, 3,) to exclude from divinity, lordship, and dominion, all who by nature are not God; and not to exclude our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the very same verse, is joined to the Father; who, in the unity of the Father and of the Spirit, is "God ever all," and whom "the Father of glory hath set 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," Eph. i, 20, &c.

That St. Jude makes it the same capital offence to speak against the dignity of the Son, as to insult the majesty of the Father, and that the "men crept in unawares," against whom St. Jude prophesies, are principally the malicious opposers of our Lord's divinity, appears from the context: for St. Jude, in verses 21 and 25, considering again Jesus Christ as on the throne of the Godhead with his Father, exhorts the Christians to keep themselves in the love of God the Father, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life." Now who can read these words without wondering at the "certain men" who "creep in unawares," who come into the Church of Christ, as if they would purge it from corruptions, and pour contempt upon the very divinity of the supreme Lawgiver and Judge of the universe; and who dare tell us that the apostles give Jesus Christ no higher title than that of a mere man "approved of God," when they call him the Lord to whose mercy we are to look for eternal life; as if a mere man could, in the day of God, show us "mercy unto eternal life!"

How different is the idea which St. Jude gives us of him, after Enoch, verse 14: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all the ungodly of their ungodly deeds, and of all the hard speeches which they have spoken against him." Now, sir, we Trinitarians never heard of the saints of Moses, or of any mere man, but we have heard of the saints of God, we have heard of that great Being, who is called the Lord of hosts and the King of saints, because all the armies of the saints and angels are his

* I consider this verse as it stands in our translation. But when I look into the original, I find that St. Jude prophesies of "certain men crept in unawares, who deny, τον μονον δεσποτην θεου και κυριον ημων ιησουν χριστον, our only Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ"—or, according to the best copies, which omit θεου, our only Master (or Lord) and Saviour Jesus Christ.

own : and therefore we conclude that the Lord who shall come with myriads of his saints, is the Son who will punish obstinate unbelievers for their hard speeches, not against a mere man, but against him who said, when he was in the form of a servant, "The Son of man [resuming his form of God] shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, and they shall gather his elect," &c, Matt. xxiv, 31, and xxv, 31. Now, sir, this Lord of glory, whose are the saints, the angels, and the elect, is our Lord Jesus Christ, whom St. Jude, in the last verse of his epistle, calls (in the unity of the Father's Godhead, mentioned verses 1 and 21) the only wise God our Saviour, to whom be glory, majesty, and dominion, both now and ever !

Should you ask me, sir, how I prove that this doxology belongs peculiarly to our Lord Jesus Christ, I reply, that St. Jude himself furnishes me with a proof ; for, verse 24, speaking of this God our Saviour to whom he ascribes glory, he describes him thus : " Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," &c. And that this description peculiarly belongs to our Lord, I prove by the following references. Speaking of himself as the good Shepherd, the keeper of the sheep, that keeps obedient believers from falling into sin and into hell, he says : " I and my Father are one ;" and explaining how he is, with the Father, this God our Saviour who keeps the sheep from falling, he says : " I give unto them eternal life ; none shall pluck them out of my hand : my Father [also] who gave them me, is greater than all [the powers of earth and hell,] and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," John x, 28, 30.

If this equality of the Father and of the Son, in " keeping us from falling," proves that St. Jude's doxology refers to our Lord, as well as to the Father, the following remark on St. Jude's word, " God our Saviour is able to present you faultless with great joy," &c, proves it still more clearly. Is it God the Son, who will present us to the Father, or God the Father, who will present us to himself ? St. Paul will inform us : " You (says he) that were sometimes enemies, hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you unblamable in his sight," Col. i, 22. Now, sir, so surely as the Father was never manifest in the flesh, the Prince of life, who died to " present us blameless," is Jesus Christ, whom St. Jude [in union with God the Father] calls " God our Saviour." For it is our Lord, who peculiarly " loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might cleanse it, and present it to himself without spot and blameless." It is our Lord, " who, for the joy [the great joy] that was set before him, endured the cross," and will one day say (as Mediator) to the Father, " Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me." Compare Eph. v, 25, &c ; Heb. ii, 13, and xii, 2.

From these observations it appears that St. Jude also gives to Christ higher titles than that of " a man approved of God," since he calls him not only " Jesus our Lord Messiah," but " God our Saviour." I have dwelt the longer on this apostle's testimony, because some of the men whom he describes have endeavoured to press him into the service of Socinus, and to represent him as an opposer of our Lord's divinity. We have not yet heard St. John and St. Paul, but as this letter is long enough, I shall reserve their testimony for my next. I remain, &c.

LETTER VIII.

On the same subject.

REV. SIR,—The sacred writers with whom you have already been confronted, rise with one accord against your error. Two more apostles, St. John and St. Paul, remain to be consulted; and as they have written about half of the New Testament, we may in their writings, if any where, find your favourite doctrine. But before we call them in as evidences, let us make a view of the question to be decided by their testimony.

This question is not whether our Lord was *a man*, “a man approved of God,” *a man mediating between God and us*, nor yet, whether he was not inferior to the Father when he had taken upon him the form of a servant, and when he sustained the part of a commissioned Mediator: for this we maintain as well as you. But the question is, whether, as Logos, as the Word, he had not a Divine “glory with his Father before the world was,” John xvii, 5. You boldly reply, “No!” you suppose that Arians do him too much honour, when they believe that he had a super-angelic nature; you think that we Trinitarians are idolaters, for considering him as possessed of a Divine nature; and you assert, that he was *a mere man*, and that the sacred writers give him *no higher title than that of a man approved of God*.

Now, sir, where does St. John side herein with Socinus and you? Is it in his Gospel, which he begins by calling our Lord “the Word who in the beginning was with God, [the Father, Jude, verse 1,] and was God?” Is it where he saith, that this Logos is the Word, “by which all things were made, without which nothing was made, and in which was the life and the light of men;” that this “Logos was made flesh,” and that he (St. John with his fellow apostles) “beheld the glory” of this Logos, “a glory as of the only begotten of the Father?” John i, 1, 14.

I do not wonder if a philosopher who maintains that he has no immortal principle within him, can find, in these words of St. John, a demonstration that the Word, the Logos made flesh, was a mere man; but we poor trinitarian idolaters, who have yet immortal souls, think that this apostle could not assert more clearly the eternal generation and divinity of the Logos. (1.) His *eternal generation*, by saying, that “in the beginning [when the creation began] he was with God the Father,” John i, 1, 14, as his only Son, begotten in a manner, of which the formation of Adam’s soul, and the regeneration of the godly, who, by analogy, are called sons of God, give us but a faint idea: and (2.) his *divinity*, by declaring, that this only begotten Son of God the Father, was not only “with God in the beginning,” as Maker of all things; but that “he was God;” a title which is as far above that of a mere man, as Christianity is above Materialism.

If St. John overthrows your error in the very first verse of his Gospel, does he set it up afterward? Where? Is it where he saith: “No man hath seen God [the Father] at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him?” John i, 18. Is it where he brings in our Lord as saying, “I and my Father are one: he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father?” John x, 30, and xiv, 9.

We grant you, with St. John, that the Father is *greater* than the Son, when the Son is considered, not only as a man, but also as a Divine Mediator; allowing you farther, that when our Lord came "to fulfil all righteousness," to set us a pattern of all Divine and human virtues, and to enforce God's commandments, the fifth of which requires human sons to obey their human fathers; it became him as a Divine Son to honour God the Father, and to say publicly, "My Father is greater than I," both with respect to his *paternity*, and with reference to the order of the "Three who bear record in heaven." Nay, we maintain that our Lord coming, as a Divine Son, to set us a pattern of voluntary subordination, liberal obedience, and filial gratitude, it highly became him to display the temper of a Son, by referring all to his Father.

This he did with a dignity suitable to the Son of God, when he said: "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," John v, 26. "The living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father. I can [morally speaking] of mine own self do nothing: what things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise. I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent me, &c. Father, if thou be willing, "remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. Sacrifices [offered according to the law] thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me. Then I said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Father, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do: into thy hands I commend my spirit: [the human soul which I assumed, together with the body thou didst prepare for me:] I have glorified thee on the earth, and now glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

In all these dutiful expressions, nothing indicates that our Lord was a mere man: on the contrary, taken all together, they are strongly expressive of the humble submission, of the perfect obedience, and of the cheerful dependence which become a Son, and which principally became "the Son of God, manifest in the flesh." In a word, instead of finding Socinianism in these speeches of our Lord; in them, as in a glass, I see the Divine character of him, whom the Scriptures call *ἰδιον υἱον*, the *proper Son* of God the Father: I admire the adorable temper of a Son, who is the perfect pattern of all sons, as being *φύσει θεός*, Son of God by nature. Compare Rom. viii, 32, with Jude 1, and Gal. iv, 8.

Having thus presented you, sir, with a key to open these passages in St. John, which the enemies of our Lord's Divine glory continually dwell upon, I return to that apostle, and I ask again, Where does he say that our Lord is a mere man? If you reply that it is where he brings in our Lord as saying, "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," that is, every penitent believer. "And this is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John xvii, 1. (3.) Triumphant in this passage, you say, If the Father be the only true God, either Jesus Christ is no God at all, or he is only a false god: but conclusive as you think this argument, if you consider it every way, you will find that it can be so retorted as to overthrow your whole system.

"The only true God," you say, is "the Father," mentioned in the

very first verse of the chapter. We thank you for this concession : we have then in the true Godhead, a Father, God the Father. Now, sir, we Trinitarians, who have not yet sacrificed our rational and immortal souls to Materialism, reason thus : If the only true God be a truly Divine and everlasting Father, he has a truly Divine and everlasting Son ; for how can he be truly God the Father, who hath not truly a Divine Son ? This inference is so obvious, that St. John, whom you try to force into the service of Socinus, saith : " He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father ; he that denieth the Son, denieth the Father also ;" because the opposite and relative terms and natures of Father and Son, necessarily suppose each other. You must therefore give up the true paternity of God the Father, or the false arguments of Socinus.

" What ! do you then believe in two or three gods ? Do you break the first command of all revealed religion, which is to believe in the unity of God ?" No, sir : we only believe that in the unity of the Godhead there is, without any division, a mysterious and adorable trinity, which our Lord calls " The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." We believe with St. John, (1.) That " there are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ;" and (2.) That " these three are one," 1 John v, 7. We believe that when the Father spake from the cloud on the holy mount, and from heaven on the banks of Jordan, he said, " This is my beloved Son ; hear him." We obey this first command of the Gospel : we listen when our Lord speaks ; and we hear him say, " I and the Father are one,"—one in our counsels and works, but especially one in our Divine nature. Hence the propriety and ground of this capital precept : " You believe in God, [the Father,] believe also in me," who am his only begotten Son. Now, sir, we beg that you will not so far honour Socinus as to pour contempt upon the declaration of the Father, the command of the Son, and the veracity of both : and this you nevertheless do when you contend for a unity which degrades the Son of God to a mere man, and makes it an act of idolatry to believe in him as we believe in the Father.

You and your friend Mr. Lindsey are Jewish Unitarians, I mean Unitarians ready to stone the Son of God for supposed blasphemy ; and Unitarians " who crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame : " but we, whom you pity as deluded idolaters, are Christian Unitarians. With the apostle, we believe that in the Deity there is an eternal paternity, an eternal sonship, and an eternal procession, which answer to the profound mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, held out in the form of baptism as the one great object of our faith ; and we reverence this Divine paternity, sonship, and procession, as you admire the polarity and attraction of the loadstone, together with the impregnating effluvia which continually proceed from it, without your knowing those mysteries of the natural world, otherwise than by the testimony of other philosophers, and the experience you have had, again and again, that they spoke the truth, when they testified that those mysteries are realities worthy to be believed by every lover of truth.

Your objection being answered, I return to St. John, and I ask again, Where does he say that our Lord was a mere " man approved of God ?" Is it where he declares, that " he who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father," and that the Father " hath committed all judgment to

the Son, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father?" John v, 23. What a finishing stroke do the apostle and our Lord here give to Socinianism! How do all men honour the Father? Is it not by trusting in him, by praying to him, and by worshipping him as Jehovah, "God over all, blessed for ever?" And is he a mere man, whom St. John, the Son, and Father, want us thus to honour? Does not this one verse contain a demonstrative proof that St. John spake too highly of our Lord, or that Socinus and you trample upon the divinity of the Son, which is one and the same with the divinity of the Father, since "all men must honour the Son as they honour the Father?"

From St. John's Gospel, go to his epistles, and you will find him still ready to assert our Lord's divinity. Beginning his first epistle, as he did his Gospel, with a heart-penetrated with a deep sense of his Master's Divine greatness, he calls him "the eternal life, which was with the Father," 1 John i, 2. That we may honour the Son as we honour the Father, he points out both unto us as the joint object of our faith: for, representing "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," as the soul and the end of Christianity, he exhorts us equally to "continue in the Son, and in the Father," 1 John i, 3, and ii, 24; because it is eternal life, in its progressive manifestations, to know God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

It is remarkable, sir, that in consequence of the *oneness* of the Father and of the Son, St. John uses (after our Lord) a variety of expressions entirely subversive of your error. "The Father dwelleth in me," saith Christ; "I am in the Father, and the Father in me: if any man love me, I and my Father will come to him!" John xiv, 10, 11, 23. Nay, this apostle, who concludes this epistle by a charge to "keep ourselves from idolatry," uses the appellations of Father, God, the Son of God, and Jesus Christ, as partly synonymous. Take some examples: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the [adopted] sons of God. Now are we the [adopted] sons of God, but we know, that when he [God manifest in the flesh] shall appear, we shall be like him" in his glorified humanity, 1 John iii, 1, 2. Again: "Hereby know we the love of God, [manifest in the flesh,] because he [God our Saviour] laid down his life for us," 1 John iii, 16. Yet again: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us; God is love. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, [or as it is expressed 1 John ii, 28,] that when he [God the Son] shall appear, we may not be ashamed before him at his coming, because as he is [in his form of a servant, a loving, humble man] so are we in this world," 1 John iv, 16, &c. From a careful comparison of these passages, it is evident that St. John considered the Father and the Son, in his form of God, as so intimately one, that he joins them together as the great object of our faith, and uses the high title of God for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man who laid down his human life for us, and before whom we shall appear in the great day.

Take another proof that St. John honours the Son as he honours the Father. Summing up his first epistle, he saith: "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, [the Father, eternally one with his only begotten Son.] And we

are in him that is true, even in [or by] his Son Jesus Christ : this is the true God and eternal life." For the eternal Godhead resides in the Son, as truly as it does in the Father, and flows to us more immediately from the Son ; who is peculiarly God our Saviour, and the fountain of our eternal life, 1 John v, 20. Thus St. John concludes this epistle, as he began his Gospel, not by asserting with you that Jesus Christ is a mere man, or by refusing to give him any higher title than that of a "man approved of God," but by calling him "God, the true God, the living God," yea, "everlasting life" itself. And the drift of this excellent epistle is so evidently to hold forth the Son's and the Father's common divinity, that the sum of the whole is, "Whosoever denieth the Son, he hath not the Father !" 1 John ii, 23.

The same vein of anti-Socinian doctrine runs through St. John's second Epistle, of which we have the substance in these words : "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any to you, and bring not this doctrine, [but make you believe that committing sin is consistent with our victorious faith, or that the Father is Jehovah alone, and that the Logos, God the Word, was not manifest in the flesh to take away our sins,] receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed ; for he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 9, 10. "For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ [the Logos, who was in the beginning with God, and was God] is come in the flesh, [some of whom deny his real divinity, and others his real humanity.] This is a deceiver and an antichrist," 2 John v, 7. "For he is antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son ;" it being impossible to deny the Son without denying the Father, 1 John ii, 22. Yea, so perfect is the oneness of the Father and of his only begotten Son, that St. John gives the elect lady this anti-Socinian blessing : "Grace, mercy, and peace be with you [equally] from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," the Son of the Father, 2 John 3. Another proof this that there is, in the Godhead, an eternal paternity inseparably connected with an eternal Sonship.

St. John's last book is full of the same doctrine. The Father (if not the Son) speaks thus : "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, who was, and is to come, the Almighty," Rev. i, 8. And the Son, not thinking it a robbery to speak of himself in the same glorious terms, says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," Rev. i, 17, and xxii, 13. Thus the last as well as the first chapter of the Revelation, shows that he hath higher titles than that of a "man approved of God."

As the Father and Son are honoured with the same titles, so are they represented as filling the same everlasting throne : and although the Father calls himself a jealous God, yet he is so little displeased with the Divine honours paid to the Son, that, placing him at his right hand, he gives him the seat of honour "in the midst of the throne," that all men and angels may (without scruple) honour the Son, as they honour the Father, Rev. v, 6 ; Psalm cx, 1, and Acts vii, 55. Therefore every rational "creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth," is represented, by St. John, as paying the same worship to the Father and the Son, and as addressing to both a doxology similar to that which

concludes the Lord's prayer, saying, in the midst of the deepest prostrations, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever," Rev. iv, 8, &c, and v, 12, &c. And both, in the unity of the Spirit, are adored as the same Jehovah, the same "Holy, Holy, Holy One, that liveth for ever and ever, who hath created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and were created, and before whose throne the elders [of the triumphant Church] cast their crowns," Rev. iv, 10, 11, and v, 14.

Thus St. John, whom you think favourable to your error, not only asserts (after our Lord) that all men are to "honour the Son as they honour the Father," but testifies that all the heavenly hosts actually worship the Son as they do the Father. So grossly mistaken are you, when you assert that our worshipping of Jesus Christ is an abominable idolatry, on account of which every true Christian is to forsake the Church of England. I wish, sir, that by advancing such unscriptural and antichristian paradoxes, you may not finally unfit yourself for the company of those who worship God and the Lamb, and for the bliss of those who sing with St. John, "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen!" Rev. i, 5. Praying that this letter may be a mean of removing or shaking the prejudices you entertain against him who (in the unity of the Father and of the Holy Ghost) is "the true God and eternal life," 1 John v, 7, and 20, I remain, &c.

LETTER IX.

Doctor Priestley is confronted with St. Paul: and our Lord's Divine glory is seen in that apostle's writings.

REV. SIR,—St. Paul, who, as a rigid Jew, detested the very name of idols, and who, as a zealous Christian, went through the world to make armies of idols fall before the living God,—St. Paul, I say, will peculiarly take care not to countenance idolatry. He wrote thirteen or fourteen epistles, and, if you are not mistaken, we shall find, at least in one of them, that our Lord was a mere man.

But how soon does this apostle rise against your error! In the very first chapter of his first epistle, he calls his Gospel indifferently "the Gospel of God" and "the Gospel of Christ," Rom. i, 1, 16; and to let us at once into the mystery of our Lord's Divine nature, he confirms St. John's doctrine of the Logos made flesh, and calls our Lord "the Son of God made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared with power the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness, [the holy and quickening Spirit essential to his Divine nature, 1 Cor. xv, 45,] by the resurrection from the dead." And therefore the apostle immediately points him out as being, in the unity of the Father, the Divine spring of grace and peace, saying, "Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. i, 3, 4, 7. Far from seeing in this description a mere man, I already perceive *υιου υιου*, the proper Son of God, the very Prince of life, condescending to clothe him-

self with our flesh, our mortal nature, that he might make way for his Gospel, which is the Gospel of God.

When the apostle hath thus led us to honour the Son as we honour the Father, he deploras the idolatry of the heathen, who honoured and "worshipped the creature," Rom. i, 25. A strong proof this, that St. Paul had no idea of your doctrine, which sees in Christ a mere creature. On the contrary, he holds him out as the great object of our faith and confidence: saying that "God [the Father] hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," that is, who relieth on Jesus for salvation, Rom. iii, 25, 26. Now, sir, this faith, this religious reliance for pardon and eternal life, is the highest of all acts of worship, and therefore none is to be the object of it but "God our Saviour." So sure then as St. Paul never called us to believe in Moses, in himself, or in any mere man, but only in Jesus; our Lord, the object of our faith, is "God over all," and not a mere man as you unscripturally teach.

On our Lord's divinity rests the force of St. Paul's great incentive to Divine love: "God," saith he, "commendeth his love toward us, in that, when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v, 8. For if Christ be a mere man, God commended his love as much toward us by the death of Socrates, or of St. Paul, as by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the same evangelical ground rests also this ravishing conclusion of the apostle: "As by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace shall reign in life, by one, Jesus Christ," Rom. v, 17. For if our Lord be a mere man as Adam was, why is he much more able to save than the first man was able to destroy? But upon St. Paul's evangelical principles of sound reasoning, Christ is by so much more able to save than Adam was to destroy, by how much the only begotten and proper Son of God is greater than a son by mere creation. For "the first Adam was [only] made a living soul, but the last Adam [is] a quickening Spirit," 1 Cor. xv, 45.

Take another instance of St. Paul's apostolic concern for our Lord's Divine glory, which you so zealously oppose. Christ had said to the woman of Samaria, "Salvation is of the Jews," because he, the Saviour, was of Jacob's posterity. In like manner St. Paul, speaking of the Israelites, adds, "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came who is over all, God blessed for ever," *ο ων επι παντων θεος ευλογητος εις τας αιωνας αμην*, Rom. ix, 5. It was impossible to any but an inspired writer to crowd, in so few words, such a full description of our Lord's divinity, contradistinguished from his humanity. (1.) He is *ο ων*, he exists essentially. "Before Abraham was," says he, "I am;" and therefore the name of Jehovah, the self-existent God, belongs to him, as he is one with the Father, and the Spirit. (2.) He is not only "with God," but he "is God:" yea, (3.) God "over all," God of all men and angels, God supreme over earth and heaven. (4.) God "blessed," praised and worshipped as God; *ευλογια*, *blessing*, being the first action of adoration, which St. John saw performed in heaven, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, Rev. v, 13. Nor is this adoration (5.) to end, like the extraordinary honours paid to a king at his coronation: it is to last for ever: and so far is St. Paul from repenting to have asserted

our Lord's divinity in so strong a manner, that he sets (6.) the broad seal of his approbation to the whole description by an "Amen," which expresses both the fulness of his persuasion, and the warmth of the devotion with which he blessed and adored our Lord.

When the apostle hath considered the Son of God in his Divine nature, lest we should lose sight of his condescending love in becoming our brother, he concludes the epistle by showing him in his inferior character, as a Divine man by whom alone we have access unto God. "To God only wise," says he, "be glory through Jesus Christ for ever!" Rom. xvi, 27. This care of the apostle is a proof of his wisdom; for, having showed us the infinite height of the ladder by which we rise to glory, he kindly shows us that the foot of it is within our reach, reminding us that this very Jesus, who, in the unity of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, is "God over all," is nevertheless, in consequence of his union with our nature, a man who graciously mediates between God and us:—

And lest we should think that Divine man a mere man, St. Paul, in the context, represents him again as a wonderful person in whom, by virtue of an indissoluble union with Deity, are all the treasures of Divine wisdom and power. For whereas, in the first chapter of his epistle, he had wished the Romans "grace and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ;" in the last chapter he shows that in Christ dwells the fulness of the Godhead, and gives twice his blessing in the name of the Son only, saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," Rom. xvi, 20, 24; an apostolic blessing this, which upon your plan would be both absurd and wicked. (1.) *Absurd*: for how can a mere man have grace enough to supply the wants of millions in all ages? And, (2.) *Wicked*: because it puts Christians upon believing in, and praying to Jesus Christ, for the fulness of Divine grace, which would be tempting them to gross idolatry, if he were a mere man.

But so far was St. Paul from entertaining any fear in this respect, that he begins his next epistle by describing true Christians as men who are "sanctified in [or by] Christ Jesus, and who in every place call upon the name of Jesus our Lord, both theirs and ours:" as people who "wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall confirm them unto the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," elsewhere called "the day of God," 1 Cor. i, 2, 7, 8. These words, sir, demonstrate our Lord's divinity, unless you can prove that all Christians, in all ages, and in every place, are to call upon a mere man for sanctifying and confirming grace unto the end of the world.

But opposing St. Paul to himself, you try to set aside this striking proof of our Lord's divinity, by saying after the apostle, "There is none other God but one. To us [Christians] there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things," 1 Cor. viii, 4, 6.

As you, sir, and your brethren, perpetually deceive the simple, by affirming that our Lord's divinity is inconsistent with these words, I shall not only rescue them out of your hands, but establish by them what you intend to destroy.

1. What appearance is there that St. Paul, having begun his epistle by pointing out our Lord as the object of our adoration and prayers, would contradict himself in the middle of that very epistle? If you do

not believe that he wrote by *Divine inspiration*, you should at least allow that he wrote with *common sense*.

2. When he says, "There is none other God but one;"—"to us there is but one God," he no more means to overthrow the Godhead of our Lord, which is one with the Godhead of the Father, than he means to overthrow the Godhead of the Holy Spirit; but he evidently opposes the one Godhead of the Father, and of the Word, and of the Holy Ghost, to the multiplicity of heathenish deities, and of potentates, who, as living images of the supreme Potentate, are sometimes called gods, even in Scripture.

3. To be convinced that this is the true meaning of the two clauses on which you rest your contempt of our Lord's divinity, we need only consider them with the context. St. Paul speaks of eating the flesh of those beasts which have been "offered in sacrifice to idols;" and he says, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, [is a mere vanity,] and that there is none other God but one, for though there be that are called gods, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) yet to us [Christians] there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we of him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, [the Word and Son of the Father,] by whom are all things, and we by him." He might have added, as he does, chap. xii, 4, and Eph. iv, 4, and "one Holy Ghost," the Spirit of the Father, in whom are all things, and we in him.

4. I have observed, in the last letter, that this expression, "one God the Father," far from excluding the divinity of the Son, is as consistent with it, as the idea of a king is consistent with that of a subject: for God being eternally and infinitely perfect, if paternity belong to his essence, so does sonship. The eternal Father hath then a co-eternal Son, his Word, who, in the unity of his Spirit, is the one God opposed by St. Paul to the many idols and gods of the heathen. "There are three [Divine subsistences] that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three [εἰσι εἷς] are one," one Jehovah in whose names Christians are baptized.

5. That our Lord, with the Holy Spirit, is not excluded from the unity of the Godhead by the text, is evident to those who take notice that the apostle hath no sooner mentioned "one God the Father," but he mentions the Son as the "one Lord," in the unity of the Father and of the Spirit.

6. If you insist that this expression, εἷς Θεός, *one God*, which is applied to the Father, necessarily excludes the Son; it will follow, by the same unscriptural rule, that this expression, εἷς Κύριος, *one Lord*, which is applied to the Son, necessarily excludes the Father; and thus to rob the Son of his *supreme divinity*, you will rob the Father himself of his *supreme Lordship*! So true it is, that Unitarian *overdoing* always ends in *undoing*; and that our Saviour spake an awful truth, when he said, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father!"

7. To be convinced that the one God, and the one Lord, are not to be separated, and that, while the former is viewed as the Creator, the latter is not to be looked upon as a mere creature, we have only to consider what the apostle saith of each. He calls the Father the Being "of whom are all things, and we in him;" and he assures us that the Son is the Being "by whom are all things, and we by him." Now if

"all things are by the Son," he is prior to all the creatures that have been created, nay, he is the Creator of them all, and therefore you endeavour to substitute an absurd tenet to the second article of the Christian faith, when you teach that he is a mere man, who had no existence till he was born of the virgin. Thus the very scriptures by which you attack our Lord's divinity, when they are candidly considered with the context, and the tenor of the Bible, strongly confirm what you rashly deny: and St. Paul does not contradict himself when he exhorts the Corinthians to "flee from idolatry," and to "call upon the name of the one Lord by whom all things were made."

Nor will it avail to object, that St. Paul writes to these very Corinthians, that "as the head of the woman is the man, so the head of Christ is God," 1 Cor. xi, 3. For we who believe the divinity of our Lord, as it is set forth in the Scriptures and in the Nicene Creed, grant that as Eve was subordinate to Adam, so the Son is subordinate to the Father: but, at the same time, we assert, that as Eve, notwithstanding her subordination, was truly of one nature with Adam, the Son of God, notwithstanding his subordination to the Father, is of one nature with him also. Thus this second objection, when candidly weighed, becomes another proof of our Lord's divinity, especially if we consider what St. Paul says in the next chapter.

Speaking to the Corinthians of the idols which they once worshipped, he first opposes, to those dumb idols, Jesus Christ, the "Word made flesh," and observes, that "no man can say, [with a full and lively conviction,] that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii, 2, 3. And in the three next verses the apostle, holding out the doctrine of the trinity, says, (1.) "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." (2.) "There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." (3.) "There are diversities of operations, but the same God." And that the Spirit and the Lord are ineffably one with him, whom St. Paul calls the same God, I prove by the context. God, saith he, "hath set some in the Church as apostles, teachers," &c. God hath endued some with "gifts of healing, and diversities of tongues." Now, he who peculiarly sets some to be apostles, is the Lord Jesus, who called the twelve apostles and St. Paul. And he who peculiarly imparts gifts, whether of utterance, of tongues, or of healing, is the same Divine Spirit, whose unity is opposed to the diversity of his operations.

If you deny that God "who hath set some in the Church to be apostles," is peculiarly Jesus Christ, "the same Lord" who presides over the differences "of administrations;" and if you will still assert that the apostles never give to our Saviour any higher title than that of "a man approved of God," I once more prove the contrary, by reminding you, that St. Paul calls the Church sometimes "the Church of God," and sometimes "the Church of Christ;" and that, speaking to the clergy at Ephesus, he exhorts them to feed "the Church of God, which he [God] hath purchased with his own blood," Acts xx, 28. Now, sir, God who hath thus purchased the Church, is peculiarly "God the Son," our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the unity of the Father, and of the Spirit, is "the same one God," whom Bible Christians worship in trinity, because "of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever, Amen," Rom. xi, 36.

If you ask, How can St. Paul assert the divinity of Christ, when he writes to the Corinthians that Christ is the "image of God?" Is there no difference between God and his image? Will you worship God's image as if it were God himself? I reply, That there is an imperfect image, which expresses only a part of the external form of its original, and a perfect image, which expresses its whole nature, in a perfectly adequate and living manner. Thus four-footed beasts bear a resemblance to men in some things; but a son who looks, thinks, speaks, and acts like his father, is a perfect image. Adam was an image of God in the first sense, and our Lord in the second sense. That Christ is this living and perfect image of the Father, I prove, (1.) By his own words, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." And (2.) By these words of the apostle, which follow the text on which the objection rests: "God [the Spirit, by the light of the Gospel, and by the light of faith] hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of God [the Father] shining in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," 2 Cor. iv, 6, and Heb. i, 3. And our Lord's being such an image of God, does not any more cut him off from divinity, than a human son's being the express image of his father deprives him of the human nature. Therefore this objection also affords us a new proof of our Lord's divinity. ****

LETTERS

TO

THE REV. MR. WESLEY,

ON THE WANT OF

COMMON SENSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS,

IF SUPPOSED TO HOLD THE

DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S MERE HUMANITY.

BY THE LATE REV. JOSEPH BENSON.

Vol. III.

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LETTERS

TO

THE REV. MR. WESLEY.*

LETTER I.

REV. SIR,—The Rev. Mr. Fletcher, whose unfinished letters, at your desire, are laid before the public in the preceding pages, has just observed to Dr. Priestley, that if he will not allow St. Paul wrote by inspiration, he ought at least to allow he wrote with common sense. And most professors of Christianity will suppose, that if Mr. Fletcher had extended the observation so as to include the other sacred writers, his demand would not have been unreasonable. They will be of opinion, that the doctor ought to allow they all wrote with common sense. And yet to desire him to allow this, is to desire him to give up his favourite doctrine of Christ's mere humanity. For only let this doctrine, to say nothing of other points, be supposed to have been held by these holy writers, especially by the penmen of the New Testament, and let their writings be read under that supposition, and I will be bold to affirm that any person, who has himself common sense, will pronounce that, in a multitude of instances, the apostles and evangelists wrote without it. And to this test one may venture to submit the matter in dispute between Dr. Priestley and his antagonists.

The sacred writers, he affirms, considered our Lord in no other character than that of a mere man. Well, sir, let us for the present take this for granted, and let us make experiment how those passages of their writing, which relate to Christ, read according to this hypothesis. If they appear to contain common sense, we will allow he has the truth on his side; but if not, methinks it would be no unreasonable demand to require him to own himself in an error. I begin with St. Paul, whose epistles are now under consideration, but shall pass slightly over the epistle to the Romans, and the first to the Corinthians, because Mr. Fletcher has already reviewed these epistles. I shall, however, refer to a few passages. From the others I shall quote more largely.

In the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, according to Dr. Priestley's doctrine, we must understand the apostle as follows:—

Chapter i, 1 :—"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ," that is, a servant of a mere man, "called to be an apostle, [not of men, as he informs the Galatians, chap. i, 1, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ," a mere man! "and God the Father, who raised him from the dead] separated

* Though the aged and truly reverend minister of Christ, to whom these letters are addressed, is now no more; yet, as they were written and presented to him many months before his death, it is judged best to give them to the public in their original form.

unto the Gospel of God,—concerning his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord,” a mere man, “made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, by whom,” though a mere man, “we have received grace and apostleship: among whom ye are also the called of Jesus Christ,”—that is, the called of a mere man, once indeed on earth, but now confined to heaven, and whom, therefore, ye Romans never saw, nor heard, nor could have any access to, or intercourse with, or be called by,—“to all that be at Rome,—grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father,” the self-existent, independent, supreme, and everlasting Jehovah, “and from the Lord Jesus Christ,” a mere man, who had no existence till about forty and fifty years ago, but who, nevertheless, is the source and fountain, the author and giver of grace and peace, conjointly with the supreme God!

Now, sir, would any man, who believed the mere humanity of Christ, have expressed himself in this absurd manner? Would he have spoken of being called to be an apostle, not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, if he had believed Jesus Christ to be no more than a man? Would he, in mentioning his being of the seed of David, have added the words, according to the flesh, thereby manifestly intimating that Christ had a nature which was not from David? Would he have spoken of receiving grace and apostleship, through this mere man, and have looked up to him, in conjunction with the eternal God, for grace and peace to be conferred upon the Churches to which he ministered? I think, dear sir, the doctor himself would hardly affirm it: but if he would affirm it, then I ask why his own practice and that of his brethren is so very different from this apostolic pattern? Why do they never express themselves in any such manner as this, either in their prayers or sermons, nor apply to Christ, in union with his Father, for grace, or peace, or any other blessing?

I shall give another instance out of the fifth chapter: “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ,” a mere man, says the doctor, “died for the ungodly. God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ,” a mere man! “died for us,” viz. one mere man for the whole human race! “Much more, then, being now justified by his blood,”—the blood of one mere man! “we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God,” many millions as we are! “by the death of his Son,” viz. the death of one mere man! “much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved [from everlasting damnation] by his life,” the life of the same mere man! “If by one [mere] man’s offence, death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ,” although also but a mere man!

Pass we on to the eighth chapter. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,” that is, that are in a mere man! “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,”—that is, the law of the spirit of life in a mere man! “hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh—God hath done, sending his own [*ιδιον*, proper] Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” that is, if Dr. Priestley be

right, causing a mere man to be born!—"and by a sacrifice for sin, [the doctor says, by dying a martyr, merely to confirm the truth,] condemned sin in the flesh." Verse 8, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you: now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ," that is, the spirit of a mere man! "he is none of his: but if Christ be in you,"—viz. if a mere man, crucified in Judea, 1700 years ago, and now in heaven, be in you,—"the body indeed is dead, [is mortal,] because of sin; but the Spirit is life, [is immortal,] because of righteousness. And he that spared not his own Son," that spared not one mere man! "but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him, also, freely give us all things?" that is, on the doctor's principles, if he delivered one mere man to die a martyr to confirm the truth of the Gospel, how shall he not, with him, deliver millions of men from everlasting damnation, and put them in possession of eternal salvation! The apostle proceeds: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ," a mere man! "that died: yea, rather, that is risen again: who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" the love of a mere man! "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake," mere man though thou art! "we are killed all the day; we are appointed as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him," that is, through a mere man! "that hath loved us." Strange language this from the mouth of a scholar, a Christian, and an apostle! Nay, who can reconcile it with common sense?

But to proceed: still more irreconcilable therewith is the language of the same apostle, in the two next chapters. "I say the truth in Christ," that is, in a mere man, by whom I thus swear, and to whom I thus appeal; though as a mere man, now in heaven, he certainly cannot know my heart, nor be a witness in any such matter; however, "I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart—for my brethren, —my kinsmen according to the flesh—of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Here again one might inquire what ideas the apostle, if speaking of a mere man, could annex to the words, "as concerning the flesh:" surely if Christ be a mere man, his whole person was from the Jews, as much as the person of St. Paul himself. And would it not be absurd, if, speaking of that apostle's progenitors and his descent from them, one were to express one's self in a similar manner, and say, Of whom, as concerning the flesh, St. Paul came? Those, indeed, who believe the soul to be inspired immediately from God, and not received by traduction from our parents, may suppose that the phraseology, though unusual, and unprecedented when applied to a mere man, is, however, not quite improper: but the doctor cannot avail himself of any such distinction between the soul and body; for he teaches that man has no soul, distinct from his body; and that even Jesus Christ had none. On his principles, therefore, the expression is doubly absurd. But what shall we say of the following clause: "Who is over all, God blessed for ever?" How many absurdities, on the

doctor's hypothesis, are wrapped up in this half sentence? To say that a mere man is over all, to term him God, to affirm that he is blessed, and that for ever! Surely reason and common sense could no more have a hand in dictating this than the Spirit of inspiration.

And what, on the doctor's principles, has common sense to do with the following passage, which we find in the next chapter? "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ from above? or, Who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring him back from the dead?" For if he be a mere man, who had no existence till begotten by Joseph, and conceived in the womb of Mary, why does the apostle speak of "bringing him down from above?" Surely if the latter clause: "Who shall descend into the deep [that is, into the grave, or into the state of the dead] to bring him back from the dead?" would imply an absurd inquiry, if he never had been in the grave, or in the state of the dead: so the former clause proposes a question equally ridiculous, if Jesus Christ, before his appearing among us, never had been above.

The apostle goes on, according to the Socinian principles, in the same strain of absurdity, (verse 11 :) "The Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him," a mere man though he be, "shall not be ashamed: for the same Lord over all," though but a man! "is rich unto all that call upon him: for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him," the mere man! "of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?"*

There are sundry other passages in the remaining chapters of this epistle, which, I am persuaded, no person that believed the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, and was possessed of common sense, could have dictated or written. The following are among the most remarkable. Chap. xi, 26, "The Deliverer [a mere man] shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away iniquity from Jacob." Chap. xiv, 6, "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, [viz. unto a mere man!] and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord [the same mere man] he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, [a mere man,] and he that eateth not to the Lord [the same mere man] he eateth not. For none of us [real Christians] liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, [that is, unto a mere man!] or whether we die, we die unto the Lord, [the same mere man;] whether living or dying, therefore, we are the Lord's [that is, we are the property of a mere man!] For, to this end Christ both died, and rose, and liveth; that [though a mere man!] he might be Lord both of the dead and living! For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, [the judgment seat of a mere man!] for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus [a mere man!] there is nothing unclean of itself. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He that

* In proof that this is to be understood of Christ, see *Vindication*, vol. vi, p. 441, and vol. vii, p. 43.

in these things serveth Christ, [that is, serveth a mere man!] is acceptable to God."

Chap. xv, 7, "Receive ye one another, as Christ also [a mere man!] hath received us to the glory of God. Verse 12, Esaias saith there shall be a root of Jesse, [viz. a mere man, not born till many hundred years after Jesse, and yet the root from which Jesse sprung!] and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him [though a mere man, and though it be written, Cursed is the man that trusteth in man; yet in him I say] shall the Gentiles trust! I will not dare, (verse 18,) to speak of those things which Christ, [a mere man,] hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed,—through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ. Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, [that is, for the sake of a mere man!] and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me:"—

Chapter xvi, 3, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, [that is, in a mere man!] Salute my well beloved Epenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ, [a mere man!] Salute Andronicus and Junius, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who were in Christ [the mere man] before me. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, [who you know is a mere man!] The Churches of Christ, [that is, the Churches of a mere man!] salute you. Mark them that cause divisions, for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, [that is, serve not a mere man!] but their own belly. The grace of [this mere man!] our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you! Amen! [I say again, verse 24,] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the same mere man!] be with you all!"

These, reverend sir, are a few of the many passages in the Epistle to the Romans, relating to Christ, which, when opened with Dr. Priestley's key, and interpreted according to his doctrine, appear to be so absurd, that I think no person pretending to common sense would have written them. And as a proof that the doctor and his brethren consider them as absurd, or at least incompatible with their scheme, they are rarely observed to use such either from the pulpit or the press: "Serving Christ, preaching Christ, being in Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the grace of Christ; Christ made of the seed of David according to the flesh; sent in the likeness of sinful flesh; Christ dying for us, reconciling us to God by his death,—giving us redemption in his blood,—being the end of the law for righteousness," &c, &c, are expressions seldom, if ever, heard from their pulpit, or read in their books. And no wonder: for they are expressions which but ill agree with their doctrine of Christ's *mere humanity*. They are like the head of gold, and breast of silver, in Nebuchadnezzar's image, joined with feet and toes of iron and clay.

I am, reverend, sir, your obedient son, in the Gospel of God our Saviour,

JOSEPH BENSON.

LETTER II.

REV. SIR,—In the last letter we reviewed sundry passages quoted from the Epistle to the Romans, and found, I think, that on the supposition of the author's holding the doctrine of Christ's *mere humanity*, he paid little regard, I will not say to *Divine inspiration*, or to *conclusive reasoning*, but even to *common sense*, in writing that epistle. I now proceed to the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the very inscription of which, and benediction pronounced immediately after, demonstrate, either that the Socinian doctrine is false, or that St. Paul wrote, to say the least, very absurdly.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, [that is, an apostle of a mere man!] unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, [viz. sanctified in a mere man!] called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, [that is, call upon the name of a mere man!] Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," who, though no more than a man, is able conjointly with the self-existent Jehovah, to confer grace and peace upon all the Churches.

"I thank my God, [proceeds he, verse 4,] always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus, [that is, by a mere man!] that in every thing ye are enriched by him [a mere man though he be!] in all utterance, and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ [this mere man] was confirmed among you, so that ye came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, [though he be a mere man] shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of [the same mere man] our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," I mean, the fellowship of a mere man!

Now what a group of absurdities have we in these few verses! An apostle of a mere man! Sanctified in a mere man! Calling upon the name of a mere man! Deriving grace and peace from a mere man! Enriched by a mere man in all utterance and in all knowledge! Confirmed unto the end by a mere man! Waiting continually for the coming of a mere man! Surely this kind of language savours more of lunacy than of a sound mind, and betrays as great a want of reason or *common sense*, as of learning or inspiration. And yet one can hardly open any where in this or in the other epistles of this apostle, but, on the supposition of his being a Unitarian in the sense of Dr. Priestley and Socinus, one meets with absurdities equally numerous and glaring. Thus in the verses which immediately follow:—

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [viz. the name of a mere man,] that ye all speak the same thing. Was Paul [a mere man] crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I [a mere man!] baptized in my own name, [the name of a mere man.] For Christ [another mere man!] did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ [that is, the cross of a mere man!] should be made of none effect. For the doctrine of the cross is indeed, to them that perish, foolishness; but to us who are saved, it is the power of God, verse 23. We preach Christ [a mere man!] crucified, unto the Jews a

stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them who are called, Christ [the same mere man] the wisdom of God, and the power of God! Of him are ye in Christ Jesus [viz. in a mere man] who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." A mere man, the wisdom of God and the power of God: yea, wisdom and righteousness, that is, the source and author of wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, to all that believe! Strange doctrine this indeed, and very incredible!

Thus again in the next chapter: "I determined not to know any thing among you but Jesus Christ, [that is, I determined not to know any thing but a mere man!] and him crucified. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," that is, a mere man!

Again, chapter iii, 11: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," a mere man: that is, a mere man is the one foundation of the whole Church, with all its doctrines, privileges, and duties! All believers, in all nations and ages, are built upon a mere man! And, chapter v, this doctrine supposes the apostle to speak as follows: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [that is, in the name of a mere man,] when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, [viz. the power of a mere man,] to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Will Dr. Priestley, or any of the Socinians, tell us how the power of a mere man, confined in the third heaven, could be exerted and felt on earth, and that in thousands and myriads of congregations at the same time? And will they inform us how sinners of every description could be washed, (as the apostle expresses it in the sixth chapter,) sanctified, and justified in the name of this mere man?

Pass we on to the seventh chapter: "Unto the married I command, yet not I [a mere man, as you know I am] but the Lord, [another and a greater mere man!] Let not the wife depart from her husband. But to the rest speak I, [a mere man,] and not the Lord, [particularly the other and greater mere man,] verse 22, He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's [that mere man's] freeman. Likewise, also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's [the same mere man's] servant. Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men." Howbeit, ye may be the servants of Christ, who himself is but a man!

Now how ridiculous is this language! How unworthy of the lips, I will not say of an inspired apostle, enlightened with Divine wisdom, but of any rational creature, however illiterate and uninformed! And yet this and such like language every advocate for the mere humanity of Christ, who acknowledges the authenticity of these epistles, and supposes their author to have been a Unitarian, puts into the mouth of the apostle; nay, and makes him utter it almost with every breath, even as often as he has occasion to speak of his Master, which, it is well known, is very frequently.

The Socinians glory much in the sixth verse of the next chapter, because the apostle there asserts, with great plainness, the *unity* of God; but even that passage affords a striking instance of the absurd and

ridiculous doctrine I mention. For if he affirm that "to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things," a truth we should be sorry to disbelieve or deny, persuaded as we are, that he is what his name imports, the Father of all, even of his beloved Son, his incarnate Word; if, I say, he affirms this, he affirms with equal plainness, that there is "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things:" and how all things could be by a mere man, who had no existence till they had been made and preserved at least four thousand years, it may perhaps puzzle even Dr. Priestley to show. Nor have we far to read before we find another proof of the absurdity of supposing St. Paul to hold the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity. Verse 12, he says, "When ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ:" that is, according to this hypothesis, "When ye sin against mere men, ye also sin against a mere man!" To this mere man, as the Socinians think him, the apostle declares himself, in the next chapter, to be "under the law," and, chapter x, affirms that the Israelites tempted him in the wilderness, that is, if the Socinians be right, tempted him two thousand years before he existed. And while the ungodly among them thus rebelled and vexed the Holy Spirit of their Lawgiver, and their Judge, the faithful applied to him as their Saviour, and received salvation from him, for "they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ," the Rock of Ages, and the fountain of living waters to his Church, and yet, according to Dr. Priestley, a mere man!

If it seem strange to us that persons of sense and learning should patronize a doctrine which fathers such nonsense upon an inspired apostle, our wonder will in some measure cease, if we pass on to the twelfth chapter of this epistle. There the apostle both gives us the true reason why men embrace the Socinian hypothesis, and furnishes us with a striking example of the absurdity of attempting to reconcile it with his doctrine. "I give you to understand (says he) that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." They have not received the Holy Ghost; they are not enlightened by that Divine Spirit; he has not taken of the things of Jesus, and shown unto them; has not revealed Christ to them, and therefore they do not, in the true and Scriptural sense, call Jesus Lord, but degrade him into a mere man. The apostle goes on: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," from whom they proceed, "and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord," the same mere man, says Socinus, that appoints them all, "and there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all." In other words, according to the Socinian doctrine, all the gifts, offices, and effects, produced in the Church of Christ, are from the Holy Ghost, from a mere man, and from the self-existent Jehovah.

Permit me, Rev. sir, to refer you to a few more passages of this epistle, as instances of the absurdity of supposing the apostle to have held Dr. Priestley's sentiments concerning the mere humanity of Christ. Chap. xv, 45, we read: "The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam is a quickening Spirit;" that is, according to the doctor, a mere man is a quickening Spirit! "The first man was from the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven:" that is, a mere

man, descended from Joseph and Mary, is the Lord from heaven! "I protest by your rejoicing, which I also have in Christ Jesus, [a mere man,] I die daily. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, [that is, through a mere man!] Therefore be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, [viz. the work of a mere man!] forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord," [the same mere man!] Chap. xvi, 21: "The salutation of me Paul with my own hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, [that is, love not a mere man!] let him be anathema [let him be accursed] maranatha; [that is, the Lord, the same mere man, cometh.] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, [viz. the grace of a mere man!] be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus," [the same mere man!]

You see, dear sir, the first Epistle to the Corinthians, when interpreted according to the Socinian doctrine, no more appears to have been written with *common sense*, than the Epistle to the Romans. Nay, if Jesus Christ be a mere man, some parts of it are *impious*, as well as *absurd*. It is inscribed to those that "call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" that is, if Jesus be no more than a man, it is inscribed to idolaters. And both that and many other passages of it manifestly countenance and encourage idolatry. To represent grace and peace as being derived from the Lord Jesus, as well as from God the Father, and to ask "grace of him" for the Churches: to speak of being "enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge, of being confirmed by him to the end," and called into "his fellowship," of "preaching him, the wisdom and power of God;" "the wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption" of his followers; of being determined to "know nothing but him:" to call him the "Lord of glory," even that Lord "by whom are all things," and represent him as the only "foundation" of "his Church," that is or can be laid; as the "Lord that shall come" and bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart: to speak of the power of this person being with them that are gathered together delivering an offender to Satan: to hold him forth as our Passover crucified for us, and "dying for our sins," according to the Scriptures: to teach that believers are "washed, justified, and sanctified in his name;" are his members joined to him, in one spirit, and not their own but his, bought with a price: to term him the Lord almost in every breath, and that eminently and absolutely without any, the least, restriction or limitation; and represent himself and all the apostles, nay, and all Christians and ministers through all the world, as his servants: to speak of his ordaining laws for his Church; and of his followers being "under the law" to him: to talk of "sinning against him, tempting him, and provoking him to jealousy," and to pronounce those accursed that do not love him: surely this is not only absurd, but even pernicious doctrine, if he be no more than a man.

Equally pernicious, as well as absurd, are sundry passages of his second epistle to the same people. He begins it, as he had done the former, by styling himself an "apostle of Jesus Christ," and asking grace and peace of him, as well as of his supreme and everlasting Father! Verse fifth he mentions his consolations as "abounding through him," and chap. ii, 14, speaks of their "triumphing in him," and being

"unto God a sweet savour in him," in them that are saved, and in them that perish. Chap. i, 19, he calls him that "Son of God," whom he, Sylvanus, and Timotheus had preached, and declares that he was not yea and nay, but that all the promises of God in him are "Yea," and in him "Amen." And chap. iv, 5, he assures us they "preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord:" that is, according to this doctrine, they preached not mere men, but a mere man! "and themselves the servants of the Churches for Jesus' sake," viz. for the sake of a mere man! And verse 11: "Always delivered unto death for his sake, [viz. for the sake of a mere man!] that the life also of Jesus," adds he, "might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." The reason of this their entire devotedness to Christ, we learn, chap. v, 14, 15, "The love of Christ constrained them:" that is, according to Dr. Priestley, the love of a mere man! "while they thus judged," thus believed and reflected, "that if one [mere man] died for all, then are all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live should not live henceforth unto themselves, but unto him [the mere man!] that died for them, and rose again." All mankind, therefore, being redeemed by his death, are, according to this doctrine, under an indispensable obligation of living in obedience to the will, and of being devoted to the glory of one mere man! Nay, and the apostles themselves were but ambassadors for Christ, (that is, ambassadors for a mere man,) as though God, adds he, did "beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, [the stead of a mere man!] be ye reconciled to God: for he hath made him [though but one mere man] a sin offering for us, [many millions of mere men,] that we might be the righteousness of God [might be justified and made righteous by God] in him." How all true believers should be justified and made righteous through one mere man, is surely, to say the least, not easy to conceive.

Proceed we to the eighth chapter. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that, though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." Will Doctor Priestley, or any Socinian, inform us when and how Christ was rich, on their hypothesis, and when and in what sense he became poor? And will he tell us how, on the supposition of his being a mere man, he can act the part of a spiritual husband, to all the faithful in every nation and age, guiding, protecting, and comforting them, nay, and supplying all their wants? "I have espoused you [many millions as ye are] to one husband, (says the apostle, chap. xi, 2,) that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ." The apostle goes on: "But I fear lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preach another Jesus [another mere man] whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another Spirit [from that mere man] which ye have not received, ye might well bear with him."

Above all, I would recommend the paragraph that follows, to the consideration of those who view Christ as a mere man, and therefore judge that it would be idolatry to worship him. Chap. xii, 7, speaking of his thorn in the flesh, he says: "For this thing I besought the Lord [that is, I besought a mere man! see verse ninth] thrice, that it might depart from me, and he said unto me, My grace [though I am but a mere man!] is sufficient for thee, for my strength [mere man as I am!] is

made perfect [is perfectly displayed] in weakness! Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ [the power of a mere man!] may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, &c. for Christ's sake, [that is, for the sake of a mere man!] for when I am weak, then [through the help of this mere man] I am strong!" This surely is ridiculous in the extreme. And the 3d, 5th, and 13th verses of chap. xiii, are little better. 3. "Ye seek a proof of Christ [a mere man!] speaking in me. 5. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Know ye not that Christ [a mere man!] is in you, except you be reprobates! Verse 13: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, [that is, the grace of a mere man!] and the love of God, [the Supreme Being,] and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, [that is, the fellowship of a power or property of God!] be with you all! Amen."

Leaving you to wonder, Rev. sir, how any man of sense can patronize and attempt to reconcile with the Scriptures, a doctrine, which, when brought to that touchstone, appears to be so absurd and ridiculous, I subscribe myself yours, &c.

LETTER III.

REV. SIR,—In the two former letters we reviewed a variety of passages occurring in the Epistle to the Romans, and the two Epistles to the Corinthians, which, on the supposition that the author of those epistles held the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, manifestly appear to have been written without regard to *common sense*. I proceed now to lay before you a few texts, of a similar nature, from the lesser epistles of the same apostle: and several, not a little remarkable in this view, occur in the very beginning of the first of these epistles. According to Dr. Priestley's hypothesis, they must be read as follows:—Gal. i, 1, "Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, [a mere man!] and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. Grace to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, [from the eternal God and a mere man!] who [though no more than a man] gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us [many myriads as we are!] from this present evil world. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, [the grace of a mere man!] unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ, [the gospel of a mere man!] Do I now persuade [or solicit the favour of] man? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not [please or] be the servant of Christ, [a mere man!] But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man: for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," a mere man!

Now, sir, is not all this very extraordinary? An apostle, not of *men*, neither by *man*, but by a *mere man*! If I pleased, or were the servant of *men*, I should not be the servant of a *mere man*! The Gospel which I preached is not after *man*, but after a *mere man*! Is not this excellent sense? worthy of the learning of the disciple of Gamaliel, and of the

inspiration of the apostle of God? The apostle proceeds, verse 15: "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,—to reveal his Son [that is, to reveal a mere man!] in me, that I might preach him [the same mere man!] among the heathen," as the grand foundation of their confidence and hope, 1 Cor. iii, 11; Eph. i, 12, 13; the object of their love, 1 Cor. xvi; and spring of their obedience, 2 Cor. v, 14;—"immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood!"

I shall take no notice of what the apostle has delivered with great clearness in the next chapter, respecting justification by faith in this *mere man*, as the Socinians think him, though absolutely irreconcilable with their doctrine; but what he has occasionally remarked, respecting the union which he had with Christ, and which indeed all that are justified have with him, must not be passed over, as being perfectly unintelligible on their hypothesis. Verse 20, we read, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ [a mere man, says Dr. Priestley] liveth in me; and the life I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, [that is, by faith in a mere man,] who hath loved me and given himself for me." Will Dr. Priestley inform us how Christ, if a mere man, could live in the apostle? And will he tell us how he could "redeem all [that believe in him, whether Jews or Gentiles] from the curse of the law, see chap. iii, 13, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through him; and mankind might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith?" John vii, 37, 38.

There are many other passages in this epistle equally absurd on the Socinian principles. As chap. iv, 14, "Ye received me as an angel of God, even as [a mere man!] Jesus Christ." Verse 19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ [a mere man] be formed in you!" Chap. v, 1, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith [a mere man] Christ hath made us free!" Chap. vi, 2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," that is, the law of a mere man. Verse 14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the cross of the same mere man,] by whom [a mere man though he be] the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in [the same mere man] Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus, [viz. the marks of the sufferings I have endured for the sake of a mere man!] Brethren, the grace of [this mere man] the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

You see, Rev. sir, that this Epistle to the Galatians, beside the many passages which are similar to those found in the preceding epistles, has several of a peculiar nature, in which the Lord Jesus is set in opposition to men: and to be made an apostle by him, to receive the Gospel from him, and seeking to please him, are opposed to the being made an apostle by man, receiving the Gospel from man, and seeking to please man. Now, in these instances, Dr. Priestley will find it hard work, indeed, to vindicate, on his hypothesis, the common sense of the apostle. Examine we now the Epistle to the Ephesians. This also furnishes us with many instances of the apostle's writing without common sense, on the supposition of his being a Unitarian. Passing over the inscription and

benediction, which are similar to those in the other epistles, verse the 3d, &c, he speaks of the Father as blessing us, viz. all the faithful, "with all spiritual blessings in him, choosing us in him to be holy,—predestinating us to the adoption of children,—making us accepted, and giving us redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins:" and then, verse 10, he proceeds as follows:—"That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, [that is, in a mere man,] both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him, [mere man though he be!] in whom also we have obtained an inheritance,—according to the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ,] that is, who trusted in a mere man!] in whom ye also trusted, [and were so far from being condemned or blamed by God for so doing, that] after ye believed in him, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." This mere man, verse 20, "the Father hath set at his own right hand, in 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 given him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him [viz. of the mere man!] that filleth all in all." Is there any reason or sense in any part of this paragraph? How can a *mere man* be the head of the Church universal, not only guiding and governing, but *virtually influencing* all true believers, in all nations and ages? And how could a mere man bring Jews and Gentiles nigh to each other by his blood, as the apostle observes in the next chapter, or be their "peace, making in himself one new man?" And having formed them into one body, how could he reconcile both unto God, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby? or come from heaven, even while he remained there, and preach peace to the Gentiles, who were far off, and to the Jews that were nigh, granting unto both "access through himself, [a mere man,] by one Spirit unto the Father?"

Another remarkable passage we meet with, chap. iii, 1: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [that is, the unsearchable riches of a mere man!] and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; viz. by a mere man, who had no existence till all things had been created at least four thousand years! Such are the absurdities which the Socinian doctrine fathers upon the disciple of Gamaliel, and of the Lord Jesus! Nay, and what is worse, makes him utter these absurdities to God upon his knees, in the most solemn acts of devotion. For instance, verse 14: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom [though a mere man!] the whole family of heaven and earth is named, that Christ [mere man as he is!] may dwell in your hearts by faith! that being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which [though it be but the love of a mere man,] passeth knowledge!—that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." How a mere man should dwell in our hearts, how his love

should pass knowledge, and how the knowledge of it, in that degree which is attainable, should be a mean of filling us with all the fulness of God, is surely, to say the least, not to be conceived!

Another remarkable instance of the absurdity of supposing the apostle to have held the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity occurs in the next chapter, verses 7-17: "Unto every one of us is grace given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, [that is, the gift of a mere man!] Wherefore he saith, when he [this mere man] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it [what does it imply] but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" Will the Socinians inform us how a mere man, who had no existence till born in Bethlehem, and who of consequence had never been in heaven, could descend from thence? "He that descended (I say), is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he [a mere man!] might fill all things. And he [a mere man] gave apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, [the body of a mere man!] till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, [the faith and knowledge of a mere man!] unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we may grow up unto him in all things, who [though a mere man] is the head, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love!"

Pass we on to the fifth chapter, where we meet with more instances, and equally striking: "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and [though a mere man!] hath given himself for us, [one mere man to ransom millions!] an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour. Wherefore he saith, verse 14, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ [a mere man] shall give thee light." For, though a mere man, he can hear and answer prayer, and give the light of life to as many as apply to him! Verse 22: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, [a mere man,] for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and he [a mere man!] is the Saviour of the body! Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and [though a mere man!] hath given himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, that it should be holy and without blemish! So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord [viz. a mere man!] the Church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

The next chapter abounds with instances of a similar kind. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, —in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; [a mere man!] not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, [a mere man!] doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord, [a mere man!] and not to men! Knowing, that whatsoever

good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, [this same mere man,] whether he be bond or free. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also [a mere man!] is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, [a mere man!] and in the power of his might! Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, [the supreme God and a mere man!] Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ [the mere man I so often name] in sincerity!" Wishing, reverend sir, that should Dr. Priestley think it worth his while to show us how the sundry passages quoted in this letter from the Epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians might, consistently with common sense, be written by one who held the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, he may not forget to tell us how his unwearied endeavours to degrade the Lord Jesus are consistent with loving him in sincerity, I subscribe myself, &c.

LETTER IV.

REV. SIR,—Though I made no particular remark upon it, yet I hope, in looking over the last letter, it would not escape your notice, that in the Epistle to the Ephesians also, as well as in that to the Galatians, the apostle repeatedly opposes the Lord Jesus Christ to men. "Not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ. With good will, doing service as to the Lord, [viz. Christ,] and not to men." Now on the Socinian principles this is saying, not as men pleasers, but as man pleasers; doing service as to a man and not to men!

The Epistle to the Philippians comes next in course, and contains a similar doctrine as to the point in question, with the epistles already considered. Indeed, the apostle is consistent with himself in all his epistles, and, according to the doctor's hypothesis, consistent in inconsistency. Here, as before, he styles himself (not indeed an apostle but) a servant of Jesus Christ, and represents Timothy as being joined with himself in this state of servitude to a mere man, and from this mere man, as well as from the almighty God, he begs grace and peace for the saints at Philippi, as he had done for the Churches to which the preceding epistles are addressed. And then, verse 12, he writes: "I would that you should observe, brethren, that my bonds in Christ [my bonds endured for a mere man!] are manifest in all the palace: and some preach Christ [preach a mere man!] even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. The one preach Christ [the same mere man] of contention; but the other of love. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ [the mere man] is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice: for I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [that is, the supply of the spirit of a mere man!] according to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ [a mere man!] shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death. For me to live is Christ, [that is, a mere man] 'is the supreme end of my life, and I value my life only as it is capable of being referred to the purposes of

his honour!'] and to die is gain, and what I shall choose I wot not, for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, [the mere man I speak of,] which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you: that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ [the same mere man] by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, [viz. the gospel of a mere man:] in nothing terrified by your adversaries; for to you it is given in behalf of Christ, [in behalf of a mere man!] not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake," [for the sake of the same mere man!] A strange doctrine this indeed!

But to proceed. Chap. ii, 1, we read: "If there be any consolation in Christ, [that is, on the principles I oppose, in a mere man!] if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, fulfil ye my joy: and let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who [though but a mere man, that had no existence till born at Bethlehem, in the days of Augustus Cesar, yet] being, *υπαρχων*, *subsisting* in the form of God, [that is, say the Socinians, being endowed, like Moses and others, with the power of working miracles!] thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" a mere man thought it not robbery to be equal with God! or as the doctor's party, contrary to the natural and proper import of the words, wish to translate it, did not assume an equality with God,—that is, a mere man manifested great humility in not assuming an equality with God! The apostle goes on, but "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, [that is, a mere man, who was 'made in the likeness of men, and emptied himself' that he might be made in that likeness!] and being found in fashion as a man, [for in what other fashion was it reasonable to suppose a mere man could be found?] he humbled himself, [still more,] and became obedient unto death. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus [viz. the name of a mere man!] every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those in earth, and those under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [a mere man!] is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!"

I appeal here to any reasonable man, whether it were possible for any one possessed of common sense, to believe Jesus Christ to be a mere man, and yet to write in this manner: and I appeal to any person possessed of a grain of piety, a single spark of the fear of God, whether he could consider the Son of God as a mere man, and yet speak as follows: "I trust in the Lord Jesus [ver. 19, that is, on the Socinian hypothesis, I trust in a mere man] to send Timotheus shortly unto you, for I have no man like minded; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's, [that is, which are a mere man's;] him I hope to send, and I trust in the Lord [the same mere man,] that also myself shall come shortly." Surely the putting our trust in a mere man for things which are wholly in God's power, and absolutely at his disposal, is flagrant idolatry, and the open declaration of that trust is a public avowal of that idolatry.

Indeed, if Christ be a mere man, St. Paul idolized him almost as often as he mentioned him. Many instances occur in the next chapter. "Finally, my brethren, (says he, ver. 1,) rejoice in the Lord, [viz. in a mere man,] for (ver. 3) we are the circumcision who worship God in the

Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus. Ver. 7 : What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, [that is, for a mere man !] Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of [this same mere man] Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom [though but a man] I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, [that is, that I may win a mere man,] and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, [faith in a mere man !] the righteousness which is of God by faith : that I may know him, [may know a mere man !] and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death : that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," that is, of a mere man ! As this is certainly magnifying a mere man too much ; so in the passage following, (ver. 50,) the apostle speaks of expecting from him what no mere man can possibly perform : " We look," says he, " for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." The apostle, however, was not only persuaded of Christ's ability to do all this, but believed that he could even impart strength to others, assuring us, in the thirteenth verse of the next chapter, that he himself could " do all things, [viz. all things which it was his duty to do,] through Christ strengthening him," whose grace, therefore, before he puts a period to his epistle, he desires for the Philippians, as in his other epistles he does for the other Churches, saying, " The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [that is, as Dr. Priestley will have it, the grace of a mere man !] be with you all ! Amen !"

Such, Rev. sir, according to Dr. Priestley's hypothesis, is the doctrine of St. Paul concerning Christ, in his Epistle to the Philippians ; a doctrine which I think every intelligent reader must pronounce most absurd and ridiculous. To rejoice so excessively that a mere man was preached, though at the expense of many and extreme sufferings endured by those who preached him : to represent serving and glorifying him as the one great end of living, and to intimate that life itself was only desirable so far as it answered that end : to censure those who sought their own things, and not the things of this mere man : to speak of trusting in him, expecting the supply of his Spirit, and being able to do all things through his help : to lay it down as a principal branch of the character of a Christian to rejoice in him, and repeatedly to exhort all Christians to do this : to mention it as a great favour to be permitted to suffer for him, and to represent all things as vile and worthless, when compared to the " excellency of his knowledge : " to speak with satisfaction of having won him, though with the loss of every thing beside, even liberty and life, just about to be sacrificed for his sake ; and to rejoice that he was magnified whatever his servant might endure : to proclaim him as " able to change even our vile bodies, and make them conformable to his own glorious body," nay, and to " subdue all things to himself ; " and to begin and end his epistle with solemn prayer, addressed to him for grace to be conferred upon the people to whom he wrote : surely these things (to say nothing of the celebrated passage in which this mere man, as the doctor thinks him, shines forth in the form of God, and is declared to be

equal with God) are very extraordinary, and not to be reconciled with *sound reason or common sense*, any more than with *inspiration or piety*.

I proceed now to the Epistle to the Colossians, which will also furnish us with a variety of examples of a similar kind. Having informed us, ver. 14, that "we have redemption through his blood, [that is, if we may believe Dr. Priestley, through the blood of a mere man!] even the forgiveness of sins," he adds, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, for by him [though a mere man, born in the days of Augustus Cesar] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers: all things were created by him [this mere man] and for him, [the same mere man!] and he [though he had no existence till about sixty years ago*] is before all things, and by him [a mere man!] all things consist. And he is the head of his body the Church: the beginning, the first born from the dead: that in all things he [a mere man!] might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him [a mere man!] should all fulness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself: by him, [a mere man!] I say, whether they be things on earth, or in heaven." Surely this is unparalleled! No nonsense that ever was uttered, can equal it! The apostle proceeds: "And you who were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he [a mere man!] reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight [the sight of the same mere man!] The mystery, ver. 26, hid from ages, and from generations, is now made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery, among the Gentiles, which is Christ [a mere man!] in you the hope of glory; whom [a mere man though he be!] we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus [the same mere man.] Whereunto I also labour according to his working, [that is, the working of a mere man!] which worketh in me mightily."

Now is not this strange doctrine? A mere man hath reconciled to God those that were alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works! A mere man is in them, many thousands and myriads as they are, the hope of glory, that is, the foundation and source of their hope! A mere man works mightily in and by his apostle. The Gospel, chap. ii, 2, is the mystery of the eternal God and of a mere man! And in a mere man, verse 3, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge! He goes on: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [the mere man I speak of,] so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, [the same mere man!] and established in the faith. Beware then lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, [a mere man!] For in him, [mere man as he is!] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him, who [though but a man] is the head of all principality and power." Observe, sir, "All the

* St. Paul is supposed to have written this epistle, as also that to the Ephesians, about the year of our Lord 63.

fulness of the Godhead bodily" (or substantially) dwells in a mere man! and a mere man is the head of "all principality and power!"

The apostle mentions afterward the "worshipping of angels," and opposes it to holding the head, "from which (adds he) all the body, [the Church universal, with every member thereof,] with joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with all the increase of God." So that it seems, this mere man ministers spiritual nourishment to every true member of his mystical body, that is, to every true believer in every part of the world, and causeth them all to increase with all the increase of God! I hope, if Dr. Priestley cannot show how this is done, he can at least prove that it is possible; and that this same mere man is capable also of being our life, as the apostle observes in the next chapter, verse 4, and our all, verse 11, and even in all that believe!

Many are the passages in the remaining part of this epistle, in which the apostle affirms of Christ, or ascribes to him what common sense will pronounce cannot belong to a mere man. For example: "Forgiving one another, if any man have a complaint against any; even as Christ [a mere man] forgave you, so also do ye—and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, [that is, in the name of a mere man!] giving thanks to God, even the Father, by him. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord [a mere man.] Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, [a mere man!] and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve [a mere man!] the Lord Christ! Chapter iv, Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master, [viz. a mere man!] in heaven. (12.) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, [that is, of a mere man!] saluteth you. (17.) Say to Archippus, take heed of the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord [a mere man!] to fulfil it. Grace be with you! Amen!"

Methinks, reverend sir, it must be impossible for any one to pay the slightest attention to the above texts, quoted from the Epistle to the Colossians, and here interpreted according to Dr. Priestley's hypothesis, without being convinced that his doctrine, and that of St. Paul, concerning the person and offices of Christ, are absolutely irreconcilable on the principles of common sense. Would any man, who was not absolutely an idiot or lunatic, if he believed Jesus Christ to be no more than a man, have held him up to view as the person, "by whom all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible;" nay, as the person for whom, as well as by whom, they were created, and who, of consequence, existed "before all things, and by whom all things consist" and are upheld? Would he have represented him as a person "in whom all fulness dwells," yea, "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and as "the head of his body, the Church," and not a head of guidance or government only, but of vital influence also? Would he have taught it as a great and important mystery, hid from ages and generations of old, but now made manifest to the saints, that this mere man was in real Christians "their hope of glory," working mightily in and by his apostles and servants?

Farther, would he, in speaking of the mystery of the Gospel, (which, by the by, on the doctor's principles, can hardly be termed a mystery at all,) have denominated it the "mystery of God the Father and of Christ," thus joining a mere man with the eternal God, and making him, together with the self-existent Jehovah, the author of the Gospel? Would he have represented him as a person "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and the "head of all principality and power?" Would he have spoken of "receiving him, walking in him," and being "rooted and built up, and complete in him," or as *εναλω πληρωμενοι* rather signifies, *filled with or by him*? Would he, in guarding them against the vain deceits of philosophy, (those deceits which are after the rudiments of the world, and the tradition of men, and not after Christ,) have cautioned them against the worship of angels, and opposed it to "holding the head," Christ; an expression which, in this connection, manifestly implies the worshipping him, which we have had already sufficient, and shall yet have much more abundant proof, that the apostles and first Christians did? Would he have termed this mere man, as the doctor thinks him, the life of true believers, and their all in all, exhorting them to "forgive one another, as he had forgiven them?" Would he have opposed him to men, and urged servants, whatsoever they did, to do it heartily as to him, [a mere man!] and not to men, "knowing that of him they should receive the reward of the inheritance, for that they served the Lord Christ?" These inquiries, reverend sir, are of deep importance, and such as, on the Socinian principles, I am well convinced Dr. Priestley will never be able to answer to the satisfaction of those who pay any deference to the authority of St. Paul.

I am, reverend sir, yours, &c.

LETTER V.

REV. SIR,—Dr. Priestley would fain persuade us that St. Paul's idea of the person of Christ was the same with that which he entertains. But, were there no other, there is at least one insurmountable objection to this, and that is, the different conduct of the apostle from that of the doctor, with regard to Divine worship. The doctor confines this entirely to the Father. He never, in any instance, addresses it to the Son. He judges it would be idolatry so to do. But we have already seen, in many undeniable instances, that St. Paul worshipped Jesus Christ. To say nothing of the many other passages which have occurred in the epistles already reviewed, the benedictions wherewith he has begun and ended these epistles, are incontrovertible proofs of it. For in these he asks grace, or grace and peace, of Jesus Christ, as well as of the supreme and eternal Father. We have already met with so many instances of this kind, that I am ashamed to trouble you with any more. I shall therefore pass over those occurring in the two next epistles, viz. the Epistles to the Thessalonians; and I shall also omit mentioning divers texts in those epistles concerning Christ, which, if understood as spoken of a mere man, appear equally absurd with those quoted in the four preceding letters.

But two passages I must refer to, as affording a plain and evident demonstration, that the apostle viewed the Lord Jesus Christ in a different light from that in which Dr. Priestley beholds him. The one passage is in the first epistle, chap. iii, 11; and, according to the doctor's hypothesis, must be interpreted as follows:—"Now God himself, even our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, [a mere man!] direct our way unto you. And the Lord [the same mere man!] make you to increase in love one toward another and toward all men; to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints:" a manifest and undeniable instance this, of a formal and solemn prayer, addressed to the Lord Jesus, that is, as Dr. Priestley will have it, to a mere man! and by one who, he says, believed him to be a mere man! Surely it behooves him to consider how, on his principles, he can acquit the apostle of the gross crime of idolatry! The other passage, second epistle, chap. ii, 16, must, on the same hypothesis, be understood in the same manner. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, [a mere man!] and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work." Here again we have a plain instance of the apostle's praying to Christ, and that at the very time and in the very manner in which he prays to the Father.

The doctor may pass these things over slightly. But you will agree with me; dear sir, that reason requires him either to allow that the apostle held a different sentiment concerning the Lord Jesus, from that which he entertains, or to give us proof that he can imitate the apostle; and worship Christ as he did. While, then, he informs his people, in the language of St. Paul in these epistles, that Jesus Christ "delivers them from the wrath to come," first epistle, chap. i, 10, and that they "obtain salvation through him," chap. v, 9: that he is "that Lord that shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; who, second epistle, i, 7, shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,"—the person from whose presence and from the "glory of whose power" such shall be "punished with everlasting destruction," when he [a mere man] shall come to be "glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe:" and while he prays to the Father for his flock, "that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in them, according to the grace of our God, and Jesus our Lord:" let him approach also the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, after the example of St. Paul. Though this might a little astonish some of his hearers, as being a procedure that they had not been accustomed to, yet it would have more weight than any thing he has yet said or done to convince the public that he does not differ so widely from St. Paul, as the generality of mankind in this kingdom suppose him to do. But if he cannot conscientiously do this, as believing it would be gross idolatry to worship a mere man in this manner, or speak of him in this exalted strain, then let him acknowledge that St. Paul and he differ widely in their views of the Lord Jesus.

Methinks, Rev. sir, on the Socinian principles, the remarkable passage contained in the second chapter of the latter epistle to this people, which has

generally been applied by Protestants to the pope of Rome, might with much greater propriety be applied to Jesus Christ. He, you know, has been worshipped as God for 1700 years at least, by the generality of Christians; and he, as God, hath sat and still sits in the temple, or Church of God, "showing himself that he is God;" proclaiming himself the root as well as offspring of David; the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and declaring that all men ought to "honour him, the Son, even as they honour the Father; and that he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father." Now if he be no such being, but only a mere man, and therefore no proper object of Divine worship, it seems it would be no difficult matter, for so great a master of the art of reasoning as Dr. Priestley, to prove that he is the great impostor and usurper, primarily meant by St. Paul in this passage, the grand idol (as indeed he must think him) of professing Christians; an impostor and usurper, by so much greater than the pope, or any other that hath arisen in the Church of God, claiming Divine honours, and exercising dominion over men's consciences; by how much he hath been obeyed more unreservedly and implicitly, and hath been worshipped more devoutly and universally than they.

You know, sir, it is generally supposed that all the most remarkable apostasies from faith in and piety toward God, which have occurred or shall occur in his Church, have been distinctly foretold in the Holy Scriptures. Now, if Jesus Christ be a mere man, the worship of him so generally practised, all over Christendom, for so long a run of ages, must be the greatest corruption of true religion, and the most remarkable defection from the service of the one living and true God, that ever took place in the visible Church. And it would be strange, indeed, and what many would consider as an insuperable objection to the doctor's whole scheme, if this greatest of all apostasies should no where be foretold in the oracles of God, when apostasies, far less criminal and general, are constantly found to have been predicted there. But if it must be supposed to be prophesied of somewhere, it may be worth the doctor's while to consider, whether this passage is not as likely to foretel it as any other.

It describes a great and general falling away from the worship and service of the true God, a grand and universally spreading idolatry, supported by miracles, real or pretended. This, according to his hypothesis, must be very applicable to that apostasy from the worship of one God only, which the doctor and his friends deplore; which they are using all possible means to remedy, and which he somewhere calls the idolizing of Jesus Christ. And however it might shock the prejudices of some half-thinking zealots to find, that, according to this interpretation, epithets are given to Jesus Christ, such as they have not been accustomed to hear him characterized by, and such as they may deem blasphemous; yet this can no way stagger the doctor. For how can he think any appellation too severe which is given to one, who, though a mere man, weak, fallible, and peccable like others, for so many centuries has been worshipped as God, and has been the grand idol of so great a part of the known world, and has so manifestly, by word and deed, countenanced and encouraged, nay, and commanded that idolatry!

Now, sir, when the doctor has once proved this point, he will have done his business effectually indeed. He will have brought Jesus Christ as low as he could wish him. He then, instead of being the Lord of glory, and Son of God, is discovered to be the man of sin, and son of —. But I must check myself: the whole truth must not be spoken at once, for indeed it would not be borne. And at present there is among us an almost universally prevailing opinion that Jesus Christ, so far from being the person described by St. Paul in this passage, “whose coming is after the working of Satan; with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish,” is in reality that Lord who “shall consume that wicked one with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming.” If this opinion should have any foundation in truth, I fear Dr. Priestley will be found to have entertained and taught a great error, and may be in danger of meeting with a severe rebuke, if nothing more dreadful, in that day, from him he has thus degraded.

Praying that we, reverend sir, and all professing Christians, may be so endowed with that Spirit of truth, whose office it is to reveal the Lord Jesus, that we may both form proper conceptions of his wonderful person, and pay him the honour due unto his name, I break off here, and subscribe myself your obedient servant in him, even in Christ Jesus, &c.

LETTER VI.

REV. SIR,—Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, you know, were particular and intimate friends of St. Paul. In the epistles inscribed to them, therefore, at least we may expect to find his sentiments concerning Jesus Christ, the grand subject of all his letters, naked and without disguise. Let us then narrowly examine these epistles, and see whether they comport with Dr. Priestley's doctrine. In order hitherto, let us adopt the method pursued above, and see whether those passages which speak of Christ appear to contain good sense and sound divinity, when understood according to the doctor's hypothesis. Chap. i, 1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, [the infinite, eternal, and supreme Jehovah,] and the Lord Jesus Christ, [a mere man, weak, fallible, and peccable, who, mere man though he be, is nevertheless] our hope: unto Timothy, my son in the faith; grace, mercy, and peace [from both these persons] from God our Father, [the Supreme Being,] and Jesus Christ our Lord,” a mere man!

Verse 12: “I thank [this mere man!] Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of [this mere man!] our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, [the same mere man!] This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ [a mere man, who was not till he was born in Bethlehem!] came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first [this same mere man!] Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter be-

lieve on him [that is, believe on a mere man!] to everlasting life," for everlasting life is obtained by believing on him, though a mere man!

What a multitude of proofs, undeniable proofs, have we in these few verses, either that St. Paul was devoid of common sense, or that he viewed Jesus Christ in a very different light from that in which Dr. Priestley considers him. To term the Lord Jesus our hope, and represent himself as made an apostle by his commandment, as well as by the commandment of God the Father; to look up to him as well as to the Father for grace, mercy, and peace, to be conferred upon Timothy; to thank him for putting him into the ministry, and enabling him to be faithful; to speak of him as exercising toward him all long suffering, and conferring upon him "exceeding abundant grace;" to glory in it as a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that he came into the world (an expression which plainly implies his having existed before he so came) to save sinners; and to represent everlasting life as being obtained by believing in him;—surely any, and much more all of these particulars, demonstrate, that if St. Paul possessed, not to say the inspiration of an apostle, but the reason of a man, he must have considered Jesus Christ as being more than a man.

And that he did, is yet farther certain from what he says of him toward the conclusion of the third chapter, where he terms him "God manifest in the flesh," which is giving him a character as far above that of a mere man, as the Creator is above one of his creatures. The apostle goes on: "Justified in the Spirit," "whose extraordinary communication (says an eminent divine) in the midst of all the meanness of human nature in its suffering state, vindicated his high claim, and marked him out, in the most illustrious manner, for the Divine person he professed himself to be:" "seen of angels," who attentively beheld, adored, and worshipped him, Heb. i, 6; "preached among the Gentiles," as the great foundation of their faith and hope, and object of their love; "believed on in the world," as their Redeemer and Saviour; "received up into glory, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named." "If thou put the brethren (chap. iv, 6) in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of [the mere man!] Jesus Christ; nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. And (chap. v, 21) I charge thee, before God [the omnipresent and omniscient Jehovah] and the Lord Jesus Christ, [a mere man!] that thou observe these things!" Again, chap. vi, 18: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, [that infinite, omnipresent, and omnipotent Being,] who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, [a mere man, local in his presence, and limited in his power,] that thou keep the commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of [this mere man] our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second Epistle to Timothy is similar to the first. The same strain of absurdity runs through it also, on the supposition that its author held the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity. A few passages I shall quote and read according to that hypothesis.

Chap. i, 1: "Paul, an apostle of [the mere man] Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in [this mere man] Christ Jesus: to Timothy, my beloved son, grace, mercy, and peace, from God the [infinite and eternal] Father, and from the Lord

Jesus Christ, [a mere man of yesterday, weak and dependent!] Ver. 8 : Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of [this mere man] our Lord, nor of me his prisoner ; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God ; who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, [though this Christ Jesus be a mere man, who had no existence till the world was at least four thousand years old!] but is now made manifest by the appearing of this [mere man] our Saviour Jesus Christ, who [mere man as he is!] hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Observe, reverend sir, a mere man hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light ! "For which cause," adds he, "I also suffer these things : nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that [though a mere man!] he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." I think, sir, they that believe him to be a mere man, must have many doubts respecting his ability to keep what they may commit unto him.

The apostle proceeds, chap. ii, 1 : "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in [this mere man!] Christ Jesus! Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, [the same mere man.] No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier." See that thou then (he might have added, as indeed is implied) make it thy care to please the mere man Jesus Christ, who hath chosen thee ! For thy encouragement let me remind thee that (verse 10) "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in [this mere man] Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying, If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him : if we deny him, he will also deny us : if we believe not, he abideth faithful, he [though a mere man!] cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance ;" that is, put them in remembrance that a mere man cannot deny himself ! Some will think that it is an assertion that requires proof, rather than repetition.

As in the words last quoted, the apostle ascribes immutability to this mere man, so, verse 19, he ascribes omniscience to him. "The foundation of God," says he, "standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his [according to what Jesus himself had testified, John x, I know my sheep, and am known of mine,] and let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The same attribute is also, in effect, ascribed to him, chap. iv, 1. But on the Socinian hypothesis it must be interpreted as follows : "I charge thee before God, [that infinite and eternal Being, who filleth heaven and earth, and therefore has his eye upon us both,] and the Lord Jesus Christ, [that mere man, who, being now in heaven, and immensely removed from our world, is an utter stranger to us, and perfectly unacquainted with our behaviour, but] who will, however, judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom ; preach the word. (5.) Watch in all things ; for, verse 6, I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand : I have fought the good fight ; and there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge [I mean the mere

man!] will give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing, [viz. the appearing of the same mere man.] (18.) At my first answer no man stood with me, but the Lord [how strange soever it may appear, since he is a mere man!] stood with me and strengthened me; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord, [the same mere man!] shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom [mere man though he be] be glory for ever and ever! [This mere man!] the Lord Jesus Christ, be with thy spirit!"

The Epistle to Titus being very similar to the two Epistles to Timothy, I shall pass it over, referring only to one passage, which, according to Dr. Priestley's plan of doctrine, must be understood thus: "Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of [a mere man! who, however, is] our great God and Saviour, *τι μεγαλη θες και σωτηρος ημων*, Jesus Christ, who [mere man as he is!] gave himself for us, that he, [a mere man, by his laying down a temporal life!] might redeem us, [many myriads as we are,] from all iniquity, and purify to HIMSELF [that is, says Dr. Priestley, to a mere man!] a peculiar people, zealous of good works! These things [are of deep importance, therefore,] speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" for terming a mere man the great God our Saviour!

The Epistle to Philemon affords several instances of the same kind with those quoted above. "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, [that is, a prisoner for his attachment to a mere man!] grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; [that is, from the eternal God and a mere man!] I thank my God, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward [that mere man] the Lord Jesus: that the communication of thy faith may become effectual," or that thy faith may be effectually communicated to others, "by the acknowledging [that is, by their acknowledging] of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus, [that same mere man!] Wherefore, though I might be bold in [this mere man] Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such a man as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of [a mere man, the man] Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, a brother beloved, especially to me, and how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. Yea, brother, let me have joy in thee, in [this mere man, which I term] the Lord: refresh my bowels in him. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in [this same mere man] Christ Jesus, saluteth thee. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, [that is, the grace of a mere man!] be with your spirit! Amen."

May these blessed words, so often repeated, be at length so considered by Dr. Priestley and other Socinians, that they too may see their need of Divine grace, and begin to apply to Christ for it, though at present they may judge it would be idolatry so to do! Surely, reverend sir, if the sundry passages, produced in this letter, were attended to, they must convince all candid and unprejudiced persons that, whether St. Paul was right or wrong in his views of the Messiah, he certainly had a much higher idea of him, than that of a mere man.

To appeal to the Lord Jesus as omnipresent, and give Timothy repeated charges as in his sight, as well as in the sight of God the Father;

to represent him as "abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light by the Gospel," and as being able to "keep what we commit unto him safe unto that day;" to exhort Timothy to be strong "in his grace, to endure hardness as a good soldier of his," and make it his chief care to please him in all things, as the captain of his salvation who had called him; to represent salvation in all its branches, and eternal glory, as being in him, and to be attained only by those who "die with him," that they "may live with him," and "suffer with him," that they may "reign with him;" to view him as unchangeable and omniscient, as one that abideth faithful and "cannot deny himself," as the Lord who "knoweth them that are his," and as the "righteous Judge" who, at the day of his final and glorious coming, will give the crown of righteousness to all that love his appearing; to speak of this Jesus as "standing by him, strengthening and delivering him" when all men forsook him, and to express an entire confidence in him for deliverance from every evil work, and preservation to his heavenly kingdom; and lastly, to pray that he would "be with Timothy" also, and to ascribe "glory to him for ever and ever;"—surely these particulars demonstrate that St. Paul was as far from believing the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, as he was from being guilty of gross idolatry himself, or from persuading others to the commission of that dreadful crime.

I am, reverend sir, yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

REV. SIR,—Though it be not certain that St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, yet, you know, it was the most prevailing opinion of the ancients, as it is still of the moderns, that he was the author of that invaluable work. I shall therefore take this for granted. But on the supposition that he was a Unitarian, in Dr. Priestley's sense of the word, he seems to have paid still less regard to *common sense*, to say nothing of *piety* or *sound reasoning*, in this, than in any of his other epistles. We need not read far to find instances of the truth of this observation. We meet with them in the very beginning of the epistle. According to the Socinian doctrine, he must be interpreted to mean as follows:—

"God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, [that is, by mere men,] hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, [another mere man,] whom [however] he hath appointed heir of all things, [viz. of all his works, of all creatures visible and invisible!] by whom also he made the worlds, [though this his Son had no existence till the worlds had been made at least four thousand years!] who [mere man as he was, yet] being the effulgence of his [the Father's] glory, and the express image [or exact delineation] of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, [even the things that had been created and upheld some thousands of years before he, a mere man, existed!] when he had, by himself, [viz. by laying down his mere temporal life,] purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Being [though a mere man, ignorant in many things, weak and peccable] so much better than the

angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he [the Father] at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And again: I will be to him a Father, and he shall be unto me a Son. And again: when he bringeth his first begotten into the world, [not that he had any prior existence,] he saith, Let all the angels of God [be guilty of idolatry, and] worship him [a mere man!] Of the angels he saith: Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son [a mere man!] he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And thou, Lord, [a mere man! born in the days of Augustus,] in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and [though weak and helpless] the heavens are the work of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest; yea, they shall all wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou [though no more than a man!] art the same, and thy years fail not. And to which of the angels said he at any time, [as he hath said to this mere man,] Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

Such, if we believe Dr. Priestley, is the doctrine of the apostle in the very beginning of this epistle—an epistle written manifestly with a design either to bring over the Jews, those great advocates for the unity of God, and the purity of Divine worship, to the Christian religion, or to preserve those that were brought over. Even here, and to this people, averse above all others from the very appearance of idolatry, does he hold forth, according to the doctor, a mere creature, yea, a mere man, as the object of religious worship even to angels; nay, and what is, if not more impious, yet more absurd and ridiculous, proclaims this mere creature, this mere man, to be the Maker, Upholder, and Lord of the universe. Surely a man must do greater violence to his understanding to entertain error, than to admit the truth.

But to proceed. The apostle goes on in exactly the same strain of irrational argument, as distant from common sense as from piety: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip: for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by [a mere man! whom I term] *the Lord*, and was confirmed unto us by those [other mere men] that heard him!" Again, ver. 5: "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak, [as he hath to that mere man whom we call the Son!] We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, [not that he ever was higher, being only a mere man!] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, [though a mere man,] by the grace of God, should taste death for every man;" his single and temporal life, though he was of no higher nature or origin than others, being an adequate price for the redemption of the innumerable and eternal lives of all men! And, ver. 14: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself [a mere man!] likewise took part of the same:"

not that it was possible he should have had it in his choice, whether he would take part thereof or not, having had no existence till he was formed in the womb, and grew up in flesh! "That through death he [a mere man!] might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he [a mere man!] took not on him the nature of angels, [or did not take hold on and assume their nature into union with himself,] but he [the same mere man] took on him [that is, assumed into union with himself] the seed of Abraham, [viz. that particular seed born of Mary, and descended from the Patriarch Abraham: in other words, he, a mere man, became a mere man!] wherefore in all things it behooved him [a mere man, begotten by Joseph, and conceived and born of Mary] to be made like to his brethren, that he [the same mere man] might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself suffered, being tempted, he is able [though a mere man, and of consequence immensely removed from his followers, and entirely unacquainted with them] to succour them that are tempted!"

Now, what strange unintelligible jargon is this! How unworthy, I will not say of the tongue, or of the pen of an apostle Divinely inspired, but of a human creature endowed with common sense! How absurd, as well as false, was it to represent it as a much greater crime, and therefore as a behaviour that would meet with much more exemplary punishment to neglect the salvation revealed by a mere man, than to disobey the word spoken by glorious angels!—to speak of this mere man as made a little lower than the angels, (an expression which plainly implies that he was once higher,) in order that, by the grace of God, he might taste death to redeem every man!—as partaking of flesh and blood, because we were partakers thereof, a manner of speaking from which it is natural to infer that he had it in his choice whether he would partake of them or not, and that he acted voluntarily in so doing, and therefore that he pre-existed: to magnify it as an astonishing instance of his love, that he passed by the nature of angels, and laid hold on sinking men, assuming the human nature into union with himself, and condescending to be made in all things like unto his brethren; and to hold him forth to our view as being therefore able, not only to destroy the power of Satan, and to deliver mankind from his works, especially death and the fear of it, but also to sustain the office of a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, making reconciliation for the sins of the people, and succouring them that are tempted; an expression this which certainly implies his being perfectly acquainted with them, and ever at hand to help them, wherever they may be dispersed abroad over the face of the earth; which it is certainly inconceivable that any mere man should be! Methinks (I say) that, as these things, if understood of a mere man, must be false, so to suppose them is very ridiculous, and sufficient to discredit any pretences, not only to a supernatural *afflatus*, but even to ordinary reason and understanding.

Chapter iii, 3, we meet with a passage still more extraordinary, if considered in a similar point of view. "This person (says the apostle) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he that

buildeth the house hath more honour than the house : for every house is builded by some one ; but he [this mere man !] that built all things, is God : and Moses verily [one mere man] was faithful as a servant,—but Christ [another mere man !] as a Son over his own house, whose house [or family] we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end. For we are made partakers of [this mere man] Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”

Respecting this remarkable passage, I shall only say, that as certainly as the author of it compares Christ to Moses, and asserts his great superiority to the Jewish lawgiver, so certainly does he signify that that superiority consisted in two things : Moses was but a servant in the family of God, Christ a Son : Moses was the house itself, or rather only a part of it, but Christ was the builder of the house, yea, is the builder of all things—is God ! Now, is it possible, on the principles of common sense, to reconcile this doctrine of the apostle with the supposition of his viewing Christ, whom he thus magnifies, as a mere man ? Surely, if Christ be a mere man, he was and is God's servant, and a part of God's house as much as Moses.

Pass we on to the fourteenth verse of the fourth chapter, where we meet with another paragraph, which, on the principles of common sense, is almost equally irreconcilable with the same doctrine of Christ's mere humanity. The Socinian hypothesis requires us to understand it thus : “ Having therefore a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, [that is, a mere man !] let us hold fast our profession, for we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, [although it must be granted, that, being a mere man, he cannot be acquainted with them !] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need !”

Still more ridiculous, according to the same doctrine, is the apostle's language in the seventh chapter, where he discourses largely on one of the capital doctrines of Christianity, and holds forth the Lord Jesus as a “ High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” Comparing them together, he observes, verse first, “ This Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God ; first, being, by interpretation, king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace ; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God,” who, as Dr. Priestley teaches, is a mere man, and had both a father and a mother, and, at least, beginning of days, if not also end of life. “ For he testifieth, Thou [a mere man !] art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Therefore, this [mere man] because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood : wherefore [though a mere man !] he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and [though a mere man !] higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's : for this he did once when he offered up himself : for the law maketh men high priests, who have infirmity ;

but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son," viz. a mere man; who, according to Dr. Priestley, had infirmity also, and was weak and peccable like others; but nevertheless, it seems, "who is consecrated for evermore!"

Now here I would ask, on the supposition that the author of this epistle believed Jesus Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, to be a mere man, the proper son of Joseph and Mary, begotten, conceived, and born like other men; how came he to avail himself of the silence of the Old Testament, respecting the genealogy of Melchisedec, in the comparison which he draws between him and Christ? How came he to take notice of his being without any father; recorded in the Scripture, "without mother, without descent, and his having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," mentioned in the Divine oracles, as circumstances which rendered him a more complete type of the Son of God? Certainly, if the Son of God be a mere man, and the apostle had considered him as such, he must have seen that Melchisedec would have resembled him much more, had all these particulars been otherwise; I mean, if he had had a father and a mother spoken of in the Jewish Scriptures; and if the beginning of his days had also been recorded there. For it must be allowed, that a man that has human parents, and whose days have had a beginning, is, in these respects, a fitter type of a mere man conceived and born as all others are, than one who never had any progenitors, and whose days never began to be. And as it is probable that Melchisedec was a real man, and therefore that he had both a father and a mother, though that circumstance be not mentioned in the short account Moses has given us of him, certainly the apostle would have taken no notice of these particulars, much less would he have enlarged upon them, as he has done, had he viewed Jesus Christ in the light in which Dr. Priestley views him: as it is not to be conceived that any end could be answered by it, unless to mislead people, and make them believe that the Son of God, of whom this Melchisedec was an illustrious type, was not of this world, nor of any human origin.

I need make no remark upon divers other expressions in the passages quoted above: they speak for themselves, and make it evident that if the apostle believed Jesus Christ to be a mere man, he strangely forgot his creed, when he wrote these verses, and uttered things, to say the very least, very inconsistent with it. For let common sense judge. How can a mere man, whose presence is, and must be merely local, and who is immensely removed from our world, and confined in the third heaven; how can he, I say, be acquainted even with the persons, and much more with the infirmities of all his followers, nay, and of all mankind in every part of the habitable globe? And how can he be present with, and assisting every one that shall apply to him at whatever time or place; giving grace to help in time of need; directing, protecting, strengthening, and comforting all in general, and each individual in particular, as their wants and necessities require? I pass by many particulars, also, in the eighth chapter, in which the apostle's reasoning is very weak on the Socinian hypothesis. Indeed, there is hardly any solid argument in the whole epistle, (though generally considered as the most clear, argumentative, and convincing of all St. Paul's Epistles,) on the supposition that Jesus Christ, the grand subject of it, is no more than a man, weak,

and peccable like others. On this principle, what shall we make of his doctrine respecting the priesthood of Christ, as displayed at large in the ninth and tenth chapters? Here, methinks, he especially answers the character Dr. Priestley gives him, and stands forth as an inconclusive reasoner. If the doctor be right, he reasons as follows:—

Chap. ix, 11: “Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, [viz. the blood of a mere man!] he entered in once into the holy place, having [by that mean] obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, [the blood of one mere man!] who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God!”

Chap. x, 4: “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin. Wherefore when he [a mere man! who had no prior existence] cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; but a body hast thou prepared me. Then said I, [before I existed!] Lo! I come to [enter that body and] do thy will, O God! By the which will we are sanctified, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, [the body of one mere man,] ‘once for all:’ body, I say, but I do not mean by this that he hath any soul, any more than a superior or Divine nature. No, like other mere men, he was all body, wholly made of matter without spirit! “But he, [or *αυτος*, *this person*,] after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies [whether evil men, or evil angels,] be made his footstool, [viz. the footstool of a mere man!] For by one offering he [a mere man] hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified!” Verse 10: “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness [or liberty] to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, [the blood of a mere man!] by a new and living way which he [a mere man] hath consecrated for us: and having [the same mere man] a High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin [but that which we reject,] He that despised Moses’ law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot [one mere man, whom I term] the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace!”

I think no one will wonder that they who reject the whole doctrine of the divinity and atonement of Christ, together with the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, should consider the author of this epistle as writing without inspiration, and as reasoning very inconclusively. But what will they say to that passage in the eleventh chapter, where the apostle informs us that Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ (that is, the reproach of a mere man, who had no existence till about two thousand years after that time, that he esteemed this reproach, I say) greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?

Chap. xii : The apostle exhorts us to "look to this [mere man] Jesus," and terms him [though a mere man] "the author and finisher of our faith;" and tells us, "he is set down on the right hand of the throne of God:" and, verse 25, bids us see that we refuse him not, for, adds he, "if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, [the mere man, Moses,] much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him, who [though he] speaketh from heaven, [is however but another mere man!] whose voice then [viz. two thousand years before he had any being!] shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but heaven also!" This mere man, chap. xiii, 8, "Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" for, though a mere man, he is immutable! and, verse 12, "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, he suffered without the gate: let us go forth, therefore, unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach, and by him [mere man as he is!] let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually: that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, [who, though but a mere man, is however] the great Shepherd of the sheep, [omniscient to know, and omnipresent to oversee and protect them all!] through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, [the same mere man,] to whom [mere man as he is] be glory for ever and ever! Amen!" I hope, reverend sir, if Dr. Priestley deem this to be good sense, and sound doctrine, he will have no objection to join with the apostle in this doxology, and add his hearty amen to St. Paul's, ascribing glory to this mere man for ever and ever! I am, reverend sir, yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

REV. SIR,—However difficult a task Dr. Priestley may find it to reconcile the epistles of St. Paul with common sense, on the supposition of that apostle's holding the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, I am persuaded he will find it equally difficult to reconcile therewith the epistles of the other apostles, supposing them also to have been of the same opinion. In proof of this, I shall lay before you a few passages, extracted from their writings also, referring you to the original epistles for farther satisfaction. St. James, it is true, speaks but little of Christ; but nevertheless, what he does speak shows, either that he was not a Unitarian in the doctor's sense of the word, or that he had little regard to common sense in writing his epistle. He not only styles himself a servant of God, but also of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, as the doctor will have it, of a mere man! And the next time he mentions his name, which is in the beginning of the second chapter, he assures us he is the "Lord of glory;" that is, on the doctor's hypothesis, a mere man is the Lord of glory! "Be patient, brethren, (says he, chap. v, 7,) unto the coming of the Lord; [that is, the coming of a mere man!] stablish your hearts: the coming of the Lord [the same mere man] draweth nigh. And grudge not one against another, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge [a mere man] standeth at the door"

St. Peter furnishes us with many more examples than St. James, either of the erroneousess of the Socinian doctrine, or of his own absurdity. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, [that is, says Dr. Priestley, an apostle of a mere man!] to the strangers,—elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," that is, the blood of a mere man! Here St. Peter speaks like a Trinitarian. He both names the three that bear record in heaven, and attributes unto each his proper office and work in the economy of our redemption. He ascribes our election to God the Father, who, in his Divine foreknowledge, marks from the beginning who will accept of salvation in the only way in which it can be accepted, the way of repentance and faith, and elects or chooses such for his children. He imputes our redemption to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whose body, offered up upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin, makes atonement, and the sprinkling of whose blood gives at once peace with God, and peace of conscience to the truly penitent and believing soul. And he attributes our sanctification to the Holy Spirit, whose heavenly influence upon the mind both breaks the power, and purges away the defilement of sin, at the same time that he inspires us with love, joy, and peace, with holiness and happiness, and gives us to know that his genuine fruit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

The second of these persons, against whom Dr. Priestley seems to have a peculiar enmity, and who, he thinks, is far too much exalted, when "advanced to the high rank of the first and principal emanation of the Deity, the *vous* or *λογος* of the Platonists, and the *δημιουργος*, under God, in making the world,"—as being, he believes, a mere man: this person, I say, even Jesus, the Son of God, is represented by St. Peter, a few verses after, as the great object of the faith and love of the saints, and the source of unspeakable joy to them. "Whom having not seen, ye love, (ver. 8,) in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." And is HE a mere man whom they thus love, though they have not seen him, and in whom they "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?" Is HE a mere man whose Spirit, as the apostle observes in the following verses, "was in the ancient prophets," and spoke by them, and who hath "redeemed us, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for us?" Surely, if he be, St. Peter must have mistaken his character, and have viewed him in a very different light.

This appears still more manifest from the next chapter: "As newborn babes," says he, "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord [a mere man, shall I say?] is gracious." That he means Christ, is plain from the following words:—"To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ," that is, says Dr. Priestley, by a mere man! "Wherefore, also, it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that

believeth on him [that believeth on a mere man!] shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, that believe, he [this mere man] is precious; but unto them that be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same [mere man] is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to them who, disobeying the word, stumble." I ask again, Can it be supposed that St. Peter considered the person of whom he spake in these words, as being a mere man? The person whom he thus represents as the one foundation of the Church, and of every member thereof? To whom he applies the words of Isaiah, in the eighth chapter of his prophecy, manifestly meant of Jehovah? The Lord, whom true believers "taste to be gracious," to whom they come, as to a living stone, upon whom they are built up, and trusting in whom they shall never be confounded? I ask, farther: Is HE a mere man who, as we learn ver. 24, &c, "his own self bore our sins in his own body, on the tree, heals us by his stripes;" and undertakes to be the "Shepherd and Bishop of all our souls," many thousands and myriads as we are, dispersed over the whole world? Methinks he who will affirm this, may as well affirm St. Peter to be an idiot, or beside himself.

But there is no end of the absurdity of supposing the New Testament writers to hold the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity. We have only to read a few verses farther, and we are informed of this mere man preaching in the days of Noah, by his Spirit, to those who, indeed, are now in prison, but were formerly disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited for the repentance of the old world. And, a verse or two after, are assured that he "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him," that is, subject to a mere man! and, chap. v, 11, find the apostle ascribing to him "praise and dominion for ever and ever," confirming his doxology by a solemn and hearty Amen!

The second Epistle of St. Peter is exactly of a piece with the first. It also contains divers passages utterly irreconcilable with common sense, on the supposition that the author of it believed the Lord Jesus Christ to be a mere man. The following, which I shall barely quote and interpret, according to the Socinian hypothesis, leaving it to the reader to make his observations upon them, seem very remarkable:—"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ," that is, of a mere man; "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" that is, of the infinite Jehovah, and a mere man! or rather, according to the Greek, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, however, is a mere man! "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, [self-existent, independent, supreme, and eternal,] and of Jesus our Lord," a weak, peccable, and mortal man!

For, ver. 16, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of [this mere man] our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty," (*μεγαλειότητος*), the majesty of a mere man! For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, "This [mere man!] is my beloved Son, in whom [though he be

weak and peccable] I am well pleased. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount."

Let the reader observe the following prediction. How applicable to the doctrine we oppose! Chap. ii: "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Would not one suppose that the apostle was describing the present times here? For, ver. 20: "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, [that is, the knowledge of a mere man!] they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

Chapter iii: "This second epistle, beloved, I write unto you, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, [that is, the apostles of a mere man!] knowing that there shall come, in the last days, scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" that is, the coming of a mere man. "But the Lord [viz. the same mere man!] is not slack concerning his promise, [to fulfil it,] but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord [that is, the day of a mere man!] will come, as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise. Nevertheless we, according to promise, [the promise of the same mere man!] look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him [that is, found of a mere man!] in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the long suffering of our Lord [viz. the long suffering of a mere man!] is salvation. And grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, [that is, in the knowledge of a mere man!] To him, [that is, to a mere man!] be glory, both now and for ever!"

Methinks, reverend sir, were there no other arguments to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ is more than a mere man, these doxologies are sufficient to evince it. For if it be not idolatry to ascribe glory to a mere man or mere creature, I confess I know not what is. Leaving you to adore with me the wisdom and goodness of God, in furnishing us with so many and such incontestable proofs of the falsity of a doctrine, which, of all others, is the most inimical to our peace and our best interests, in time and in eternity, I remain, reverend sir, yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

REV. SIR,—We come now to the Epistles of St. John. I think Dr. Priestley has not pronounced him to be an "inconclusive reasoner." But if, as he supposes, that apostle considered our Lord as a mere man, he is certainly as much entitled to that character as St. Paul himself.

He begins his first epistle, by terming the Lord Jesus the "word of life," the "life," and the "eternal life," appellations which certainly but ill agree with the character of a *mere man*. He informs us that he was "with the Father from the beginning," though it was only in these latter ages that he was "manifested" in the flesh to us, and assures us, notwithstanding he was now returned to the Father from whom he came, and was no longer visible among his disciples as formerly, yet that they had still fellowship with him as well as with the infinite and eternal Father. "That which was from the beginning," says he, "which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life: for the life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us: that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Now, is it of a mere man that all this is spoken? Is a mere man the word of life, the life, the eternal life? Was a mere man with the Father before his manifestation in the flesh? Yea, from the beginning? Can a mere man, while with God, in the third heaven, be nevertheless present with men on earth, so that his true followers may have union and communion with him? And can the blood of a mere man, as he affirms, verse 7, "cleanse from all sin?" Or can a mere man be a "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world?" Chap. ii, 2. Surely, to suppose these things is most ridiculous.

In the following verses he repeatedly calls the commandments of God his [Christ's] commandments, and the word of God his word; and, verse 12, assures the children of God, that their sins are forgiven for "his name's sake;" that is, as Dr. Priestley will have it, for the name's sake of a mere man! And, verse 22, associating him with the eternal Father, he testifies that "he is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son: [that is, according to the doctor's hypothesis, that denieth the eternal God and a mere man!] Whosoever," proceeds he, "denieth the Son, [denieth a mere man!] the same hath not the Father. If that which ye have heard from the beginning remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and the Father, [that is, in a mere man, and in the eternal God!] These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you. And now, little children, abide in him, [the same mere man!] that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him [a mere man!] at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him;" viz. of a mere man!

It appears from the last words, that, according to St. John, on the Socinian principles, a mere man is the author of our regeneration! We are born of the spirit of a mere man! An extraordinary doctrine indeed! And yet not more extraordinary than the doctrine taught us by the same apostle, in the following chapter, concerning Christ's being "manifested to take away our sins," and to "destroy the works of the devil;" a doctrine which never can be reconciled with the notion of Christ's mere humanity, on the principles of common sense. For as the expression, "He was manifested," plainly implies that he existed before such manifesta-

tion, so the declaration of the end for which he was manifested bespeaks him more, I will not say, than a mere man, but more than a mere creature. For how can a mere man, or mere creature, take away our sins, or destroy the devil's works?

But let us pass on to the famous passage, in which this apostle professedly characterizes the "spirit of truth," and the spirit of error, and let us see how it reads, if understood according to the Socinian doctrine. Chapter iv, 1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world: hereby know we the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ [the same mere man!] is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ [that is, that a mere man!] is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already it is in the world." Now, what a strange and uncouth phraseology is this, which, on the doctor's principles, the apostle uses! Whoever, speaking of the birth of a mere man, said he came in the flesh? Certainly, such a form of expression is unexampled in any author, ancient or modern, sacred or profane. The reason is plain: a mere man must come in the flesh, if he come at all: he cannot come, or be born into the world otherwise. It is therefore unnecessary, and indeed ridiculous to mention that circumstance. It is just as if one were to say, "A man came clothed with skin, or with a head upon his body."

But to use such a phraseology concerning a being that might come otherwise, concerning an angel, for instance, or a departed spirit, would be at least good sense. To say that Gabriel came in the flesh, or that Elijah, or Moses rose again, and came in the flesh, however the assertion might offend our faith by its falsehood, it would not shock our common sense by its absurdity: it would be only like saying, A man came clothed in scarlet, which was a circumstance that might properly be mentioned, as he might have come clothed in raiment of another colour. Just so the apostle's relating and solemnly testifying that Christ came in the flesh, as it was a fact true in itself, so it was very necessary it should be mentioned, it being very possible, nay, and likely, that he should come otherwise, even without flesh, in the Spirit, in his spiritual and Divine nature, as indeed he had come from the beginning; whether to the patriarchs, in the early ages of the world, or to his Church in the wilderness, and to his prophets in after times.

But, says the doctor, (*History of Corruptions*, p. 142,) "This doctrine has staggered many, when they reflect coolly upon the subject, to think that so exalted a Being as this, an unique in the creation, [an only one,] a Being, next in dignity and intelligence to God himself, [he should rather say, one with God,] possessed of powers absolutely incomprehensible by us, should inhabit this particular spot of the universe, in preference to any other in the whole extent of, perhaps, boundless creation." It is worthy of observation, here, that the very doctrine which staggers the doctor and his friends, and seems so perfectly incredible to them, is the grand subject of all St. John's writings, and furnishes him (as it does the other apostles) with matter for the highest admiration and praise! "In this, says he, chap. iv, 9, was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten [an unique in the

creation,' *an only one*, as Dr. Priestley terms him] into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins! Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world!"

Though, as the doctor expresses it, (*ibid.*) "he existed before all creatures, yea, from eternity, by an eternal derivation from his eternal Father," though "he was the immediate Maker of the world, and of all things visible and invisible, and appeared in a Divine character to the patriarchs and prophets;" yet, that he was born of the Virgin Mary, and made man, is a doctrine which is now and has been in every age, since Christianity was first established in the world, the grand foundation, as well as object of the faith of the people of God, the source of their love, and matter of their wonder and praise. That the *Logos*, the *Wisdom*, and *Word*, "which was in the beginning with God and was God; that Wisdom and Word, by which all things were made, hath been made flesh, and hath dwelt among us," while men beheld his glory, the glory of the "only begotten of the Father," full of grace and truth: that when he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich: that when in the form of God, and," as the apostle declares, "equal with God," as being his very Word and Wisdom, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: that, when he was "found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself still farther, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:" this great mystery of godliness, while it hath filled them with wonder and amazement, at the condescension and love of this Divine and adorable Saviour, hath convinced them that, mean and worthless as they are, when compared with creatures of a more exalted rank, they are, however, not overlooked by their Maker, amidst the immensity of his nobler works: on the contrary, they see that they stand high in his esteem, and are the objects of his peculiar love and tender compassions.

What God may, or may not have done, for other creatures, in other worlds, they know not, and therefore pretend not to say; but they do not think their ignorance in this point can justify their disbelieving a fact sufficiently authenticated, and in consequence thereof, their ungratefully rejecting what, they have good proof, God, in infinite goodness, hath done for themselves, though they may not be able to assign a reason for his preferring of them to others, should there be a preference in the case. They consider that other beings, existing in other worlds, either may not have fallen as they had done, and, therefore, may not have needed to be visited in a similar manner by a Divine Redeemer; or, if they have, that some circumstances in their case might render their defection more inexcusable, and that therefore the Divine wisdom might not see fit to afford them the help he hath afforded man, formed out of the dust of the earth, weak and frail, even in his best estate, and seduced by the subtlety and fraud of his more powerful and crafty adversary.

Be this as it will, their firm belief of a mystery they cannot fathom, that "God has been manifest in the flesh;" that "to them a child has been born, to them a son has been given, whose name is Wonderful,

Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God with us ;” their conviction of this, I say, while it lays a foundation for the most absolute confidence in, and entire dependence upon their God and Saviour for whatever they want for time and eternity, binds their hearts to him, as by a thousand ties, and becomes a most powerful and perpetual obligation to love and obedience. This “love of Christ constraineth them, while they thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they who live, [viz. who live through his death,] should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again.” In the meantime, that the “Father sent the Son, his living Word and Wisdom, to be the Saviour of the world ;” that “he so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” is matter of equal praise, and equally excites their admiration, and provokes their gratitude. And while with St. Paul they render thanks unto God for his unspeakable gift, they see every reason to conclude, with the same inspired apostle, that “he who hath not withheld his own Son, but hath freely delivered him up unto death for us all, will, with him also, freely give us all things !” Thus the doctrine of the incarnation of the Divine Word, though a subject of cavil to the reasoning pride of vain and all-assuming philosophy, is a firm ground of confidence, and perpetual source of consolation to the humble and devout follower of Jesus, the little child, to whom it hath pleased our heavenly Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, to reveal those things, which he hath hid from the wise and prudent !

But, says the doctor, (ibid.) “It cannot but be thought a little extraordinary, that there should be no trace of the apostles having ever regarded their Master in this high light. For, being Jews, they would certainly consider him, at first, as a man, like themselves, since no Jew ever expected any other for their Messiah. Indeed, it can never be thought that Peter and others would have made so free with our Lord, as they sometimes did, if they had considered him as their Maker.” In answer to this, I would observe, what sort of a Messiah the Jews expected may be gathered, not only from the Scriptures of the prophets, which gave birth to that expectation, but from the ancient Chaldee, or Jewish paraphrase on those Scriptures, which expresses their faith, at the very time when the Messiah was expected. Not to refer to any other passage, their comment on Isaiah ix, 6, is sufficient to put this matter beyond dispute, and is as follows :—“The prophet saith to the house of David, that a child is born to us, a son is given to us, and he hath taken the law upon himself, that he might keep it ; and his name shall be called God, before the face (or from the face) of the admirable counsel ; the man that abideth for ever ; the Messiah, whose peace shall be multiplied upon us in his days.”

As to the apostles, whether there be “any trace of their having ever regarded their Master in this high light,” the present quotations from their writings show. And as to St. Peter, in particular, once a Jew, and no doubt well acquainted with the notions of his countrymen, respecting the person and office of the Messiah, he hath spoken for himself already. In what light he might view his Master, when he first became his disciple, I will not say ; but that he considered him as more than a man,

when he wrote his epistles, is evident from the many passages we have quoted from them, which, if understood of a mere man, appear to be absolute nonsense.

The same must be said of the epistles of the other apostles. Many passages in them all, as these letters demonstrate, are truly nonsensical, if interpreted of a mere man; and these, not a few detached and unconnected sentences, but whole paragraphs and sections, yea, entire chapters, the principal doctrine of which is most irrational, as well as the argumentation perfectly inconclusive, on the Socinian hypothesis. For instance, what makes a greater figure in the writings of St. John, or is more frequently mentioned or expatiated upon, than the doctrine of the great love of God, manifested in his sending "his Son into the world that we might live through him?" But, if what he advances upon this subject be understood of a mere man, how unworthy is it, I will not say of the inspiration of an apostle, but of the reason and common sense of a man! We need not go far to seek examples of this. I appeal to the passage last quoted. Only suppose it to be spoken of a mere man, and how insipid and unmeaning! nay, how absurd and ridiculous does it appear! "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent [a mere man whom I term] his only begotten Son into the world, [not that we are to suppose he had any existence prior to his being sent,] that we might live through him: [that is, through his teaching and example!] Herein is love! not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent [a mere man called] his Son, to be the propitiation for our sins," that is, (says the doctor,) to die a martyr to confirm his doctrine! Beloved, if God so loved us, [and sent a mere man among us to teach us his will!] we ought also to love one another. We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son, [I mean that the eternal God sent a mere man!] to be the Saviour of the world." One mere man to save the whole human race!

The doctrine of the next chapter is yet more irrational, if more can be. Thus, verse 5: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus [a mere man!] is [by adoption] the Son of God? This is he [the mere man] that came by water and blood, even Jesus; not by water only [in which he was baptized, an emblem of his own parity, and our regeneration,] but by water and blood: [atoning blood, the blood of one mere man, shed for the sins of millions!] and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; [that is, on the Socinian principles, the Self-existent Jehovah, a mere man, and the power of God!] and these three are one! [the eternal God, his power, and a mere man are one!] This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, [is in a mere man!] He that hath the Son, [that hath this mere man dwelling in him! see 2 Cor. xiii. 5,] hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, [that hath not this mere man, dwelling in him!] hath not life." Ver. 20: "We know that the Son of God is come, [that is, that a mere man hath been raised up to instruct us,] and [though a mere man!] hath given us an understanding to know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, in or by his Son Jesus Christ, [a mere man.] He [the mere man I speak of] is the true God and eternal life. [But though I give

these high titles to a mere man, yet, let me add,] little children, keep yourselves from idols!" A necessary caution indeed! but very absurd in this connection.

The second epistle he inscribes to the elect lady, (or, as some rather think it should be rendered, to the elect Kuria, making *Kuria* a proper name,) and, like St. Paul, he prays for grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, on the Unitarian hypothesis, from the supreme God, and a mere man! "Many deceivers, (says he, ver. 7,) are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh:" I speak of that mere man, born in Bethlehem, who, having had no pre-existence, must come in the flesh, or not at all. "This is a deceiver and antichrist. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, [the doctrine of a mere man!] hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son, [both the eternal God, and a mere man!] If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds!" How far this caution concerns the abettors of the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, the reader must judge.

The short Epistle of Jude is of a piece with the epistles of the other apostles. It is also written without *common sense*, as certainly without *inspiration*, on the supposition that he believed Jesus Christ to be a mere man. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, [that is, the servant of a mere man,] to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in [the same mere man] Jesus Christ, and called. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ: [that is, denying the infinite Jehovah, and a mere man!] Verse 14: Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord [that is, a mere man!] cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all. But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, [viz. the apostles of a mere man!] ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the mercy of a mere man!] unto eternal life." Praying, reverend sir, that this mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which St. Jude mentions, may be extended to Dr. Priestley also, although he takes such pains to persuade himself and others that it is but the mercy of a mere man; and that whatever strange and unscriptural speculations he may amuse himself and others withal, he may not live and die without the experimental and practical acquaintance with the trinity, spoken of in these words. I remain, reverend sir, yours, &c.

LETTER X.

REV. SIR,—In the foregoing letters I have reviewed all the epistles of the New Testament, and have selected most of the texts in which the Lord Jesus is spoken of; and, methinks, every reasonable man must

allow they are all absurd, and the greatest part of them even profane, on supposition that he is a mere man. The same observation may be extended to the other books of the New Testament. They also contain sundry passages which, to say the least, are very ridiculous; and manifest, either that the authors of them were not Unitarians, in the Socinian sense of the word, or that they were wanting in *common sense*. In many of these passages, our Lord Jesus Christ himself speaks, either while on earth, or after his ascension into heaven. So that, if Dr. Priestley's doctrine be true, it appears that the Lord Jesus Christ himself (I speak it with reverence) was as much wanting in common sense, as any of his apostles; and his doctrine, like theirs, is absurd and impious. Permit me, reverend sir, before I conclude, to give you, in one or two letters more, a few instances of the truth and propriety of this remark. But as I have already enlarged so much, they shall be very few in comparison with what might be produced; and shall be chiefly taken from the Gospel of St. John, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ, communicated to him. In the latter book, we meet with the following passages among others:—

“John, to the seven Churches which are in Asia. Grace be unto you, and peace, from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, [viz. from the eternal God,] and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne, [viz. the Holy Ghost, whose operations are manifold] and from Jesus Christ, [a mere man!] who is the faithful Witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth! Unto him [the mere man!] that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father, to him [mere man as he is!] be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen! Behold, he [a mere man!] cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him! even so! Amen! Verse 9: I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, [the kingdom and patience of a mere man!] was in the isle of Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, [the testimony of a mere man!] I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, [the day of the same mere man!] and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I [a mere man!] am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last! And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like the Son of man; his head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters: and he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength. And when I saw him, [though he be a mere man!] I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I [a mere man!] am the First and the Last! I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen! and have the keys of death and of hell!” I do not wonder that Dr. Priestley doubts the authenticity of the Apocalypse.

Proceed we to chap. v, 5: “One of the elders said unto me, Weep

not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, [who, however, is but a mere man, and did not exist till many hundred years after David's death!] hath prevailed to open the book and loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven eyes and seven horns, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth: [for though a mere man, to him belong the seven Spirits of God!] and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book; the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood; [the blood of a mere man!] out of every kindred, and tongue; and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. And I heard the voice of many angels, round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is [the mere man!] the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing: and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, [viz. to the eternal God,] and to the Lamb, [a mere man!] for ever and ever! And the four living creatures said, Amen! And the four-and-twenty elders fell down, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever!" What will the disciples of Socinus say to this? Surely, if Christ be a mere man, idolatry is committed, even in heaven!

And as the Father and the Son are associated in claiming and receiving Divine worship from the saints, whether men or angels, so also in taking vengeance on sinners. Thus, chap. vi, 16: "They said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; [that is, the wrath of a mere man!] for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" who shall be able to bear the wrath of a mere man?

Equally remarkable is the following passage:—"After this, I beheld, (chap. vii, 9,) and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, [viz. of Jehovah,] and before the Lamb, [that is, before a mere man,] clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," a mere man! Here again, according to Dr. Priestley, a mere man is worshipped, and salvation is ascribed to him, as well as to the infinite Jehovah! And, verse 13, the saints that have come out of great tribulation are said to have washed their robes, and made them white in his blood! "Therefore, (it is added,) are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb, [a mere man, says the doctor!] who is in the midst

of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to fountains of living water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." So that, if the doctor be right, a mere man, in conjunction with the supreme God, is the author of their everlasting felicity. And, chap. xi, 15, the kingdoms of this world are represented as "become his kingdoms," and he is said to reign for ever and ever, being, chap. xvii, 14, "Lord of lords, and King of kings!"

Chapter xix, 11, we meet with a description of this reigning King; a description which but ill agrees with the character of a mere man. "His name (we are assured) is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns; and he hath a name written, that no man knoweth but himself. And he is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God! And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God. And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords."

In the twentieth chapter is displayed "a great white throne, and he [a mere man, shall we say?] that sits on it; from whose face the earth and the heaven flee away, and there is found no place for them: and the dead, small and great, stand before God, [Dr. Priestley says, before a mere man!] and the books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works." Here the mere man appears to be the universal Judge, and they that stand before him are said to stand before God! And in the next chapter, the same person is represented as the bridegroom of the Church, which has its Maker, that is, on the Socinian hypothesis, a mere man, for its husband! "And he carried me away in the Spirit, to a great high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty, and [a mere man!] the Lamb, are the temple of it; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God [the infinite Jehovah] did lighten it; and the Lamb [a mere man!] is the light thereof." As if one were to say, The sun and a candle are the light of the world! "And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it," viz. in the light issuing from Jehovah, and a mere man! "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life," that is, the book of life of a mere man!

And as Jehovah and a mere man are the joint sources of light, so of life and consolation also. For, chap. xxii, 1: "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, [that is, the throne of Jehovah, and a mere man!] And, ver. 3: There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God [the Supreme Being] and of the Lamb [a mere man!] shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [that is, the grace of a mere man] be with you all! Amen."

Such is the doctrine of St. John in the Apocalypse; a doctrine which,

on the Socinian principles, can never be reconciled with common sense. As little will any one be able to reconcile therewith the doctrine concerning Christ, taught in his Gospel. This book, according to Jerome, (*lib. de Scriptoribus Eccles.*) was written after the epistles, and the Apocalypse, at the request of the bishops of Asia, "against Cerinthus, and other heretics, and chiefly against the then spreading doctrine of the Ebionites, who asserted that Christ had no existence before Mary: for which reason (he tells us) he was constrained to speak plainly of his Divine generation." That this account is true, we have every reason to believe, not only from the known veracity of Jerome, but also from the nature of the testimony, borne throughout this Gospel concerning Christ; a testimony which, if supposed to be meant of a mere man, is certainly, to say the least, not intelligible. The following quotations make this manifest:—"In the beginning was the Word, [viz. a mere man!] and the Word [this mere man!] was with God, and the Word [the same mere man] was God. All things were made by him, [even the whole creation, though it had been made at least four thousand years before he existed!] and without him [the same mere man] was not any thing made that was made. In him [viz. in this mere man!] was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. John [a mere man] was not that light, but came to bear witness of that light: that [mere man, Christ] was the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world!" A strange assertion truly! "He [this mere man] was in the world, and the world was made by him, [was made by a mere man!] and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not: but as many as received him, to them gave he [mere man as he was!] power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe in his name. And the Word [a mere man!] was made flesh, [I wish Dr. Priestley would tell us what he was before he was made flesh,] and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, [that is, the glory of a mere man!] full of grace and truth: [a mere man full of grace and truth!] and of his fulness [the fulness of a mere man!] have all we received grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, [a mere man,] but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," a mere man also!

I need proceed no farther with the testimony of St. John. This remarkable passage, placed in the front of his Gospel, like the preamble to an act of parliament, manifestly shows the design of the whole book, and is a key to all those discourses of our Lord, and of John the Baptist, recorded by this apostle, in which Jesus is represented as the Son, "and the only begotten Son of God," and is declared to have pre-existed, and to have come down from heaven. It proves, to a demonstration, that St. John considered Christ as being the Son of God, in a sense in which no other being, man or angel, is his son; and that he looked upon him as pre-existing, not as a creature, but as the creating *Logos* or *Word* of the Father, who, in union with the Father, is the Creator and Lord of all creatures, visible and invisible. And as he produces the testimony of John the Baptist, and of Christ, in confirmation of his own testimony, it cannot be doubted but he understood them in the same light; and methinks in the same light every one must understand them who believes

them to have been possessed of common sense, and impartially considers their testimony. Only let the following passages be attended to without prejudice, and while the absurdity of applying them to a mere man is noticed, let it be observed also how clearly they describe, and how exactly they characterize that proper and only begotten Son of the Father, who is his Wisdom and Word incarnate, and the Creator and Lord of men and angels.

John bare witness of him, and cried: "This [mere man, shall we say?] was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he [though a mere man, and born after me] was before me!" This is the record of John: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, [that is, the way of a mere man!] as said the Prophet Esaias: I baptize you with water; but there standeth one [mere man] among you, whom ye know not: he it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose. The next day John seeth Jesus coming, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, [that is, behold a mere man!] who taketh away the sins of the world. [For, though a mere man, he taketh away, or makes atonement for the sins of all men!] This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is preferred before me, for [though a mere man!] he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he [a mere man] should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he [viz. the mere man!] that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God," that is, says Dr. Priestley, a mere man!

Again, chap. iii, 28: "I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him. He [the mere man] that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He [the mere man!] that cometh from above, [though a mere man,] is above all. He that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He [the same mere man] that cometh from heaven is above all." Will Dr. Priestley tell us how it could be said Christ came from heaven, any more than John the Baptist, on his principles? "The Father (addeth he) loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. He that believeth on the Son [that is, on a mere man!] hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son [viz. this mere man] shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The other evangelists agree with St. John, respecting the testimony of the Baptist. Thus, Matt. iii, 11: "I indeed baptize you with water, unto repentance; but he [a mere man, as say the disciples of Socinus] that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he [though a mere man!] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Such is the testimony, which, according to the evangelists, John the Baptist bore of Christ: a testimony which they must have judged to be

of deep importance, and therefore have recorded it with great care, as being a full and perfect confirmation of the views they entertained themselves, and laboured to give others, of Jesus of Nazareth. But, methinks, every reasonable and unprejudiced man must allow, that it is a testimony which, if supposed to be borne of a mere man, is most ridiculous; nay, and absolutely false. For if Jesus Christ be a mere man, of no higher origin than John, inasmuch as he was born some months after him, it is not true that he was before him; much less is it true, that whereas John was from beneath, he was from above; and that whereas John was of the earth, he was from heaven. According to Dr. Priestley's hypothesis, they were equally from beneath, equally from the earth; and however Christ might be preferred before John, yet the reason of that preference could not be that which John assigns, viz. that Christ was before him, for in reality he was before Christ. As to the rest of his testimony, I make no remark upon it. It is obvious to the most inattentive observer, that it is impossible it should agree with a mere man, who, how much soever he might be honoured or exalted, could never, with any propriety, be said to be ABOVE ALL, to HAVE ALL THINGS DELIVERED INTO HIS HANDS, or to be the bridegroom of the Church, the owner and possessor of the bride; by believing in whom she obtained everlasting life; and much less could he be able to "baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," to separate, with infinite discernment, between the precious and the vile, and "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

I should now proceed to the testimony borne by Christ himself; but having already drawn this letter out to a sufficient length, I break off here, and subscribe myself, Rev. sir, yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

REV. SIR,—According to the testimony of the evangelists, when Jesus was transfigured on the holy mount, there came a voice from the excellent glory, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." In obedience to the Divine command, let us now attend, while this beloved Son of the Father bears record of himself, that we may learn from his own lips to form a right judgment of his person, made the subject of so much dispute and altercation. Dr. Priestley is fully persuaded that he is a mere man. In order that we may be able to determine whether the doctor's opinion be according to truth, let us bring it to the surest of all tests, the test of the doctrine taught by Christ himself. The doctor (I think) will not deny that he is the AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS. Of consequence an opinion which cannot bear the test of his doctrine is not of God. Let us see, therefore, whether the testimony which he bears of himself be consistent with common sense, on the Socinian principles.

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art [a mere man? no! Thou

art] the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel! Jesus answered, and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up: he spake of the temple of his body." And is he who spake this a mere man? Can a mere man raise his own body from death? especially if, according to Dr. Priestley, he have no soul, but the whole of him be dead and insensible?

Again, chapter iii: "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he [the mere man! says Dr. Priestley] that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who [though a mere man and now upon earth] is in heaven! For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, [that is, if we believe the Socinians, a mere man, of no higher origin than others,] that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son [a mere man] into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him [that is, through one mere man] might be saved. He that believeth on him [a mere man] is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." I make no reflections on these solemn declarations of our Lord. Every reader must consider them as being both false and absurd, on the supposition of his being a mere man. Again, chapter iv: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, [that is, according to Dr. Priestley, thou wouldst have prayed to a mere man!] and he [a mere man though he be] would have given thee living water." And who that reads these words, can doubt whether Jesus Christ encouraged prayer to be addressed to him? Again: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I [a mere man!] shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto life eternal." Here again, if Jesus Christ be a mere man, he manifestly encourages idolatry. This he does also, chapter vii, 37: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive."

But what shall we say to the following words? In what light do they appear, if they be considered as proceeding out of the mouth of a mere man? Chapter v, 17: "My Father [the eternal God] worketh hitherto, and I [a mere man!] work." Verse 19: "Verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for whatsoever things he [the infinite Jehovah] doth, these also doeth the Son [a mere man!] likewise. For the Father [the eternal God] loveth the Son, [a mere man!] and showeth him [though but a man] all things that himself doeth; and will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son [a mere man!] quickeneth whom he will. For the Father [the great God] judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, [a mere man!] that all men should honour the Son, [that is, should honour a mere man!] even as they honour [the infinite Jehovah, viz.] the Father! He that honoureth not the Son, [this mere man!] honoureth not the Father who sent him! Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the

voice of the Son of God, [viz. the voice of a mere man!] and they that hear shall live. For as the Father [the everlasting Jehovah] hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son [that is, to a mere man!] to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man;" that is, because he, a mere man, is a mere man! A strange reason truly. Our Lord goes on: "Marvel not at this, the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, [the voice, says Dr. Priestley, of a mere man!] and shall come forth."

Methinks every reasonable man that considers this extraordinary passage, must allow, that if the Lord Jesus be a mere man, (I speak it with reverence,) he never can be acquitted of the crime which the Jews laid to his charge, (chap. x, 33,) I mean the heinous crime of blasphemy. Are these expressions fit to be used by a mere man? or by any mere creature, however exalted? Put them into the mouth of Gabriel, and try how they sound. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Whatsoever things God doth, these doth Gabriel likewise. As God raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so Gabriel quickeneth whom he will. God hath committed all judgment unto Gabriel, that all men should honour Gabriel, even as they honour God. He that honoureth not Gabriel, honoureth not God. The dead shall hear the voice of Gabriel, and live. All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Is not this language blasphemous, even from the mouth of the holy Angel Gabriel, who stands before God, and it seems is one of the highest order? If even he, or the Archangel Michael used it, would they not deserve, and would they not meet with the condemnation of the devil? And let it not be said, that the angels have no right to use this language, because they have not been exalted to the authority and power to which the Son of man is exalted. For if God will not give his glory to another, as he hath sworn he will not, it is certain no mere creature can be so exalted as to have a right to use such language, which would manifestly be to equal himself (as the Jews said) with God.

And then it is not here only that our Lord expresses himself in this manner. He is frequently speaking to the same purpose. Thus, ver. 39: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and it is they that testify of me; and ye will not come to me [that is, according to Dr. Priestley, ye will not come to a mere man!] that ye might have life." Again, chap. vi, 32: "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is he [the mere man, if we believe the doctor and Socinus, born of Joseph and Mary] who cometh down from heaven, [that is, that cometh from a place where he had never been!] and giveth life unto the world. I [a mere man!] am the bread of life; he that cometh to me [mere man as I am!] shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, [a mere man!] and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out: for I [a mere man] came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I [a mere man!] will raise him up at the last day.

“The Jews then murmured at him, [as methinks Dr. Priestley and the Socinians must necessarily do,] because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven; and they said, [in language similar to that of Dr. Priestley,] Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it that he [a mere man] saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus, therefore, answered, [it would be well if the abettors of the Socinian doctrine would weigh the answer,] Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come unto me except the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life: I am the bread of life. Ver. 50: This is the bread that came down from heaven; that a man may eat thereof and not die. I [a mere man, born of Joseph and Mary] am the living bread which came down from heaven: if a 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.” The whole of this discourse is absurd and impious, on the Socinian principles.

Again, ver. 53: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I [a mere man] will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh [mere man though I be] is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, [a mere man!] and I [a mere man!] dwell in him. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.” Certainly if our Lord be no more than a man, he must have intended to mislead his hearers. He adds: “Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” Now, if he be a mere man, who had no existence till born in Bethlehem, he asserts a falsehood here. He had never been in heaven before. As also, chap. viii, 19, 23: “If ye had known me [a mere man] ye would have known my Father also! Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world!” Are these the words of the faithful and true Witness? Are they the words of soberness and truth? Are these that follow? “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God. 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.” How distant from common sense, as well as piety, is language like this, proceeding from the mouth of a mere man!

Chapter tenth furnishes us with many examples of a similar kind. “I [a mere man!] am the door of the sheep: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. I [the same mere man] am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. [I say again, though a mere man,] ver. 14, I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, [a mere man,] so I [a mere man] know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And other sheep have I, which are not of this fold, them also I [a mere man] must bring in, and they shall hear my voice, [the voice of a mere man,] and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I [a mere man] may take it again; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I [a mere man!] have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Ver. 27: "My sheep hear my voice, and I [a mere man!] know them, and they follow me, and [though a mere man] I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father that gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand; I and my Father [that is, if we believe Dr. Priestley, a mere man and the eternal God] are one!" Well might the Jews accuse him of blasphemy. Surely, if he be a mere man, he cannot be acquitted of that dreadful crime. For he speaks as though the almighty power of the Father were his own, to be used by him at his pleasure, for the protection of his sheep. Again, ver. 37: "If I [a mere man!] do not the works of the Father, believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."

And, methinks, his words to Martha appear very inconsistent with truth, if considered as proceeding from the lips of a mere man: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live." Divers passages, also, in the two next chapters, if understood as spoken by a mere man, seem equally ridiculous, as chap. xii, 26: "If a man serve me, [a mere man!] let him follow me. Yet a little while (ver. 35) is the light [viz. a mere man!] with you: while you have the light, believe in the light. Ver. 45: He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me:" that is, on the doctor's principles, he that seeth a mere man, seeth the eternal God! "I [a mere man!] am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. Chap. xiii, 3: Jesus, [that is, a mere man,] knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he [though a mere man, who had no existence till born in Bethlehem!] was come from God, and went to God," &c.

But more especially the discourses recorded in the three following chapters are worthy of our attention in this view. According to the Socinian doctrine, the Lord Jesus addresses his disciples in the following and such like language, just before his departure from them: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, [the Supreme Being,] believe also in me, [a mere man!] Verse 6: I [a mere man] am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; [that is, if ye had known a mere man, ye would have known the supreme and everlasting God!] and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, [a mere man] Philip? He that hath seen me, [that hath seen a mere man!] hath seen the Father! Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Verse 15: If ye love me, keep my commandments; [the commandments of a mere man!] I

will not leave you comfortless, I [a mere man!] will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but you see me; because I [a mere man] live, ye shall live also! He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father: and I [a mere man] will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me, he will keep my words, [the words of a mere man!] and my Father will love him, and we [that is, both the omnipresent God, and I, a mere man, N.B.] will come unto him, and make our abode with him!" Will Dr. Priestley inform us how a mere man can come to, and make his abode with thousands and myriads at the same time? Verse 28: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I;" that is, on the Socinian hypothesis, the eternal God is greater than a mere man! A wonderful discovery truly.

He proceeds, chapter xv: "I [a mere man] am the true vine, [into which all believers, in all parts of the world, of every nation and age, are ingrafted,] my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away. Abide in me [that is, abide in a mere man] and I [the same mere man!] in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, [from which it derives its very being, and to which it is wholly indebted for all its life, growth, and fruitfulness,] no more can ye, except ye abide in me, a mere man, whose offspring ye are, and on whom ye are dependent, not only for grace, but for life, and breath, and all things!" Col. i, 16, 17. "He that abideth in me [a mere man!] and I [the same mere man] in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me [that is, without a mere man!] ye can do nothing." Strange doctrine, indeed! What! can we do nothing with the help of God, without the help of this mere man? "If any man," proceeds he, "abide not in me, [the same mere man, even though he may suppose that he abides in the Father,] he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. If ye abide in me, [a mere man!] and my words [the words of a mere man!] abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you." Verse 23: "He that hateth me, [a mere man,] hateth my Father also," the supreme and eternal God.

Pass we on to chapter xvi, 7: "If I [a mere man] go not away, the Comforter will not come: but if I depart, [though I am a mere man!] I will send him unto you. He shall glorify me, [shall glorify a mere man!] for he shall receive of mine, [that is, of the things of a mere man!] and shall show unto you. All things that the Father [the infinite and supreme God] hath are mine; [they all belong to me, though I am a mere man!] therefore said I, He shall take of mine, and show it unto you. Verse 27: The Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me, [a mere man,] and have believed that I came forth from God." N.B. "I [a mere man, shall we say? Surely, if we say so, we must give the lie to the faithful and true Witness;] came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." That the Lord Jesus spoke, and meant to be understood literally, is certain, from what follows: his disciples said unto him, "Lo now speakest thou plainly: now are we sure that thou knowest all things: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God!" That is, according to Dr. Priestley's system, we believe a lie!

How extraordinary is this whole discourse of our Lord, according to

the Socinian doctrine! How remote from every principle of reason and religion, that we are acquainted with! But, what is worst of all, this doctrine makes the Son of God utter this nonsense, nay, I may say, this impiety and blasphemy to his Father, in the most solemn exercise of devotion. Thus, chapter xvii, 1: "Father, glorify thy Son, [that is, glorify a mere man!] that thy Son may glorify thee. O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory I [a mere man, born but about thirty years ago] had with thee before the world was! They [my disciples] have known assuredly that I came out from thee, [though I had no existence till I was born in Bethlehem,] and have believed that thou didst send me. Verse 10: All mine are thine, and [though I am a mere man!] thine are mine, and I [the same mere man!] am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world;" me, who, being a mere man! had no existence till a few years ago!

Such is the testimony, which, according to St. John, the Son of God bore of himself, while upon earth, in his most solemn discourses to the Jews, whom he laboured to bring to repentance, over whom he wept, and whom he died to redeem; and to his own disciples, whom he was thus preparing to go forth and instruct all nations, and whom, in this way, he was arming for persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom; and in his most devout and fervent prayers addressed to his Father, just before his crucifixion: a testimony which, I will venture to say, neither Dr. Priestley, nor any of the Socinians upon earth, will ever be able to reconcile, with the doctrine of our Lord's mere humanity, on the principles of common sense. As little will they be able to reconcile therewith the testimony which the other evangelists record him to have borne. Two or three passages only I shall produce, as a specimen of the rest. Thus, Matt. xi, 27-30: "All things are delivered unto me [that is, if we believe the Socinians, unto a mere man] of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son [that is, knoweth a mere man!] but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, [the same mere man!] and he, to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him. Come unto me [that is, come unto a mere man!] all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I [a mere man!] will give you rest! Take my yoke upon you, [the yoke of a mere man!] and learn of me: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Upon this rock will I [a mere man!] build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. For where two or three are met together in my name, I [a mere man!] am there in the midst of them. [For, though a mere man, I am omnipresent!] All power is given unto me [that is, given unto a mere man!] in heaven and on earth: go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, [the true, living, and eternal God,] and of the Son, [a mere man!] and of the Holy Ghost; [the power of God!] teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I [a mere man!] have commanded you: and, lo! I [a mere man!] am with you always, even unto the end of the world." For, I say again, though a mere man, I am omnipresent, and can and will be with you, be you ever so many thou-

sands and myriads, at all times and in all places! An extraordinary promise, indeed, to proceed from the lips of a mere man!

Once more, and I have done. We have reviewed the testimony borne by Christ, while upon earth, in the days of his humiliation, and have found it inconsistent with common sense, on the principles of Unitarianism. Let us now attend to the testimony borne by him, since his ascension into heaven. This, I am persuaded, we shall find equally, if not more irreconcilable therewith, on the same principles.

Rev. ii, 1: "These things saith he [the mere man!] that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: [being always present with, and among his people, though a mere man!] I [a mere man!] know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear those that are evil: nevertheless, I [a mere man!] have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent: or else I [a mere man! confined in heaven, till the restitution of all things!] will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place. To him that overcometh will I [though a mere man!] give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God! Ver. 8: Unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna, write:—These things saith the First and the Last, [that is, says Dr. Priestley, a mere man!] who was dead and is alive; I know thy works, and thy tribulation, and thy poverty. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: but be thou faithful unto death, and I [a mere man!] will give thee a crown of life. Verse 12: To the angel of the Church of Pergamos: These things saith he [the mere man!] who hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works—but I have a few things against thee. Repent, or else I [the same mere man!] will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. To him that overcometh will I [a mere man!] give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. Verse 18: Unto the angel of the Church of Thyatira write:—These things saith the Son of God, [whom the Socinians think a mere man, but] who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass; I [a mere man!] know thy works, and the last to be more than the first: notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, that thou permittest that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants: and I [a mere man!] gave her space to repent, and she repented not. Behold, I [the same mere man!] will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into tribulation. And I will kill her children with death: and all the Churches shall know that I [a mere man!] am he that searcheth the reins and the heart! And I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you, I say, and the rest at Thyatira, I [a mere man!] will put upon you no other burden, but that which you have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh and keepeth my word to the end, will I [a mere man!] give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and I will give him the morning star. Chapter iii, 1: Unto the angel of the Church of Sardis write:—These things saith he [the mere man!] that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I [the same mere man!] know thy

works. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, for I have not found thy works perfect before God. If thou wilt not watch, I [a mere man!] will come unto thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come unto thee. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I [a mere man!] will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. Verse 7: To the angel of the Church in Philadelphia:—These things saith [a mere man? No! but] he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the keys of David! he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth: I know thy works: behold, I [a mere man!] have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name: [the word and name of a mere man!] Behold, I [a mere man as I am!] will make them of the synagogue of Satan to come and worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also [though but a man!] will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly! Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Verse 14: To the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans:—These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning [*αρχη*, the *principle, origin, head, and governor*] of the creation of God, I [a mere man!] know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: so then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. I counsel thee to buy of me [that is, of a mere man!] gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. As many as I love, I [a mere man!] rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I [a mere man!] stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, [for I am present at the door of all hearts!] I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I [though but a man!] grant to sit down with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with the Father on his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith [that is, what Christ saith by his Spirit] unto the Churches,” and let him consider whether they are the words of a mere man! And that he may not pass a matter of such moment over slightly, let him turn to the last chapter of this book, and reflect upon the solemn and awful testimony borne by the same person, verse 7: “Behold, I come quickly: Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” Verse 12: “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward [shall we say the reward of a mere man?] is with me, to give every one according as his work shall be. I [though viewed by some as a mere man!] am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” And let me assure you, “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches.” And if you still be ignorant who I am, and therefore be in danger of not paying a due regard to my testimony, let me inform you farther, that I am both God and man, both the Son of God, and son of man: let me affirm, that “I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” And that you may not only give credit to what I say, but lay it to your heart with the serious-

ness which its importance demands, I, the same person that testify these things, add, "Surely, I come quickly." Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus, and give the opposers of thy divinity to know that thou art more than a mere man! Not doubting, reverend sir, but you will join with me, and the Church universal, in this important petition, and hoping that the time approaches when the Son of God will appear for himself, and show the universe who and what he is, I here put a period to this little work, and subscribe myself your obedient servant in the same Christ Jesus,

JOSEPH BENSON.

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