DR. JOHNSON'S

LIFE OF DR. WATTS,

WITH NOTES.

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIX-PENCE.]

THE LIFE OF THE REV. ISAAC WATTS, D. D.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.

With NOTES.

CONTAINING

ANIMADVERSIONS AND ADDITIONS.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED,

A distinguishing Feature of the DOCTOR'S CHARACTER, omitted by his BIOGRAPHERS;

An authentic ACCOUNT of his last SENTIMENTS on the TRINITY; and

A COPY of a MANUSCRIPT of his never before published.

Veritatis amator sincerus et pacificus cultor.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

THAT a man of Dr. WATTS's character and talents should be held in the highest veneration by the body of Dissenters, is not at all wonderful; for all men are, by a principle of self-love, attached to their own party, which naturally leads them to think and speak highly of those who have, by any means, distinguished themselves in serving its interests.

Nor is it very extraordinary, considering the many pleasing and useful publications of which the Doctor was the author, and the amiable spirit breathed through them all, that wise and good men of different religious persuasions should be willing to give him a considerable tribute of praise.

But that a writer of Dr. JOHNSON's principles, in politics and religion, should have undertaken to be his biographer, and should have passed so high an en-

comium on his character and his writings, is a decisive evidence of the superior excellence of both. And it is very remarkable, that he who is so free in his censures of others, whose lives he has written, should find so little to blame in him. The Dissenters will think that Dr. Johnson has done himself honour in the testimony he has borne in favour of a man whose sentiments, both in ecclesiastical and political matters, were so opposite to his own; at the same time that they must be highly gratified with the honour which redounds to Dr. Watts's character from the approbation of so distinguished a writer.

It is not to be wondered at that this narrative should be so short, since a life like that of Dr. Watts, so much led in retirement, and attended with so few variations, could not furnish many historical facts. And it was to be expected that a biographer, like Dr. Johnson, whose studies were of so different a nature, would be sparing in his remarks on the Doctor's publications, of which most

moſt were of a theological and practical kind, adapted to the capacities and taſtes of the bulk of chriſtian readers, and ſeveral of them on controverſial ſubjects; nor could it be thought, that he ſhould enter minutely into the writer's diſtinguiſhing ſentiments on doctrinal matters. Nor indeed can any, who poſſeſs much knowledge of mankind, how high ſoever their veneration for the character and writings of Dr. Watts, be greatly diſappointed at any expreſſions dropped from the biographer's pen, which have the appearance of cenſure. The greater wonder is, that theſe are ſo few and inconſiderable. It might alſo be expected, that in ſuch a life, written by ſuch an author, ſome material articles ſhould be omitted or miſtaken.

On theſe conſiderations, valuable as this piece of biography is, it may not be an unacceptable ſervice to the public, eſpecially to the Proteſtant Diſſenters, if at the ſame time that they are preſented with a detached copy of Dr. Johnſon's Life of this great and good

man, a few Notes should be subjoined, either to supply the writer's defects, to correct his mistakes, or to obviate his censures.

The design of this publication cannot be thought to be superseded by Dr. GIBBONS's performance, by those who consider not merely the prolixity of that work, but the circumstance of its being written prior to that of Dr. Johnson. It is moreover a principal object with the writer of the present piece, to exhibit to the public what he thinks an important and very distinguishing part of Dr. Watts's character, which both Dr. Johnson and Dr. Gibbons have totally omitted; as also to give a true representation of his last sentiments with respect to a Doctrine which employed his thoughts and his pen more than any other disputed point in theology, and which has been generally thought of more importance, and accordingly has been the subject of more debate than almost any one besides, viz. the *Doctrine of the Trinity.*

Much

Much has been ſaid about Dr. Watts's laſt thoughts on this point, but nothing written that is ſatisfactory; perſons of different parties being deſirous to have it appear, that ſo conſiderable a man was on their ſide; while thoſe who have been the beſt able to give information on this head, have thought themſelves bound, by prudence at leaſt, to withhold it. Dr. Gibbons, among all the minute circumſtances he has recorded, has not even glanced at any thing peculiar in Dr. Watts's manner of conceiving with reſpect to this point, which he laboured more than any other, nor on that part of his hiſtory which was connected with it.

It is readily granted, that no juſt argument for or againſt any repreſentation of this doctrine, can be drawn from the ſentiments even of a Watts. But it is certainly a matter of innocent curioſity, to know what were the concluſions of ſo great and good a man, upon ſuch a point after all that he had read and thought, and written concerning it.

And it muſt be granted that the manner in which, and the temper with which, ſo able and free and candid an enquirer purſued his inveſtigations of this much diſputed article of chriſtian faith, may be of uſe to direct others, and young ſtudents eſpecially, in their enquiries concerning it.

If any thing here advanced be not ſtrictly true, it is without the writer's knowledge, as he has aſſerted nothing but what upon the moſt impartial examination he himſelf believed. And if any one is able to give the world a more juſt repreſentation of the matter, he would be the firſt to make his acknowledgments; as no one would be more highly gratified than himſelf to know what were the dying ſentiments of ſo able and pious a man as Dr. Watts, how different ſoever they might appear to be from his own.

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THE

LIFE

OF THE

Rev. ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

DR. Johnson introduces his Life of Dr. Watts with the following information: "The Poems of Dr. Watts were by my recommendation inserted in the late Collection*, the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleasure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden."

* It is possible this publication may fall into the hands of some who need to be informed, that the Collection referred to is, *The Works of the English Poets, with Prefaces Biographical, and Critical, in Sixty-two Volumes*; and that Dr. Johnson wrote these PREFACES, which were afterwards printed by themselves, in Four Volumes 8vo. from whence the following Life of Dr. Watts is extracted.

We ſhall give this learned and maſterly writer's account of WATTS at length, that the reader may form the more impartial judgment concerning it, and by way of NOTE ſhall offer ſome animadverſions on ſuch parts of it as appear to be erroneous or exceptionable, and ſubjoin various additional Anecdotes.

"ISAAC WATTS was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the ſame name, kept a boarding-ſchool for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a ſhoe-maker [A]. He appears,

[A] This "report" is by no means "common." The Editor, who has often heard Mr. Watts ſpoken of, never met with it before. And it is ſurpriſing this author ſhould have introduced it, at leaſt without a mark of the ſtrongeſt diſapprobation; ſince it evidently appears to be totally void of foundation, from Dr. Gibbons's Life of Dr. Watts, (which our author had read) in the firſt page of which he mentions it, in a note, as a well-known matter of fact, that the Doctor's Father "was the maſter of a flouriſhing Boarding-School at "Southampton, which was in ſuch reputation, that "gentlemen's ſons were ſent to it from America and "the Weſt-Indies for education." It is indeed of little conſequence what any man's extraction was: but if the fact be well known, why ſhould any idle reports be mentioned which have the appearance of a diſparagement?

from

from the narrative of Dr. *Gibbons*, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

"Isaac, the eldest of nine children, was given to books from his infancy, and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old. I suppose, at home.

"He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorn, a clergyman, master of the Free-school at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his scholar afterwards inscribed a Latin Ode [B].

"His proficiency at school was so conspicuous, that a subscription was proposed for his support at the University; but he declared his resolution to take his lot with the Dissenters [C]. Such he was as every Christian Church would rejoice to have adopted.

"He

[B] This elegant and truly classical ode, was written at the age of twenty. It is inserted in the Lyric Poems, and Dr. Gibbons has given a copy of it, with a good English Translation, *Memoirs*, p. 7—18.

[C] This resolution was the more remarkable, as his Father had suffered much for his Nonconformity. A circumstance which, taken in connexion with the respect shewn to the son by the members of the established church, affords a striking proof that in his determination to take his lot with the Dissenters, he was actuated purely by a regard to *conscience*. It was therefore surprising

"He therefore repaired in 1690 to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-students Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Horte, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam. Some Latin Essays, supposed to have been written as exercises at this academy, shew a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study.

"He was, as he hints in his Miscellanies, a maker of verses from fifteen to fifty, and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verses to his brother, in the *glyconick* measure, written when he was seventeen, are remarkably easy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindarick folly then prevailing, and are written with such neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has such copiousness and splendour, as shews that he

prising that his biographer (especially after the high encomium which follows) should, in the close of this piece, have suggested any thing like a reflection upon him for his Nonconformity. But of this further notice will be taken hereafter.

was but a very little distance from excellence. His method of study was to impress the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them, and by interleaving them to amplify one system with supplements from another [D].

"With the congregation of his tutor, Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe [E], Independents, he communicated in his nineteenth year.

"At

[D] It was customary with Dr. Watts, to make remarks in the margin of his books, and in the blank leaves to write an account of what was most distinguishing in them, to insert his opinion of the whole, to state his objections to what he thought exceptionable, and to illustrate and confirm what appeared to him just and important. The writer of these notes has seen several of the Doctor's books with such MS. observations, and he has one now before him, entitled *A Treatise of Human Reason*, from whence he will transcribe some of the Doctor's remarks in an *Appendix*, as a specimen of his manner, which he apprehends the reader will not only esteem as a curiosity, but value for their intrinsic worth.

[E] From Dr. *Gibbons*'s account this is *indubitable*. Dr. *Watts* afterwards ranked among the Independent ministers: a character which indeed more properly belongs to Dissenting Ministers in general than any other; for they and their churches are totally independent of each other, and in religious matters are subject to no foreign

"At the age of twenty he left the academy, and spent two years in study and devotion [F] at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness; and had the happiness, indulged to few parents, of living to see his son eminent for literature and venerable for piety. He was then entertained by Sir John Hartopp five years, as domestic tutor to his son; and in that time particularly devoted himself to the study of

reign jurisdiction whatever. A principle in itself highly rational, and most favourable to religious Liberty, as well as most agreeable to the scripture-plan; in which no traces of a national church, or ecclesiastical authority, are to be found.

[F] In this he discovered singular wisdom, and this it was that mostly contributed to his future greatness. Happy are those young ministers who have opportunity for following a like course, and thrice happy they who have wisdom to improve it. It is much to be lamented, that Dissenting Ministers (who are expected to preach their own sermons, generally two in a week, and these new compositions, of much greater length than is usual in the establishment, as well as to pray from their own conception) should enter on their public work at so early a period as they often do, some being not twenty years of age and many but little more. A year or two spent in retirement, or with an aged minister, would contribute more to qualify them for the ministerial function, than all their academical studies.

the

the Holy Scriptures; and being chosen assistant to Dr. Chauncy, preached the first time on the birth-day that compleated his twenty-fourth year; probably considering that as the day of his second nativity, by which he entered on a new period of existence.

"In about three years he succeeded Dr. Chauncy; but soon after his entrance on his charge, he was seized by a dangerous illness, which sunk him to such weakness, that the congregation thought an assistant necessary, and appointed Mr. Price [G]. His health then returned gradually, and he performed his duty till (1712) he was seized by a fever of such violence and continuance, that, from the feebleness which it brought upon him, he never perfectly recovered.

"This calamitous state made the compassion of his friends necessary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Thomas Abney, who received him into his house; where, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated, for thirty-six years, with all the

[G] A gentleman of excellent character and abilities. He was uncle to the present Rev. Richard Price, D.D. F.R.S.

kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters [H] to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him. A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial [I];

[H] Of whom the last survivor, Mrs. *Elizabeth Abney*, was the lady to whom Dr. *Gibbons* dedicated his Life of Dr. *Watts*. She died at *Stoke Newington*, Aug. 20, 1782. Her character for piety, prudence, and benevolence, was worthy of one who had enjoyed the instructions and example of such a man as Dr. *Watts*. In her last will she discovered a singular instance of a public spirit, leaving all the produce of her estates (after the payment of several discreet and benevolent legacies) to be disposed of for charitable purposes, at the discretion of her executors.

[I] How honourable and happy would it be for gentlemen of fortune, and for their families, as well as for the Clergy themselves, if "Coalitions" like this were more frequent. How lamentable is it, that those who are honoured with the name of Chaplains to our great men, have so seldom any other advantage from such a connection than a promotion to a living, and are no further useful to their patrons, than to attend them in their diversions, or canvass for them at an election!

and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbons's representation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewise to multitudes besides. [*This long Quotation from Dr.* Gibbons *we shall here throw into the margin* *.]

"If

* "Our next observation shall be made upon that remarkably kind providence which brought the Doctor into Sir Thomas Abney's family, and continued him there till his death, a period of no less than thirty-six years. In the midst of his sacred labours for the glory of God, and good of his generation, he is seized with a most violent and threatning fever, which leaves him oppressed with great weakness, and put a stop at least to his public services for four years.

"In this distressing season, doubly so to his active and pious spirit, he is invited to Sir Thomas Abney's family, nor ever removes from it till he had finished his days. Here he enjoyed the uninterrupted demonstrations of the truest friendship. Here without any care of his own, he had every thing which could contribute to the enjoyment of life, and favour the unwearied pursuits of his studies. Here he dwelt in a family, which, for piety, order, harmony, and every virtue, was an house of God, where he had the privilege of country recess, the fragrant bower, the spreading lawn, the flowery garden, and other advantages, to sooth his mind and aid his restoration to health; to yield him, whenever he chose them, most grateful intervals from his laborious studies, and en-

"able

"If this quotation has appeared long, let it be considered that it comprises an account of six and thirty years, and those the years of Dr. Watts.

"able him to return to them, with redoubled vigour "and delight.

"Had it not been for this most happy event, he might "as to outward view, have feebly, it may be painfully, "dragged on through many more years of languor, and "inability for public service, and even for profitable "study, or perhaps might have sunk into his grave "under the overwhelming load of infirmities in the "midst of his days; and thus the church and world "would have been deprived of those many excellent "sermons and works, which he drew up and published "during his long residence in this family. In a few "years after his coming hither, Sir Thomas Abney "dies; but his amiable consort survives, who shews "the Doctor the same respect and friendship as before, "and most happily for him and great numbers besides; "for, as her riches were great, her generosity and mu-"nificence were in full proportion; her thread of life "was drawn out to a great age, even beyond that of "the Doctor's; and thus this excellent man, through "her kindness and that of her daughter, the present "Mrs. Elizabeth Abney *, who in a like degree es-"teemed and honoured him, enjoyed all the benefits "and felicities he experienced at his first entrance into "this family, till his days were numbered and finished, "and, like a shock of corn in its season, he ascended "into the regions of perfect and immortal life and joy."

* Mentioned in Note (u).

"From

"From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwise diversified than by successive publications. The series of his works I am not able to deduce [J]; their number and variety, shew the intenseness of his industry and the extent of his capacity.

"He

[J] The Doctor's Works are collected in six volumes Quarto. The following is a compleat Catalogue of them with the Titles abridged:

1. Sermons on various Subjects.—2. A Guide to Prayer.—3. The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.—4. Seven Dissertations on Ditto.—5. Death and Heaven.—6. A Defence against the Temptations to Self-murder.—7. A Caveat against Infidelity.—8. The Strength and Weakness of human Reason.—9. An humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion.—10. Discourses on the Love of God; and the Use and Abuse of the Passions.—11. The Redeemer and Sanctifier.—12. The Holiness of Times and Places.—13. A Book of Catechisms, in Number 5.—14. Prayers for Children.—15. A short View of the whole Scripture History.—16. Humility represented in the Character of St. Paul.—17. Self-Love and Virtue reconciled by Religion.—18. The World to come.—19. The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind.—20. The Harmony of all Religions which God ever prescribed.—21. Orthodoxy and Charity united.—22. The Rational Foundation of a Christian Church.—23. Useful and Important Questions concerning Jesus Christ.—24. The Glory of Christ as God-man.

"He was one of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of style [K].

He

man.—25. Evangelical Discourses.—26. A Reformation Sermon.—27. Sermon on the Death of George I.—28. Nine Sermons in the Bury-street Collection.—29. Questions for Students in Divinity.—30. A short Essay towards the Improvement of Psalmody.—31. Lyric Poems.—32. The Psalms of David imitated.—33. Hymns and Spiritual Songs.—34. Divine Songs for Children.—35. Logic.—36. The Improvement of the Mind.—37. A Second Part PSS. and a Discourse on Education.—38. The Knowledge of the Heavens and Earth made easy.—39. Philosophical Essays.—40. The Art of reading and writing English.—41. The Doctrine of the Passions.—42. Miscellaneous Thoughts in Prose and Verse.—43. Remnants of Time improved.—44. Essay on the Freedom of the Will.—45. Essay of Civil Power in Things sacred.—46. Essay on Charity-Schools

A late publication, entitled the Doctor's PSS. Works, was a shameful imposture.

[K] What occasion had Dr. Johnson for this sarcasm? or what foundation was there for it in truth? If the Dissenters had universally been as destitute of the graces of language as he supposes, surely they might have learnt something from the more polished compositions of the established clergy, to whose works they were not

utter

He shewed them that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction. He continued to the end of his life the teacher [L] of a congregation, and no reader of

utter strangers. But it does not appear that in regard to elegance of style these had so much preference, before Dr. *Watts's* time, as the above paragraph takes for granted. Divines of all parties at that period were less attentive to the graces of language than they have been since. It is certain that many writers of the church of England were chargeable with as much "coarseness "and inelegance of style" as the generality of Dissenters; as also that some Dissenting Writers before Dr. Watts's time had acquired as polished a diction as most of their brethren of the establishment. In this view the writings of Dr. *Bates* will bear a comparison with those of any in his day. But be the writings of Dissenters what they might, at this period, there is no evidence that they afterwards owed their improvement to Dr. Watts. Nor indeed does it appear that Dr. Watts's style altogether deserves the encomium here passed upon it. It is certain that some of his contemporaries in point of style at least fully equalled him without imitating him. So did Dr. *Grosvenor*, Dr. *Evans*, Dr. *Foster*, and others.

[L] The use of this term "Teacher of a congregation," which High-church men affect to apply to Dissenting ministers, is invidious and contemptible; tho' in fact the office which it imports is truly honourable. To teach men the knowledge of divine things, by a constant course of preaching, with "fidelity and diligence," and especially to do it with success, is in reality infinitely

of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance, made his discourses very efficacious [M]. I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foster [N] had gained by his proper delivery, to my friend Dr. Hawkesworth, who told

finitely more to any man's honour than to enjoy two or three fat benefices; or to be called *right reverend fathers in God*, and sit among the senators of the land, as is the case with some who are scarcely seen in a pulpit three times in the year, and therefore certainly ought not to be called *Teachers of congregations*.

[M] "Made his discourses very efficacious." This expression is not a specimen of "the graces of language" which this writer speaks of. But the principal objection to it is, that it is destitute of theological propriety, and unworthy an orthodox member of the church of England. That which gives efficacy to the ministry of the word, Dr. Watts would have said, is, not any thing in the manner of the preacher, but the influence of divine grace. We have a yet higher authority for saying, *neither is he that planteth nor he that watereth any thing, but God that giveth the increase*.

[N] Why not *Doctor* Foster? He certainly had a Diploma. It is much to be questioned whether Dr. Hawkesworth's assertion respecting his inferiority to Dr. Watts, *as a speaker*, be just.

me,

me, that in the art of his pronunciation, he was far inferior to Dr. Watts.

"Such was his flow of thoughts, and such his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life, he did not precompose his cursory sermons; but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

"He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations; for as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it [o].

"At the conclusion of weighty sentences, he gave time, by a short pause, for the proper

[o] It does not appear that Dr. Watts used *no* action in the pulpit. According to Dr. Gibbons he used *but little*, but it is not clear that the reason here assigned was a true one. Tho' it be acknowledged that "corporeal "actions have no correspondence with theological "truth," nevertheless when they are natural and unaffected, as they indicate the fervour of the preacher, they also have a tendency to engage the attention of the hearer, and thus may have their use as a means to "enforce" his doctrine.

impression.

impression [p]. To stated and public instruction, he added familiar visits and personal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which conversation offered of diffusing and increasing the influence of religion.

"By his natural temper, he was quick of resentment; but, by his established and habitual practice, he was gentle, modest, and inoffensive.

[p] This anecdote concerning Dr. Watts's *preaching* is taken from Dr. Gibbons, who in the same place (p. 144) gives an account of his manner in *Prayer* which is worthy of attention, particularly of their's who are called to lead the devotions of Dissenting Congregations. That Dr. Johnson passed this over in silence was probably owing to his aversion to the Dissenting mode of praying *extempore*. If all who practise that mode imitated this great man, the principal objections against it would be removed. It will not be displeasing to the reader if the passage here alluded to be transcribed.—"In prayer it might perhaps be truly said that he excelled himself. It was throughout an address to Deity, not in florid expressions, not in long and involved sentences, but in easy and unadorned language, and rather short and weighty periods. There was an extent [in his prayers] which comprehended every proper subject, and at the same time such a brevity of expression on each of them, that at the conclusion an hearer might find himself at a loss to conceive what more or less could have been said. The like pauses were

inoffensive. His tenderness [Q] appeared in his attention to children, and to the poor.

To

" were observed by him in prayer as in preaching, if not " rather longer. He was most serious in this part of " sacred worship."

[Q] His *tenderness* appeared not in these instances only; he possessed all the softer affections in a high degree. Tho' he spent his days in celibacy he was not unsusceptible of very *tender* impressions from female charms; witness his regard to Mrs. *Singer*, afterwards Mrs. *Rowe*, to whom, under the name of *Philomela*, he inscribed a Poem, inserted in his *Horæ Lyricæ*. To this circumstance Dr. *Young* has been supposed to refer in some well-known lines, in his 5th *Satyr*. The reader will here naturally recollect Dr. Watts's Ode to the *Countess of Sunderland*, for which he made an unnecessary apology, which Dr. *Gibbons* has as unnecessarily repeated. (*Memoirs*, p. 130) where there is a copy of this Ode, which is dated 1712. As it was never published in any of the Doctor's works, it will not be unacceptable here. It was written at *Tunbridge Wells*, when the Duke of *Marlborough's* three daughters were at that place, who had been celebrated by other bards in a manner which the Doctor thought conveyed no just praise.

An ODE *to the* LADY SUNDERLAND, 1712.

I.

Fair nymph ascend to beauty's throne,
And rule that radiant world alone;
Let favourites take thy lower sphere *;
Not monarchs are thy rivals here.

* Alluding to her late removal from the Court of Queen Anne.

To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue, though the whole was not an hundred a year; and for children, he con-

II.

The court of beauty built ſublime
Defies all pow'r but heav'n and time;
Envy that clouds the hero's ſky
Aims but in vain her ſhafts ſo high.

III.

Not *Blenheim*'s field, nor *Iſter*'s flood,
Nor Standards dy'd in Gallic blood,
Torn from the foe, add nobler grace
To Churchill's houſe than *Spenſer*'s face.

IV.

The warlike thunder of his arms
Is leſs commanding than her charms;
His lightning ſtrikes with leſs ſurpriſe
Than ſudden glances from her eyes,

V.

His captives feel their limbs confin'd
In iron, ſhe enſlaves the mind;
We follow with a pleaſing pain,
And bleſs the conqueror and the chain.

VI.

The Muſe, that dares in numbers do
What paint and pencil never knew,
Faints at her preſence in deſpair,
And owns th' inimitable fair.

On the ſight of theſe beautiful lines a certain divine compoſed the following; in which it is difficult to ſay, whether

condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man, acquainted with the common principles

whether he has paid a greater compliment to the Author or to the Lady he had celebrated.

While num'rous bards have sounded Spenser's name,
And made her beauties heirs to lasting fame,
Her mem'ry still to their united lays
Stands less indebted than to Watts's praise.
What wond'rous charms must to that fair be giv'n
Who mov'd a mind that dwelt so near to Heav'n!

Whatever apology any of the Doctor's grave readers might think necessary for the above piece of gallantry, he certainly more needed one for having in many of his devotional pieces, transferred his *tender* expressions and feelings from a human beauty to a divine; which he has done in such a manner, that he thought it necessary in his preface to the *Lyric Poems*, p. 23. to make the following declaration. "Among the Songs that are dedi-"cated to *divine love*, I think I may be bold to assert, "that I never composed one line of them with any other "design than what they are applied to here; and I have "endeavoured to secure them all from being perverted "and debased to wanton passions, by several lines in "them that can never be applied to a meaner love." In a Note he apologizes for those in particular which are grounded on *Solomon's Songs*.

of human action, will look with veneration on the writer who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year.

"A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach."

"As his mind was capacious, his curiosity excursive, and his industry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his subjects various. With his theological works [R] I am only enough acquainted to admire his meekness of opposition, and his mildness of censure. It was not only in his book but in his mind that orthodoxy was united with charity [S]. Of his philosophical pieces, his Logick

[R] Dr. Johnson here refers to his *polemical* pieces in Theology, which in number and size are the least considerable. Most of his theological pieces are of a devotional and practical nature. These consisted chiefly of Sermons, all of which it would have been worth the Biographer's while to have read and characterized.

[S] This book, though written with an excellent spirit, and a most important design, has been held in as little estimation as any of the Doctor's pieces, having gone through only one edition. Bigots on all sides (for such there are) usually express more disgust at what is designed to reconcile contending parties, than at what is pointed

Logick has been received into the universities, and therefore wants no private recommendation: if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it must be considered that no man who undertakes merely to methodise or illustrate a system, pretends to be its author.

"In his metaphysical disquisitions it was observed by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of *space* with that of *empty space*; and did not consider that though space might be without matter, yet matter being extended, could not be without space.

"Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his Improvement of the Mind, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's Conduct of the Understanding, but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with

pointed with the greatest severity against either; and are disposed to give no quarter to a man who is of no party because he will not be of theirs. Of this Dr. Watts was sufficiently sensible; which occasioned that remark of his which Dr. Gibbons has recorded. "A moderate "man must expect a box on both ears."

deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended.

"I have mentioned his treatises of Theology as distinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his incessant solicitude for souls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works: under his direction it may be truly said, Theologiæ Philosophia ancillatur, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason is on a sudden compelled to pray [T].

"It was therefore [U] with great propriety that, 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aber-

[T] This is a high compliment paid to Dr. Watts's piety; but though it is founded in truth, it is perhaps rather over-strained. That every reader should be compelled to pray is certainly an hyperbolical expression. *Query*, In case of such an impulse what FORM would be adopted? The author must surely have intended *extemporary prayer!*

[U] The word "therefore" should have been omitted. It cannot be supposed that it was an account of the

Aberdeen an unſolicited diploma, by which he became a Doctor of Divinity. Academical honours would have more value, if they were always beſtowed with equal judgment. He continued many years to ſtudy and to preach, and to do good by his inſtruction and example; till at laſt the infirmities of age diſabled him from the more laborious part of his miniſterial functions, and being no longer capable of public duty, he offered to remit the ſalary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the reſignation.

"By degrees his weakneſs increaſed, and at laſt confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired Nov. 25, 1748, in the ſeventy-fifth year of his age.

"Few men have left behind ſuch purity of character, or ſuch monuments of laborious piety. He has provided inſtruction for all ages, from thoſe who are liſping their firſt leſſons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither cor-

the pious tendency of his writings that the Doctor received a Diploma, which is uſually conſidered as a teſtimony of a man's literary merit.

poreal nor ſpiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reaſoning and the ſcience of the ſtars. His character, therefore, muſt be formed from the multiplicity and diverſity of his attainments, rather than from any ſingle performance; for it would not be ſafe to claim for him the higheſt rank in any ſingle denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different purſuits.

"As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have ſtood high among the authors with whom he is now aſſociated. For his judgment was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice diſcernment; his imagination, as the Dacian Battle proves, was vigorous and active, and the ſtores of knowledge were large by which his fancy was to be ſupplied. His ear was well tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unſatisfactory.

"The paucity of its topics enforces perpetual repetition, and the ſanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction.

diction [v]. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well [w]. His poems on other subjects

[v] The above passage relating to devotional poetry is a very extraordinary one, and the writer's remarks appear to be destitute of any solid foundation. What are there no sacred poems which are satisfactory? Why so? The reasons here assigned are singular and contrary to fact. It is surprising the writer should urge "the "paucity of religious topics," and equally so that he should say, "the sanctity of the matter rejects the or-"nament of figurative diction." There is nothing whatever whose topics are so various as those which religion supplies, or which are better adapted to admit of poetical images. Religion comprehends all the perfections and works of Deity—the wonders of nature and providence—the greater wonders of grace and redemption—the incarnation, the life, the miracles, the sufferings, the death and resurrection of the Son of God—the awful scenes of mortality—the final resurrection of the dead—the solemnities of the universal judgment, and of an eternal state of existence—as well as the sublime virtues of piety to God, and of benevolence to men. These general subjects, with all their subordinates, supply an infinite variety of topics, and they seem to admit of a figurative diction, at least equally with any other. Witness the sublime composures of many of the sacred writers, particularly those of the prophets, in which the loftiest images and the boldest figures are introduced in almost every line.

[w] It seems very surprising that the author should have taken no notice of Dr. Watts's *Translation of the Psalms*

subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a Man of Letters, and have different degrees of value, as

Psalms of David, which is generally allowed to be his capital production in poetry, with which in point of utility, none of his other pieces will bear a comparison, and which, considered as a composition for the use of Christian Societies, may justly be pronounced superior to every work of the kind. The translation of *Tate* and *Brady*, and that of *Merrick*, are not on the whole to be compared with this of *Watts*, in the use of which the Dissenting congregations enjoy an advantage for rational and evangelical devotion in the delightful exercise of psalmody far superior to what the Church of England can yet boast, in the few parishes where the wretched verses of *Sternhold* and *Hopkins* are rejected. It is very surprising, that the governors of the Church should not better consult the edification of her members.

Besides the above translation of the *Psalms*, Dr. Watts composed a volume of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, of which Dr. Johnson has taken no notice, which though not equal to the former, contain many specimens of sublime and devotional poetry, well calculated for the edification of christian societies, and which are highly recommended by the plainness of the composition and the smoothness of the verse. If in some instances they may be thought less judicious than the *Psalms*, it ought to be admitted as an apology, that the author was very young, some of them being composed when he was actually a school boy. Many have wished that the Doctor

in

as they are more or less laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

in his mature age had corrected what it is said he freely acknowledged to be faulty in some of these composures. Some have asserted that this is what he intended doing, and actually had done. It may not be improper in this place to take notice of what has been lately published to the world on this subject, by the Rev. Mr. *B. Williams*, in his preface to his *Collection of Psalms*. Speaking of the Doctor's unconfined charity, and his "wish to avoid every word in his poetical composures, designed for public worship, which was likely to give the smallest offence to serious christians of any denomination," he relates the following anecdote. "When he found, in the latter part of his life, that "he had not been so successful in this respect as he had "aimed to be, he wished for nothing more ardently "than sufficient health and time to revise both his "Psalms and Hymns, in order to render them wholly "unexceptionable to every christian professor." This account he says, in a note, "was received from Dr. "Watts himself, a few years before his death, by the "late Dr. *Amory*, and by him given to one of his pu-"pils, who communicated it to the Editor." He then says, "the editor has also good authority to add, that "the revisal so fervently wished for was undertaken and "finished, and would most certainly have been publish-"ed, had not the author's death unhappily prevented." Without impeaching this writer's veracity, the evidence of the fact is by no means satisfactory. What became of the

vention [x]. He writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse: the rhymes are not always sufficiently cor-

the copy thus corrected? Mr. *Parker*, the Doctor's amanuensis, knows of no such thing, and never heard of the author's having such a design; which indeed appears highly improbable. A man of Dr. Watts's knowledge of the world could hardly expect that he should be able to make every thing in these compositions universally unexceptionable, as the alterations which would have gratified one party, would have equally offended another.

The writer of this heard Dr. *Amory* relate a conversation between Mr. *Grove* and Dr. *Watts*, concerning the Book of Hymns, which does not well agree with the above account. It was as follows. Mr. *Grove* remarked to the Doctor, that several of the Hymns laid the stress of our redemption on the compassion of Christ, rather than on the love of God, and expressed his wish that he would alter them in this respect, and make them more conformable to the scripture doctrine. The Doctor replied, that he should be glad to do it, but it was out of his power, for he had parted with the copy, and the bookseller would not suffer any such alteration.

It is remarkable, that so low was the author's expectation with regard to the success of this publication, that, it is said, he received no more than ten pounds for the original copy.

[x] This account of the Doctor's poetry on common subjects, seems to be much below the mark, and not very consistent with what had been said in some preceding passages.

respondent. He is particularly unhappy [y] in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously pure; but who is there that, to so much piety and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of sprightliness and vigour? He is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed by his verses or his prose, to imitate him in all but his non-conformity [z], to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.

[y] The contrary to this is what some have thought to be true, so that it might almost be questioned, whether there be not an error of the press here, and that the word *happy* should not be read instead of *unhappy*.

[z] Is not this exception, and even the mention of this circumstance, a striking proof of Dr. Johnson's bigotted attachment to the national established mode of worship? "Reverence to God" [or rather *for* God] and benevolence to man, are the two grand essentials of religion. He that possesses these is a true christian, whatever be the external mode of worship which he adopts. Neither his Conformity nor his Nonconformity will exclude him from the divine favour, nor ought it to be matter of censure to his fellow-creatures. If a man, in uniting with any christian community, appears to follow the dictates of his own conscience, and to act conformably to his principles, he deserves the esteem of all

all parties, and to object to his peculiarity of religious profession is the mark of a little mind.

That Dr. Watts was conscientious in his Nonconformity there can be no doubt. Dr. Johnson acknowledges that "any denomination of christians would have "been glad to have received him." If he could have conformed to the national church, doubtless he might have had preferment in it equal to what some of his fellow-students obtained. He neither had, nor could he expect, any such emoluments among the Dissenters. On what principle then could he "resolve to take his lot with them" but that of CONSCIENCE? If he had complied with the terms of conformity while he thought them unlawful, he had violated his conscience, and lost his integrity. Was not his Nonconformity then laudable?

Considering what the terms of ministerial conformity are, it may be justly questioned, whether if all the clergy were equally conscientious, one half of them would not be Dissenters. To declare an *assent and consent to* ALL and EVERY THING *contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, the book of Common-prayer*, &c. (which comprehend such a prodigious number of particulars; many of them very disputable, some of them unintelligible, and others exploded by the wisest and best of men) is such a requisition as it is hard to be conceived the generality of the clergy can *bona fide* approve. It is indeed well known that most of them, and even of the Bishops themselves, disbelieve some of the doctrinal articles of the church, as appears from the general strain of their preaching and of their writings, and that they profess to subscribe them only as articles of peace. If the terms of conformity were a declaration that they *did not believe* "all and every thing, &c." it is undeniable that many (not to say the

the most) of those that conform might very conscientiously make it. Whether therefore their subscription to the present terms be consistent with simplicity and godly sincerity, it behoves them seriously to enquire. If they think that such a subscription would, in them, be a gross prevarication, and rather than be charged with it, willingly forego the advantages of being in their church, they ought at least to be respected as honest men. And if Dr. Johnson had studied the grounds of Nonconformity (which he appears not to have done), he might have entertained a better opinion of the understandings of Protestant Dissenters as well as their integrity. But this is not the place for entering into that controversy.

With regard to Dr. Watts, supposing him to be mistaken in his judgment of the matters in debate between the Church of England and Dissenters, that "Reverence for God," which Dr. Johnson acknowledges he possessed, was the very thing which made him a Dissenter. He made the word of God the rule of his faith and practice. He could not submit to human impositions in matters of religion. He dared not yield to such terms of communion as the Holy Scriptures have not prescribed. His judgment did not approve many things which the Church of England enjoins, and his conscience would not allow him to profess to believe as true what he thought to be false, or to practise as right what he apprehended to be wrong. Why then is he censured for his Nonconformity? and why is it suggested that it would be *unhappy* for any to imitate him in it, though they should be actuated by the same noble principles? An inspired apostle has said, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing that he alloweth." And again, "This is our rejoicing the testimony of our

consci-

conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have our conversation in the world." The principal source of *happiness* is "a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man." He that has this must be "happy," and he ought to be respected. Dr. Johnson therefore had much better have said, "Happy indeed is that reader who is disposed by his verses or his prose, to imitate him in his impartial enquiry after truth, and in following the dictates of his own conscience, in his reverence towards God and his benevolence to men, whether he be a Conformist or a Nonconformist."

A SUP-

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SUPPLEMENT

TO

DR. GIBBONS's CHARACTER

OF THE

REV. ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

THE Character of Dr. Watts as drawn by the Rev. and worthy Dr. Gibbons, who perhaps had as good opportunity of judging concerning it as any man now living*, appears truly amiable and excellent. The ſubſtance of it is as follows. " His truth and ſincerity were very conſpicuous. In him there was nothing that could be ſtyled art or deſign.—He never diſcovered in his behaviour

* Since this was written, this good man has been called from off the ſtage of life. See a juſt character of him in his funeral Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Davies.

or conversation any thing like an high opinion of himself—nor did he shew a disposition to traduce or depreciate the characters or abilities of others—As to food and drinks he was very moderate and exemplary.—There was nothing in him which betrayed a penurious temper, or a desire to lay up treasures on earth. He was rich, but it was in good works.—He never discovered any thing like furious zeal, or a narrow decisive spirit, but cordially embraced all whom he esteemed the genuine disciples of his Lord; and no party names, or variety of sentiments in matters of doubtful disputation and different modes of worship, could separate him in affection from such as he had reason to apprehend loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.—His soul which glowed with gratitude for the favours he received from any, was also eminent for its friendship.—He was nobly avaricious of his time, and ever watchful to improve it."——This character of Dr. Watts, none who knew him, or are acquainted with his writings, will be disposed to call in question. His eminent piety and devotion to God, not professedly mentioned in this chapter, the reader is to take for granted,

and

and ſufficient proof, it might be thought, had been given elſewhere.

But there was one very diſtinguiſhing feature in his character, which this biographer, as well as Dr. Johnſon has entirely paſſed over, tho' of peculiar importance in a chriſtian miniſter, and that was "His LOVE OF TRUTH, and his freedom, impartiality, diligence and humility in his enquiries after it." Dr. Gibbons ſurely could not have failed to obſerve ſtriking proofs of this in his intercourſes with him, as well as in his writings. This omiſſion is the more ſurpriſing, as ſuch a man as Dr. Gibbons, who is the tutor of an academy, cannot but highly approve ſuch a character, and it may well be ſuppoſed would recommend the imitation of it to his pupils. It is indeed a character but ſeldom to be met with, and therefore ought to be noticed with peculiar approbation. In Dr. Watts it was conſpicuous in a very eminent degree. There are many paſſages in his writings which might be produced in proof of it, but one extract ſhall ſuffice from his *Improvement of the Mind*, a book on which Dr. Johnſon has paſſed a very high and deſerved encomium, tho' with-

out any reference to this part of the Doctor's character; a circumstance not very surprising in him, who was a slave to established modes of faith and worship.

"While you are in search after truth, (says Dr. Watts *) in questions of a doubtful nature, or such as you have not yet thoroughly examined, keep up a just indifference for either side of the question, if you would be led honestly into the truth: for a desire or inclination leaning to either side, biasses the judgment strangely; whereas by this indifference for every thing but truth, you will be excited to examine fairly instead of presuming, and your assent will be secured from going beyond your evidence.

For the most part people are born to their opinions, and never question the truth of what their family or their country or their party profess. They clothe their minds as they do their bodies after the fashion in vogue, nor one of a hundred ever examines [his] principles. It is suspected of Lukewarmness to suppose examination necessary, and it will be charged as a tendency to apostasy if we go about to examine them. Persons are ap-

* Imp. of the Mind, p. 285. 3d Edit.

plauded

plauded for presuming they are in the right, and as Mr. *Locke* saith, he that considers and enquires into the reason of things is counted a foe to orthodoxy, because possibly he may deviate from some of the received doctrines. And thus men without any industry or acquisition of their own, lazy and idle as they are, inherit *local truths*, i. e. the truths of that place where they live, and are inured to assent without evidence. This hath a long and unhappy influence; for if a man can bring his mind once to be positive and fierce for propositions whose evidence he hath never examined, and that in matters of the greatest concernment, he will naturally follow this short and easy way of judging and believing in cases of less moment; and build all his opinions upon insufficient grounds.

In determining a question, especially when it is a matter of difficulty and importance, do not take up with partial examination, but turn your thoughts on all sides to gather in all the light you can toward the solution of it. Take time, and use all the helps that are to be attained before you fully determine.—If it be a question which is to be determined by reason and argument, then your exami-

nation is partial,—when you consider only the advantages of it, and the reasons for it, and neglect to think of the reasons against it—when you resolve to determine it by natural reason only, when you might be assisted by supernatural revelation; or when you decide the point by some word or sentence, or by some part of revelation, without comparing it with other parts, which might give further light. It is also a culpable partiality, if you examine some doubtful or pretended vision or revelation without the use of reason.

Take heed lest some darling notion, some favourite hypothesis, some beloved doctrine, or some common but unexamined opinion, be made the test of the truth or falsehood of all other propositions about the same subject. —Take heed of receiving any wrong turn in your early judgment of things; be watchful as far as possible against any false bias which may be given to the understanding, especially in younger years.

Have a care of interesting your warm and religious zeal in those matters which are not sufficiently evident in themselves, or which are not fully and thoroughly examined and

proved;

proved: for this zeal, whether right or wrong, when it is once engaged, will have a powerful influence to establish your own minds in those doctrines which are really doubtful, and to stop up all the avenues of further light. This will bring upon the soul a sort of sacred awe and dread of Heresy; with a divine concern to maintain whatever opinion you have espoused as divine, tho' perhaps you have espoused it without any just evidence, and ought to have renounced it as false and pernicious. We ought to be zealous for the most important points of our religion, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; but we ought not to employ this sacred fervour of spirit in the service of any article, till we have seen it made out with plain and strong conviction that it is a necessary or important point of faith or practice. Zeal must not reign over the powers of our understandings, but obey them.—Even the most sublime and mysterious doctrines of revelation are not to be believed without a reason for it; nor should our pious affections be engaged in the defence of them, till we have plain and convincing proof that they are certainly revealed."

The man who was capable of giving ſuch advice as this for the inveſtigation of truth (and many other paſſages of a ſimilar nature are to be found in his writings) one would naturally ſuppoſe to be himſelf a ſincere lover of truth, and a diligent humble impartial enquirer after it. And it is well known that his conduct agreed with the advice he gave. Few men have been found who have more entirely diveſted themſelves of the prejudices of education, or who have diſcovered a greater impartiality of enquiry and openneſs to conviction than Dr. Watts. Tho' he was not haſty in giving up his early opinions, and was very far from affecting a love of novelty in his religious ſentiments, it may be truly ſaid of him that he ſought for truth "as for hidden treaſures." He was willing to receive light from every quarter, and ready to embrace whatever upon free enquiry appeared to be the truth, however contrary to his former ſentiments, or to the prevailing opinions of thoſe in the higheſt reputation for the ſoundneſs of their faith; to whatever cenſures he might be expoſed from bigots of all parties, or from thoſe perſons whom he moſt eſteemed, and whoſe good opinion he was moſt ſolicitous to preſerve.

Accordingly

Accordingly it is well known that he did in various particulars differ in judgment from those on the one hand who have claimed the character of *Orthodox*, as well as from those on the other who have complimented themselves with the title of *Rational*. He thought for himself, and called no man master on earth. Accordingly he shared the common fate of those who do so, by incurring the censure of some of different parties who would have gloried to have had him of their own.

*** As a further illustration of Dr. *Watts's* candour and freedom of enquiry, the reader is referred to an Essay in his *Miscellaneous Thoughts*, No. XLIX. entitled, *The mischief of warm disputes and declamations on the controverted points of Christianity.*

An authentic Account of DR. WATTS's *last avowed sentiments concerning the Doctrine of the* TRINITY, *the* DEITY *of* CHRIST, *&c.*

OF all the controversies which have been agitated in the christian church, there is scarcely any one that has been more constantly kept up, or conducted with greater warmth, or with a more intemperate and unchristian zeal, than that of the *Trinity*, or the Divinity of the Son and Spirit of God. It is unnecessary to relate the different opinions which have been held on these subjects, or to mention the names of their authors or principal abettors.

It is well known to most readers how the Trinitarian controversy was revived in Dr. *Watts*'s time, both among the Clergy of the established church, and the Dissenting ministers, and to what height matters were carried by the contending parties. Some yet living well remember, what it might be wished should for ever be forgotten, the animosities

mosities which prevailed at the meetings of the London ministers at *Salters Hall*, on the business of Subscription to a Test proposed for ascertaining the orthodoxy of those that belonged to that body, with respect to these points of doctrine.

Many of those who had been always understood to believe them refused to subscribe any Test whatever, and of this number was Dr. *Watts*, who, tho' he was in the main in the orthodox faith, and had written in defence of it; did not chuse to set his hand to any human formularies, which might be the occasion of invidious distinctions and unchristian separations among brethren.

In this, as well as other disputable matters, the natural mildness of his temper, and his enlarged charity, which was the consequence of his impartial investigation of so difficult a subject, led him to act the part of a moderator.

In his book entitled *Orthodoxy and Charity united*, he had a view to this doctrine among others, and inserted an Essay to shew the room there is for mutual forbearance and candour.

This

This moderation which the Doctor professed and maintained, led some party-zealots to suppose that he had departed from the faith, and there were those who scrupled not to call him an *Arian*.

The truth of the matter was, that he no more deserved this opprobrious name than those who stigmatized him with it; tho' it must be owned, that his manner of conceiving and explaining some things relating to the Trinitarian doctrine was different from that of the generality of those who were called orthodox.

In the younger part of life he seemed to embrace the doctrine as it had been commonly stated, and had no objection to the usual modes of expression in relation to it. But, as it was not his character to take any thing upon trust, he indulged a freedom of inquiry with respect to this subject of debate, as well as every other, and the consequence was, he saw reason to alter his views concerning it.

With what seriousness and humility he conducted his enquiries, and how earnestly he desired to know the truth, appears from a piece found among his manuscripts, entitled

A Solemn

A Solemn Address to the great and ever-blessed God, &c. which is printed in the fourth volume of his works, and of which we shall hereafter give a copy at length.

It has been confidently asserted by some Anti-trinitarians, that the Doctor before his death was come over to their party, and that he left some papers behind him, containing a recantation of his former sentiments, which his executors thought it most prudent to suppress. A report of this kind was lately revived, with the mention of some remarkable circumstances in confirmation of it, in the *Monthly Review*, of which we shall take some distinct notice hereafter.

Some zealous patrons of the most rigid orthodoxy, unwilling to have so eminent a divine as Dr. *Watts* numbered among the apostates from it, have zealously maintained such reports as the above to be mere fictions; others have allowed that he might have expressed himself unguardedly, and that he had adopted some modes of speech inconsistent with his former views on the subject; but have endeavoured to exculpate him by urging the decay of his faculties, thro' age and intense application to study. And others have allowed

allowed that he had indeed for a time given into Anti-trinitarian ſentiments, but that before his death he was happily recovered to the right faith. As a proof of the reality of his converſion one Mr. *Toplady*, in a periodical publication, was raſh enough to print a Hymn of the Doctor's on the Deity of Chriſt, which he fancied bore the evident marks of the infirmities of age. But unhappily for this writer theſe were in reality the infirmities of youth: for this Hymn was actually inſerted in the firſt Edition of the *Lyric Poems*, and by the author himſelf left out of the ſubſequent ones. This circumſtance Dr. *Gibbons* has particularly mentioned, with a ſevere and juſt cenſure of Mr. *Toplady*, both for his temerity in publiſhing this hymn as the production of the author's old age, and alſo for his groundleſs aſſertions reſpecting the decay of his mental faculties.

Dr. *Gibbons* however has taken care to avoid ſaying any thing which might lead to a diſcovery with reference to any alteration of Dr. *Watts*'s ſentiments about the Trinity; which occaſioned ſome unknown writer to addreſs to him a Letter in the *Weſtminſter Magazine*, of which it may not be amiſs to inſert a copy, which is as follows.

"To the REV. DR. GIBBONS.

"REV. SIR,

"IN your 'Memoirs' of the truly great and excellent Dr. *Watts*, you certainly did right in attempting to rectify any mistakes into which the Public had been led, concerning him or his writings, by any erroneous accounts issued from the pens of ignorant or evil-designing men. I was glad to find that you had so well refuted the idle stories which have been so generally reported and credited concerning the Doctor's "loss of his intellects" in the latter part of his life, and "his strange chimeras of fancy," which a late Biographer (you say Mr. *Toplady*) hath retailed much to his disadvantage. I was also glad that you had exposed a palpable 'mistake' (if not pious fraud) of the same writer respecting a poetical piece of the Doctor's 'on the Sufferings and Glory of CHRIST,' as one of the latest of his composures, p. 313.

But I am greatly surprised to find that you have passed over in total silence a matter of far greater moment than either of these, which the same writer mentions, with equal confidence,

confidence, in the very ſame paper; and for the ſake of which alone this Poem is introduced. He tells us, "that the Doctor had fallen into erroneous notions with reſpect to the Doctrine of the Trinity—but that God had mercy upon him before he left the world, and recovered him to the orthodox faith:" and as a proof of this he produces the above Hymn, which he ſays, "to the beſt of his knowledge, had never before appeared in print, and which ſeems, from the unfiniſhed ſtate in which he left it, to have been one of the laſt products of his poetical pen." Give me leave, Sir, to ſay, that it appears to me, and others of your readers, very extraordinary that you ſhould have thought it worth your while to animadvert (and that with ſome degree of ſeverity) upon a chronological error of ſuch ſmall importance in itſelf, and to uſe ſo many words to ſatisfy us that the Doctor wrote this piece in early life, and to account for its being omitted in the later editions of his Poems; and yet that you ſhould not have ſaid 'one word' reſpecting 'the grand matter of fact' for the ſupport of which this piece is produced, and for which only the lateneſs of its date is aſſerted.

From

From your total silence with regard to the fact itself, your Readers, who have seen Mr. *Toplady*'s account, are not merely left in a state of suspense; but, as you have, by proving the early date of this Poem, removed his only argument that Dr. *Watts* was recovered from his supposed errors before his death, you have left us to conclude that he died in them: and, moreover, by maintaining "the soundness of his intellects," you have deprived his friends and admirers of a plea which has often been 'charitably' urged in his favour. Thus have you left the 'Sabellians' to trumph, as having the mature judgment, the dying sentiments of the learned, the pious, the impartial *Watts* on their side; for his later publications seem most to favour the 'Sabellian' scheme.

It has been pretty generally reported, that the Doctor left some papers to be published after his death, containing his last sentiments on that subject, which had been the object of his laborious and impartial enquiry through a great part of his life; but his Executors thought it most prudent to suppress, if not destroy them. The Public have a right to ask you, Sir, what was the real matter of

fact? You justly observe, that "persons who attempt to communicate to the public the memoirs of deceased persons, ought to make themselves acquainted with their writings, dates," &c. And surely those who write the lives of eminent Divines, should be acquainted with, and ready to communicate, what was most remarkable concerning their religious sentiments, and the result of their enquiries after TRUTH: an object, let me say, of far greater importance, and more worthy of being known, than the highest degree of 'poetical' merit. It would not be a mere matter of 'curiosity' to know the last sentiments of so great and good a man as Dr. *Watts*, with regard to the Trinity; but it would have had a very important tendency to assist others in forming their judgment on such a capital article of Christian faith. It would likewise tend to remove the prejudices, and abate the censures, of many against those who cannot assent to the popular opinions (or rather the popular 'phraseology') to be informed (if indeed it be so) that even Dr. *Watts* himself, who had been under strong and early prejudices in their favour, and had written in defence of them, was obliged at length

length to give them up. As, on the other hand, if it be true (as Mr. *Topladdy* affirms) that tho' this eminent Divine had departed from the Catholic Doctrine for a time, he was reclaimed before he died; the knowledge of it, together with the occasion of his fall, and the means of his recovery, might be instrumental to guard others against, and recover them from, the same erroneous opinions.

"After all that you have told us concerning your great intimacy with Dr. *Watts*, and your minute acquaintance with the circumstances of his death, (even to the appearance of his corpse in the coffin) it cannot be supposed that you should be a stranger to this affair. And give me leave to say, that candour and justice call upon you to declare what you know concerning it. You tell us of the Doctor what is much to his honour, (p. 136) "that those prime and radical constituents of a truly good character, 'Truth' and 'Sincerity,' were very conspicuous in him; and that you never observed him, in any of his converses, in the least degree affect to conceal or disguise any sentimental differences in religion between himself and others; but, on the other hand, he appeared quite open

and free to a declaration of them, whenever an occaſion offered." Why then ſhould his Biographer make any ſecret of them? 'Your "open and free declaration" reſpecting the ſubject of this Letter is eſſentially neceſſary to your ſupporting the character of which you are juſtly ambitious, the diſciple and the friend of Dr. *Watts*; which that you may, is the wiſh of,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

W—M S—MS—N.

W—m—r, Nov. 7, 1780.

To this letter the good Doctor did not think proper to give any anſwer. Nor has he, nor any one elſe, refuted the aſſertions above referred to. From hence many will be inclined to give them credit.

But tho' it is undeniable that the Doctor did not continue in the ſame views of the ſubject which he entertained in the early part of his life, there is no deciſive evidence that he materially altered his ſentiments concerning the Trinitarian doctrine within any ſhort

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ſpace of his death, and it is highly improbable that he ſhould. He had for many years made this point the ſubject of his laborious and impartial ſtudy, and within about two years of his diſſolution he publiſhed the reſult of his enquiries, from which it is ſcarcely credible that he ſhould in ſo ſhort a time have greatly deviated.

Dr. Watts died Nov. 25, 1748. His book entitled *Uſeful and Important Queſtions concerning Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God*, is dated 1746. And the ſame year, (moſt probably towards the cloſe of it) he printed another work, in which he further illuſtrates and defends his opinion concerning the perſon of Chriſt, entitled *The Glory of Chriſt as God-man diſplayed*, &c.

Conſidering how many years the Doctor had made this ſubject his ſtudy, how deliberate he was in forming his ſentiments, and how cautious he was of publiſhing them to the world, it ſeems moſt natural to look for his laſt ſentiments on this much diſputed point in theſe two pieces; and the rather as the book which was written againſt him on the *Arian* ſide by Mr. *Tomkins* (which might be thought moſt likely to have made him a

convert, if he had been one) was printed previous to either of these *.

It is certain these pieces contain the last authentic account of his sentiments, as avowed by himself, and therefore till some decisive proof be brought of a subsequent recantation, the view which these books give of the matter, might justly be considered as Dr. Watts's last thoughts on the subject of the Trinity.

From these it is abundantly evident that he had not given into the *Arian* or *Socinian* hypothesis, for he expresses himself strongly against both, and maintains positions inconsistent with either. But it must at the same time be allowed that he evidently appears to have deviated from the most commonly received opinions, concerning the Son and Spirit of God, tho' he maintained the true Divinity of both, which he did upon such grounds as he thought best secured every thing essential to the doctrine and most effec-

* The Title of this work was *A Sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian*, concerning the plain sense of scripture relating to the Trinity. Being an Answer to Doctor I. Watts's late book entitled The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, &c. asserted and proved by plain evidence of scripture without the aid or incumbrance of human schemes.

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tually obviated the objections of its opponents.

It is true, ſome both among the Orthodox and the Heterodox conſidered him as having in theſe publications given up the point; the former becauſe he differed from them in his manner of explaining it, and the latter becauſe he admitted the force of ſome of their objections to it, and freely gave up what he thought untenable, and perhaps eſpecially becauſe he exerciſed more candour towards them than the defenders of the Trinitarian doctrine had uſually done. But it is exceedingly ſtrange that the friends of orthodoxy ſhould diſown a man as a brother, and conſider him as an apoſtate and an enemy, becauſe he repreſents things in a manner different from themſelves, and maintains them on different grounds. And it is equally ſtrange, at leaſt equally unwarrantable, that the patrons of hereſy (as it has commonly been called) ſhould inſiſt upon it that a man is on their ſide merely becauſe he does not go all the lengths of their opponents, or yields to the force of ſome of their objections: but more eſpecially that they ſhould draw ſuch an inference from the candour he exerciſes to

them: but most of all that they should take occasion from the moderation of any one who professes himself orthodox in the main, to insinuate any thing to his disadvantage in point of sincerity. Thus it was with respect to Dr. *Watts*, and thus it has been with respect to others of the like moderate principles *.

It is surprising that they who lay so much stress upon candour, and are so severe against bigotry, should themselves act so uncandid a part. Nothing is more common than for those who call themselves *rational*, to condemn the bigotry of the *orthodox*, for their strenuous adherence to every *Iota* in the orthodox system, and their want of charity towards those who differ, which they will say might be exercised consistently with the firmest attatchment to orthodoxy; and yet if any of the orthodox shew themselves ready to make some abatements, and appear to exercise candour towards those of different sentiments, these gentlemen will have it that they must, in their hearts, be on their side, and impeach

* Dr. *Doddridge* was in this predicament. See the notice he takes of it in a Letter of which Mr. Orton has given a copy in his Life.

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their ſincerity in not joining their party; which they are willing to attribute to a ſordid attachment to their ſecular intereſt, or to any thing rather than to a *real moderation in principle*, of which bigots on both ſides ſeem to deny the exiſtence.

Whether there be in reality ſuch a moderation, by which both *Orthodoxy and Charity* may be maintained *, and what that is, may poſſibly appear from a repreſentation of Dr. *Watts*'s ſentiments as contained in his two laſt publications now mentioned; which thro' the intemperate zeal of oppoſite parties ſeem not to have met with the attention they deſerved, and to be now but little known.

The *Preface* to the firſt of the above pieces we ſhall here tranſcribe at length. It is as follows. "It cannot be of much importance for the reader to be informed who was the writer of theſe papers: yet if it will be any ſatisfaction, the author himſelf preſumes to ſay, It is one who has ſpent many years of his life in diligent enquiries into the ſacred doctrines of the goſpel, by a conſtant and laborious ſearch of the Holy ſcriptures;

* See a late able performance, entitled *Primitive Candour*, &c.

nor

nor is he ashamed to add, with continual application to the God of all light and grace for the instruction of his Holy Spirit, that he might better understand the things discovered in his word. He also takes the freedom to say these papers are the product of that part of his life when *his powers of mind and body were in full vigour* *. The author has sometimes been ready to suppose, that several of the Questions here proposed may be very useful towards the further explaining some of those parts of scripture which have been less studied, especially concerning *God the Father*, and the Divine and human natures of his *Son Jesus Christ*, whom to know, to trust in, and to love, is eternal life: and he thinks he can safely appeal to God concerning the honesty and sincerity of his own endeavours, to give a faithful answer to all these enquiries, according to the clearest light he could find in the Holy scriptures.

"He has one favour to beg of his readers and that is, that they would not examine any of these papers by the mere dictates of their

* This is a sufficient answer to those who would exculpate the Doctor for his deviation from the beaten track by urging the decay of his faculties.

own reasoning powers, for the subject is a mere matter of divine revelation; nor that they would take the sentiments or schemes of elder or later writers, whether Schoolmen or Fathers, or Divines of any party, for a perfect test of truth and orthodoxy in these sacred subjects.

"Yet he freely and delightfully confesses these following articles borrowed from the *Athanasian Creed*, viz. "We believe and "confess the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of "God is both God and Man; God of the "same substance with the Father, a Man of "the substance of his mother, *born* into the "world, perfect God and perfect man; of "a reasonable soul, and human flesh sub-"sisting *together*: Equal to the Father, as "touching his Godhead, and yet inferior to "the Father, as touching his manhood: "One, not by conversion of the Godhead "into the flesh, but by taking of the man-"hood into God, *so as to become one personal* "*agent or* one person: and as the reasonable "soul and flesh is one man, so God and man "are one Christ, who suffered for our sal-"vation," &c.

"Tho'

"Tho' I freely and chearfully acknowledge all this, yet I take no human writings for a teſt of the divinity or truth of my opinions: And I could wiſh all my readers would lay aſide all other teachers, beſides the mere writers of the Holy Scriptures, in ſuch enquiries, where the light of theſe divine truths will alſo ſhine brighteſt, which are not to be known by the mere light of nature, but are entirely to be learned by the revelation of God to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and to his holy apoſtles.

"And if this practice be ſincerely purſued, the author humbly hopes theſe papers may find acceptance among the diligent and honeſt enquirers after truth, ſo far at leaſt as to have his unwilling miſtakes pitied and forgiven, and his ſincere endeavours accepted, to make known the ſcriptures to his fellow-chriſtians in thoſe important articles that relate to *God the Father* and his *Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, which are of ſo much importance toward our ſalvation.

"Yet finally, to avoid all objections and dangers of miſtake, I think it may be proper here to take notice, that there have been generally two ways among our *Proteſtant* Divines allowed

allowed to explain the *Filiation* or Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his Divine nature; the one is, the real and supernatural, which is granted to be utterly incomprehensible, relating chiefly to the *nature* of the Father and the Son; the other is scriptural and œconomical, relating chiefly to their *characters* or *offices* in our salvation, which is more easy to be understood.

"I must acknowledge I incline most to the *second*, because this allows the most perfect equality, even Oneness or *Sameness* in the Godhead, whether applied to the *Father* or the *Son*, and thus it maintains the true Godhead itself to be underived and self-existent in both; and upon this supposition I believe the second of these writers have been always esteemed perfectly sound and orthodox as well as the first."

In this preface, as there are the striking evidences of the greatest humility and candour, as well as the most ardent love of truth, so the intelligent reader, who is at all versed in the Trinitarian controversy, will easily perceive that Dr. *Watts* differed from the generality of the orthodox, who maintain "that "Christ as God was the Son of the Father,

"derived

"derived from him or begotten by him, and "therefore really a distinct person, or agent "from the Father, but nevertheless equal to "him in all perfections;" and that his idea of the Divinity of Christ was, "*that the Godhead, the Deity itself, personally distinguished as the* FATHER, *was united to the man Christ Jesus, in consequence of which union, or indwelling of the Godhead, he became properly God* *." And it is evident from the sequel of this performance, and from a subsequent publication, he conceived this union to have subsisted before the Saviour's appearance in the flesh, and that *the human soul of Christ existed with the Father from before the foundation of the world*; on which ground he maintains the real descent of Christ from heaven to earth, and the whole scene of his humiliation, which he thought incompatible with the common opinion concerning him.

As to the *Holy Spirit* the Doctor seems not to have held the common notion of his real personality, as distinct from the Father, supposing

* Dr. *Doddridge* seems to have held the same sentiments, which were late revived in a controversy occasioned by a publication of the late Mr. *Benjamin Fawcett*, entitled *Candid Reflections*, &c.

posing it to mean the divine power or influence, or God himself as exerting his influence. But we have now particularly to do with the person of *Christ*, which is the principal subject of the publications now under consideration.

It is no part of our design to condemn or confirm the Doctor's opinions on this point, but merely to represent them, and shew wherein they differed from the generality of other orthodox divines, and to give a brief view of the arguments by which he supported them.

In his *Important Questions concerning Jesus the Son of God*, the *First* which he proposes is this——"What is the true meaning of "the Name *Son of God*, given to Christ in "the New Testament; and especially where "the belief of it is made necessary to salvation?"

In § I. he mentions the various senses given to this term by different writers, and observes, that the first of them is patronized by many, viz. "that it includes an eternal unconceivable generation of the person of the "Son by the person of the Father, in the "sameness of the Divine essence, consubstantial, coequal, and coeternal with the "Father."

But

'But I am perſuaded (ſays he) this can 'never be the ſenſe of this name in thoſe 'ſeveral texts before cited [where believing 'in the Son of God is ſaid to be neceſſary to 'ſalvation] for (1) If this be never ſo true, 'yet it is confeſſed to be unconceivable: 'and I do not think the gracious God would 'put ſuch a difficult teſt upon the faith of 'young diſciples, poor illiterate men and 'women.—(2) Nor is this clearly enough re-'vealed for us to make it a fundamental 'article in any age, and to damn all who do 'not receive it.—(3) There have been ſome 'pious and learned men in ſeveral ages, who 'have acknowledged Chriſt's true Godhead, 'and yet have ſuppoſed that the Sonſhip of 'Chriſt referred rather to his *human nature*, 'or to his *office* of *Meſſiah*, than to ſuch an 'eternal generation.—There are ſome ſuch 'in our age, and I will never pronounce an 'anathema upon them.'

After having mentioned ſeveral other ſenſes in which the term *Son of God* is uſed in ſcripture, he ſpeaks of this laſt, as what he believes to be its moſt common acceptation, (p. 16,) eſpecially where the belief of it is made neceſſary to ſalvation. Having in § 2, urged

urged several arguments to confirm this sense, he states some objections § 3, and produces various passages from scripture in which 'Christ is called *the Son of God*, and God is 'said to be his *Father*, wherein we cannot 'suppose the Godhead of Christ is or can be 'designed, v. g.

'*John* v. 18, 19. When the Jews had 'made a strange inference, and charged Christ 'with making himself equal to God, be-'cause he called God his Father, he answer-'ed, *Verily verily I say unto you, the Son can 'do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the 'Father do*, &c. This is not an expression 'which represents the Son as the true and 'eternal God, or that grants their inference; 'for it is plain that this expression represents 'him under a degree of impotence and de-'pendence; that *he could do nothing of him-'self*. Nay this contradicts their inference; 'and *denies* his equality with God, rather 'than confirms or allows it. The sense of this 'expression may be learned from *John* viii. 38: 'Tho' there are some expressions in that 'paragraph to (ver. 30.) which seem superior 'to the character of any mere creature, and 'which would hardly have been applied to

'Christ the man, if not united to Godhead; 'yet Christ considered as the Son of God is 'throughout represented as dependent on the 'Father for all, and receiving all from the 'Father, which is hardly consistent with the 'idea of supreme Godhead, if that were in-'cluded in Sonship.

'*John* v. 30. *I can of myself do nothing. 'I seek not mine own will.* (vi. 38.) *I came 'down from heaven not to do mine own will but 'the will of him that sent me.* This does 'not sound like the language of Godhead, 'which is supreme and independent, and 'can do all things of itself, and by its own 'will. Ch. xiv. 28. *My Father is greater 'than I.* ver. 31. *As the Father gave me com-'mandment even so I do.* Ch. xvii. 5. *Father 'glorify me,* &c. *Mark* xiii. 32. *Of that day 'and hour knoweth—not the Son, but the Fa-'ther,* &c. &c. All this implies inferiority 'and dependence. 1 *Cor.* xv. 38. *Then shall 'the Son also himself be subject to him, that 'God may be all in all.* This is a character 'of too much inferiority for Godhead. The 'argument stands thus: If the Son of God 'be true God, considered as a Son, then he 'is originally and necessarily Lord of all, and

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'it must be said it is by his own voluntary 'condescension that he is so far depressed and 'humbled by the œconomy as to become the 'Father's deputy and vicegerent, and when 'that œconomy ceases, he is of course exalted 'to his equality with the Father, and to his 'essential and natural Lordship over all. But 'the representation of St. *Paul* is just the 'contrary. In many parts of his writings, 'particularly *Phil.* ii. he shews that the Son 'of God is not depressed but exalted by the 'œconomy to the kingdom. And he tells 'us in this text that when the Son gives up 'this œconomical kingdom, he comes again 'into subjection: *then shall the Son himself 'be subject to the Father*; which plainly shews 'that, considered as a Son, he is naturally 'subject to the Father, and that at the end 'of this œconomical exaltation he shall re-'turn to his natural subjection and shall be 'so for ever, when *God* appears *all in all.*

'This text will not prove that Christ is 'not God, for he is so BY PERSONAL UNION 'to the divine nature: he is *God manifest in 'the flesh.* He is God and man in one com-'plex person. But this text, I think, does 'prove that his *Sonship* doth not include

'*Godhead*. In this and many other texts 'his Sonship may be better referred to his 'inferior nature, or to his offices. And this 'will free us from those embarrassments to 'which we have been driven, to keep up the 'sublime idea of Godhead in these scriptures 'which call him a Son, and at the same 'time carry so much of dependence and in-'feriority in them.'

The Doctor's *Third* question, (which leads to the discovery of his opinion concerning the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ) is this, "Could the Son of God properly enter "into a Covenant with his Father, to do and "suffer what was necessary to our re-"demption, without a human soul?"

'It is granted (says he) that the generality 'of our christian writers believe that it was 'only the divine nature or Godhead of Christ 'which had an existence before he was con-'ceived of the Virgin Mary, and became in-'carnate; yet whensoever they would repre-'sent the exceeding great love of the Father 'in sending his Son into our world, that he 'might suffer and die for us, and describe 'the transcendent love of Christ, in coming 'into the world and submitting to death for

'our

'our ſakes, they uſually repreſent it in ſuch 'language as can never agree with his *Divine* '*nature*, in any propriety of ſpeech, but 'only to the pre-exiſtent human ſoul of 'Chriſt, with its deſcent into fleſh and blood, 'and the ſufferings of this human ſoul for 'us. And it is evident that the ſcripture 'itſelf leads them plainly to ſuch a repre-'ſentation of things—ſo that they are led by 'the force of truth into ſuch expreſſions as 'are hardly conſiſtent with their own pro-'feſſed opinions.' He here quotes ſome paſſages from Mr. *Flavel* and others, which ſpeak of the abaſement of Chriſt, and the humiliating change which he paſſed thro', which are totally inapplicable to Godhead.

'Now if we ſuppoſe (ſays he) the human 'ſoul of Chriſt to have a pre-exiſtent ſtate 'of joy and glory with the Father before the 'world was created, theſe expreſſions are 'great and noble, are juſt and true, and 'have a happy propriety in them to ſet forth 'the tranſcendent love of the Father in ſend-'ing his Son, and of the Son of God in 'coming from heaven and leaving the joys 'and glories of his Father's immediate pre-'ſence, to take on him fleſh and blood, and

'suffer shame, sorrow, pain, anguish of flesh
'and spirit, sharp agonies and the pangs of
'death. And this love is exceedingly en-
'hanced while we consider that this human
'soul of Christ was personally united to the
'divine nature, so that hereby GOD himself
'becomes manifested in the flesh.

'But on the other hand, if we suppose
'nothing but the *pure divine nature* of Christ
'to exist before his incarnation, then all these
'expressions seem to have very little justice
'or propriety in them: for the divine nature
'of Christ (how distinct soever it is supposed
'to be from God the Father) yet can never
'leave the Father's bosom, can never divest
'itself of any one joy or felicity that it was
'ever possessed of; nor could God the Father
'ever dismiss the divine nature of his Son
'from his bosom. Godhead must have eternal
'and compleat beatitude and glory, and can
'never be dispossessed of it. Godhead can
'sustain no real sorrow or sufferings.—Neither
'could the human nature leave the bosom of
'the Father if it had no prior existence.—
'But now if we conceive the soul of Christ
'in its pre-existent state, as *the first born of*
'*every creature*, to *come forth from the Father*

'and

'and *come into the world* (John xvi. 28.) to 'part with the glories and joys it poſſeſſed, 'to dwell in a feeble manſion of fleſh, of 'pain and ſorrow, and ſuſtain the pangs of 'a curſed death, &c. this is amazing love in-'deed; this has a ſurpriſing and ſenſible rea-'lity in it, and ſhould awaken all the powers 'of our ſouls to admire and adore both God 'the Father for ſending him, and his Son 'for conſenting to ſuch abaſement.

'There is another and a very remarkable 'inſtance, wherein our Proteſtant divines, 'in a very juſt and affecting manner repre-'ſent the COVENANT of REDEMPTION, be-'tween the Father and the Son, according 'to Scripture, upon the ſuppoſition of the 'pre-exiſtence of Chriſt's human ſoul: But 'according to the common or ſcholaſtic ex-'plication of the doctrine of Perſons in the 'Trinity, we can have no ideas under all 'their glorious and affectionate repreſenta-'tions of this tranſaction.

'The common or ſcholaſtic explication of 'the Trinity, which has been long and uni-'verſally received and been called orthodox, 'is; That God is but one ſimple, infinite 'and eternal ſpirit: Hence it follows, that

'the divine essence, powers, and essential pro-
'perties of the Father, the Son, and the Spi-
'rit in the Godhead are numerically the very
'same. That it is the same numerical con-
'sciousness, understanding, will and power,
'which belongs to the Father, that belongs
'also to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
'and that the sacred three are distinguished
'only by the superadded relative properties
'of paternity, filiation and procession; but
'their thoughts, ideas, volitions and agen-
'cies, according to this hypothesis, must be
'the very same numerical thoughts, &c. in
'all the three.'

The Dr. then proceeds to give an extract from a sermon of Mr. *Flavel*, which he highly approves, relating to the Covenant of Redemption, in which he represents "the per-
"sons transacting with each other; the bu-
"siness transacted; the quality of the transf-
"action as fœderal; the Father promising to
"support and reward the Son, the Son pro-
"mising to obey the Father's call to suffer,
"&c. and the articles to which they agree,
"&c. &c." He further observes, that the author represents this transaction in a way of *Dialogue*, and then remarks thus: 'In
'read-

'reading such accounts of stipulations and 'contract between the Father and the Son, 'before the foundation of the world, what 'proper conceptions can we frame, or what 'clear ideas can we possibly have, while we 'suppose nothing but Christ's *divine nature* 'transacting this affair with the Father, and 'while we believe the divine essence, perfec-'tions, and powers, the understanding, will, 'thought, and consciousness of the Father 'and the Son, to be numerically one and the 'same? since in the Godhead they are but 'one and the same infinite spirit? The mere 'personalities, paternity and filiation, can-'not consult and transact in a way of con-'tract, proposal and consent: [which can 'only be done by] two distinct conscious-'nesses and wills.

'Further, one of these beings or persons 'covenanting, seems to be inferior to the 'other, and to be capable of receiving orders, 'commission, support and recompence from 'the other: But if only the *Deity* of Christ 'existed, and his Deity and the Father's have 'but one numerical consciousness and voli-'tion, one power and glory, what need of 'orders and commissions, or of promises of

'support

'support and recompence? How can pure 'Godhead be supported or recompensed?—'What possible difference can we conceive 'between the love of the Father in sending 'the Son, and the love of the Son in con-'senting?—And how doth this abate our 'grand ideas of the distinct and condescend-'ing love of our blessed Saviour, in his con-'sent to this covenant, since that part of 'him which really suffered, i. e. his inferior 'nature, had then no existence?

'But on the other hand, if we give our-'selves leave to conceive of the human soul 'of Christ in its pre-existent state, as the 'πρωτοτοκος, *the first form of every creature*, '(Col. i. 15. Rev. iii. 14.) and intimately '*united to the eternal God*, then here are pro-'per subjects for these fœderal transactions; 'and a most glorious and divine covenant it 'was, between the Father and the Son, for 'the salvation of poor ruined man.—Thus 'Christ, when he *came forth from the Father* '*and came into the world*, really laid aside 'that glory which he had with the Father 'before the world was, and *though he* '*was rich, yet for our sakes became poor*.—'Every thing coincides admirably well in

'this

'this ſcheme, and anſwers the various ex-
'preſſions of Scripture on this ſubject, with-
'out ſtraining the words by needleſs tropes
'and figures: It becomes ſo plain that *he*
'*that runs may read*, and every private Chriſ-
'tian may underſtand theſe early grounds
'and foundations of his hope.'

The *Fourth Queſtion* which the Doctor propoſes is this: "Is the Godhead of Chriſt; "and the Godhead of the Father, one and "the ſame *?"

He anſwers in the affirmative, and proves it by the following arguments. '(1.) If the 'divine nature of Chriſt be another diſtinct 'principle of ſelf-conſciouſneſs and volition; 'another diſtinct ſpiritual being, or another 'ſpirit, this approaches ſo near the doctrine 'of another God, that it is very hard to diſ-
'tinguiſh it. For ſo far as our ideas of 'arithmetic and reaſon can reach, this ſeems 'to be a plain truth,—If one infinite ſpirit 'be *one God*, two or three infinite ſpirits 'muſt be *two* or *three Gods*. (2.) The God 'of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, the God of

* Or, in other words, is the Deity of Chriſt, or the being to whom the humanity of Chriſt is united, *God the Father?*

'Iſrael,

'Israel, the Almighty, Jehovah, is the proper style and title by which God the Father was known under the Old Testament, and under these he often appeared to the Patriarchs; yet it is agreed by all Trinitarians, that it was Jesus Christ that appeared to them and assumed these titles. (3.) Several passages of the Old Testament cited by the writers of the New Testament, and applied to Christ, do evidently refer to the great *one God*, the God of Israel, whom all before the days of Christ must suppose to mean *God the Father of all*.—These texts are properly applied to Christ, if we suppose the Godhead of the Father and of Christ to be *the same*, and THAT THE MAN CHRIST JESUS WAS THE SHEKINAH OR HABITATION OF THE GREAT GOD, intimately and personally united to him. In this sense Christ was *Emmanuel*, or GOD *with us*.—But the application of these texts to Christ will scarcely prove the Godhead of Christ, unless it be the same with that of the Father. (4.) When Christ expresses his own Godhead, it is by declaring his *oneness with the* FATHER. *I and the* FATHER *are one*, *He that hath seen*

me

'*me hath seen the* FATHER. *I am in the* 'FATHER, *and the* FATHER *in me. The* 'FATHER IN ME *doth the work.* It is 'not reasonable to suppose he would have 'always used these modes of speaking, if he 'himself had another Godhead [or if he as 'man had been united to a second person in the 'Godhead and not to the FATHER]. (5.) 'On this supposition I do not see how the 'Trinitarians can solve the difficulties which 'arise from those scriptures where God the 'Father is represented as the *only true God*, 'and under that idea distinguished from Je-'sus Christ. *John* xvii. 3. 1 *Cor.* viii. 6. '*Eph.* iv. 5, 6. *Isaiah* xliv. 6. 8. xlv. 21, 22. '(6.) When our Saviour foretold that his 'disciples should leave him alone, he adds, '(*John* xvi. 32.) *And yet I am not alone, be-'cause* THE FATHER *is with me.* If his 'Godhead had been distinct from that of the 'Father, he needed not the presence of the '*Father* for his support; *his own Godhead* 'would have have been sufficient.

'On the whole, whatever unknown dis-'tinctions there may be in the divine nature, 'to lay a foundation for God's discovery of 'himself under three personal characters, as

'the

'the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, 'yet the Godhead of the Father seems to be 'the same one infinite and eternal Spirit, 'which under some peculiar distinction or 'relation, is united to the Man Christ Je-'sus; and hereby Jesus becomes one with 'God, &c. By this means the great and 'fundamental article of all religion, the 'UNITY of the true God is maintained 'inviolable, and thus we most effectually 'preclude all the objections and cavils of the '*Arian* and *Socinian* writers against the doc-'trine of the blessed Trinity, and the D[illegible] 'of Christ, as though this doctrine intro-'duced *more Gods than one*. For if we sup-'pose the Man Jesus Christ, in his soul and 'body, to be both an intellectual and cor-'poreal SHEKINAH, or habitation of the 'one God, the God of Israel, we may justly 'call Jesus Christ GOD *manifest in the* flesh; 'a man *in whom dwells all the fulness of the* '*Godhead bodily*; *a man of the seed of David*, 'and yet GOD *over all blessed for ever*. Nor 'is there so much as the shadow of our own-'ing two or three Gods, which has been 'too often, with some appearance of reason,

'charged

'charged upon some other modes of explaining this sacred doctrine.'

From these extracts from Dr. *Watts*'s own writings, it is plain to every intelligent reader, what his Sentiments concerning the Deity of Christ were. It is evident that he did not give into *Arianism*, which makes Christ to be another and inferior God, distinct from the supreme, nor into *Socinianism*, which denies the pre-existence of the Son of God. At the same time it is equally evident, that he had departed from what are generally called the orthodox sentiments; or rather, perhaps it should be said, from the common *manner of explaining them*; by which however, he himself at least thought he maintained genuine orthodoxy to the best advantage.

This first publication closes with AN ESSAY *on the Importance of any human Scheme to explain the sacred Doctrine of the Trinity*, shewing, 'I. That no such scheme of explication is necessary to salvation. II. That 'it may yet be of great use to the Christian 'Church. III. But all such explications 'ought to be proposed with modesty to the 'world, and never imposed on the Conscience.'

At

At the end of this essay are the following remarks, which are submitted to the reader's impartial reflections.

'——These accidental inconveniencies '[arising from religious controversies] are 'not a sufficient reason for our supine and 'perpetual contentment with confused sen-'timents and unintelligible speeches about 'the *modus* of sacred truths, if clearer ideas 'are any way attainable. There are just 'and strong motives that may excite us to 'search into the deep things of God, and to 'propose our improvements in knowledge to 'the world and the church, tho' there are 'no reasons sufficient to impel us to impose 'our improved notions on others, or to raise 'contentions and quarrels on the account of 'them. All our illustrations or clearer con-'ception of this sublime doctrine, which 'God may have favoured us with, should 'be proposed with great modesty, with a 'humble sense of our fallible natures,—and 'with a zealous care to maintain all those '*practical regards* to the Holy Trinity, which 'are of so much greater importance. And if 'it be unreasonable to dictate to our fellow 'christians on these mysterious points, how

'much more culpable is it to eſtabliſh any 'ſpecial form of human explication of this 'ſacred doctrine, as a *Teſt of Orthodoxy* and '*Chriſtianity!* and to forbid any the bleſ-'ſings of ſpecial communion in the goſpel, 'unleſs they teſtify their aſſent to ſuch a 'particular hypotheſis, or ſcheme of expli-'cation, which the impoſers confeſs to be 'human, and yet impoſe it in their own 'preſcribed form of words.

'The perſons who are guilty of this un-'charitable practice, may conſecrate their 'impoſitions and excommunications with 'holy names, and call them *pure Zeal for* '*the Divinity of Chriſt*; but I ſuſpect it will 'be found in the great day to deſerve no 'better a character than a miſtaken zeal for 'the honour of Chriſt, mingled perhaps with 'zeal for the Divinity of their own notions, 'which they had incorporated with the plain 'and expreſs revelations of the Godhead of 'Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. He that makes a 'private and particular explication of any 'doctrine which is dark and doubtful in it-'ſelf, and not clearly revealed in ſcripture, 'as neceſſary as the doctrine itſelf, which is 'plain and clearly revealed, puts the matter

'of *faith* and *opinion* on the ſame foot, and 'intrudes too much upon the authority and 'kingdom of our Lord Jeſus in his church."

IT was intended to have ſubjoined an abſtract of Dr. *Watts*'s ſubſequent work on the ſame ſubject, which appears to have been the laſt of his publications, tho' the different parts of it were drawn up at different times, and moſt of it many years before it came abroad. But as it was feared this would ſwell the preſent publication to an inconvenient ſize, this deſign is laid aſide, and it ſhall ſuffice to give a brief account of the contents, with a few extracts.

It is entitled, *The Glory of Chriſt* as GOD-MAN *diſplayed in Three Diſcourſes*. The *Preface* contains a very modeſt account of the author's deſign, and beſpeaks the candour and impartiality of the reader. The Contents are as follows.

'DISC. I. A Survey of the viſible Ap-'pearances of Chriſt as GOD before his 'Incarnation.

'DISC.

'Disc. II. An Enquiry into the extensive 'Powers of the human Nature of Christ in 'its present glorified state. §. 1. The In-'troduction. §. 2. Scriptural Proofs of the 'Exaltation of the human Nature of Christ, 'and the extensive Capacities and Powers of 'his Soul in his glorified State. §. 3. A Ra-'tional Account how the Man Jesus Christ, 'united to God, may be vested with such 'extensive Powers. §. 4. Testimonies from 'other Writers.

'Disc. III. An Argument tracing the early 'existence of the human Soul of Christ be-'fore the foundation of the world. §. 1. In-'troduction. §. 2. Some Propositions lead-'ing to the Proof of the Doctrine proposed. '§. 3. Arguments for the pre-existence of 'Christ's human Soul drawn from various 'Considerations of some Things inferior to 'Godhead, which are ascribed to him in 'Scripture, before and at his Incarnation. '§. 4. Miscellaneous Arguments to prove 'the same Doctrine. §. 5. A Confirmation 'of it by Arguments drawn from the happy 'Consequences thereof, and the various Ad-'vantages of it to the Christian Religion. '§. 6. Objections answered—The modern

'Authors who have professed and defended 'it, viz. Dr. *H. More*, Dr. *Edward Fowler*, 'Bp. of *Gloucester*. A Defence of his Dis-'course by a Presbyter of the Church of 'England. Mr. *Robert Flemming*. Ano-'nymous. Mr. *Joseph Hussey*. Dr. *Francis* '*Gastrell*, Bishop of *Chester*. Mr. *Nelson*'s 'learned Friend against Dr. *Clarke*. Dr. '*Thomas Bennet*. Dr. *Tho. Burnet* of the 'Charter-house. Dr. *T. Burnet* of *West-*'*kington*. Dr. *Knight*. Dr. *Thomas Goodwin*.

'*Appendix*. An Abridgment of a Disc. 'of Dr. *T. Goodwin*, on the Glories and 'Royalties that belong to Jesus Christ, con-'sidered as God-man.'

As the Pre-existence of Christ's spirit was the grand point which the Doctor laboured to establish, in order to avoid the difficulties of the common scheme, which either makes DEITY *to suffer*, or makes the suffering Saviour a *mere man*, and thus coincides with Socinianism, we shall here present the reader with a view of the Doctor's manner of arguing to prove this point.

DISC. III. §. 3. He first argues *from various considerations of something inferior to Godhead ascribed to Jesus Christ before and at his*

his incarnation. e. g. I. 'Christ is represented as his Father's messenger, minister or angel, that was a distinct being from his Father, sent by him to perform such actions and services for his people; long before his incarnation, some of which seem too low for the dignity of pure Godhead.'

II. 'Christ when he came into this world, is said to empty and divest himself of some glory which he had before his Incarnation. Now if nothing but his divine nature existed before this time, this could not properly empty or divest itself of any glory; therefore it must be his inferior nature, or his human soul which did then exist.' Under this head the Doctor considers that much disputed passage, *Phil.* ii. 5—7. which he interprets thus. 'Here the apostle's design is to set Christ forth as a pattern of humility; and this he doth by aggrandizing his former circumstances, and representing how he emptied himself of them, and appeared on earth in a very mean and low estate. *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God,* i. e. his human soul, being in union with

'his Godhead, was invested with a god-like 'form and glory in all former ages; thus 'he oftentimes appeared to the Patriarchs 'as the Angel of the Lord, and as God, 'or Jehovah, clothed with the divine *Shekinah*, and spake and acted like God himself. This seems to be the *form of God* 'which the apostle speaks of. Nor did he '*think it any robbery* or presumption so to 'do, *i. e.* to appear and act AS GOD, since 'he was united to the divine nature, and 'was in that sense *one with God*. Yet *he* '*emptied himself*, i. e. he divested himself of 'this god-like form or appearance, this divine *Shekinah*, and coming into the flesh 'he consented to be made *in the likeness of* 'other *men*; nay, he took upon him *the* '*form of a servant*, instead of *the form of* '*God*.'

III. 'That very being which came down 'from heaven, and was sent of God into 'the world, is represented as capable of having a will different from the will of God 'the Father, and therefore it must be inferior to godhead: now this could be no 'other but the will of his human soul.'

IV. 'Christ

IV. 'Christ represents his own coming 'into the world, and being sent hither by 'the Father, in such a manner as naturally 'leads one to suppose he had a real and pro-'per dwelling in another place, and in an-'other manner, before he came into the' 'world, and that he then changed his place 'and company, and manner of life; all 'which seem more agreeable to a human 'spirit than to a divine person.'

The Doctor then, § 4. mentions various *miscellaneous arguments to prove the same doctrine*, e. g.

I. 'It seems needful that the soul of 'Christ should be pre-existent, that it might 'have opportunity to give its previous ac-'tual consent to the great and painful un-'dertaking of atonement for our sins.' And 'indeed this voluntary consent of his to be-'come incarnate and to suffer is plainly re-'presented in several places of Scripture.' *Ps.* xl. 6, 7. *Heb.* x. 5, &c.

II. 'The Covenant between God the Fa-'ther and his Son Jesus Christ, for the re-'demption of mankind, is represented in 'Scripture as being made from or before the 'foundation of the world. [Must we not

'then ſuppoſe] that both parties ſhould be 'preſent, and that this ſhould not be tranſ-'acted merely within the divine eſſence by 'ſuch perſonalities as have no diſtinct mind 'and will? The eſſence of God is generally 'agreed to be but one conſcious mind or 'ſpirit. Now can one ſingle underſtanding 'and will make ſuch a covenant?'

III. 'Chriſt's coming into the world is al-'ways expreſſed in ſome corporeal language, 'ſuch as denotes his taking on him animal 'nature, or body, or fleſh, without the 'leaſt mention of taking a ſoul.'

IV. 'It is certain, that among the learn-'ed of the Jewiſh nation, there was a tra-'dition of the pre-exiſtence of the ſoul of 'the Meſſiah.'

V. 'Since it pleaſed the Father to prepare 'a body for our Lord Jeſus, by the over-'ſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt, and by a 'peculiar manner of conception, that he 'might be the Son of God in a ſuperior 'ſenſe, with regard to his *fleſh*, ſo it is not 'unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that the *ſoul* of 'Chriſt alſo, which was to be united to 'Godhead, ſhould have this peculiar prero-

'gative,

'gative, to be derived immediately from 'God, before any creature was made.'

§ 5. Contains *a confirmation of this doctrine by arguments drawn from the various advantages of it.* After a full illustration of these, he sums them up thus: 'There are 'many dark and difficult texts of scripture 'which have puzzled interpreters in several 'ages, and which have hung heavy upon 'the various schemes that support the doc-'trine of the Deity of Christ. Now sup-'pose there could be one single clue found 'out, which leads us into such a solution 'of all these difficulties, and such an inter-'pretation of these scriptures, which has the 'following advantages attending it, *viz.*— 'Which gives the most natural and obvious 'and literal sense, so that every common 'reader that had no pre-conceived notions 'or schemes of thought, would readily run 'into at the very hearing of it:—Which 'puts learned men to no trouble of figures 'and metaphors, such as *Prolepses*, i. e. 'speaking of things before they are done; 'or *Catachreses*, i. e. calling the eternal God, 'without actual union to human nature, a 'man, or an angel, &c.—Which is most

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'consistent with and most agreeable to all 'other parts of the word of God, both in 'the Old and New Testament, renders the 'exposition of many other texts easier and 'plainer than before, and sets the several 'parts of scripture in a beautiful harmo-'ny;—Which interferes with no particular 'scheme of divinity, and thus does not 'widen the common differences of the se-'veral parties of Christians, but freely al-'lows each of them their own sentiments;—'And yet which assists us to answer the ob-'jections of our opponents against the di-'vinity of our blessed Saviour, and also al-'lures them to embrace the truth;—Which 'aggrandizes the personal glories of our Lord 'Jesus Christ, and raises his condescension 'and love to most amazing degrees;—Which 'spreads a new lustre over the whole gospel 'of Christ, and the various transactions re-'corded in the word of God;—I would 'humbly ask whether [such a scheme] does 'not bid fair for the truth of the Gospel, 'and the very meaning of the sacred wri-'ters? Such is the doctrine of the pre-ex-'istence of the human Soul of Christ.'

From

From the foregoing extracts it is sufficiently evident what Dr. Watts's sentiments were within a year or two of his death. The reader, however, is not to suppose, that these publications were the effect of any sudden or recent change in his views of these doctrines; for it is well known, that he had many years before publicly avowed some peculiarity in his manner of conceiving and of expressing himself with respect to them, so as to expose himself to the censures of the more rigid Trinitarians as favouring heresy. In his *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, printed so early as the year 1722, he discovered his inclination to the *Indwelling Scheme*, on account of which Mr. *T. Bradbury*, in a letter dated 1725, charged him with making "the Divinity of Christ to evaporate "into a mere attribute," and after jeering at his professed love of truth, writes to him thus: "It is pity after you have been more "than thirty years a teacher of others, you "are yet to learn the first principles of the "oracles of God. Was Dr. *Owen*'s church "to be taught another Jesus? that the Son "and Spirit were only two powers in the "divine nature?"

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The Doctor replied with equal gentleness and firmness, telling Mr. Bradbury, among other things, "That though the Doctrine "of the Trinity be a first principle, he never "knew that the particular mode of explain-"ing it was such a first principle also." With respect to the charge of destroying a trinity of *persons*, the Doctor answers thus. "I "have often freely declared, and still de-"clare, that I allow the greatest distinction "possible between the sacred three in the "divine nature, which does not arise to "three distinct conscious minds or spirits. "Make it as great as you will short of this, "and I acquiesce. But then since three dis-"tinct conscious minds is the true idea of "three proper literal persons, whatever falls "short of this can be but an anological "personality; yet if any man will call this "a proper divine personality, though it is "but similar to human personality, I will "not contend about words and names."

The Doctor, unmoved by the injurious reflections and fierce opposition of such of his brethren who were slaves to human systems, resolutely pursued his enquiries, and the result was, that he saw further reason to

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be dissatisfied with the common modes of explaining the Trinity, and he honestly declared his different apprehensions respecting it. In the year 1721, he published his *Sermons on various Subjects*, in which there is one entitled, *The Scale of Blessedness; or blessed Saints, blessed Saviour, and blessed Trinity*. On the review of this discourse in the year 1729, he saw occasion to insert the following Note, (Edition 6th, vol. i. p. 260.)

" This Discourse was delivered above " twenty years ago; and the reader will ob- " serve some warmer efforts of imagination " than riper years would indulge on a theme " so sublime and abstruse. Since I have " searched more studiously into this mys- " tery of late, I have learned more of my " own ignorance; so that when I speak of " these *unsearchables*, I abate much of my " younger assurance; nor do my later " thoughts venture so far into the particu- " lar *modes* of explaining this sacred dis- " tinction in the Godhead. There appears " to me good reason to doubt, whether there " can be three distinct and different princi- " ples of consciousness, and three distinct " and different wills in the One God, the

" one

"one infinite Spirit. I was afraid to assert "it in this sermon heretofore, and I am "more afraid to assert it now. Reason and "Scripture join to teach me, that there can "be but one God, and this God is a Spirit. "What distinctions there may be in this "one Spirit, I know not. Yet since I am "fully established in the belief of the *Deity* "*of the blessed Three*, (though I know not "the *manner of explication*) I dare let this "discourse appear now in the world, as be-"ing agreeable so far to my present senti-"ments on this subject. A larger and more "particular account of my most mature "thoughts on the doctrine of the Holy "Trinity, may be seen in the last sermon "of my third volume."

From the above note it is plain, that Dr. Watts had in some respects altered his views of the subject. But some have taken occasion from thence to propagate an idea, that he had entirely given up the orthodox faith; whereas nothing more can be justly inferred from it, than that he had somewhat altered his judgment with respect to the manner of expressing and maintaining it. Nor does it appear that he materially charged his senti-

ments

ments afterwards. The more he enquired into the matter, the more he was confirmed in his opinion with respect to the most perfect simplicity of the divine nature, or oneness of the Godhead, and the pre-existence of the derived nature of Christ, and at different times he wrote various Essays on these subjects, which he at length, in the two last years of his life, revised and put together in the two publications of which we have given an account. From these, as it is plain he was not an Athanasian, it is equally so that he was not either an Arian or a Socinian. It is possible however, tho' not probable, that he might change his sentiments after the publication of the above pieces. That this was actually the case has lately been confidently asserted by a writer in the *Monthly Review*, who mentions some respectable persons as having been well acquainted with the fact. We shall therefore produce the whole passage, and subjoin some remarks upon it.

This writer, in the review of Mr. *Williams's Collection of Psalms*, having quoted a passage in the preface to that work, before referred

to,

to, respecting Dr. Watts, goes on to relate the following anecdotes *.

"That the Doctor had altered his opinion "with respect to some points of what is "called *Orthodoxy* is undeniable. This is a "subject that *some* of his encomiasts shrink "from with concealed mortification, and "would if possible consign to oblivion, as it "cannot be remembered without bringing "some reflection either on the Doctor him-"self, or their own darling cause. But it "would be in vain to deny a fact known to "*many* who were interested in making it pub-"lic. It was well known to Dr. Lardner, "and by him communicated to the late ex-"cellent Mr. *Merrival* of *Exeter*, from whose "mouth the writer of the present article "immediately received it. Dr. Watts's papers "(many of which contained the most ex-"plicit renunciation of some of his former "sentiments with respect to the doctrine of "the Trinity) were mutilated, and publish-"ed in a very imperfect manner. Some "were *wholly suppressed*, and it was with dif-"ficulty that Dr. Doddridge could rescue from

* Month. Rev. Feb. 1782. Vol. LXVI. p. 170.

"destruc-

" destruction a certain curious paper respect-
" ing the Trinitarian controversy, published
" among the posthumous works, entitled
" *A Solemn Address to the Deity*, &c. The
" conduct of some of Dr. Watts's friends
" in this case was so disingenuous, that it
" called forth very loud complaints from
" those who were acquainted with the secret:
" and it was but a short time before Dr.
" Doddridge embarked for Lisbon, that he
" complained to Mr. Merrival of unfair con-
" duct both with respect to Dr. Watts and
" himself, to whose charge, in conjunction
" with the late Dr. David Jennings, his
" papers were entrusted for publication."

There is no reason to question the veracity of the writer of the above article, nor of the authorities therein mentioned, but it is easy to suppose that reports made at so great a distance of time, and which had passed thro' several hands, might undergo some material alterations. That Dr. Watts left some MSS. behind him to be published by Dr. *Doddridge* and Dr. *Jennings* is not denied. Some of these accordingly they published, viz. *The second part of the Improvement of the Mind*, *A Treatise on Education*, and *Remnants of*

Time employed in prose and verse. These had no relation to any points of orthodoxy, and therefore nothing in these can be supposed to be "mutilated *." But these were the whole of what these gentlemen printed, excepting "the Solemn Address to the Deity" which it is not denied was printed entire. Some of his papers were indeed "suppressed", which related to the doctrine of the Trinity, but the charge of "disingenuity" in this matter

* Probably some articles among the pieces entitled, *Remnants of Time employed*, might be suppressed. But if it was so, the executors were sufficiently warranted herein, whatever might be the subjects of them, by the following advertisement which was prefixed to them by the author himself.

"These papers were written at several seasons and in-
"tervals of leisure, and on various occasions arising
"through the greatest part of my life. Many of them
"were designed to be published among the *Religiæ*
"*Juvenilæ*, but for some reason or other, not worth
"present notice, were laid by at that time. Whether
"I shall ever publish them I know not, though far the
"greater part of them have stood long corrected among
"my manuscripts; nor do I suppose many of them in-
"ferior to those Essays and Remarks of this kind which
"have before appeared in the world with some accept-
"ance. If they are not published in my life-time, my
"worthy friends, who have the care of my papers,
"MAY LEAVE OUT WHAT THEY PLEASE."

as groundless, because the Doctor had by no means enjoined his executors to publish them, but left it to their own discretion.

The publishers of his works made no secret of their having suppressed these papers, but say in the Title to his *Address to the Deity*, which was prefixed to them, "that it was "not judged necessary to publish them." There is no proof that they contained a "renunciation of his former sentiments;" a gentleman of veracity who had seen them assured the writer of this, that they appeared to him to contain nothing new, being only a further illustration of his sentiments concerning the Trinity which he had before published to the world, and therefore it might well be thought by his executors "unnecessary to publish" any thing more upon the subject. That this was the real matter of fact appears to be highly credible, and indeed undeniable, from the piece already referred to, which it is said "Dr. Doddridge with great difficulty rescued from destruction." This piece is evidently of the same complexion with what the Doctor had before published, and therefore most undoubtedly

that was the case with *the other papers which were suppressed*, to which this was prefixed.

We shall here transcribe it at length, as the best answer to the above assertions of the *Monthly Reviewer*, and at the same time as the most decisive proof what the Doctor's last sentiments were on this much disputed point of Divinity, as well as a pleasing evidence of his seriousness, humility and impartiality in his search after truth.

It is published in the Quarto Edition of Dr. Watts's works, vol. iv. p. 640—643, at the end of his *Remnants of Time employed*, and is verbatim as follows.

The

The Author's Solemn Address to the great and ever-blessed God, *on a Review of what he had written in the Trinitarian Controversy, prefixed by him to some pieces on that subject, which it was not judged necessary to publish.*

"RIGHTEOUS art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet I may talk with thee concerning thy judgments. Permit me O God and Father, to plead with thee concerning the revelations of thy nature and thy grace, which are made in thy gospel: And let me do it with all that humble reverence, and that holy awe of thy majesty, which becomes a creature in the presence of his God.

"Hast thou not, O Lord God Almighty, hast thou not transacted thy divine and important affairs among men by thy Son *Jesus Christ*, and by thy holy Spirit? And hast thou not ordained that men should transact their highest and most momentous concerns with thee, by thy Son and by thy Spirit? Hast

thou not, by the mouth of thy Son *Jesus* required all that profess his religion to be washed with water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost? Is it not my duty then, to enquire, who or what are these sacred names, and what they signify? Must I not know thee, the only true God, and *Jesus Christ* thy Son, whom thou hast sent, that I may fulfil all my respective duties towards thyself, and thy Son, in hope of eternal life? Hath not thy Son himself appealed to thee in his last prayer, that eternal life depends upon this knowledge? And since thou hast made so much use of thy holy Spirit in our religion, must I not have some knowledge of this thy Spirit also, that I may pay thee all those honours thou requirest from this divine revelation?

Hast thou not ascribed divine names, and titles, and characters to thy Son and thy holy Spirit in thy word, as well as assumed them to thyself? And hast thou not appointed to them such glorious offices as cannot be executed without something of divinity or true godhead in them? And yet art not thou, and thou alone, the true

 God?

God? How shall a poor weak creature be able to adjust and reconcile these clashing ideas, and to understand this mystery? Or must I believe and act blindfold, without understanding?

Holy Father, thou knowest, how firmly I believe, with all my soul, whatsoever thou hast plainly written and revealed in thy word. I believe Thee to be the only true God, the supreme of beings, self-sufficient for thine own existence, and for all thy infinite affairs and transactions among creatures. I believe thy only Son *Jesus Christ* to be all-sufficient for the glorious work of mediation between God and man, to which thou hast appointed him. I believe he is a man, in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily. I believe he is one with God; he is God manifested in the flesh; and that the man *Jesus* is so closely and inseparately united with the true and eternal Godhead, as to become one person, even as the soul and body make one man. I believe that this illustrious person is hereby possessed of divine dignity, sufficient to make full atonement for the sins of men by his sufferings and death, even tho' they be accounted an infinite evil; and

that he hath all-sufficient power to raise himself from the dead, to ascend to heaven, and fulfil the blessed works for which thou hast exalted him, and to govern and judge the world in thine appointed time.

"I believe also thy blessed Spirit hath almighty power and influence to do all thy will, to instruct men effectually in divine truths, to change the hearts of fallen mankind from sin to holiness, and to carry on thy work of illumination, sanctification, and consolation on the souls of all thy children, and to bring them safe to the heavenly world. I yield myself up joyfully and thankfully to this method of thy salvation, as it is revealed in thy gospel. But I acknowledge my darkness still. I want to have this wonderful doctrine of the all-sufficience of thy Son and Spirit, for these divine works made a little plainer. May not thy humble creature be permitted to know what share they can have in thy deity? Is it a vain and sinful curiosity to desire to have this article set in such a light, as may not diminish the eternal glory of the unity of the true God, nor of the supremacy of Thee the Father of all.

"Hadst

"Hadst thou informed me, gracious Father, in any place of thy word, that this divine doctrine is not to be understood by men, and yet they were required to believe it, I would have subdued all my curiosity to faith, and submitted my wandering and doubtful imaginations, as far as it was possible, to the holy and wise determinations of thy word. But I cannot find thou hast any where forbid me to understand it or to make these enquiries. My conscience is the best natural light thou hast put within me, and since thou hast given me the scriptures, my own conscience bids me search the scriptures, to find out truth and eternal life: It bids me try all things, and hold fast that which is good. And thy own word by the same expressions, encourages this holy practice. I have, therefore, been long searching into this divine doctrine, that I may pay thee due honour with understanding. Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship, whether he be one pure and simple being, or whether thou art a threefold deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit.

"Dear and blessed God, hadst thou been pleased, in any one plain scripture, to have informed

informed me which of the different opinions about the holy Trinity, among the contending parties of christians, had been true, thou knowest with how much zeal, satisfaction, and joy my unbiassed heart would have opened itself to receive and embrace the discovery. Hadst thou told me plainly in any single text, that the Father Son and holy Spirit, are three real distinct persons in thy divine nature, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts, nor embarrassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inventions of men, instead of divine doctrine; but I should have humbly and immediately accepted thy words, so far as it was possible for me to understand them, as the only rule of my faith. Or hadst thou been pleased so to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease find out, and with certainty infer this doctrine, I should have joyfully employed all my reasoning powers, with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference, and ingrafted it into my soul.

Thou hast taught me holy Father, by thy prophets, that the way of holiness in the

times

times of the gospel, or under the kingdom of the Messiah, shall be a high-way, a plain and easy path; so that the way-faring man, or the stranger, tho' a fool, shall not err therein. And thou hast called the poor and the ignorant, the mean and foolish things of this world, to the knowledge of thyself and thy Son, and taught them to receive and partake of the salvation which thou hast provided. But how can such weak creatures ever take in so strange, so difficult, and so abstruse a doctrine as this; in the explication and defence whereof, multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtilties of dispute, and endless mazes of darkness? And can this strange and perplexing notion of three real persons going to make up one true God, be so necessary and so important a part of that christian doctrine, which, in the old testament and the new, is represented as so plain and so easy, even to the meanest understandings?

O thou searcher of hearts who knowest all things, I appeal to thee concerning the sincerity of my enquiries into these discoveries of thy word. Thou knowest me, thou

hast

hast seen me, and hast tried my heart towards thee: If there be any lurking hypocrisy in my heart, any secret bias towards any thing but Truth, uncover it O Father of Lights, and banish it from my soul for ever. If thine eye discovers the least spark of criminal prejudice in any corner of my soul, extinguish it utterly, that I may not be led astray from the truth, in matters of such importance, by the least glance of error or mistake.

"Thou art witness, O my God, with what diligence, with what constancy and care, I have read and searched thy holy word, how early and late, by night and by day, I have been making these enquiries. How fervently I have been seeking thee on my bended knees, and directing my humble addresses to thee, to enlighten my darkness, and to shew me the meaning of thy word, that I may learn what I must believe, and what I must practise with regard to this doctrine, in order to please thee, and obtain eternal life!

"Great God, who seest all things, thou hast beheld what busy temptations have been often fluttering about my heart, to call it off from these laborious and difficult enquiries

and

and to give up thy word and thy gospel as an unintelligible book, and betake myself to the light of nature and reason: But thou hast been pleased by thy divine power to scatter these temptations, and fix my heart and my hope again upon that Saviour and that eternal life, which thou hast revealed in thy word, and proposed therein to our knowledge and acceptance. Blessed be the name of my God, that has not suffered me to abandon the gospel of his Son *Jesus!* and blessed be that holy Spirit that kept me attentive to the truth delivered in thy gospel, and inclined me to wait longer in my search of these divine truths under the hope of thy gracious illumination.

"I humbly call thee to witness, O my God, what a holy jealousy I ever wear about my heart, lest I should do the slightest dishonour to thy supreme Majesty, in any of my enquiries or determinations. Thou seest what a religious fear, and what a tender solicitude I maintain on my soul, lest I should think or speak any thing to diminish the grandeurs and honours of thy Son *Jesus*, my dear Mediator, to whom I owe my everlasting hopes. Thou knowest how much I am afraid

of

of speaking one word which may be construed into a neglect of thy blessed Spirit, from whom I hope I am daily receiving happy influences of light and strength. Guard all the motions of my mind, O almighty God, against every thing that borders upon these dangers. Forbid my thoughts to indulge; and forbid my pen to write one word, that should sink those grand ideas which belong to thyself, or thy Son, or thy holy Spirit. Forbid it, O my God, that ever I should be so unhappy as to unglorify my Father, my Saviour, or my Sanctifier, in any of my sentiments or expressions concerning them.

"Blessed and faithful God, hast thou not promised that the meek thou wilt guide in judgment, the meek thou wilt teach thy way? Hast thou not told us by *Isaiah* thy prophet, that thou wilt bring the blind by a way which they knew not, and wilt lead them in paths which they have not known? Hast thou not informed us by thy prophet *Hosea* that if we follow on to know the Lord, then we shall know him? Hath not thy Son, our Saviour, assured us, that our heavenly Father will give his holy Spirit to them who ask him? And is he not appointed to guide us into all

truth?

truth? Have I not sought the gracious guidance of thy good Spirit continually? Am I not truly sensible of my own darkness and weakness, my dangerous prejudices on every side, and my utter insufficiency for my own conduct? Will thou leave such a poor creature bewildered among a thousand perplexities, which are raised by the various opinions and contrivances of men to explain thy divine truth?

Help me, heavenly Father, for I am quite tired and weary of those human explainings, so various and uncertain. When wilt thou explain it to me thyself, O my God, by the secret and certain dictates of thy Spirit, according to the intimations of thy word? nor let any pride of reason, nor any affectation of novelty, nor any criminal bias whatsoever, turn my heart aside from hearkening to these divine dictates of thy word and thy Spirit. Suffer not any of my native corruptions, nor the vanity of my imagination to cast a mist over my eyes, while I am searching after the knowledge of thy mind and will, for my eternal salvation.

"I intreat, O most merciful Father, that thou wilt not suffer the remnant of my short

life to be wasted in such endless wanderings, in quest of thee and thy Son *Jesus*, as a great part of my past days have been; but let my sincere endeavours to know thee, in all the ways whereby thou hast discovered thyself in thy word, be crowned with such success, that my soul being established in every needful truth by thy holy Spirit, I may spend my remaining life according to the rules of the gospel, and may with all the holy and happy creation ascribe glory and honour, wisdom and power to thee, who sittest upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

(N° I.)

Containing a ſpecimen of Dr. Watts's manner of reading, referred to p. 5, of his Life, Note [D], being Remarks on a Book entitled *A Treatiſe of Humane Reaſon*, printed 1675. Small 12mo.

In the Title the Doctor has inſerted the author's name, MA. CLIFFORD, *Eſq. In the blank leaf at the beginning he puts his own name, with the date* 1705, *and writes as follows:*

THIS book when firſt publiſhed, did perhaps mollify the ſpirits of ſome men that were ſet upon perſecution of the Diſſenters. It has many uſeful notions in it, but it exalts Reaſon as the Rule of religion as well as the guide to a degree very dangerous: which occaſioned ſome writings Pro and Con at that time.

A book called *Plain Dealing*, by a ſcholar at Cambridge, was publiſhed in oppoſition to it, whoſe deſign ſeems tending toward perſecution.

An Anſwer thereto came out by one *Albertus Warren*, called *An Apology for the Diſcourſe of Humane Reaſon*, &c. 12mo. p. 144. This apologizer is a perfect Hobbiſt; his ſtile pretty ſmooth, but his ſenſe exceeding thin-ſet, his thoughts trivial and common, chiefly againſt perſecution; nor is there any thing in it worth the reading ſo much as the character of Mr. Clifford. [This character being a ſingular one we will tranſcribe it.]

" As to his perſon, 'twas little, his face rather flat than oval; his eye ſerious, countenance leonine, his conſtitution choleric, ſanguine, tinctured with melancholy: of a facetious converſation, yet a great humoriſt: of quick parts, ſo of quick paſſions, and venereal, thence lazy; he was learned, very critical, poſitive and proud, and ſcorned to be rich; he had a will to be juſt; would drink to exceſs ſometimes. His religion was that of his country; he was always loyal to his king, and a very good poet. He died 'twixt 50 and 60, at Sutton's hoſpital, whoſe maſter he then was; not much lamented by the penſioners. Few knew him well. He was a man ſtrangely compoſed; 'tis queſtioned whether his virtues or his vices were moſt.

I incline to the last; yet he departed peaceable and piously."

Another Book called *Observations upon*, &c. 12mo. p. 73, wherein our author is charged with confusion, and some inconsistencies are proved upon him. But what was truly valuable in the controversy was not much. I have [here] inserted all that was worth notice by way of marginal remarks with an *—*And they are proofs of his great attention and sound judgment.*

The Doctor's own remarks are distinguished by another signature, and those only we shall here transcribe. The author having said (p. 2,)—"There being so many mists cast before me "by the errors and deceits of others, that "one had great need of a better eye-sight "than is left us by the fall of our first fore-"father," the Doctor remarks, *** This sentence, forced from the author's pen by the mere power of truth, overthrows many things in his following discourse, and should have at least taught him to mention *Fervent Prayer to God* for safe direction as a companion to this great guide Reason in quest of Religion.

P. 34. "I cannot see how any but God "himself can certainly know that any man "is an Heretic." *** *Obj.* But surely Heresy must be knowable by men, else how can Heretics be rejected? Tit. iii. 10. But then this rejection is not with fire and sword, but only a casting them out of such an Ecclesiastical Society.

P. 38. "He who gave rules which admit "of so many interpretations, is well content-"ed that they shall be interpreted several-"ly—" *** God, who left his word obscure in some circumstantials of religion, foreknew and designed to permit various interpretations therein, not that all can be true, but to try whether under all this doubtfulness in lesser matters they would all hold the essentials; and under this difference of opinions practise Charity.

P. 66. "He bids you search—there is "therefore in man a natural ability of search-"ing spiritual truths, and that can be no-"thing else but his understanding." *** It is granted that man has a power of searching spiritual truths necessary to salvation, if he use all the helps God has proposed, *viz.* advice of the learned and pious, scripture, and earnest

earneſt prayer, &c. But then it is not Reaſon that diſcovers all theſe ſpiritual truths to him, but only ſhews where they may be found, and reads and receives them there.

P. 67. "We lay the blaſphemous accuſa-
" tion of injuſtice upon God, if he puniſh
" us for an error which we could not avoid."
*** No man ſhall be condemned but for the ſins of the Will: either Heathens acting contrary to the light of nature, or thoſe who are born in chriſtian countries, for neglecting the helps to knowledge, or bribing their underſtandings, &c.

P. 69. "In this caſe [error in judgment]
" we cannot know our fault, and therefore
" have no means of repenting of it."
*** Therefore we grant, the condemning ſentence ſhall not be pronounced on any for mere invincible ignorance.

P. 87. "Reaſon is to be accounted that
" Rule and that Guide we look for, &c."
*** If this author would be content to exalt Reaſon only as a GUIDE to us in the ſearch after the RULE of Religion, perhaps he might be defended: but to make it the Rule and Guide too attributes more to it than a Chriſtian dares aſſent to. *The follow-*

ing quotation which the Doctor makes with approbation is worthy of being inserted. "* In "this matter Reason is the Eye, true Religion is the Object; all other helps, divine and human, are as the light, as spectacles, &c. Now it is impossible to see "with any thing but our own eyes, i. e. "our Reason. Yet a clear Light is also necessary, without which our eye cannot see "the object, nor our reason find out the "true Religion."

At the end of the book the Doctor writes the following Remarks on the whole.

This Discourse of human reason contains many valuable and bold truths of the necessity and usefulness of searching for happiness by its conduct; which if referred to our search after a Rule, or superior Guide, viz. *Revelation*, may be safely admitted; (especially if he had joined earnest Prayer to God therewith.) But the bent and strain of his discourse seems to bid us depend on human Reason alone in the search of happiness itself, or heaven and salvation; and his methods of reasoning are such as would lead the ignorant and unwary into a complete and sole dependance on Reason. My sense on this

subject

subject is contained in these *Remarks*, which especially refer to the last part of this book from p. 80. to the end.

It must be granted, that men of sense and learning and enquiry, are led by Reason to the acknowledgment of the divinity of Scripture; deducing this conclusion from a hundred moral arguments and probabilities, which united amount to a certainty and demonstration. Thus by Reason we find out the Rule of Religion, which is infallible; but then our Reason must subject itself to be guided by that Rule, which is divine and infallible.

Obj. p. 86. "But this Rule so found "must be interpreted by Reason." *Ans.* In things which are plainly and expresly asserted by this Rule of Scripture, and that in a sense which contradicts not other parts of scripture, or natural light, our reason must submit, and believe the thing, though it cannot find the *modus* or manner of its being; So in the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, which are above the reach of our reason in this present state. But we cannot, nor must we be led to take the words of scripture in such a sense as expresly and

evidently contradicts all ſenſe and reaſon; as Tranſubſtantiation: for the two great Lights of God, Reaſon and Revelation never contradict each other, though one be ſuperior to the other.

Therefore Reaſon has a great deal to do in Religion, *viz.* to find out the Rule, to compare the parts of this Rule with one another, to explain the one by the other, to give the grammatical and logical ſenſe of the expreſſions, and to exclude ſelf-contradictory interpretations, as well as interpretations contrary to Reaſon. But it is not to ſet itſelf up as a Judge of thoſe truths expreſſed therein which are aſſerted by a ſuperior and infallible dictator God himſelf; but Reaſon requires and commands even the ſubjection of all its own powers to a truth thus divinely atteſted, for it is as poſſible and as proper that God ſhould propoſe Doctrines to our underſtanding which it cannot comprehend, as Duties to our practice which we cannot ſee the reaſon of; for he is equally ſuperior to our Underſtanding and Will, and he puts the obedience of Both to a trial.

Yet after all it muſt be acknowledged, that the greater part of mankind, as well as

of

of chriſtians, have their Reaſon ſo exceedingly weak, their prejudices ſo ſtrangely ſtrong, their incapacity to ſearch and to diſtinguiſh truth ſo great, that there ſeems to be a neceſſity of the Spirit of God by powerful and ſecret influence to lead thoſe whom he deſigns to ſave, both to the belief of the Scriptures as the Rule, and to the interpretation of thoſe parts of the Rule which are abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation. And we find that the beſt account that moſt Chriſtians can give why they believe Scripture to be the word of God, and why they believe this or that to be the ſenſe of Scripture is, becauſe they have found ſuch influences proceeding from it on their hearts, to change their wills from ſinful to holy, and turn their ſouls from ſin and the creature and this preſent world of vanity to God and Religion, and eternal things. And this is moſt properly called the teſtimony of the Spirit; which the Proteſtants oppoſe to the Popiſh teſtimony of the Church; this laſt being external and rational only, and built upon a hundred probable circumſtances which are knowable only to the learned, but the firſt being

being inward and common to all true Christians, and by which all must be saved.

And it may be remarked here, that the reason why rational and learned men exalt Reason so high, and make it to be their sole guide and judge in things of religion is, because they find their own Reason able to prove the truth and divinity of Scripture and the Christian Religion, and to secure them from the follies and absurdities of Atheism, Judaism, Paganism, and Mahometism. But they cannot condescend to sympathize with the vulgar, and think how exceeding feeble and variable and deceivable are the minds and reasoning powers of the generality of mankind, who all have souls to save; towards whose direction into the truth, and security and establishment therein unto salvation, it is very evident something more is needful than the infirm and unsteady faculties of nature; and as this author himself by the very force of truth thoughtlessly asserts, p. 2. "One had great need of a better eye-sight than is left us by the fall of our first fore-father."

N°

(N° II.)

TWO LETTERS *between the publisher of this work and a friend, concerning* Dr. WATTS's *Sentiments respecting the* Trinity.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE read with attention the view which you have given of Dr. Watts's last sentiments concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity, and think you have undeniably proved that the common reports of certain persons, respecting his renunciation of the orthodox faith, are without foundation. But I must take the liberty to say, that in the extracts which you have given from his two last publications, you have led your readers to entertain an idea that he was entirely in what has been called of late *the Indwelling-scheme*; that he did not maintain a distinction of persons in the Godhead, but conceived of God, as being only one person, who is called the Father, and that it was this one person who dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, in consequence of which union Christ is God. Whereas I think you must have found, in examining his writings, that he did not deny a three-fold distinction in Deity, and that Christ had an existence as God, previous to the union of the human nature to the Godhead. For my own part, tho' I would by no means condemn you and others, who are in the Indwelling-scheme, as heretics, since you mean to support the Deity of Christ; and I think your sentiments widely different from Arianism or Socinianism; yet I must confess to you that I do not believe this to be the scripture representation

representation of the doctrine. And, tho' I am clearly of opinion that our orthodox writers are not to be justified, who speak of the Father, Son, and Spirit as three persons so distinct from each other as to be *three beings*, (which I cannot vindicate from the charge of *Tritheism*;) yet I do apprehend that there is a three-fold distinction in Deity, which justifies the term *three persons*, and that to each of these the essential attributes of Deity belong. Herein I cannot but think Dr. Watts's opinion coincided with my own, so that he was more orthodox than your view of his sentiments would lead your readers to suppose.

I am, with sincere respect, &c.

LETTER II.

Answer to the foregoing.

My dear and worthy friend,

I THANK you for the freedom of your remarks, and for the opportunity which you have afforded me of expressing my ideas about Dr. Watts's sentiments, and proposing some queries to you concerning your own.

I firmly believe that Dr. Watts was, in the latter part of his life at least, in the sentiments which, upon the most deliberate and impartial enquiry, I have embraced, respecting the Deity of Christ, &c. called *the Indwelling-scheme*. His idea seems clearly to me to have been this: That God is one infinite being, possessed of all perfections: That this one God is he who is often characterized as the *Father*. That Jesus Christ is another being, or person, in himself inferior to the Father and derived from him; as you and all the orthodox

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will allow the man Christ to be *: But that he existed with the Father before all worlds; (which you, *with the* SOCINIANS, *deny:*) And that the one God, the Being called the *Father*, (with reference to Christ the *Son*) was so united to him, and so dwelt in him, that he became *one with God*, and in consequence of this union he is properly God, so that at his incarnation GOD *was manifested in the flesh*.

It is true, he does sometimes allude to the idea of some *unknown distinctions* in Deity; but at most, I conceive, he only means to say, he does not know what distinctions the incomprehensible nature of Godhead may admit of; nor do I. (See p. 77.) But I cannot find that it was any article of his *faith* that there *are* such *distinctions in the Godhead* as you speak of; on the contrary he maintains that the person, or being, united to the man Christ Jesus, was not a *part of Deity* (for so I must conceive of it if it was not the *whole Godhead*) or an existence separate from the *Father*, but that it was the *Father himself*. See p. 76, 77. So that I cannot think that I have given a partial representation of his sentiments.

And now, my good friend, as I am writing to you on this subject, I will embrace the opportunity which you have afforded me for enquiring, *What is meant by that three-fold distinction in Deity* which you maintain? I have put this question to many who use this phraseology, but could never get a satisfactory answer. When I have proposed

* Dr. Watts, in his sermons printed 1721, has these expressions: "The Son of God is spoken of in the New "Testament as a very glorious person, who was some way "begotten of the Father, i. e. *derived* from God the Father, "Vol. II. p. 452. He is constituted near to God by an un-"speakable union. What joys, what unknown delights "possess the holy soul of the man Jesus! for he is the nearest "*creature* to the blessed God; for he is one with Godhead." Vol. I. p. 250.

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my difficulties, I have been told "the subject is "mysterious, and I must not pry too inquisitively "into the deep things of God." Now I am willing to remain ignorant of what God has not thought fit to reveal. But surely revealed truth, may be understood, and it cannot be presumptuous to search into the meaning of it. However, the enquiry in the present case is not about the divine nature itself, but about a mere human form of speech in respect to it. And is there any presumption in asking a fellow-creature, when he uses language concerning God, which I do not understand, *What he means by it?* or in stating the objections I have to it? With as much propriety might I charge *him* with presumption in objecting to any phraseology *of mine*, or desiring of me an explication of it. Do you expect or wish me, good Sir, to adopt any modes of speech, without having ideas to them? Is this a sufficient test of a person's being orthodox? I have always thought orthodoxy to signify, not *speaking* but *thinking right*. For any thing that appears, I think the same of God as you do. You seem to maintain the *Unity of God* in as absolute a sense as myself, inasmuch as you deny God to be *three beings*. Wherein then do we differ? Were you to tell me freely what ideas you have when you talk of three distinctions in Godhead, possibly it might appear that you believe no more than I do, or I might readily fall into your sentiments. But till you tell me your *meaning*, (which surely you can do if you have any) I am incapable of making a comparison between your sentiments and my own. At present, the mode of expression which you adopt appears to me highly exceptionable.

I can form no idea of a three-fold distinction in Deity but that of *three Beings*, or three component *parts*, which is equally inconsistent with the unity,

unity, and would imply divisibility; which I am sure you would protest against. I can easily conceive of a distinction between the *attributes* of God. But do you make the Son and Spirit to be only distinct *attributes*? If so, with what propriety can they be represented, and addressed, as *persons*? or how can they sustain different offices, and perform different works? or indeed *any at all*? Besides, if the attributes of God be allowed to be personified, it will follow that there are as many persons in God as there are attributes. If the Wisdom of God be called one person, and his Power another, his Holiness may be as justly stiled a third, his Goodness a fourth, &c. The attributes of Deity are only the properties of his nature. Neither of these can be properly called *God*, or be spoken of as *equal* to God, who is *the being* to whom they all belong. Moreover God himself you must allow to be a *being*, and God the *Father* you will admit is a *person*, in the proper sense of that term, i. e. an intelligent being: but if the Son and Spirit are only attributes of God, then they are not equal to him, and consequently this notion is contrary to the orthodox faith. If you mean that the one God sustains *three Characters* or *Relations*, this is intelligible enough, but then it is not *orthodox*; it is pure *Sabellianism*. Besides God sustains more characters and relations than *three*, consequently, according to this scheme, there are more distinctions or persons *.

* If Christ *as God* be a distinct person from the Father, does it not follow that there are *two persons* in Jesus Christ? for he was a person *as man*. This I know some Trinitarians deny, but it is only to serve a turn. Must it not be a *person* who thinks, speaks, acts, suffers, and dies? Are not the personal pronouns constantly applied to Christ as man? Do not you often speak of him as acting and suffering *as man*? To me nothing can be plainer than that Christ as man was a *person*; consequently, unless he be two persons, he is not *as God* a person distinct from the Father.

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I can think of no other ſenſe in which the terms can be uſed. Perhaps you will ſay, that "ſince "the nature of God is to us incomprehenſible, "there may, for ought we can tell, be ſuch diſ-"tinctions in it as have been ſuppoſed." I anſwer, There may be various things in God of which we poor worms of the earth have no conceptions, and it does not become us to *deny* any thing concerning him, however myſterious, which does not evidently imply an imperfection. But let me ſay, it is equally preſumptuous in us to *affirm* any thing concerning God which he himſelf has not clearly revealed. And it is no juſt argument that *there is* this or that property or diſtinction in the divine nature, merely that the contrary cannot be clearly proved. I beſeech you to think whither this would lead us.

Our faith, with reſpect to what God is, muſt be founded, *not* on what may be ſuppoſed *poſſible*, and cannot be proved *falſe*, but on what divine Revelation clearly aſſerts to be *true*. And to believe any thing concerning the Deity of which we can give no rational account, or to uſe language reſpecting him without ideas, is ſo far from giving him glory, that it is doing him diſhonour. At beſt it is to *darken counſel by words without knowledge.*

If you can give me a rational and ſcriptural explanation of the above terms, by which the Deity of the Father, Son, and Spirit can be maintained to greater advantage than upon Dr. *Watts*'s plan, (which for want of a better I at preſent adopt) you will confer a great obligation upon,

Dear Sir,

Your friend and ſervant,

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