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THE
DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY
VINDICATED,

AND THE

Authorized Version of the Scriptures
DEFENDED,
IN A LETTER

TO

THE REV. ROBERT WALLACE,
Minister of a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Chesterfield;

OCCASIONED BY HIS

"PLAIN STATEMENT AND SCRIPTURAL DEFENCE OF

The leading Doctrines of Unitarianism," &c.

BY

THE REV. THOMAS HILL, M. A.

Vicar of Elmton, Derbyshire.

"I like not that arrogant theology, which presumes to explore what *angels desire to look into*; and which, failing in its attempt, rejects as absurd, what it is not able to understand."

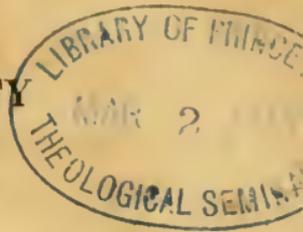
BISHOP WATSON'S CHARGE, in 1795.

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1820.



A Letter

TO THE

REV. ROBERT WALLACE,

SIR,

IT is not without much reluctance that I am induced to offer to the public the following Remarks upon your late publication; a reluctance, I trust, in no degree arising from want of zeal in the defence of Scriptural Truth, but solely from the consciousness of my inability to do justice to so great a cause. I can scarcely hope, indeed, that any production of mine will be read beyond the neighbourhood in which I reside. Since however my name is, in that neighbourhood, associated with Institutions essentially involving the principles which you discard, and is enrolled among the Ministers of an Establishment preeminently characterized by the doctrines which you impugn; it will not, I trust, be deemed inconsistent with the most unfeigned regret that the task has been undertaken by no abler advocate,

if I humbly offer a defence of the mode of faith which I profess. Having avowed my attachment to those Societies, which have for their objects the distribution of the Scriptures, both with and without the formularies of the Church, and the education of the poor in the principles of our established religion; it is not perhaps unnatural that I should endeavour to repel the attack which you have made upon every fundamental article of the Christian Faith; that I should vindicate the authority of that venerated version, through the medium of which the dictates of Inspiration have, from earliest infancy, been conveyed to our minds; that I should offer to the rising generation some antidote to the seductive influence of opinions, flattering indeed to the pride of human reason, and maintained with no small plausibility of argument, but involving, as I sincerely believe, the most pernicious errors, and entailing the most awful consequences on all who embrace them. And having solemnly promised, at my ordination, to “be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to Gods word,”* from that Church, which “acknowledges the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine majesty worships the Unity;”† can I better fulfil my engagement than by contributing my humble

* *Ordination of Priests.*

† *Collect for Trinity Sunday.*

share of ability towards the defence and elucidation of that mysterious, but most Scriptural doctrine?

Far be it from me to discourage a spirit of liberal enquiry. “Naturally enough attached to the principles in which I was educated,” I am not, I trust, “a bigot or a slave to them.” No sooner shall it be proved that they are *contrary* to Reason and to Scripture, than I will renounce them as cordially as I now believe them to be true. But I do not think it “rational” to reject a doctrine merely because it *exceeds* my comprehension; nor does it accord with my notion of “candour” to load with reproach and suspicion a part of the sacred volume, confessedly authorized by every version and every manuscript extant, merely because it militates against a favourite and preconceived theory.

You complain,* but I think without reason, that Unitarians are treated by their opponents with unjust severity; that their “names are cast out as evil;” that, “together with the primitive disciples of their Lord, they are a sect every where spoken against.” Could I believe that they really bear this character of genuine Christianity, I should think more favourably of the

* *Statement*, pp. 5, 6.

principles by which they are distinguished. But it is a character, to which Reason, Experience, and Scripture, oblige me to deny their pretensions. It is a character preeminently affixed to those who maintain, with an earnestness proportioned to their vast importance, those very doctrines which you exclude from your system. It was "*Christ crucified*," which was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" and it is the same doctrine, which, to the end of time, will offend the pride and provoke the enmity of man. On the contrary, so congenial to his natural propensities are "the peculiarities of" *religious* "opinion by which Unitarians are distinguished;" so pleasing to his ear are their encomiums on the dignity of his nature, and on the merit and sufficiency of his obedience; that *those* peculiarities cannot, in the nature of things, expose them to reproach and persecution. Whether the odium under which they lie, if indeed it exists at all, has arisen from any other cause, particularly from their avowed hostility to all national establishments,* is a question, which it would be foreign to my present purpose to agitate.

* That I may not be accused of adding to "the various *misrepresentations* to which the character and opinions of Unitarians, have been exposed," I beg to subjoin some extracts from the writings of Dr. Priestley, an author, whom, I believe, they universally admire and venerate. "We are, as it were, laying gunpowder, grain by grain, under the old building of error and

You exult however in the declaration, that your “moral conduct is still above suspicion,” that your “moral principles have never been obscured by the shadow of an insinuation.”* Rather a bold assertion! But what would it prove, even were its truth indisputable? Would it au-

superstition, which a single spark may hereafter inflame, so as to produce an instantaneous explosion.” *Importance of free Enquiry*, p. 40. What Dr. P. means by the *old building of error and superstition*, the context sufficiently explains. On the impossibility of supporting the ecclesiastical constitution, if once a great majority of the people can be made hostile to it; and on “the power of small changes in the political state of things, to overturn the best compacted establishments,” he likewise enlarges with much earnestness and force: *ibid.* pp. 39, 41, 44. The fittest seasons and best opportunities, for *silently* working out the great effects which he here professes to hold in view, this writer had before communicated to his fellow labourer, Mr. Lindsey, in the dedication of his *History of Corruptions*, pp. vi. vii. “While the attention of men in power is engrossed by the difficulties that more immediately press upon them, the endeavours of the friends of reformation, in points of doctrine, pass with *less notice*, and operate *without obstruction*.” Times of public danger and difficulty are thus pointed out, as best suited to lay that train, which was finally to explode with the ruin of the establishment. And indeed, at an early period of life, he had even ventured to promise himself a more rapid accomplishment of the great object of his wishes. Speaking of the establishment, and those abuses which he ascribes to the principles of the hierarchy, he does not scruple to predict that, in “some general convulsion of the State, some bold hand, secretly impelled by a vengeful providence, shall sweep down the whole together.” *View of the Principles and Conduct of the Protestant Dissenters*, p. 12.

* *Statement*, p. 6.

thorize the conclusion that your religious creed is correct?—None ever questioned the morality of Socrates: but Socrates lived and died in the belief of a plurality of Gods. The morality of Mr. Hume has been loudly celebrated: but Mr. Hume railed at religion almost in the agonies of Death.

You have favoured us with an account,* which I will suppose to be strictly correct, of the various classes of Unitarians. The minute points of difference, however, on which they separate from each other, appear to me but of small importance in the argument. If Christ be less than God, it matters little, in my judgment, whether he was a mere man, or had an existence before all worlds. It is clear that all Unitarians are agreed in denying, what it is the object of the following pages to establish, the supreme divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as well as the personal existence and divine nature of the Holy Ghost.

Before I enter upon the discussion, I have only to offer my fervent prayer, that the undertaking may be blessed with the assistance and direction of Almighty God.

* Page 7—11.

Remarks on the "Scriptural Proof that there is only one God."

Since the doctrine of the divine Unity forms as essential a part of the Trinitarian's creed as of your own; I should have had little to remark on your Statement of that Doctrine, had you not asserted that, in respect of the support which it derives from the general tenour of Scripture language, "it differs essentially from that of the Trinity, which," you add, "is not expressly taught in a single passage of Scripture, if we except 1 John v. 7., upon which the writings of Porson and Marsh have stamped the decisive character of forgery;"* and had you not, by implication at least, maintained † that the two doctrines are directly repugnant to each other.

How will you prove this repugnancy? You are aware that the Apostle speaks ‡ of *body, soul,* and *spirit*, as constituting the same individual man. If, then, a man may be *three* in one respect, and *one* in another; do we know so much of God as to assert that it is *impossible* that something similar, but far superior, and more entire both in the distinction and in the unity, should

* p. 11.

† p. 13.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 23.

take place in his incomprehensible nature? We do not say that the Deity is three and one in the same sense; nor do we pretend to explain or comprehend *how* God subsists in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but we humbly believe his Testimony concerning himself, and adore his incomprehensible Majesty.

I am not indeed prepared to say, with Mr. Wardlaw, that “every Text, which affirms the Unity of God, involves an *affirmation* of the Trinity:”§ but this at least I am bold to assert, that every such Text is perfectly *consistent* with it. Take, for an example, the very first of those passages which you have adduced in order to prove that “the Deity is strictly and numerically one.” “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” Deut. vi. 4. The original words are, JEHOVAH our ELOHIM is one JEHOVAH. Now, Sir, it is well known to every Hebrew Scholar that ELOHIM is a *plural* noun. *As such*, it is in Scripture applied to the *false gods* of the Heathen. Applied therefore in this *emphatical* manner to the *true* God also, it must be considered as remarkably consistent with the doctrine of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. Indeed, as this mode of expression is adopted in the second Commandment, and in other passages directly pointed

§ *Statement*, p. 13.

against polytheism and idolatry, it seems to have been *particularly selected* in order to show that no plurality in the true God infringed the Unity.

You say, however, that, if we except 1 John v. 7., the doctrine of the Trinity is “not expressly taught in a single passage of Scripture.” Lest so essential an article of our creed should seem to need the support of a disputed text, I will resign the passage in St. John’s Epistle; although it is thought by Bishop Horsley, and other learned men, that the doubts respecting its authenticity are the result of “an over-suttle criticism.” The other passages, by which this doctrine is fairly established, although perhaps not expressly asserted,* are neither few nor equivocal. To some of the most important of these I will now beg your attention.

When our Lord was baptized, the Father, by a voice from Heaven, declared him to be his beloved Son, and publicly sealed his appointment to the mediatorial office, on which he then solemnly entered: and the Holy Spirit descend-

* If our expressions convey the doctrine of Scripture, with as much perspicuity and precision as human language generally admits of; it is mere trifling to object to them, because they are not found in the Bible; for *truths* not *words* constitute the matter of Revelation, and *words* are only the vehicles of *truths* to our minds.

ing visibly, under the emblematic representation of a Dove, lighted upon him; as through him to be communicated to all his true disciples. Thus the three Persons in the sacred Trinity evidently acted according to the parts sustained by them in the great work of man's salvation.†

But the form of Christian Baptism is far more conclusive: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."‡ By the rite of Baptism men were required to renounce their false gods, and to acknowledge the God of the Bible; from whence the inference is unavoidable, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are that only and true God. Besides, they were thus to dedicate themselves to him, and enter into covenant with him: and this is to be done in the same manner, and therefore in the same sense, to one as to the other of these three Persons. Nothing less therefore can be implied than a profession of worshipping, believing in, and serving Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The next passage is the Apostolical benediction: "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."§ This is clearly, if any

† Matt. iii. 16, 17.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 19.

§ 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

thing can be, an act of adoration, by which the Divinity of each is confessed. We are therefore taught to pray to the Son and Spirit equally with the Father, and to maintain the same dependence upon them for the peculiar grace and favour, which in their respective offices they bestow.

These passages have led me to the cordial reception of the Trinitarian Doctrine, my notion of which I beg leave here to state, as it will be perceived to influence my interpretation of many Texts, which you adduce in support of your opinions:

The Sacred Three have perfect union with each other, inasmuch as they are three distinct coequal Persons, each of whom possesses the same undivided essence. The God-man Christ Jesus has perfect union with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as he is the same in person with the second coequal, coeternal, and co-essential Person of the Godhead. The Father doeth the works of the God-man in him, not personally, but by the Holy Ghost. Neither is it the Father, essentially considered, who works the works of Christ by the Holy Ghost, but the Father considered in his covenant office, as the depositary of the will of the sacred and coequal three.

Remarks on the "Scriptural Proof that the Father only is the true God."

Having established the doctrine of the divine Unity, a doctrine which every Trinitarian most cordially receives, you enumerate the following passages, which, in your judgment, "confine the Godhead solely and exclusively to the Person of the Father."† "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth." John iv. 23, 24. "And this is Life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. i. 3. "Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we by him." 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.‡ One God and Father of all, who is above

† *Statement* p. 15.

‡ The comment of *Jerome* upon this passage is as follows: "Si enim, ut existimant Ariani, Deus pater solus est Deus, eadem consequentiâ, solus erit Dominus Jesus Christus, et nec Pater erit Dominus, nec filius Deus; sed absit, ut non sit, vel in Dominatione Deitas, vel in Deitate Dominatio. Unus est Dominus, et unus est Deus; quia patris et filii dominatio, una Divinitas est." *Hieron. Comment. in Ephes.* iv. 5.

all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. iv. 6.
 "For there is one God, and one Mediator between
 God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Why may not "God" or "the Father" in all these passages express a Person, who represents the simple and absolute divine Essence; whilst "the Lord" or "Lord Jesus Christ" represents a Person, who, whilst he is coequal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the Unity of the divine Essence, possesses also a nature which he holds in strict union with his divine nature; the combination of which two natures constitutes a Person, essentially inferior, who also bears relations which form another and distinct ground of inferiority?



Remarks on the "Scriptural Proof of the Simple Humanity of Jesus Christ, and of his inferiority to the Father."

It is a common, but not a very honourable artifice, in controversial warfare, by giving a partial statement of an adversary's opinion, to make it appear inconsistent both with Scripture and with itself. Thus, in the preceding discussion, your reasoning might lead an inexperienced reader to conclude that a believer in the Trinitarian Doctrine necessarily rejected that of the Di-

vine Unity. An instance of similar unfairness will appear in the Chapter on which we are now entering. From the pains which you take to establish the proper humanity of Christ, a Truth in which every Trinitarian entirely concurs, might it not be inferred that those, who maintain his Divinity, so maintain it, as to exclude the possibility of his possessing a human, in combination with his divine nature? In proving that Christ was man, you only prove that, which your adversaries fully admit. The point at issue between us is, whether the proofs, which establish his humanity, infringe his true and proper Deity; whether, while he is on some grounds and in some senses inferior, he is not, at the same time, equal to the Father. But let us proceed to the examination of those passages, from which you infer "the simple humanity of Christ."*

"There came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him saying, Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal Life? And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." Mark x. 17, 18.

A young Ruler, evidently ignorant of the character of Jesus, addressed him by a title, which,

* *Statement*, p. 16.

under such misapprehension, was improper; a title, too, which the Jewish Rabbies are said to have affected, and which, on that ground also, was likely to call forth our Lord's animadversion; "Why dost thou call me good, whom thou regardest only as a prophet sent from God, and dost not look upon to be any more than a mere man? Thou shouldest remember that none is perfectly good but one glorious and immutable Being, even the ever blessed and eternal God."†

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." John xiv. 28.

The essential nature of Christ, *as Christ*, contains inferiority; because Christ is GOD-MAN. The relation also in which he stands to the Father (since he that sent is greater than he that is sent,) furnishes another ground of inferiority.

"Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 23.

Christ is the ordinance of God, for his glory; and in one view his property, doing his will and work.

† Doddridge.

“ I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ ; and the head of the woman is the man ; and the head of Christ is God.”
1 Cor. xi. 3.

Christ issues from God, and refers himself to God.

Your next appeal is “ to other passages where Jesus is styled *the Servant of GOD*, and where his wisdom and power are said to have been derived from the Father”* “ Behold my servant, whom I have chosen ; my beloved, in whom my Soul is well pleased.” Matt. xii. 18.—“ When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” John vii. 26.—“ For I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak : And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.” John xii. 49, 50.—“ Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out

* *Statement*, p. 17.

from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." John xvii. 7, 8.—“ The Son can do nothing of himself.” John v. 19.—“ I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” v. 30—“ The works which the Father hath given me to finish, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.” v. 36.

All which the Lord Jesus Christ did and spoke, he did and spoke in fulfilment of the provisions of an everlasting Covenant, which is referred to the will of the Father personally, as its source. By the ordinances of that Covenant, He took the inferior relation, becoming the *Servant*, and the *Sent* of another, even the Father; and doing all he did, and speaking all he spoke, by a power not his own personally, but belonging to the Holy Ghost personally: which power He received as a gift from the Father; that power of the Holy Ghost, which he received and exercised, being traced up to the Father's will, as the source of the gift. Hence he is said to have *spoken* what the Father *taught* Him, and what the Father *said* to him: of himself to be able to do nothing; and to work the works which the Father *gave* him to finish, and *enabled* him to finish: it being always to be considered, that this submission and subser-
vency to the Father does not imply any essential

inferiority, either in Him, or in the Holy Ghost, to the Father; but an inferiority, which is the result of Covenant transactions, in which they are, severally, equal covenanting Parties; and of which the ultimate end is the manifestation of that same one divine Essence (in which they are co-eternal together, and co-equal,) in the Person of the Father.

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

The Empire sustained by the GOD-MAN is an empire of time: when time shall be no more, then, although Christ will for ever continue to be God-man, the empire will be carried on, not in *his* Person, but by *the Father*, as the representative of the sacred Trinity; no longer by God in human nature, but by God absolutely.

You proceed to remark, that “passages equally apposite and decisive are adduced by the Unitarian as proofs of Christ’s humanity, in which he is said to have been *chosen, appointed, sanctified,*

inspired, anointed, given, and sent by God.”*
 “Behold my servant whom I have chosen.”
 Matt. xii. 18.—“Who was faithful to him that
 appointed him.” Heb. iii. 2. “Him whom the
 Father hath sanctified.” John x. 36.—“I will
 put my spirit upon him.” Matt. xii. 18.—“Thou
 hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;
 therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee
 with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Heb.
 i. 9. See also Acts x. 38. “God so loved the
 world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that
 whosoever believeth in him, should not perish,
 but have everlasting life.” John iii. 16.—“As
 thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I
 also sent them into the world.” John xvii. 18.

The preceding Statement furnishes the clue
 to the interpretation of all these passages. Christ
 is, according to the relations imposed upon, and
 received by him, in and through the Covenant,
 one *chosen*, one *appointed*, one *sanctified*, one who
receives the Spirit, one *anointed* with oil, one *sent*.

It is unnecessary that I should cite the passages
 from which you infer the true and proper huma-
 nity of Jesus Christ; † since the Trinitarian not
 only concurs in that inference, but regards it as

* *Statement* p. 18.

† *Statement* p. 19—21.

lying at the foundation of his dearest hopes. “*He took not on him the nature of Angels, and therefore saved none of them who, for want of a Redeemer, are reserved in everlasting chains and darkness unto the judgment of the great day. And Man once fallen had been, as deservedly, so irrevocably, condemned to the same condition, but that he took upon him the seed of Abraham. For since we are partakers of flesh and blood, we could expect no Redemption, but by him who likewise took part of the same. We could look for no Redeemer, but such a one, who by consanguinity was our brother. And since there is but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus, we cannot be assured that he was the Christ, or is our Jesus, except we be first assured that he was a man.—When therefore we see our Saviour truly suffer, we know his divine essence suffered not, and thence acknowledge the addition of his human nature, as the proper subject of his passion. And from hence we may infallibly conclude, Surely that Mediator between God and Man was truly Man, as we are men, who when he fasted was an hungry, when he travelled was thirsty and weary as we are; who being grieved wept, being in an agony sweat, being scourged bled, and being crucified died.*”*

* *Pearson on the Creed* pp. 179, 192.

In the last place you “infer the superiority of the Father from various passages, in which he is literally and emphatically styled the God of Jesus.”*

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Mat. xxvii. 46.—See also Mat. xv. 34. “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” John xx. 17.—“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.” 2 Cor. xi. 31.—See also Eph. i. 3. Col. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3.—“I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” Eph. i. 16, 17.

God is, by covenant, the God as well as the Father of the God-man Christ Jesus. From that Covenant he derives his origin and his essence, as *Christ*, whose *essential nature* is neither Godhead simply, nor Manhood simply, but *Godmanhood*; which is, (if I may be allowed the expres-

* *Statement*, pp. 21, 22.

sion) a creature-nature; and he who wears it is a Creature, (Coloss. i. 15. Revel. iii. 14,) and God is his God, even as he is the God of all creatures. The relation of *Father* is distinct from that of *God*; it is the peculiar relation, which He, who is the God of Christ, chooses and appoints to himself, that he will bear towards this peculiar creature Christ: and, *in him*, towards those to whom “he giveth power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe in his name.”*

If you have failed in your *Scriptural* proof of the simple humanity of Jesus Christ, I think you have been equally unfortunate, not to say disingenuous, in your citation of *human* authority. I can scarcely persuade myself to believe that you *intended* to represent Lord Bacon as a Disciple of the Unitarian School. Such however is the effect which might probably be produced by your extract from his writings, unless it were explained by the context, and illustrated by the general character of his Compositions. Having remarked that the concurrence of your adversary in the doctrine of Christ’s humanity “amounts in fact to nothing, since he maintains at the same time that Jesus was perfect God as well as perfect man,”† you attempt to expose the absurdity of the Creed by the following observations: “He (i. e. *the*

* John i. 12.

† *Statement* p. 22.

Adversary of the Unitarian) believes, as Lord Bacon with characteristic force and acuteness observes, three to be one, and one to be three; a Father not to be older than his Son, a Son to be equal with his Father," &c. From these words, which are extracted from a work entitled *Characteristics of a believing Christian, in Paradoxes and seeming Contradictions*, a reader unacquainted with Lord Bacon's opinions might infer, that it was his object to prove the Trinitarian Hypothesis to be false, by proving it to be absurd. With what fairness such a conclusion would be drawn, let the first of these characteristics (the second and third of which you have cited) determine.

1. "A Christian is one, who believes such things as his Reason cannot comprehend; hopes for things he never saw; and labours for what he knows he shall not obtain. Yet, in the issue, *his belief appears not to be false*; his hopes makes him not ashamed; his labor is not in vain."

2. "He (i. e. *the Christian*) believes three to be one," &c.

Lest the meaning of this celebrated writer should still be deemed equivocal, let it be illustrated by another passage, in which you must, I think, discover not only the "characteristic force and

acuteness" of the author, but the submission of a great and vigorous understanding to the most obscure and unintelligible dictates of divine Revelation. The prerogative of God extends over the whole man, and reaches both to his will and his reason ; so that man must absolutely renounce himself and submit to God: and therefore, as we are obliged to *obey the divine law*, though our will murmur against it ; so are we obliged to *believe the word of God*, though our reason be shocked at it. For if we should believe only such things as are agreeable to our *Reason*, we assent to the *matter*, and not to the *author*: which is no more than we do to a suspected witness. But the *faith imputed to Abraham for righteousness*, consisted in a particular, laughed at by Sarah ; who, in that respect, was an Image of the *natural Reason*. And therefore, *the more absurd and incredible any mystery is, the greater honour we do to God in believing it, and so much the more noble the victory of faith.*"†

The Rhapsody which occupies a part of your 23rd and 24th pages, as it contains no argument, requires no reply. I proceed therefore to notice your observations on the violence that is offered to our Reason by believing in the union of the

† *Bacon de augm. Scient. Sec. xxviii. § 2.*

divine and human natures in the person of Christ.†

Even if it were granted that the doctrine is as unreasonable as you desire to represent it, your argument would consist only in opposing *human* probability to the positive declarations of the *divine* word. But I scruple not to say, that, far from being contrary to reason, this doctrine is strictly consonant to it. And in reply to your enquiry, whether “our Salvation could not have been accomplished but by the condescension and humiliation of Deity itself; whether man could not have been reconciled to his Maker but by the Crucifixion and Death of the eternal Judge of all the Earth?”‡ I should say, that, although it might be presumptuous to assert, that the Almighty *could* have devised no other method of deliverance for his creatures, we have abundant cause to admire the fitness of that which he *has* appointed. Indeed it is a method which seems to be rendered necessary by the infinite holiness and justice of God, and the intrinsic evil and desert of sin. It would evidently be inconsistent with the glory of God’s attributes, that he should show mercy to the sinner, without at the same time exhibiting his justice in the punishment of

† *Statement*, p. 24.

‡ p. 25.

sin. How then shall sin be remitted? “Without shedding of blood,” says the Scripture, “is no remission.”* Who shall be the victim? No created Being, of whatever dignity or excellence, would suffice: because none could adequately exhibit the *infinite* justice and holiness of God. The Eternal Son of the Father therefore said, “Lo I come to do thy will, O God.”†

Again: “if satisfaction was to be made to divine justice for the sins of men by vicarious obedience and vicarious sufferings, in such a way (and in no other way it could be consistent with divine wisdom) as might attach the pardoned offender to God’s service upon a principle of love and gratitude; it was essential to this plan, that God himself should take a principal part in all that his Justice required to be done and suffered, to make room for his mercy; and the divine nature itself being incapable of suffering, it was necessary to the scheme of pardon, that the Godhead should condescend to unite to itself the nature capable.”

For suppose that some inferior Being, either a perfect man, or an incarnate angel, had been able to pay the forfeit for us: and “suppose that the forfeit had been paid by a person thus dis-

* Heb. ix. 22.

† Ps. xl. 7, 8. Heb. x. 7.

inct and separate from the Godhead ; What effect would have been produced, by a pardon so obtained, in the mind of a pardoned offender ? I say, no doubt, for an unexpected deliverance from impending vengeance,—love for the Person, man or angel, who had wrought the deliverance,—remorse, that his crimes had involved another's innocence in misery : but certainly no attachment to the service of the Sovereign. The Deliverer might have been loved : but the Being whose justice exacted the satisfaction would have remained the object of mere fear, unmixed with love, or rather of fear mixed with aversion. Pardon thus obtained never could have inflamed the repentant sinner's bosom with that love of God, which alone can qualify an intelligent Creature for the enjoyment of the Creator's presence. This could only be effected by the wonderful Scheme in which Mercy and Truth are made to kiss each other ; when the *same God*, who *in one person* exacts the punishment, *in another, himself* sustains it ; and thus makes *his own mercy* pay the satisfaction *to his own justice.*"*

“ This,” you say, “ may be the Christianity of Athanasius, of Calvin, and of numbers besides, whom *fashion* or *prejudice* has moulded into a

* *Horsley's Sermons*, Vol. I. pp. 167, 172.

conformity with their opinions.”* A noble specimen, truly, of Unitarian candour! Condescend, Sir, to believe that there are those, who, with opinions completely opposite to your own, can say, “We believe these things, not because others have believed them before us, but because we have been at the pains of examining the subject for ourselves.”†—“But, be assured,” you add, “it is not the Christianity of the new Testament.”‡ That it is not only the Christianity of the New Testament, but the doctrine of the whole Bible, I hope in my next chapter to demonstrate.

You profess yourself unable to discover, “if Christ were every thing which orthodoxy represents him, in what the efficacy of his example would-consist.”§ The difficulty arises from confounding the two natures of our Redeemer, which subsist, in strict union indeed, but in perfect distinctness from each other. Although God and man be one Christ; he is “one, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.”||

In support, however, of your opinion, you appeal to the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of the Father, which, you argue must be regarded

* *Statement*, p. 25. † p. 43. ‡ p. 25. § *ibid.*
 || *Athanasian Creed.*

as the reward of his piety and virtue ; since, on the supposition, that “ he was only exalted to a state of dignity which he had enjoyed before his appearance in the flesh, his followers would have derived from his example but little encouragement to a life of persevering holiness.”† You altogether mistake the ground of Christian encouragement. The Trinitarian does not look for his eternal glorification to the exactness of his own resemblance to the Lord Jesus Christ. Whilst he sees, in his Saviour’s perfect character and conduct, as a man, the prototype which he endeavours to fill up, though with a full consciousness that he shall ever come short of it, his *hopes* are founded upon the infinite value of his righteousness and sacrifice, as an infinite person, the co-equal of God the Father, and of God the Spirit.

There is this unfairness in your argument, that you graft Unitarian views upon Trinitarian principles. You reason, as an Unitarian, upon the efficacy of Christ’s example, and then endeavour to deduce an absurdity from the Trinitarian Hypothesis, as combined with Unitarian views. You take an Unitarian view of Christ’s example, on the supposition that he is what the Trinitarian believes him to be.

* *Statement*, p. 27.

Triumphing in the persuasion, that you have shown the general tenour of Scripture to be in direct opposition to the doctrines of Christ's proper Deity and Equality with the Father, you acknowledge that "the Gospel of John has by many been considered as an exception to this Statement."† To obviate, however, the impression, which such an acknowledgment might produce, you affirm that "the passages, which give most strength to this opinion are directly opposed to the general tenour of the Gospel, and the express assertions of our Lord himself."‡ The former part of this Statement I defy you to prove: to the latter I have replied in the former part of this chapter, where I showed that you took an erroneous view of the assertions made by our Lord in St. John's Gospel.

You remark, however, that "the Evangelist, in assigning his own motives for the composition of his Gospel, makes no allusion whatever to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity:" that "he professes, on the other hand, to have written it with a view to confirm the testimony of the other Evangelists, that he was a great prophet, sent to teach mankind the way of eternal life."§

This is *your* interpretation of John xx. 30, 31. "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the pre-

† *Statement* p. 28.

‡ *ibid.*

§ *ibid.*

sence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the CHRIST, *the SON of GOD*, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name."—Will you tell us what *Christ* means? Is not Christ that *complex Being*, GOD-MAN, to whose person it was essential that there should be a combination of the true and proper Godhead with the manhood? When, therefore, St. John calls him *the Christ*, the mystery of his person, and therefore his proper Godhead, is implied.—The expression, *Son of God*, may admit of some variety in its interpretation: it must be allowed sometimes to mean one *brought* into this relation to God by His holy will and appointment; and may be applied in this sense to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as that Person who was *constituted a Son* by the covenant transactions of past eternity. Nor would I rest the very and eternal Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ upon this single title, which, in common with *Son of man*, appears to have been a distinguishing title of the *Messiah*, or *Christ*.* There seems, however, a propriety in considering it as distinc-

* See Luke xxii. 69, 70., where it is evident that "Son of God," and "Son of Man," are interchangeable expressions. "Hereafter shall the *Son of Man* sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the *Son of God*? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am." Both ex-

tive of his Godhead, in that, according to the interpretation of the learned Bishop Horsley, it especially denotes that person of the sacred Trinity, who was to take the manhood into God; and is therefore indicative of his manhood rather than of his Godhead, though it *implies both*.

To your positive assertions, relating principally to the Gospel of St. John, I have little to reply, since they are totally unsupported by proof. It may be *your opinion*, though I know not on what authority that opinion is founded, that for the few incidents of our Saviour's life, which that Evangelist has recorded, we are indebted to "the fondness and partiality of friendship."* "By the rules of" *what you consider* "sound interpretation," it may be true that "he has recorded no fact," that "he has preserved no discourse," that "he has permitted no observation to escape him, from which it can be inferred, that the nature of Jesus was superior to that of man."† It may perhaps be correctly stated according to the "*improved version*" of

pressions, therefore, denoted *Christ*, v. 67. Who then is Christ? According to our Lord's own words (Matt. xxii. 43.) he must be David's Lord. But, "if David call him *Lord*, how is he *his Son*?" Here the union of the two natures in Christ is implied. If he were a mere man, David could not call him Lord.

* *Statement*, p. 29.

† p. 30.

St. John's Gospel, though it no where appears in the received translation, that "God called" Jesus "his *best* beloved Son," made him "the chosen representative of his will to mankind," and constituted him "his sole representative and vice-gerent upon earth."* It may be *your pre-conceived notion* that, if the Divinity of Christ were a Scriptural doctrine, "it would have been enforced in terms too obvious and unequivocal to admit of doubt."† In short the whole is resolvable into your undertaking to say how the sacred writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, should have expressed himself, if he had intended to convey certain truths; which truths *are* conveyed, according to all fairness of interpretation, though you deny that they are.

In conclusion, you venture to assure us that, if we will "employ the reason which God has given us, Revelation will then cease to be a mystery."‡ If we employ our reason, *in the Unitarian sense of that phrase*, that is, if we exclude from our creed whatever exceeds our comprehension, and reject as absurd, all that our Understandings cannot penetrate; it is certain that Revelation will *then* cease to be, what its author has declared it to be, "the *mystery* of his will,"§ the *hidden wisdom*,"|| "the wisdom of God in a *mystery*,"¶ "the great *mystery* of Godliness."**

* p. 30.

† *ibid.*

‡ p. 31.

§ Eph. i. 9.

|| 1 Cor. ii. 7.

¶ *ibid.*

** 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Scriptural Proof of the Divinity of Christ.

I had, I confess, expected to find in a Defence of Unitarianism some notice of those numerous arguments by which, in the judgment of a large majority of Christians, the contrary doctrine is established. This, however, seems to have formed no part of your plan. You dwell at great length on those passages, which appear to favour your own system, and then dispose of the rest of Scripture in one sweeping sentence, the whole of which I beg to transcribe. "Looking, then, at the general tenour of the Gospel history, as well as the history and writings of the Apostles, what do we find to countenance the doctrines of Christ's proper Deity and Equality with the Father? **NOTHING**, literally **NOTHING**, but a few false readings and mistranslations, with a passage here and there, which, by remote inferences and far fetched analogies, is made to speak a language favourable to these doctrines."*

In taking up this challenge, equal, I think, in boldness, to any that can be found in the annals of controversy, I have only to premise that, although I cannot consent to give up the "false

* *Statement*, p. 28.

readings and mistranslations" of the most distinguished critics and interpreters, for the "corrected text" and "improved version" of an anonymous committee of obscure Unitarians; yet *this* I will venture to promise, that, in my endeavour to establish on Scriptural grounds the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, I will have recourse neither to "remote inferences" nor "far fetched analogies;" my appeal being made exclusively to the literal construction and obvious meaning of the sacred writings.

I would begin with observing that a strong *presumptive* evidence of the Divinity of Christ arises from the appellation, by which he is distinguished as the *Son of God*: an appellation admitting, as I have already allowed, some variety of interpretation, but, in many passages, evidently distinctive of the true and proper Godhead of him, to whom it is applied. It was, as you are aware, given to him by the *Angel* who predicted his miraculous incarnation. It was confirmed, not only by a *voice from heaven*, but by the reluctant testimony of the *Spirits of darkness*. It was frequently assumed by *Christ himself*, and was construed by his *enemies* into a blasphemous usurpation of the honour that belongs to God only. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: *therefore* that holy thing which shall

he born of thee shall be called the *Son of God.*" Luke i. 35.—"This is *my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5.—"Devils came out of many, crying out and saying, 'Thou art Christ, the *Son of God.*'" Luke iv. 41.—"Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto and I work : therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because.....he had said that *God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*" John v. 17, 18.—"Jesus said unto him, Dost thou believe on the *Son of God?* He answered and said, Who is he Lord, that I should 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—38.

From the name, which carries with it the lowest degree of evidence, we proceed to the more positive testimonies of Scripture. And our attention is, in the first place, naturally directed to those passages, in which the *preexistence* of Christ, not as a created Being of the highest eminence, but as the Maker and Preserver of the Universe, is affirmed by himself and his Apostles. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made. And the Word was made*

flesh," &c. John i. 1, 2, 3, 14.—“ *I came down from heaven; I proceeded forth and came from God.--Before Abraham was, I am.*—No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that *came down* from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.—Ye are from beneath, I am *from above*. Ye are of this world, I am not of this world.—What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up *where he was before?*—*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world.* Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.—Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was.*” John iii. 13. vi. 38, 62. viii. 23, 42, 58. xvi. 28.—“ Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though *he was rich*, yet for your sakes *he became poor*, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” 2 Cor. viii. 9. —“ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God; thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation,* and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Phil. ii. 5—8.—“ By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or

* *εαυτον εκεινωσε*, literally, *he emptied himself*.

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." Col. i. 16, 17.

I will not affirm, because I cannot prove, that Christ appeared on earth previously to his incarnation. But, in illustration of the preceding remarks, I may be allowed to state it as the opinion of many learned men, that all the dispensations of God, relating to mankind, from the first dawn of revelation, have been uniformly carried on in the person of his Son; who has appeared under the several characters by which he is described in Scripture, as the circumstances of men required in the different ages of the world. Of the numerous arguments by which this opinion is supported, I will select a few of the most striking and satisfactory. *Jehovah* revealed himself to Moses under the awful and mysterious distinction, *I am that I am.** *Christ* assumed a similar appellation, when, claiming a priority of existence to Abraham, he said, "Before Abraham was, I AM."†—Again: when the Jews had murmured for want of water, *Jehovah* encouraged his servant with the following assurance, "Behold, I will stand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock; and there

* Exod. iii. 14

† John viii. 58.

shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”* St. Paul, in express allusion to that event, declares that “they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was *Christ*.”†—The same Apostle, to deter his Corinthian converts from the imitation of the disobedient Israelites, reminds them of the fiery serpents sent by *Jehovah* for the punishment of that ungrateful people: “Neither,” says he, “let us tempt *Christ*, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.”‡—The prophet Isaiah describes, in a sublime passage,§ the glory of *Jehovah*, which he was permitted to behold. St. John, in an unquestionable reference to that transaction, says that Prophet, “saw *Christ’s* Glory and spake of him:”|| for “no man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”¶

But we have also the “more sure word of prophecy:” let us enquire then under what character the Messiah was to appear, agreeably to the writings of those holy “men of God,” who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”**

* Exod. xvii. 6. † 1 Cor. x. 4. ‡ Numb. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. x. 9.

§ Isa. vi. 1—4. || John xii. 41. ¶ i. 18. ** 2 Pet. i. 21.

Was he foretold as a divine Being, or as a mere man, or as one, in whose person the two natures should be mysteriously combined?

The following predictions, indisputably relating to the Messiah, can be explained on no other supposition than that of his possessing a divine nature. "Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever: the Sceptre of thy kingdom is a right Sceptre." Ps. xlv. 6. Heb. i. 8.—"The Lord said unto my LORD, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Ps. cx. 1. Matt. xxii. 44. Mark xii. 36. Luke xx. 43. Acts ii. 35. Heb. i. 13.—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name EMMANUEL" (God with us) Isa. vii. 14. Matt. i. 23.—"unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the Prince of Peace." Isa. ix. 6.—"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our GOD. Lift up thy voice, be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." xl. 3, 9.—"Behold, your GOD 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 an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." xxxv. 5.

Matt. xi. 2—6.—“ This is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.” Jer. xxiii. 6.—“ One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven ; and there was given him 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.” Dan. vii. 13, 14. Matt. xxiv. 30.—“ But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from *everlasting*. Mic. v. 2. Matt. ii. 6.—“ Thus saith the LORD, I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.” Zech. viii. 3.—“ The LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to HIS temple.” Mal. iii. 1.

But, while these prophetic declarations convey the fullest assurance, that the expected Redeemer of Israel was to be a divine person ; it is most important to observe, that there are others, in which his human nature is with equal clearness described. Although he was to be Emmanuel, God with us, he was at the same time to be “ a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He was to be “ wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ;” to be “ led as a lamb to the slaughter,” to be “ taken from prison

and from judgment," and to be "cut off out of the land of the living."*

Since therefore those unerring oracles of holy writ have plainly declared that an union of the divine and human natures should constitute the Christ; if Jesus be no more than man, he answers not to this prediction, and consequently is not the true Messiah.

Bearing then in mind these prophetic declarations, let us extend our enquiry to the Gospel: let us see whether in the life and character of Jesus Christ we can discover such marks of a divine as well as of a human nature, as will justify the conclusion that it is he, "to whom give all the Prophets witness."†

His *miraculous incarnation*, an event foretold by *prophets*, announced by an *Angel*, recorded by *inspired historians*, and attested by the *wonderful transactions* of his life, is, of itself, a satisfactory proof of the union of two natures in his person.

The same truth is most firmly established by the astonishing series of *miracles* which he performed: for although miracles, *abstractedly* con-

* Isa. liii. 5, 7, 8.

† Acts. x. 43.

sidered, are nothing more than the credentials of a divine legation, yet those of Christ were such as to prove the Deity of his *person*. The evident line of distinction between Jesus and all other workers of miracles is such as we should expect to find between the actions of a *Lord* and those of his *servants*. *They* wrought miracles to shew by whose authority they acted; *Jesus*, to manifest his own.*

Christ, on some occasions, forgave the sins of those, whose bodily maladies he removed. "He said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."† I ask, with the Jews, "Who can forgive sins, but God only?" Yet this prerogative of Deity, Christ frequently assumed and exercised. He pardoned the *sinner*, who washed his feet in the house of the Pharisee.‡ He forgave the *woman*, who was taken in adultery.§ He cancelled the sins of the *penitent thief*.|| Are these the deeds of a mere man? Was it ever known that any prophet or messenger from God acted thus? Would such conduct and such lan-

* John ii. 11.—Dr. Sherlock remarks, on the miracle recorded in Matt. viii. 2, 3., that when our Lord said, "*I will, be thou clean,*" and the leper was immediately cleansed, his divinity shone forth more brightly, than if he had commanded all the powers above visibly to assist him."

† Mark ii. v.

§ John viii. 11.

‡ Luke vii. 48.

|| Luke xiii. 43.

guage as this comport with the meek and unambitious temper of Jesus? Would God himself, the great and jealous Lord, who "will not give his glory to another," have sanctioned so daring an encroachment upon his name and authority?

Christ not only wrought miracles himself, but also conferred supernatural powers on his disciples, who exercised them in his name, and ascribed their whole success to his authority. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Acts iii. 6.—"Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." ix. 34.—"I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to come out of her." xvi. 18.—"Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" iii. 12.—"Be it known unto you all, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth does this man stand here before you whole." iv. 10.

The *discourses* of our Lord, whether we regard the manner or the substance of them, afford an important testimony to the doctrine of his Deity.

The prophets introduced their message with solemnly declaring in whose name it was delivered; "Thus saith *the Lord*." Jesus issued his precepts in a tone of personal authority; "Be-

hold, *I* say unto you.”—“Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest.” Mat xi. 28.—“Him that cometh unto me *I* will in no wise cast out.” John vi. 37.

But, if the *manner* of our Lord’s discourses is such as to indicate the dignity of his person ; how much more decisive is the testimony which arises from the *substance* of them ! What unequalled sublimity is there in the following declarations : “In this place is one greater than the temple.” Matt. xii. 6.—“The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.” v. 8.—“I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; and the bread, which I shall give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John vi. 51.—“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me (as the Scripture saith) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” vii. 37, 38. And when we hear the same person declare that he is “the resurrection and the life ;” that he possesses the supreme power of “raising the dead,” and finally determining the fate of the whole human race ; that “the hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear *his* voice and come forth ;” and that the rewards of the faithful and the punishments of the disobedient will entirely result from his determination ; surely we are con-

strained to acknowledge that “never *man* spake like this man!” In short, let us only *suppose* that the Divine Being was to descend from heaven, and to live and converse with mankind, as Christ did; what greater evidence could we desire, in proof of his Deity, than that which our Lord gave, in the spirit and wisdom with which he uniformly spoke?

I would, in the next place, appeal to the *divine attributes* of Jesus Christ.

His *omnipresence* is asserted by himself in the plainest language. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt. xviii. 20.—“If any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John xiv. 23.—“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. xxviii. 20.

The high attribute of *omniscience* is ascribed to him; and in a great variety of instances he proved himself most justly entitled to it. He perceived the woman in the throng, who had touched him.* He knew that Lazarus was dead, before he proceeded to Bethany.† By a look upon Peter he convinced him that he was acquainted

* Luke viii. 46.

† John xi. 14.

with his treachery ;* by a word to his Disciples, he showed himself to be no stranger to their intentions.† It was the exercise of this perfection, which produced conviction in the mind of Nathanael ;‡ which caused an Apostle to Exclaim, “ Lord, *thou knowest all things*, thou knowest that I love thee ;”§ and which fully justified the following declarations of the sacred historians. “ Jesus knew their thoughts.” Matt. ix. 4.—xii. 25.—Luke v. 22. vi. 8. ix. 47. xi. 17.—“ Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him.” John xvi. 19.—“ He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” ii. 25.—“ Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.” vi. 64.

His *eternity* may be inferred from what has already been advanced. He “ whose goings forth were from everlasting,” he, who had glory with the Father before the world was, he, without whom was not any thing made that was made, must have been himself without “ beginning of days or end of life.” But the title by which he revealed himself to his beloved disciple, places the matter beyond dispute ; “ I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” Rev. i. 8, 11.

* Luke xxii. 61.

† John i. 47—49.

‡ Luke ix. 46.

§ John xxi. 17.

Indeed, we may ask, what attribute of Deity is there, which the Scriptures do not expressly apply to the Lord Jesus Christ? Is not he *immutable*, who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever” ?* Is not he *omnipotent*, by whom “all things were made,”† and by whom all things consist;‡ who “upholdeth all things by the word of his power,”§ and who is “able to subdue all things to himself.||”

Having spoken, in my last Chapter, of the *atonement and satisfaction of the Cross*, as implying the Deity of Christ, it only remains that I advert to the concluding scenes of his Ministry; his *resurrection*, his *final commission to his disciples*, his *triumphal ascension into heaven*, and his *promised return, as the supreme Judge of quick and dead*, at the last day.

He had said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days *I* will build it up. But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this unto them.”¶

Behold him, after this, dismissing his few followers, and those of the lowest and most ig-

* Heb. xiii, 8.

† John i. 3.

‡ Col. i. 17.

§ Heb. i. 3.

|| Phil iii. 21.

¶ John ii. 19—21.

norant of the people, to the conversion of the world;* assuring them of his constant presence and protection;† breathing on them, and imparting to them the influence of the Holy Ghost:‡ giving them power over unclean spirits, and ability to work all kinds of miracles;§ behold him, having in a solemn and authoritative manner, bestowed his benediction upon them, carried up into heaven, in the presence of his disciples;|| and say whether these things are explicable upon any other supposition than that of the absolute Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bear also in your recollection the high office which he will sustain, as the Judge of men, when he will “sit upon the throne of his glory,”¶ attended with an innumerable train of Angels,** when all who are in their graves shall come forth at his voice,†† and heaven and earth shall flee away at his presence;‡‡ and say whether the appearance of Jehovah could have been described in a manner more completely sublime and magnificent.

To reconcile such descriptions with a belief in the simple humanity of Jesus, is impossible.

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

† v. 20.

‡ John xx. 22.

§ Mark. xvi. 17, 18.

|| Luke xxiv. 51.

¶ Matt. xxv. 31.

** Mark viii. 38.

†† John v. 28.

‡‡ Rev. xx. 11.

To suppose that the graves should give up their dead at the voice of a man ; that Angels should attend his train, and heaven and earth pass away at his presence ; to imagine that a mere glorified man should be appointed the supreme arbiter of the everlasting fate of millions ; that he should be able to read the heart, and know the exact motive of every action ; to distinguish real from unintentional guilt, and to determine, with perfect justice, the several portions of reward or punishment due to every individual ; is surely not less repugnant to reason, than to the plainest declarations of Scripture.

To the important doctrine which I am labouring to establish, the Apostles of our Lord bear a most decisive and unequivocal testimony. The Baptist thus declares the dignity of his person. “ He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”* The incredulous Thomas, convinced at length of the reality of his Master’s resurrection, exclaimed, “ My Lord, and my God !”† To him the holy Martyr Stephen recommended his departing soul, “ Lord Jesus receive my spirit.”‡ St. Paul, who had the Gospel by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ, declares him to be “ God over all, blessed for ever ;”§ in

* John i. 27. † John xx. 28. ‡ Acts vii. 59. § Rom. ix. 5.

whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”* Now if it was the object of these holy men to recover their fellow-creatures from idolatry to the worship of the true God, and if idolatry consists in worshipping such as by nature are no gods; what shall we think of the texts here adduced, on the supposition that Christ is not God? or what shall we say to St. John’s conclusion of his first Epistle, when, having mentioned Jesus Christ, he adds, “This person (οὗτος) is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”†

Surely then I may, in conclusion, adopt your own words, and say, “No comment is required to elucidate passages like these. They speak a language which sophistry itself is unable to pervert.”‡ It is however well known that sophistry has *attempted* to pervert them. Let the success of the attempt be estimated by the following specimens of Socinian interpretation. To elude the obvious inference to be drawn from the words of the Psalmist and of the Apostle, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” it has been said that the passage may be rendered, “God is thy throne for ever and ever.” To set aside the confession of St. Thomas, “My Lord and my God,”

* Col. ii. 9.

† 1 John v. 20, 21.

‡ *Statement*, p. 15.

his words are interpreted as being merely a profane exclamation of surprise. To evade the decisive testimony of the Apostle, who says, that, of the patriarchs, “as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, GOD blessed for ever,” it has been proposed to render the latter clause, “God *be* blessed for ever. Amen.” And lastly, St. Stephen’s dying address to Christ has been considered as the language of a man, in an ecstasy of devotion, or in the agonies of death, and therefore not of much weight in the argument.

These comments of the Socinians require no comment from me. I will only remark that to my own mind there is no proof of the Deity of Christ more convincing, than that which arises from the absurdities into which its most able opposers have been driven.



Remarks on the “Scriptural Proof that the Holy Spirit is not an Intelligent Being distinct from God the Father.”

I have some hesitation in allowing that “the terms *Holy Spirit* and *Spirit of God* are admitted to be synonymous, both by the Trinitarian

and the Unitarian.”* They are used with some variety of application. We more usually, when we speak of the divine Spirit *as a Person*, call him *the Holy Ghost*, or *the Holy Spirit*, or *the Spirit*; and I am not aware that we ever distinguish him *personally as the Spirit of God*. When that phrase is adopted, it is generally in reference to his operations. The expressions therefore are not interchangeable.

The first argument, by which you endeavour to disprove the personality of the Holy Spirit, is founded on the assumption that as “it is common for the sacred writers to employ *the Spirit of a person* to denote *a person himself*,” so the analogy of language would lead us to infer that *God* and *the Spirit of God* are likewise one and the same person.†

Granting the premises to be correct, granting, for instance, that *the spirit of Moses* and *Moses*‡ are substantially the same expression, the one declaring the man generally, and the other a part of the man, the seat and source of his feelings and actions, does it therefore follow that *the Spirit of God* and *God* are one person; *God* being the whole substance, and *his Spirit* a part of that whole?—It might be maintained that the

* *Statement*, p. 31.

† pp. 32, 33.

‡ Ps. cvi. 33, 43.

form of expression *Spirit of God* universally denotes the *agency*, rather than the *personality*, of that Spirit; declaring him as employed in his operations within, or upon other substances rather than the whole operating substance. But especially in the passage, from which your conclusion is drawn, it will be found, upon examination, that it clearly denotes such operation of the Person, and not the Person himself. “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God;” &c. 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12. The comparison therefore is *not* between the Spirit of God, *personally*, and God, or the Father, himself, but between the Father, *personally*, and the Spirit, *as given to his people*. The Spirit, as imparted to the people of God, in his gifts and operations, may be to God, what the Spirit of a man is to the man, without at all affecting the distinct personality of the Spirit and of the Father.

It will be found that there is a distinction in the form of expression used by the sacred writers when they express the Spirit personally, and when they express the Spirit as bestowed in his agency upon, and within other substances. Or, to speak more conformably to your views and

admissions, there are two distinct forms of expression, under which the Spirit is exhibited. Sometimes he is spoken of *with* the article, and with or without other adjuncts; sometimes he is spoken of *without* the article. In the former of these modes of expression it will be found upon examination that the Spirit, as *imparted*, i. e. in his gifts and operations, is generally pointed out; in the latter, the Spirit *in his distinct personality*. Thus it is in the passage and chapter here referred to. In the verse more immediately under consideration, the Spirit is spoken of, as imparted to the people of God, *το πνευμα τῆ Θεῆ*. In the 13th verse of the same chapter the Spirit is spoken of personally, *διδασκοις πνευματος αγιου*. This passage, therefore, when thus correctly considered as to its proper meaning, furnishes no objection to the personality of the Holy Spirit. Besides that, if there were not this marked distinction in the use of the terms, which furnishes an unquestionable difference, (the qualities or operations of a Person being manifestly distinguishable from the Person himself) it would at last be a most unjust inference from the passage adduced, to say that it disproves the personality of the Holy Ghost, and represents him only as a part or property of the one divine Person. An illustration—which it clearly is, and only such—an illustration of a truth is not a declaration of truth. The re-

lation between God the Holy Ghost and God the Father might be expressed by a reference to the relation which subsists between a man's spirit and the whole man, without implying a declaration that the Holy Ghost is to the Father what a man's spirit is to himself, and that only.

The passage to which you next appeal, is Matt. xii. 28. "If I cast out Devils *by the Spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." And "that *the Spirit of God* here signifies the *power of God*, or *God himself*, is" in your opinion "*clearly manifest* from the parallel place in Luke's Gospel. 'If I with the *finger of God* cast out Devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.' Luke xi. 20."*— "Whether it is that" my "mental vision is obscured, or whether" I "wilfully shut my eyes against the light of truth," I cannot take upon myself to pronounce: but to me it is far from being "*clearly manifest*" how the *finger of God* can be made to signify *God himself*.

I have, in a former chapter, remarked that all which the Lord Jesus Christ did and was enabled to suffer, he did and was enabled to suffer by the Holy Ghost. Thus, he cast out Devils by the Holy Ghost; *not* by the Holy Ghost *personally*, but

* *Statement*, p. 34.

by that energy of the Holy Ghost, which he, by covenant, administered and exercised. Bearing in mind this distinction, I find no difficulty in reconciling the two passages in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, where the *Spirit of God* and the *finger* (or *power*) of *God* appear to be convertible terms; by the *Spirit of God* being meant, *not* the Spirit *personally* but, the Spirit *in action*. The Spirit in action is the power of the Father.

The words of the Psalmist, Ps. li. 11. "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,"* contain two distinct petitions. *Presence* and *Spirit* do *not* mean the same thing. David implores that God would not cast him out from the manifestation of his favour; the *presence* of God meaning his *manifested favour*. God is spoken of as a man, who is specially present in some places and not in others; and his manifested favour is vouchsafed in special acts and exercises of communion.

In Ps. cxxxix. 7. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"† I should very much question any reference to personal distinctions of the Godhead. God is spoken of after the manner of men. And, in this manner of speaking, his *spirit* represents

* *Statement*, p. 34.

† *ibid.*

that faculty of the divine Being, whereby he is conscious to the objects around him, and his *presence* is but another way of representing this.— A hundred passages of this kind prove nothing. It does not follow, because the Spirit of God is spoken of, without reference to personal distinctions, that therefore there is no Holy Ghost.

I have next to notice your explanation of St. Peter's address to Ananias, and the bold assertion at the close of it, that "the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit is a doctrine of mere human invention, baseless and visionary as the dream of the enthusiast."*

A conclusion, Sir, far too large for the premises, if those premises were correct. Nothing can be more obvious, than that, upon the face of the passage Acts v. 3, 4., the Holy Ghost is represented as a Person, and *that* Person expressly called *God*. "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to THE HOLY GHOST? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto GOD." Will you explain with what propriety it could be said of an attribute, or quality, or faculty of God, *Thou hast lied to it*: Thou hast lied to the *mind* of God, Thou hast lied to the *wisdom* of God, Thou hast lied to the *goodness* of God, Thou hast lied to the

* p. 35.

power of God. Is this a mode of expression, which common sense will admit? If the real meaning, then, be the obvious meaning, we have in this passage, what the Trinitarians have always maintained, a decisive testimony to the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost.

You would disprove this testimony by referring to other passages of Scripture, from which you infer that we *need* not consider the Holy Ghost as a Person, and a divine Person, here. Rather a strange method of interpreting a passage of Scripture; which should stand upon its own plain and obvious construction and context. But let us examine the passages. “It is not ye that speak, but *the Holy Ghost*.” Mark xiii. 11. —“It is not ye that speak, but *the Spirit of your Father*, which speaketh in you.” Matt. x. 20. Now, Sir, what is the amount of the parallel, which you would institute? Who maintains that the *person* of the Holy Ghost was here intended by the evangelists? It is the Holy Ghost, by his *energy*, which spoke in the disciples of Christ; and that Holy Ghost, *thus speaking*, is fitly called *the Spirit of the Father*, as he is that Spirit, of which the Father, according to the provisions of the everlasting covenant, bestows the energies.

You have bestowed much pains in proving, by numerous quotations from Scripture,* that “the term *Holy Spirit* is frequently employed by the sacred writers to denote *the effect* as well as *the efficient cause*; the *manifestation of divine power*, as well as *divine power itself*.” Why, Sir, all this argumentation does but confirm the view I have already maintained, that in many passages of Scripture the Holy Ghost is decidedly spoken of, not with reference to his distinct personality absolutely, but with reference to his agency; the Person at work, and not the Person in his essence; an acting or manifesting of his Deity, or an act or effect produced by his Deity, not his Deity, or the substance of his Deity, itself. This, I suppose, is what you mean by the distinction you are here setting forth: and I am obliged to you for your representation, inasmuch as you confirm that very distinction, which I have myself instituted, and furnish me with an answer to some objections which, without this view, might perhaps be substantiated against the Trinitarian hypothesis.

The whole amount of the objection is that, in many places, the Holy Ghost is not spoken of as a distinct divine person, and therefore is not a divine person; though there be places, in which

* pp. 35, 36.

he *must* be a divine person. Granting, to the full, the demand which you make to have the Holy Ghost considered in many passages as representing an energy of the Godhead, it does not therefore follow that there are no passages of Scripture, in which he cannot be considered as such energy, but must be regarded as a distinct, divine, personal agent.

I concur with you in considering that the *promise of the Spirit** is *not* the promise of the *personal residence* of the Holy Ghost, but the promise of his operations; and that, under the title of Paraclete, Spirit of Truth, &c. is conveyed not the declaration of his personal presence, but of his various and truly divine operations.† But all this proves nothing against the reality of his

* John xiv. xv. xvi. The Holy Ghost, as promised and vouchsafed to the Apostles and to the Church, is called *the promise of the Father*, and said to be *sent by the Father in Christ's name*, with reference to those provisions of the everlasting covenant, by which the Father, as the great origin and spring of divine operation, (He being that person to whom all the actings of the Godhead, in fulfilment of covenant engagements, are referred, *as the source of will*) has from everlasting promised and sworn to give the Holy Ghost in his energies to his church and people, for the sake of, and by the administration of the Lord Jesus Christ: the Holy Ghost, as a distinct and co-equal Person, having covenanted to exert his energies under this form, and by this channel of administration.

† *Statement*, pp. 37, 38.

distinct personal subsistence, but rather proves that there must be such a distinct personal subsistence; otherwise such operations should not be declared to proceed from him as their source. Such subsistence, which may be inferred from, and seems necessarily to be implied in, the ascription of such performances to such a source, is distinctly and positively proved by direct testimonies of Scripture, which can bear no other fair and logical interpretation than that which represents him as a distinct, co-equal, co-eternal, co-essential Person of the Godhead.

On the subject of *personification*,* we may remark, as before, that the conclusion is too large for the premises. Doubtless *Sin, Death, &c.* are personified in Scripture; and doubtless the *energies* of the Spirit are personified in Scripture. But does it therefore follow that the Spirit, from which those energies proceed, is no more a real Person than Sin and Death are real Persons? The energies themselves may be no more real persons than Sin and Death; but the Source, from which those energies proceed, must be a living and personal source.

I beg to conclude these observations with an extract from the writings of the celebrated Dr.

* *Statement* p. 39.

Owen. “ If a wise and honest man should tell you that in a certain country, where he has been, there is an excellent governor, who wisely discharges the duties of his office ; who hears causes, distributes justice, and comforts the distressed,—would you not believe that he intended by this description, a righteous, wise, intelligent person?—What else could any man living imagine? But now suppose that a stranger, or person of suspicious character, should come and say that the former information was indeed true, but that no man or person was intended, but the sun or the wind, which, by their benign influences, rendered the country fruitful and temperate, and disposed the inhabitants to mutual kindness; and, therefore, that the whole description of a governor was merely *figurative*;—must you not conclude, either that the first person was a notorious trifler, or that your latter informer, whose veracity you had reason to suspect, had endeavoured to abuse both him and you? It is exactly thus in the case before us. The Scripture tells us that the Holy Ghost governs the Church; appoints overseers of it,—discerns and judges all things,—comforts the faint,—strengthens the weak,—is grieved and provoked by sin; and that, in these and many other affairs he orders and disposes all things according to his own will. Can any man credit this testimony, and conceive otherwise of the Spirit, than as a holy, wise, intelligent per-

son? Now while we are under the power of these apprehensions, there come to us some men, whom we have just cause to suspect, and they tell us that what the Scripture says of the Holy Spirit is indeed true, but that no such person is intended by these expressions,—but only a quality, or influence of divine power, which doth all these things *figuratively*; that he has a *will* figuratively, and *understanding* figuratively,—is *sinned against* figuratively, and so of all that is said of him. Now, what can any man, not bereft of natural reason, as well as spiritual light, conclude, but either that the Scripture designed to draw him into fatal errors, or that those who impose such a sense upon it are corrupt seducers, who would rob him of his faith and comforts? Such will they at last appear to be.”*

Scriptural Proof that the Holy Ghost is a Person.

I will now proceed to lay before you some evidences of the personality of the Holy Ghost; with only this postulate, that, if such language be uniformly used in the Scriptures concerning

* *Owen's Pneumatologia*, B. i. Chap. 3.

the Holy Spirit, as in all other cases would convey to our minds the ideas of *personality* and *personal agency*, I may be allowed to draw the conclusion, that the Holy Ghost is a personal agent.

I would first appeal to the testimony which is borne to this truth by our Lord himself. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another Comforter*, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth."—"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in my name, *He* shall teach you all things." John xiv. 16, 17, 26.—In the passage last quoted, and in several others, especially in those that follow, the personal pronoun (*εκεινος*) is used. "When the Comforter is come,—even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *He* shall testify of me."—"When *He* cometh, he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever *He* shall hear, that shall he speak."—" *He* shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John xv. 26. xvi. 7—15. Now, I will only ask, do not the ordinary rules of language restrict the use of the *personal pronoun* to a *personal agent*? And, if any words can convey the idea of personal agency, is not that idea most clearly conveyed by those which occur in the preceding sentences, viz. *being sent, com-*

ing, testifying, receiving, shewing, teaching, hearing, and speaking?

Our Lord's description of the unpardonable sin decidedly ascertains the personality of the Holy Ghost. "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies, wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Mark iii. 28, 29.—For how can it be supposed that a sin, committed against a *quality* or *attribute* of the Deity, should be irremissible, while against the Deity himself *all manner* of sin and blasphemy should be capable of forgiveness? Sin against God must include sin against any of his attributes, as the greater proportion includes the less: and, consequently, if there be a crime, into which a man may fall, against *the Holy Ghost*, beyond the reach of pardon, while, at the same time, *all manner* of sins and blasphemies against God may be remitted; the Holy Ghost must be a *person*, distinct from God the Father.

In the form of baptism appointed by our Lord, "Go ye and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. xxviii. 19, if the Father and the Son be persons, the same must also be understood of the Holy Ghost. For, suppose it to be otherwise;

and how unaccountable is it that our Lord should join in the same form of worship, and without the least intimation of any difference, *two persons*, and one *attribute*; and command his followers to be dedicated to the joint service of the Father, and of the Son, and of an attribute of the Father and the Son! What adoration can be paid to an attribute? Does not the very notion of God include his attributes?

Let us, in the next place, enquire, what is the testimony borne by St. Paul to this doctrine. "All these worketh that one, and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." 1 Cor. xii. 11. Are not *working*, *dividing*, and *willing*, personal acts? or can such terms be used of a mere attribute, consistently with the precision required in religious instructions?—"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." 1 Cor. ii. 10. Here a distinction is clearly expressed between the *Spirit*, which is said to *search*, and *God*, whose deep things are *searched*. On the supposition that they are one and the same person, the sense would be that the Spirit of God searcheth all things, yea the deep things of *himself*: which is absurd.—"The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26. Here again, upon the supposition that the Holy Ghost is not a distinct person in the Godhead, but only an

attribute of the Father, he would be making intercession to *himself*.—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. If personality be supposed, by implication, to be in the Lord Jesus Christ, or in God, for dispensing the blessings here prayed for; it must, on the same ground, be supposed to be also in the Holy Ghost. Can any one conceive that the qualities of *grace* in Christ, and *love* in God (which without doubt are personal qualities, inasmuch as they are imparted from one to another) are more properly personal, than the *communion*, which is also as directly implored from the Holy Ghost? Are those qualities of grace in Christ, and love in God, to be joined with the communion of one, who is himself but an *attribute*, or *quality*, or *energy*, of Christ, and of God? What is meant by the *communion* of an *attribute*? And how is this *communion* conveyed, by the operation of an *attribute*, into the hearts of believers?

I should far exceed my limits, if I gave at large the numerous scriptural testimonies to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's personality. He is said to *speak expressly*,* by *Prophets*,† to *Apos-*

* 1 Tim. iv. 1.

† 2 Pet. i. 21.

les,* and to Churches,† He appoints ministers,‡ and sends messengers.§ He bears witness,|| and is appealed to as a witness.¶ He is described as possessing all *personal* qualities; such as *grief,*** a *mind,††* a *will,‡‡* and *power.§§* He is declared capable of being tempted,||| of being resisted,¶¶ of having *despite* done unto him.***

If there is meaning in language, surely these expressions are demonstrative of *personal consciousness* and *identity*. If they can be made to bear any other interpretation; upon the same principles, I conceive, it would be equally easy to do away the plainest doctrines of Scripture.

It is very possible that, in the variety of testimonies, which bear on this point, some may possess greater weight than others; for indeed of no truth, to be established by collateral evidence, can it be supposed that all the testimonies in its favour should be of equal importance. But it must be the fallacy of the *whole*, and not of any single proposition, or more, that can be deemed sufficient to invalidate the certainty of

* Acts. xiii. 2.

§ xiii. 4.

** Eph. iv. 30.

§§ Rom. xv. 13.

*** Heb. x. 29.

† Rev. ii. 7.

|| Rom. viii. 16.

†† Rom. viii. 27.

||| Acts v. 9.

‡ Acts xx. 28.

¶ ix. 1.

‡‡ 1 Cor. xii. 11.

¶¶ vii. 51.

what is here advanced. Allow but *one* of the proofs to be unanswerable, and that is enough for our purpose, viz. to prove that the Blessed Spirit is a Person.

—◆—

Scriptural Proof that the Holy Ghost is God.

I begin with assuming, what, I trust, has been proved in the last chapter, that the Holy Ghost is “an Intelligent Being distinct from God the Father.” The question then immediately arises, Under what character are we to consider him? Either he is *God*, possessing, in a distinction of person, an ineffable unity of the divine nature with the Father and the Son; or he is the *creature* of God, and consequently possesses only a derivative and subordinate excellence. There is no medium betwixt the two. Whether of the two characters then belongs to him? Let the question be determined by the *titles*, the *attributes*, and the *operations*, which the Scriptures ascribe to him.

He is described as “the *eternal Spirit*,”* a name which carries on the face of it the most

* Heb. ix. 14.

convincing proof of his Deity. Who is eternal, but “the High and Holy one, that inhabiteth eternity?” He is repeatedly called the *holy Spirit*, as being eminently so above all creatures, and as being the author of all that holiness which they possess. He is distinguished as the Spirit of *holiness*, the Spirit of *truth*, the Spirit of *power*, the Spirit of *life*, the Spirit of *wisdom* and *knowledge*. And whether we are to understand from these appellations that he possesses these perfections in a way of eminence above all creatures, or that he is the grand source, from which they are communicated to others, in either sense they completely establish the doctrine of his Deity.

But what will you say to those passages in which he is expressly called *God*? Christians are in some places said to be born of *the Spirit*; in others to be born of *God*.* In lying to *the Holy Ghost*, Ananias lied unto *God*.† The spiritual gifts, which the Corinthians received, are all declared to be the work of “that one and the self-same *Spirit* ;” and yet concerning these operations St. Paul as expressly asserts, “It is the same *God*, which worketh all in all.”‡—“All Scripture is” said by one Apostle to be “given by inspiration of *God* ;”§ and by another it is

* John i. 13. iii. 5, 6, 8.

† Acts v. 3, 4

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 6, 11.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

asserted that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by *the Holy Ghost*.”*—God is described, in the Book of Leviticus, as promising to dwell with his people: “I will set my tabernacle among you; and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”† The accomplishment of this promise is declared by the Apostle: “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk among them,” &c.‡ How and by whom is this done? “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that *the Spirit of God* dwelleth in you? for the temple of God are ye.”§ If then it was *God*, who of old promised to dwell in his people, and thereby to make them his temple; then is *the Holy Spirit* God; for it is he, who, according to that promise, thus dwelleth in them.

The *attributes* of the Holy Ghost will also lead us to the same conclusion. He is *omnipresent*; for he dwelleth in all true believers, wherever dispersed, or however numerous.|| He is *omniscient*; for he “searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God,” and no one knoweth them, but he alone;¶ he “teacheth all things,”

* 2 Pet. i. 21.

† Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 16.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

|| vi. 19.

¶ ii. 10, 11

and even “sheweth things to come.”* He is *omnipotent*; for “the Spirit of the Lord is not straitened,”† but “divideth to every man severally as he will.”‡

The *operations* of the Holy Spirit unequivocally attest the same truth: for they are such as no finite Person can be competent to perform. *Creation* itself is ascribed to him. He, in the beginning, “moved upon the face of the deep,”§ to reduce the chaotic mass to order, and to impregnate dead matter with life and animation. The amazing plan of divine *providence* was laid, and is conducted by him; for, “who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord? or being his counsellor hath taught him?”|| He was the author and giver of all those *miraculous and supernatural powers*, with which any of the human race were ever endued. The Prophets, those “holy men of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” By him the Evangelists, the Apostles, and the primitive believers, were enabled to cast out Devils; to heal the sick; to raise the dead; to speak in languages before unknown, or to interpret the discourses of others. Christ himself was “anointed by the Holy Ghost.” to work his beneficent miracles.¶ He “cast out

* John xiv. 26. xv. 13. † Micah ii. 7. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 11.
 § Gen. i. 2. || Isa. xl. 13. ¶ Acts x. 38.

Devils by the Spirit of God,"* "who was given to him without measure;"† and "through the Holy Ghost he gave commandment to his Apostles."‡ Is it possible that such can be the agency of a creature?

Lastly, the *ordinary influences* of the Holy Spirit form a distinct and satisfactory proof of his Deity. Who but an almighty agent can produce a new creation in the soul, can restore life to the dead sinner; and more than reinstate him in paradise; can prepare him for, and conduct him to, the glories of the heavenly world? Who but an all-powerful Being can give him strength to subdue his corrupt affections, to keep in vigorous exercise his spiritual principles, to fit him for every duty and every trial, to sustain him in his arduous conflict, and transform perfectly into the image of his God and Saviour? A creature cannot effect this: and we are assured that the Spirit is the mighty agent.§ From these his operations then we can be at no loss to ascertain the divine character of the Author.

* Matt. xii. 28. + John iii. 34. ‡ Acts. i. 2.
 § 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 1 Pet. i. 2.

On the Canon of the New Testament.

I have now to offer some observations on the attempt which you have made to disprove the authenticity of certain Books in the New Testament. For although I would most willingly rest the proof of the Trinitarian Doctrines on those parts of the sacred volume, which by universal consent are allowed to be genuine, I think it would argue a culpable indifference on a most important question, if I were to pass over in silence an attempt to throw a slur upon any part of the sacred volume.

I have neither leisure nor opportunity to collate Manuscripts, or to ascertain the comparative accuracy of the different editions of the New Testament; much less, to wade through the voluminous writings of the early Christian Fathers. With yourself, therefore, I must be content to disclaim all pretension to originality, in this part of my Letter, except perhaps in those arguments, which are founded on your own admissions and palpable misrepresentations. I shall not attempt to combat every erroneous position or incorrect conclusion, which presents itself in this part of your work; but shall select a few of the most prominent, from which the character of the rest may be fairly and easily inferred.

In endeavouring to bring under suspicion the following Books of the New Testament, viz.

Hebrews, 2 Peter, Jude,
James, 2 & 3 John, Revelation;

you appeal to the evidence of the Apostolical Fathers; on which I shall only remark that the references to Scripture in the writings of those authors are far more numerous than you are willing to allow. The following table is transcribed from the work of the Rev. Dr. Magee,* a writer not more distinguished by his profound learning, than by his unimpeached integrity, in the department of sacred criticism. The references printed in italics are those which you have suppressed.

Barnabas. A. D. 71.	Clemens Rom. A. D. 96.	Hermas. A. D. 100.	Ignatius. A. D. 107.	Polycarp. A. D. 108.
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew
<hr/>	<hr/>	<i>Mark</i>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>Luke</i>	Luke	Luke	<i>Luke</i>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	John	John	<hr/>
<i>Acts</i>	Acts	Acts	Acts	Acts
<i>Romans</i>	Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
1 <i>Cor.</i>	1 Cor.	1 Cor.	1 Cor.	1 Cor.
2 <i>Cor.</i>	2 Cor.	2 <i>Cor.</i>	2 Cor.	2 Cor.
<hr/>	Galat.	<i>Galat.</i>	Galat.	Galat.
<i>Ephes.</i>	Ephes.	Ephes.	Ephes.	Ephes.
<i>Philip.</i>	Philip.	<i>Philip.</i>	Philip.	Philip.
<hr/>	Coloss.	<i>Colos.</i>	<i>Coloss.</i>	<i>Coloss.</i>

* Appendix to Magee's Discourses on Atonement and Sacrifice, p. 478—481.

Barnabas. A. D. 71.	Clemens Rom. A. D. 96.	Hermas. A. D. 100.	Ignatius. A. D. 107	Poly carp. A. D. 108.
<i>Philip.</i>	1 <i>Thess.</i>	1 <i>Thess.</i>	1 <i>Thess.</i>	1 <i>Thess.</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____	2 <i>Thess.</i>
_____	1 <i>Tim.</i>	_____	_____	1 <i>Tim.</i>
2 <i>Tim.</i>	2 <i>Tim.</i>	2 <i>Tim.</i>	2 <i>Tim.</i>	2 <i>Tim.</i>
_____	Titus	_____	<i>Titus</i>	_____
<i>Hebrews</i>	Hebrews	<i>Hcbrews</i>	<i>Hcbrews</i>	<i>Hebrews</i>
_____	James	James	_____	_____
1 <i>Pct.</i>	1 <i>Pet.</i>	1 <i>Pct.</i>	1 <i>Pet.</i>	1 <i>Pet.</i>
2 <i>Pct.</i>	2 <i>Pet.</i>	2 <i>Pet.</i>	_____	_____
_____	_____	1 <i>John</i>	1 <i>John</i>	1 <i>John</i>
_____	_____	2 <i>John</i>	_____	_____
_____	_____	3 <i>John</i>	3 <i>John</i>	_____
_____	_____	<i>Jude</i>	_____	<i>Jude</i>
<i>Revelation</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____

With these testimonies, I am perfectly willing that the authenticity of the “disputed Books” should rest upon your own admissions and the authority of those whose opinion you appear to hold in high veneration.

The Epistle to the Hebrews

Is, as we have seen, referred to by all the Apostolical Fathers; and although, according to Michaëlis, it might not be contained in the original Syriac version, it was, in the opinion of that writer, received “*shortly* afterwards.” It was, by your own admission, inserted in the catalogue of Origen,* nor was it excluded from that of

* *Statement*, p. 51.

Eusebius.* Indeed Lardner, after a full discussion of the subject, concludes in favour of the probability that St. Paul was the author of this Epistle; and Sykes strenuously contends for the same position. I omit the mention of other critics from a persuasion that the opinion of all, when added to the weight of that advanced by Lardner and by Sykes, can only prove, in the judgment of Unitarians, light as atoms of dust on the preponderating balance.

The Epistle of St. James.

On the authenticity of this Epistle, I am perfectly satisfied with the following concessions from yourself and the Editors of the Improved Version. "I think it *highly* probable that the Epistle commonly ascribed to James is genuine, because it appears to have been known to Clemens Romanus, and Hermas, two of the *earliest* Apostolical Fathers, and because it is found in the canon of the first Syriac New Testament, which is decidedly the most ancient version of the Christian Scriptures."† "It is not unworthy of the Apostle, to whom it is generally ascribed."‡

* *Statement*, p. 56.

† p. 44.

‡ p. 60.

The Second Epistle of St. Peter.

Why is so marked an exception made of this Epistle, which, not to mention other testimonies, is referred to by Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, and Hermas, the three earliest of the Apostolical Fathers? Lardner, after a detailed examination of the arguments alleged against its authenticity, concludes strongly in favour of it. Of St. Peter's two Epistles he says, "If we consult them, and endeavour to form a judgment by internal evidence, I suppose it will appear very probable, that both are of the same author. And it may seem somewhat strange, that any of the ancients hesitated about it, who had the two Epistles before them. *** I conclude, therefore, that the two Epistles, generally ascribed to the Apostle Peter, are indeed his. **** *Certainly* these Epistles, and the discourses of Peter recorded in the Acts, together with the effects of them, are monuments of a *divine inspiration.*" *History of the Apostles, and Evangelists*, chap. 19. With respect indeed to the first and third chapters of this Epistle, the Editors express themselves rather doubtfully; but the *second* chapter they condemn without reserve, printing it in italics. And yet Lardner, as we have seen, maintained the divine authority of the whole, and Michaëlis states what he terms "positive grounds for believing it genuine," *Introd.* Vol. iv. p. 350, &c

The Second and Third Epistles of St. John.

The following concession from the Editors of the "Improved Version" is highly important and satisfactory. "They appear to regard these Epistles as genuine; and attribute the circumstance of their having been disputed in and before the time of Eusebius to their brevity, and 'to their being addressed to particular persons;' adding, with Dr. Priestley, that 'both the subjects and the language are so much the same with those of the former Epistle, that there cannot be a doubt of their having the same author.' "*

The Epistle of St. Jude.

The Editors of the Improved Version "seem less inclined to retain this as a genuine part of Scripture, than any book of the New Testament;" † and you profess to "think, with *Lardner* and many others, that the Epistle of Jude ought not to be regarded as of sufficient authority to establish by itself any doctrine." ‡ I, with many others, think differently: on which side of the question *Lardner* is to be ranked, let the following passage determine; "I have been thus prolix in rehearsing the passages of *Clement*; for they ap-

* *Statement*, p. 60.

† p. 61.

‡ p. 44.

pear to me to be a sufficient proof of the antiquity and *genuineness* of this Epistle ; or that *it was writ by Jude, one of Christ's twelve Apostles.*" *History of the Apostles and Evangelists*, chap. 20.

The Apocalypse or Book of Revelation.

The Editors "regard as by no means deficient in external evidence, although disposed to rest the proof of its divine authority, as a book of prophecy, chiefly upon the perceived accomplishment of the predictions which it contains."* And they add, with much candour, that it cannot be read by any intelligent or candid person, "without his being convinced that, considering the age in which it appeared, none but a person *divinely inspired* could have written it."

With admissions so large and satisfactory ; even if I possessed the leisure and learning necessary for such an undertaking, I should think them wasted in any elaborate attempt to establish, on other evidence, the authenticity of the disputed books of the New Testament.

* *Statement*, p. 61.

On the Text of the New Testament.

The following remarks upon the alterations in the text of the New Testament, proposed by the Editors of the Improved Version, I have extracted from the work of the Rev. Dr. Magee, the celebrated Irish Theologian; because they contain, not only an able exposure of the errors of that version, in general, but also a most satisfactory vindication of the introductory chapters in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke; the authenticity of which you have, with much labour, attempted to disprove.

“ This Version is of that convenient latitude that a person may, at the same time, admit its authority; and yet disbelieve almost every doctrine, and every important truth of the Christian Revelation. It is, in short, like the ancient mantle of my country, a covering of such loose and wide dimensions, that the wearer may turn round and round in it, without disturbing its shape, or depriving himself of its shelter. And like that too, it has been used as a disguise to muffle the assassin, and to conceal the dagger.

The Editors of this work have not, it must be observed, conducted themselves in the publication of it, with that manly boldness, which they are at all times so ambitious to put forward

as their distinguishing characteristic. They have, on the contrary, not scrupled to adopt one of those *pious frauds*, which they are pleased to consider the ordinary expedients of their orthodox opponents. The name of a Bishop of the established Church was calculated to lull suspicion, and to contribute to a mere extended circulation; and accordingly this "Improved Version," which they have now sent abroad, they profess to found *upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's translation* of the New Testament; whilst in truth, they adopt no part of that translation, which in any degree shackles them in point of doctrine, but abide by it in such places only as are of a nature perfectly indifferent. They have thus contrived to give a respectable name to their Unitarian blasphemies. They thus hold out deceitful colours to the unwary, and vend their poisons under a false label.

In the Introduction to the work we are fairly apprized that it has been a principal part of its design, to "divest the sacred volume of the technical phrases of a systematic theology." That is, in other words, we are told that the great object has been so to render the New Testament, as to empty it of all such expressions, as might give support to any of the received and peculiar doctrines of Christianity. This appears pretty manifestly to be what is here intended:

for, agreeably to this, we find that all those phrases which in any way connect with the unscriptural notions of the *miraculous conception*, the *pre-existence*, and the *divinity of Christ*,—the *personal existence*, *divine nature*, and *gracious influences of the Holy Spirit*,—the *existence of evil spirits and Angels*, &c. are all completely swept away, and nothing left to us, but what perfectly agrees with Mr. Belsham's idea,—that Christianity comprises a good moral system, with indeed the knowledge of this one fact, that a man has risen from the grave.—In the next place we are told, what sufficiently explains how this has been effected. It is stated, that it has not been the intention, “to exhibit a version critically correct in every minute particular:” and that “*verbal criticism* had of course not been attended to in the degree that some might wish and expect.” Thus we are fairly informed, that certain liberties are to be taken in the translation, to which the minuteness of verbal criticism might possibly present some impediment. That is, in a work, whose very object is to ascertain the exact meaning of words, the exact meaning of words is not to be attended to, lest it might embarrass the freedom of translation, and force upon the translator a sense different from that, which he chooses to assign. Of what nature are those freedoms of translation, which have grown out of the facilities, and are adapted to the ob-

jects, which the Editors have here planned for themselves, I shall now give a slight specimen.

The doctrine of the *Incarnation* is at once thrown off by rejecting from the beginning of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, the whole of what belongs to the miraculous birth of our Lord. This has been done, it must be allowed, with sufficient boldness: for it is fairly admitted that these portions of the Gospels “are to be found in all the manuscripts and versions now extant.”—Now it is actually amusing to observe, what is the leading evidence, by which the Editors conceive themselves justified, thus to expunge from the canon of Scripture, what has come supported by the testimony of *all* the manuscripts and *all* the versions. With respect to the passage in St. Matthew, they tell us that the *Ebionites* did not read the two first chapters in their copy of his Gospel; and with respect to St. Luke, they tell us that *Marcion*, a heretic of the second century, did not admit the two first chapters of his. Therefore, it follows, that since the sect of the *Ebionites*, and the heretic *Marcion* of the second century, are against all the manuscripts and all the versions, it is impossible that these last can be received as true.* The argument is certainly quite intelligible. But let us

* *Statement*, p. 86,—88.

enquire a little about these irrefragable witnesses. And, first, as to these *Ebionites*, we are informed that their canon of the New Testament rejected the three last Gospels, and all the Epistles of St. Paul. And, next, as to this *Marcion*, we find that he rejected the Old Testament, and every part of the New, which contained quotations from the Old, and that he used no Gospel but that of St. Luke, expunging from this also whatever he did not approve: and we are told these things too, upon the very authority, on which the Editors build, respecting the omissions from St. Matthew and St. Luke.—Why, then, have not these admirers of *Marcion* and the *Ebionites* received the testimony of such unimpeached witnesses throughout? Why have they not on the authority of the latter, rejected all the New Testament except St. Matthew; or, on the authority of the former, rejected the entire of the Old Testament, and all of the New, excepting a part of St. Luke, and some of the Epistles: or, on the authority of both together, why have they not rejected the whole Bible, both Old and New Testament?—But it seems that these witnesses are to be brought up and turned down at pleasure: they are both good and bad, according as may serve the present purpose. For not only do we find that they are not believed by the party producing them, in any part of their testimony except that which relates to the beginnings of the

two Gospels; but we find that even in these they are believed, only so far as is convenient: our Editors themselves admitting, that the *Ebionites* had mutilated the Gospel of St. Matthew, by *taking away the genealogy*; that is, by taking away the first 16 verses of the first chapter. And, therefore, respecting these first 16 verses, the Editors reject the testimony of the *Ebionites*, as being convicted of a mutilation of the Gospel; but as to the remaining verses of the first chapter, and the whole of the second, they hold the testimony of these same Ebionites to be good, against all gain-sayers, against all manuscripts, and against all versions.—All this is put forward honestly and without any attempt at disguise: the Ebionite witnesses pronounced, on one side of a leaf, as not credible, from their acknowledged mutilation of the sacred text; and, upon the other side of the same leaf, maintained to be witnesses of such repute, as ought to be relied upon, in opposition to all the manuscripts, and all the versions of the New Testament in the whole world.”

“ But that we may form a better judgment of the value of this Ebionite testimony, according to the showing of its Unitarian abettors, let us attend to a few more particulars on this head. The Gospel of the Ebionites began, it is said, with these words, *It came to pass IN THE DAYS*

OF HEROD KING OF JUDEA, that JOHN CAME BAPTIZING *with the baptism of repentance in the river Jordan*. This the Editors distinctly state, in their third note, from the authority of Epiphanius; whilst, in the very note which precedes, they reject the text of St. Matthew, because it places the birth of Christ before the death of Herod; which event they contend from Luke iii. 23, must have taken place two years at least before Christ was born.* Thus, the Gospel ascribed to Matthew is spurious, because it fixes the birth of Christ before the death of Herod; and yet the Gospel of the Ebionites, which fixes it not less than thirty years before that event, (inasmuch as it represents Herod to be alive at the commencement of the Baptist's ministry) is, notwithstanding, to be relied on as a genuine and indisputable document.—Yet farther,—for the Editors seem ambitious to make an overpowering display of the riches of their criticism on the first opening of their work,—they inform us, from Epiphanius, that Corinthus and Carpocrates argued from *the genealogy at the beginning of the Gospel*, that Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary; whilst, at the same time, they acquaint us, that the gospel, which was used by Corinthus and Carpocrates, was *the Gospel of the Ebionites*, to which they admit no genealogy was prefixed, or

* *Statement*, p. 95.

from which (to use their own and Epiphanius's words) *the genealogy was taken away*. This, it will be confessed, is making a tolerably large demand upon the complaisance of the reader; yet there remains still more occasion for his courtesy, if he will travel on amicably with the Editors even through the first two pages of their translation. The *genealogy* appears, in the first view, to be a difficulty in their way, which they have themselves unnecessarily created. The Ebionites they have produced, as their favourite witnesses, to ascertain what was the true and original gospel of St. Matthew. But the Ebionites omit the entire of the two first chapters of that Gospel. Why, then, injure their evidence by contending for the *genealogy*, which they reject? The reason is plainly assigned. The genealogy, as it stands, may answer the purpose of proving, that Jesus was the offspring of Joseph and Mary: and, accordingly, the Editors apprize us, that Corinthus and Carpocrates applied it to this use, and hence deduced the mere humanity of Christ. They proceed also to shew the reasonableness of admitting the genealogy to be genuine, on the ground that "it can hardly be supposed that an author writing for the instruction of Hebrew Christians would have omitted to trace the descent of Christ from Abraham and David, upon which they justly laid so great a stress." They then proceed to evince the like reasonableness of dis-

carding all that follows the genealogy to the end of the second chapter. "This," they say, "COULD NOT *have been written by the author of the genealogy, for it CONTRADICTS HIS DESIGN*, which was to prove that Jesus, being the son of Joseph, was the descendant of Abraham and David; whereas the design of this narrative is to shew that Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, was not his real father. This account, therefore, of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, must have been wanting in the copies of Corinthus and Carpocrates, as well as in those of the Ebionites: and, *if the genealogy be genuine, the narrative MUST BE spurious.*" Thus, then, the whole matter is completely arranged. The genealogy must be genuine, as marking the human descent of Christ from Abraham and David, a thing expected by the Jews: and by all who received it as genuine, the narrative of the miraculous conception, as contradicting its design, must be rejected as spurious. At the same time, lest we should imagine that the force of this reasoning might have operated so powerfully upon those Hebrew Christians who received the genealogy, and maintained the proper humanity of Christ as to induce them to *take away* the narrative, which so decidedly contradicted the genealogy, in like manner as it is admitted others of them had *taken away* the genealogy itself, the Editors take care, in the very next note, to assure us that to

that description of Christians “the account of the miraculous conception could not have been in any degree unacceptable:” * “*nor would it,*” they add, “*at all have militated against the doctrine of the proper humanity of Christ,*† it being a fact analagous to the miraculous birth of Isaac, Samuel, and other eminent persons of the Hebrew nation.” Thus it appears that the history of the miraculous conception is itself something miraculous; for it at the same time *contradicts*, and yet *does not at all militate against*, the idea of Christ’s human descent.”

“Now perhaps it may be doing no more than justice to these erudite and luminous commentators, to bring together into one point of view, the scattered lights, which have been here distinctly noticed; but which cannot fail from their combined brilliancy to shed a brighter glory upon the work which they are designed to illustrate.—1. The Ebionites and Marcion have omitted, in their respective copies of certain portions of Scripture, passages, which are undoubtedly parts of the genuine sacred text; and the former, it is confessed, have actually taken away the genealogy from St. Matthew’s Gospel: the proof, therefore, arising from their omission of whatever relates to the miraculous conception of

* *Statement*, p. 88.

† p. 105.

Christ must be received as decisive against that fact, although it is admitted that the narratives of it, as given by St. Matthew and St. Luke, come attested by every manuscript and every version now extant, without exception.—2. The Gospel of St. Matthew, as it is conveyed to us at this day by all the manuscripts and all the versions, cannot be genuine, because it requires us to believe that our Lord was born before the death of Herod; but we may admit, as unquestionable, the Gospel of the Ebionites, which pronounces Herod to be living at the commencement of the Baptist's ministry, or about the thirtieth year after our Lord's nativity. — Lastly, the narrative of the miraculous conception ascribed to St. Matthew, must have been rejected by all who received the genealogy, as contradicting the design of the genealogy, which was to establish the human descent of Christ; at the same time that it is quite clear, that the fact of the miraculous conception could not at all have militated against the doctrine of the proper humanity of Christ, nor consequently have been in any degree unacceptable to those who held that doctrine.— Such are the new views presented at the opening of this *Improved Version*, which is to set every thing to rights in the Christian Scriptures."

“There are, moreover, certain chronological deductions connected with some of the foregoing

observations, which I cannot avoid laying before the reader. It has been stated that the Editors contend, that *the death of Herod must have taken place two years at least before Christ was born.* Their mode of establishing this point is deserving of some detail. It follows, they say, as a necessary consequence from the death of Herod being placed (as it is by Lardner) in the year 750, or 751 U. C. Lardner, in the part referred to by the Editors, had asserted that “if Herod died in 750 U. C., he died *three years and nine months before the VULGAR CHRISTIAN ERA*; if at a certain time, before mentioned, in the year 751, then he died about *two years and nine months before the said era;*” and which is the truth, he professes himself unable to determine. (See *Lardner’s Works*, Vol. i. p. 428). Our Editors, referring to Lardner twice upon the same subject, contend peremptorily that Christ “**MUST HAVE BEEN BORN** *at least two years and nine months, and probably three years and nine months, after the death of Herod:*” and thus, in utter disregard of all the arguments by which the vulgar Christian era has been disproved, or rather with an apparent ignorance of the existence of any such arguments, they have at once assumed the vulgar and the true era of our Lord’s nativity to be the same; and on this assumption, as in itself sufficient to invalidate the whole story of our Lord’s birth as given by St. Matthew, they

build the rejection of that story as an utter fabrication. They profess at the same time to ground their reasoning on the authority of *Lardner*; whose main object has been to establish the direct reverse of their position, — that Christ “must have been born two years at least after the death of Herod;” inasmuch as, with great learning and sound argument, he has laboured to demonstrate the consistency of St. Luke’s declaration respecting the age of Christ in the 15th of Tiberius, with the narrative of St. Matthew, which places the birth of Christ about two years before the death of Herod. (*Lardner’s Works*, Vol. i. p. 339—382). That learned writer, however, in his *Appendix concerning the time of Herod’s death*, has, unfortunately for our Editors, in the passage above referred to, spoken of the *vulgar Christian era* as posterior to the death of Herod; and they, substituting, for the *vulgar Christian era*, the *time of Christ’s Nativity*, have at once inferred the priority of Herod’s death to the birth of Christ; and have adduced the authority of Lardner’s name in behalf of a position, which Lardner has most triumphantly overthrown.”*

To the preceding extract I beg leave to add the argument, by which a learned and living

* *Mayes on Atonement*, Vol. ii. p. 449—458.

Prelate has, in my opinion, established, beyond the possibility of fair argument, the authenticity of St. Matthew's introductory chapters. Bishop Marsh, in his ninth lecture, observes that, if we turn to the second volume of *Griesbach's Symbolæ Criticæ*, we shall find a quotation from the *first* chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and a reference to the *second* made by *Celsus* the Epicurean Philosopher, which quotation and reference are noted by *Origen*, who wrote in answer to Celsus. Griesbach, he adds, justly remarks, "Hence it is evident that the first two chapters of Matthew were known to Celsus." And with no less justice on his own part, he deduces the following inference; that, if Celsus, who wrote his celebrated work against the Christians in the time of Marcus Aurelius, and consequently little more than a hundred years after St. Matthew himself wrote, yet found the first two chapters in *his* manuscript of St. Matthew's Gospel, those chapters must either have been *original* parts of St. Matthew's Gospel, or they must have been added at a time so little antecedent to the age of Celsus, that a writer so inquisitive, so sagacious, and at the same time so inimical to Christianity, could not have failed to *detect* the imposture: but that, in this case, he would not have quoted those chapters as parts of St. Matthew's Gospel: and consequently, that the truth must lie in the *other* part of the dilemma, namely, that those

chapters are authentic. — *Course of Lectures*, Part ii. pp. 55, 56.

Having had occasion to mention *Griesbach*, I cannot forbear remarking upon the injustice of introducing the name of that illustrious critic, in order to give a sanction to opinions which he held in abhorrence,* and to add respectability to a version of the Scriptures, in which there is the widest departure both from his text, and his rules of criticism. This injustice has been so ably exposed by *Dr. Laurence*, in his *Critical*

* The following observations occur in *Griesbach's Preface to the Apostolical writings*. "Interim uni tamen dogmati, eique palmario, doctrinæ scilicet de verâ Jesu Christi divinitate, nonnihil a me detractum esse videri posset nonnullis, qui non solum locum istum celebratissimum, 1 Joh. v. 7. e textu ejectum, verum etiam lectionem vulgarem loci, 1 Tim. iii. 16. (ut et Act. xx. 28) dubitationi subjectam, et lectorum arbitrio permissam invenient. Quare, ut iniquas suspiciones omnes, quantum in me est, amoliar, et hominibus malevolis calumniandi ansam præripiam, primum *publicè profiteor atque Deum testor*, neutiquam me de veritate istius dogmatis dubitare: atque sunt profectò *tam multa et luculenta argumenta et Scripturæ loca*, quibus vera Deitas Christo vindicatur, ut ego quidem intelligere vix possem, quomodo, concessâ Scripturæ sacræ divinâ auctoritate, et admissis justis interpretandi regulis, dogma hoc in dubium a quoquam vocari possit. In primis, locus ille, Joh. i. 1, 2, 3, tam *perspicuus est atque omnibus exceptionibus major*, ut neque interpretum neque criticorum *ai ducibus conutibus* unquam everti, atque veritatis defensoribus eripi possit."

Reflexions upon some important misrepresentations contained in the Unitarian Version, that I must beg leave to transcribe his observations.

“ This production is not what it professes to be, a translation scrupulously adhering to the text of Griesbach, “ the most correct which has hitherto been published ;” but one, in some instances, made from a text which exists no where but in the imagination of the Translators: who, although they generally indeed follow Griesbach, yet occasionally innovate even on his innovations.” There are “ many passages of considerable length undisputed by him, the authenticity of which they represent as extremely dubious. Nor is this all. For, completely in the teeth of an intimation formally given, that “ the words, which, in the judgment of Griesbach should probably, though not certainly, be expunged, are included in brackets,” they sometimes take the liberty themselves of expunging words of this description, upon the superior decision of their own judgment. Timid, cautious, circumspective, Griesbach weighed over and over again, with anxious solicitude, the credit of a textual variation, experience having taught him wisdom; for he candidly confesses that in his first edition he had admitted several readings into the text, which in his second, uncorroborated by more recent collations, he felt himself under the necessity

of removing to the margin. But they, less exact and more intrepid, in passages where he could only discover the appearance of a probable, determine the existence of a certain, omission; and by an easy dash of the pen obliterate them altogether."

"On one occasion indeed they hazard a bolder step; and, where Griesbach adopts, without observation, the common reading, they, upon the sole authority of the Cambridge manuscript, venture upon a little interpolation, which directly converts an affirmative into a negative sentence. It is recorded of St. John, who visited with St. Peter, the sepulchre of our Lord, when Mary Magdalene had communicated to them her suspicions respecting the removal of the body, that, after he had inspected the sepulchre, "he saw and believed."* Now this passage, in direct contradiction to every other manuscript, they render, "he saw and believed *not*," adding the following note from Newcome; "So the Cambridge MS. in the Greek, but not in the Latin, translation of it. The following verse assigns a reason for the unbelief of St. John and St. Peter." The precise value of this sort of half authority, contradicted by its other half, for the manuscript in question contains a Latin, as well

* *Statement*, p. 75.

as a Greek text, it is for them to calculate and explain; but as the consistency of the narrative is urged by way of proving the necessity of their interpolation, I cannot help remarking that the common sense of the context, by which alone, I apprehend, the consistency of the narrative can be preserved, requires no such addition. The point applicable to the credence of the Apostle was, not the resurrection of our Saviour, for nothing upon that head had yet been surmised, but evidently the report of Mary Magdalene, that the body had been stolen away. When, therefore, St. John was informed of the circumstance, and examining the sepulchre, perceived the linen clothes, which had wrapped the body, lying on the ground, and the napkin, which had been bound about the head, folded together in a place by itself, can we possibly conjecture that he believed *not*?"

“ Upon the whole, then, it is, I presume, incontrovertible, that they have not uniformly adhered to the text of Griesbach. I do not indeed dispute their right to deviate from the judgment of that, or any other Critic; but I complain of their holding out false colours to the public. If they flattered themselves that they possessed talents capable of improving “ the most correct text of the original which has hitherto been published,” they were doubtless at liberty to have

made the experiment but they should have undertaken the task openly and undisguisedly. Were they apprehensive, that in such a case their competency might have been questioned, and their presumption censured?"

“Nor can I take a final leave of the subject, without again alluding to another deception practised upon the general reader. From the style of the title-page, the prolegomenal parade of the Introduction, and the perpetual attempt at manuscript erudition in the notes, he is naturally induced to consider the Version as one conducted upon principles rigidly critical; while, in truth, it is nothing more than a mere patchwork translation, solely manufactured to promote the cause of Unitarianism. When a passage occurs, which, in its obvious sense, threatens fatality to the Unitarian Creed, its sting is instantly and ingeniously extracted; what exposition the language of Scripture *can*, not what it *ought* to bear, becomes the object of investigation; and the context is twisted into subserviency to the gloss, and not the gloss made consistent with the context. The Translators indeed unreservedly confess, that they have studied “to preclude many sources of error, by divesting the sacred volume of the technical phrases of a systematic theology;” but they forget to add, that it was only in order to supercede one system by another.

If a clause admits the slightest pliability of meaning, every nerve is strained to give it a peculiar direction. Instead of enquiring, with Christian simplicity, what really *are*, they presume with philosophical arrogance upon what *must be*, the doctrines of Scripture; and substitute the deductions of reason for the dictates of revelation. Averse from established opinion, fond of novelty, and vain of singularity, they pride themselves upon a sort of mental insulation, and become captivated at every magic touch with the effluent brilliance of their own intellect. The profound researches of the most distinguished commentators and philologists they either slight or despise, unless convertible by a little dexterity of application to the aggrandizement of some favourite theory; and satiate us with the flimsy refinements and loose lucubrations of Lindsey, or of Priestley. Immoderately attached to particular doctrines, and deeply prejudiced against all others, they modify every expression in the text, and every exposition in the notes, to a sense sometimes directly favourable, but never even indirectly unfavourable, to Unitarianism; so that, in reality, always indifferent, though apparently sometimes anxious, respecting the true philological import of Scriptural language, and ever restless with the gad-fly of theological conceit, they prove themselves to be wholly incapacitated, from a defect, if not of

talent, certainly of temper, for the patient task of critical ruminati^on.”*

I have now executed, with whatever imperfection, the task which I assigned to myself, of replying to the arguments, by which you would disprove the Trinitarian doctrines; as well as to those which you have adduced, in support of some proposed alterations in the canon and text of the New testament.—In refutation of the former, which are founded upon what I conceive to be an erroneous interpretation of certain passages of Scripture, I have not only shown that those passages, when correctly considered, are not in reality unfavourable to the orthodox system, but have quoted a number of others, inexplicable on any other hypothesis.—In replying to the latter, I have either argued from your own concessions, or cited the authority of eminent critics and theologians, to some of whom you have yourself alluded in terms of the highest veneration. With them I must leave you to contend the point at issue. For myself, I beg it may be distinctly understood, that I shall write no more on the subject.

* Laurence's *Critical Reflexions*, p. 169—177.

Here then, Sir, as a *controversialist*, I take my leave of you. Bear with me, however, if, as a *Christian*, I solemnly entreat you to re-consider those doctrines, of which you have undertaken to be the advocate. Believing, as I do, that *there is none other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved but the name of Christ, that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, that he who hath the Son hath life, and he who hath not the Son of God hath not life, that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God*; believing, I say, these things, can I behold, with unconcern, a fellow-creature denying the divine nature of one, and the very existence of another of these sacred persons; and presuming, with sacrilegious audacity, to expunge from the inspired volume a part, which every version and every manuscript declares to be genuine?—And when I regard you as the spiritual guide of others, what shall I say? I cannot indeed address you in the language of an Apostle, *Take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer*, since you believe not that there is any Holy Ghost; but I may be permitted to remind you of the awful transactions of that day, when *the Son of Man*, whom you have denied to be also the *Son of God*, shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and shall say to you, *Give an account of thy stewardship*.

What will be your feelings in that day, if it shall be found that any of those, who have surrendered their belief to your direction, have made Shipwreck of their faith, and have come short of Heaven through the want of that instruction, which would have made them wise unto Salvation? I beg you to believe that, in offering these remarks to your consideration, I am actuated by a sincere desire to promote the best interests of yourself and others. Allow me to subscribe myself, in the true spirit of Christian charity,

SIR,

Your faithful humble Servant,

THOMAS HILL.

WHITWELL RECTORY,
Jan. 28, 1820.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

In pages 90 and 91, for *Corinthus* read *Cerinthus*.

W. Wheelhouse, Printer,
Nottingham.

ERRATA.

- P. 11. l. 12, for "over-suttle" read over-subtle.
P. 25. l. 20, for "hopes" read hope.
P. 29. l. 4, for "I say" read Joy.
P. 41. l. 16, for "Prophet" read the Prophet.
P. 49. l. 5, for "Exclaim" read exclaim.
P. 52. l. 23, for "recommended" read commended.
P. 75. l. 25, after "Holy Ghost" take away the full stop.
P. 83. l. 5, after "Revelation" take away the full stop.
P. 102. l. 1, after "experiment" add a semicolon.
Ibid. last line, for "supercede" read supersede.

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