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SERIES
OF
SERMONS
ON THE
DIVINITY OF CHRIST:

PREACHED IN
EAST-WINDSOR,
DEC. 1819, AND JAN. 1820.

BY THOMAS ROBBINS.

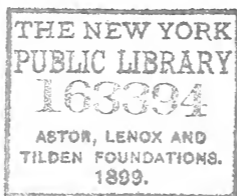
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TO the People of my Pastoral Charge, the following Sermons, written for their benefit, and now printed at their desire, are affectionately Dedicated.



SERMON I.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

It was justly observed by the early fathers of the christian church, that three of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in their history of Christ, began with his incarnation, then passed along through his life, his death, his resurrection and his ascension to his divine glory in the heavens. They began with his humanity, and advanced to his divinity. They found their Saviour on earth, and left him in heaven. While John first contemplates the Redeemer as the mighty God, then descending to earth, to assume our nature, and make atonement for sin. He begins with him in heaven, then comes with him to earth. He first contemplates his Lord as one with the father, afterwards, as a man of sorrows, wounded for our transgressions, dying that sinners may live.

This thought is very useful in leading us to a correct view of the plan of the gospel of John.

It affords the true reason of the solemn, and, apparently, abrupt manner, in which this gospel is introduced.

Another observation may be made on the introduction of this gospel. The Evangelist evidently had in his mind the beginning of the book of Genesis. The narrative of the creation by Moses is justly considered, merely as a sample of composition, one of the highest efforts of the human mind, and might well be contemplated as a pattern, by the succeeding writers of the inspired scriptures. But there is a more important reason why this Apostle should have had a reference to the Mosaic account of the creation in the beginning of his gospel. Moses gave a history of the material creation, John was to give a history of the new creation; the redemption of a Church by the Lord Jesus. The Hebrew prophet has taught us how the heavens and the earth rose out of chaos. The beloved disciple has made known the manner in which a holy people, meet for the service of God, is to be raised from the ruins of sin. The former has made an record of the ruin of man by sin: the latter of his glorious recovery by grace. One gives a history of the creation of the first man, of his fatal apostacy, and the ruin of all his posterity. The other informs us of the coming of the second Adam, of his victory over sin, of his purpose to restore all the evils of the fall, and of the eternal glory of his numerous seed. The one records the dawn of hope

for our guilty world, in the promise of the victory of the seed of the woman: the other assures us that that promised seed has come, and has finished the work which was given him to do. Moses says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He adds, "All things were made by him." Thus the same Creator that is introduced by the Hebrew shepherd as calling into being the heavens and the earth, is presented by the chosen disciple, as the Redeemer of lost men.

The term Word, in the text, means Christ. This is evident from what is said in the succeeding explanation. Concerning the Word, the Evangelist asserts, (verse 4) "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." And (verse 14) "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." And (verse 17) speaking of the same person, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This apostle speaks of Christ, in other instances, under the appellation of the Word. 1. John 1. 1. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, —and our hands have handled of the Word of life." And in the same epistle, (chap. 5, verse 7,) "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy

‘Ghost.’” It is said of Christ, Rev. xix. 13, “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called, the Word of God.”—We may add, though there have been great attempts to explain away, and pervert the natural meaning of the words of our text, yet it is generally admitted, on all hands, that it is Christ that is spoken of under the denomination of the Word.

The principal object of the inspired evangelist, in the introduction of his gospel, is, undoubtedly, to declare the true character of Christ. He, therefore, asserts his divinity in the fullest and plainest manner, and in various forms of expression, declaring him to be eternal, to be God, the Creator of all things, inherently possessed of life, and the author of all moral light bestowed upon men.

The gospel of John was, evidently, written for the primary purpose of illustrating and confirming the great doctrine of the deity of Christ. It was written many years after the other gospels, and as is generally understood, after the banishment of this apostle to the isle of Patmos, where he received and wrote the Revelation, and after all the other apostles were dead. All the ancient ecclesiastical writers agree in the account that the apostle John saw the other gospels and approved of them; but thought some things further ought to be recorded concerning Christ, particularly, with regard to his divinity. St. John then wrote his gospel,

and did it under the immediate guidance of that divine Spirit who had expressly promised to the apostles, to bring all things to their remembrance, and to guide them into all truth.

The doctrine of the Trinity has ever been considered a fundamental doctrine of our holy religion. It was taught and believed by the holy prophets of God, it was taught and established by the Lord Jesus, it was uniformly inculcated by his faithful apostles, and has been received and held, ever since, in the Christian church. It is true, it has been denied. Like all other of the important doctrines of divine revelation, that of the Trinity has usually had its opposers, and, at times, numbers, within the pale of the visible church, have refused to receive it as the truth of God. This doctrine was opposed by certain heretics at an early period of the christian church, and has had its enemies more or less, in almost every period since. Yet the number of those who have denied the doctrine of the Trinity to be taught in the scriptures, compared with those who have received it, has always been small. And it may be said with confidence, where the other great doctrines of the gospel have been received and taught in their greatest purity, where the practical duties of religion have been most extensively observed, where the renewing and sanctifying influences of the divine Spirit have been most richly experinced, the doctrine of the Trinity has been most faithfully held.--The

great question on the doctrine of the Trinity regards the divinity of Christ. All that have held that there is more than one person in the Godhead, have allowed that there are three. The evidence of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, though as we believe, most ample and irresistible, is not so great as that of the divinity of the Son. If then it can be shown that Christ is not truly divine, the deity of the Spirit is not likely to be maintained. And if Christ is admitted to be a divine person, there can be no great difficulty in allowing a divine character to the Spirit of God. It is evident, then, that the great doctrine of the Trinity of God rests, substantially, on the question of the divinity of Christ. This is enough to show the high importance of this subject, though some further observations to evince its magnitude, and to exhibit some of the consequences depending upon it, may be made hereafter.

We shall now proceed to the object of this discourse, which is,

To prove and illustrate the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Our Doctrinal Proposition is,

JESUS CHRIST IS A BEING TRULY DIVINE. HE IS, IN ALL RESPECTS, VERY GOD.

Whatever comes from God, is in a certain sense, divine. It is divine with regard to its source or author. The word of God we call divine, the commandments are divine, the work of creation is a divine work. That is, all these have proceeded from the Deity and are

the production of his own divine mind. The prophets are called divine prophets, to distinguish them from persons calling themselves prophets, who were not sent from God. The apostles are called divine, as being inspired of God, and commissioned to make known to men the way of salvation which he has provided. Religious ordinances are called divine. Heb. ix. 1. "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service." They are divine, as appointed by God, and as designed for his worship. In such a use of the term, many persons speak of Christ as a divine Saviour, who do not admit his personal divinity. Christ is divine, not on account of his work but because he possesses in his own nature, all the attributes of God.

The proofs of the divinity of Christ are many and various ; and, in an attempt to exhibit them, though in a summary manner, it is necessary that they be arranged in distinct classes. In this manner we shall

FIRST—Endeavour to mention some of the most plain and satisfactory proofs that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly a divine person.

SECONDLY—We shall take notice of some of the objections to this doctrine, and the arguments urged against it.

THIRDLY—We shall mention some of the consequences which naturally result from the truth of this doctrine, as well as some of those flowing from the opposite sentiment.

FIRST—We shall endeavour to mention some

of the most plain and satisfactory proofs that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly a divine person.

These proofs will be drawn, of course, principally, from the scriptures. I am aware there are many attempts, at the present day, with great pretensions to superior learning, to alter and correct the reading of the scriptures. And no class of people have done so much at this, as those who oppose the divine character of the Saviour. On this subject, which does not belong to the present discussion more than to that of any other scripture doctrine, I shall make only a passing remark. The scriptures were not designed, principally, for philosophers, or eminent scholars, but for all orders of men, for the learned and the unlearned, the old and the young, for every description of needy immortal sinners. And no reasonable person will suppose that any important doctrine, especially one of such magnitude as that of the assential character of the Redeemer, would be left by the Holy Spirit in such a state of obscurity, as to be determined only by the power of acute criticism, or extensive learning. And further, if we are to suppose that there has been no watchful providence of God, to preserve the holy scriptures from loss and corruption, through such a long course of ages, we can have but little confidence in their divine authority. If God has been pleased, in his great wisdom and goodness, to give to mankind a revelation of his will, designed for the benefit

of his people in all periods of time, we may rest satisfied that he would not suffer any material alterations of his truth ever to take place. We may observe, further, the integrity of the scriptures may certainly be included in the special promises of his presence and favour which God has given to his church. One of the principal ways in which he has promised to be with his people is in his word. But, on this they cannot rely, unless they can be sure that the scriptures, *as they have them*, are in truth, the holy testimony of God. We therefore rest with confidence, trusting in the truth and faithfulness of Jehovah, that the Bible, as we now have it, is truly the word of God.—These scriptures testify, in a variety of forms, as we believe, that Christ Jesus is truly divine.

This testimony may be given after the following method.

I. The names given to Christ by the inspired writers.

II. The attributes ascribed to him in the scriptures.

III. The works which are uniformly ascribed to him.

IV. The worship which the scriptures inform us of having been paid to Christ, and which they require for him.

I. Jesus Christ must be divine from the names given him by the inspired writers.

Of these there are several which are the peculiar names of the divine Being. These will be mentioned in their order. And

1. Jesus Christ is often called God. This is the appropriate name of the supreme Being, and more frequently used in the scriptures than any other, to express his person. By the single term, God, the Most High is commonly denominated, in the history of the creation, in the succeeding account of his dispensations with the early patriarchs, and in the periods of the prophets and the apostles.—This term is often applied to Christ. As a striking example, we recur to the words of our text. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” That truth cannot be affirmed, that I can conceive, in any plainer terms. It is most evident, as we have before observed, that the primary object of the apostle John, in this passage, is to assert the character of his Saviour. He, certainly, must have intended to speak so as to be understood. And I see not how he can be understood, in this plain passage, in any other way than to assert that Jesus Christ is God. And what unprejudiced person who had not some previous opinion to support or oppose, would ever understand it in any other way? Whether Christ *can be* God, is another question. But that the apostle John has asserted that he is, is clear.—It may be proper to add, that, in this case, there is no question about the correctness of the translation. The original language speaks the same truth, precisely, as our own. As it is

evidently intended by the apostle, in this passage, to declare the deity of Christ, he has, in a peculiar manner, guarded and strengthened his declaration, so as to leave no reasonable ground for error or mistake. Thus, in the same sentence in which he declares Christ to be God, he asserts his eternity. "In the *beginning* was the Word." That is, before all things else, before creation had a being. "The same was in the beginning with God." His existence was coeternal with that of the Father. If, when Moses says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" he teaches that God was before all things, that he was, of course, eternal: when John asserts that Christ was in the beginning, and in the beginning with God, that is, God never was without him, he fully declares the eternity of Christ. This is mentioned in this place to show that there can be no mistake in believing that the apostle meant to declare his Saviour to be very God.—If the scriptures are the word of God, and if they are to be received in their plain and natural import, this passage decides the question. It is here asserted, by divine authority, that Christ Jesus is the eternal God. It will be proper, however, to notice some other passages.

Rom. ix. 5. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed, forever, Amen." While the apostle Paul here calls Christ God,

he speaks of him as eternal, and as ever blessed. That is, always perfect, and always holy. Each of which make him the true and eternal God. Having made this assertion respecting his Saviour, the apostle subjoins his Amen, as a confirmation or repetition of the preceding declaration. I know of no way to evade the testimony of this passage.

1. Tim. III. 16. "And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." The person here spoken of is Christ. Yet the apostle affirms that it was God who was manifest in the flesh, who was preached unto the Gentiles, who was believed on in the world, and received up into glory. The disciples saw him ascend up to glory, and they knew that it was their Lord and Saviour.— This apostle says again, Acts xx. 28. "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." God hath purchased the church, he has done it by taking our nature, and thus offering his own blood a sacrifice for sin.

Matt. i. 22, 23. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth

‘a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us.’ Jesus, having taken our nature, having been born of a woman, is God with us.—Heb. 1. 8. “But unto the son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” This passage is quoted from the forty-fifth Psalm. The apostle assures us that it is spoken by God, and that it is spoken to the Son, who is Christ. Thus God calls him by his own sacred name, God.—Rev. xx. 11, 12. “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened;—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” He that is to be the final judge of the world, certainly, is Christ. And here we are assured that, at the judgment, all will stand before God.

The profession of Thomas the disciple, after the resurrection of his Lord, is an express testimony to the Saviour’s divinity. He had declared that he would not believe in the resurrection of his Master, until he had ocular testimony, and sensible evidence of the fact. “Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither

‘thy finger, and behold my hands ; reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side ; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.’ Here it is to be observed, that this disciple was perfectly free from all improper credulity. He was unreasonably so, in refusing to believe that his Lord had risen, from the testimony of his fellow disciples. He was now called upon by his Lord to examine and satisfy himself with regard to his character. He did so, and having become convinced that the crucified Saviour had truly risen from the dead, a fact which must have determined his character, he exclaims, not with a passionate surprise, as has been often asserted, but as the result of deliberate examination and reflection, *My Lord, and my God.*

The Lord Jesus assumed the appellation of God, and suffered others to address him in that form. Rev. xxi. 6, 7. “And he said unto me, ‘It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end :—He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.’” The person here speaking is Christ. In the first chapter of this book, he uses a similar expression. “I am ‘Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.’”—On this subject, we have an important testimony in the tenth chapter of John. Christ says, (verse 30,) “I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

‘Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.’ They certainly must have known, as he spake to them, what he meant, when he said “I and my Father are one.” And they assert that he made himself God. If they had been mistaken, and misapprehended him, it cannot be believed that he would not have corrected the error. If he would not have done this to save his own life, he must have done it to prevent them from shedding innocent blood. For there was every appearance that they would, immediately, attempt to put him to death. If he were not truly divine, they were right in declaring him guilty of blasphemy; and, by their law, a blasphemer might be punished with death.

These testimonies, to which we have thus attended, are taken from the scriptures of the New Testament; from whence, a variety of others, of a similar import, might easily be adduced. Some passages, from other parts of the scriptures, will be considered in the next discourse.

This Saviour, who is thus found to be truly God, is our Saviour, our Lord, and will be our final judge. Verily he is able to save, even

to the uttermost, all that come unto him. To all who fear and love him he will be a protection, a security, an exceeding great reward. All his enemies will be compelled to bow before him, to submit to his dominion, to be disposed of at his pleasure. "The thunder of his power, who can understand?" As judge of the world, he will appoint to all their portion for eternity. They that are his friends by penitence and obedience, and they only, will be safe in the day of his appearing. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

SERMON II.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, &c.

In the sacred Books of the Prophets, we find numerous testimonies concerning the character of the Redeemer, some of which it will be important for us to notice. In these, he is, most explicitly called God. One of the most interesting scenes, that has ever occurred on earth, is that in which the Most High appeared to the humble shepherd of Midian, to declare his gracious purpose for the redemption of his afflicted Israel. Ex. iii.—“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian:—And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses ! And he said, here am I. And he said, draw not nigh hither : put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the

‘God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.’ I think no case can be mentioned from the scriptures, in which the true God is more clearly spoken of, or in which the divine majesty more fully appears. Yet a little attention will convince us that the person thus brought into view, with such great solemnity, is Christ. He is called in the beginning, “the Angel of the Lord.” The original expression, used in this case, would be more correctly rendered “The Angel the Lord,” or rather “the Angel Jehovah.” This is a term very often applied to Christ, but never to the Father. Jacob says, Gen. XLVIII; “The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” Here the prophetic patriarch speaks of the Angel as his Redeemer, and he invokes his divine blessing. The Angel his Redeemer is Christ.

The Saviour is denominated an angel by the prophet Isaiah. “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” Here, the angel of his presence, which is the same as the angel of the Lord, is said, explicitly, to have been the Saviour and the Redeemer of Israel. Israel’s Saviour and Redeemer can be none but Christ; yet the prophet calls him, as Moses does, “the

‘Angel of the Lord.’” Many passages might be adduced from the scriptures of the old Testament, were it necessary, in which the same expression is applied to the Redeemer. It is, therefore, sufficiently evident, that *The Angel Jehovah*, who appeared to Moses, was Christ. The passage of the prophet Isaiah, to which we have referred further illustrates the one in Exodus, now under consideration. The prophet says, “the angel of his presence saved them;” that is, his people Israel; “he bare them, and ‘carried them all the days of old.” Referring, primarily, to what God did for them, in delivering them from the oppressions of Egypt, and bringing them to the heritage of Canaan. The same thing which the Angel that appeared to Moses in the bush declared that he would do. And as it is clear, from what is said of him, that the Angel mentioned by the prophet is the Saviour, the one seen by the shepherd of Midian must be the same.

We notice a few instances in which the term Angel is applied to Christ. Malachi, iii. 1. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he ‘shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, ‘whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ‘ye delight in.” The messenger of the covenant is the same as the angel of the covenant; the terms angel, and messenger, signifying the samething. But the messenger, or angel, of the covenant,

who came to his temple, was Christ Jesus.—Acts vii. 38. “This is he that was in the church in ‘the wilderness with the angel that spake to ‘him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fa- ‘thers.” The head of the church is none but Christ, who is here called the angel, and declared to be the same that spake to Moses on Mount Sinai.—Acts xxvii. 23. “Paul ‘said, there stood by me this night, the angel ‘of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, say- ‘ing, Fear not Paul.” This spostle would acknowledge himself the property and servant of none but Christ whom he here denominates “the ‘angel of God.” Though this expression, “the ‘angel of the Lord,” be often used in the scrip- tures, it will be found, on a careful examination, to refer, in most cases, to Christ: and when it does not, the meaning is ascertained by the con- nexion, so that there can be little danger of mistake. This angel of the Lord called to Abra- ‘ham to stay his hand, when raised to slay his son upon the altar; and when he appeared to Moses, said of himself, “I am the God of Abra- ham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”— The promise which the Angel of the Lord makes to Moses, of redeeming Israel out of all their afflictions, is, subsequently, renewed by the same person. Ex. vi. “And I will take ‘you to me for a people, and I will be to you ‘a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord ‘your God, which bringeth you out from under

“the burdens of the Egyptians.” He here calls himself the Lord God.

The following passages are from the prophet Isaiah. “Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.”—“Who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour.”—“Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel, I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.” Here we find that the Saviour, the Redeemer, is called God, as his appropriate name, that, by this, he is distinguished from all false Gods; and that he is declared to be the only God, and no one beside him.—Again, “For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.”

Hos. XIII. 4. “Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but me: for there is no Saviour besides me.”—The prophet Habakkuk declares, in his great affliction, though every other comfort might be taken from him, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” The God of his *salvation* must be Christ the Saviour.

Other passages might easily be selected from Moses and the prophets, to an almost indefinite extent, in which Christ Jesus is explicit-

ly called God, with the highest marks of reverence and worship.—Their testimony concerning the character of Christ the Redeemer is equally valid with that of the apostles. For the Saviour says, in his sermon on the mount, in the outset of his public ministry, “Think ‘not that I am come to destroy the law or the ‘prophets: I am not come to destroy but to ‘fulfil. For verily I say unto you, ‘Till heaven ‘and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no ‘wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.” By *the law and the prophets*, he means the whole of the scriptures of the Old Testament. He well knew that some, in that day, expected that the Messiah, at his coming, would set aside the authority of the scriptures of the prophets, for the purpose of the new dispensation, and that the same opinion would be held, by many in succeeding times. On this account he makes use of the strong language contained in the words to which we have just referred. He came not to destroy but to fulfil. And, before the divine authority of these sacred writings shall be set aside, heaven and earth shall pass away. Christ was the hope of prophets and saints, as really, as of apostles and believers. He says to the Jews, “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye ‘believe not his writings, how shall ye believe ‘my words?” While the Saviour here assures us that Moses wrote of him, he teaches the

truth, no less important, that those who do not receive the writings of Moses as of divine authority, cannot be said to be believers in him. The apostle Paul, having spoken of many of the ancient saints, who, in a variety of ways, evinced their faith in God, observes, in the 11th of Hebrews, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." The *promises* were those, especially, which refer to the coming and the work of Christ. Of these, they were persuaded, and they embraced them. They were, therefore, the true friends and children of Christ. Thus it is testified of them, in the same chapter, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." He that had prepared a city for the ancient saints, is the same holy Saviour that said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."—That the people of God, preceding and succeeding the incarnation of Christ, equally belong to him, is fully attested in the Epistle to the Ephesians. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the

‘Lord.’ The church is built upon the testimony of prophets and apostles, of which the Lord Jesus is, equally, the sure foundation.— It is written, 2 Tim. III. 16. “All scripture ‘is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction ‘in righteousness; that the man of God may be ‘perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good ‘works.” Whether the apostle here refers to the whole of the scriptures, or to the Old Testament only, may admit of some question ; but that he includes all the Books, of the Old Testament, and means to give his solemn testimony to their validity and divine authority, there can be no doubt.

We have made this digression to show that prophets and apostles belong, equally to Christ; that both have written of him, and that to him all their writings primarily refer; that the Books of the Old Testament are declared by Christ and the apostles to be of equal authority with those of the New ; and that they are for our instruction. We shall, therefore, as we proceed, make no distinction between the different parts of the holy volume of God, in looking for authorities to confirm the various sentiments which we may wish to establish.

Having seen that the Lord Jesus is called God, in the most unqualified manner, we may observe,

2. He is called *the great God*. Titus II. 13. “Looking for that blessed hope and the

‘glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ *Looking for the appearing of the great God*;—that is, the second appearing of the Lord Jesus, when he shall come to judgment. Thus, he that is to come to judge the world, is the great God.

3. The Saviour is called *the true God*. 1. John v. 20. “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” This is very conformable to the declaration of the Redeemer to Moses, who appeared to him in the bush, and who was with him on the mount of Sinai. Ex. xxxiv. 6. “And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” He is true, and all important truth is derived from him. Of a similar import is the declaration of the Pharisees to Christ, who were compelled by the power of irresistible evidence to make the unwilling concession, “Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth.”

4. The Lord Jesus is called *the mighty God*. Thus, in the 50th Psalm, “The mighty

ty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.—Our God shall come and shall not keep silence.—He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, (that he may judge his people;) Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” This psalm is a very clear prediction of the last judgment. And the Judge, who is Christ, is called “The mighty God.”—Isa. ix. 6. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God.” It is well known that this is one of the clearest of the prophecies of Christ. Isa. xlix. 26. “And all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.” By the same prophet Christ is said to be “mighty to save.”

5. Christ Jesus is denominated *the God of Israel*. Ex. xxiv. “Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.” Christ says, in reference to the Father, “No man hath seen God at any time.”

This being true, it is plain that the God of Israel, who was seen in his glory by Moses and Aaron, and the sevnty Elders, was the Lord Jesus, who often manifested himself to his people previous to his coming in the flesh. This manifestation of Christ on Mount Sinai much resembles his appearance to the three disciples on the mount of transfiguration.

In the preface to the ten commandments, God says, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This person is the same, most clearly, as the one who spake to Moses at the mount of Horeb, and assured him that he had come for the deliverance of Israel his people. That Being, we have seen to be Christ. He is, then, the Lord God of Israel. *God of Israel* is a term often used by the sacred writers, and appears to be applied, uniformly, to Christ. The appellation is given him with great propriety, since he often appeared to Jacob, and blessed him, and assured him that he would be his God, and the God of his seed.

We have thus done with this part of the argument, from which we have seen that the scriptures apply the divine name God, together with the appellation, *the great God, the true God, the mighty God, and the God of Israel*, frequently, and in the plainest manner, to Christ.

We proceed to observe,

6. The inspired writers give to Christ the name *Jehovah*. This word signifies being;—simple,

absolute, independent existence. Of course, no term can more justly designate the character of the true God. The Jews considered the term Jehovah the incommunicable name of God, and unlawful ever to be spoken except in the connexion in which it is given in the scriptures. It is evident that the utmost solemnity is attached to this divine name, from the manner in which it is first revealed. Ex. vi. "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, 'I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them,—And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel,—And I have remembered my covenant.'" God thus reveals his great name, because he is about to show his terrible judgments upon Egypt, and his great deliverances for Israel. The name Jehovah is but seldom found in our English Bibles; though, in the original language, it is often used. It is usually translated by the word LORD. When the original is Jehovah, the word LORD is always in capitals. When that word is in small letters, the original is another word. Psl. cx. 1. "The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand." The first Lord here, is Jehovah, the other is not. The name Jehovah is often given to each person of the sacred Trinity, but, in the few instances in which it is used by our translators, it appears

to refer to Christ. Isa. xii. 2. "Behold, God 'is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: 'for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my 'song; he also is become my salvation." He who is *the salvation* of his people, surely, is Christ. But, this is Jehovah. In the 6th verse of the same chapter, the prophet adds, "Cry 'out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great 'is the holy one of Israel in the midst of thee." This is the same divine person, first called Jehovah. But, *the holy One of Israel*, as we have seen before, is Christ. Isa. xxvi. 4. "Trust in the 'Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is ever- 'lasting strength." The Strength of Israel is 'Christ. He often promises help and strength 'to his people. Ps. xxxv. "The salvation of the 'righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength 'in the time of trouble." This, clearly, is Christ. And the passage is very like to the one first noticed, where he is denominated Jehovah. There is but one other instance in which this name is given in our translation, besides the one in Exodus, in which God declares this to be his name. Ps. lxxxiii. "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth." This Psalm is a prayer to the head of the church, who is Christ.—We have seen that it was Christ who declared to Moses, "I am the God 'of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God 'of Jacob." When God reveals his name Jehovah, he spake in a similar manner.

But we are not left to any doubtful deductions on this subject. The term Jehovah, as it stands in the original, is often and directly applied to Christ. One of the most striking examples is the solemn vision of Isaiah. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims:—And one cried unto another, and said Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The term *Lord* in these instances, is Jehovah. The apostle John quotes a part of the description of this vision, in the xiith. chapter of his gospel, and applies it, expressly, to Christ. In reference to whom, he says, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him." John knew who it was that Isaiah called Jehovah of hosts, and he assures us that it was Christ. It is proper also to notice the awful impression made upon the mind of the prophet, when he had this discovery of the Christ Jehovah. "Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." How holy and terrible is Jehovah our Saviour !

Isa. xl. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD," that is Jehovah, "make straight in the desert a highway for our God." The Evangel-

ist Matthew, speaking of John the Baptist, says, (Chap. III.) "This is he that was spoken of by 'the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one 'crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way 'of the Lord, make his paths straight." John came to prepare the way of Christ. And the prophet says it was the way of Jehovah.

Jer. XXIII. 5. 6. "Behold, the days come, saith 'the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous 'Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and 'shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 'In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel 'shall dwell safely; and this is his name where- 'by he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR 'RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" It is *Jehovah our Righteousness*. And it is well known that the righteous Branch of the house of David is Christ. And the Saviour alone is our righteousness before God.

Isa. XLIII. "But now thus saith the LORD 'that created thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have 'redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy 'name." And, a little after, "For I am the 'LORD thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy 'Saviour." The LORD, in these verses is Jehovah; and he is spoken of as Creator, Redeemer, and Saviour. All of which show him to be Christ.

Zech. XII. "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man

‘within him.’ The LORD, here, is Jehovah; and you perceive that the prophet describes him by his works of creation. But we are told in our text, “All things were made by him,” that is, Christ. The character of this Jehovah is further explained in this chapter of the prophet. He says, “And I will pour upon the ‘house of David, and upon the inhabitants of ‘Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom ‘they have pierced, and they shall mourn for ‘him, as one mourneth for his only son.” Who has been pierced by the inhabitants of Jerusalem? To whom shall they one day look and mourn? It is this Jehovah Jesus, who has been pierced for sin, who invites the guilty and the perishing to look to him with repentance; to look and be saved.

The Lord of hosts is an expression very often used in the scriptures, and is most generally, *Jehovah of hosts*. This appellation is frequently given to Christ. Ps. xxiv. “Who is this king ‘of glory? The LORD of hosts,” Jehovah of hosts, “he is the king of glory.” This Psalm is a description of Christ, and of the character of his people. It is said of them, individually, “He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, ‘and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” The God of their salvation is Christ. The beholder, contemplating the redemption of God’s people, by the power and mercy of their Saviour, is represented as enquiring, with

great solicitude, "Who is this King of glory?" The Church replies, "The LORD of hosts, he 'is the King of glory.'"—This term is applied to Christ, with great clearness, on a variety of occasions. It is an appellation singularly suited to his character. The hosts of God are his armies. They are all the powers, the instruments, whether rational or irrational beings, by which he performs the purposes of his will. Of all these, Christ is the Lord. All are his servants, subject to his controul. He says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—When Christ appeared to Joshua on the wall of Jericho, with a drawn sword in his hand, the leader of Israel anxiously enquires, "Art thou 'for us, or for our adversaries? And he said Nay; 'but as captain of the host of the LORD am I 'now come.'" In this character, he delivered into his hand that strong city, with all its power.

7. Christ Jesus is called *the Father*. This term, in mentioning the names of the persons of the Trinity, is usually applied to the first person. Yet the sacred writers evidently take pains to apply those names to the different persons, indiscriminately, to prevent an apprehension that there may be in one a superiority to another.—While we have many examples of the application of the term, Father, to Christ, no one is more conspicuous than the noted prophecy of the Saviour in the 9th of Isaiah. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son

'is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called 'Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The 'everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.'" The same prophet says again of his Lord, in the name of the Gentiles, Isa. LXIII. 16; "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: 'thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; 'thy name is from everlasting." There can be no mistake in the apprehension of this passage, since, in the same sentence, he is called *our Father and our Redeemer*. Our Redeemer is none but Christ. Mat. II. 10. "Have we 'not all one father? hath not one God created 'us?" The Creator is Christ, who is the father of all.

Rev. XXI. 6. "And he said unto me it is 'done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning 'and the end: He that overcometh shall inherit 'all things; and I will be his God, and he shall 'be my son." The Alpha and the Omega is Christ. If the believer is a son, as here denominated, the Redeemer is his Father. The term *Father*, is designed to signify superiority. As the Father is the head of the house, Christ is the head of the church, the head and disposer of all things. He is the former, the preserver, the protector of his people, wielding the sceptre of all things, disposing every event for the advancement of his own purposes of wisdom and grace.

We shall not attempt to adduce any other of the sacred names, which the scriptures apply to Christ, for the illustration of his character. The names and epithets given him, by the inspired penmen, are very many. Those which have been mentioned are the distinguishing names of the true God; and we have seen that they are applied, in the most unqualified manner, to the Lord Jesus. The name Jehovah, often sustained by the Saviour, is never applied to any being but God.

What a source of comfort is opened to the humble believer in the recollection that his Saviour, who is his portion and his hope, is exhibited in the holy word of truth, as truly God, Lord, and Jehovah. In this character, the heavens and the earth are his, he is the security of his people, their shield and their exceeding great reward. The wicked world may seek to take from him his great name, but they are in his hands, and soon, will all be brought to his feet. He is our Lord and our God, and whatever threatening dangers may arise, we will trust in him and not be afraid.

SERMON III.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, &c.

IN the two preceding Discourses, we have endeavoured to establish the doctrine of the Saviour's divinity, from the sacred Names given to him by the inspired writers. We would now observe,

II. The divinity of Christ is proved from *the divine attributes* often ascribed to him in the scriptures. If the sacred writers meant to teach the truth, or rather, if the Holy Spirit, by whom they were moved to speak, meant to teach us the truth of God by them, we cannot believe that they would ever apply divine attributes and qualities to any created being. If then, we find these perfections plainly and purposely ascribed to Christ, the conclusion will seem to be unavoidable, that he is truly divine. Of these divine attributes of Christ, several will be noticed in order.

1. The first which we shall mention is *eternity*. This is, exclusively, a divine attribute, since, whatever has existed from eternity cannot have been created, and cannot be dependent on any other being. On this truth, there is, perhaps, no declaration more express than

the words of the text. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." The expression, *the beginning*, must imply a period previous to the commencement of time. It refers, at least, to the first transactions respecting creation, or to a time previous to the existence of any being but God alone. But, at that period, was the Word, and then was he with God. He had a perfect existence at the time when nothing had been made. That is, his existence was without beginning.

The first sentence in the Bible, is, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This declaration of Moses teaches, not only that all things were created by the most High, but that, in the beginning of all things, and before all things else, God existed. It would be a correct paraphrase of the text to say, 'In the beginning was God, and he created the heaven and the earth.' If the eternity of God is asserted in this passage, the eternity of the Word is equally declared in the beginning of the gospel of John. It is evident that the apostle intended to declare the eternity of the Word, in this passage, because he subjoins immediately, "All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made." As he made all things that are made, he must have existed be-

fore any thing that was created, that is, he must have been uncreated and eternal.

I will now call your attention to the vision of this same apostle, contained in the Book of Revelation. Rev. 1. "I was in the Spirit on 'the Lord's-day, and heard behind me a great 'voice, as of a trumpet; saying, I am Alpha and 'Omega, the first and the last: and what thou 'seest write in a book, and send it unto the 'seven churches which are in Asia;--And I 'turned to see the voice that spake with me. 'And, being turned, I saw seven golden candle-'sticks; and in the midst of the seven candle-'sticks, one like unto the Son of man.--And, 'when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. 'And he laid his right hand upon me, saying un-'to me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I 'am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold 'I am alive forever more, Amen." The person here addressing the beloved disciple is easily ascertained. John saw in the midst of the golden candlesticks, "one like unto the Son of 'man." An appellation invariably applied, in the New-Testament, to Christ. This person directed the apostle to send an Epistle, which he dictated, to each of the seven churches in Asia. In the introduction of these short Epistles, the son of man is described, in a different manner, in each one. In one case, he says, "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira 'write; these things saith the Son of God." There is but one person in the universe who

can truly be called the Son of man, and the Son of God. That is Christ ; who here appears in vision to the beloved disciple. This Saviour says of himself, "I am Alpha and Omega, the 'first and the last.'" And the assertion is repeated several times. Nothing could more fully declare the eternity of his existence. He embraces eternity, past and to come. If he be first, he is before all things else ; if he be last, nothing can be after him. His saying that he is Alpha and Omega, is equivalent to the declaration that he is the first and the last.

This same description of Christ is found, repeatedly, in the prophets. Isaiah XLIV. "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts ; I am the first and I am the last ; and besides me there is no God." It is here stated explicitly, that it is the Redeemer who is the first and the last. Isaiah XLVIII. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called ; I am he : I am the first, I also am the last." The speaker, in this case, as might easily be shown, is Christ.—Prov. VIII. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."—In the 5th chapter of Micah, we have a minute prophecy of Christ. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

The epithet, I AM, Christ peculiarly applies to himself. He said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM ; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." This epithet implies absolute independent existence ; all duration present with him, ever the same. Thus he says, (John VIII.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." Not, I was ; but, *I am*. The succession of ages is always the same before him. Of a similar import is his last memorable promise, "Lo, *I am* with you alway."

2. Another of the attributes of Christ is *self-existence*. This necessarily belongs to his eternity. If he exists without a beginning, it must, of course, be without a cause; and he must be self-existent. It is said of him by the apostle Paul, "He is before all things, and by him all things consist." All things exist by him, but he exists, uncaused, from the necessity of his nature.

The terms *Jehovah*, and *I am*, which are frequently applied to Christ, meaning simple, independent being, clearly show him to be self-existent.

The self-existence of the Saviour is forcibly declared in our text. "In him was life ; and the life was the light of men." To him belongs *life*, inherently, necessarily, an essential part of his nature. This cannot be affirmed, truly, of any created beings. All life possessed by them is derived and dependent. Depend-

ing for its continuance on the power from which it is received. If the supporting power of the Creator were to be taken from created beings, any moment, they would sink, at once, into non-existence.—Not such is the Saviour of men. “In him was life.” Essential to his character, and always in him. “And the life was the light of men.” Light always flows from the sun, as a fountain, enlightening the system with which it is surrounded. The life of Christ is the light of the world, constantly shedding forth beams of blessedness.

The scriptures ascribe to Christ the work of creation, in the fullest manner. The text says, “All things were made by him.” He that made all things that are made, must himself be unmade; that is, self-existent.

3. The Lord Jesus is declared to be *immutable*. This seems to follow, necessarily, from his self-existence. A being that is self-existent, that has existed from eternity, must be independent of all other existence, and no cause can be conceived that he should ever be subject to any change. The being by whom all others exist, cannot be disappointed in any of his purposes, and no reason appears that there should ever be any change of his purposes or character. In conformity with such a view of the divine being, immutability is expressly ascribed to Christ. Heb. 1. 8. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.” He is here contemplated as past, present, and

future, comprehending all duration, and, in the whole he changes not.

Ps. cii. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." This passage is quoted in the first chapter of the Hebrews, and declared by the apostle to be spoken of Christ. The comparison made use of by the inspired writer is very strong. If there be any thing in creation that is unchanging, it is the earth and the heavens. While all the tribes of men are constantly subject to revolution and change, the earth on which we tread, and the visible heavens that are above us, remain unchanged. Noah, and Abraham, and Paul, and the people of our times, have seen the sun revolve in the heavens in the same regular course, they have witnessed the same changes of the seasons, they have beheld the earth bringing forth the same productions for the supply of man and beast, and they have witnessed the same general character in all created objects within their view. Yet, all these shall perish, they all shall grow old as a garment, they shall be folded up like a vesture and laid aside, while Jesus their maker shall endure forever. The Saviour says by the prophet Malachi. "For I

“I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

The immutability of Christ is forcibly exhibited in his great work of atonement for sinners. If any thing could have induced him to change his purpose, it would seem the obstacles, the difficulties, the discouragements, which he encountered would have done it. “He came to his own, and his own received him not.” By the people of his own kindred, according to the flesh, long enlightened by the prophets of God, he was rejected and abused; by sinners, whom he suffered to redeem, he was hated and put to death ; by his own visible friends, his intimates and companions, with whom he took sweet counsel, he was forsaken, denied, and betrayed. But none of these things moved him ; he ceased not to labour and suffer, bearing the reproach, despising the shame, till his work was finished. When Judas and his band came to apprehend the Saviour, Peter drew his sword, for the defence of his Lord, “and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place.—Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall presently send me more than twelve legions of angels ? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be ?” With infinite ease, he could have escaped from the hands of his enemies ; but neither their rage and cruelty, nor the

overwhelming terrors of Gethsemane, nor the agonies of the cross, could change his purpose, or change his mind, till a door of mercy was opened in heaven, pardoning grace proclaimed to a guilty world. Whenever you behold the Saviour, whether calling the heavens and the earth into being, or giving the law from the hill of Sinai, or stilling the tempest with his word, or bearing his cross up the hill of Calvary, or blessing the affectionate disciples of Galilee and rising out of their sight in the clouds of heaven, or summoning the universe to his bar of judgment, he is the same perfect, humble, exalted Emmanuel.

4. The scriptures ascribe to Christ the attribute of *omnipotence*. To refer to a passage already noticed, Christ says, (Rev. 1.) "I am 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.'"—Ps. XLV. 3. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O 'most Mighty." These words are addressed, immediately, to Christ. *Most mighty* must be of the same import as *almighty*.—Gen. XVII. "And when Abraham was ninety years old and 'nine, the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee ; and will 'multiply thee exceedingly." He that enters into covenant with his people, is Christ. And we have before seen that it was Christ that ap-

peared to Moses in the burning bush and declared himself to be the God of Abraham. He here says that he is the almighty God.—2. Cor. vi. “Wherefore come out from among them, ‘and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch ‘not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ‘and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be ‘my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Al- ‘mighty.” We have before seen that Christ Jesus stiles himself the father of his people. And, while he assures them that he will receive them to the adoption of children, he declares himself to be the Lord Almighty. In the vision of the heavenly state, the church of the redeemed are represented as falling upon their faces and worshipping God, “Saying, We give thee ‘thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and ‘wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken ‘to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” From the ascription, “was, and is, and is to ‘come,” we learn that the sacred person here addressed is Christ. As this description of character is frequently applied to him, and to none other.

Christ says to his disciples, immediately before his ascension from earth to heaven, “All ‘power is given unto me in heaven and in ‘earth.” The dominion, the government, of all worlds, belong essentially to him.—The song of Moses, contained in the 32d of Deuteronomy, is, evidently, addressed to Christ. If it were necessary to detain you for the purpose, this might easily be shown. In this,

God is often called a Rock; an appellation peculiarly appropriate to Christ. There, he says of himself, "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

Many of the actions of Christ, recorded in the gospel, show him to be possessed of Almighty power. When he fed thousands with a little food, and the remaining fragments exceeded all that he took into his hands, he manifested the same creative power, precisely, as when he called the world into being out of nothing. Diseases, of every kind, are subject to his controul; the demons acknowledge his power, and are compelled to submit to his will; deaf ears are unstopped; the eyes of the blind are opened; he speaks to the raging tempest, "Peace: be still; and the winds and the seas obey him." He goes to the grave of Lazarus and calls forth the dead. If any thing could attest almighty or unlimited power, such transactions must be the proof.

The principal evidence we have of the omnipotence of the Deity consists in his works and in his word. Both of these testify, in the fullest manner, the omnipotence of Christ. With regard to the miracles which he wrought, it is to be observed that they were performed immediately by himself, by his own will, and not by the aid of any superior power. Whereas the prophets and apostles, though they wrought

many miracles, always took care to let it be known that these were done, exclusively, by the power of God. Moses wrought many miracles in Egypt and in the wilderness. But he informs us that he was appointed to this work by the will of God, that he constantly received instruction from him, performing nothing but at his bidding, bearing the rod of God in his hand.—When Elijah, one of the greatest of the prophets, raised to life the widow's child, he "cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come in-
 'to him again. And the Lord heard the voice
 'of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into
 'him again, and he revived." It was not the prophet that raised the child, but God.—When Peter and John restore the lame man, Peter says, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
 'rise up and walk. And he took him by the
 'right hand, and lifted him up ; and immedi-
 'ately his feet and ankle-bones received
 'strength." It was not done by the power of Peter and John, but by their holy Saviour, from whom they had received their authority.—Totally different were the miracles of Christ. He never intimates that he acts by any assistance. When a tempest arose, and his disciples were filled with consternation, their ship covered with the waves, "he arose and re-
 'buked the winds and the sea, and there was a
 'great calm. But the men marvelled, saying,
 'What manner of man is this, that even the

‘winds and the sea obey him?’” Such was the omnipotence of Christ! Those who beheld his works saw and knew that he was almighty.

5. Another of the attributes of Christ, is Omniscience. He knows all things. This, though an exclusive prerogative of God, the scriptures ascribe, abundantly, to Christ. When the Saviour demanded of Peter, “Lovest thou me?—he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” This is an express ascription of omniscience to the Saviour. If it had not been just, we cannot suppose that he would have suffered his affectionate disciple to have entertained such an erroneous and dangerous sentiment. His admitting the declaration, under such circumstances, is the same in effect, as if he had made it himself. *Thou knowest all things.* I am not able to conceive that a fuller testimony to his omniscience could have been given.

Christ says, Mat. xi. 27; “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” Here we have a proof of the incomprehensibility of Christ, as well as of his omniscience. It requires omniscience fully to know the Father. This the Son does. And he declares, at the same time, that the omniscience of the Father is requisite to a full knowledge of the Son.

No subject of knowledge can more perfectly require the exercise of omniscience than searching the heart. But this is often ascribed to Christ. In the solemn prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, the king says, "Give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." This, it seems, is the prerogative of God only. Yet Christ says, Rev. 11. "And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." He declares himself to be the one that searcheth the heart. Thus, it appears, not only, that he possesses this divine attribute, but that he is the only God. He alone is the searcher of all hearts.

In the short epistles addressed to each of the seven churches in Asia, all of them begin with the declaration of the Lord Jesus, "I know thy works." This he could not do, unless he knew all things.—Mat. ix. "And behold certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" He knew their thoughts, he knew the purposes and desires of their hearts.—On a certain occasion, "there arose a reasoning among" the disciples, "which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart. took a

‘child and set set him by him.’” The thoughts of their hearts were all open to his view.

John 11. “Now when he was in Jerusalem at ‘the passover, in the feast day, many believed ‘in his name, when they saw the miracles which ‘he did. But Jesus did not commit himself ‘unto them, because he knew all men ; and ‘needed not that any should testify of man : ‘for he knew what was in man.” He knew that Judas intended to betray him. And, perceiving the purpose of his heart, he says to him, “That thou doest, do quickly.” He knew that Peter would deny him. And he knew, at the same time, that he would not do it from previous purpose and malice of heart, but from negligence in duty, and under the influence of sudden and strong temptation. He therefore tells him, “I have prayed for thee.”

We mention but one more divine attribute that the scriptures ascribe to the Lord Jesus. That is,

6. Omnipresence. Matth. xviii. 20. “For ‘where two or three are gathered together in ‘my name, there am I in the midst of them.” His people have gathered together for worship, in his name, in thousands of places, in every period since he gave this promise ; and will continue to do the same to the end of the world. Every returning sabbath witnesses a multitude of worshipping assemblies, convened in the name of Christ, all of whom have this promise of his presence.

Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." His gospel is always to be taught, and by a great multitude of ministers; but, if they are found faithful, he will be with them all, at all times, to the end of the world. This was his last promise to his people, and was immediately confirmed by his solemn ascension into heaven.

It is said by the apostle John, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He is always acquainted with the errors and failings of his people, and is ever presenting, for those that fear him, his prevalent intercession before his Father.—After Christ had risen from the dead, he appeared and disappeared, according to his pleasure; he appeared suddenly among his disciples while the doors were shut.

We thus see that the essential attributes of God, such as belong to him only, are abundantly ascribed, in the holy scriptures, to Christ. Those which we have particularly noticed, are Eternity, Self-existence, Immutability, Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence. These, if the testimony of divine truth is to be the rule of our faith, must determine

the Lord Jesus to be truly God. We want no greater, no more exalted Saviour, than one possessing such a character. The heavens and the earth are his. He justly says of himself, "I am the Lord, and there is none else, 'there is no god besides me.'"

SERMON IV.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, &c.

We now proceed to observe,

III. The divinity of Christ is proved from the works or actions, which the scriptures uniformly ascribe to him. The sacred writers, both prophets and apostles, constantly ascribe to him the works of God.

The first that we shall notice is creation. This idea has been, occasionally, referred to, already. But it may deserve, in this place, a more particular consideration. On this truth, nothing can be more express than the words of the text. "All things were made by him; and without him 'was not any thing made that was made.'" Here it is most evident that the Evangelist meant to be understood. Of the works of Christ, which he is about to describe, this is the first that he mentions. After noticing his self-existence and eternity, as being in the beginning with God, he immediately adds, "All things were made by 'him.'" The declaration, it is true, is very simple, but I know not how it could be any more intelligible or strong. But the Holy Spirit well knew how much the character of the Son would be called in question, and, ther^{ly} e,

immediately adds, by the evangelist, "And 'without him was not any thing made that was 'made.'" While he asserts that all things were made by him, he expressly excludes every other being from a participation in the work. Nothing was made but by him.

Some have held that Christ is a created being, the first created, and the greatest of all creatures ; and that the world was made by him, by virtue of a delegated power, derived from God. But, according to the divine testimony now before us, the saviour acts no subordinate or delegated part, he is said to have made all things, and not only is there no intimation of any assistance, but the co-operation of any other being is expressly excluded. This sentiment also involves the absurdity that he who is expressly declared to have made all things that are made, is himself a created being. I think every unprejudiced reader of the scriptures will say that it is here declared that Christ made all things, as plainly, as it is in the beginning of Genesis, that they were all made by God.

Many other passages of scripture ascribe the work of creation, expressly, to Christ. Col. 1. "In whom we have redemption through his 'blood, even the forgiveness of sins ;—For by 'him were all things created that are in heaven. 'and that are in earth visible and invisible, wheth- 'er they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things were created by him

and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Here it is asserted, repeatedly, that all things were made by the Redeemer, including creatures in heaven, as well as those on earth. The angelic host are clearly referred to, as being made by Christ, and for his pleasure, as really as man.

Ps. cii. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth : and the heavens are the work of thy hands." This passage is quoted in the first chapter of the Hebrews, and applied, expressly, to Christ.—Eph. iii. "Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." In the 4th chapter of Revelation, the heavenly host are represented as saying to Christ, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things ; and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

2. The scriptures speak of Christ, as preserving and upholding all things. This indeed naturally results from his creation. He who created all things must necessarily preserve and continue them in being.—Heb. i. 3. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."—Col. i. "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—Job says to his Sa-

viour, "I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, 'O thou Preserver of men?'"

The whole of the 127th Psalm is a divine song, celebrating the protecting care, and the upholding mercy, of Christ, by which he ever sustains his people. "I will lift up mine eyes 'unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 'My help cometh from the Lord, which made 'heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot 'to be moved : he that keepeth thee will not 'slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel, shall 'neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy 'keeper. The Lord is thy shade upon thy 'right hand. The sun shall not smite thee 'by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord 'shall preserve thee from all evil ; he shall 'preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve 'thy going out, and thy coming in, from this 'time forth, and even forever more.'"—The Lord Jesus will guide the courses of the sun, he will direct the influences of the moon, he will controul the operations of the seasons, for the benefit and support of his people. As he is *their* keeper, he is the preserver of all created things, and makes them all subservient to the merciful designs of his grace.—The Psalmist says again of his Saviour, "Except the Lord 'keep the city, the watchman waketh but in 'vain." Vain is the help of man. No human prudence or skill, no created strength or wisdom, can uphold and preserve the city : it must be sustained by Israel's God. the holy Saviour, and by him alone.

We have before shown, that the God of the Covenant, who covenanted with the ancient patriarchs, was Christ. His covenant with Noah, after the flood, forcibly confirms the truth we have now in view, that all created things, are upheld by him. The faithful patriarch came out of the ark, and built an altar, and offered burnt-offerings to God his preserver. "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. He then subjoins a most merciful promise, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." He further said to the vnerable father of all succeeding generations, "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood.—I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me, and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant."—These covenant promises, you will perceive, respect the operations of the elements, the changes and particular nature of the seasons, the productions of the earth, and the phenomena of the heavens. That they all may be performed, according to the word of the great Promiser, through the various successive ages of time, all these must be upheld, in their various energies and ope-

rations, by his own holy will. A single argument will confirm this truth, that Christ upholds all things, to which the scriptures give so full a testimony. Creation is calling created things into existence. Whatever is created is dependant on the will of its creator for its continuance in being. If that life-giving mercy be taken away, any moment, it would return to non-existence. This thought is verified by the perishable nature of every object around us. Even the heavens shall perish as a vesture. It is therefore necessary, that all these created things should be continually upheld by the creative power of him whose voice first called them into existence.

3. The Lord Jesus is the absolute and universal governor of the world. Few things concerning his character are more fully attested in the word of God, than this. Ps. xlv. "Thy throne O God is forever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." This passage is quoted in the first chapter of the Hebrews, and shown to be addressed to Christ. It represents his government to be universal and eternal.

In the second Psalm, the universal government of Christ is declared with great force and beauty. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy

‘possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Kiss the Son lest he be angry.’”

The 72d psalm gives a still more magnificent description of the kingdom and government of Christ. “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.—Yea, all things shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.—His name shall endure forever:—and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” All the important traits in this description show, most clearly, that the character in view is Christ. And while the prophecy points out the extent of his dominion, it declares the benignity of his government; that all nations shall call him blessed. It is added in the conclusion, by the enraptured prophet, “And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.”

The prophet Isaiah says of his Saviour, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”

The prophet Daniel had a very clear vision of the government and glory of his Lord. “I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and

‘came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.’”

—it was the particular design of the Holy Spirit to comfort Daniel and his people, in the time of their deep afflictions in the Babylonish captivity, when their sorrows were most severe, when the prospects of the church were painful in the extreme, with a view of the true character of their Lord, and of the future glory of Zion. Thus he was assured, though the church might now be in affliction and reproach, though Jerusalem was forsaken and her consecrated walls trodden down, that her God and Saviour lived, that the government of the world was absolutely in his hand, that the righteous and the wicked were all under his controul, that he would, ultimately, make his cause to triumph, while all his enemies should be put under his feet.

The Saviour, himself, asserts his government to be universal, extending to all the evil as well as the good, in this world. Thus he says by the Prophet Isaiah, “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me: —I form the light and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.—That they may know from the rising

of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me, I am the Lord, and there is none else.”—All this is declared by him who calls himself the Saviour and the Redeemer of Israel.

The doctrine of the universal government of Christ is taught with equal clearness by the apostles, in the New Testament. Acts x. “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (he is Lord of all.)”—Rom. ix. “Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever.” In the introduction of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle evidently designs to exhibit the character and exalt the glory of his Saviour. “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.”

The noted passage in Philippians, in which there is a special design to state the humiliation and exaltation of the Redeemer, it would be improper for us to omit. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should

‘bow. of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’—The Saviour says of himself, Rev. iii. “These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David ; he that openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth and no man openeth.”

The government of Christ over created beings is proveable from his being the Creator ; in the same manner as we argued his preservation of all things that exist. Divine providence, or the divine government of the world, is nothing but the disposing or regulating the works of creation, in such a manner, as to answer the holy purposes of the Creator’s will. It is evident that God must have made all things for his own pleasure, or for his own glory. No other motive could have existed, that we can conceive, which could have moved him to exert his creative power. And this is expressly declared in the word of God. Rev. iv. “Thou hast created all things ; and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” If the works of creation are to answer the purposes of the Creator, they must be ever under his controul, disposed according to the counsels of his holy will. The Creator is Christ. It will then follow that the government of all things must be with him, that he may cause to be accomplished all the great ends which he had in view in

creation, and suffer nothing else to be accomplished. This is in conformity with his own declaration, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

The promises of Christ to his people prove, most fully, that he is the absolute moral governor of the world. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." If the promise of his presence mean any thing, it must imply protection, support, assistance, consolation. These could never be afforded, but in a small degree, if at all, unless the government of the world were in his hands, that the events of providence could be constantly directed by his faithfulness and mercy. Luke xxi. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.--Settle it, therefore, in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gain-say nor resist." These promises could never be performed unless the events of providence, the actions and the hearts of men, both the righteous and the wicked, were ever under the controul of the Lord Jesus. Thus the government is upon his shoulder, who is the mighty God, the Prince of peace.

4. The word of God teaches us that the Lord Jesus possessed and exercised the power of healing the sick, and raising the dead. We

might here take a view of his miracles generally; but as those which fall under the description, now mentioned, were among those that were most intelligible to beholders and most clearly evincive of his character, a brief notice of *them* will be sufficient for our present purpose. Christ says, John v. "For as the Father raiseth 'up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the 'Son quickeneth whom he will.—Verily, verily, 'I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, 'when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son 'of God: and they that hear shall live. For 'as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he 'given to the Son to have life in himself."—The apostle says of his Lord, "The first man 'Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam 'was made a quickening spirit."

In conformity with these declarations, the Saviour often exemplified this power, in quickening the dead. He came to the bier of the only son of a mourning widow, carrying out of the city to be buried. "And he said, young 'man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was 'dead sat up, and began to speak." There was nothing but his word. He commanded, and it was done.—He came to the daughter of Jairus, and said. "Damsel, (I say unto thee) arise. 'And straightway the damsel arose and walked."—He goes to the grave of Lazarus, his friend, and cries with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth." The dead obeys his call. The bars of death could no longer contain their prisoner.

—These persons returned to life, in health and soundness, and their acquaintance knew that they were raised from the dead.

This power of Christ was still more forcibly exhibited in his own resurrection from the dead. It is evident to every attentive reader of the gospels, that his death was voluntary. He could have escaped from his enemies, with infinite ease, had he been so disposed. He knew all their designs, before they made any attempts to put them into execution ; for he repeatedly assured his disciples that he must die, and pointed out many of the circumstances of his death. He even assured them of an event, than which nothing could be more unexpected, that, by one of their own number he should be betrayed into the hands of his enemies: and singled out the wretched individual.—On several preceding occasions the wicked sought to take his life, but he escaped out of their hands, because he knew that his time was not yet come. He had not finished the work that was given him to do. He did not die till he saw that every thing was accomplished,—till he could say, “It is finished.” Then, he bowed his head, and “yielded up the ‘Ghost.’”

The scriptures describe the death of no other person like that of Christ. All others,—died. He,—gave up the ghost: he dismissed his spirit ; implying, he did it, entirely, of his own free will. In accordance with this sentiment,

is his own declaration concerning himself.—
 “Therefore doth my Father love me because
 ‘I lay down my life, that I might take it again.
 ‘No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down
 ‘of myself: I have power to lay it down, and
 ‘have power to take it again.’”—It is evident
 that the merit of the Saviour’s death, as a sa-
 crifice for sin, as an offering for the honour of
 God, must consist, in a great measure, in its
 being a voluntary offering. Thus he says,
 “Therefore doth my Father love me, because
 ‘I lay down my life.’” And God says by the
 prophet, “Therefore will I divide him a por-
 ‘tion with the great, and he shall divide the
 ‘spoil with the strong; because he hath poured
 ‘his soul unto death.”

As the Lord Jesus voluntarily laid down his
 life, he took it again, at his own pleasure. As
 he says in the words already noticed, “I lay
 ‘down my life that I might take it again.’”
 Thus he told his disciples, some time before
 the event, “The Son of Man shall be betrayed
 ‘unto the chief-priests, and unto the scribes,
 ‘and they shall condemn him to death. And
 ‘shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and
 ‘to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third
 ‘day he shall rise again.” This event depend-
 ed on his own purpose, to will and to perform.
 In conformity with this declaration, he rose
 from the tomb, on the third day after his cru-
 cifixion, and appeared unto many. His power
 over death is forcibly described by the apostle

Peter. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

But the most wonderful display of the power of Christ in raising the dead, is yet to be made. This is, indeed, foretold in the scriptures, but it is yet to take place, and all of us, as well as all our fellow-men, are to be witnesses of the scene. This is the general resurrection of the last day. That will be the work of Christ. Of this event, he says, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day." And again, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day." He says again respecting the Son of man, John v. "Marvel not at this ; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." They are to hear the voice of the Son of man, like Lazarus they are to come forth at his call, even *all that are in their graves*, whether of the just or the unjust. The raising of the dead is a necessary part of the work of the final judgment, which, it is well known, is to be performed by Christ Jesus.

The power of the Saviour, in healing the

sick, was manifested so often while he was on earth, that it would seem superfluous to cite any examples. A few cases, however, may be properly noticed. Mark v. "And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better but rather grew worse: when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.—And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." It is said in another case, "And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were, but the hem of his garment, and as many as touched him were made whole."

When John the Baptist sent from his prison to Jesus, to know whether he were the Christ, he replies, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk: the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." He then adds, with peculiar tenderness and solemnity, "And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

SERMON V.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, &c.

IN attempting to point out some of the works of Christ which show him to be a divine person, we shall next observe,

5. The Lord Jesus has the power of forgiving sin. I do not know that we can name any work that belongs, more exclusively, to God, than this. Sin is a transgression of his law. He alone can fully know the extent and claims of his own law, and the evils of a violation. Then, none but himself can dispense with the execution of its penalties. None other can release the transgressor from the condemnation to which he is exposed. If the forgiveness of sin could be granted by any other than the true God, it is evident that the government of the world would be taken out of his hands.

We shall now see that this work belongs to Christ. God says, Ex. xxiii. 20, 21. "Behold, I 'send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the 'way, and to bring thee into the place which I 'have prepared. Beware of him and obey his 'voice, provoke him not : for he will not pardon 'your transgressions ; for my name is in him."

The Angel here mentioned, as has been before shown, was Christ. The people of Israel are here assured, if they provoke him, if they do not obey his voice, he will not pardon their transgressions. It would have been absurd indeed, to have assured that people that the Angel, who was to lead them through the wilderness, would not pardon their iniquities, in case of their continued transgressions, unless the power of pardoning belonged to him.

Mat. ix. 2, &c. "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house."—It is evident that a primary object of this passage is to establish the sentiment we have now in view. Indeed, the Saviour evidently considers the question as brought to an issue. Seeing the paralytic person before him, looking to him as the Messiah for immediate relief, he says, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." The scribes

and Pharisees, who were witnesses of the scene, said among themselves, "This man 'blasphemeth; who can forgive sins but God 'only?'" In this reasoning they were certainly correct. None but God can forgive sins. And if Jesus of Nazareth had been a mere man, or any created being, his presuming to forgive sin would have been blasphemy. This position the Saviour evidently admits. And tells them, "That ye may know that the Son of 'man hath power on earth to forgive sins," turning to the paralytic, he saith, "Arise, take 'up thy bed, and go into thine house." His word is obeyed.—The question to be decided was, Could Jesus forgive sins? He, expressly, claims that power. The scribes deny it. He appeals to a miracle to be wrought, immediately, before them. The miracle is wrought by his word. This, they all knew, no one could do but God. As Christ did it, he was God. Of course, he had power to forgive sin.—Or if you choose to take the argument the other way, that God wrought the miracle by him, the consequence is the same. God would not work a miracle to establish a falsehood. Christ claimed that he had authority to forgive sin. The miracle is wrought to confirm that claim. It is thus settled, by the testimony of God, that he has that authority.

In the affecting death of Stephen, the first martyr for Christ, we are told, "They stoned 'Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord

Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and said with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." With his dying breath, he called upon God. And he calls him Lord Jesus. He then prays that he would not lay the sin of his murderers to their charge. That is, that he would forgive them. This, Stephen would not have done, unless forgiveness belongs to him.

Col. III. 13. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."—The apostle observes, in the introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ;—In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." We thus have forgiveness of sins from Christ.

On a very trying occasion, surrounded by an host of enemies, the apostle Peter stood up and declared, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree: Him hath God exalted, with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."—An essential point of his character and work is to grant forgiveness of sins.

6. The Lord Jesus sustains the character of Head of the Church. In this character, he performs many works which belong to God alone. Eph. I. 22. "And hath put all things

‘under his feet, and gave him to be head over
 ‘all things to the church.’ Col. i. “And he
 ‘is before all things, and by him all things con-
 ‘sist; and he is the head of the body, the
 ‘church.” Acts xx. 28. “To feed the church
 ‘of God which he hath purchased with his own
 ‘blood.” Having purchased it with his blood,
 it must be his property, of which he is the
 head. As head of the church, the Lord Jesus
 has established and maintained that sacred
 kingdom in this world.

By a great variety of representations, as well
 as by his express testimonies, Christ Jesus has
 taught us that the Mediatorial Kingdom, the
 kingdom of redeeming grace, rests, exclusive-
 ly, upon himself. Of this nature, is his memo-
 rable promise to Peter, Mat. xvi. “Upon this
 ‘rock I will build my church, and the gates of
 ‘hell shall not prevail against it.” This decla-
 ration of the Saviour was in reference to the
 confession which this disciple had just made.
 Christ says to his disciples, after having been
 told the opinion of many concerning him, “But
 ‘whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter
 ‘answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the
 ‘Son of the living God. And Jesus answered
 ‘and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon
 ‘Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed
 ‘it unto thee, but my Father which is in hea-
 ‘ven.” Here we have Peter’s confession of
 his faith in Christ. His Lord assures him that
 this faith is the effect of a divine illumination

from his heavenly Father. He confesses Jesus to be the Christ; the promised, the anointed, Saviour of the world. His Lord then replies, admitting the correctness of his confession, "Upon this Rock," this Saviour whom you have now acknowledged, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is built upon himself, and, for this reason, because it rests on such a foundation, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—It is worthy of observation, also, that Christ uses the expression *my church*. It is, in all respects, his own; purchased by his blood, enlightened by his truth, protected by his care, supported by his almighty power, and to be ultimately glorified by his grace. He is, thus, the head of the church, comprehending its foundation and its support.

Similar to the testimony of Christ to Peter, is his solemn declaration in the 22d chapter of Revelation. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." David was the most illustrious of the kings of Israel. He was a man of war, eminently victorious over the enemies of the church. He also formed the design, and began the work of the temple, which completed the system of divine worship for the prophetic dispensation. He was, also, one of the greatest of prophets.—Uniting these several characters, he was, for a season, as far

as a man could be, the head of the church. Now, Christ says, "I am the root of David." He from whom David sprang, who set him up, to act in his name, as his servant, to rule, to support, to enlighten his people, to guide them to God, and to heavenly glory. Thus, Christ says to him, by the prophet, "I took thee from 'the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, to 'be ruler over my people, over Israel. And I 'was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and 'have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight.'" This was not ultimately, the work of David, but of David's root.

In the character of the head of the church, it is evident that the Lord Jesus must be the support, the strength, and the vital principle, of the church, in all periods of time. The church of Christ is composed of the children of men, of fallen, sinful, creatures. These must be born anew in Christ Jesus: they must be enlightened in the knowledge of God, and of the great salvation: they must be protected from the efforts of innumerable and subtle enemies: they must be sustained and kept in the divine life, against incessant temptation, and all the weakness and corruption of their own hearts: they must be constantly fed and nourished by his grace, and built up in holiness and love, to be prepared for the eternal presence and service of God.

The materials of which the church of Christ is to be composed are, altogether, weak, sinful,

and corrupt. Fitly represented by the vision of the dry bones in the open valley, presented to the prophet. "Behold, there were very 'many in the open valley; and, lo, they were 'very dry.'" These were raised to become an exceeding great army. So is the work of Christ. Lost sinners, of whom is to be composed the church of the first-born in heaven, are, in themselves, as hopeless for such a work, as were those bones for a great army. Yet, the church of God is to be formed to a state most exalted and perfect. Eph. v. "Christ 'also loved the church, and gave himself for it; '—that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or 'any such thing." This work can never be intermitted. How short is any generation of believers! These cannot continue but a little season. Others must be brought to their place, that their Lord may always have a remnant, that he may ever have some on earth to witness for him.

Various and extensive are the means and instruments which the Head of the church is always employing, for the maintenance and advancement of his great cause. For the ancient church, he was constantly raising up and sending them prophets, to make known his truth, and vindicate his name. As he says "I have 'sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them." In gospel times, he gives to his people his word

and his holy ordinances, which he has engaged to accompany with his blessing.

The events of Providence must always be ordered with reference to the interests of the church. Perhaps no event takes place in the christian world, at least there are very few, which are not connected, in some way or other, with the interests of the church. The Lord Jesus raises up its friends for its protection and support. He raises up enemies to inflict upon his people that chastisement and discipline which he sees to be necessary for them, to reclaim them from the ways of evil, and to bring them to himself. He raised up Cyrus to go at the head of a great army, with the heart and designs of a martial conqueror, to break the yoke of idolatrous oppression, and release his people from captivity. He disposes Artaxerxes, glorying in the pride of eastern magnificence, sinking in the softness of Asiatic luxury, to issue an edict and make adequate provision to restore the desolated Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple of the living God. He calls Solomon and Josiah to rule his people in judgment and justice, and teach them the truth and worship which he had appointed. He raises up Sennacherib to execute his judgments upon them, and to chastise them for their multiplied transgressions. Similar events could easily be mentioned from the word of God, to an indefinite extent, appointed by the holy wisdom of the great Head of the church, with a direct

view to its interests, its preservation, and prosperity. Profane history abounds with similar facts. Every attentive reader of the history of nations, will constantly discover many of the most important events, to have an immediate connexion with the interests of the church of Christ.

When Alexander was pursuing his conquests in Asia, resolved to subject every power to his wide dominion; as he approached the city of Jerusalem, the High-Priest Jaddus, with a great number of the subordinate priests, went out in solemn embassy to meet him, clothed in their sacerdotal vestments, and intreated him to spare the Jewish state, and leave them to the undisturbed enjoyment of their sacred worship. The Conqueror, whom no enemy could terrify, whose lust of dominion no possessions could satiate, bowed with reverence, with solemn awe and trembling, before the servant of Aaron's God, and granted all his request.

In the time of the Diocletian persecution, the last and greatest effort of Paganism for the destruction of Christianity, the government of the Roman Empire was shared by several different sovereigns; and their mutual jealousies, with their individual ambition and private designs, prevented a steady co-operation in the fatal purpose, and saved the Church. Though each one would have rejoiced, and, had he possessed the supreme power, *would, probably,*

have used it all to exterminate from the empire every vestige of the religion of Christ.

At the time of the Reformation, when the Church was emerging from the insupportable mass of Papal corruptions, Charles V. Emperor of Germany, and Francis I. King of France, the greatest princes of that active age, were equally enemies of the Reformation, and persecuted the Protestants in their own dominions with unrelenting severity. Yet, the lust of dominion was their ruling passion. And, being constant rivals for power, and in a state of national war the greater part of their reigns, embittered by the constant corrosions of disappointed ambition and personal enmity, each of them afforded frequent aid and essential relief to the protestant subjects of the other, for the purpose of fomenting divisions, and weakening the power of the hated rival. In this manner, those zealous supporters of Papal corruption were, indirectly, sapping its foundations.

I might go on with a statement of similar facts to any extent. But more is unnecessary.—While we thus discover the events of Providence constantly guided by a holy and unseen hand for the welfare of the church, we perceive that He who is the church's head, who manages all its concerns, and protects all its interests, is the disposer of every event; that he looks through all periods of time, and constantly exercises a power, wisdom, and goodness, which can belong to none but God.

7. The Lord Jesus is to be the final Judge of the world. Of this truth, it is unnecessary to multiply testimonies, as it is one which the scriptures have made most plain. Christ says, himself, "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Acts xvii. 31. "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—In the 25th of Matthew, the Saviour has given us a particular account of the process of the final judgment, as it is to be conducted by himself.

In the close of the Revelation, which was evidently designed to be the conclusion of the sacred volume, the Lord Jesus gives his last testimony of his purpose to judge the world, in righteousness; and says, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Nothing is more evident than that it must be the work of God to judge the world. The first requisite for this great transaction is a perfect knowledge of all hearts. The state of the heart constitutes the essential part of the character of every moral being, as viewed by a holy God. Here, only, is any true obedience to the divine law. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." A compliance with these great

precepts is to be found in the exercises of the heart. A want of love to God or our neighbour, is a plain violation of these commands. The greater part of the duties of the christian life proceed, immediately, from the affections of the heart; and the principal sins, committed against God, are from the same source. Christ has taught us that “Out of the heart proceed ‘evil thoughts,’” with a long catalogue of the most aggravated vices: while, “with the ‘heart man believeth unto righteousness.”— It is evident, as we have shown already, that it is the prerogative of God alone to search the heart. David says to his son, “The Lord ‘searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the ‘imaginations of the thoughts.” Yet, without this knowledge, it is equally evident that no one can judge the world in righteousness.

We may percive, in another view, that a divine intelligence is necessary for the judgment of the world. We are assured that every work is to be brought into judgment, with every secret thing. What mind, but one that is infinite, can comprehend the individual characters of countless millions, with all their works? It is *the Judge* that is to bring every work into judgment. We have forgotten, and shall never recollect till he bring them to our remembrance, many of the events of our lives, which will then be found to be of a most important nature. He is to see that no transaction, from the beginning to the end of time, that no idle

word, that shall have ever fallen from the lips of any one of Adam's race, shall be overlooked or forgotten. He must see that not one individual, in the countless throng gathered before him, is neglected.

The performance of the judgment must require an infinite wisdom. Every event, every instance of moral conduct, every transaction between man and God, or between man and man, is to be weighed and adjusted according to the most perfect rectitude and justice. Every sin must be viewed in connexion with all its attendant aggravations, and with every temptation or circumstance that could alleviate its guilt. The situation and circumstances of every accountable being, at all times, must be accurately weighed, in order to determine the true nature of their deserts. Every action of obedience or duty, of love to God or creatures, must be viewed in connexion with every consideration which may enhance or diminish its value. That the Judge may, not only, distinguish between the saved and the lost, but that he may render unto every one, precisely, according as his work shall be.

Infinite goodness will be necessary for the Judge of the world. He is to pronounce an acquittal upon vast numbers of our fallen race, and receive them as the blessed of the Father to the holy dwelling of God in heavenly glory. In view of the infinite guilt of all of mankind, of the little grace to be found in the best of

christians, of the amazing deficiency, negligence, unfaithfulness, and constant provocations, of the followers of Christ; nothing less than a love, a compassion, a long-suffering, great as heaven, and inexhaustible as eternity, could save the guilty, and bring the unworthy believer to the mansions of rest.

Thus, in every view of the amazing scene of the judgment to come, the proof is irresistible that the Judge must be truly divine. He must be, as we have seen, the searcher of hearts, infinite in knowledge, in wisdom, and in goodness. This Judge is the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, all these divine attributes belong to him. In whom dwells all the fulness of God. To him be glory forever; Amen.

SERMON VI.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, &c.

We now proceed to show

IV. That the Godhead of Christ is proved from the Worship which the scriptures inform us of having been paid to him, and which they require for him. The first principle of the religion of the bible is that we are to worship God, and him only. And the true difference between this religion and every other, is, that those enjoin worship to be offered to various beings, to such as are no gods, while this directs our services to the one God, who alone is Jehovah.

In the front of Sinai's law, we have the great command, the first and most important of the decalogue, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*" This commandment is intended to assure us that there is no God but the God of Israel, and that no other being is to be worshipped. The three following commandments are a sort of exposition or illustration of the first. To this purpose is the testimony of Christ. Mat. vii. "One of the scribes—asked him, 'Which is the first commandment of all? And 'Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is. Hear, O Israel; The Lord our

‘God is one Lord : And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.’—In the temptation of Christ, the devil “saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan ; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” No being in heaven or earth was entitled to any worship but the only God.

King Hezekiah, in his memorable prayer in the temple, when he and all his people were involved in the utmost anxiety and distress, “prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth ; thou hast made heaven and earth.” He proceeds to plead with him to defend his people and his worship, against the enmity of idolaters, who served gods that were no gods. The Lord heard his prayer, and brought to Israel a great deliverance.

In the last of Revelation, the beloved disciple gives us the following account of the nature of divine worship. “And, when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God.”

Thus this great truth is kept in view, through the sacred volume, as a primary doctrine of divine revelation, that the one true God is the only proper object for the worship of all rational creatures.

We shall now find that the scriptures teach the duty of paying divine worship to Christ. The first instance that we shall notice is that interesting interview between the Saviour and Thomas his disciple. He would not believe, without the fullest sensible evidence, that Jesus was risen from the dead. "Then saith he to 'Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold 'my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and 'thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, 'but believing. And Thomas answered, and 'said unto him, My Lord, and my God.'"—This was, most plainly, an act of direct worship. It was a most solemn acknowledgment that he was indeed the true God, whom he confessed as his God, whom he would worship and adore. The singular incredulity of this disciple was most wisely ordered in the holy purposes of God, that the fullest evidence of the character of Christ, and of his resurrection from the dead, might be exhibited. This acknowledgement of Christ, as his God, was expressly approved by his Lord, who replies immediately, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast 'believed." He believed in him as he truly was.—It is further to be noted, that the disciple makes this declaration in the most delib-

erate manner, as the result of irresistible evidence.

We are told concerning Christ, after his resurrection, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him."

At the time of his ascension, in the presence of his disciples, "He led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Whether they worshipped him before or after his ascension, it makes no difference; for, though in heaven, if he be not the true God, he was no more to be worshipped than any other creature. John was expressly forbidden to worship the angel that was sent to make known to him the truths of heaven.—Of all persons that can be named, the apostles of Christ had, certainly, the best opportunity to know the true character of their Lord; what he was, and what he requires of his people. And as they were to lay the foundation of the christian church, we cannot believe that the Holy Spirit would suffer them to be deceived in any important truth. Yet we perceive that they worshipped the Lord Jesus, as the true God.

The Saviour was worshipped by the ancient patriarchs and prophets. It is said of Abra-

ham, Gen. 18; "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre:—And he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and lo, three men stood by him." The patriarch addresses one of them, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." The person whom he addresses says to the patriarch soon after, "Lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son." And when they doubted of the truth of the promise, he subjoins, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" That is, himself; for he had made the promise in his own name. He then made known to the faithful patriarch his purpose to destroy the cities of Sodom, because of their great wickedness. Abraham then made his intercession for those cities, and received a gracious answer to his repeated supplications. In these supplications he observed, "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.—Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?—Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" That the person, whom this eminent patriarch worshipped, was Christ, can admit of no reasonable question, since it is the same that covenanted with him, whom we have before shown to be Christ the Saviour. He calls him the judge of all the earth. This Judge is Christ.—No man hath seen God," (that is the Father,) "at any time." It is Christ alone that has ever assumed a visible appearance. and been exhibit-

ed to the human eye. Thus it is he that appeared to Abraham, and was worshipped by him as the only true God.

The same being appeared, a little after, to Lot, rescued him from the impending danger which was shortly brought upon his devoted city, and received his reverence and worship. He says to Lot, while leading him forth from the city, "Escape for thy life;—escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto him, Oh not so my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life;—Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh! let me escape thither, and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See. I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city for the which thou hast spoken." Thus he receives the prayer of just Lot, and for his sake, spares Zoar, otherwise appointed to destruction.

The Saviour, that was the God of Abraham, was also the God of Jacob. By this latter patriarch he was repeatedly worshipped. When he wrestled with Jacob, he says to him, "Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.—And he blessed him there." Jacob prayed with an earnestness, a determination, which would not be denied. And he obtained his blessing. In view of this event, Jacob said,

“I have seen God face to face, and my life is ‘preserved.’”—When the same Saviour appeared to Moses in the burning bush of Horeb, the great prophet took his shoe from his foot, in token of reverential worship. Joshua did the same.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, the parents of Sampson. We have, before, taken some notice of this passage, and have shown that the person denominated “the Angel of the Lord,” was Christ. He is often spoken of in the scriptures by that appellation. On the occasion to which we now refer, “Manoah took a kid with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord:—For it came to pass, when the flame went up ‘towards heaven, from off the altar, that the ‘angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the ‘altar:—Then Manoah knew that he was an ‘angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto his ‘wife, We shall surely die, because we have ‘seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the ‘Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not ‘have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands.” Thus they testify that the Angel of the Lord, who appeared to them, whom they first call a man, is God, and the Lord. The original is Jehovah. To him they present their offerings, and their sacred worship. And they pray him to fulfil the words of his gracious promise. This promise he did fulfil, and they worshipped him after his departure.

In the 45th Psalm, David says to the Church concerning Christ, "So shall the King greatly 'desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and 'worship thou him." And to his Saviour he says, in the same psalm, "I will make thy name 'to be remembered in all generations; there- 'fore shall the people praise thee forever and 'ever." Praise is an immediate act of wor- ship.

The whole of the 102d Psalm is a prayer to God. And, by a quotation from this psalm in the first of Hebrews, we are assured that the person addressed is Christ. Some passages of this psalm are the following, "Hear my prayer, 'O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee. 'Hide not thy face from me, in the day when I 'am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me.— 'My days are like a shadow that declineth; and 'I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, 'shalt endure forever, and thy remembrance 'unto all generations. Thou shalt arise and 'have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour 'her, yea, the set time is come."—The Lord Jesus is here recognized as the head of the church, to whom she looks, continually, for the blessings of his Almighty grace.—From the worship paid to him by the psalmist, the Sa- viour takes occasion to prove his own charac- ter. He said to the Pharisees, "What think 'ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say 'unto him, the son of David. He saith unto

·them, How then doth David in spirit call him
·Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord,
·Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine
·enemies thy footstool?—This quotation is from
the 110th psalm, and shows that the psalmist
worshipped the Saviour as his Lord.

In the vision of Isaiah, given in the sixth
chapter of his prophecy, that illustrious prophet
pays direct and solemn worship to Christ.

In the writings of the apostles, we have ma-
ny striking instances of the worship of the Sa-
viour. One of the most impressive of these,
is the case of Stephen, who was the first that
was put to death for the service of Jesus. Acts
vii. 59, 60. “And they stoned Stephen, call-
ing upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive
my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried
with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their
charge.” The faithful martyr, with his dying
breath, makes his prayer to the Lord Jesus,
and to him only. You observe, that he makes
two most important petitions: one is, that his
Lord would receive his own departing spirit;
the other that he would forgive the sin of his
murderers. Requests which no one could
grant but God.—It is further to be noticed, that
Stephen worships his Saviour, not merely with
his parting breath, but under the clearest illu-
minations of the Spirit of God. It is said, verse
55th, “But he being full of the Holy Ghost,
looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the

‘glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.’ Thus he was full of the Holy Ghost, had a full inspiration respecting the truth of God, as well as the highest comforts and joy of the believer, when he paid divine worship to his Saviour. He had also an open vision of heaven: he saw the glory of God, he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and could not have been mistaken with regard to his character. He then commits to him, and to him alone, his immortal spirit,—for eternity. I know of no testimony on sacred record, for the divinity of Christ, more interesting, more satisfactory, more absolutely overwhelming, than this. The thoughtful mind, looking over this passage, again and again, seeing the richness of truth with which it abounds, is ready to say, ‘It is enough, I can ask no more.’

The apostle Paul often prayed to Christ. 1 Thess. III. Now God himself and our Father, ‘and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men.’ The Lord, in the latter part of the passage, is, evidently, Christ. Again; ‘Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father,—comfort your hearts.’

Concerning the thorn in the flesh, with which this apostle was afflicted, he says, ‘For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is

‘made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that ‘the power of Christ may rest upon me.’” Thus, it was Christ’s strength which was made perfect in the weakness of his apostle, and it was he to whom the apostle prayed thrice for a deliverance from his affliction, and who promised to give him the blessing of his grace.

This apostle usually begins his Epistles by praying that grace and peace may be multiplied to the churches and saints to whom he wrote, from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace are the greatest blessings that God bestows upon any of his creatures. But as the apostle prays Christ to confer these favours, it is evident that he can do it, and, of course, that he is a proper object of prayer and praise.

John says to the seven Churches in Asia, “Grace be unto you, and peace,—from Jesus ‘Christ, who is the faithful and true witness.” The apostolic benediction often used, is an express prayer to Christ, and an immediate act of worship. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ‘be with you all.” Several of the Epistles close with an ascription of praise to Christ; and to him alone. The conclusion of the Epistle of Jude is, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the ‘only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.

The ordinance of baptism, appointed by Christ, is an act of religious worship to him. His last command to his disciples is, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." As this is a covenant transaction between God and his people, as it is the initiating seal by which the people of Christ become visibly united to him, it is one of the most solemn acts of religious worship. It is true the worship is paid, equally, to each person of the sacred Trinity; but to Christ no less than to the Father and the Spirit.

The word of God commands us to worship Christ. The baptismal service, just noticed, is a proof of this. In this, the believer is required to take the Lord Jesus for his God and Saviour, to dedicate himself to him, and to devote himself to his service. This divine ordinance is to be constantly celebrated in the church until the second coming of Christ. All, therefore; all, who hope and trust in his great salvation, are required to worship him.

John v. 23. "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him." The Father, certainly, cannot be duly honoured without divine worship. And he requires the same kind, and the same degree, of honour, to be paid to the Son

as to himself. And he that honoureth not the Son, *in this manner*, honoureth not the Father.

On the mount of Transfiguration, Jesus assumed the appearance of his divine glory.—While Moses and Elias appeared before him, “a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” That is, they were required to regard him in that divine character in which he then appeared. The apostle Peter assures us that, on this occasion, Christ Jesus received from God the Father honour and glory. That glory which belongs to him as one with God.

The Lord Jesus is worshipped by the holy hosts of heaven. The prophet Isaiah, in his vision, “saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims:—And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” The apostle John, speaking of Christ, says, “These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.” Quoting a part of this chapter. We therefore know that the glory which Isaiah saw was the glory of Christ: and that it was Christ who was worshipped by the holy seraphims of heaven.

The angels of heaven are *required* to worship the Saviour. It is said, Heb. 1; “When

‘he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, ‘he saith, And let all the angels of God worship ‘him.” The song of the heavenly host, at the birth of the Saviour, seems to be a hymn of praise to Christ. “Glory to God in the high-‘est, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” He is praised that he has undertaken the work of man’s redemption ; that, through him, there is peace on earth.”

In a view of the spirits of the just made perfect in glory, John says, “They sang a new ‘song, saying, thou art worthy,—for thou wast ‘slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy ‘blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and ‘people, and nation.”—As we have observed before, Christ Jesus, in heaven, is no more a fit object of worship, than he is on earth, if he be not truly divine.

When the Lord Jesus shall come to judgment, the universe is represented as bowing before him in reverence and worship. “Behold, ‘he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall ‘see him, and they also which pierced him ; and ‘all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of ‘him.”

We have thus gone through with the first Part of our subject, and have endeavoured to state the principal evidences and proofs of the Divinity of Christ. These have been taken, chiefly, from the word of God, and exhibited in the following order.—1. The Names given

to Christ by the sacred writers.—2. The divine attributes ascribed to him.—3. The works which he performs. And—4. The worship paid to him on earth and in heaven.

These different sources of evidence, for the divinity of the Saviour, are perfectly distinct and independent of each other, and are all of them the most ample in their kind, furnishing a mass of testimony clear and intelligible, and, as it would seem, satisfactory and irresistible.

We now make some improvement.

1. The doctrine of the Divinity of Christ appears to be as fully taught in the scriptures as could be expected, or desired. It seems to be difficult to believe that it could have been more full or explicit. I cannot conceive that the acutest intellect could point out a manner, in which this doctrine, admitting it to be true, could have been revealed, so as to have been more convincing or intelligible. The correctness of these observations is not diminished by the fact that this doctrine has been often denied. No important doctrine is taught in the word of God, saving that of the divine existence, which has not been openly denied, by some who have professed to receive the scriptures as a divine revelation. If the unbelief of man is to be admitted as a proof that the truth of God is not fully attested, no part of the sacred Volume can be considered free from imperfection.

Error has its seat, not in the understanding,

but in the heart. While the affections of the heart are determinately opposed to the truth of God, there is no testimony which the mind cannot resist. The court of Egypt did not believe that the God of Israel was the true God, or that they were bound to obey his voice. Though it is hard to conceive that they could have had greater evidence than was presented before them. When our Lord Jesus was upon earth how few acknowledged him as a teacher come from God, as the holy Saviour of men! Yet their unbelief arose not from the want of evidence, but from a dislike to his precepts and his character. That state of the human mind that would resist the testimony of his divine nature, then, can do it now.—This reasoning is sanctioned by the testimony of the apostle Paul. “For what if ‘some did not believe? Shall their unbelief ‘make the faith of God without effect? God ‘forbid.”

2. The friends of the Lord Jesus need not fear for the honour of their Lord, and the glory due to his name. His divinity and essential glory have always been denied by many who love not his holiness, and by some who profess to serve and follow him. But this error has never prevailed extensively, and we have a well grounded confidence that it never will. While we are persuaded that God will maintain his own truth, and protect the honour of his well beloved Son; we may rest satisfied that

the common sense of honest and impartial readers of the Bible will always perceive that the Saviour's divinity is a scripture doctrine. However an unholy heart may be dissatisfied with a doctrine that proclaims sin to be such an evil that nothing less than a divine sacrifice could make an atonement; the conscience, in most instances, will bear witness that such is the testimony of God.

The wicked will adopt error, because they tremble at the terrors of divine truth. But the glory of Christ is in his own hands, and he can never forget his own great name. Before him angels bow and devils tremble. He knows that the security of the church, the happiness of his people, the safety of the universe which he is called to govern, depend upon the proper vindication and display of his essential glories. He, who rose from the dead, who ascended into heaven, who has sustained his church, a little flock, to the present day, cannot be in want of any power or purpose to accomplish this great design. His counsel shall stand, he will do all his pleasure.

3. Safe are the interests of the Church. It is in the hands of GOD. It rests not upon created power. He who is the root and the offspring of David, who is the rock on which his cause shall rest is Jehovah. The chief corner-stone, on which the great fabric is built, is the mighty God, the Lord our righteousness. He has given his word to his people, he has pledged his faith-

fulness, they are graven upon the palms of his hands, the walls of Zion are continually before him. A woman may forget her sucking child, but he will not forget the children of his grace.

4. How terrible will be the portion of the ungodly. They are to stand in judgment before him whom they revile and oppose. And this judgment will be for eternity. All their character, their unbelief, their opposition to him and his cause are known to him. He has given us a specimen of his proceedings, at that eventful scene, in the parable of the nobleman and his kingdom. After rewarding his faithful servants, the nobleman says, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." He is long-suffering and gracious, but he will in no wise clear the guilty. He can create and he can destroy. It is his glorious purpose to manifest the mercy of God, but it is no less his design to sustain his righteous justice and truth.

The wicked will be lost by their own disobedience and inexcusable unbelief. The suggestions of unbelief which now quiet the conscience will then be found to be refuges of lies. The Lord Jesus is to reign forever. The treatment received by him and his gospel, in this world, will never be forgotten. No privilege of repentance will ever be afforded the wicked: and their hearts, perpetually harden-

ed in sin, would never be disposed to accept of it, if placed in their power. "O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

SERMON VII.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, &c.

HAVING endeavoured, in the preceding Discourses, to exhibit the principal evidence of the Saviour's Divinity, we now proceed, as proposed,

SECONDLY, To consider some of the objections that are made to this doctrine, and the principal arguments that are urged against it.

In prosecution of this design, it will not be expected that we take notice of *all* the arguments and objections that have been made use of by those who have denied the divinity of Christ. While such a course would lead the discussion to a great length, it would be wholly unnecessary. For this, like most other subjects of laborious controversy, rests upon a few questions or principles, and though a great variety of extraneous topics may be introduced, yet, according to the issue of the primary principles, must be the final result of the great enquiry.

I will further premise, that any objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, will be considered equally valid against the divinity of Christ.

For it was observed, at the commencement of these discourses, that they would be, virtually, a discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity; since the divinity of Christ has always been the labouring point in that doctrine. If He be not divine, there is no trinity in the Godhead, and all who have maintained his divinity, so far as I know, have admitted the doctrine of the Trinity.

1. The first objection which I shall notice, is, that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, or of the Trinity, is self-contradictory and absurd. The objector says, with much apparent confidence, that three cannot be one, and one cannot be three, and, therefore,—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit cannot each be God, and, at the same time, there be but one God. In the statement of this objection, as it is usually done by Unitarians, there is, I think, a want of candour and correct representation of the Trinitarian sentiment, which ought not to exist in those who are enquiring after truth. They say they object to the Trinitarian sentiment, that Christ is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God, because they cannot believe in more than one God. They cannot ascribe divine honours to Christ, because the scriptures teach that there is one God, and that we are to serve him only. With the same purpose they assume the name of *Unitarians*; professing to believe in the *unity of God*, as opposed to the denomination of *Trinitarians*. There is thus

a constant insinuation that their opposers believe in three Gods, and worship three perfectly distinct and independent beings.

These opposers of our sentiments perfectly know that we believe in the unity of God, that we mean to give no intimation of an acknowledgment of more Gods than one. The term *Unitarian* has been assumed, of late years, by the opposers of the divinity of Christ, as more imposing than those by which they had previously been distinguished, and calculated to convey the impression that they are the exclusive advocates of the unity of God.

I feel the more justified in noticing *the use of terms*, in this place, because it is a very common device of error, and, oftentimes, produces a very powerful effect. A few years since, a very zealous attack was made on the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, under the title of "The Age of Reason." The object was to insinuate that the scriptures are inconsistent with the dictates of reason, and that those, who believe them to be divine, give up the proper exercise of their own reason.—We believe the holy scriptures to be the word of God, and we think we can give a reason for this belief, and that our reason cannot resist the force of evidence in confirmation of this great truth.

In like manner, it is a common thing for persons to say, they cannot believe in the doctrine of the divine decrees, because they must believe in the freedom of the human will; and

because the calls and invitations of the gospel are universal, extending to all people. The impression is thus made, indirectly, that those who believe in the decrees and election of God deny those other truths. Whereas, the advocates of the divine decrees maintain the freedom of the human will, and the fulness of gospel invitations, as strongly as their opponents.

Those, who deny the divinity of Christ, often say, that they cannot believe him to be a divine person and pay him divine honours, because they must give the highest possible exaltation and worship to God the Father. They cannot consent that any thing should withhold their affections from a supreme homage to him, or that any other being should have a place in their hearts, as an object of worship. Thus, it is insinuated, that, from a reverence of God, and a tenderness of his character, they do not admit the Deity of Christ, and that those who do, must, in a certain sense, dishonour God.—Afraid to worship Christ, when God has required that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father!

Such reasonings are specious, and are well calculated to influence an ingenuous mind, before it is aware of the design. Attempts of this kind usually belong to the devices of error; truth has no need of the stratagems of art for its illustration or support. But, with regard to the essential character of the Saviour of sin-

ners, we can say as the apostle Paul did, on a different occasion, "None of these things 'move me.'"

The simple question is, Is the Lord Jesus a divine or a created being? To the objection already stated, that the doctrine of his divinity leads to an absurdity, I would reply, in the first place, that it becomes us to be very cautious in pronouncing things to be absurd or contradictory, which pertain to the character of God. We know but little of his perfections, and are utterly incompetent to determine what qualities of character are requisite to constitute an infinite and perfect being, and what are not. There are, undoubtedly, many things, very important, in the attributes of the Deity, that have never been revealed to men, and are not known by them. We have no means of determining what must be the character of an infinite and holy being, but what God has been pleased to reveal concerning himself. And, with such limited knowledge, it is not becoming in imperfect creatures to say what is consistent in God, and what is worthy or unworthy of his infinite holiness. One may say that it is unworthy of God to believe that he had any concern in the existence of evil. But when we hear it said by himself, "I form the light 'and create darkness, I make peace and create 'evil,'" we are compelled to be still, and know that he is God. "Canst thou by searching find

'out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty
'unto perfection?'"

But we would observe, further, in reply to the objection now before us, that we do not consider the doctrine of the Trinity, or the divinity of the Saviour, either contradictory or absurd. The scriptures do not teach that there are three Gods and that there is but one God. This would, indeed, be a contradiction. But they name three distinct persons, or characters, each of whom is the true God. The manner of this divine existence they have not made known, and we do not attempt to describe it. We are told "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." It is not said there are three Gods; but, simply, there are three that bear record in heaven. All that is affirmed is that there is something in the mode of the divine existence which authorizes us to say there are three in God, at the same time that he is one. Thus it may be safely affirmed of the Father, of the Son, of the Spirit, that he is God.

We say, for the purpose of expressing this truth, that *there are three persons in the Godhead*. A very proper expression, because we can find no other as suitable. At the same time, we admit, and Trinitarians have always admitted, that the word *person* is not used by the sacred writers, in this sense; and we admit, also, that the word *person* does not exactly

express our ideas of the three that are in God. But when we reflect on the poverty of human language, and remember that it is made for man, and naturally arises from his own relations and wants, we cannot wonder that it is deficient when applied to the Most High. Thus, God is represented in the scriptures as possessing the ordinary senses and corporeal members of a man. We do not suppose such a representation to be strictly true, but it is necessary to exhibit his character in conformity with the conceptions of our own understandings. I see not, therefore, any more reason to object to the term *person*, as applied to each of the sacred Three, than to the terms the heart, the mouth, the eye, the arm, of the Lord.

The objection is that three cannot be one, and one cannot be three. Admit it. We do not suppose that, in the Godhead, there are three, *in the same sense*, that there is one. But that **THERE ARE THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD.** By being three, they do not cease to be one.

Christ says, concerning the ordinance of marriage, "And they twain shall be one flesh." Though they become one in an important sense, they do not cease to be two.—These thoughts afford a strong inducement to attempt illustrations by comparisons: but I dare not do it, lest I degrade the subject, and tread on forbidden ground.

The objector contends, again, that to say that there is a plurality, and, at the same time,

a unity, in God, is contradictory. If it be a contradiction, must it not have been perceived by the sacred writers? Reflect for a moment, on the words of our text. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." By asserting that the Word was *with* God, the apostle John clearly affirms that there is a distinct personality, and that the Word and God are two. Yet he says, in the same sentence, "The Word was God." Leaving this truth, as clearly as it can be expressed, that, in one sense, the Word and God are two, and, at the same time, they are one.—A writer, in a long treatise, may deliver different, and even, opposite sentiments. And this is sometimes done. But for a person, possessing common sense, to declare a palpable contradiction, in one sentence, is not to be supposed.

Are the sacred writers regardless of the dictates of reason? Verily, there are no other authors who convey their ideas with so much clearness and precision; and, for excellence of composition, many parts of the scriptures exceed all other writings. These inspired writers well knew that the truth of God could not contradict itself, and, if they delivered sentiments that were contradictory, the contradiction would soon be perceived, and they would not be believed.—The Apostle Paul says "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God

‘and Father of all, who is above all, and ‘throughall.’” He says also, concerning Christ, “Who is over all, God blessed forever.” *He knew*, if one of these declarations contradicts the other. And, if so, he could not be writing under the inspiration of the God of truth. All that he affirms, in these passages, is the same that is declared by the greater part of the inspired writers, that there is but one God, that the Father is this God, that the Son is this God, that, though possessing a distinct personality, they are one.

The Lord Jesus often declared himself, on a variety of accounts, different from his Father, and yet says, “I and my Father are one.” Had these declarations been really contradictory, he would have lost the confidence of his disciples and afforded his enemies sufficient ground of accusation against him. But his opposers, though very subtle and obstinate, never pretended, that we can find, that he taught things contradictory or absurd.

That the doctrine of the Trinity is a *mystery*, is admitted. That we are unable fully to comprehend and explain it, we readily allow. But a mystery is totally different from a contradiction or absurdity. The one is above our reason, the other contradicts it. Many, who reject the doctrine of the Trinity, or of the divinity of Christ, object that it is a mystery, and they call on us to explain it. But if the doctrines of divine revelation are to be rejected because of mysteries, because

of certain difficulties that may seem to attend them, what, of the more important doctrines of scripture, would be left?—In looking into the character and works of God, we are met with mysteries at every step that we advance. The existence of an uncreated, eternal, Being, is a mystery which no one can comprehend. The creation of the world out of nothing, though a most simple and familiar truth, is, nevertheless, an incomprehensible mystery. Can you comprehend the nature of a spiritual being? Or can you describe the properties of matter? Not at all. Where is the philosopher that can point out the process of vegetation;—or the manner in which food sustains animal life;—or the nature of the operation of mind upon matter, as in the case of the human body and soul? Now, if there be innumerable mysteries, in the word, and in the works of God, even in those objects which are most familiar to our senses, how can it be expected that we should not find mysteries in his character? If we do not reject him because he is a spirit, or because he is self-existent, both of which are mysteries, we cannot reasonably reject him because he exists three persons in one God.—We believe that God is a spirit because the scripture declares it; we believe that Jesus is God, on the same authority.

We all know that man is a complex person, consisting of body and soul: that these are perfectly distinct substances: that they are sepa-

rated at death, and will be reunited at the resurrection. Yet these separate subsistences form but one person, and both are necessary to complete the man. Yet this union is, to us, as unintelligible, as really a mystery, as the union of the divinity and humanity in the person of Christ Jesus.

2. It is objected to the doctrine of Chrst's divinity that it is not consonant to human reason, that the light of nature teaches no such truth, that natural religion, if it do not reject, at least, does not, in any degree countenance the sentiment. All this is admitted. The doctrine of the Trinity is, purely, a doctrine of divine revelation; we know nothing of it except what we find in the word of God. Those who advocate the sufficiency of human reason for life and godliness, and suppose that the word of God contains few truths but what are taught by natural religion, which is the case with many that reject the divinity of Christ, will, of course, be stumbled at this doctrine. But their difficulty is easily obviated. If a volume, claiming to be a divine revelation, do not discover new truths, truths unknown to the religion of nature, it must have been unnecessary, and, by a wise and holy God, would never have been given. And we cannot believe that such a revelation would be given without containing many and important truths, concerning God, and concerning man as an immortal being, which could not, otherwise, be known. In conformity with such

a conclusion, we find that the scriptures contain a great number of the most important truths, which the light of nature has never made known. Indeed, this is true of the greater part of the important doctrines found in the inspired volume.

Redemption,—is a doctrine of pure revelation. The light of nature knows not how a sinner can be forgiven, much less could it teach the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, or find a person suited to the work of a Mediator. While we contend that all these truths are perfectly consistent with right reason, and that none but a divine person, such an one as the Lord Jesus Christ, could have made atonement for sin, we allow that this is a great design of infinite wisdom and holiness, which the mind of man would never have conceived. To this purpose the prophet declares, “And he saw that there was ‘no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation ‘unto him, and his righteousness it sustained ‘him.” Had not God, in the riches of his mercy, provided salvation, no redemption for lost men had ever been known, and they had found no deliverance from eternal woe.—We can easily perceive that the redemption of sinners must appear to a benevolent mind infinitely desirable; and why should man, who is to partake of the blessing, object to the method which God has adopted, when, without this, he must have been lost forever. It is true this divine

plan lays low the pride of human reason, but it exalts God.

The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is, substantially, a doctrine of revelation only. Natural religion has some conjectures, and hopes, on this subject, but it attains to no certainty. It does not teach the resurrection of the body, and, of course, nothing certain or satisfactory respecting a future retribution. If we do not complain of this doctrine for being one which human reason had not discovered, why should we make an objection of that nature against the divinity of Christ?

3. Another objection to the divine character of the Saviour is, that the scriptures uniformly declare that there is but one God. This argument is often urged with much earnestness, as if it could determine the question. The opposers of Christ's divinity contend that the doctrine of the unity of God is taught in all parts of the sacred scriptures, and that it is the principal truth which distinguished the religion of the sacred prophets, from the heathen nations by whom they were surrounded. All this is correct. And the same sentiment is as stedfastly maintained by Trinitarians as by them. *We* do not believe in more than one God, we are convinced the scriptures teach, decidedly, that there is but one. No truth is there taught with greater clearness and force. From this truth, Trinitarians infer that Christ cannot be God. Here the question is, my brethren, as the

apostle said in another case, "What saith the 'scripture?'" It is not whether it appear reasonable *to us* that the Son and the Spirit should be divine, equally with the Father, when there is but one God. But what does the word of God declare respecting Christ. It is granted that the doctrine of the Trinity is found in divine revelation only. It is equally true that we know nothing of redemption except what we get from the holy scriptures. If this great design of heavenly grace is there made known, we may safely presume that the character of the Redeemer would be distinctly pointed out. And thus it is. And it is there testified, as we have seen, in the fullest manner, that Christ Jesus the Redeemer, is truly God. Let it be conceded that the scriptures teach that there is but one God. If they teach, at the same time, that Jesus Christ is God, with equal precision and clearness, I see not why we should hesitate to receive their testimony. Admit that we do not, in all respects, comprehend the nature of this truth. Shall it therefore be rejected?

Does God absolutely govern the world? Will his counsel stand, and will he do all his pleasure? At the same time, is the sinner left entirely, to his own free will, to his voluntary choice, to attempt or reject the offers of mercy and eternal life? It is so declared in the scriptures of truth. And these doctrines we do not hesitate to receive, though we may not be able fully to resolve all the difficulties and questions that may be suggested on the subject.—

The word of truth teaches us that there is one God, and that we are to worship him only. It teaches also that all men shall honour the Son even as they honour the Father.

When Christ taught the doctrine of the new birth to Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler says, with surprise, "How can these things be?" He finds his mind insufficiently to comprehend them, but he admits the truth on the authority of a teacher come from God. On the same authority, strengthened and confirmed in every variety of form, though we believe in and worship one God, we believe that Jesus Christ is God.

4. It is objected that the character in which the Lord Jesus is presented to the view of men does not admit of his being a divine person. He is made known as a Mediator between God and men; and it is contended that God could not be a mediator between himself and his own creatures. He could not make an atonement, it is said, to satisfy and propitiate himself. This objection, at first view, has something of a formidable appearance; but, on a careful consideration, it will be found to be easily obviated.

The work of redemption was never designed, primarily and chiefly, for the salvation of men. The highest, the supreme object is the glory of God: the display of his own perfections to intelligent beings. In this view, God receives the praises of the heavenly host. "Thou art 'worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, 'and power: for thou hast created all things;

and *for thy pleasure* they are and were created." All his works, of every description, are for his own pleasure. The work of redemption, the most important of all the works of God, made known to men, is designed and carried on for the same purpose. It is to make a manifestation of the infinite goodness and mercy of Jehovah, and, especially, of his holy justice. Thus Christ is made a sacrifice for sin, not to make God more merciful, for he is infinitely gracious, but to show his infinite hatred of iniquity, his inviolable regard to the claims of his law, his inflexible purpose to maintain the authority of his government, while he bestows pardon and eternal life upon the transgressors. Thus Christ says to his Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth." I have done that on earth which will glorify God, which will make the richest display of the divine perfections to intelligent beings forever. This work of Christ has made an exhibiton of the character of God, has let creatures of all worlds into a view of his perfections and glory, which could never have been done in any other way. Thus the work of Redemption, in all its connexions and consequences, is designed, and will have the effect, to promote the declarative glory of God.

Such being the primary object of this work, and such its effects, where is the inconsistency that the eternal WORD should be the mediator? That he should assume our nature into a union with the divine, and that the man Christ Jesus

should be made a sacrifice for sin. As there cannot be any impropriety in this, so far as we can discover, it is easy to perceive, on the other hand, a clear necessity that this course should have been adopted.

No other being in the universe is adequate to the work. Atonement was to be made for the sins of a world. Satisfaction was to be made to that justice and law of God which denounce eternal death upon every transgressor.—Among men, all are sinners, there is not an individual who does not stand guilty before God. In heaven, there is not an angel who is not bound in duty to render to God all his obedience and all his love. Then, no one can be found among created beings who could make atonement for sin. The consequence is, God alone can find a ransom. As Abraham said to his son, going to the hill of sacrifice, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.” And none but the God-man could be sufficient or suitable for this great work. Possessing the divine and human nature, he knows the rights of the one, and the needs of the other, and knows how to perform the work which is given him to do. And, in doing it, he glorifies God and saves sinners.

SERMON VIII.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, &c.

IN considering the objections to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, we now proceed

5. To take notice of one more important than any that have been mentioned, which is, that the Scriptures represent the Son as inferior to the Father. This will, therefore, deserve particular attention. And I shall endeavour to examine those passages on which the principal reliance is placed, with that attention and candour which the importance of the subject justly requires. The texts of scripture which properly come into view, admit of a natural division into two classes. Those in which Christ is said to declare his own inferiority to God; and those in which the same truth is said to be declared by the sacred writers. This division, we shall, accordingly, follow.

Some of the declarations of Christ, on this subject, which have been most noticed, are the following. Mat. xxvii. 46. "And, about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to

‘say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ John xx. 17. “Jesus saith unto her, ‘touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.’” In these passages, it is said, Christ evidently speaks of God as separate and distinct from himself, and as his superior. John xiv. 28. “If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto my Father: for my Father is greater than I.” Mark xiii. 32. “But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” John v. 18. “Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these, also doeth the Son likewise.” John xiv. 10. “The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” John xvi. 23. “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.”

In reference to these passages, which are the principal dependence of all who deny the divinity of Christ, several things are to be observed.—In the first place, Christ the Saviour is as really the Son of man, as the Son of God.

He possesses a human as truly as a divine nature. It is said in the beginning of John, in immediate connexion with our text, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." Christ spake of himself *as the Son of man*, more frequently than by any other term. Mat. xv. 13. "He asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" He uses the same term when he asserts his highest prerogatives. Thus he says to the high priest, at the time of his arraignment, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And in his particular account of the judgment, he says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory,—before him shall be gathered all nations."

Christ Jesus was in all respects a man. Heb. ii. 17. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." As man, he was, of course, infinitely inferior to God. He possessed a human soul, a finite mind, as really as a human body. Luke ii. 52. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." His divine nature could admit of no increase of wisdom; and this assertion can be true of his human soul only. As man, therefore, he is perfectly distinct from God, he is his son, his servant. In this character, he often speaks of himself, as we should expect; and, of course,

as a creature of God. Thus he says, "Go to 'my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend 'unto my Father and your Father; and to my 'God and your God." He calls his people brethren, and acknowledges the same God and Father with them. This he must do, "for he 'took not on him the nature of angels; but he 'took on him the seed of Abraham." I cannot see any inconsistency, therefore, that he should often speak of himself as a creature, and, often, as God. Any one of us may say, 'I am a mortal, a dying creature, and soon shall turn to dust:'—and also, 'I am an immortal being, and shall never die.' All this is said with perfect truth, and no one is deceived by the apparently contradictory nature of the assertions.

We observe, again, the Lord Jesus acts in a subordinate capacity in the character of a mediator. In this work he takes an intermediate station between God and man, to perform a service in behalf of each. Thus, in a passage already referred to, in which this subject is distinctly brought into view, it is said, "It behov- 'ed him to be made like unto his brethren: that 'he might be a merciful and faithful high priest 'in things pertaining to God, to make reconcili- 'ation for the sins of the people." He was to secure the honour of God, while he procured pardoning mercy for lost sinners.

The Mediatorial character of Christ is particularly delineated in the fortieth Psalm

“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ;—
 ‘ burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not
 ‘ required. Then said I, Lo, I come :—I de-
 ‘ light to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy
 ‘ law is within my heart.” He comes to the
 abodes of men, he takes a human body, and
 makes a sacrifice before God, such as his holy
 law requires, while all human offerings are in-
 sufficient to make satisfaction for sin. He
 comes by divine appointment, he acts in obe-
 dience to his Father’s will, to magnify and
 honour his holy law.

The scriptures represent Christ, in taking
 our nature, as he did in the character of Medi-
 ator, as having *humbled* himself. It is said,
 Phil. 11. He “made himself of no reputation,
 ‘ and took upon him the form of a servant, and
 ‘ was made in the likeness of men.” To the
 same purpose, this apostle says again, “For
 ‘ verily he took not on him the nature of angels ;
 ‘ but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”—
 When the mediatorial work of the Saviour was
 drawing to its close, he says to his Father, “I
 ‘ have finished the work which thou gavest me
 ‘ to do.” This work was given him of God,
 and it was performed according to the holy ap-
 pointment of heaven. If two kings were reign-
 ing jointly over a kingdom, possessing, togeth-
 er, the supreme power, as has often been the
 case in the government of nations, and one
 should voluntarily engage to go on an embassy
 to a distant country, he would then act, simply,

in the character of an ambassador, subject to the orders which he should receive, from time to time, from the royal court.

Again. In the work of redemption, Christ Jesus performs the important part of an Intercessor. Though this is the most exalted service that can be performed, short of the works of the true God, yet it is, essentially, a subordinate work. This part of the Saviour's work is not finished till the church is made complete, and the whole number of the redeemed are brought home to glory. For "he *ever liveth* 'to make intercession for us.'" "If any man 'sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, 'Jesus Christ the righteous."

In the character of Intercessor, Christ was typified by some of the ancient prophets. Abraham interceded for Sodom. Moses often interceded for Israel. The dresser of the vineyard, in the parable, interceded for the barren fig-tree. In all these cases, the prayer was heard and the request was granted. The person receiving an intercession holds, necessarily, a superior station to the one that intercedes.—While on earth, Christ prayed, abundantly, for his people; he prayed for a wicked world, and for his enemies; he prayed for himself. When about to leave the world, he assures his disciples, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall 'give you another Comforter, that he may 'abide with you forever."

These things being considered, that the Lord Jesus is the Son of man, that he is a mediator between God and man, that he is an intercessor before God in behalf of the children of men, all which characters or offices are necessarily inferior to the work of the divine being, we cannot wonder that he is often spoken of in the scriptures as a being subordinate to the true God. And when we reflect that Christ Jesus is not made known to us, and the doctrine of the Trinity is not revealed, only in consequence of the work of redemption, to which these respective characteristics of the Saviour necessarily belong, it is reasonable to expect that he would be exhibited, more commonly, as a subordinate being. We need not wonder, therefore, that such a number of passages of scripture are found that speak of Christ in this character, but rather have much more reason to admire that his divine nature is so fully revealed.

We shall now pay a little attention to the texts that have been noticed, which are often adduced to disprove the doctrine of the supreme divinity of Christ. While suffering on the cross, the Saviour called upon God. It is admitted that God was distinct and superior to the sufferer, for it was *the Son of man* alone that became the victim, the divine nature could not suffer. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." As he calls his disciples his brethren, he speaks of himself.

simply, as man ; and Jehovah was his God, as well as theirs. "My Father is greater than I." Christ is here presenting his character as Mediator, for it is a part of that solemn discourse with his disciples, immediately before his suffering, in which he constantly refers to that event which is to finish his work, and by which he is to procure eternal redemption for them and all his people. This was said the same night in which he was betrayed. It was the afflicted, humbled, forsaken mediator that said it. As such, his Father was, most truly, greater than he.

The next passage to be noticed is one much insisted on by the opposers of the doctrine of the Trinity, who affirm that Christ Jesus speaks of himself as inferior in *knowledge* to the true God. "But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The Saviour is here speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, or, more properly, of the final judgment. His object is to declare that the time of this event is known to God only. And when he includes the Son with angels and men he must be speaking of the man Christ Jesus ; since Christ, in his higher capacity, is to be the final judge. And we cannot suppose that the Judge himself would be ignorant of his own coming. The Saviour says, in the same discourse, "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and

glory. And then shall he send his angels and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." If the Judge knows what he shall do, on that occasion, he knows, undoubtedly, the time when it is to be done. This discourse, therefore, must be self-contradictory, unless we suppose that the Son, in the latter case, has a different meaning from what it has in the former, and that, in the first instance, the term must be understood of his human character, in which his mind was limited, not knowing all things.—But further. In this very discourse, Christ foretels the events which shall be connected with his second coming. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory." Having foretold these preceding and attendant circumstances of his coming, it cannot be supposed that he means to say that he, in the character in which he is then to appear, does not know the time of his own coming.

John v. 19. "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

This remark is made to the carping Jews, who were bitter in their enmity, and were seeking to kill him because he had cured an impotent man on the sabbath. He therefore tells them, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." As Son of man, simply, he cannot, and pretends not to do those works. But he possesses this power, in consequence of his union with the Father. Not by a commission from the Father, like a prophet; for he performs the miracle in his own name; having just said to the impotent man, before them all, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." While he admits that the son of Mary, whom they see in their company, could not do those mighty works, his beholders are taught that they are the effect of the energy of the invisible Deity dwelling within him. As is said in the Epistle to the Colossians, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily." This declaration, therefore, which we are now considering, more fully proves his divinity, as it is an assurance to the Jews that there is no illusion, that they are under no mistake with regard to his human person, and that the miraculous healing of the impotent man, was the work of the eternal Spirit resting upon him.

John xiv. 10. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." This passage sufficiently explains itself. It is

not Jesus the son of the carpenter, but the Father, that is the mighty God dwelling within him, that doeth those wondrous works.

John xvi. 23. "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." The term Father, much used in this chapter, evidently, means the true and supreme God. Christ is teaching his disciples that he is soon to be taken from them. It is their practice now, to ask the favours, that they need, of him, though, on many accounts, one with them. When he is gone, they must apply to the invisible God, through his great intercession. They can no more ask of him, in that character which he now sustains, for his humiliation will then have ceased.—This construction is confirmed by what follows. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father." He is soon to drop his mortality, to close his humiliation, and to return to that glory with the Father which he had in him before the world was. I cannot see, therefore, that here is any prohibition of praying to Christ in his exaltation; but only a direction to his disciples not to look for him again, in his present character.—In the same discourse he says, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." If he is able to do for his people all that they need, he must be a proper object of prayer.

A few passages from other parts of the sacred writings, frequently adduced in opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity, will now be noticed. It is said that God promised to Abraham that the Messiah should be of his seed. This, certainly, is true, for he took on him the seed of Abraham. But the promise implies, simply, that he should be a man, while it contains no intimation that he should be no more.

It is urged that he is foretold by Moses as a prophet like unto himself. God says to Moses, Deut. xviii; "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee." Many of the ancient prophets were illustrious types of Christ. Such were Abraham, and Jacob, and David, and Solomon. Eminently such was Moses. He was the instrument of delivering Israel from the bondage of Egypt, as Christ delivers his spiritual Israel from the bondage of sin. But no reasonable person will believe that Christ was to be, in every respect, like the prophet by whom he was typified; especially, that he could be no more.

It is prophesied of John the Baptist, that "he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." This spirit he might have, and yet be far greater than the prophet Elijah. For Christ says, "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."—Christ, in many things, was like to Moses, but in all, his superior. If Christ can be no more than Moses, because he is likened to him, we might argue that, be-

cause the Psalmist calls him, "My rock, my fortress, my high tower," he cannot be a rational being.

That he is promised to be of the family of David proves no more than that he is his offspring according to the flesh: while, in a much more important sense, he is David's root.

It is urged that the sacred writers often speak of Christ, simply, as a man. Acts II. 22. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs." Acts XVII. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." 1 Tim. II. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." And I. Cor. XV. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." It is granted that, in these passages, Christ Jesus is spoken of as man. But it will be observed that in each case he is contemplated as Mediator. This character we have shown to be subordinate to God. And the mediatorial work is performed, principally, by his humanity. As Mediator, he suffered under Pontius Pilate, he procured the resurrection of the dead, he mediates between God and man, and, in this character, he will judge the world. When, therefore, he is spoken of in his mediatorial capacity, it is reasonable to presume that he would be represented as man. And such a represen-

tation can be no argument, that I can conceive, against his divinity.

I notice but one passage more. That is in the fifteenth of the first of Corinthians. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.—And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Christ Jesus, as Mediator, performs, as we have seen, a part subordinate to the Father. He acts, in this character, by a commission from him. As Mediator, he receives a kingdom. The kingdom of the redeemed Church. During the continuance of his mediatorial work, this kingdom is incomplete. When it shall be completed, his work as mediator will be finished, he renders up his redeemed kingdom, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," unto God, and the mediatorial character of the Son is laid aside forever. The Son resigns himself to the Father, having finished his work, and God is all in all. I can perceive no other natural and reasonable illustration of this passage than this. If, however, we do not give it a correct interpretation, for it is not without its difficulties, it seems, at least, not to be suited to make a reduction of the character of Christ, as it is expressly declared that "he shall have put down all rule, and all au-

‘thority and power.’ And ‘he must reign ‘till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ‘The last enemy that shall be destroyed is ‘death.’ He who can subdue sin and death, and all the enemies of righteousness, cannot be less than divine.

It must be obvious to all that have attended to the passages of scripture which have now been reviewed, and which are principally depended on by those who deny the divinity of Christ, that the most of them afford, no more than *negative evidence* in favour of their sentiments. While they speak of the Saviour, they *do not* assert his divinity. Those in which his inferiority to the Father is declared appear to be most naturally applicable to his humanity, or to his character of Mediator. At least, it must be evident to all, that, on these principles, every passage of this nature, applicable to Christ, admits of an easy and natural solution. His humanity, his mediation, his intercession, include the whole. While the immense mass of express, positive, and irresistible evidence, in favour of the Saviour’s divinity, remains unaffected. I cannot perceive, after much reflection, that this course of reasoning affects the proof of his supreme divinity, at all.

And in view of all the objections which have been noticed, and which, so far as I know, are the most weighty that are made against the doctrines of the Trinity, it will be seen that they all may be obviated by a careful atten-

tion to the character of God, and the character of Christ, as given in the holy scriptures. By keeping in mind that there is one God, in three persons, infinite and incomprehensible, that Christ is God and man, a Mediator and an eternal Redeemer, it will be found easy to understand the various testimonies of divine truth respecting God and salvation.

On the other hand, suppose Christ to be a created or finite being, and the abundant declarations of the word of God, respecting his divinity, are wholly inexplicable, unintelligible, and absurd. In that case, the words of our text, with numerous others of a similar character, must be wholly unmeaning and useless.

If the passages of scripture, which we have endeavoured to explain in this discourse, have not been explained correctly, in regard to their main object, the sacred writers must be left with palpable contradictions. If Christ has said "My Father is greater than I,—I can of mine own self do nothing:" he has also said "I and my Father are one,—I do the works of my Father,—All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me." If we receive the Bible as the word of God, these different declarations must be reconciled. By the divinity and humanity of Christ this can be done; and I cannot perceive that it can be in any other way.

Or if any would attempt to adduce these variant assertions against the character of Christ,

let it be remembered that they were never considered contradictory while he was upon earth, since, no such charge, that we can learn, was ever brought against him. This, we may be sure, his enemies would not have omitted, could the charge have been sustained.

The blessing at the close of the Epistle to the Romans has been adduced to show that Jesus Christ is not a proper object of worship. "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever." Look at the conclusion of the next Epistle, and you will find the solemn benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." One is praise to God; the other is a prayer to Christ. Does the great Apostle, in these different passages, contradict himself? It must be so, if the first ascription implies that Christ Jesus may not be worshipped. But this we shall not believe of the apostle Paul, in a case so plain and express.

Oh let us, like Mary, sit at the feet of Christ, and receive the words of his holy truth, *as he gives them*, not obtruding our own fancies or presumptuous desires, and we shall find the truth of God plain and easy. Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

SERMON IX.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, &c.

WE now come to the last division of our subject, which is,

THIRDLY, To consider some of the consequences which naturally result from the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, as well as some of those which necessarily flow from the opposite sentiment. And

1. The first of these which will be mentioned is that the great doctrine of Atonement is hereby illustrated and established. Whatever attempts have been made to argue and explain upon this subject, it is always found that the atonement must depend on the divine character of the Saviour. This truth has, indeed, very commonly, been admitted by those who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and they do not hold to an Atonement, in that sense in which we consider it to be taught in the word of God. They say that God can dispense with the execution of the penalties of his own law, by his own sovereign act, and that he can be in no need of any thing of the nature of a reparation, of any thing to

make satisfaction for the violations of his own righteous justice. They say, generally, that Christ Jesus died in obedience to his Father's will ; that God so ordered events in his holy providence that the enemies of Jesus rose against him to put him to death ; and he, seeing this, made no attempt to escape from their malicious rage, but freely submitted to the evil thus brought upon him. And that his death manifested his obedience to the divine will, and, at the same time, gave the fullest proof of his sincerity and confidence in the doctrines which he taught, being ready to die for their confirmation. In short, that he died just like a martyr. The martyrs have died willingly in obedience to the holy appointments of God, and for the confirmation of that truth which they have loved, believed, and taught.

Some go a little farther, and say they conclude, from the testimony of the scriptures, that *there must be something in the death of Christ*, connected, in some way or other, with the salvation of the believer. Leaving it in that perfectly undefined, uncertain manner, destitute of any positive affirmation, which admits of its being any thing or nothing.—You may as well say that there is no truth in the scriptures, as to give them that doubtful cast which makes them speak no intelligible or determinate truth. But such is the natural result of all attempts to understand the work of the Mediator, when you take away his divinity.

There is something plausible in the assertion that God must have a right to dispense with the penalties of his own law, and can be in no need of a satisfaction, and cannot be supposed to require a sacrifice in order to the pardon of the transgressor. That, from a sovereign act of mere goodness, he may pardon and save whom he will. But such is not the nature of the divine dealings, such is not the character of God, as exhibited in his word. In the administration of the divine government, there is always a fitness, a reasonableness, in the various dispensations, which commend themselves to the understanding, to the conscience, of all intelligent and moral beings. It is evidently the purpose of God to afford rational creatures some further evidence of the wisdom and rectitude of his dealings, than would arise from a mere implicit confidence in his perfections. One may say that God will do right, and it becomes us to bow in submission before his holy wisdom. But how much more consoling is the thought, and how does it exalt his wisdom and grace, to believe that he will have all intelligent beings to see and be convinced of the wisdom of all his dispensations!

Look at the history of the flood. The wickedness of man was great on the earth, and God says "I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth;—yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." He directed Noah to build the ark, and to be,

during this period, a faithful preacher of righteousness. Thus, the most faithful and affectionate warnings and invitations were given to those disobedient transgressors, “when once ‘the long-suffering of God waited in the days of ‘Noah,’” that they might have escaped the execution of divine justice. As they continued in disobedience and impenitence, under all this discipline, they were destroyed: and all intelligencies will attest, forever, the rectitude of God’s dealings.

Similar to this have been the divine dispensations with men in every age. Examine the narrative of the long series of the rebellions of Israel in Samaria, on account of which they were broken up and carried captive among the nations of the east. Their character and provocations are particularly stated, with the dealings of God with them, by which all his judgments are fully justified. Thus it is said, “For they served idols, whereof the Lord had ‘said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. ‘Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and ‘against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all ‘the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ‘ways. Notwithstanding they would not hear, ‘but hardened their necks,—And they rejected ‘his statutes and his covenant.—Wherefore the ‘Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed ‘them out of his sight.” Thus the unhappy subjects of his justice, as well as every beholder, must be convinced of the propriety of the divine appointments.

Under the similitude of a vineyard, God represents, by the prophet Isaiah, his great mercies to Israel, and their disobedience and rebellions. He then says, "And now, O inhabitants, of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard." He refers it to them to say whether he has not done every thing for his vineyard that could be expected from him; all that could, with any propriety, be requested, and whether it be not perfectly reasonable that it now be destroyed.

God says to Pharaoh, "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." The object was to let all the earth know the true character of God, and the true nature of his dealings.—God supported David, in his conflict with Goliath; and the reason assigned is, "that the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." The Most High thus manifests his character to the children of men, not to strengthen his own dominion, but to give them as rational beings a correct view of his providential government, that all may be satisfied of the holy wisdom of his allotments.

The most remarkable passage on this subject, found in the scriptures, is in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy. After noticing the great provocations of Israel, God says, "I said I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of

them to cease from among men: *Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their enemies should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this.*" God would not leave any grounds of triumph to the wicked, he would not afford the ungodly any occasion to say he has forgotten his covenant with his people, or that the enemies of righteousness have prospered, in any degree, beyond what he saw fit to permit. His name shall not be exposed to reproaches, in view of any reasonable beings, either righteous or wicked.

Testimonies of this kind might be indefinitely multiplied; but more is unnecessary.—The result of all is that there is a fitness, a reasonableness, in the dispensations of God with moral beings, which he means to have understood and approved by all who will impartially contemplate the appointments of his wisdom.—For what purpose but this is there to be a general judgment of the world? It cannot be to bring to light any facts in the view of the Judge, to enable him to make an impartial decision; but that all rational creatures may see the reasonableness of his decisions, and that every mouth may be stopped.

Now, my brethren, let us apply these truths to Redemption. If there has not been made an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, God is supposed to give up the penalties of his law.

which says "the soul that sinneth shall die," to suffer multitudes of guilty offenders to pass unpunished, and to be made eternally blessed, without any reason perceivable by created beings ; and, unless all are to be saved, to consign vast numbers to destruction, because, it would seem, his goodness could not save the whole. Or, at least, all is to us impervious uncertainty, and impenetrable gloom.—We have seen that not such is the nature of the divine dealings. Christ, the eternal Word, was made flesh and dwelt among us. He assumed the body which God had prepared him. The man Christ Jesus, by virtue of his union with the divine nature, is infinitely exalted, and his sacrifice is of infinite value. The Father gives him up to the smiter, and hides his face from him, for he is put under the execution of the divine law, for the sins of the world. He suffers till eternal justice is satisfied, till he can say "It is finished." In this way, the universe will see forever that not one jot or tittle of the law has failed, that the truth and justice of God are perfectly sustained, that the evil of sin is exhibited in the strongest light, that "God can be just 'and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.'" Though every transgressor were pardoned and saved, the law of God is preserved, for it has received all that it claims.—Thus the scriptures teach that there is an immediate connexion between the sacrifice of Christ

and the salvation of sinners. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed." And again; "Thou shalt be called The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in."

It will readily be seen, that this view of the atonement requires the Mediator to be a divine person. As a sacrifice is to be made for the sins of the world, as an offering is to be made to divine justice of the nature of an equivalent, no created being, however exalted, could be adequate in any degree.—Christ says to his Father, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire;—Then said I, Lo, I come." No created offering or sacrifice could be sufficient to purge away sin; and, seeing this, Christ says, *Lo, I come*. And no one can ever have a doubt of the sufficiency of his great sacrifice, and of the reasonableness of bestowing pardon upon lost sinners for his sake.

2. In the divinity of the Saviour the burdened, guilty sinner finds a secure resting place, and a glorious foundation for hope. Every sinner that has seen himself, that knows in some degree, the plague of his own heart, that sees the guilt and vileness of his conduct towards God, that looks upon the holy purity and spirituality of the divine law, finds that, without an infinite salvation, he is inevitably lost forever. He sees sin to be infinitely hateful and vile, and, in view of himself, he is ready to say with the Apostle, 'Of sinners I am chief,'

and that nothing less than an infinite atonement could ever make it consistent in God to bestow upon him pardoning mercy. He sees that eternal punishment is no more than he deserves, as the just threatening of the divine law, that no righteousness of his own can release him from his desert, that nothing can do this but the immaculate righteousness of Christ.

In addition to this consideration, the penitent believer sees himself to be corrupt, helpless, constantly dependent, unable to do any thing as he ought in the duties of the divine life, ever liable to depart from God, to offend, to fall, unless upheld by his rich, infinite grace, and guided in the way of obedience and truth. Where shall he look for help, whither shall he seek for an arm on which he can safely lean, where shall he rest his trembling fainting soul? Tell him of a human friend, refer him to an angelic helper, call all created strength and wisdom to his support, and he sees no comfort, no hope. He knows something of the corruptions of his own heart, and of the snares of an ungodly world, and, with no other keeper or support than created aid, he knows that he shall run into sin, that he shall go on offending God, and go down to hell.

No, my fellow sinner, longing to be exempted from the burden of sin, groaning under your corruptions, desiring to love and serve a holy God, longing for a perfect conformity to him,

—such is not your Saviour. Your “Redeemer is strong; The Lord of hosts is his name.” Look at a *divine* Saviour, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth, who says “I am ‘the Lord and there is none else,” who loveth his own and loveth them unto the end, who is long-suffering and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, who cannot forget his people though a mother may forget her sucking child, who giveth them eternal life that no one can pluck them out of his hands, and rest secure. In this grace you may hope, on this strength you may rest.

Another view of this subject is no less supporting to the humble believer. Sensible of his own extreme unworthiness and vileness, he cannot bring his mind to the sentiment that the work of redemption has been undertaken and carried on, at such amazing expence, *merely*, for the sake of vile sinners, in every view, utterly unworthy. But when he finds that this work is the design of the holy Trinity, that each person of the sacred THREE performs a part, that it is designed and performed for the honour of God, for the manifestation of his own glory, and that man is rather the instrument than the end of its accomplishment, all is clear and satisfactory, and the success is sure. If it be for God’s glory, his purpose cannot be frustrated, his design cannot fail. As a means of the display of divine wisdom, grace, and mercy, the humble believer may hope and rely

that his own unworthy soul may be brought to eternal life and heavenly glory. However unworthy, however guilty, his unworthiness and guilt will contribute to enhance the triumphs of sovereign mercy, of infinite faithfulness, of boundless love. And thus will he be prepared for a humble part in the everlasting song.

3. The doctrine of Christ's divinity opens to the view of created beings the character of God. As the belief of the true God is the first principle of religion, nothing can be more important than correct views of his character. All our views of a spiritual being must be, in a great measure, indistinct and confused, and but imperfectly suited to produce that reverence, obedience, and love, which is due from creatures to their Creator. One may have some general impression of the existence and some of the attributes of God, viewed, simply, as a spiritual being. But our ideas of many of his perfections, of some of the most important parts of his character, must, necessarily, be exceedingly inadequate and defective. At least, this is the case with my own mind; all my contemplations of God, viewed as a mere spiritual being, have this deficiency. But when we contemplate the character of God, made manifest in the flesh, when we behold him in Christ the Mediator, when we perceive him exhibited to patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, presenting to men the

designs of his wisdom and the purposes of his grace, the energy of his power and the riches of his love ; when we behold him creating, upholding, governing, and judging the world ; when we perceive him, in the work of redemption, born, living among men, suffering, dying, rising, ascending, and reigning in glory, we have a perception of God, clear and satisfactory, whom we can consistently love and adore, in whom the soul can repose a humble confidence for eternity. In such a contemplation of our God, the anxious mind perceives something on which it can rest, to which it can approach, to which the heart can flow forth in love, gratitude, and praise.

Such a view of the divine character is taken by the apostle John, in the beginning of his first Epistle. “ That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ;—That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.” That God in whom we are to believe, whom we are to serve, is thus presented to our senses.—Many of the eminent saints, that lived before the coming of Christ, had a sight of God, in a visible manner : in other words, they saw the Lord Jesus, and their souls were filled with love, confidence, and trust in God. Without such a view of him, they would never have been able to present to their fellow-men

such an exhibition of divine truth as they often made, and had never exhibited such lives of conformity to God, such zeal for his cause, and for the glory of his grace, as authorized the great apostle to say, "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." Without this, they would only have seen through a glass darkly, but then they beheld their Saviour face to face.

Such a view of the character of God gives us the fullest confidence in the divine promises. We have seen that the natural and the moral world are under the dominion of Christ; we have witnessed his love and faithfulness to his people; and, thus, we can confide that nothing can or will prevent his performing all his purposes of mercy and love.

As a further illustration of the present sentiment, we may doubt whether any person ever does have the idea of God, without some corporeal image in his mind. We necessarily affix some material properties to a spiritual being, to assist our own conceptions. And this we are warranted in doing, by the example of the inspired writers, who constantly speak of God as possessing human faculties and members. And this is done, for the reason already mentioned, to assist our conceptions of the divine character, at the same time that they declare that God is a spirit. Thus when we find that he has assumed our nature, in the person of Christ, we are, in a sense, let into the view of heaven.

beholding God in his glory. Instead of wandering in the benighted regions of fancy or conjecture, we behold a God whom we can know, whom we can serve and love.

4. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ exceedingly elevates and exalts our holy religion. This thought I shall not pursue far, in this place, as it may be resumed, in a different form. At the head of Christianity, that religion which brings us to a knowledge of God, which points out all our duties to him and our fellow-men, which is our only support under the severe trials of life, and our only hope for the time to come, is CHRIST. He is its author, its foundation, and its end. He is the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. In proportion, then, to the importance, the properties, the dignity, of his character, must be the worth of that religion which came from him. When we see its author to be both Lord and Christ, him that is worshipped by all the angels round the throne, whom the winds and seas obey, who controuls disease and holds life and death in his hands, who will reign over all the redeemed forever and ever; who shall not reverence his holy gospel, trembling at its terrors, hoping in the greatness of its grace, rejoicing in the security of its promises?

SERMON X.

JOHN I. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, &c.

WE now proceed to consider, briefly, some of the consequences which result, unavoidably, from a denial of the divinity of the Saviour. This part of the subject could, easily, and perhaps profitably, be extended to a considerable length. But it is necessary for us to be as concise as may be. A few things will be noticed.

1. It is obvious to remark that such a sentiment brings down, exceedingly, the character of Christ. Whatever he may be supposed to be, whether a man, or an angel, or one greater than an angel, or the highest of all beings created or derived from God, he is infinitely below the divine being. In either of these characters, he ceases to be self-existent, to be eternal, or almighty, he ceases to be a proper object of worship, he is no longer able to pardon or save a sinner. Indeed, it can make no essential difference what character you ascribe to him, if he be not truly God. In either case he can possess nothing but a delegated authority, none but a derived power. Whether in

heaven or in earth, he is not essentially different, in his nature, from Gabriel, or from Moses and Elijah. You have taken him from the throne, where Stephen saw him and worshipped him with his dying breath, and placed him in the rank of created beings, creatures of yesterday.

When Mary, the faithful disciple, went to the sepulchre to find the body of her Saviour, she looked in and saw two angels where the body of Jesus had been lying, but saw no man. The angels said to her, "Woman, why weep'st thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." No wonder she wept. Her Lord, her hope, her all, was gone. *We* also may say, to those who would divest the Lord Jesus of his divinity, *They have taken away my Lord.* As a Saviour, faithful and true, he is gone. We may add, 'we know not where they have laid him,' for they have not provided us, and they cannot provide us, with another. Behold the Lord Jesus, at the bar of Pilate, or suspended on the hill of Calvary, or agonizing for a lost world in the garden of Gethsemane, or sitting on the throne of final judgment, and you look with comparative indifference, if he be not our Lord and our God.

2. The denial of Christ's divinity tends, in a great degree, to diminish the worth of the holy scriptures, and to destroy our confidence in their perfection and divine authority. It

will hardly be denied, by any considerate person who has attended to this subject, that an impartial stranger, who never saw the Bible, and never heard of this question, if brought to read the sacred volume with attention, would be convinced that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is there clearly taught. All unlearned readers, and all who had not their opinions and prejudices on this subject previously fixed, would perceive this doctrine fully and abundantly inculcated in the word of God. This is the more evident from the fact that all who oppose the doctrine always resort to criticism, to laboured explanation, and minute construction, to maintain their sentiment.

All who oppose the doctrine of the Trinity, so far as I know, attempt to alter the common reading of the Bible. The first objection, usually, is to the translation. That our version does not correspond with the original. This argument, however, soon fails, as it is well known that our translation is uncommonly correct, and the meaning of the original can be easily ascertained.

Driven from this ground, they make a bolder advance, and assert that the sacred text is corrupted, that we do not have it in its original purity, as written by the inspired prophets and apostles. They affirm that various passages have been added, and ought now to be expunged from the sacred volume. That, in some instances, words and sentences are omitted,

and ought now to be inserted, to render the text correct.—Some Unitarians go still further, and contend that a part only of the sacred volume is to be considered as of divine authority. That a portion of it is the word of God, as spoken by him, and much of the residue is to be viewed, merely, as correct history. And that many of the remarks and opinions of the inspired writers are to be estimated as human authority, and not as the testimony of God.—Others hold that the New Testament is to be considered as containing the christian system; while the Old Testament is, principally, limited to the Jewish dispensation, and is not, to us, a standard of divine truth.

While I pass over these absurd and corrupt opinions, I mean not to admit that they cannot, any and all of them, be fully answered; and shown, upon the true principles of argument and sound criticism, to be untrue. It is easy to prove, by the most conclusive reasoning, that the whole of the Bible is the word of God, and is now of divine authority to us and to all men. And it has been before shown, in these discourses, that the watchful providence of God has preserved his word from mutilation and change.

These errors and practices have now been noticed to show the tendency and effect of the denial of a divine Saviour. We need not wonder that those who get into this course are carried to such lengths. When a person once

permits himself to take liberties with the scriptures, and to make alterations to accommodate them to his own views, we may well expect that his conscience will be seared, and, as his heart will constantly meet with unwelcome truths, he will find no place to stop. He takes the volume of God, which the Lord Jesus died to purchase from heaven, and *strikes out*, one part after another, till little, *little* is left.

But in the most moderate state of this opinion, it is easy to perceive how one's reverence for the scriptures, and confidence in their divine authority, must be nearly destroyed. If a doctrine of so much importance in the christian system; as that of the essential character of Christ, cannot be ascertained but by the aid of learned criticism, and various deviations from the natural import of gospel truths, who can trust in any of its testimonies; what evidence can we have that any other doctrine is made more plain; and who can believe that **THIS VOLUME** proceeded from the holy wisdom and goodness of God? The scriptures were given for the purpose of making lost sinners wise unto salvation. Of these, how small a portion are persons of critical learning, sufficient to understand the various reasoning usually resorted to by those who disown the sacred Trinity! The scriptures might as well have been kept forever in their original languages, and never have been translated into

the vernacular tongues of christian nations. If such is the character of the holy scriptures, the Bible must be viewed as a volume of uncertain mystery, the distressed sinner, alarmed at the thought of his transgression against God, would not venture to go to it for relief, and the humble soul could no more say, "O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day." If the scriptures are the word of God, they are perfect; if they are not, they are unworthy to guide the faith, or fix the hope of an immortal creature, going into eternity. You may as well give up the word of God, entirely, calling it a cunningly devised fable, as to give it a character of lawless uncertainty, consisting of doctrines and precepts which no one can ascertain.

3. A denial of the divinity of Christ leads to almost every erroneous opinion respecting religion. This naturally follows from what has just been observed in regard to the authority of the scriptures. If our confidence in that sacred testimony is lost, nothing remains to preserve us from the multitude of errors to which an unholy heart is inclined, and to which an ungodly world affords innumerable temptations. Take away that standard of truth, and there is no error to which we are not exposed.

To mention some of the errors to which this sentiment leads, it may be observed that a denial of the Deity of Christ, as we have already seen, sets aside his atonement. An atonement

for sin, we have shown, cannot be made but by a divine person. And, without such an atonement, I see not how any one, that knows his own guilt and corruption, and the holy strictness of the divine law, can hope to obtain salvation.

The same sentiment also leads to the doctrine of universal salvation. If no atonement for sin be necessary, if God can pardon sinners of his mere goodness, and if his goodness is infinite, why shall not every sinner receive pardon and eternal life?—This error naturally follows the sentiment we have now in view, in another way. If a created being can be the Saviour of sinners, if a man or an angel can perform this work, so as to save countless millions from hell, in whatever manner it be done, their sins cannot be very great, and they must be easily overlooked. Of course, it is to be presumed that none will be made miserable forever.

With these errors, the doctrine of total depravity, and that of sovereign grace, so much inculcated in the scriptures, fall at once. If a created Saviour be sufficient, if no atonement for sin be necessary, it can hardly be supposed that the heart is totally sinful, that the carnal mind is enmity against God; or that the sovereign grace of God is necessary to the salvation of a sinner.—Other erroneous sentiments, naturally flowing from a rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity, might easily be added, were it

necessary. We would only subjoin, in this place, that all these opinions are very commonly held by such as disown the divinity of our Lord.

4. The Unitarian sentiment sets aside the special work of the Holy Spirit. All who deny the divinity of the Son do the same by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit, as spoken of in the scriptures, they hold to be merely a power, or an operation, of God. Thus the appropriate work of the divine Sanctifier, in the salvation of sinners, is set aside. The doctrine of Regeneration falls. The divine operations of the Spirit of God, in his striving with sinners, in renewing and building up his people, in working in them to will and to do the works of righteousness, in preparing and ripening them for heavenly glory, seem to be no part of the faith of the great salvation. We thus find that, where these sentiments prevail, those who embrace them do not usually believe in revivals of religion, by the operations of the Holy Spirit, they do not look and pray for them, and, what is still more painful, it is seldom that they have them.

5. The sentiment now in view is eminently calculated to lead a sinner into fatal security, and quiet him in his sins. If a created Saviour can take away sin, it can be no great evil, nothing about which we need have any great alarm, and nothing which can expose one to great danger in the world to come. If God

pardons sin without an atonement, it must be easily done ; and, if repentance be required, the procrastinating, sin-serving, transgressor is ever saying to himself, ‘ That can be done at any time,’ and he is ever saying to his conscience, ‘ Peace and safety.’

The practical danger, and immoral tendency of these sentiments follow of course, and the hardened sinner, forgetting that God is angry with the wicked every day, and that no unclean thing shall ever enter into his holy kingdom, goes on in the service of his corruptions, saying, “ I shall have peace, though I walk in the ‘imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness ‘to thirst.’”

6. When a divine Saviour is taken from the gospel system, there seems to be nothing remaining on which the anxious mind can rest. This error, as we have seen, prepares the way for others, to an indefinite extent. The christian scheme loses its consistency, its harmony, its power, and the anxious enquirer finds nothing to satisfy his heart, his conscience, or his understanding. Thus, it has always been the fact, that no uniformity of sentiment has existed among those that deny the Saviour’s divinity. Though they unite in saying that he is not God, they never agree in what he is. Some esteem him a higher, and some a lower order, among created beings, with almost every intermediate grade that can be conceived. And it is not ordinarily the case that the opinions of

the same person remain stationary. Those who entertain such sentiments usually advance from step to step, most commonly, placing the Lord that bought them, and his holy word, lower and lower, till they are, unexpectedly, called to his bar, *to see and know what he is.*

All this is to be expected. For such as can shut their eyes against such testimonies of God, as those that declare Christ to be a divine person, may well be supposed liable to fall into any error whatever. And it is well known that error, of every degree, is always congenial to the affections of a corrupt and sinful heart.

We may also conclude, with safety, that a righteous God will send a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, upon those who thus reject his Son, and seek to despoil him of his glory. For thus he has declared. 2 Thess. II. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lye; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." They believed not the truth because they had pleasure in unrighteousness.

7. The sentiment now in view exceedingly debases and degrades the religion of the gospel. This religion is Christ's, this gospel is his, and its worth depends, in a great degree, on his individual character. Do we see in the author of this system of precept and duty, of promise and threatening, of reward and punishment, merely a man, a man of the greatest

wisdom and goodness; or a created person greater than any that has been made, yet began to exist but a little time since, comparatively, and, like us, dependent for the continuance of his being on the gracious keeping of his Creator? Do we call him our Saviour, and do we present all our religious worship through one we call Jesus Christ our Lord, who, like Moses and Paul, wrought miracles by the assistance and power of God, who spake divine truth as he instructed him, and who, of himself, is unable to perform what we have been wont to call "exceeding great and precious promises"? Who is this Rock on which the Church is built, where the weary fainting believer hopes to rest, when the storms of licentiousness and error overspread the world?—Is it a Prophet, is it one of our corrupted race, is it one that has seen but a moment of eternity, that can behold but a speck in the great designs of providence, that may have had but a glimpse of the unfathomable counsels of Jehovah? Is this he at whose birth the angelic host awaked their highest notes of praise, at whose death the earth trembled, the sun withdrew its light, and the heavenly throng were silent with unutterable amazement?—No; that was another; that was the earth's author, and heaven's eternal king.—My brethren, I cannot proceed; too painful is the theme. A contemplation of the consequences, of the long list of errors and evils, that necessarily follow a denial of the

divine character of Christ, looking at the eternal ruin brought upon immortal sinners, and the dishonour cast upon the Lord of glory: especially, when we perceive the Saviour despoiled of the glories of his mediatorial work, as well as of his essential character; and when we contemplate that religion, which we have supposed to be the glory of immortal creatures, and the highest manifestation of the perfections of God, sinking into a system of cold morality, or frozen philosophy, it is too much to be borne.—My dear hearers, I stand not in this place, as a teacher of divine truth, as one of your fellow-sinners called to intreat you to be reconciled to God, in the name of a Master who is not divine. I proclaim not the threatenings of eternal justice, I declare not the promises of heavenly grace, but by the command of HIM “who openeth and no man shutteth, who shutteth and no man openeth.”

IMPROVEMENT.

1. IN the review of this whole subject, we are naturally led to reflect on the excellency and fulness of divine truth. Those of us who have heard, attentively, the most or all of these discourses, have felt, I presume, a degree of surprize, to find such a great variety, and perfect fulness, of testimony, to the divine character of Christ. I have, certainly, felt this, myself. In looking over the proofs which ob-

viously arise, we find them accumulating upon us in such a manner, that it is much more difficult to satisfy ourselves in the selection, than to find a sufficiency to establish the truth. As there can be no more important doctrine in the christian system than that of the Saviour's divinity, we may well be persuaded that it would be made positive and plain. And such, by the divine favour, we find it to be. The Holy Spirit has not left us to grope in uncertainty, but has written the vision and made it plain, that he may run that readeth it. On this subject, also, the scriptures seem to have cleared the ground, so that the objections and arguments urged against the doctrine are easily obviated, and appear, on examination, lighter than we should be led to expect.

These general observations apply to all the essential doctrines of the gospel. God has made known his truth, he has presented it clearly before us, that we may learn the way of righteousness, that our souls may live. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear 'the words of this prophecy, for the time is at 'hand."

2. Our subject suggests the true cause of the many errors that prevail in the christian world respecting Christ and his salvation. It is the blindness of the human heart, and the love of sin. The Lord Jesus is denied, many would despoil him of his essential glory, because he is the enemy of all sin. It is not for

want of evidence and proof of his supreme divinity, for this, as we have seen, appears to be complete. It has been shown how a denial of this doctrine tends directly to diminish the evil of iniquity, to lessen the danger that awaits the ungodly, to soothe a sinner to a quietude in sin, and lead him to rest at ease in Zion. These are motives sufficient to induce multitudes to resist the clearest testimonies of divine truth.

Why did not those who saw Christ while on earth, who beheld his miracles and witnessed his holy life, and heard him speak as never man spake, become his followers and friends? It was because he required them to deny ungodliness, to take up their cross, and follow him. This was the reason, and this was all.

Error, of every kind, relaxes the obligations to godliness, and diminishes the danger of sin. It is, therefore, readily seized by a corrupt heart, by an unholy life, by an ungodly world, as a shelter from the holy wrath of a righteous God.—When Paul preached Christ and his gospel, with great plainness and solemnity, “some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.” Some believed not, because of the blindness of their hearts.—The unbelieving Jews demanded of Christ who he was. He replied, “I have told you, and ye believe not.” Where the gospel of Christ has been known, the effect has always been the same as is declared to the prophet Daniel.

“ Many shall be purified, and made white, and ‘tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly : and ‘none of the wicked shall understand ; but ‘the wise shall understand.” These things will not defeat the counsels of grace, nor frustrate the holy designs of Christ the Saviour. “ For ‘what if some did not believe ? shall their un- ‘belief make the faith of God without effect ? ‘God forbid.”

3. How certain, and how terrible must be the final destruction of all the enemies of Christ. Those who do not believe in him, in gospel lands, where the word of his truth is known, do thus, because they like not his holiness and his righteous justice. They are not willing to acknowledge him as their Lord and their God. Of all such, Christ says in the parable, “ But those mine enemies, which ‘would not that I should reign over them, ‘bring hither and slay them before me.” Such characters will be particularly in view at the second coming of our Lord. “ When the Lord ‘Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his ‘mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance ‘on them that know not God, and that obey not ‘the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who ‘shall be punished with everlasting destruction ‘from the presence of the Lord, and from the ‘glory of his power ; when he shall come to be ‘glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all ‘them that believe.”—The gospel of Christ requires all to love, to worship, to obey him, as

their Lord. Those, who do not comply with these requirements, do not obey his gospel, and are exposed to these denunciations of the wrath and vengeance of God.

It is said by the apostle Peter, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" We have seen that the denial of Christ proceeds from the corruptions of an unholy heart. And it is also found, when this dangerous sentiment is once admitted, when a helpless dependent sinner has once dared to despoil Christ of his divine glory, he usually advances in his errors and blindness, denying more and more of Christ and his gospel, and becoming more calloused in guilt, till his probation is closed, and he enters upon an unchanging eternity.—I believe it to be a most solemn truth, that few, very few, who give themselves up to disclaim the essential character of their Saviour, are ever reclaimed from their error, or brought to true repentance.

We are assured that, in the latter days, errorists of this kind shall arise. "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

The Lord Jesus, who is denied by the ungodly and unbelieving, is himself to be the Judge of all. All who live in impenitence, without

God in the world, neglecting the calls and disregarding the holy precepts of the gospel, are virtually denying Christ the Saviour. As is said in the Epistle to Titus; "They profess 'that they know God; but in works they deny 'him.'" All such, stupid and secure in sin, putting off the day of serving their Lord, must be soon brought before him, when his eyes shall be as a flame of fire. He is no longer a compassionate inviting Saviour, he is an inexorable Judge, who will appoint for all their portion for eternity. All the impenitent are now confirmed in their iniquity, their opposition to Christ will continue forever, and forever justify the execution of a Saviour's wrath. The sufferings of the wicked in the future world will never bring them to repentance, but will only increase their opposition to the holy Saviour. Thus he will subject them to the execution of his wrath, forever and ever.

4. Glorious and perfect is the security of the humble believer, and of the Church of the Lord Jesus. The friends of Christ rest upon their Lord, hoping in his mercy, trusting in his power and grace. They will not be deceived. Their Saviour is the mighty God, heaven is his throne, the earth is his footstool, he has purposed to redeem his people, and he cannot change. He has given them great and precious promises, and all his truth is pledged for their performance. He knows the weakness and imperfections of his people; he is

acquainted with their temptations, their darkness, and discouragements; he is a witness of all their struggles, their laborious efforts against sin and the snares of an ungodly world, and says, "My grace shall be sufficient for you." He well knows the anxieties and fears of his people, and tells them, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The presence of the divine Emmanuel fills the universe, wherever his people may be, there is their Lord, to enlighten, to guide them to life and endless glory.

On this almighty Saviour rests the Church. He is "a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." Long has this little flock been in affliction and suffering, long has it sojourned in the wilderness; mysterious have been the appointments of Heaven concerning it: but its glorious Watchman has never slumbered nor slept. Its Lord and its Saviour is on the throne, the reins of government are in his own hands, he suffers his cause to labour and suffer as his own perfect wisdom shall direct, that, in the end, it may come out of the furnace purified like gold. The powers of error and wickedness shall go as far as he may permit, and no farther. And these temporary successes of evil will prepare the way for the more glorious triumphs of his grace, and the more perfect rejoicing of his people. "If Christ be for us, who can be against us?"

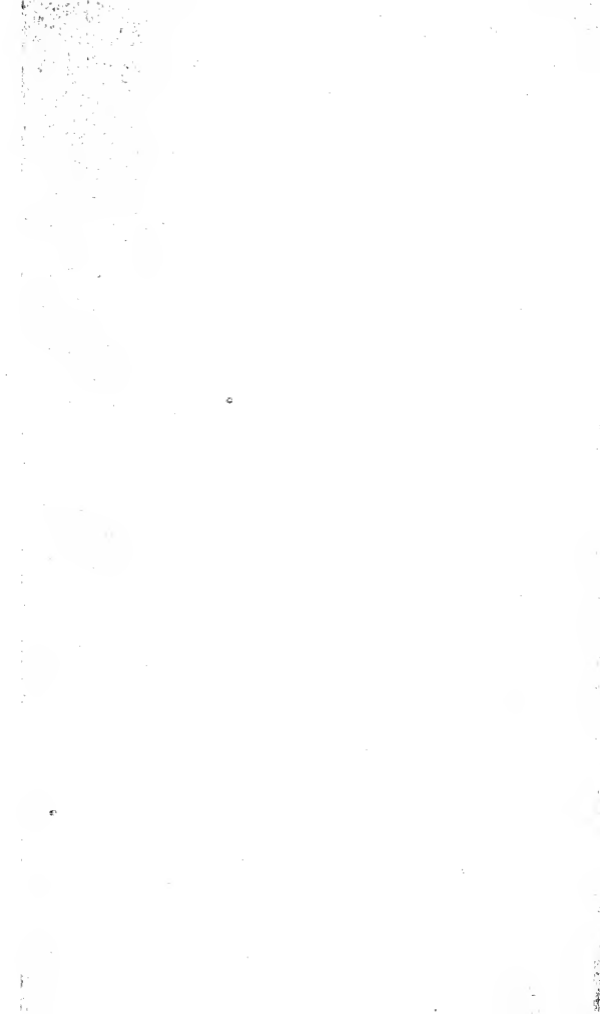
5. How perfect and glorious is the exaltation of Christ. His enemies have long la-

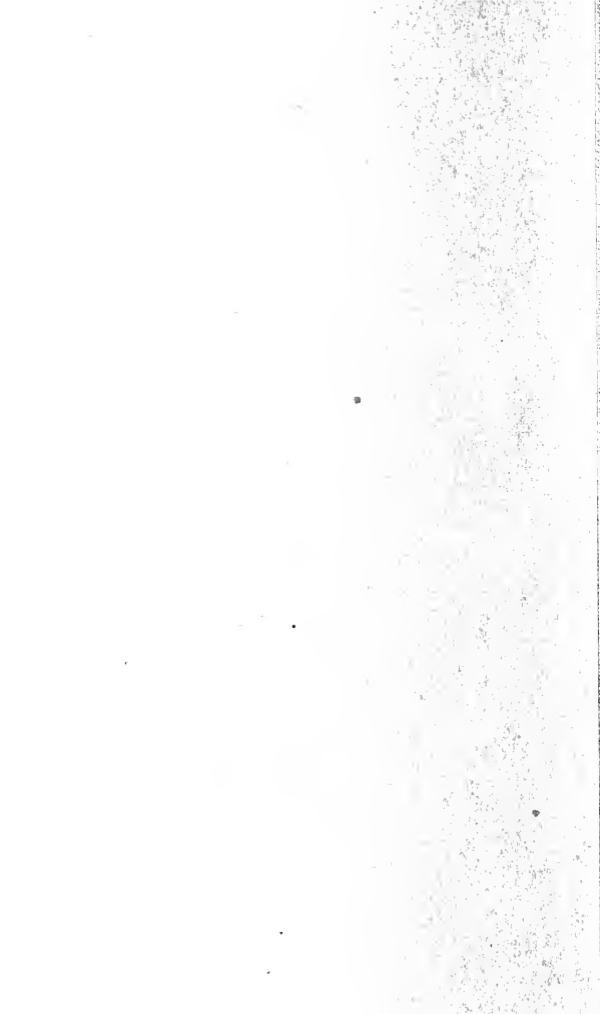
laboured to take from him his crown, to deprive him of his divine glory, but they have laboured in vain. Fear not, O believer, your Lord and Saviour is secure. He is **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and he will sit forever on the throne of the heavens. He holds the keys of hell and of death: these will rage as far as he may see fit to permit, but, himself, the Eternity of Israel, is infinitely beyond their power. Your faith, my hearers, in the divine perfections of your Saviour, stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the eternal truth of heaven, and will never be shaken.

“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away ‘the sins of the world.’” Long has he been rejected and set at nought by a world whom he died to save. Soon will he rise from his seat and ride forth in his glory. Hitherto has he kept his people, a little flock, like a tender lamb, in the arms of his love. From the tempest and the storm, he has been its shelter and defence: from every enemy, its covert and hiding-place.

Soon will his chariot of salvation ride over the earth, gathering countless millions to his fold, while all his incorrigible enemies will be trampled under his feet. The day of the Church’s prosperity, the period of the Redeemer’s triumphs on earth, is drawing nigh. A nation will be born in a day;—the numberless tribes of Adam will crowd his temple-gate with supplications and praise. A few ages

will roll away, and his house will be full. Every mansion prepared on high is occupied, every note in the song of Redemption is struck: —the sufferer of Gethsemane, the prisoner of Gabbatha, the criminal of Calvary sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. Heaven is irradiated with the beams of his glory. The song of eternity is begun. UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER; TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.





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