

SCC#12,552

THREE LETTERS,

FROM

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS;

IN WHICH THE DOCTRINE OF THE

TRINITY,

IS BEAUTIFULLY HANDLED; AND A VARIETY
OF OTHER SUBJECTS DWELT ON.

Published from an European Author by

ELIJAH CRAIG.



"And this is Life Eternal, that they might know the only true
GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast sent."
JOHN, 16. 3d v.

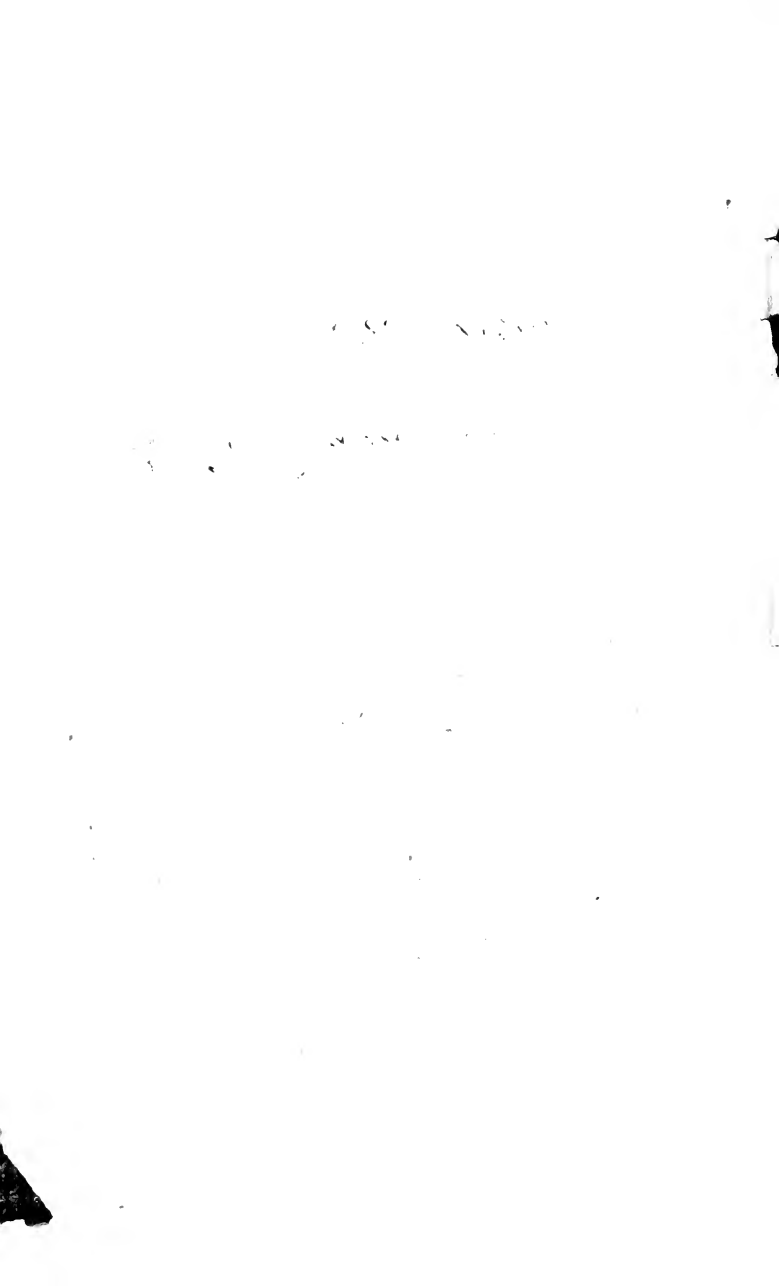


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PREFACE.

FROM a real belief that the following sheets will be an advantage to thousands at this crisis, I have directed 1000 copies to be printed; and although they will cost between forty & fifty pounds (including the paper) yet I believe so soon as the thinking part of the people can become acquainted with them, I shall be reimbursed. I can heartily recommend them to the perusal of all those who have been long labouring to content themselves on deistical sentiments; and those especially, who have been wavering between deism and the Christian Religion. I can heartily recommend them also, to all *real* Christians, and the teachers of the Christian Religion in particular,

as there are none of them, in my opinion, but would profit by the reading them ; and that it will grace the library of the greatest Christian in the state, and be a companion to his end. I am interested in the sale, but believe I should speak the same thing was I not.

The publication contains three out of sixteen letters, wrote on different subjects.—Some references will be seen in reading the following pages, to former letters, but not so as to injure the sense—and as I have avoided in a great measure, harangueing on the nature of the Trinity and Deity, for certain reasons, I have thought proper to make this publication, & to annex the recantation of the Baltimore Deist.

E. C.

L E T T E R I.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

DEAR ONESIMUS,

YOUR kind favor came safe to my hand : and I have now to inform you, that according to my promise I waited on my dying friend, on the day I had fixed.—He is exceedingly weak ; the clay-tabernacle is fast mouldering down to its primitive earth. “Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,” is among the first lessons taught our first parents immediately after their fatal revolt from their gracious sovereign ; and through all succeeding ages death hath passed upon all their natural offspring because they all, by representation, and in their own persons have sinned.—*Superbus* is quite sensible that in a few days he must sleep in the dust, from whence he shall not return, until the Heavens be no more.—O ! may he sleep in Jesus. O ! may that cold and silent grave prove a bed of rest to his wearied, and emaciated body. May his precious and immortal soul be carried by the Angels into the celestial paradise, and enrolled among the number of the spirits of just men made perfect.—After insisting a little on the nature and prevalence of his disorder, and the impossibility of his holding out much longer, considering the debilitated state of his frame, and rapid growth of the disease ; he addressed me after the following manner :

“ My dear *Philemon*, you have removed all my doubts ; and
“ as an instrument in the hand of a kind and gracious providence,
“ have poured day-light into my darkened and benighted mind,
“ respecting this important, and self-interesting question, how
“ a man is to be justified in the sight of an infinitely holy and
“ just God ; and in the issue obtain the end of his faith, the
“ salvation of his soul.—I cheerfully acquiesce in, and cordially
“ embrace this gracious and benign device of Heaven,
“ in bringing many sons and daughters to glory by the propitiatory
“ and vicarious obedience of the Captain of our salvation.
“ My heart’s desire and prayer to God is, that my sins
“ may be pardoned, my person and services accepted upon the
“ sole footing of the sinless and perfect obedience, and most ex-

“quisite sufferings of the one Mediator.—“ God forbid that
 “ I should glory in any thing else, save in the cross of our Lord
 “ Jesus Christ.” My sole confidence is in “ Jehovah my righte-
 “ ousness and my strength.” Since I have seen the glory of
 “ his person, and the perfection of his atonement, “ the shadow
 “ of death is turned into the morning.” I now no longer view
 “ the last enemy armed in all his horror ; nor the grave, that
 “ irksome dreary place, as I once did. I can triumphantly sing,
 “ O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory.”
 “ I know that my redeemer liveth :” And that he shall ran-
 “ som me from the power of the grave, and will redeem me
 “ from death.

“ Ever since the commencement of our acquaintance, you
 “ have expressed a more than ordinary concern about the eter-
 “ nal interests of my soul ; you have followed me with your sa-
 “ lutory instructions, and friendly advice, almost to the very
 “ brink of the grave.—I hope, while this fluttering soul con-
 “ tinues in this clay-tabernacle you will not supercede your
 “ constant attendance, nor remit your usual diligence in instruct-
 “ ing, comforting, and strengthening my mind in the good ways
 “ of God.—There is yet one article. concerning which I
 “ would wish for further information ; I mean Christ’s *supreme*
 “ Deity. You know, that you have all along rather taken this
 “ for granted than directly proven it. This I desire, not that I
 “ am in any hesitation about the doctrine ; but I wish to have
 “ some objections which I have heard raised against it, answer-
 “ ed ; and the truth of it from scripture elucidated : and if my
 “ strength permit, I will fairly propose the objections, and I
 “ hope you will be as candid and ingenious, as to give a fair
 “ and an impartial solution.”

My dear friend, you may believe me, that I would think it my
 honor as well as my duty, to be the happy instrument of contri-
 buting in the least degree to the confirmation of your faith and
 belief in this, or any other article of our holy religion : and par-
 ticularly such as have an immediate connexion with, and a par-
 ticular influence in the eternal salvation of our souls.

“ *Philemon*, I have often heard it said that the doctrine of
 “ Christ’s supreme deity, is rather of the speculative than practi-
 “ cal kind : And that it is so exceedingly difficult and obscure,
 “ that the generality of men cannot understand the terms in
 “ which it is expressed ; and therefore, that it would be far bet-
 “ ter not to intermeddle in it, nor insist upon it ; and indeed to
 “ acknowledge the truth, this in a great measure hindered me
 “ from pursuing this subject with that carefulness and diligence

which I should have done, and the nature of the subject required."

Superbus, I apprehend none will look upon this article of our faith to be a matter of little or no consequence, nor applaud those wise and prudent men, who upon all occasions industriously shift the theme, but such, who are indifferent about vital religion and real godliness, in any point of view; And should the unmeaning cavils of persons of such a stamp deter you, or any one from making a scriptural inquiry into the constitution of the Mediator, the Saviour, "by whose stripes we are healed;" and thro' whose suffering we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins? But granting this article was a point purely speculative, if it be a divine truth, and capable of being proven from the holy Scriptures, you, and every one else must agree with me in this, that it ought to be believed, and if God requires our assent even to a merely speculative doctrine, he has reason for it; and in this case, how dare any be so bold and presumptuous as contradict him.—But besides this, the assertion is not true; the supreme deity of Christ is by no means a matter of mere theory, but in a great measure practical. Did the eternal Son of God assume human nature with a view to deliver from the guilt, and cleanse from the pollution of sin; and doth not the consideration of this tend to practice? Doth it not shew clearly as in a glass, the exceeding evil and malignity of sin, which made such a propitiation necessary? This it doth beyond any other argument whatever. If ever you would wish to obtain a view of sin in all its enormity and baseness, you must repair to Mount Calvary, and there behold the Son of God suffering, bleeding, and dying for its expiation? And if ever we would raise in our own souls, or infuse into the minds of our fellow-sinners, a just indignation against this vile and abominable thing, we must look to Jesus who endured the cross, and despised the shame, to put an end to sin, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.—Viewing sin in this glass, and through this medium, will, you may credit me, be infinitely more efficacious for the destruction of sin in our souls, than all the thunders from Sinai's flaming mount; or the collected examples from those who are reckoned virtuous heathens: yea, than from all the examples of the most pious and holy men recorded in the divine oracles. What is the reason that iniquity of every kind is rearing up its accursed forehead without a blush? This is one great and principal reason, the denial of Christ's divinity, and of consequence, his propitiatory and vicarious sufferings: And hence the main and most efficacious argument for all manner of holiness of life and conversation, is lost in the rubbish of doctrines little superior, and of as little

value to answer the purpose of universal holiness, as heathen morality. But,

That the doctrine of Christ's supreme deity is not purely matter of theory, but in a great measure practical will appear, and in connection with what was just now observed; that if there was such a malignity in sin that nothing else, and nothing less, than the sufferings of Christ could expiate; it teaches us also at the same time, that if we do not lay hold on this redemption we are lost for ever, because it is impossible there should be any greater. How hazardous a venture must they run, who depreciate his glorious dignity, and thus undermine as far as possibly they can that foundation which God hath laid in Zion, for sinners to build on for eternal salvation? How can they be secure of that life and immortality he hath brought to light by the gospel, while they renounce that faith which, according to that gospel is necessary to it? And how dismal and irretrievable must their disappointment be at the last, when they come to appear before his awful and dreadful tribunal, if after all, Christ should prove to be the most High God, and should reject them for rejecting him under that character now, contrary to his plain revelation of it, and of its vast importance to ourselves? Can it be a matter of pure theory, how we are to be saved? Whether by the infinite dignity and efficacy of the surety, or by the "filthy rags" of our own righteousness.—Let us suppose for once, that those who believe the divinity of Jesus expected more from him, and his righteousness than what he will really answer; yet still they have as much from him as they who expected less than they did. And they have moreover the same personal righteousness to trust in, as well as others have. And undoubtedly it will be no blemish in their righteousness, nor any bar to its acceptance, that it is overlaid with so much humility, as to make them own it to be wholly of God, and utterly renounce all trust and confidence in it. But if it should prove at the great day of accounts, that salvation becomes ours no otherwise than through the infinitely perfect righteousness of the Saviour God and man; what a dangerous case must they be in, who have never received or trusted in him as such, and will never have the benefit of his atonement and satisfaction to answer for them.—I think if men are not entirely lost to all sense of religion, and perfectly indifferent with regard to the present and future interest of their precious and immortal souls, they can never appear as advocates for the non-importance of this point, or reckon it a matter of mere indifference whether Christ the Mediator appear to them in the character of the *true God*, or only a creature.

But further, will it not appear that this point is by no means a matter of mere theory, when we take into the account the religious worship that is paid to Christ. It is to be expected that the generality of christians are not so far lost to all sense of religion as to restrain prayer before God. To such who are habitually guilty of a neglect of this part of religious worship, it will be a matter of no great moment, whether they consider the Mediator to be God equal with the Eternal Father, or a creature formed by his Almighty hand. I say then if the Son, (and I may add here) the Holy Ghost be God; ought they not to be honored, adored, prayed to, and glorified as such? If they be not God, ought they to be honored, adored, prayed to, and glorified as such? if they be not, the believers of this doctrine are in the strict sense of the word idolators, because they worship an object which is not by nature God. Again, if they be God, the opposers of this system, and oppugners of this doctrine are blasphemers. Nay all the *Arians*, and those of the *Socinians*, who pay divine honors to Christ (for they are divided on that point) are in a most miserable dilemma upon this subject. If Christ the Mediator be God, they are guilty of blasphemy for denying his divinity. If he be not God, they are idolators for worshipping a creature: And if the true worship of God, and idolatry, recognizing him on the one hand, and blaspheming on the other, be not practical points, I freely acknowledge I know not what are. But I shall explain myself more fully to you on this head in its proper place.

I shall just add here, that that can be no purely speculative point in which our faith is so much concerned. Is it a matter of no moment whether our faith be fixed on the Saviour as "the true God, and eternal life," or only as a *made God*, or a *mere creature*? I maintain that without a true faith, there can be no true christian practice. The adversaries of Christ's supreme deity value themselves upon their high encomiums of morality, or a good life; as if none but they had any regard to it. But alas! do they not inculcate christian practice, while they deny the christian faith? What to secure the superstructure, by undermining, and digging up the foundation! Doth it not appear evidently throughout the whole of the New Testament, that a right faith is as necessary to salvation, as a right practice? Nay, that without the former, there cannot be the latter. Or, (if you please) in a large sense, practice includes faith: And I presume, if we carefully consult the same Scriptures of truth, we will find that the best of our morality is unavailing without the merits of Jesus Christ; and that the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus cannot be of any service to us, unless we have a true faith in

him ; and that we cannot have a true faith in him, unless we believe him to be the *true and Eternal God*, as I shall show you afterwards.

As to the other prejudice you mentioned against treating on this subject, viz. that it is exceeding difficult, and even unintelligible, especially to the unlearned and common people.—I have already shewn you, that the doctrine is important, and shall endeavour afterwards to show that it is true ; and certainly that which is important, and capable of being proven to be true, can never be so difficult as to be incapable of being understood. It is very true, that the most learned will never be able to comprehend the mystery ; but even the unlearned, and the common people are capable of apprehending enough to yield the obedience of faith to the article : and indeed the doctrine of the trinity is as intelligible as the doctrine of God's omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, simplicity, and self-existence. Is not the whole nature of God infinitely beyond the grasp of the most enlarged capacity ? And yet we all profess our faith and belief in this ever glorious, and first cause. How sublime and mysterious is the doctrine ! A being which neither made itself, nor was made by any other ; a first cause, without a beginning ; infinite without extension ; in every place, yet circumscribed in no place ; eternally and perpetually existing, without any succession of time ; a present, without past or future ! &c.

“ *Philemon*, I would wish to know what are the particular tenets which the *Socinians* and *Arians* hold.”—It would be a very difficult task *Superbus*, to point out the various antisciptural positions which are scattered here & there in their writings ; and perhaps it would be very unfair to charge the *Socinians* in gross with all the absurd tenets maintained by some of them.—The *Socinians* according to a very eminent writer* maintains a plurality of Gods, (this I will shew you afterwards) they undermine the authority of the holy Scripture. They deny not only the imputation, but the contagion and corruption of original sin ; the satisfaction of Christ ; the eternity of future punishments, nay the certainty of any future punishment at all. They maintain that God is not angry with men for their sins ; and that Jesus Christ did not come into the world to redeem it. They advance human reason above divine revelation ; and affirm that nothing is to be admitted into religion as the object of our belief which exceeds the reach of our understanding. They teach that God is not infinite in his essence, but confined to the Heavens ; that he is not omniscient, but limited in his knowledge ; particularly,

* *Dr. Edward's preservative against Socinianism.*

that he is ignorant of future events. They moreover teach us, that God is mutable, or subject to change ; that he has the same passions that we have ; and finally, that he is material, or made up of bodily parts.—These positions are certainly as absurd as they are impious ; and as contrary to reason, as they are to revelation. As for the *Arians*, they agree with the *Socinians* in degrading the Son of God to the rank of a creature : Although they differ in this, that the former look upon him as the first, & most excellent creature the Almighty formed ; whereas the latter maintain that he never existed prior to his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. *Arians* join hands with *Socinians*, in denying the infinite merit and atonement of Jesus ; & consequently if ever we are saved, we must be our own *Saviours*. They are both unanimous in this, that the death of Christ was neither propitiatory, nor vicarious. *Arians* tell us that the Holy Ghost is the creature of the Son, and subservient to him in the work of the creation : while some of the *Socinians* deny his personality altogether & look upon him only as the power and wisdom of God. *Arians* look upon the Holy Ghost to be a person chief of the heavenly Spirits, prime minister to God & Christ ; and deny that he is to be worshipped, glorified, or prayed to. † They teach us that our Saviour's eternal generation is a mere romance, the contrivance of some idle trifling person who had little else to do, but to invent such incredible & absurd notions.—I may just add here, that it is even shocking to the human mind to consider the impious and abominable practices of the *Arian Bishops*, when that faction was countenanced by the secular power ; especially *Eusebius of Nicomedia*, and *George of Alexandria*. How was that excellent and pious man *Athanasius* calumniated, and persecuted by them : Banished and hunted from place to place ; accused of the most horrid crimes, treason, murder magic, &c. But all these accusations were disproven by such clear and incontestible evidence, that even their malice and power made his innocence & virtue shine the brighter ; particularly, as to the charge of murder the person upon whom it was pretended to have been committed being produced alive in open court. ‡ At that period, and in main-

† See the Athanasian Creed analyzed and refuted.—Also Mr. Charles Leslie on the Socinian controversy. Dial. 4.

‡ Upon the appearance of *Arsenius*, (the person supposed to have been murdered, and whose hand he had cut off) *Athanasius* addressed the court thus : Gentlemen, *Arsenius* you see has both his hands, but where

tenance and defence of that heresy, christian blood was spilt like water, by *Arians*, *Heathens* and *Jews*, acting in conjunction ; Yea, great numbers of all ages, and both sexes, were massacred and butchered by them, even in the churches, and in time of divine service. The Arian persecution against the Orthodox, was as bloody, if not more so, than ever any of the heathen persecutions had been.

“ Can you inform me *Philemon*, of the circumstances of *Arius*’ death ; I have often heard, that he died in an extraordinary manner.”

He did *Superbus*, in such a particular and extraordinary manner that I think without breach of charity, it may be affirmed, that the immediate hand, and just judgment of God, were visible in it ; and that the God to whom vengeance, and the vindication of the true religion belong, did by the death of this man declare his abhorrence of the heresy. It was when he was in the very height of his prosperity & greatness, that he met with his tragical end. *Alexander*, bishop of *Constantinople* received an express order from the emperor, to receive *Arius* into communion ; the bishop absolutely refused to obey the command ; & shutting himself up in the church the night before, prostrated himself at the altar, implored Almighty God to take the matter into his own hand.* The next morning *Arius* going to the church attended by his followers in great pomp and triumph, was upon a necessity of nature forced to turn aside out of his way, where his spirits suddenly failing him, the fate of treacherous *Judas* became his portion, he fell head-long and burst asunder in the midst, and immediately expired. His friends all the while impatiently expected his return ; and staying longer than they thought he should, some went to call him, and *Eusebius* more forward than the rest, reproached his backwardness and neglect both of himself and his friends ; but hearing no answer, they went in and found

where the third hand was cut off, I leave my accusors to discover.— See Dr. Cave’s life of *Athanasius*.

* Dr. Cave gives the form of prayer used on this occasion by the Bishop, which was to the following purpose.— “ If Lord, thou permittest *Arius* to communicate to-morrow, suffer me thy servant to depart, and destroy not the righteous with the wicked. But if thou sparest thy church, as I know thou wilt, have respect to the threatenings of the *Eusebian* party, and give not over thine heritage to ruin and reproach. Take *Arius* out of the way, lest entering into the church, heresy enter in with him ; and hereafter piety and impiety be accounted both alike.” Thus he prayed, and heaven heard his prayer, and signed a warrant for the execution.

him wallowing in his own filth and blood. Nor is it to be wondered (as one remarks †) that he who denied our Saviour as to his divine nature, should not feel a less heavy punishment than he who betrayed him in his human.

“ Can you inform me *Philemon*, of the lineage and pedigree “ of both these heresies ?”

Yes *Superbus*, they may be both easily traced up to their fountain-head and true original.—The *Socinians* had theirs from *Photinus*, as he had it from *Paul of Samoseta*. The heresy of *Arius* as I already told you is indeed different in some respects, altho’ they agree in this, that they deny the Son, or second person of the Trinity to be consubstantial with the Father. *Carpocrates*, *Ebion*, *Cerintbus*, and many more maintained this heresy, prior to any of these above mentioned. And to what sect did these belong? Why, to the most wild, enthusiastical, lewd, and in all respects diabolical sect of the *Gnosticks*, who were the disciples of *Simon Magus*. Therefore to trace the pedigree of these heresies upwards to their original, they pass through *Socinus*, *Photinus*, and *Arius*, to *Paul of Samoseta*; from him to *Ebion*, *Cerintbus*, *Carpocrates*, &c. and so on to *Simon* the forcerer the first broacher, and renowned father of heresy. †

• Permit me now *Superbus*, to propose a few arguments in order to the further establishing of your mind in this important article of our Holy religion.—And the first that I shall mention is taken from that name so often ascribed to Christ in Scripture, the *Son*, the *only begotten Son* of God; and his being thus so called, I would conclude that he is consubstantial, or of the same essence with the Father. That he is the Son, the only, the only begotten Son of God cannot be denied. He that believeth on him, (are the words of our Saviour himself) is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the *only begotten Son of God*. He that believeth not the *Son*, shall not see life. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God*, and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

From these scriptures we are taught this among other things, that this doctrine is not a purely speculative point. Eternal life

† Dr. Trapp’s Sermons on the Trinity.

† Vide Hieron. Zanchius de tribus *Elohim*. Page 2.

* John iii. 18. v. 36. Chap. xx. 31.

is referred to our believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Now, they who believe that his being called the Son, and the only begotten Son of God, because consubstantial with the Father, place their salvation in him as thus co-equal with him in all the essential perfections of deity; and that he in the fulness of time, assumed the human nature, and in that, obeyed, suffered and died; put an end to sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, imputable to all who believe for their justification. *Arians* again, they believe in his name for eternal life, as some super-angelic creature, the first of the handy-works of the Almighty. *Socinians* believe in him for eternal life, only as a *God by office*; and that so far from being eternal, or first created, that he never existed until his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary.—What an immense difference between the faith of these believers! Upon what a different footing must they wear the crown in glory!

That Christ being called the *only begotten Son of God*, proves him to be God co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father in all the essential perfections of deity, from the import and propriety of the phrase itself—and from all those places of Scripture in which the term *only begotten* is applied to him.—Hear his own words on this head. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him,” &c. Now if the term *only begotten Son* doth not imply much more than either the *Socinians* pretend, or will admit; yea, if it doth not imply Godhead in the strictest and highest sense, then the argument urged by our Lord and his Apostles, will be found to be inconclusive and vain; and God by thus giving and sending his Son, shewed more love to him, than to the world. I prove what I have just now advanced thus—if he who is called Christ is by the mere good pleasure of the Father so highly honored, that after a short life of obedience & suffering here on earth, he is made a *God*, receives divine honors, not only from men, but from Angels and Archangels, and universal empire and dominion over all creatures in Heaven and earth granted him. Do you not see *Superbus*, that according to this scheme, that God’s love to Christ rose far superior to his love to the world? To which I may also add, that for the same reason, that Christ’s love to a guilty world in coming to obey, and suffer in their stead doth not appear so very extraordinary, and doth not deserve the magnificent character it bears in Scripture; because, upon the *Socinian* and *Arian* hypothesis, he himself was the greatest gainer. It would have been indeed an act of great and undeserved love to have saved such vile and execrable sinners as we are, by any means becoming God’s infinite wisdom, justice and holiness, and

certainly that love would have commanded the highest admiration, and would have been deserving of our highest praise, in giving up to the death such an excellent creature as *Arians* suppose Christ to be. *If the death of such a creature could have purchased salvation.* But what would that love have been to the love of God in freely giving up to the death such an infinitely great, & glorious person as his beloved and only begotten Son, who is consubstantial with himself. And if Christ had been merely a creature, however excellent, he might have got such glory and advantage to himself, by his humiliation and death, as would have made it infinitely worth his while, for his own interest's sake to be born, suffer and die. He might have been a real gainer by a death from which he was to be raised to such degrees of glory & honor, as are the consequences of it. Therefore whatever encomiums the Scriptures pass on Christ's love to us, yet according to the *Arian* and *Socinian* scheme what he did and suffered was really for his own advantage, he was truly the gainer.—But let us consider Jesus in another point of view, as the true God, because the only begotten Son of God, and so infinitely glorious and blessed in himself, to which nothing can be added; and so he can get nothing by all that he hath done and suffered for us, or by all that we can do in return for his love; no real accession of glory, or advantage can by any means be made to him, who is exalted in himself “above all blessing and praise.” Upon this principle then, and this only, doth God's love to sinners in sending, and Christ's love in coming to do and suffer, appear transcendent and amazing, as it is every where in Scripture said to be. And upon this principle only, will the argument urged by our Lord and his Apostles setting forth the love of both the Father and the Son as non-such, be found conclusive.

Again, that his being the *only begotten Son of God* proves him to be consubstantial, or of the same nature and essence with the Father, will appear from the very import of the phrase itself.—For he alone can be called the *only begotten Son* who is solely & singly the Son of his Father, has no co-partner in the Son ship, no brother in that kind of filiation or Son-ship; and moreover who is a Son by nature, not by adoption, of the substance, and not by the choice, or mere good will of the Father. That this is the plain meaning of *only begotten* is evident of itself, and must be acknowledged by every one. I come then to prove, that Christ cannot be called the only begotten of the Father any otherwise, than by his divine and eternal generation from the Father.

That this title cannot belong to him as man, or a creature however excellent, will appear from these four considerations by which Christ as man is said to be eminently the Son of God;

and it will appear in the sequel, that by them he is not the *only begotten Son of God*.

1. He is eminently the Son of God as he was conceived by the Holy Ghost. But the first man *Adam*, was formed by the power of God without a Father or Mother either; and is therefore expressly called the Son of God.† Now, if Christ be no otherwise the Son of God than by *creation*, it will necessarily follow, that he cannot with propriety be called the only begotten Son of God, seeing he has *Adam* a co-partner in this kind of filiation or Son-ship.

2. He is the Son of God with respect to his extraordinary mission and office. But with regard to this, he is neither begotten, nor only begotten. In this sense he is a Son by grace, not by nature; and has as many brothers, as there were prophets sent with any special mission or mandate.

3. Neither is he the Son, the only begotten Son of God by virtue of his resurrection from the dead; for this reason, all good men who rise from the dead to a blessed & glorious immortality are stiled the Sons of God, as being children of the resurrection.‡ Nor,

Lastly, can he be called the only begotten Son of God upon the account of his being made sole Lord and heir of all things. He could not upon this account be called the Son of God at all, much less, the only begotten Son of God. For this reason, an heir, (as every one knows) is not necessarily the Son of him whose heir he is.

Now *Superbus*, is it not evident that in all the afore-mentioned respects, Christ is not neither can be the only begotten Son of God.—But concerning the two last of which respects, I may observe, that in all those places of Scripture in which the term *only begotten*, is applied to him, such as when the Father is said to have sent his only begotten Son into the world, &c. it evidently carries this in it, that he was his only Son, prior to his manifestation in the flesh; and did not become so by his incarnation, or his being raised from the dead, or constituted heir & Lord of all things.

Again, we find wise *Agur* giving this title to Christ antecedent to his incarnation, and without any respect to his mediatorial character. When speaking of the omnipotence, majesty and incomprehensibility of God, represents his name, and his *Son's* name as equally unsearchable. Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the winds in his fist? Who hath bound up the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, or his

† Luke iii. 38.

‡ Luke xx. 36.

Son's name, if thou canst tell? Doth not this man speak of both their names as alike inexplicable? Which I conceive is true, not of the name of God, and of Christ considered merely as the *Messiah*; but of those ineffable and glorious persons, Father & Son, considered in their divine nature, and original relation to each other.—And it is very observable here, that he speaks of omnipotent works in the creation, preservation, & government of the world, which are common to the Father and Son; but can relate to the Son only as he is a divine person, the same in nature with the Father who made the worlds by him, and by whom all things do consist.

Further, in order to convince us that this title the *Son of God* has a reference to his pre-existent nature, or in other words, to his intrinsic relation to the Father in the Godhead; let us take notice of the account he gives of it himself.† The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. When there were no depths, before the mountains were settled; before the hills was I brought forth, then was I by him as one brought up with him; like a Son in the bosom of a Father.—In this account I apprehend, we will find Christ the personal wisdom of God, speaking of himself in a two fold character; the one pointed out by this phrase, “The Lord possessed me, (or begat me) in the beginning of his ways.” The other, by this “I was set up from everlasting.” He was set up from everlasting, as Mediator and head of the church, to shew that he was then really subsisting with the Father, and therefore was capable of bearing a part in that eternal covenant-transaction. There is therefore a plain difference between his being brought forth, and his being set up; the one respects his peculiar manner of subsistence, and the other his office.

Doth not an inspired prophet in the most explicit terms confirm the same truth?‡ 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, or *from the days of eternity*. Here is plainly intimated a two-fold egress, or going forth of Christ; the one in his incarnation, as mediator; the other in his eternal generation from the Father as his only begotten Son. The expression is the same by which the eternity of God is pointed out, Psal. xc. 2. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

We find the Eternal Father confirming the same truth, in this address to his Son, Psal. ii. 7. Thou art my Son, this day have

† Prov. viii. 22, 23, 24, 25, 30.

‡ Micah, v. 2.

I begotten thee. His generation here is spoken of as a permanent thing, pointing at its Eternity: hence some render the words, and very justly too, "I am this day begetting thee:" holding forth his generation as a permanent thing of which it hath ever been, is, and will be said, "this day have I begotten thee," to denote an eternal, abiding, unbeginning, and never-ending act.

Again, that he is the only begotten Son of God as to be consubstantial with him, will appear from the following Scriptures. John x. 3. I and my Father are one. He is so essentially, and necessarily one with him, that "he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father also." For he is in the Father, and the Father in him.* And moreover he is that Son who is the brightness of his glory, and the express character of his person.† And in John v. 18. he calls God his own *proper* Father, and thereby showed his equality with God, as the Jews rightly understood him. And he is also the Father's own *proper* Son, and the Son of himself.‡ And he is thus denominated to distinguish him from Angels, who are the Sons of God by creation; and believers, who are his Sons by adoption; and also from those who are called his Sons by office, as are sometimes magistrates—He is also called the Son of the living God,§ "and the Son of the Father in truth and love," truly, and really partaking of his nature, and beloved by him.

What do all these, and several other Scriptures of a like strain mean? But that the title the Son of God, and the only begotten Son of God, is not to be taken in an improper, and distantly metaphorical sense; but in as proper and natural a sense as possibly can be, to express the sameness of his nature with the Father, or to denote, that he is such a Son as naturally proceeds from, or is begotten of the Father, in distinction from all others who may be called the Sons of God in the afore-mentioned senses.

To confirm this sense of the words only, and only begotten as applied to our Saviour in the highest signification by the sacred writers, we have the judgment & interpretation of the primitive church. For the three first centuries and prior to the Nicene council, the title of the only begotten, or only Son of God, as applied to our Saviour was by the constant and perpetual use of it by the Catholic Doctors, determined to signify his eternal generation from God the Father. That of *Tertullian* is in substance common to them all, and with one voice affirmed by them all.

* John xiv. 9, 10.

‡ Rom. viii. 3, 32.

† Heb. i. 2, 3.

‡ Math. x. 16.

“ He is the first born, as begotten before all things ; *only* as alone begotten by God, truly and properly.”*

Before I proceed further on this subject, allow me to make these few remarks from what has been said above.

Is it not evident that the article of our Savior's divinity is of such vast importance, that the faith of a christian, yea christianity itself, cannot subsist without it ? That Jesus is the Christ ; that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and that it is necessary to salvation to believe both, all sects and parties who can in any tolerable sense be called christians do expressly acknowledge, and zealously contend. But I presume from what has been advanced that he can be neither the Savior, nor the only begotten Son of God, if he be not God ; I mean God in the strictest sense, and of the same essence and substance with the Father. What then can we think of those who pretend to be the true disciples of Jesus, and yet deny his divinity ?

Again I would observe, that although the distinct manner of the divine substances, and consequently the eternal generation of the Son, and their relations *ad intra* are inconceivable, and infinitely beyond all that we are acquainted with ; yet I presume if there be not eternal intrinsic relations between them, by which they are distinct persons, without regarding their economical actions, *Sabbellianism* is unavoidable. It seems therefore necessary to consider these distinct titles of Father and Son, as names belonging to, and expressive of their original relations to each other. And while these relations, and consequently the generation of the Son, are considered as *absolutely necessary & eternal*, they neither can be proved to be impossible, or inconsistent with the independency and necessary subsistence of the Son, in the self-existent God-head.

It will therefore necessarily follow, the Son exists not by a mere act of the Father's will, as all creatures do ; & therefore his existence is not arbitrary as theirs is—There was no necessity of nature why any of them should have been brought into a state of existence : and that they actually do exist, is entirely owing to the sovereign good will and pleasure of the great Creator: “ For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.” But we read of nothing like this of the existence of the Son. He being *the Son* in the highest signification of the word, his existence cannot but be absolutely necessary. He could not but exist, & that from everlasting to everlasting. He claims this very essential attribute of Deity *I am*, denoting the necessity and eternal permanence and existence of his being. The Father can no more subsist without the Son, than the Son without the

* See Dr. Trapp's Sermon on the Trinity.

Father: the non-subistence of either is changing the Godhead, and making it infinitely different from what it is. But the infinite perfection of the Godhead unavoidably requires the necessary subsistence of the Son, as well as of the Father.

In a word, I think we may see how much of the infinite wisdom, love and goodness, both of the Father and Son is displayed in the work of our redemption; particularly in the preparation and assumption of our human nature.—I have already shown you *Superbus*, that Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and therefore consubstantial with him. But he is also real man, and his manifestation in the flesh was to purchase an eternal redemption for us, by his obedience and sufferings. That he is as truly and really man as he was God, is evident from his being called a man, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the Son, and the offspring of David. The accounts we have of his conception and birth, and of his whole life and death on the cross, in which he appeared, acted, and suffered altogether as man, and in ways peculiar only to himself, irrefragably prove the truth of his manhood. He had a true human body, of the same flesh and blood with the church which he redeemed. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. He had a true human soul; for he as man increased in wisdom, as well as in stature. This could not, without the highest blasphemy be said of his God-head. And his soul we find was subject to the same passions of grief, joy and sorrow as ours are; although without sin. Hence we read of his rejoicing in spirit, of his being grieved in spirit, and of his groaning in the spirit; and that his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death; and that he poured out his soul unto the death, and gave up the Ghost. All these, and such like expressions show that he had a true human soul, as well as body. He was sent to redeem the souls as well as the bodies of men, therefore he must have a soul to be made a sacrifice for our souls. In a word, he is said to be made like unto his brethren; which is spoken with respect to his taking our nature that he might be fit to act therein as a substitute High-priest for us sinful men, and therefore imports that he is as truly a man as any of us are. And on this account, he is frequently called *the Son of man*, as on account of his divine nature he is called the *Son of God*.†

† The *Arians* Super-Angelic Spirit, the first created of all God's handy works, and which supplied the place of Christ's human soul, the Scriptures know nothing of. As the *Socinians* make him all man, the *Arians* rob him of his human nature entirely. Seeing a human soul & body are the constituent parts of human nature.

And from this two fold consideration of Christ, as the Son of God, and the Son of man, we can consistently explain the doctrines and actions of Jesus while here on earth, and the various accounts which the sacred penmen both of the Old and New Testament give of him ; which from any other consideration are entirely inexplicable, e. g. when he is said to be sent ; upheld in the execution of his Mediatorial offices ; that he of himself could do nothing ; that the Father was greater than he ; that he knew not the last day ; that he came to do the Father's will not his own : and that the words which he spake were not his, but the Father's that sent him, &c. Now all these phrases and others of a similar nature may be justly affirmed of Jesus as man, and in his official capacity. But how are we to reconcile what is predicated of him otherwise, without taking into the account at the same time, that he is as truly and really God, as he is as man ? Can a *creature* raise the dead, create all things in Heaven & in earth, support universal nature in its existence ? Can a *creature* be endowed with the divine properties and essential perfections of deity, as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, &c. Can a *creature* authoritatively forgive sin, justify and sanctify sinners, be the object of religious worship, be prayed to, honored, and believed in equally with God the Father ? All these things belong to Jesus ; but how ? As a *creature*, as a *mere man*. No, but as God, and that God who was manifested in the flesh.—I say then *Superbus*, that viewing Christ in this two-fold character, we can easily, and consistently reconcile what is affirmed of him with regard to each of his natures respectively, which otherwise would be impossible.

“ *Pbilemon*, I perfectly coincide with your sentiments on this head. I freely confess that I have been prodigiously puzzled how to reconcile the *seemingly* inconsistent account the Scriptures give of Jesus. When I read his own words “ the Son can do nothing of himself,” I was naturally led out to conclude, that he behoved to be vastly inferior to the Father ; & yet at the same, that he created the worlds, forgave sin, raised the dead, and opened the eyes of the blind ; I could not reconcile these actions with that impotence he at the same ascribed to himself. When I read that he was ignorant of the day of judgment, and yet that he knew all things ; and particularly, that he was to be the judge. These things seemed entirely paradoxical to me. But viewing Jesus as *God* and *man* I can now account for all these different phrases consistently, and to my entire satisfaction. I now behold him not only inferior to the Father, but made a little lower than the Angels ; yet God supreme, “exalted above all blessing & praise.”

“ But before you proceed any further to confirm the doctrine of Christ’s supreme deity, I wish you would solve an objection which I have heard produced against a Trinity of persons in one Godhead, viz—that it implies a contradiction ”

To give you all possible satisfaction on this head, and show you at the same time how groundless this objection of the adversaries to Christ’s divinity is ; let me observe that according to the unanimous language of the sacred Scriptures on this head ; in the unity of the God-head there are three distinct persons, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. “ There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father,” &c. By the term *person* is generally understood, “ a particular manner of subsisting and acting, in an intelligent Being.” Or according to a very learned writer, a *person* is an intelligent agent, having the distinctive characters of *I, Thou, He*, and not divided or distinguished into more intelligent agents capable of the same characters.* By the persons in the God-head, we do not mean three distinct attributes of deity ; this would land us directly into *Sabbellianism*, as when the same man may be at the same time a king, a prophet, and a father. The Scriptures manifestly make a greater distinction between them than this amounts to. Nor on the other hand, we do not mean three distinct substances, minds, or spirits ; for then (each of them being God) it would, according to the ideas which we have annexed to these other words unavoidably follow, that there were three Gods ; a position, not only contrary to Scripture, but to reason and common sense. But positively we mean as I already hinted, an understanding and voluntary agent.

Neither is there any contradiction in the doctrine of the Trinity, as is most unjustly alledged. Because the terms are not affirmed of the same thing, and in the same respect, as they always must be to make a contradiction. To say that three Gods are one God, or that three persons are one person would be a flat contradiction. But to say that there are three persons in the God-head, or that the three persons are one God, is no more a contradiction than to say that there are three lines in one triangle or that there are three faculties in one soul, the understanding, will & memory. I may here further observe to you, that that may be a contradiction in one nature that is not so in another. For instance, is it not a contradiction that with us, yesterday should be to day, or that to day should be to-morrow ? But God is the same yesterday, to day, and forever. With him all things are present, there is no past or to come in eternity. Would it not be a flat contradiction for me to say, that at the same time that I am

* Dr. Water l. 2 def. from page 364 to page 369.

here, I am in another place at a thousand miles distance? But it is no contradiction in the nature of God to say, that at the same time that he is in Heaven he is also on earth, yea in the same instant every where, and filling all things.—In a word I think it would be the highest presumption to charge the account which the Holy Scriptures give of this sacred mystery, viz. that there are three that bear record in Heaven—and these three are one, as a contradiction.

The believers of this doctrine never presume to explain the manner of this ineffible mystery; (for it would cease to be a mystery, if it could be explained) yet it is clear from Scripture, that there is a distinction between the three persons as such; so that what is personally ascribed to one, cannot be personally ascribed to the other two; though they are the same God and the essential attributes of deity common to them all. They are not three distinct persons as three men are; but in a manner of subsisting to us quite incomprehensible. I shall sum up the whole in the words of a very pious and learned author.*

“ We maintain, (says he) that the persons in the blessed Trinity are truly distinct, in opposition to *Sabellianism*; & yet that they are proper persons subsisting in the same undivided substance or essence. That the generation of the Son is a proper generation; the procession of the Holy Ghost is a proper procession; such as doth properly, and did eternally take place among the glorious persons subsisting in the Godhead. But we deny that they are proper persons in the sense that men and Angels are proper persons, who are distinct substances, and have distinct understandings and wills.—The persons of the Trinity are not so distinct as to be independent of, separate from, or alien to each other. They are proper distinct persons, though no man, nor perhaps Angel, can define what a divine person is, or account for the distinction among themselves. The like may be said of the generation of the Son, which is, no doubt, most proper, though not to be defined by the notions of generation among men. “ For who can declare his generation.” And therefore the generation of the Son will still remain a mystery, let bold men quibble as they will. Among men, in the very name of Father, there is implied something greater than in that of Son. But it doth not follow, that it must needs be so in the deity, where the Son no more had any beginning of being than the Father; nor could in any instant not have been, any more than the Father himself could not have been. A parallel between Fa-

* Monsieff on the supreme deity of Christ, page 194, 195.

“ther and Son amongst men, and Father and Son in the deity cannot with any show of reason, be drawn; the difference being so wide between them as might be shewn in many particulars.

“Amongst men, Father and Son are two, not only divided persons, but they have different endowments: In the deity, Father and Son are one; not one person, but one in all excellencies and perfections. Amongst men, the Father has his things, and the Son has his; but in the deity, the Son hath all things, without exception that the Father hath. Amongst men the Son doth some things, and the Father other things; but in the deity, whatever things the Father doth, these doth the Son likewise. Amongst men, though the Son is from the Father, yet he is not in the Father; and though the Father produced the Son, yet he is not in the Son; and though a Son may be like the Father, yet it cannot, strictly speaking, be said, that he that has seen the Son has seen the Father. But in the deity, the Father is so in the Son, and the Son in the Father, that he that has seen the Son, has also seen the Father.”

But I proceed *Superbus* to another argument in favor of the supreme deity of Christ; and this I found upon the name *God* given him in Scripture. The adversaries of Christ's deity rather than acknowledge their Saviour to be God, have laboured hard to distinguish away the meaning of the term *God* by affixing this idea to it, as if it was no more than merely an official word. So that we must not think (as it has been vulgarly and erroneously imagined) that the word *God* in the sacred writings denotes essence, nature or substance, but office only, dominion or authority, particularly when applied to Christ. But if this be true I am afraid that such an explication of the term will affect the Father, as much as the Son; and this way we will soon have no God at all. Is he not in John i. 1 expressly called God? In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was *God*. Is not the term *God* applied to Christ in as absolute a sense, as it is or can be applied to the Father, without any limitation or note of inferiority? Would you not think it strange *Superbus*, that the Holy Ghost would give the same identical term to the Son that is given to the Father, and leave us to explain it thus? The Father is called God, because he is God by nature, the Son is called God, because he is so by office, as being the Father's deputy and ambassador to men, just as Moses was a *God* to Pharaoh, by giving him authority to speak unto him in his name. I have made thee *Erbim* a *God* to *Pharaoh*.* And

* Exod. iv. 16. chap. vii. 1.

magistrates are sometimes called *God*. "I said ye are *Gods*."—But what is this to the point in hand? Is it any where predicated of Moses, or those other *Gods*, that they are eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, and the like? Was Moses to be worshipped by the Israelites? Is it any where said that he made the worlds, or that he is God over all blessed for ever? Is he any where called Jehovah? Neither is he *absolutely* called *Elohim*, but only with regard to *Pbaraob* and *Aaron* to whom he was to deliver God's message. Is it not somewhat strange, if he be but a God by deputation, and not in the strict and absolute sense of the word as applied to the Father, that he is said to be Eternal, and works ascribed to him which none but God properly speaking can do? He was in the beginning, i. e. from eternity with God, and from Eternity he was God, and in time created all things; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Now is not creation-work the peculiar prerogative of deity? In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. But we have no account here, nor any where else that God created the Son. And if the Son be among the rank of the creatures, yea in very deed a creature, and yet at the same time the Creator, he made himself; which is certainly as great a contradiction as a Trinity in unity. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made; which exactly answers to the Mosaic account of the creation in Gen. i. 1.—He is expressly called "the mighty God," and "God manifested in the flesh." And he is so denominated by the Father himself, Heb. i. Thy throne O God is for ever and ever. According to some the term *Elohim* here absolutely used, signifies as much as *Elobe Elohim* the God of Gods. What a bold attempt to pervert the words of the Holy One, and without any sense, to render the phrase thus—God shall be thy seat or throne for ever and ever. This is directly contrary to the received opinion even of the Jews themselves. The Targum on the 45th Psalm from which this is borrowed renders the words thus—"Thy throne O God is in Heaven for ever and ever." We would wish to know in what sense God is the throne of Christ? What idea doth it convey? Has it any countenance from the original? I look upon this address of the Father to the Son as a plain and explicit acknowledgment of the Son's supreme deity.

Again he is emphatically called the great God. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, or the great God, even our Lord Jesus. These titles belong to one and the same person as that form of speech is commonly used, and often translated; particularly when the Father is called "The God and Father of our

“ Lord Jesus,” which very phrase at other times is rendered “ God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And the Apostles speaking of the appearing of this great God, determines us to understand it here. Doth he not certainly mean Christ’s second and glorious appearance? The Scripture never represents the Father as the person who will make that appearance; but constantly appropriates it to Christ, who shall come in all his glory, and the glory of his Father to judge the quick and the dead. And although Christ shall come in his Father’s glory, as well as his own, yet it is not the person of the Father, but that of the Son that shall then come and make his glorious appearance.

But in order to remove all jealousy of any thing figurative or improper in this appellation of Christ, he is called the *true God*, not a true God, as if there might be more true Gods than one, but by way of emphasis, *the true God*, as having the true and only God head in himself.—And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.* This is, or, he is the true God and eternal life. Now the true God whom the Apostle here speaks of is Jesus; and what more can possibly be affirmed of the Father than that he is the true God? Doth not the natural order and grammatical construction of the words lead us to this sense? And particularly doth not his joining the title of *eternal life* with that of the true God clearly point us to Jesus, as the true God here spoken of? We find that as the beloved disciple began, so he concludes his epistle, with these titles of Christ, *his son Jesus Christ*, and *eternal life*, and inserts between them, this is the true God, that we might be sure not to mistake, who he means thereby. So that if the plainest words taken in their genuine sense and connexion, are of any weight with us, Jesus Christ is declared to be *the true God* to the exclusion of all inferior notions of his God-head, as if it was different from that, which is the only true one. *Socinians* and *Arians* in order to get free of this crabbed text, are reduced to this pitiful shift, which by the bye is not true, viz. that the article is here added to the word God, which is never done when Christ is called God. Among other places which prove the falsity of this we might refer them to John xx. 28. where the article is added both to Lord and God. Now if the addition of the Greek article to the word God, infallibly proves that the person meant is God in the most strict and absolute sense; our Lord Jesus Christ is so.—But if this objection is untenable they have another yet in reserve; but it unfortunately happens that it is of as little validity as the other to overturn the genuine meaning of this text; their objection is this, that relative particles, such as that in the text,

* 1 John v. 20.

sometimes refers to what is more remote. To this it may be answered that the necessity of referring the particle to what is more remote is evident from the text, and necessary from the nature of the thing.* In a word, to refer this to the true God going before makes the *Apostle* guilty of a tautology, by saying, *the true God he is the true God*. Perhaps they may object against his true consubstantiality with the Father and say, that he is *a true made God*; but to swallow such an interpretation requires more reason and common sense, than ever fell to the share of any man, since God created man. A *true created God*, is a position at which reason itself revolts.

I shall only mention one text more on this head, and this you will find in Romans ix. 5. Whose are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen. Some in order to evade the force of this text as an argument for the supreme deity of Christ, would most perversely turn the last clause of the verie into an *Ecpbone-ma* and grateful exclamation for the blessings conferred upon the Jews, thus, *God who is over all be blessed forever*. But this sounds so harsh, and without any like example in the New Testament, that (according to a very learned author†) it never came into the head of any *Arian*; and *Socinus* himself rejects it for this very good reason, that *God be blessed*, is an unusual and unnatural construction. The phrase occurs twenty times in the Old Testament, but in every place the term blessed goes before, and the article is prefixed to the word God, which is a plain demonstration that this is no *Ecpbone-ma*, or grateful exclamation. The plain and most obvious sense of the words is this; the *Apostle* having said in the preceding context, that Christ came from the Fathers according to the flesh, or as to his human nature; is it not reasonable to conceive that he should proceed to show what he was as to his divine nature? Is it not unreasonable to think he should say nothing of the superior nature of Christ? Especially if we consider, that the limitation *according to the flesh*, plainly intimated that there was another nature in him, according to which he came not from the Fathers. Upon the whole, I presume that the argument from hence to prove him truly and properly *God* is invincible. *God over all*, is the *periphrasis* by which

* See Acts iv. 11.
2 Theff. ii. 9.

Acts vii. 19. Chap. x. 5, 6.
2 John vii.

† Dr. Whitby on the place.

all the heathen Philosophers did usually represent the supreme God; And so is God the Father described both in the Old and New Testament, as he that is over all. † This is the constant epithet of the great God in the Old Testament. ‖ And this character here ascribed to Christ, is given to the most high God, as distinguished from all creatures whatsoever; Rom. i. 25. where the Apostle charges the Gentile world with worshipping and serving the creature more than (or beside) the Creator; who is God blessed for evermore. Amen.—The creatures the Gentiles served, were demons, and such deceased heroes as they supposed to be subordinate powers, but raised to the dignity of Gods; from all these, the Apostle distinguishes the true God, the Creator of the world by this title, “*God over all, blessed for evermore;*” q. d. that God to whom alone the blessing and adoration of all intelligent creatures is, and will be forever due. The polytheism of the Gentile world is here exposed by the Apostle, representing the weakness and folly of any subordinate deities under one as supreme, which the God of Israel always disclaimed. His constant language was this; “I am the Lord and there is none else: There is no God besides me.”—“I am God, and there is none like me.” “Before me there was no God formed, neither will there be after me.” What absurdity for christians to talk of one God that is supreme, and another that is God in a subordinate sense!—I apprehend upon the whole, that nothing but the most determined opposition to the supreme deity of the Son of God, could ever induce any one to force and strain a text from its plain, genuine, and grammatical construction and meaning, as the other interpretation doth. The Scripture was certainly written for the common use of all, and is generally to be understood in its most obvious and easy sense; but if this text is not to be understood in the sense already given, but must be understood (the latter clause I mean) as a doxology, I despair of ever understanding any one text delivered in the plainest terms imaginable. The truth is, it requires a great deal of the most unhappy ingenuity to bring divine revelation *seemingly*. to support a bad cause. I conclude then, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God consubstantial with his Eternal Father; even the most high, and infinitely blessed God.

In connexion with the foregoing Scriptures, permit me *Superbus* to offer another to your consideration in support of the supreme deity of the Son of God.—Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and

† Eph. iv. 6. ‖ 1 Chron. xvi. 36. Psal. xli. 13, and 89, 52.

was made in the likeness of men.† The Apostle in this text seems to have foreseen, and obviated the *Socinian* heresy; for he doth not only call Christ, *God*, but he informs us how he is *God*. Not by gift or donation, or that he was made God: That being a contradiction in the very terms; but that he was in the form and essence of God, and so equal to God, which he could not pretend to without the highest robbery.

“But *Philemon*, might not the *form of God* (as I have often heard it so explained) be understood as to mean only, that there was a communication made to him of divine, and miraculous powers over diseases, Devils, the grave, the wind, the seas,” &c.

I answer *Superbus*. by asking you this question, was there not a communication of this divine and miraculous power given to Prophets, Apostles? &c. But where do we ever read, that they were in the form of God? Every one that understands terms, knows what is meant by *matter* and *form*. The form of a thing is its essence, not its shadow or likeness. And therefore whatever is in the form of God, is of his essence, and consequently must be God. And this is the inference the Apostle here makes;—that because he was in the form of God, therefore he was equal to God; and it was no presumption in him to claim this equality, because being in the form of God, he was by nature truly and properly God.

But if Christ was originally a creature as *Socinians* and *Arians* maintain, and only advanced through the mere good will of the Father to divine honor, then indeed he could not be excused from the charge of robbery and presumption, yea of blasphemy to pretend to be equal to God.

“But *Philemon*, I have heard some read the words thus—who committed not robbery by equalling himself to God, i. e. did not rob God of his honor by arrogating to be God, or equal to God.”

Superbus this was explaining the text like an oracle! It bears these two meanings, either that Christ did not arrogate to himself to be God, or equal to God; and therefore did not rob God of his honor. Or otherwise, it may be understood, that though he did arrogate to himself to be God, or equal to God, yet this was not a robbing God of his honor. In this last sense then it must mean that Christ is God, or that it is no dishonor to God to have a creature made equal to him. But what a gross perversion of the phrase, *who thought it not robbery to change it into*

† Philip. ii. 6, 7.

this, who committed not robbery; as if the Greek word meant both *thought* and *committed*; or that *thought* and *committed* are the same thing:

The form of a servant which Christ is here said to take, was his taking upon him our flesh, or our human nature, as appears from the following words. "And was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man." And this form of a servant, is compared with the form of God, in which he was before he took upon him the form of a servant. The same word is used in both branches of the comparison, and therefore must be taken in the same sense, unless we would make the comparison fallacious. "Being in the form of God—he took upon him the form of a servant." Therefore he was as truly God as he was man; he was as really possessed of a divine, as he was of a human nature.—And moreover, he was God before he was man; for observe, it is not here said, that he took upon him the form of God, because he was always in that form, and so could not take it.

I might just add here, that we have two other phrases similar to this which I have been speaking of, and as expressive of the supreme deity of Christ. He is called the image of the invisible God.* And the express image of his person.† Now a picture or a shadow is a man's image, but not in the same respect as his Son, who is the express image of his person, because he partakes of his identical nature.

Would you wish *Superbus* to know the hypothesis of the *Socinians* on this head; which, in the issue may be applied to the *Arians* also? Their doctrine then is this, that our Lord Jesus Christ is by nature a mere man; but by the will of the Father advanced to the dignity of a God. And being so advanced, he is *Deus verus* truly and properly a God. Allow me to present to your view their principles on this head, from the learned *Dr. Edward's* preservative against *Socinianism*, and that in his own words.‡

"If we consider God in his attributes, we will find that the first great, and (if I may so call it) fundamental attribute which the Scriptures reveal, and indeed natural reason dictates, concerning him, is the unity of the God-head. Deut. vi. 4.—Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Deut. xxxii. 39. See now, that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me.—Here undoubtedly it will be said, that the *Socinians*

* Collos. i. 15.

† Heb. i. 3.

are beyond all suspicion orthodox. All their studies and labors being employed in asserting and vindicating the unity of the God-head, in opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity ; which according to their apprehension must infer a plurality of Gods. But for all their boasts concerning this matter, and assuming to themselves upon that score the name of *unitarians*, we must not be too hasty in acquitting them from the imputation of *Polytheism*. For although they deny the eternal generation of Christ and his divinity, and say he had no existence before his being formed in the womb of the *Virgin Mary*, and his appearance in the world ; and that the being which he then had was purely human. Yet after his resurrection from the grave, and ascension into Heaven, they say, that God the Father, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings exalted him to the honor and dignity of a God ; not indeed to be the supreme and eternal God, but however *Deus verus*, distinct, and separate from the Father. And *Socinus* takes it ill of his adversaries that they should charge him with denying Christ to be God ; and complains against them that will not be brought to confess and worship him for their Lord and God, who was once a weak and infirm man. And herein he saith the power and goodness of God was discovered, and his admirable wisdom displayed, in extolling, and deifying this man, beyond what we can imagine.

And to the objection against this opinion, as that which did unavoidably infer a plurality of Gods. *Woltzogenius* will tell you, that if by two Gods you mean *one* of whom are all things, and we in him, and the *other* by whom are all things, and we by him ; we are so far, saith he, from being ashamed of worshipping two such Gods, that we rather glory in it. But if it shall be further said, that to do them right, they acknowledge but one supreme God by nature : and that Christ is only God by appointment and office, not *natus*, but *factus*, not begotten, but made ; and deified after his ascension by a communication of the divine power, wisdom, and Goodness to him.

I answer that this is so far from abating, that it rather increases the difficulty, and makes the *Socinian* notion both impious and absurd ; as may be shown more at large hereafter, when we come to lay the charge of idolatry at their door.— Indeed one would think it should be a debasing of the name and honor that is due to God, to give either of them to any but him who is from all eternity. The same *Woltzogenius* will tell you, you may if you please reproach them for so doing ; but he values it not a rush, *nos non erubescimus*, says he, we are

“ not ashamed to own that we worship *Deum factum vel factitium*, a made God ; not made by a goldsmith, or engraver, *ab aliquo sculptore, vel auri fabro*. But they acknowledge with *Peter*, Acts ii. 36. That God hath made Jesus who was crucified Lord and Christ, i. e. saith he, *Deum eximum fecerit*, hath made him a great and eminent God.

“ If this be not enough, if you please to consult *Smalcius* ; he will give you all the satisfaction on this head that you can possibly desire. For first he will tell you, that whereas the Scriptures assure us that there is but one only true God ; yet this must be taken *sano sensu*, not as if there were no other true God, besides God the Father ; but that there is none that is God *eodem prorsus modo*, just in the same manner as he is.— For otherwise the thing is certain and past all doubt, that there are more true Gods than one. And let the inspired writers be never so positive ; yet he and his friends can, and will, with equal confidence advance this contrary position that the true God is not one only true God. Nay, it is not an indifferent matter ; but a truth which they firmly believe, and earnestly contend for ; and therefore pronounce it without hesitation, that there are more true Gods than one.

“ And indeed they have reason to contend earnestly for this opinion ; if it be true what he saith in the same place, that to acknowledge and confess, and adore one only *chief* and *supreme* God, is purely judaical, and a renunciation of the christian religion. Here he speaks as home to the point as you can possibly desire ; and it is enough in all conscience. Thus whereas the Scriptures tell us there is but one God ; the *Socinians* say there are two ; one God by nature, another by grace —one supreme, another inferior ; one greater, another lesser ; one elder and eternal ; another a junior and modern God.— And this by *Socinus* is made the great mystery of the christian religion ! Greater indeed, if true, and more incomprehensible than any other ; or rather than all the stupendous and adorable mysteries of our faith put together.”

What this learned author observes with regard to the *Socinians*, is applicable at the same time to the *Arians*. These latter make Christ a creature (though a more excellent one) and a made, yet real God as well as the former. But I pray what notion can any one have of a *made*, or *created* real God ? i. e. a God and no God ? Is there not an infinite distance between God and any creature, be that creature never so excellent ? In a word, is our Saviour in their opinion, strictly and properly God ; or is he not ? If he be, why do they not say so ? If he be not, why do they worship him ? Seeing the Scripture is to the last degree,

and indeed beyond expression, careful to guard against idolatry. But of this more afterwards.

“ But *Pbilemon*, if Christ be God in the strict and absolute sense of the words ; why is God the Father said to be the only true God, in exclusion of all others. John xvii. 3.—To know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

The meaning of these words *Superbus*, I apprehend is this ; to know thee the only true God, &c. i. e. that the Gentiles quitting their dumb idols, and false Gods, may own thee alone to be the living, and true God, who made Heaven and Earth ; and that the Jews may own me to be thy Son sent to them from Heaven, and that Messiah, which according to the promise to Abraham and David, thou hast sent to them : for by knowing thee fully, they shall know me also, whom all men are to worship as they worship the Father ; and whom he that doth not worship, doth not truly honor the Father ; for I and the Father are one.

But more particularly here ; the term God is to be understood of God essentially considered, in opposition to all false Gods, and by no means exclusive of the Son or Holy Ghost, but inclusive of them as divine persons with the Father in the same God-head. If the adversaries of Christ's upreme deity should say that the word *solus* only, excludes all other things from any communion with that of which it is predicated, and so imports that the Father alone is the true God ; this assertion may be confuted from many instances both of the Old and New Testament. Doth not *Solomon* say of God, “ thou only knowest the hearts of all men,” and yet saith Christ, “ all the churches shall know I am he that searches the heart and tries the reins, to give every man according to his works.” It may further be remarked here, that Christ speaks of himself in distinction from the only true God, not with regard to his own nature as God, but with respect to his office-capacity, as he intimates by adding these words, “ whom thou hast sent,” viz. to be Savior, the knowledge of whom, as such, is as necessary to eternal life, as the knowledge of the true God in distinction from idols. If Christ be excluded here from being the true God, I cannot possibly see but there must be the most palpable contradiction between this and the first verse of this gospel, where the Evangelist plainly informs us, that the word was not only with God, but that the word was *God*, strictly and properly taken.

This will receive further confirmation from Jude, v. 4. denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. These words may be as properly rendered thus ? denying the only Lord God,

even our Lord Jesus Christ: or according to some; and denying Jesus Christ our only master, God, and Lord.* Now that they ought to be so rendered is evident; because one article only is put before all these words; and because the person who is the only master and God, is by *Peter* called the Lord that bought us: Now was it not Christ that bought us with his own blood?

“But *Philemon* would not what we have in 1 Corinth. viii. “6. seem to exclude Christ from being God in the strict and absolute sense of the word: but to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him.”

Superbus, I hope it will not be urged here, that when the Apostle speaks of one Lord Jesus Christ, that the Father is excluded from being the Lord of Christians, neither by saying, there is but one God the Father, ought it to be supposed, that he excludes Jesus Christ from being also the God of Christians. Especially if we consider, that he is here stiled that one Lord by whom all things are created, Eph. iii. 9. all things which are in Heaven or in Earth, Coll. i. 16 for he that made all things is God, Heb. iii. 4. and by the work of creation is the Godhead known, Rom. i. 20. And this is elsewhere made the very description of God the Father, that it is he by whom are all things. Rom. xi. 35.—Again it is here said that all things were not only created by this Lord, but for him, also Coll. i. 16. consequently as he is the last end, he must be the first cause, and therefore God in the most strict and proper sense of the word—But further, it is evident that the Apostle in this place is speaking of God in opposition to idols; for he had laid down this position, viz. that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. And he goes on in the subsequent verses to prove this assertion; for though there be that are called Gods many, &c. but to us there is but one God, &c. and one Lord Jesus Christ, &c. Now can we suppose that the Apostle here meant one subordinate God, distinct in nature from the one supreme God? If he did, he at once overthrew what he was proving: and at the same time doth he not land us in the very bosom of idolatry, by supposing one supreme, and another subordinate God? And at the same time also, did he not give a very strong handle to the Heathens to defend their idols and the worship of them? For many of them believed there was but one supreme God, but at the same time thought divine worship was due to some inferior deities; and therefore if Christ was not truly the most high God, and yet is to be worshipped, as most of the opposers of his God-

* See Dr. Whitby on the place.

head allow; would not this rather confirm than confute the Heathens opinion, that inferior deities may be worshipped.

But supposing that the Apostle here speaks of the one God, according to two different manners of subsistence and operation, viz. the Father of whom are all things, and the Son, the cause by whom are all things, the Father working by the Son according to their order of personal subsistence in the Godhead, then he argues suitably to his design of proving that "there is no other God but one," and that all inferior deities are nothing,

"*Philemon*, is not Christ called the first-born of every creature? If so, how can he be truly and properly God? Can any thing be the first-born of creatures, but a creature? Is not the eldest Son of the number, and of the same nature with the rest of the brethren?"*

Superbus, this text can never fit *Socinians* for proving Christ to be a creature and not the true God equal to the Father. For if he was the first-born of every creature, (granting him to be no more than a mere creature) he certainly had a being prior to his conception in the womb of the *Virgin Mary*; which yet they deny. It will neither fit *Arians* nor *Socinians*, for this reason; because the Apostle asserts all things were created by him: now if all things were created by him which are in Heaven, and which are in earth, visible and invisible, &c. must he not be among the number of these creatures? Or else there were some things which were not created by him; but this would be a flat contradiction to what the Apostle asserts. But if all things were created by him it will necessarily follow, that he created himself. But very properly is our Lord here called the first-born, or rather, as the words may be very properly rendered the *heir* of all things. Now to act as an heir, is to act as a *Lord*. And this is the grand character of Jesus: he is the heir or Lord of all things, because he created all things, animate, and inanimate, rational, and irrational, which are in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath. Is he not expressly called v. 18. the first-born from the dead, as being Lord over the dead; since for this cause he died, and rose again, that he might be lord over the dead and over the living. Rom. iv. 9. The first-born is necessarily the heir, and so Lord of the family; therefore the first-born was by the ancients denominated Lord as well as heir; pointing out his great authority over the other branches of the family. The right of primogeniture is solely lodged in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is prince over, and high above all creatures, they being the workmanship of his hands. And therefore the Apostle assigns a reason why he is called the first-born, heir, or Lord of all creatures,

* Coll. i. 15.

because he is their Creator ; all things were created by him as the first cause, and for him as the last end.

According to a very learned author,* the *Socinians* gloss on the foregoing text is to the following purpose, viz. that to Christ here is not ascribed the creation of the old world and all things that are in it ; but only the creation, that is, the renovation of all things under the gospel-state, or the reformation of mankind by Jesus Christ.

What an antiscriptural interpretation ! how foreign and remote from the most usual sense of the words. How flat and uncouth to say, that Jesus Christ was before every new creature, i. e. before the renovation made by him, or rather his Apostles after his exaltation. Is it not evident, and that upon the slightest observation, that the Apostle speaks here of such things as are incapable of this moral creation, viz. the creation of all things visible upon earth ? Doth not these *all* things comprise all things without life, inanimate as well as animate, metals, stones, elements, all vegetables, and all beasts ? And did Christ, and his Apostles preach to stones, trees, and beasts for their renovation ? Did he come to make a moral renovation upon things invisible, viz. the Angels ? Good Angels needed it not, and bad Angels are shut up in utter darkness beyond the reach of mercy. And yet *Crellius* tells us that Jesus is exalted, and hath received power and authority to reform and renew men and Angels. The most favorable construction we can put upon this man's hypothesis on this head is, that he had certainly forgot himself. †

In a word I would prove the consubstantiality of the Son of God from this objected text, from what he is called in the preceding verse, "the image of the invisible God." Did he not make him who is invisible in his essence, conspicuous to us by the divine works which he wrought, they being such as plainly showed, that "in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." For an invisible God can only be seen by his effects of power, wisdom, and goodness, by which faith the Apostle, from the creation of the world the invisible things of God, viz. his eternal power and Godhead, have been made known by the things which are made. ‡ He is so the image of God, that he

* Dr. Whitby on the place.

† Quia ex Christi exaltatione et divino quod accepit imperio. consecuta est hæc Angelorum, hominumque reformatio, ac renovatio per illum, et in illius nomine dicitur, seipsum creati, id est renovati dicuntur. *Crellius* in locum.

‡ Rom. i.

that hath seen him hath seen the Father ; because in their nature they are one, and in their glory undivided. I conclude then that he who is “ the image of the invisible God,” the Creator of all things in Heaven and earth, must be far more excellent than the most excellent among all creatures ; that he is the first-born, the supreme Lord over all.

I have just to add *Onesimus*, that for the present I was obliged to leave my fore afflicted, and dying friend. I received the call to return home with great reluctance, and with far greater did I leave my affectionate *Superbus*. However my heart is with him, and my most earnest request is for him.—Do not forget to acquaint me first opportunity of the state of your affairs—And may the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of the Father in truth and love ; who is God over all blessed for ever, be the God and Saviour of my dear

ONESIMUS.



L E T T E R II.

P H I L E M O N T O O N E S I M U S .

DEAR ONESIMUS,

YOUR favour of the 7th inst. came safe to my hand. It breathes the language of one who is acquainted with vital religion and experimental godliness. May your path be like that of the just man's which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. May you go on from one degree of glorious grace unto another, until you appear before God in Zion, when grace shall be swallowed up in glory ; when you shall “ see no more darkly “ as in a glass, but face to face.”

I returned as soon as possibly I could to my dying friend. I found him quite disconsolate. The comforter that can only relieve the distressed soul stood (in his apprehension) aloof from his fore. He addressed me as far as I remember in the following terms. “ My dear *Philemon*, since you left me I have had a “ fore confid ; nothing presents itself to my view but what is “ truly alarming and shocking. When I take a view, of my past “ life, I am filled with the utmost confusion ; when I look before “ me I tremble. I am about to die ; and immediately I am to “ be sitted before the impartial tribunal of an holy, just, and “ righteous Judge. What must I do to escape condemnation?

“ My bypast offences are mustered up before in horrid array.—
 “ I find a veil hung up between me and pardoning mercy, that
 “ I cannot behold that darling attribute of the divine nature.
 “ Satan is injecting this horrid suggestion that “ the Lord hath
 “ shut up his tender mercy in his wrath.” I find little or no
 “ comfort either from the absolute promises of the new cov-
 “ enant, or from the all-atoning merits of the Son of God. O
 “ that the “ Son of righteousness would arise on me with heal-
 “ ing in his wings ;” and dissipate my fears, strengthen my faith,
 “ invigorate my almost dying hope, and pour into my disconso-
 “ late benighted soul, the oil of joy and consolation. Have pity
 “ upon me dear friend, have pity upon me, and tender me your
 “ best advice in my present melancholy case.”

My dear *Superbus*, I feel with you in your present downcast condition ; may he “ that turneth the shadow of death into the “ morning,” come and resolve your doubts and chase away your fears.—Perhaps you are laboring under a very sad mistake, and a very fatal one too with regard to your present comfort, viz. — that if the genuine humble christian has given his assent to this true and faithful saying, “ that Jesus Christ came into the world “ to save sinners,” and to save him, that he should no more doubt of it. To ease your mind with regard to this, remember the expression of a very exercised christian on this head. “ Doubtless “ that faith (said he) which is never assaulted with doubting, is “ but a fancy ; Surely that assurance which is ever secure, is “ but a dream.”† Although there is no intermixture of faith and unbelief, yet where the former is implanted, there the latter is sure to haunt it. There are indeed some happy intervals in the christian’s life in which this celestial grace arrives at its *plerophoria* or full assurance, and in this case, the mouth of his unbelief may be stopped, but even then it is far from being extirpated. God for wise and holy ends permits it to be thus with the christian ; particularly to keep him humble. My dear friend, pride and a fond conceit of ourselves are interwoven in our very natures. The Lord in mercy thus exercises his people to keep them from spiritual pride, and to teach them to live habitually on that grace that is in the fountain. The Apostle’s thorn in the flesh seems rather preventive than corrective. To keep him humble after his rapture, rather than to chastise him for any present prevailing pride of soul. And if so holy a person needed it, what do we think of ourselves ?

But *Superbus*, in order to restore peace to your troubled mind consider, that no sense of your unworthiness should drive you

† Bolton’s directions for walking with God.

from that physician who can restore health and cure to your soul. Believe in him now as if you had never done it prior to this very period. If you were as brim full of sin as the sea is of water, the sun of light, and hell of darkness ; yet remember your sins are not infinite, but the mercy of God, and the merits of Christ are. Let your case be as bad as the Devil and an awakened wrangling conscience can make it ; yet here lies your comfort, " the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." Has God heard thousands as it were out of the belly of hell, and shall you now despair of mercy ? Is his hand shortened that it cannot save ? Or his bowels shut up that he will not ? Is that glorious luminary the sun emptier of light, for shining ? Or weary of bestowing his beams on dunghills ? Dare your unbelieving heart say that there are no rays in the Son of righteousness for you ? When you see they have darted on benighted souls, upon the very verge of the bottomless pit. Would you be willing to give up your part in the all-atoning merits of the Son of God, and resign up the exceeding great and precious promises of the new covenant to others.—" No *Philemon* I never will." Your own unbelieving heart and the accuser of the brethren have kindled this flame in your bosom. Satan's finger is in this finishing stroke of wickedness, in order to dishonor your God, and disturb your peace. Though walking in darkness, seeing no light ; yet stay yourself on the Lord, whose thoughts of mercy are as much above yours, as the heavens are above the earth.—Wrestle with him in prayer till he return and bless you. A holy violence and reiterated importunity will never displease the Holy One of Israel. Say with the *leper*, " Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." Wait with the *Syropbenician* woman, in great humility, though his countenance be stern, and his answer rough at the first, yet in due time you will find him the meek, gentle Lamb of God. If the Devil and your misgiving heart attempt to stop the breath of your prayers, cry the louder with the blind man, " thou Son of David have mercy on me." " He waits to be gracious," and by poor broken penitent sinners, he will be intreated.*

In a word my dear friend, believe me that notwithstanding of all this combustion raised in your soul by the Devil and your unbelief, God has gracious designs towards you. Be of good cheer,

* *Greenham* informs us of an *Arian* put to death at *Norwich*, who a little before his execution, asked if he might be saved by Christ ? And being told he might ; broke out into this blasphemous speech. " If your Christ is so easily to be intreated as you say, then I defy him, and care not for him."

the great physician calls you, though by harsh methods, yet with gracious intentions.

Permit me now *Superbus*, to offer to your consideration another argument in support of the supreme deity of that great Lord by whose obedience and death in the human nature, you expect justification at the great tribunal of God, and eternal glorification.

That he is the true God I prove from another name attributed to him in Scripture, viz. *Jehovah*. Now this is the incommunicable name of the one true God: a name so peculiar to him, "that he whose name *alone* is Jehovah is the most high over all "the earth." This name is so peculiarly appropriated to himself, that he will not give it, nor the glory and perfection signified by it, to another.* It is equivalent to that name which the great God takes to himself, Exod. iii. 14. *I am that I am*. I am that I was, I will be that I am. The primary signification of the name Jehovah is *being*; and the most obvious reason of the name is, that God is being itself, independently, necessarily, and immutably existing. "I am Jehovah, I change not." In him is the whole nature of entity: and nothing hath any absolute perfect being but God himself. It is a word of absolute signification expressing the eternity, independence, and immutability of the one true God. And that this is the import of the word is plain from Scripture, and obtains the suffrage of all critics, Jews and Christians, ancient and modern. The question then is, hath our Lord Jesus Christ this name attributed to him in Scripture? If he has it will necessarily follow, that he must possess all the glory and perfections signified by it. Must he not be eternal, independent, immutable, and necessarily existing? Must he not be the foundation and fountain of all that is, or that can possibly be?

That this name belongs to him is evident from Jer. xxiii. 6. This is the name whereby he shall be called the Lord (or Jehovah) our righteousness. Jehovah, expressive of his absolute supremacy, eternal and independent nature: And yet astonishing! he is our righteousness. He, by the assumption of our nature into a personal union with the divine, becomes by his obedience and death, the ground and foundation of our justification before God. That the name Jehovah is a name peculiar to him is evident from a number of other texts.† And in all those places where the Angel of Jehovah is called *Jehovah*; which can relate to none but Jesus the Angel of the covenant.—*Arians* sometimes

* *Isai.* xlii. 8.
Zech. iii. 8, 13.

† See *Jer.* xxxiii. 6.
Isai. vi. 3, &c.

amuse us with the phrase *Jehovah Angel*; if they mean this of any created Angel, be who he will, let them reconcile their idea with the term *Jehovah*, as implying eternal, necessary existence. To talk of a *Jehovah-Angel*, and yet his existence purely arbitrary, depending upon the mere good will and pleasure of God, is the grossest absurdity, if not the greatest impiety. For this reason it is attributing that incommunicable name which God will yield to no creature whatever, whether angelic, or *super-angelic*. It is somewhat strange to talk of a *Jehovah* mutable in his being and existence! But such a *Jehovah* do *Arians* and *Socinians* make Jesus the Son of God. Time was when this *Jehovah* had no existence; time was when he was only a creature; afterwards he assumed another form, he was made a God; and who can tell but he may be undeified after all? By the same mere good pleasure of God, which created him, and deified him, he may be reduced to the rank of a mere creature again. Who can say to the contrary?

Seeing then these names of the only true God are given to Christ in a proper and strict sense; and some of them are so peculiar to God, that they can be given in no sense at all to others. Seeing he is frequently stiled in Scripture, *Lord* and *God*, "the Lord God of the prophets," "King of kings and Lord of lords;" "the true God," "the only wise God," "God over all, blessed for evermore;" and particularly *Jehovah*; he must needs answer these high titles, and be by nature true and proper God.—To suppose otherwise, is to suppose that these high titles, peculiar to the only true God are applied to Christ without their meaning, to amuse or deceive, and lead us into mistakes; but as that would be blasphemy once to imagine, so the names given to Christ should stand in our thoughts for the things they are signs of, and command our belief, that he really is what they declare him to be, the great and true God, God over all, immutable, and eternal in his being and existence.

What an infinite and condescending stoop did this great *Jehovah* make, in the assumption of human nature in its mean, lost, and ruined state! How distinguishing and sovereign was the grace that prompted this infinitely great personage to pass by the more excellent nature of the angelic tribe, and *apprehend* the sinking nature of men. To what an amazing height of dignity is human nature now raised! God will surely dwell with men, and men shall dwell with God. Hear the astonishing news ye sons of licentiousness and riot; ye who by your prodigal courses do all that in you lies to debase that nature in you, which in the person of the Son of God, is so highly exalted. Hear the awful threatening pronounced by this incarnate *Jehovah* himself; "if ye be-

“ believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” And if it come to this issue with you, ye shall never see but *once* your dignified nature in the person of the Son of God. And this, instead of raising your admiration, and attracting your esteem, will cover you with everlasting shame and confusion. Hear it ye who with the most strenuous efforts, endeavour all you can to rob the Son of God of that divine glory and majesty, which as *Jehovah* he essentially and necessarily possesses. And, what if in some future period you find him to be, what the Scriptures unanimously declare him to be, *Jehovah*, the true and eternal God, as true to his threatnings, as to his promises. “ They that honor me I will honor ; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

What a comfortable reflection my dear *Superbus*, to think that you and every humble christian who have taken up your standing for time and eternity on this foundation which God hath laid in Zion, the righteousness of Jehovah. What infinite perfection and value (as I lately informed you) must be in that sacrifice which he offered, when he offered up himself. And what a glorious as well as unexceptionable righteousness must that be, which he by his obedience and death hath wrought out, and by the offer of the gospel is brought nigh, to all to whom the glad tidings have reached. Believe me you may venture your dearest interests on this bottom ; you may, without being afraid venture your appearance before his awful tribunal, by laying hold on him, who “ is made of God unto us righteousness.” And seeing he is God as well as man, he cannot but be mighty to save. He is the same yesterday, to day, and forever. He is Jehovah, he changes not. He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. He is infinite in wisdom, to teach and guide us with his counsel while we are here ; he is infinite in his power, to protect and defend us, to help and succour in every exigence and strait ; he is infinite in his holiness, to sanctify and renew our natures, and to make us holy as he is holy ; he is infinite in his goodness, to supply all our wants, to perfect our felicity. In a word, he is infinite in his truth, to make good all his promises to us, and all this because he is *Jehovah* ; and therefore they that know, and acknowledge this name, may with the greatest safety put their trust in him, who never did, and never will forsake them that truly seek his face.

I proceed now *Superbus*, to confirm the truth of Christ’s supreme deity from some of these properties and attributes which essentially belong to deity absolutely considered ; and if we can find any, or all of these attributed to Jesus, no one can deny but this consequence will unavoidably follow, that he is truly and properly God. If he that hath the true nature, and essential distinguishing properties of man, is in the properest sense

true and real man ; so he that hath the true nature, and essential distinguishing properties of the only true God, is in the properest sense truly and really God. It certainly must be the greatest absurdity and contradiction in nature to suppose otherwise.— With regard to the relation he stands in to us in his office-capacity as Mediator, he is said to be “full of grace and truth;” with regard to the relation he stands in to his Eternal Father, as the second person of the ever blessed Trinity, the “fulness of the God-head dwells in him bodily,” i. e. personally or substantially. The God-head dwells in him, that is, the nature or essence of God, yea, all the fulness of the God-head, which takes in all its essential perfections, glory and blessedness; this not only dwelt, but dwells, that is, abides constantly and for ever, not only with him, but *in him*. So that he has the same fulness of the God-head in him, as the Father has, which speaks him to be truly and properly God.

More particularly here, he is *Eternal*, and if so he must be God in the most strict and absolute sense of the word; for eternity is an incommunicable and essential perfection of deity; and if he is eternal, he necessarily exists. The first Scripture proof I shall produce in order to confirm the eternal existence of Christ you will find in Prov. viii. 22, &c. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the Heavens I was there; when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by him, as one bro't up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, &c. That it is a person, and not an attribute or perfection of the divine nature that here speaks, I apprehend no man will question. Some of the *Arians* themselves own, that the speaker here is the Son of God. Now what is predicated of him? Just the very same that is affirmed of the one God in Psalms xc. 2. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.— The Lord possessed me (by generation) in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old, i. e. before any thing was created I existed; and if so he was from eternity; for this reason, nothing was before creation but eternity; the creation of the world and time were coeval. The Apostle Paul we find uses a phrase almost similar to what we have in the foregoing text; Coll. i. 17—And he is before all things. Now what is it to be before all things? But to be from eternity. And if he was before all things, i. e. from eternity, he must necessarily be God supreme, for an eternal creature is a flat contradiction. Why doth the Apostle in the foregoing text, say the Christ was before all things? But to prove him the Creator of all things; and is

it not absolutely requisite that the Creator exist before the things created?

Again, we have another illustrious text to the same purpose in *Isai. ix. 6.* Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, &c. If you would wish to know the exposition of this text by a certain *Socinian*, I will give it in his own words. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given—the wonderful counsellor; the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, shall name him the peaceable prince, his government shall be multiplied, i. e. he shall reign long, even twenty and nine years, and he shall have very great peace—from henceforth to the end of his life. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this, i. e. God's love to his chosen people, shall make good this prophecy."* What prodigious trifling not to say worse of it is this, to interpret such lofty, and mysterious words, each of which should command the highest admiration, only to mean that King Hezekiah should reign twenty and nine years in peace. The words in the original literally run thus—a child is born to us, a Son is given to us, and the principality shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called admirable counsellor, God strong, Father of eternity, prince of peace, to multiply principality, and to peace no end. With what solemnity should the word of God be treated, how should men take care not to add, nor diminish from the words of the holy one.—Now is not the child born, and the Son given, expressly by the Holy Ghost called the Father of eternity. And is it possible, that either the *Arian* or *Socinian* hypothesis can agree with the name here given him. The Father of eternity, and yet the first creature ever God made; the Father of eternity, and yet never had an existence before his conception in the womb of the *Virgin Mary*. Should we hesitate a moment *Superbus*, whether we ought to resolve our faith into, this faith *Arius*, this faith *Socinus*; or this faith the Holy Ghost? In a word is it possible to believe that Christ is the Father of eternity, and yet himself not eternal?

We find our Lord Jesus Christ himself appropriating this attribute and perfection of the divine nature to himself, *Rev. i. 8.* I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come the Almighty. In the fourth verse of that chapter, we find the Father described from his eternal being, without all beginning or ending; and our Lord Jesus Christ asserts in the aforesaid text in the very same terms his own absolute eternity, and that the description there given is to be understood of Christ, and as spoken by himself, is

* See the history of the Unitarians, page 57.

evident both from the preceding and subsequent context. But if our adversaries dispute this, can they call in question, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the speaker in Rev. xxii. 13? And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be. Here he gives an account of himself, as he into whose hands all power and authority to judge the world is committed. After this account of himself as coming quickly to judgment he adds, I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.†—Might it not be asked, what doth God mean by that description he gives of himself in Isaiah xlvi. 6. I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God? Is it not descriptive of the absolute eternity of the one God? Wherein then lies the difference of this phrase when applied by God to himself, and significative of his eternal existence, and the same phrase when applied by Christ to himself? If the one is descriptive of God's absolute eternity, so must the other be of Christ; or else our Lord has arrogated to himself an essential attribute and perfection of the divine nature which did not belong to him, and in so far, the accusation of the Jews against him for blasphemy was not groundless. But *Superbus*, faithfulness is the girdle of his loins, and righteousness the girdle of his reins; let our Lord Jesus Christ be true and every man a liar.

We have another illustrious proof of Christ's eternity in Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the Heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years fail not. That these words have an immediate reference to Christ is evident from the connexive particle *Kai*, and which connects this with the former citation, and makes it to run thus—of the Son it is said thy throne O God is for ever and ever, *Kai*, and of him it is also said, thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth. Again from the scope of the Apostle, which, both before and after, is, to bring testimonies to prove the excellency of the *Messiah*, and the truth of what he had asserted of him, v. 2, 3. and therefore he pursues the same

† “The Author of the history of the *Unitarians* reads the words thus—Christ (says he) was the first, that is the most honorable, and the last, that is the most despised of men; the first with good men, and the last with evil men.”

Design here. Now is it not evident that these words, they shall perish, but thou remainest, are plainly spoken of the same person who founded the world in the beginning, and therefore must belong to Christ? The foregoing words are taken from Psalms cij. 26, 27. and spoke of there as descriptive of God's eternity; and mentioned here, and applied by the Apostle to Christ to point out his eternal existence. And there are two things attributed here to Christ; the creation of the Heavens and the earth; and the abolition, or change of them. And then the Apostle proceeds to point out the eternity and immutability of their Creator. It is here affirmed of Christ that he *remaineth* or abideth; that he is the same, and his years fail not. One and the same thing is intended in all these expressions, even his eternal and absolutely immutable existence. Eternity is sometimes described as a *nunc stans*; wherein, or whereunto nothing is past or future; it being always wholly present in, and to itself.—These phrases are synonymous with that name God designs himself by to Moses, *I am*; that is, who is of himself, and in himself, always, absolutely and unchangeably the same. The last expression although metaphorical, is of the same import, “thy years fail not.” That is, the creature whose duration is reckoned by years shall fail and come to an end; but of his being and existence who is Creator, there is neither beginning nor end; because he is absolutely eternal.†

Again our Lord Jesus Christ is omnipotent, and if so, he must be the supreme God, and consubstantial with his Eternal Father. Is it possible that the term *Almighty*, without the highest blasphemy can be attributed to any creature however excellent in its nature? Can any being whatever, without being possessed of Almighty power create the world, preserve the creatures in their being and existence; raise the dead; forgive sins; redeem the world? &c. But these works are expressly attributed to him; consequently he must be omnipotent. But do you ask, is this perfection and attribute of deity any where in Scripture ascribed to Christ? I answer it is in Rev. i. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and*

† The author of the Athanasian Creed analyzed and refuted, in his endeavouring to prove the non-eternity of Christ, very artfully passes over the Scripture texts above mentioned. “The only considerable text produced (says he) in support of it, viz. Christ's eternity is, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*” He either thought that the texts which have been mentioned were not worth his while to take notice of them; or too stubborn to confute; it is very likely the last was the truth.

which was, and which is to come, the *Almighty*. In the preceding verse Christ is described in his appearance to judgment; 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, &c. Immediately upon this it is added, to strike us with the greater awe at the thoughts of his tremendous and awful appearance, and of our appearance also to be judged, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord—the *Almighty*.

In order to convince you *Superbus*, that this title peculiarly belongs to Christ, I cannot do better than give you the sentiments of a pious and learned Divine on this head, and that in his own words.—“ But that which seems to me to put the case beyond all dispute is, that it is Christ, and not the Father, who speaks, or is personated in speaking through this book of revelations, and Alpha and Omega are constantly used by him, as his special distinguishing denomination. In the beginning of this book we are told, “ this is the revelation of Jesus Christ—” and he sent and signified it by his Angel to his servant John.” And at the close of the book, Christ calls himself Alpha and Omega, and adds, “ I Jesus have sent mine Angel to testify to you these things in the churches.” Though several things are said of the Father in this book, yet I cannot find, that he ever calls himself, or is called Alpha and Omega, or that he is ever represented as speaking at all in any other parts of it; which makes it highly irrational to suppose him to be the person speaking of himself under this character here.”* What shall we say of the boldness and effrontery of the aforementioned author, who roundly tells us, “ that there is no text in the New Testament wherein our Saviour is described by the character of the Lord God Almighty.”† I am afraid in the issue he will be found to have given Christ the lie. He knew perfectly well, that to yield up this text, and call Christ *Almighty*, his *mighty* fabric fell to the ground at once. So the easiest and the most expeditious way of getting rid of it, and imposing on his credulous readers was, to deny at once, that Christ never spoke these words, and that he is no where in all the New Testament called *Almighty*.

I may further confirm the truth of Christs supreme deity from his *omniscience*. He is *Almighty* and can do all things; he is omniscient and knows all things. Is he not expressly said to know all men and all things absolutely and without limitation? We are told that Jesus did not commit himself to them, viz. the

* See Dr. Guyse's Sermons on the Trinity, page 71.

† See page 39.

Jews, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.* And now (say the disciples) are we sure that thou knowest all things.—By this we believe that thou camest forth from God, viz. in his divine nature by eternal generation. If it be here replied that the disciples only understood him of his coming forth from God the Father as a prophet, or in his official capacity complexly. How were they sure from this that he knew all things? They certainly were apprised of this truth that it was by no means essential to the prophets to know all things. And further, our Lord plainly distinguishes between his eternal generation and his temporal incarnation in these words. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world.† It neither was, nor possibly could be, that by the Father's mission of him into the world he knew all things, but entirely owing to his consubstantiality with the Father. It might be queried here, whether or not is it possible for infinite power to cause a finite creature to know all the thoughts, desires, and motions which pass through the hearts of all men at once? Or in the last judgment to have all the thoughts, words and actions of all men, in all ages, so immediately before him, as to pass sentence accordingly; but such, I may say, infinite knowledge Christ must have, as he is to be the judge at the last day?

That to know the hearts of all men, is the sole prerogative of Jehovah, is clear from 1 Kings, viii. 39. Thou *only* knowest the hearts of all the children of men. And this Jehovah himself claims as a peculiar perfection of his nature. I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. God here speaks of the absolute impossibility of any other knowing the heart as the foregoing verse shows. What shall we say then, when we are assured that Christ is possessed of this very knowledge? "He knew what was in man." He inspects the heart of every man; he knows their thoughts, and the inward reasoning of their souls. But what if he knows before hand what will be the particular inclinations of men's hearts, before these inclinations spring up, or are formed in them? And that this is the truth is evident from John vi. 44. for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

We find when *Peter* expressed his strong resolution that he would never forsake his Master, and boldly avowed that though all men should be offended, yet he would not; yea although he should die with him, yet he would not deny him in any wise; the same language was adopted by all the disciples: Yet Christ

* John ii. 24, 25.

† John xvi. 23.

at this very time knew that he, and all his fellow disciples would drop their resolution and basely desert him. He hath the most perfect knowledge of men's hearts on earth, although now in glory, & hath left this peculiar prerogative of his Godhead so clearly on record, as pertaining to himself, that it is become a common principle of faith, and a known maxim in all the churches. For says he, all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts, and will give unto every one of you according to your works. † And that his knowledge is infinite is evident from what he himself tells us with regard to his knowledge of the Father; viz. that he knew the Father, even as the Father knew him. ‡

That objection which is the great *Achilles* of Arians and Socinians, viz. Christ's ignorance of the day of judgment, militates nothing against what was just now observed; and is impossible that it could be true of Christ, in that consideration of him as God, which I have been just now speaking of. For the infinite knowledge which the Scriptures ascribe to him, and which he claims as the essential prerogative of his nature, absolutely excludes this ignorance: As I already told you, Christ is to be considered here as man, and so the context leads us to understand. For he there speaks of himself as the Son of man, and in his official character in human nature. "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory," &c. And in the next verse, "the Son of man, is as a man taking a far journey," &c. And we are sure, that he increased in wisdom and knowledge as man, and so had not all knowledge in that consideration of him; but that this is no way inconsistent with the perfection of his Godhead, I have already shown.—I hat Christ as man could be omniscient we flatly deny, unless we were to maintain with the *Lutherans* that the infinite perfections and attributes of the divine nature were communicated to the human, which is absurd, yea absolutely impossible. His infinite knowledge of all persons and things, proves him to be God; his increasing in wisdom and knowledge proves him to be truly and really man.—The same answer will serve to solve any difficulty which may arise from such expressions as these;—that all things which he had heard of the Father, he declared to his disciples; and "I speak to the world (says he) the things which I have heard of him," &c.

I may observe to you here *Superbus*, that the author of the *Atbanasian Creed analyzed and refuted*, looks upon Christ's claim-

† Rev. ii. 23.

‡ John x. 15.

ing this prerogative of searching the reins & hearts, to be one of the strongest proofs in all the New Testament for the deity of the Son of God. And he falls upon a very strange method to evade the force of that text, Rev. ii. 23. by connecting it with the latter clause of verse 27. "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts"—Even as I received of my Father. With as great propriety he might have connected it with these words—"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth." If any one will be at the pains to read the intervening verses in the most transient manner, he will immediately see the truth of the observation. Such a far-fetched connexion may pass with such who, instead of looking into the Scriptures, only look into the book. But with regard to such as wish to resolve their faith into the divine testimony, they will certainly be cautious of swallowing down every thing that this man avers to be true, without searching the Scriptures to see with their own eyes, whether it will quadrate with the unerring rule of God's word.

I might also confirm the truth of Christ's supreme deity from another essential attribute of the divine nature ascribed to him, viz. *omnipresence*. Is it possible to conceive that a creature however excellent, and dignified in its nature, can be every where present? "Do not I fill Heaven and earth," is the language of the one true God. But what if we find the same attributed to Christ? We have his own word for it; John ii. 13. And no man hath ascended into Heaven but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of man, who is in Heaven. Christ as God was in the beginning with God, and came down from Heaven to do, and declare his Father's will. He came down from Heaven, not by any local descent, or by quitting Heaven, but only by a manifestation of himself on earth. Now is it possible to conceive that a mere creature can be in Heaven, and on earth at the same time? In order to evade the force of this text for proving the *omnipresence* of Christ, the *Socinians* and *Arians* will tell us, that the latter clause of the verse should be rendered thus—"even the Son of man which *was* in Heaven;" and this say they is apparent, because Christ speaks of himself as the Son of man. In answer to this, I might observe that Christ here speaks of himself, as "the Son of man who is in Heaven," as *Peter* speaks of the prince of life being crucified, and *Paul*, that the Lord of glory suffered, and that God purchased the church with his own blood. The Son of man is in Heaven, not *as* the Son of man, but as the Son of God. But what fundamentally destroys this answer is this consideration, that it is not true that Christ, as to his human nature *was with God*, or was in Heaven. Yes say *Socinians*, after his baptism he was taken up into Heaven,

there to be made acquainted with the will of God. But if any one can swallow such an absurd notion they may—it is scarcely worth the refuting. If men would not shut their eyes against the clearest light, they must learn from the above text, that our Lord Jesus Christ is omnipresent; in one and the same time filling Heaven and earth with his presence.

When about to leave his disciples he teaches them the same comfortable truth, and inculcates the belief of it on them in order to support them in all the trials, difficulties and dangers they had to encounter with. Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

“*Pbilemon*, I have heard it objected by the adversaries of Christ’s supreme deity, that there are some titles and attributes which singularly belong to deity, and are the principal criterion of the one God, which are never applied to Christ; such as the one God and Father of all.”

It would be strange indeed *Superbus*, if these titles were applied to the Son; because taken all together they are personal titles peculiarly belonging to God the Father. And it must remain a standing monument against the adversaries of Christ’s deity to their shame and confusion, that after the doctrine has been clearly proven from the word of God; that no proof shall be thought sufficient, unless it be a proof of what was never pretended, of God the Son’s being the very same person with God the Father. And herein lies the mystery of their heresy, viz. in this one false principle, that the Son cannot be strictly God, unless he be the person of the Father.

“*Pbilemon*, I have often heard it urged, and that with great vehemence against your hypothesis, that all the glory, dignity, veneration and worship, which is due to the Son of God, follows in consequence of his humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto the death of the cross; and that the names, titles, and attributes, which you have been discoursing of, did not originally belong to him, but conferred on him by virtue of his obedience to the will of the Father. Do not you think this notion has some countenance from what an inspired penman informs us? Philip, ii. 8, 9, 10. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

In answer to this *Superbus*, allow me to observe that the Apostle is not here speaking of the exaltation of Christ's divine nature, but of the exaltation of that nature which suffered.—Because he became obedient unto death—Wherefore God hath highly exalted him. This exaltation is represented in Scripture, either as the *reward*, or the *consequence* of his sufferings unto the death; for “we see him (saith the *Apostle*) who was made a “ little lower than the *Angels*, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor.” And the elders about the throne say, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory.† Moreover the Evangelist John expressly informs us, that this dominion and power was given to the Son of man, because he was so.—The Apostle doth not say of Christ as the *Socinians* contend, that he is exalted to the glory of God the Father, though that be true of the exaltation of his human nature; but he saith, that being thus exalted, he is to be acknowledged of all tongues and nations as their *Lord*, to the glory of the Father; nothing more tending to his glory, than that all persons owning Christ as their Lord, and yielding obedience to him, should abound in these works of righteousness, “which are through Jesus Christ to the glory of “ God the Father.”

There are some Divines who rather view the Apostle's words as intended to point out a more illustrious manifestation of Christ, and a solemnly proclaiming him to be what he always was. I shall give you the sentiments of a very celebrated Divine on this text. “Certain it is, says he, that one who is in a proper sense “ God, cannot be exalted. Hence it is, that as many of the ancients as have understood this text of a proper exaltation, “ have interpreted it of the human only, not the divine nature “ of Christ. So that here again the *Arians* understanding it “ of a proper exaltation to a better state, and of Christ considered in his highest capacity, run counter to the ancients “ before the Nicene council, in a very material article respecting this controversy.—If a proper exaltation be intended; it “ can only be meant of Christ, as receiving these honors and titles in his human or mediatorial capacity, which he had always enjoyed in another.—This, in the main, is true, and “ right: But there is some reason to think, that it is not precisely and accurately the meaning of this text, which seems “ not to speak of any proper exaltation, but of the more illustrious manifestation of him for the solemn proclaiming him to “ be what he always was.—But even this though true in part,

† Rev. v. 12.

“ I take not to be the full meaning of the text before us.—
 “ Though the absolute essential dignity of our blessed Lord was
 “ always the same, and in respect of which he was ever equal
 “ with God; yet his relative dignity towards us, founded in the
 “ obligations we have received from him, never so signally ap-
 “ peared, as in that amazing condescension, and goodness, his
 “ becoming man, and dying for us. We are hereby “bought
 “ with a price,” becoming servants to Christ, and Christ a Lord
 “ to us, in a peculiar sense, and under a new and special title.—
 “ Upon this occasion, and upon this account, it pleased God in
 “ the most solemn and pompous manner, to proclaim the high dig-
 “ nity of God the Son, to reinforce his rightful claim of homage,
 “ and to command Heaven and earth, Angels and men to pay
 “ him all honor, reverence, and adoration, suitable to the dignity
 “ of so great, so good, so divine a person, as the Son of God.
 “ We may observe how, under the Old Testament, it pleased
 “ God often to insist upon what great things he had done (though
 “ slight in comparison to the work of redemption) in order to
 “ move the persons concerned to receive him as God. Thus
 “ Gen. xv. 7. I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the
 “ Chaldees; and Exod. xx. 2. Deut. v. 6. I am the Lord thy
 “ God which brought thee out of the land of *Egypt*. To omit
 “ many other places, proving that even God the Father asserted
 “ his claim to the adoration of his people from the good and
 “ great things he had done for them.”*

I proceed now to confirm the truth of Christ's supreme deity, from the works ascribed to him in Scripture; and if we find they are such as none but *God* strictly and properly speaking can perform, or are claimed by him as his *sole* prerogative, then we may warrantably conclude, that our Lord Jesus Christ is co-equal with the Father.

Observe how our Lord speaks of his joint operation with his Father, in the same absolute and sovereign way with respect to all these works in general, when he says, “my father worketh hitherto, and I work.”—“And what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise,” or in the same manner.

The work of creation is ascribed in a proper sense to Christ.—In the first place let us attend a little to the voice of Scripture on this head, and see how *peculiarly* and *exclusively* it appropriates this great and glorious work to the one true God. Thus saith the holy one of Israel:—I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands have stretched out the Heavens,

* Dr. Waterland's Serm. page 170, &c. to 181.

and all their host have I commanded.* I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*.† Accordingly we find him distinguishing himself from all that are not the true and living God, by his creating all things. The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King.—Then shall ye say to them, the *Gods* that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. Now *Superbus* I will appeal to you: Do not these, and many other similar places of Scripture which might have been cited, ascribe the work of creation to the one Jehovah, so peculiarly as to exclude all others from being so much as instruments, much more from being principal agents in it? For he could not be said to do it *alone*, and *by himself*, if he employed any others in it. What is it to create? Or what is the proper work of the efficient cause? Creation is an immediate effect of the divine will, exerting absolute omnipotence. God spake and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast. Believe me my dear friend, the notion of an agent subordinate to the Godhead in creation-work, when there was *nothing* for that agent to work upon; and the notion of an *infinite* power residing in, and exerted by any being that is not absolutely infinite, shocks all the principles of natural reason, and carries the most open face of an impossibility. And therefore the Apostle speaks of the creation of the world as a clear evidence and incontestible proof, and that to the very Heathens, of the eternal power and supreme Godhead of him that made it. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.‡ From all this we may assuredly depend on the truth of this maxim, “He that built all things is God.”

Now doth not the Scriptures assert in the properest and plainest terms, that Christ created all things?—“All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.—He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” In order to favour the scheme of our adversaries, the above words should have run thus: in the beginning God created his Son, and then, by him all things were made, &c. But the words as they run, plainly im-

* Isaiah xlv. 11, 12.

† Chap. xlv. 24.

‡ Rom. i. 20.

port, that he was never made himself; but was from eternity with God, and was God. The Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Colossians, chap. i. 16, 17. expressly extends the work of creation by Christ to all things of the upper and invisible, as well as to the lower and visible world, to all which he had a prior existence. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things. Is it possible that Christ's creating all things, and his existence before any created being, could be expressed in more clear and comprehensive terms? What can be more fully, and clearly said in the case? Are we not taught in the most explicit terms, that all things were made by Christ as the first cause, and for him as the last end? All things were created *by* him, say *Socinians* as the instrumental cause; but what if we find creation-work as performed by the one God, expressed in the very same terms as is here spoken of with regard to Christ? I am Jehovah, —that spreadeth abroad the heavens *by* myself. I hope it will never be said the great Jehovah was only an instrument in the work of creation. Neither can we look upon the Son of God in this light, unless we are determined at all events to contradict the clearest and plainest Scripture testimonies. The distinction which our adversaries make between *by whom*, and *from* whom, can stand them in no stead to prove the Son only an instrument in creation. The preposition *dia*, *by*, with a genitive after it, is frequently used to express the efficient cause, e. g. Rom. xi. 36. of whom, and *through whom*, and to whom are all things. To whom be glory forever. If they understand this of the Father: then by their own way of reasoning, they make him no more than an instrumental cause? Are we not said to be called *by* God the Father? Is he only the instrumental cause? If he be, who is the principle efficient cause? God is faithful *by* whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ.* Now, it cannot with any propriety be inferred against Christ's creating the worlds by his own proper efficiency, from its being said that God made them by him. But what if we find creation-work expressly appropriated to Christ, by God the Father himself? And this we will in Heb. chap. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. But to the Son he (*viz.* God the Father) saith, thy throne O God, is for ever and ever.—And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, &c. This is quo-

* 2. Cor. i. 9.

ted word for word, from Pſal. cii. 25, 26, 27. where without all controverſy the proper work of the one only true God, as the firſt ſupreme cauſe in the creation of all things, is ſpoken of. And the whole context in the Hebrews ſhows, that Chriſt is the perſon to whom that text, and the efficiency there ſpoken of belongs; for it is placed in the miſt of a diſcourſe, wherein the Father all along ſpeaks to the ſon. From the third verſe there is a compariſon carried on between Chriſt and the Angels, and ſeveral particulars are reckoned wherein he had the pre-eminence above the Angels, all joined together with the copulative *and*, viz. Chriſt had the pre-eminence in theſe reſpects: unto which of the Angels ſaid he thou art my Son. *And* again, I will be to him a Father.—*And* again to the Son, he ſaith, let all the Angels of God worſhip him.—*And*, thy throne O God, is for ever and ever.—*And*, thou Lord in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth. What a wonderful arbitrary and abſurd interpretation, to turn copulatives into diſjunctives; which is done by *Socinians* and *Arians* in the text now under conſideration. To refer all the copulatives mentioned to Chriſt in the chapter, except that in the 10th verſe: And good reaſon they have for ſo doing, for grant this and their *Babel* building falls to the ground. But I am afraid in ſo doing, they give the lie to the “Holy One of Iſrael.” Upon the whole can any thing be more plain, than that Jeſus Chriſt is in his original nature the only true, and moſt high God; ſince this work which is done by that God *himſelf* and *alone*, and can be done by none other, is ſo often in ſuch expreſs terms aſcribed to the Son, yea by the Father himſelf, as done by him.

The Author of the Athanaſian Creed analyzed and refuted, in one ſentence contradicts all that the Prophets and Apoſtles, yea what the great Jehovah himſelf hath ſaid, reſpecting Chriſt as the Creator of all things; and at once gives them the lie.—“Let it be obſerved (ſays he) that our Saviour is never ſtyled “the Creator of Heaven and Earth.” A bold and moſt impious ſentence indeed. One would be apt to imagine that he entertained ſome inward rancour and ſpite againſt the Son of God; yea, that he had an underſtanding far ſuperior to Prophets or Apoſtles, or the great God. Theſe all unanimoſly ſtile him the Creator of Heaven and Earth. No ſays our author, he is never ſo ſtyled. But let us purſue him a little further.—“We read (ſays he) in the New Teſtament, that God created all things by Jeſus Chriſt; that God made the worlds by his Son, or eſtabliſhed the ages by his Son; and that the world was “made by him, and through him.” But granting he was an inferior inſtrument as he maintains he was in the

doth he not deserve the name of Creator? Doth not the Scriptures plainly and expressly attribute this character to him? If “all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made;” is he not the Creator in some sense or other? Our author might be asked, what degree of power doth it require to create, or bring a thing out of nothing into being? Infinite power he must reply. I would ask then, is it possible for infinite power to reside in a finite creature? I would ask again, how did Christ upon his own principles as an *inferior instrument*, co operate with the Father in creation? What hand had he in creation? Was he a mere spectator; or did he really create the world? Why would God employ an inferior instrument in creation, when he could do nothing without infinite power? And if he could bestow infinite power upon a creature, this was in very deed making that creature equal to himself, which is an absurdity. Let us hear his own words with regard to Christ’s instrumentality in the work of creation. “He (viz. Christ) is plainly represented as an inferior instrument whom God employed in the creation of the world. Neither is this inconsistent with what we read in the Prophet Isaiah, xlv. 24. I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that spreadeth the earth by myself. Almighty God may consistently be said to be the alone maker of Heaven and Earth, because he received help from none; he worked by his supreme and underived power, though he might think fit to employ another as an inferior instrument.”—

“Again, says he, there is no sort of difficulty in God’s being represented as the alone Maker of Heaven and Earth, although it be declared in the New Testament, that God created all things (by or through) Jesus Christ.” But might it not be enquired at our author, where do we read in all the New Testament, that God employed his Son Jesus Christ as an inferior instrument in the work of creation? How is our *common sense* to inform us that this is a scriptural truth? Have we no other proof but this; that Almighty God created all things (by or through) Jesus Christ? But will not the same common sense inform us that *of God and through him*, are all things.* Here our common sense is at a stand; were both Father and Son only instrumental in this great and glorious work? And if what our author says be true, they were no more. And who was the efficient cause? He thinks there is no sort of difficulty in viewing God as the alone Maker of Heaven and Earth; and Jesus Christ

* Rom. xi. 36.

a subordinate instrument. I freely own there seems to be such a difficulty in it to me, that I have not the least conception of it, And I might ask any one, how they can reconcile the idea of a creature and Creator together?

I proceed now *Superbus*, to confirm the divinity of Christ from another glorious work ascribed to him, viz. the preservation of all things. No one I suppose will question the truth of this common maxim, that it requires the same Almighty power to preserve the world in existence, which gave it a being. Preservation has, and very justly too been commonly called a continued creation. The Scriptures countenance such an expression, when they speak of God's acts of providence towards his creatures, under the notion of creation. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit; they are created.* And the scope of the Apostle's argument leads us to understand him to speak of God as a *preserver*, when he calls him a faithful Creator.† And we will find these two, viz. creation, and preservation joined together as the distinguishing criterion of the one true God. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone, who has made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their hosts, the earth, and all things that are therein—and thou preservest them all.‡

And hence by way of emphasis and peculiarity, and in exclusion of all others, the one true God is said to preserve man and beast.¶ But what if we find this peculiar prerogative of the one true God ascribed to Christ? Will it not necessarily follow, that he is God strictly and properly speaking? But this godlike work of preservation is, with great fulness and strength of expression ascribed to him. He is before all things, and by him all things do consist. All those several ranks and individuals of creatures, of both the visible and invisible worlds; from the highest Cherub that surrounds the throne of his glory, to the meanest insect that crawls on his footstool; his Almighty arm preserves all; they all stand and continue in him. In him we live, move, and have our being.§ Upholding all things by the word of his power.¶ Not by any delegated power from the Father, as a subordinate agent as *Socinians* would teach us; but by a power essentially residing in him as the great God. The same almighty word of his that gave the worlds a being, preserves them in existence. "He commands, and they stand fast." He acts the God, or the part which God only can act, in constant and almighty energy to maintain the world, and all creatures in it, and speaks of himself as acting herein jointly with, and in the same absolute sovereign

* Psa. cii. 30.

† 1 Pet. iv. 19.

‡ Neh. ix. 6.

¶ Psa. xxxvi. 6.

§ Acts xvii. 28.

¶ Heb. i. 3.

manner as the Father doth. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" viz. in a way of supreme providence, with a commanding power and influence on the course of nature, which equally and at all times obeys me and him; as you see by what I have now done in making this impotent man whole by the word of my power. And this the Jews understood him to speak in such an absolute strain, as bespoke him equal to their only true God, and therefore sought to kill him.

The author of the Athanasian Creed analyzed and related, &c. expresses himself on this article to the following purpose, "As to the preservation of all things being ascribed to Christ, Coloss. i. 17. by him all things consist; the form of this expression is the same with that already examined; as God created all things by (or through) Christ, so he preserves or governs all things by (or through) Christ; to which Heb. i. 3. is parallel, upholding all things by the word of his power, his power means the power of God the Father."—But is it God the Father that is described in the first clause of the verse; "who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Was it God the Father that purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high? The very same person who was the brightness of his glory, &c. and who by himself purged our sins, upholds all things by the word of his power. But perhaps our author's meaning is, that both Father and Son are joint in this glorious work of preservation; as undivided in essence so in operation; & in so far he was right. But alas! if we read on our expectations from this quarter are blasted. "The full import of these expressions (says he) taken in the highest (*Arian*) sense, is, that God employs Christ as an inferior instrument in the government of the world." To spend any more time on the absurd impious notion of Christ's being an *inferior instrument* in the work of creation and providence, would be entirely fruitless. I shall leave him and his friends in the full possession of a doctrine, which I am sure they can put no determinate sense upon.

The truth of Christ's supreme deity may be confirmed from the miracles which he wrought, while in his state of humiliation here on earth. A miracle indeed of itself, is no proof that the immediate visible agent therein is God; but it always imports, that the power of the only true God is put forth to work it. We find that both the Prophets under the Old, and the Apostles under the New Testament dispensation did many miracles; but they took special care to declare by express words, or by the plain interpretative manner of their deportment, that it was not by their own power, but only by the power of another that they did such things.

So that none could, without the most stupid ignorance, mistake them for God. But our Lord Jesus Christ in the general course of his working miracles behaved in a quite different manner: And his high sovereign and absolute way of acting peculiar only to the true God, is a strong and undeniable proof of his Godhead.

Our Lord usually wrought his miracles without the least appearance of a previous application to his Father, thereby practically avowing to the world, that he was sufficient of himself for them; and thereby also testifying to the world that the works which he wrought were such as none but God could work, and are even recommended by our Lord as such. The Prophets before Christ, and the Apostles after him, performed miracles: God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, Heb. ii. 4. But the Prophets did all their miracles by calling upon the name of God, invoking the divine power. *Elijah* when he raised the widow's son, he laid the child upon his own bed, and he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her son! And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again: and he revived.* When the same *Elijah* had challenged the Priests of Baal to bring with them each a sacrifice, and wait for an answer from Heaven by prayer, he prays to God to hear him, and to work the miracle, and to vindicate his own glory, by sending fire, which was done, to the amazement of all that beheld it.†

When *Elisba* was mocked by the children of Bethel, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. 2 Kings ii. 24. When the same Prophet divided the waters of Jordan, he calls upon the name of the Lord God of *Elijah*.

Again when the Apostles wrought miracles after the ascension of their Lord, they wrought them in the name of Christ. The healing of the impotent man is the first instance; and observe *Peter's* words on this occasion; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up, and walk ‡ And so far was the Apostle from assuming any power to do that miracle in his own name, that he declares to the people that came about him, on that occasion, that he disclaimed all pretensions to it. Why marvel ye at this? And why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power, or holiness, we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers

* 1 Kings xvii. 20 † 1 King: xviii. 37. ‡ Acts iii. 9.

hath glorified his Son Jesus.—And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong whom you see and know.*—The same Apostle being questioned before the Rulers and Elders of the people on the same subjects, answers to the same purpose. If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole—be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised up from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.†—Thus the Apostle Paul acted after the same manner in the case of the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination; Acts xvi. 18. Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ come out of her.—And he came out the same hour.

Many other examples might be brought in to support this observation, that the miracles, signs and wonders wrought by the Prophets and Apostles, were not wrought *in their own names*, but upon the invocation of the name of Jesus. Whereas our Lord put forth his acts of sovereignty and omnipotence, *in his own name*, acted openly by his own authority, and commanded the Devils, the winds, the seas, and the dead without invoking any name, or any superior power.

It is no objection against what was just now observed that our Lord addressed himself to his Father, when he was about to raise Lazarus out of his grave. He lifted up his eyes, and said, Father I thank thee, that thou hast heard me.‡ But let us observe what he immediately adds, to convince us that his conduct on such an occasion, was not owing to any insufficiency in himself; “but because of the people which stood by, that they might believe that the Father had sent him.” He suitable to his mediatorial character, made this application to the Father for this very good reason; that the people might be convinced of the wickedness and falsehood of their frequent blasphemies, whereby they accused him, as performing his miracles by a confederation with the Devil, or by a power which the Devil possessing him exerted by him. And therefore to convince them that he acted by no diabolical power, but that as the true Messiah, he came from God, and acted by a divine power, he in the presence of them all applied to his Father, as owned and approved of him in what he was going to do. And yet, at the same time to convince them, that he acted not merely as a delegate, in a depen-

* Acts iii. 6, 12, 16.

† Acts iv. 9, 10.

‡ John xi. 41, 42, 43.

dent way, and not immediately by his own power together with the Father, he adds in the next verse, and I knew that thou hearest me always, thereby intimating that his will and the Father's were always the same, so that he never willed any thing, but the Father willed it likewise; and therefore he, in a most sovereign absolute manner, like the most High God, spoke in his own, and not in his Father's name, and "cried with a loud voice " *Lazarus* come forth," and he came forth immediately. He managed this whole affair with admiral skill, suitable to his different characters, as God on the one hand, and as man and his Father's servant in human nature on the other, and so as to show that he was really the Messiah, the *sent* of God, whom he owned; and at the same time what an infinitely great Messiah he was.*

But *Superbus*, what think you was the greatest miracle of this kind ever our Lord wrought? I think you will be apt to reply, his raising himself from the dead: And that this was his own act, is evident from his own words; "destroy this temple, and " in three days I will raise it up."—But he spoke of the temple of his body.† And to evince to the world that he had an inherent power sufficient for this, he peremptorily declared, that he had power "to take his life again." This is so evident a proof of his God-head, that the Apostle took it for a demonstration, saying, he was *declared* or demonstrated to be the son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, or his divine nature, by the resurrection from the dead.

Another strong argument for the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be drawn from the power committed to others to work miracles in his name. The Apostles were free on all occasions, and embraced every opportunity to declare, that all the power which accompanied them for working miracles, was simply and wholly a power derived from Christ; a power entirely *his*, and not at all their own; and that they acted therein altogether in *his* name, and in no respects in their own. Hence we find *Peter* who cured *Aeneas* of the palsy, ascribing the cure entirely to Christ: *Aeneas*, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed; and he arose immediately.‡ And when he sent forth his twelve Disciples, we are told, he, like an absolute and sovereign Lord "gave them power and authority over all " Devils, and to cure diseases." With what an absolutely authority doth he deal out these commissions in his own name, speaking of himself as their principle, and as the fountain of all the power they had for all those marvellous works.—And when-

* See Dr. Guyse Sermon on the Trinity, page 96.

† John ii. 19, 21.

‡ Acts ix. 34.

ever he was pleased to suspend his power, and did not own an attempt to do any thing in his name, all such an attempt was ineffectual; as appeared in those seven Sons of *Sceva*, who pretended to cast out Devils, in the name of Christ; but the mention of his name not being owned by him on that occasion, nor attended with his power, they were so far from succeeding, that the Devils prevailed against them and insulted them. In a word, we may confidently affirm, that none of the Disciples could have performed such miracles as they did, except God had been with them. And the *God* who was with them was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Permit me *Superbus* to insist a little on the sovereign and absolute manner in which Christ performed all his miracles; and this was always in such a stile and manner as became the great and all-sufficient *Jehovah alone*, and plainly showed he was that *Jehovah*, who by his own power performed them. With what sovereignty and authority did he, as the God of nature and providence, rebuke the unruly elements, the winds and the seas, and they instantly obey him. He arose and rebuked the winds and the seas, and there was a great calm; and the men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? In this glorious act of sovereignty over the elements, our Lord doth not rebuke them, *in the name of God*, but in his own name, and by his own authority.* In what a lofty pe-re-mptory and God like manner did he at his pleasure command away Devils, diseases, and death. The prince of the power of the air was shocked at his presence, and never could make a stand against him. They were forced to own that he was the Son of God, and could expel them from this terrestrial globe, and shut them up in the prison of darkness, and at once complete their misery. When he acted like himself as God, and appeared in all the awful majesty of his God-head, legions of Devils trembled at his appearance. They were constrained to cry out with consternation, fear and agony, "what have we to do with thee " Jesus thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us " before the time?" With what uncontrollable majesty did he command the legion of Devils to come out of the man, and they dared not dispute his command? "Come out of the man thou " unclean Spirit."

In the same sovereign God-like manner he rebuked and healed diseases. "I will (said he to the leper) be thou clean." And to the man with the withered hand, "stretch forth thy hand; and " he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like as the oth-

* Math. viii. 26.

“er.” And to the impotent man, “rise, take up thy bed and walk, and immediately he did so.” In all these, is there the least appearance of his acting as an inferior subordinate instrument? No, he acted by no other power than what was necessarily and essentially resident in himself, as the true and eternal God. Virtue we are told came out of him and healed many. And was he not the subject of that virtue and power? Was it not a principle inherent in himself, which he could exert whenever he pleased?

And what shall we say my dear friend, to that sovereign Almighty power which so gloriously displayed itself in raising the dead? When he raised the Ruler of the synagogue's daughter, he proceeds without the least stop; takes the father and mother of the maid, and those who were with them in the room, and speaking in his own name, he says with all the authority of an omnipotent God, “*Talitha cumi*, which is being interpreted, damsel “I say unto thee arise.” He only touched the bier, on which one lay, when they were carrying him to his grave, and said “young man I say unto thee arise,” and immediately he was restored to life, to the amazement and wonder of all present.—What grandeur, majesty, and sovereignty displayed themselves in this God-like way of expressing himself, and making the dead to live at his word. If the Eternal Father had visibly appeared among the sons of men, and exerted the power of his God-head, could he have acted in any other manner? The manner of our Lord's acting on these occasions carries the same state, supremacy, and efficacy with it, as he acted at the creation of the world, saying, let it be so, and it was so. He commanded, and it was done.

Now, can any but that great and Almighty Being which created all things by the word of his power, and by the same power rules and governs all, could thus, both immediately and mediately over-rule, controul, and change the laws of nature at his pleasure, and make all its powers yield to him, and obey his word? We know the short cut the author of the *Atbanasian Creed analyzed*, &c. would have taken to evade the force of this argument (but in his wisdom he passes it over) viz. that he did all these miracles, just as he created and preserves the world, as an inferior instrument.

I proceed now to another God-like action of our Lord Jesus Christ, which will in the issue demonstratively prove his supreme deity; I mean his *forgiving sin*. Who can forgive a debt but the creditor? Who can pardon the affronts offered to majesty, but the sovereign himself? The moral law being a transcript of the divine nature, none but the legislator can pardon the com-

mission of those sins which that law prohibits, or the omission of those duties which it requires. But if Christ be but a *creature*, or a *mere man*, that law is not his, neither can he authoritatively pardon a breach of that law. We find forgiveness of sins is claimed by the great Jehovah as his special prerogative. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.* But if our Lord Jesus Christ is not God, he cannot be the party sinned against; for sin is a transgression of the law of God; it is only the great God that is the formal object against whom, sin, as sin, is immediately committed. "Against *thee, thee only* have I sinned," said David; but Christ being truly and properly God, the same in essence with the Father, all our numberless and aggravated sins are as immediately and directly against him, as against the Father. They are committed against God *as* God, against the *God-head* in all the persons of it, and so against the *Son* as well as the Father, he together with the Father being Lord of the law, as being "Lord of the sabbath" imports—since by his Lordship over the sabbath, he could interpret his own law concerning it, and transfer the obligation to observe it from the *seventh* to the first day of the week. Yea, the Apostle Paul views him as that God who gave the law at mount Sinai, whose voice then shook the earth.† Hence the rebellions, murmurings, and provocations which Israel committed against God in the wilderness, whereby they tempted him, are spoken of as committed against Christ, and as tempting of him; on which account the Apostle cautions us to take heed of the like sins against him. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.‡

Now it is a common and rational principle, that none can authoritatively and properly forgive sins but God, because he is the object against whom sin is immediately committed. Hence the Jews were so far right when they said, who can forgive sins but God only?¶ And yet Christ at that very time, and in that very sense, in which they spoke, claimed and exercised that authority, and proved it was his right, by removing the effect of sin in healing the sick of the palsy; saying to him, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The Jews who were present, hereupon reasoned in their hearts, saying, why doth this man speak blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God only? Our Lord, Jesus Christ who knows the secret reasonings of all men's hearts, was sensible of the inward reasonings of their minds; and to take off the charge of blasphemy, he did not tell them, that he forgave

* Isaiah xliii. 25.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 9.

† Heb. xii. 26.

‖ Mark ii. 7.

sins only declaratively, or as his Father's delegate pronounced it in his name; but vindicates the power of doing it in his own name, by doing another God-like work in as absolute and authoritative a way, which also took off the temporal punishment of the sins he had then forgiven. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." In the same authoritative strain he said unto *Mary*, "thy sins are forgiven thee." So that they who were with him were astonished at the majesty and grandeur of his behaviour therein, and said, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?*

And now in his exalted state he more fully displays his absolute sovereign authority to this purpose; being exalted—to give—forgiveness of sins.† And according *Stephen* in his last prayer applied to him in an absolute way for forgiveness of his enemies, saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit, and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.‡

I proceed again *Superbus*, to take notice of another Godlike work ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, which will also strongly evince his eternal power and Godhead, viz. *the resurrection of the dead*.

Doth not the resurrection of the dead carry in it an evidence of such an immense wisdom, dominion, power, and presence, as infinitely exceeds all our thoughts; yea, the most exalted conceptions of Angels, and Archangels; and for this reason, the doctrine has been denied by many, because they cannot conceive how God can work through all the difficulties, and master all the impossibilities, which they imagine their reason can suggest against it. There is indeed something very awful, astonishing, and incomprehensible in this amazing effect of infinite power. And we christians, who believe the truth of that doctrine which is so clearly and expressly revealed in God's word, believe it barely upon the unerring veracity of God's own testimony concerning it, adoring his infinite greatness and almighty power, who is able to make good his own word. We by no means pretend to adjust the conduct of the great God in this matter, by our inquisitive reasonings about it. Must it not appear altogether impossible that any but the only true God should raise the dead, though not impossible that *he* should do it? Hence the apostle lays the belief of this great and interesting article merely upon the greatness of God, when he says to king *Agrippa*, why

* Luke vii. 48, 49. † Acts iv. 31. ‡ Acts vii. 59, 60.

should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? * To suppose this great and glorious work to be done by any being inferior to the great and Almighty God, is indeed of all things the most incredible. Is not the doctrine of the holy and blessed Trinity far more comprehensible, than a mere man's raising the dead to life? And yet this incredible thing, upon any other supposition than that of the absolute power and omnipresence of the Godhead, is familiarly spoken of in the Scriptures as done by Christ, and that by his own power. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and *I will raise him up at the last day.* † Yea, he speaks of himself as having equal liberty and power with the Father for it; for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. In what a sovereign and independent manner doth he speak these words, even when he is speaking also of the father? And with what supreme majesty and grandeur doth he inform us how he, the Son, will effect this tremendous and glorious work? 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. But if these words should be meant of the powerful energy of his voice attending the gospel dispensation, for raising up sinners morally dead in trespasses and sins; the following words are confinedly to be understood of the resurrection at the last day. Marvel not at this: And the reason he assigns, why they should not marvel at it, is, because he was a person every way equal to it, having still greater power in himself; 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. ‡ And is this astonishing event to be the production of a mere man, or of any creature, however dignified? No; let us observe the Apostle's reasoning on this head, and we will learn that this is not to be effected by any power delegated to Christ (which supposition by the bye is impossible) but by a power inherent in himself; when speaking of the second coming of the Lord Jesus, says, he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body; and observe, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. || Undoubtedly, such a work wrought by that infinite inhe-

* Acts xxvi. 8.

† John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54.

‡ John v. 28, 29.

|| Phil. iii. 21.

rent power in Christ is a pregnant evidence, that he is more than a creature, yea, the true and most high God.

Superbus, I may again add here the consideration of the future judgment, which is in a full and proper sense ascribed to Christ. He shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom.* “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.” Hence it is also said, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.†

It is freely acknowledged, that the special plenary execution of all judicial power is by dispensation from the Father committed to the Son, in his office capacity: For otherwise the principal part of that judgment would fall into the Father’s hands, as the first person of the adorable Trinity: But that the nature of this work is such, as peculiarly belongs to the only true God, and is manageable by none but him. All our natural notions, as well as the Scriptures, refer this work to the supreme God only. And therefore had not Christ in his original nature been a divine subsistent in the Godhead, the full decisive unrepealable exercise of this ultimate judgment would not have been committed to him.‡ And who but the only true God can judge the world; devils and men? Who but he can exactly and perfectly know the secrets of all hearts, the innumerable thoughts that are continually springing up there, and the different principles and ends that govern them all, and determine their moral nature respectively? What mind but *his*, that is absolutely infinite, can find out all the train of thoughts, words, and actions of all that have been, are, or shall be and comprehensive enough to take them all in, and to know them exactly and infallibly in their several orders, relations, and circumstances, and pass a right judgment accordingly? In a word, it seems beneath the dignity of the Godhead to commit the full, final, and irresistible decision of all its rights with regard to us, to any creature whatever, but to God manifested in the flesh. How doth it sound *Superbus*, to be taught that a creature, or a mere man, or a made God, shall, at the consummation of all things, mount the great white throne, and there sit umpire

* 2 Tim. iv. 1.

† 2 Cor. v. 10.

‡ To prove Christ Mediator, is to prove him God: To prove his economical supremacy, is at the same time, to demonstrate his essential dignity. Christ, as Mediator had not been capable, of an economical supremacy, if he had not, as God, been naturally supreme governor of the world. Menckieff on the deity of Christ.

and judge for God. Is not this a burden too weighty for any, but he who possesses infinite wisdom, and omnipotent power? Yes: The great Jehovah clothed in human nature, will be "judge of all the earth."

Onesimus, I have just to inform you that *Superbus* having fixed this day to settle his family affairs; I begged leave to return home; promising at the same time (God willing) to return the next day. A few days I think will put a final period to my friend's existence in this world; he is quite sensible of it himself, and entirely resigned to the will of providence. Since his last victory over the temptations of satan, and the unbelieving suggestions of a wicked heart, his faith is growing more consistent, stable, and strong. He has learned, that the most comfortable way of living, and the most glorifying to God, is to live by faith on the Son of God, and to trust in God when he cannot trace him. He has learned that however changeable and fleeting his frames and exercise are; the foundation upon which his faith is built cannot be removed. He has learned that although the Lord for the exercise of his faith, patience, and humility, may hide his countenance, and draw a veil between his benighted soul and the glorious Son of righteousness; yet he that hath begun the good work, will in his due time consummate the same.

Wishing that my *Onesimus* may obtain a safe conduct through this troublesome, dangerous, and sinful world, and a glorious entrance into *Emmanuel's* land, where the inhabitants shall not say I am sick. I remain yours most affectionately.

PHILEMON.

M

LETTER III.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

DEAR ONESIMUS,

I AM very sorry to learn in yours, that our beloved friend *Aristobulus* is no more. Holiness is no security against afflictions, trials, and death. From the external dispensations of providence in this life, no conclusive argument can be drawn from God's love or hatred, to any man. In this respect all things happen alike to all: As the fool dies, so dies the wise man. It is more than probable, that the conclusion of this will carry to you the melancholy news of the death of my dear friend. The glimmering taper of life is almost burned into the socket; here I think he cannot shine much longer; but I hope he dies to live, and shine in eternal glory.

I waited on *Superbus* according to my promise. After informing me how he had settled the affairs of his family, and who he had appointed his executors; he took me by the hand repeating the following words—" *Philemon*, I see that faith in the satisfaction of Jesus is my surest holding for eternity, more sure than present sense, or past experience, or even begun possession; for all these may be interrupted and overclouded; but faith in the promise of God will hold fast when all things else fail. I wish you would in the mean time pursue the argument in support of Christ's supreme deity. I find my love enflamed, my soul comforted, whenever I either think or hear of that glorious personage who loved me, and gave himself for me. May he be my *Alpha* and *Omega*; the last in my thoughts, and on my lips here, and the first in glory."

Superbus, I most cheerfully embrace the opportunity of holding forth to you that Jesus in all the dignity, power, and glory of his eternal Godhead to your contemplation. Who can estimate his worth, or fathom his boundless love?

I shall proceed to shew you that he is the true and eternal God, consubstantial with the Eternal Father, from the consideration of the *work of man's redemption*. This you know *Superbus*, I have already insisted on at large in some of our former conferences, but if your strength and my time will permit, I will offer a few thoughts farther on this head, in confirmation of the present argument.

Let me observe here then, that the rights and honor of God's justice, holiness, veracity, law and government require, that a proper legal satisfaction be made for sin, in case any of the de-

scendants of fallen Adam be saved; and because as far as we can learn from the Scriptures, no such satisfaction could be otherwise made than by Jesus, he became our great High Priest, and offered up himself as an expiatory sacrifice for sin. But unless Christ is *God*, the sacrifice he offered could not answer its end in satisfying divine justice, and so obtaining eternal redemption for us. The notion of a true and proper satisfaction imports two things, viz. that reparation be made equal to the offence; and that the person who makes it did not owe it on other accounts to the offended party. And the real Godhead of Christ was necessary to both these.

Satisfaction imports, that reparation be made equal to the offence. Whatever is admitted short of this, is mere *mercy* and *grace*; and to say that justice is satisfied by yielding to mercy, and giving up its right to a mere act of grace, is the greatest impropriety and contradiction in terms, and a direct opposition to the Apostle, who says in the case before us, God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his *righteousness*,—that he might be *just*, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. But if the Mediator was not God, he could not make this full reparation to the law and justice of God for our transgressions. For sin is an offence *objectively* considered of an infinite nature, as it is committed against an infinite God, and is the highest treason and rebellion against his crown and dignity: and therefore proper satisfaction for it must be some way *infinite* too, or else it is not proportioned to the offence: And no satisfaction can be any way infinite, but either by an infinite continuation of it, or by its infinite dignity. For want of infinite dignity or worth, it must be continued to an infinite duration, on which account those who are not interested in Christ's satisfaction must suffer to an endless eternity, without ever being able to give that satisfaction requisite to answer the high, but just demands of law and justice. And it would be hard to reconcile the eternal duration of their sufferings with the justice and goodness of God on any other footing, than that justice demands an infinite satisfaction for sin. But where there is an infinite worth and dignity in the satisfaction itself, this entirely supercedes an eternity of sufferings; but such was Christ's satisfaction, as I elsewhere told you.

And although strictly speaking, it was Christ's human nature that suffered and died, his deity being absolutely impassible; yet that human nature being personally united to the divine, and so his sufferings became the sufferings of *himself*, and rose in value and dignity in proportion to what he was who underwent them. As suppose a person strikes his sovereign, he doth not properly

speaking strike his *dignity*, for that is impossible, it not being subject to corporeal impressions ; he only strikes his body ; and yet the injury done thereby is rated by the dignity of the person, more than by the natural hurt of the body, which was no greater than the same stroke might have done to the body of his meanest vassel. But the difference of their characters makes such a vast difference in the law's account of these wounds, that one is reckoned high treason to be punished with death, and the other hardly criminal enough to be punished at all, or at most but very slightly. Thus although Christ could not suffer as to his God-head, yet the just and proper estimate of his sufferings arose from the dignity of his person.

Accordingly, as his person is so are his sufferings. If his person is not of infinite worth and dignity, it is impossible his temporary sufferings, and the satisfaction made thereby should be so. And this infinite dignity could not be in his person ; unless he is properly and by nature God. For according to all the notions we have of *infinite*, the true God can only be *properly* so. And let us advance the character of Christ as high as ever we can, yet if he is not by nature the only living and true God, he is so far from being infinite in dignity, that he is infinitely less worthy and excellent in himself than the infinite God is ; and consequently every one must see how impossible it is that his sufferings and satisfaction thereby, should be *subjectively* infinite, after the same manner that our sin is *objectively* so. But seeing our Lord Jesus Christ is originally the supreme God, his sufferings in our nature, and his satisfaction thereby, is *subjectively* as infinite, as our sins are *objectively* so ; and consequently reparation is thereby made every way *equal* to the offence, and no sins can be too great or many, for such a sacrifice to make a complete atonement for them.

Hence the Scripture speaks of Christ in his highest character as *God*, when it displays the dignity and efficacy of his sacrifice. He is represented as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, who *by himself* purged our sins. And it is very observable that the main design of Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, being to demonstrate the infinite perfection, and never failing efficacy of Christ's most excellent priesthood and sacrifice, he made his way to that design by firmly establishing his highest character as *God*, throughout the first chapter of that epistle. He like a wise master-builder, carefully lays the doctrine of Christ's God-head, as the foundation on which he builds the whole glory and virtue of his priesthood and sacrifice, in the following parts of the epistle.

Satisfaction as I observed imports, that the person who makes it, did not owe that, by which he makes it to the offended party on other accounts, or was not bound by prior obligations to pay it, for all that such an one doth, is only paying the offended party with what was his own before, and in answering obligations and demands of a different sort from those, which satisfaction for an offence requires. And to pay many debts of *different* kinds, by the payment of one of those kinds, destroys the nature of satisfaction. Much less can one pretend to satisfy for another by yielding that, which could be demanding from himself on his own account, and which it would be his sin to refuse.

It will follow then of course, that if Christ is not truly and by nature the supreme God, he owed himself, and all that he is and hath to God, and was infinitely obliged, as an entire dependent on him, to do and suffer all that he could for his honor, and at his command. He had no pretence of right to refuse or decline it, but it was his duty to do and suffer whatever the sovereign God should call for, and it would have been his sin, and destructive to himself, to have designedly neglected it. By yielding to it he did but pay the debt, which he owed to God's supremacy, and therefore that could not answer for others, much less could it be a payment of their debts of that and a different kind too, which they owed to God's justice, as well as his supremacy.

And how excellent a being soever we suppose Christ to be, yet if he was not by nature the supreme God, it does not at all help the matter; for that vast excellence of his being, if he owes it to God, and is obliged to him, and depends on him for it, is so far from dissolving this obligation to do his utmost for God's glory, especially at his express call to it, that it really increases that obligation, and makes it so much the more his duty. For the more any one receives from him, the more he is indebted to him; and he is the less at his own disposal. So that on supposition Christ was not really and properly God; all that he did and suffered for his Father's glory was unavoidable by him, and was rather a proof of God's abundant grace to him, than a satisfaction to his justice for others.

But on the other hand, if Christ was in his original nature truly God, and necessarily existed in that nature, he was Lord and Master of himself, and so was accountable to none antecedent to his own will and choice. Prior to this obligation, he might, or he might not have assumed human nature, he was not obliged to do it; and after he had assumed it, setting aside his agreement to the contrary, he might have refused to submit to that state of humiliation, which was necessary to make satisfaction for sin.—

It could not have been imposed upon him without his own free choice. His will determined his obligation to this obedience, and not his obligation his will. His will was to do the will of his Father, before it could be said he ought to do it. The essential rights of his proper God head plainly imports all this, and his absolute supremacy thereby so fully exempts him from all original obligations to debase himself in order to a display of the glory of vindictive justice in his redemption of lost sinners, as makes his voluntary sufferings in our nature for that purpose truly satisfactory.

Upon the whole *Superbus*, it unavoidably follows, that to deny the natural and absolute supremacy of Christ, is to deny his satisfaction. And this is so evident, that they who deny the former, have likewise *expressly* and professedly denied the latter.— But my dear friend, if we would not lose the benefit of Christ's satisfaction, and all our hopes of salvation founded upon it; if we would not run the desperate risk of having the righteousness of God's nature, law, and government against us; if we would not venture to answer for ourselves to an unsatisfied, unappeased, and provoked deity; let us believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that Jesus Christ is in his original nature, the supreme God, and that by his death we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins.

I may just add here, that his *intercessory* work now within the vail, and the prevalence of that intercession is an irrefragable proof of his supreme deity. If you ask upon what doth the prevalence of his intercession depend? I answer, upon the *value* of his sacrifice. His intercession is the plea of his blood, as a righteous advocate for us. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.* He entered into the holy place by his own blood.† And he appears in Heaven as a *Lamb* that had been slain, presenting the virtue and value of his death before the throne of God for us. If therefore that blood hath not satisfied divine justice, and purchased all blessedness for us, his intercession can be of no effectual avail to us, since it is only by the interest of that blood that he intercedes for us. But if that precious blood was truly satisfactory, its real value is unexceptionably infinite, its plea for us at the throne of God, cannot but secure our interest there; justice itself will readily admit them, and yield to mercy's triumphs, in all the instances of gracious vouchsafements that are needful for us.

* 1 John ii. 1, 2.

† Heb. ix. 12.

Moreover, doth not his intercession at the Father's right hand suppose that now, while he appears in our human nature there, he hath an infinitely perfect knowledge of all the persons for whom he intercedes, and all their cases, of all the secret thoughts of their hearts, of all the distresses they labour under, & of all the suitable supplies of mercy they want in every time of need? Now, he could not have this omniscience necessary to his intercession, unless he was God; but if he is really God, all our wants and straits are constantly under his eye; and none of our groanings are hid from him. Hence the Apostle, encouraging us to come in all our straits and troubles to the throne of grace, draws his argument from the greatness of our High Priest, as the *Son of God*, that is passed into the Heavens for us; and so knows all our wants, and is able to succour us; as well as his being in our nature well affected towards us. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the *Son of God*—Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Before I proceed to the last head of argument in favor of the supreme deity of the Son of God, I shall make a little digression to review a few passages in the *Atbanasian Creed analyzed and refuted*. The author gives in a very few words a confession of his faith on the article of the Trinity. I shall present you with his sentiments on this head in his own words. "Admitting that by means of this treatise, or any other help you are deeply convinced that God Almighty is one supreme intelligent Being or person; one supreme Lord and governor; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus; and that Christ and the Holy Spirit are persons inferior to him, and employed by his supreme authority in very high offices for the salvation of men—Christ being appointed Mediator, Head, and King of the Church, and the Holy Spirit first Minister in its government, who has Angels for his assistants. In this case, as christians and disciples of Christ, you have an undoubted right to make a serious and solemn protest against the doctrine of the *Atbanasian Creed*."

Now what doth our author mean by this summary of his faith on this head? Would he have us condemn the *Atbanasian Creed*, and adopt his in its stead? No doubt; for he elsewhere informs us (as shall be noticed afterwards) that unless this be done, we need never expect the conversion of the *Jews*, *Heatbens*, and *Mabometans* to the Christian faith. It would appear that *Arians*

* Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16, See Dr. Guyse's Serms. page 132, &c.

are by no means enemies to creeds and confessions ; for here we have our author's in so many words. But might it not be enquired, in what part of divine revelation will we find, " that Christ and the Holy Spirit are persons inferior to the Father, " and employed by his supreme authority, in very high offices " for the salvation of men—Christ being appointed Mediator, " Head, and King of the Church ; and the Holy Spirit first Minister in its government, who has Angels for his assistants ?" Is there not as little foundation for this man's strange Creed in the word of God, as for the *Atbanasian* ? With regard to the latter, the Scripture is plain and decisive. There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are *one*,* one thing, viz. essence or substance. God we are told has employed by his sovereign authority these two persons in very high offices respecting man's salvation. If he had been as candid and explicit as he should have been in such an important article, upon which the conversion of *Jews*, &c. depends, he should have told us the particular offices which these two persons execute in the business of man's salvation. He indeed informs us that Christ is appointed Mediator, &c. of the church. But what is the formal ground and reason of his mediation ? Is it by shedding his blood for the purgation of our sins ? Is it by offering himself to God through the Eternal Spirit, to purge our consciences from dead works.† Or in a word, is it by making a vicarious satisfaction as our surety to the law and justice of God, for the sins of a guilty world ? But this I already told you was impossible without his supreme deity. We may reasonably suppose then, that according to him, the mediation of Christ in its fullest extent here on earth amounted to no more, than what was merely exemplary with regard to his death, & instructive with regard to his doctrine. But what if it was objected to our author, that we are said to have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.‡ What if he had listened to the song of all the redeemed from among men, who applaud the divine Saviour for washing them from their sins in his own blood.¶ What if he had seen that blessed company which stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, having their robes washed, and made white in the Lamb's blood ? I apprehend, such is his attachment to an inferior God, that if he had explained himself on this head it would have been to the following purpose ; " I assure you my " Christian brethren, (for whose sake I offer my creed to your

* 1 John v. 7.

† Heb. ix. 14.

‡ Eph. i. 7.

¶ Rev. v. 9.

¶ Chap. vii. 14.

"serious consideration) that although I have said that Christ is
 "the Mediator of his church, you are not to suppose that he is so,
 "by any *satisfaction* he made to the law and justice of God as
 "your surety. If you want pardon, I refer you not to the *blood*
 "of Jesus, but to the unbounded mercies of the one supreme
 "God; if you wish to appear in glory with your robes washed
 "and made white, this must be accomplished by the tears of
 "repentance, and a good life. For you may credit me, that all
 "these high expressions in Scripture with regard to the effects
 "of Christ's death are to be understood *metaphorically*, or *figura-*
 "*tively*. For considering Christ as infinitely inferior to the
 "supreme God, all that he did and suffered he was bound to,
 "by the law of his creation, and the will of his heavenly Father.
 "And although he is every where in the New Testament stiled
 "the Saviour of sinners, yet not exclusively of others; for I
 "may tell you, if ever you are saved, you must be your own
 "*Saviours*; and not any satisfaction he hath given in his life
 "and death, or any atonement he hath made will save: trust in
 "your good works for your future happiness; for if there is no
 "merit in these, you may believe me there is none in Christ's."
 Such sentiments as these are the necessary consequence of his
 absurd impious doctrine of an *inferior God*.

And that I may not be blamed for putting such words in the mouth
 of our author which he never spoke, neither ever thought, we will
 find in his book a brief summary of the Christian doctrine he lays
 down to his readers, as the ground of their possessing that glorious
 and immortal life, promised to God's faithful servants. Now
 in order to obtain this, one must have thought he might have
 had as much regard to the holy Scriptures, and paid as much de-
 ference to the sacred penmen, yet to Christ himself, as to have
 followed their example in directing his Christian brethren how
 to obtain the eternal salvation of their souls. What is the lan-
 guage of our Lord on this head? "Unless ye believe that *I am*,
 "ye shall die in your sins." "God so loved the world that he
 "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him,
 "should not perish, but have everlasting life." *Paul* exhorts the
Philippian jailor to faith in Jesus in order to salvation. "What
 "must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
 "and thou shalt be saved." And we find the Apostle *Peter* fol-
 lowing the same example. To him gave all the Prophets wit-
 nesses, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall
 receive remission of sins. Acts x. 43. But our author seems to
 entertain a very mean opinion of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 in order to eternal happiness; and yet after all, it is the very
 root and principle of all our good works, "purifying their hearts

“by faith.” “And this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith.” And from this divine principle flows all our love to God, and to one another; for “faith worketh by love.” Did our author imagine that the performance of the duties he exhorts to, were of any avail in the sight of God, without his celestial principle? If he did, he forgot “that without faith it is impossible to please God.” But he has a salvo for this—“I make no doubt (says he) but that, if you profess and practise according to your consciences, in religious matters, you will be enabled by God’s Spirit, to conquer all the temptations of the world, the Devil, and the flesh, and go on in the uniform discharge of every Christian duty.” Strange! at once the word of God is laid aside as the rule our faith and practise, and conscience, no matter whether it be right or wrong, is set up as the unerring rule; and faith hissed out of doors, and conscience laid as the foundation and ground-work of all our religious practise. But what if upon reading the *Alcoran*, I was persuaded in my conscience, that *Mahomet* was a prophet far superior to Christ, and that I should view him as an object worthy of my adoration, and that the account he gives of a future state was truly genuine, and far superior to the Scripture account—that there are millions who believe, and that in their conscience too, all the idle, unaccountable and absurd stuff contained in the *Alcoran*, no one will question. Now, because they believe these things conscientiously, will they be enabled by God’s Holy Spirit, to conquer all the temptations of the world, the Devil, and the flesh, &c. I see *Saperbus* you shudder at the inference. I firmly believe that *Jezebel* and her vast train of prophets, did from conscience believe that some divinity resided in the image of *Baal*. If they did. O cruel, narrow-minded, and bigotted *Elijab*, for putting these men of conscience to death. But it makes no odds what the great God reveals, what his unerring word dictates, although our author and his Christian brethren believe the very reverse (providing they believe it conscientiously) they may expect the assistance of God’s Holy Spirit to conquer all the temptations of the world, &c.

But for our author to have mentioned the grace of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as essentially necessary to salvation, and also in the practise of every moral virtue, so as to render them acceptable; perhaps he was aware that this question might be put; what are we to believe? “Negatively, you must not believe the *Athanasian* creed, for that would be the height of absurdity and impiety; this teaches you that there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; but you must, as I have from the

“ Scriptures abundantly demonstrated to you, that Christ and the Holy Ghost are persons inferior to God, and employed by his supreme authority in very high offices for the salvation of men ; Christ being appointed the Mediator, Head, and King of the Church, and the Holy Spirit first Minister in its government, who has Angels for his assistants : and although this my creed is not so very clearly expressed in the Holy Scriptures, yet my Christian brethren, from the unbounded affection which I have for your spiritual and eternal interests, you ought to believe it. And I expect your compliance with it the more readily, because you are men of reason and common sense, and will not I am sure set your seal to the senseless *Atanasian* Creed, nor admit any thing as an article in your belief which your reason cannot comprehend.”

It might be here enquired at our author, what particular hand has the Holy Ghost in our salvation? For he, together with Christ, is employed in very high offices for the salvation of men. As he has left us in the dark on this head, I shall leave it to his Christian brethren to bring him to the light any way they think proper. But let it be briefly noticed here, that all the offices of that Eternal Spirit respecting our salvation as such, as the one true God appropriates to himself, and which cannot be performed by any thing less than Almighty power. What an impious horrid expression ! how derogatory to the dignity of the ever blessed Spirit. “ The Holy Ghost is appointed first Minister in the government of the church, and has Angels for his assistants.” This is indeed blasphemy against the Holy Ghost with a witness ! I perfectly agree with our author in the inference he draws from the belief of the confession of his faith by his Christian brethren. In this case, as Christians and disciples of Christ, you have an undoubted right to make a serious and solemn protest against the doctrine of the *Atanasian* Creed. *Amen.* You cannot be offended if I, in the name of all who believe that there are three that bear record in Heaven, and these three are one, to make, as serious and solemn protest against your creed.

Permit me now *Superbus*, to present to your view, the account which our author gives of the sentiments of the church prior to the council of Nice. “ It is very remarkable (says he) the Christian doctrine is set forth very strongly in the first article (viz. of the creed.) “ I believe in one God the Father Almighty maker of Heaven and earth.” I am very glad by the bye, that he is so candid as not to impute to the Ante-Nicene Fathers the grossest idolatry, in believing in two Gods, as he and his friends the *Socinians* do.—But adds he, “ this was the old Christian language in all the Christian churches for the first

“ three hundred years after Christ. And it is well known to the learned, that the expressions excepted against in the Nicene Creed, or rather in the *Constantinopolitan* Creed concerning our Saviour, as not warranted by the Scripture, did not obtain in any genuine Creed, till the year 325, and that the anti-scriptural expressions concerning the Holy Spirit were not added till the year 381.”

Now might there not be an appeal made to the common sense of every man, whether or not, our author has not laid himself out to impose upon his readers, in a most egregious manner? I would ask any one who has in the most transient manner read his Bible, if he can find his Creed in it, viz. that the Son and the Holy Ghost, are persons inferior to the Father.—And that the Holy Ghost is prime Minister in the government of the Church, and has under him Angels for his assistants? Stand forth ye readers of the book of God, and declare if ever you found any such expressions from the beginning to the end of divine revelation. And yet he would impose this Creed upon you—But I advise you not to swallow it too hastily, lest it turn out to be like *Ezekiel's* roll, sweet in your mouth, but bitter in the issue.

But why does he think to impose this untruth on his readers, by insinuating that for the first three hundred years there was not such a doctrine known or taught, as the co-equality of the persons in the ever blessed Trinity?—I shall present to your view *Superbus*, a few testimonies to the contrary.

Dionisius of Alexandria, a little before his death, in an epistle to *Paul of Samosata*, asserts the doctrine of the Trinity in the clearest and most express manner; he mentions the Son as being “ the true God, and to be worshipped by every creature, with the Father and the Holy Ghost.”* According to some ancient *Arabick* manuscripts at Oxford, it was required that every church should have three gates, to represent the Holy Trinity—The Son is declared to have been from Eternity, *begotten*, not *made*; and there is this express form of doxology: Praise and honour and glory is due to thee (the Father,) and to him, (the Son,) and to the Holy Ghost, before all the worlds, and now and always, even to eternity.†

Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with *Trypho* the Jew, page 285, explains how Christ was the image of God, viz. Not on account of his corporal generation, but of his eternal generation from the Father, by which he was with the Father before all crea-

* See the second review of Mr. Whiston's account, &c. pag. 74.

† Second review, &c. pag. 75.

tures.* He calls it a heresy to say that these words, "let us make man after our own image," was spoken to the Angels, or that the body of man was the workmanship of Angels. But he says the Father here speaks to the Son, who came from the Father before all creatures. He confutes those *Rabbis* who depraving the Scripture, (says he) pretend that God spoke to himself, when he said let us make man, or to the elements, or to the earth, or any the like. He says that expression shows there was a number, at least two that were together, and those he makes to be the Father and the Son: And that without all doubt, says he, the Father there speaks to *one numerically distinct* from himself, and to an intelligent person.†

Tertullian is still more express on this head. God, says he in the afore-mentioned text, did not speak to the Angels as the Jews interpret, who do not acknowledge the Son, but that he spoke to the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and from hence he proves the Trinity in unity, in express words, and as positively as *Atanasius* himself. He says, *Scripturæ omnes et demonstrationem, et distinctionem Trinitatis ostendunt*, i. e. all the Scriptures show both a demonstration and distinction of the Trinity.‡

Justin Martyr, in his explication of this text, the Lord, (Heb. Jehovah) rained fire from the Lord (Jehovah) out of Heaven, interprets it of the Son, as a distinct person from the Father—*Ireneus* says the same, and proves Christ to be *definitive et absolute Deum*, & that he is *verus Deus et ex sua persona*—True God absolutely, and in his own person, and that the Lord rained fire from the Lord, was meant of him.—*Tertullian* says the same, and proves both the Trinity in unity. *Deos duos non præferimus*, we do not profess two Gods; and then he explains himself, —*non quasi non et Pater Deus, et Filius Deus, et spiritus sanctus Deus, et Deus unusquisque*. Not that the Father is not God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and each of them God.¶

I might have added to the foregoing a great many more testimonies from the *Ante-Nicene* Fathers in support of the present argument; and to convince you how insincerely our author deals with his christian brethren when he insinuates that for the three first centuries the doctrine of the *Atanasian* creed, concerning the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Ghost with the Father was neither asserted nor known.

* *Leslie* on the Socinian controversy, p. 48.

† p. 35. ‡ p. 36. ¶ p. 38.

I shall just quote one evidence more of the support of what I have just now said; and that from as bitter an enemy to christianity as almost ever it had; I mean the vile, but ingenious *Lucian*, who lived about 170 years after Christ. A man of his sagacity, and who took upon him to ridicule the christian faith, could not but know what it was, as then generally owned and professed by christians. Especially if as some tell us, that he was once a christian and turned apostate. Among other reproaches cast upon the christian religion in his *Philopatriis*, the following expressions are remarkable—"God reigning on high, great, eternal, heavenly, the Son of the Father, proceeding from the Father, one out of three, and three out of one." I know not what thou sayest; one that is three, and three that are one.—Some imagine that the *Philopatriis* was not wrote by *Lucian*, but by some other about the year 261; which answers my purpose just as well, to prove that the doctrine of the Trinity was received and believed in the christian church long before the council of *Nice*.

I shall have done with our author for the present, after showing you of what importance the belief of his creed is to the world at large, and how detrimental to the interests of true christianity, the belief of the *Atbanasian* creed is. I shall present you his opinion on this head in his own words.

"There have been of late years, very humble and christian applications made to the governors of the church, to reform several parts of our public service. But no point can, I think, more deserve the attention of christian governors, than what I have thought it my duty to propose to your examination, as it has done infinite mischief to the cause of Christ's religion; it being in vain to expect the conversion of *Jews*, *Mabometans*, and *Heathens*, whilst they are taught to believe, that the doctrine of the three persons and one God, and the worship practised in consequence thereof, are fundamental points of the gospel of Christ. But if this great offence was removed from the churches of Christ, we might then reasonably hope, that the time was drawing on apace, when, according to the prophecies of Scripture, the gospel will be preached in its original purity and simplicity, among all nations; and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name One. Rev. xi. 15. Zech. xiv. 9."

Now *Superbus*, if this be all true, what should be done? Here is a point of doctrine believed, and a form of worship practised according to that belief; and what is the consequence? Infinite

mischief is done to the cause of Christ's religion; the poor *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Heathens* are all kept close in the chains of unbelief, ignorance, and idolatry, in consequence hereof; the glory of the latter days is retarded by a judicial stroke from the *one supreme God* for teaching and believing the doctrine of the *Atbanasian creed*, in which we are commanded to believe and worship a Trinity in unity. It is somewhat surprising that no greater efforts have been made within these thirty years, for so long as I can learn this expedient has been proposed by our author; and yet except a very few, none have had either the courage or honesty to engage in this god-like work (as our author expresses it) of purging this *Atbanasian* leaven out of the church.

In order then to extirpate this noxious weed, that it should no longer do such infinite mischief to the church, and hinder the spreading of the gospel throughout the world, there should be a general council held of the clergy, Archbishops, and Bishops, &c. along with the Presbyterian clergy, of all denominations, who are infected with this deadly poison. The clergy of the church of England to bring along with them the *thirty-nine* articles; those of the Presbyterian persuasion, the confession of faith; and there and then, in the face of the sun, consign those pestilential wicked creeds, confessions, and articles to the flames. But do you reply, why burn the whole *thirty-nine* articles and the confession of faith, for one single point of doctrine? By all means—for this reason, the most of the other points of doctrine contained in the vile wicked books, are so inseparably connected with the doctrine of a Trinity, that there is no separating them; and if the belief of this has done such infinite mischief to the Christian church, so must the belief of those other points which are so inseparably connected with it; particularly the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction and atonement. The doctrine of Christ's supreme deity, and his vicarious and satisfactory sufferings, and his prevalent intercession, stand and fall together. With regard also to our manner of worship, we are taught you know, to worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—now we are the grossest idolators for paying any divine worship to persons who are not by *nature* God. So that to cut the work short, and effectually purge the church, let all go the same way.

Do you reply, is the work then finished? After these mischievous doctrines as contained in the aforesaid articles and confession of faith are condemned, may we expect the glorious day our *Prophet* predicts? Will the *Jews* own the *Messiah*, the *Mahometans* quit their *Alcoran*, and the *Heathens* abandon their idolatry? My dear friend you ought not to be in such a haste; the work is not half done, even when creeds and confessions are so-

lemly condemned.—To strike effectually at the root of the evil, the *Bible* must come under review. The doctrines contained in the *thirty-nine* articles and confession, are so built upon the word of God, that unless you dig up the foundation you never can cleanse the *leprous house*. What, although there was no creeds or confessions asserting a Trinity of persons; what, although the christian governors of Christ's church would take it in their head to condemn these to perpetual oblivion, because they contained the doctrine of the Trinity in unity and the other doctrines which are inseparably connected therewith; yet if the common people in reading their *Bible*, would light upon these texts, "there are three that bear record in heaven,—and these three are one."—"I and my Father are one;" &c. What, although we should get our creeds destroyed which assert, that by Christ's obedience and death we are justified before God; yet would not the people murmur, and almost be ready to rise in rebellion, when they read in the Scriptures, "that by the obelience of *one*, shall many be made righteous?" Would not the people, think you, sooner believe the word of God, than they would their christian governors? and would in a fit of desperation condemn them, for condemning their creeds and confessions, which, according to God's word, contain such doctrines? The greatest obstacle that I see in our author's plan of reformation, as a happy omen of glorious days, is the *Bible*. For the doctrines which he wants out of the way in order for the purification of the church, the Scriptures are to expressly and decidedly in their favour, that "he that runs may read."

O strange infatuation! thus to treat the prime distinguishing articles of our holy religion; to deny "the only Lord God, who is our Saviour;" "to count the blood of the covenant an unholily (a common) thing," not adequate to answer the great and gracious purposes which Heaven designed by it; to join with the peerless majesty of Heaven, a *creature*, in our religious acts of worship, to do despite to the Spirit of grace, to blaspheme his holy name, and deny his divine nature, and all this with a view to the conversion of *Jews, Mahometans, and Heathens*. Can we believe that our author was serious when he so roundly tells us, that the doctrine of the Trinity has done infinite mischief to the religion of Christ? A doctrine which has obtained a place in the most ancient creeds and doxologies in the christian church from its earliest infancy, to this very day, as will be shown afterwards? Is it possible to conceive that an infinitely holy, wise, and good God, would have suffered such a plant to continue so long in his church without rooting it up? There is I think, one standing evidence of the Lord's displeasure against the Eastern

churches for their virulently oppugning this article, and their bitterly persecuting the orthodox, viz. his judicially giving them up to strong delusions to believe alie. Who without shedding a tear, can view the standard of *Mabomet* set up in many famous and renowned churches in *Asia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*, where the Lord Jesus Christ once displayed the banner of the everlasting gospel; when to this ensign the nations fled as clouds, and as doves to their windows; where instead of this divine anthem, "glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," we hear nothing but, "there is no God, but God, and *Mabomet* his Prophet."—Would this last be sweeter melody in the ears of our author, than the former?

In the Lord's own time and way, he will open the eyes of the blinded *Jews*, whom for a time he, in a way of righteous judgment "hath concluded in unbelief." God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* In his own time, he will destroy the false Prophet which hath deceived such a considerable part of the world. The stone cut out of the mountains without hands, shall crush to pieces all the interest of that abominable deceiver. In *Constantinople* itself, shall yet songs be heard, "even glory to the righteous one." The time is approaching, God hasten it, when these nations which never saw the glory of our *Emmanuel*, nor heard his fame, shall see the former, and gladly embrace the latter. Yes, although Jesus is now despised, and that by his professed friends, and most injuriously vilified in his nature, person, offices, atonement, and intercession; yet I say the time is on the wing, when they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him: And his enemies shall lick the dust. When the kings of *Tarshish*, and of the isles shall bring presents: The kings of *Sbeba* and *Seba* shall offer gifts. Yea, when all kings shall fall down before him: When all nations shall serve him.† But in the mean time we may say with *Balaam*, Alas, who shall live when God doth this! And when the Lord will bring about this happy æra, you may believe, my dear friend, it will never be in a way of stripping divine revelation of its glory, nor the Son and the Holy Ghost of that divine honour and majesty, which is their natural and essential right, as distinct substances in the one Godhead, as our author wildly imagines.

I proceed now to another argument for proving the supreme deity of the Son of God, viz. that the same religious or divine worship is given to him in the holy Scriptures, which is appropriated to the most high, and only true God. And as the nature of the argument will of itself lead me out to speak of God es-

* Rom. xi. 32.

† Psal. lxxii. 9, 10, 11.

essentially considered, as the only proper object of all our religious worship and adoration, I shall at the same time prove, that the Holy Ghost is equally the object of religious worship with the Father and Son. Upon our entry on the argument, it may not be amiss to ask the adversaries of the supreme deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, wherein consists the formal reason of all the religious worship and adoration, due to Deity from his creatures? Doth it not consist in, and is it not founded upon the absolute, and unlimited supremacy of the divine nature, and all its other infinite & unlimited perfections; such as omniscience, omnipresence, all-sufficiency, omnipotence? &c. Again, might it not be enquired, whether, when the object is not possessed of these perfections, or where there is not this formal reason of divine worship, ought it to be given? And is it not the most gross idolatry to offer it? For certainly it is giving that glory to another, which is due to God alone, and which he, in his jealousy for his own honour, hath solemnly declared against: "How should my name be polluted?" "I will not give my glory to another." To give religious worship where there is not this formal reason for it, is the grossest idolatry; to withhold it from that object which is essentially and naturally infinite, eternal, and omnipotent, &c. is downright atheism. That the Lord Jesus Christ is possessed of those truly divine perfections, which entitle him to divine worship, I have endeavoured already to prove, in the foregoing considerations of him according to the Scriptures. I shall now prove the same thing by an argument *a posteriori*, and likewise the divinity of the Holy Ghost by the same manner of reasoning.

That divine religious worship is solely and exclusively attributed to the only true and most high God in Scripture, and is to be given to none else, is so plainly expressed in the first commandment, as that there can be no just reason to doubt of it: And is so placed in the very front of the moral law, as fundamental to all the rest, and so fundamental, that without it, it would lose its moral nature, and obligation upon us. Observe the language of the great Jehovah upon this head. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." This command is repeated afterwards more fully and expressly, "hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," one *Jehovah*, one self-existent original Being; and with regard to this great and glorious *Jehovah* it is added, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."—"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him," &c. And to show that this command is of eternal obligation, and is exclusive not only of the *gods* of the heathens, but of all that are not the only living and true God, Christ hath recited it again, with a still more express and evident

limitation of it, to that God alone. It is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve.* These words of Christ are an answer to satan's proposal, that he should fall down and worship him.† The worship satan demanded was of a *religious* nature, otherwise this answer of Christ, taken from the divine law, would have been nothing to the purpose, for that law only respected religious worship: And yet the religious worship satan demanded, seems not to be that of the highest kind, but only of a relative and subordinate nature; for the reason and ground of his demand was his pretence, that he could give to Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.‡ But he did not pretend to give them, as things that were originally his own, but as deposited in his hands to be at his disposal. All this power will I give thee and the glory of them, (viz. of the kingdoms of the world) for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will give it. Here he only speaks of himself as a *constituted* God, and demanded only a worship suitable to that character, which might be pretended would ultimately and reductively terminate in the true God, who gave that power to him. Now Christ in answer to this, does not say (as he justly might) that the devil's claim of that power was but a vain and false pretence, or that Christ was a greater person than satan could pretend to be; but he tells the devil, that even on supposition that what he alledged was true, (which Christ did not then think fit to dispute with him) yet he ought not to be worshipped, for this plain reason, because he was not that only true God, who had said, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and shalt serve him." And to make the sense still more evident and convincing, adds, "him *only* shalt thou serve." The plain meaning of our Lord's answer is this, viz. that there is no power or authority delegated to any, no generous or beneficent action which any one may be authorised by God to do us, is or can be the formal cause of our worshipping that creature. The object of our religious worship and service must be a God by nature.

Arians and *Socinians* will tell us, that God alone is to be worshipped as the first and supreme cause of all things, and the chief cause of our salvation; but yet religious worship and service may be paid to Christ as the immediate cause of that salvation, which God intended by him to procure, and bring to pass for us. But the question is, where is such a distinction found in all the Scriptures? Were not Moses and Aaron intermediate causes of the

* Luke iv. 8. Math. iv. 10.

† Math. iv. 9. † Math. iv. 9.

preservation and happiness of the Israelites, whom God by them brought out of Egypt? Did they not by their prayers, supplications and intercessions, preserve them many times from present death? Might they therefore pay religious worship to them, provided it was directed to the glory of the one true God whose ministers they were? Might they not do this to Joshua, who carried salvation in his very name? The apostles are called co-workers with God for our salvation, their doctrine is called "the Saviour of life, unto life," and they are said to "save them that hear them:" Must we therefore pay religious adoration to them? Vain therefore is this subterfuge by which the *Socinians* endeavour to justify their religious adoration of that Jesus whom they maintain to be a creature only, and whose divinity they deny. Hence also we find the apostle blaming the Galatians when, in their state of heathenish idolatry, they "did serve vice to them which by nature are no Gods." The strength and emphasis of the apostle's argument to show the blind idolatry of their Gentilism, lies in the object of their worship, that they served not the true God, who is God by nature, originally so, but gods of another sort, who, however they came to be gods, were not so *by nature*, and therefore had not *that* in them, which is the only proper ground and formal reason of divine worship. If Christ is not God *by nature*, might not the Galatians have retorted the argument on the apostle, and said, you worship Christ and have taught us to do so too, and therefore by your own argument, both you and we are guilty of the like idolatry still, in worshipping one that is not by nature God? We have only changed the object, but are still committing the same sin against the only true God. But is it possible to conceive, that the apostle would have argued at such a rate as would have overthrown the whole worship of the Christian church, supposing Christ to be then worshipped by it, as I shall show afterwards? And by this very argument we may be assured that the apostle believed and preached that Christ is *by nature* God.

And further here let it be observed, that so fully possessed were the apostles of this fundamental principle of all true religion, that when any pretended to offer religious worship to them, they utterly rejected it, and that with the highest indignation. Thus when *Peter* apprehended that *Cornelius* meant him religious worship, by falling down at his feet, he immediately put a full stop to him on this ground, that he was only a man, and therefore no religious worship was due to him; *Peter* (we are told) took him up, saying, stand up, I myself also am a man.* And when the

* Acts x. 25, 26.

apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas*, were treated with religious rites at *Lystra*, because of the miraculous power God had there put forth, with what detestation and abhorrence did they reject that affront to the deity? They directed them to pay all religious worship to the deity only, who made the world. They rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, first, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things thereip.* We find also, that when the beloved apostle offered to worship an angel, he forbid him for this reason, because he was not God, and directed him to pay that honour to God only. "See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant.—Worship God." Thus it is evident, that divine worship is by the doctrine of the Scriptures to be confined wholly and alone to the only true God, and to be given to him, and to none besides him.

Before I quit this I shall give you the sentiments of a very learned and ingenuous author on the text already cited in Gal. iv. 8. "Hence we learn (says he) the consequence of the *Socinian* hypothesis, that Jesus Christ is not God by nature, and yet is to be worshipped with the same worship which all christians give to him who is by nature God, seeing it teacheth us to do what *Paul* here condemneth in the *Heathens*. And surely it must be absurd to make that an article of christian faith, and a part of christian worship, which the apostle here makes the great crime of the heathen world, and a certain evidence of their ignorance of the true God—That the *Socinians* cannot answer this objection, appears from what they here return to, viz. that Gods by nature is not opposed to Gods by grace, or to those who have received their divinity from the one true God, for to serve and worship such a God by reason of the empire which he hath received from God is not profane and wicked, but pious and necessary. Now in answer to this, I say,

"That it is very evident from the text, that those who are not Gods *by nature*. are opposed to him who is God by nature, viz. to him whom the *Heathens* knew not, and to him whom the *Galatians*, being Christians knew, and by whom they were known. Since then the *Socinians'* God by grace, is not a God by nature; since he is not the God intended in these words, ye know not God;" "he must be ranked among those which are here opposed to him.

"I have elsewhere showed (says he) that the *Heathens* had the very same sentiments with the *Socinians*, as to the worship

* Acts xiv. 14, 15.

“ of their inferior *Deities* ; and it is wonderful to see how they
 “ concur in sense, and almost in words. Indeed there is scarce
 “ any plea they use for the worship of Jesus Christ as a *made God*,
 “ which was not before used by the *Philosophers* for the worship
 “ of their inferior *Deities*.”*

But to be a little more particular here, if we particularly attend to the voice of divine revelation on this head, we will find, that that divine worship which is peculiarly appropriated to the only true God, is by Scripture warrant given to Christ, and required to be paid to him.

We will find those Angels who refuse divine worship from others because they are not God, pay it to Christ because he is God; and that by the Father's express command. When he bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him.† And in order to obviate any difficulty which might arise respecting his being the proper object of religious worship, the Father calls him by a title expressive of his eternal, independent, and necessarily existent Being, which perfections as I already told you, are constitutive of the formal reason of all our worship: “ Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” Jacob we find on his death-bed worshipped him, when he applied to him for blessings on Joseph's sons, saying, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; which Angel could be none other than Christ, the Angel of the covenant.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth in the days of his tabernacling among men, he admitted of divine worship, as his due, and never made the least objection, or entered the least caution against it, or put the least restraint upon those who offered it. Now is it possible to conceive, that he should be less careful of his Father's honour, than the angels or his disciples were? Or can we imagine, when he found those who worshipped him running headlong into the grossest idolatry by paying divine honors to him, that he would not have protested against it? But we meet with no reproof, nor the least hint to those who worshipped him, that they were in an error; but instead of this he readily accepted of all that religious worship and service, that was given him. We are told that several who came to this glorious physician to be healed of their bodily disorders, fell down and worshipped him. And that these instances are to be understood of religious worship, appears from their *faith* expressed in him at the same time, as in one that was able to do whatever they wanted; which faith in him was an exalted act of divine worship.—There came a leper, we are told, and worshipped him,

* Dr. Whitby upon the place.

† Heb. i. 6.

saying, "Lord, or Jehovah, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." Christ we find, in a godlike manner, replies, "I will, be thou clean." Christ we find, approved of this man's faith in him as an Almighty agent, and granted his request. When Peter at the command of Christ, left the ship to go to him on the water, and when in this attempt he found himself ready to sink, he cried out, "Lord save me!" And it is very observable that Christ was so far from reproving him for this act of worship, that he reproved him for not being more strong and confident in it, saying unto him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

And when he came into the ship, and had by his godlike power stilled the wind, the whole company joined with Peter in worshipping him, as the Son of God: Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, thou art the Son of God.* We find also when Jesus arose from the dead, and appeared to his disciples, that some worshipped him, while some doubted: they who worshipped him did their duty; and it was the sin of those that doubted. And is it to be questioned that this was divine worship; since by that his appearance to them, he proved his Godhead, according to what he had told them, that he would raise himself again? And as soon as Thomas saw the proofs of his resurrection, he worshipped him in an address of faith, saying to him, "my Lord, and my God." And we find, that Christ was so far from finding fault with that adoring expression of his faith, that he commended him for it.

And we find *Superbus*, after his ascension into Heaven, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, (by which the evidence and glory of his God-head appeared in greater lustre than was consistent with his humbled state) the Scriptures speak abundantly of the divine worship that is paid to him and demanded for him. Is he not represented as well as the Father, the object of our faith, love, obedience? &c.

He is the object of prayer equally with the Father. Stephen in his last moments, and when he was full of the Holy Ghost directed his prayer to Jesus. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.†

* Math. xiv. 33.

† Some have such a reluctance in allowing any thing that is divine to Jesus; read the words thus; Lord of Jesus receive my spirit. One would imagine by giving such a turn to the text, that this was the last breathings of a desperate cause. But what reason is assigned for such a reading? None but this; because the word *Jesus* is indeclinable; that makes it no more *of* Jesus, than *in*, *by*, *with* or *from* Jesus. And

“ And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge.” Is not the prayer of this *protomartyr* exactly the same for matter and form, with that which Christ prayed, as man, to his Father in his last moments?—The great apostle of the Gentiles did, in as direct a manner, and as far as appears, ultimately directed his prayer to Jesus as the proper object of this act of religious worship. For this thing (viz. the thorn in his flesh) I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said, my grace is sufficient for thee: and my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Cor. xii. 8. 9.

We find it made the distinguishing character of Christians as such, that they are those who call upon the name of Christ, which includes the whole of religious worship, and prayer particularly as a leading part of it. Observe the Apostle’s description of them is, that they “ call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” And Annanias speaking to Christ of Saul’s commission against his people said, he had authority from the chief Priests to bind all that call on thy name. Acts ix. 14. And as soon as God by his grace had called Paul to the work of the ministry, and when he actually exercised that function, “ all that heard him “ were amazed, and said, “ is not this he that destroyed them, “ which called on his name in Jerusalem?” And to show still farther, that Christ was addressed in prayer in the same manner with the Father, they are frequently joined together in the same petitions, without the least appearance of a higher honor given therein to one, than to the other. Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you. 1 Thess. iii. 11. Many instances of this joint worship of the Father and Son, in a way of prayer for grace, mercy, and peace, are to be found at the beginning and close of most of the epistles. And sometimes grace is asked absolutely from Christ, without any notice taken of the Father. The prayer of the whole church to Christ, and the Apostle’s prayer to him for them, shuts up the whole canon of the Scripture.—Surely (says Christ) I come quickly. Amen, says the church even to some Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, (says the Apostle) be with you all. Amen. What can more express the sameness of this kind of worship, which is offered to the Son, with that which is offered to the Father.

Again, Christ is the object of praise equally with the Father.

this text is as much *Lord Jesus*, as it is possible for either *Greek* or *Latin* to express it.

Are they not joined together in these acts of adoration with equally lofty and exalted strains? I beheld, (says John) and I heard the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elder; &c.*

Now *Superbus*, is not every creature here represented as paying this solemn supreme homage equally to the Lamb, and to the Father? And doth not this evidently exempt Christ from being a mere creature, since he, together with the Father, is the *object* and not the *offer* of this adoration? I beheld (says the same inspired penman) and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,—saying, salvation, to our God, which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. Rev. vii. 9, 10. Now if the expressions in these places are understood as acts of the most adoring supreme worship when applied to the Father, why should they not be so understood when applied to the Son? Since they are offered to them jointly in the same breath, and in the same sublime manner, without any appearance of different degrees of regards to them respectively. When these, and such like acts of adoration are given only to the Father, *Socinians* and *Arians* never call in question, but the Father is the proper object of these: and why should it be questioned, when the very same are oftentimes given only to the Son, without mentioning the Father at all? Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; to him be glory both now and forever. Amen.† And “to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.” These and the like doxologies, which are applied to Christ, are exactly of the same strain, and in the very same words, with those applied to the Father. Now unto God and our Father, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.‡ But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Jesus Christ.—To him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

Permit me *Superbus*, to offer to your consideration what the author of the *Athanasian Creed* &c. offers on this head.—“To worship one supreme God, (says he) and him only, does not preclude God from a right to appoint an inferior worship to be paid to a person in the capacity of a Mediator: which we find to be a plain matter of fact recorded in the gospels.”

One would imagine that our author had collected a great part of the New Testament in support of his hypothesis; but let the reader peruse these Scriptures never so carefully, he will (I can

*Rev. v. 11, 12, 13, &c. †2 Pet. iii. 18, ‡Phil. iv. 20.

assure him) not meet with one, either directly or indirectly to establish this point, which he has the effrontery to palm upon his incautious reader, as an article beyond all dispute authenticated by the Spirit of truth. I could wish to be informed where in all divine revelation any such position can be found; viz. "that God has a right to appoint an inferior worship to be paid to a person in the capacity of a Mediator."—And that this must be true our author speaks with all the assurance of an oracle; "which we find (says he) to be a plain matter of fact recorded in the gospels." But perhaps you will reply *Superbus*, that I am not doing the author justice: has he not been endeavoring all along to introduce the word of God, to support the doctrine of an inferior God; why should we now be blamed to summon in the same evidence in support of an inferior subordinate worship? But might it not without any impeachment on the good sense of our author be enquired, what are the things essentially requisite to constitute an inferior God; and an inferior subordinate worship? Might it be asked again, whether in his opinion this inferior God is really and essentially God? If he answer in the affirmative; I ask again what divinity, or philosophy will endure such doctrine? If this supposed inferior God be not truly and essentially God, then he is a mere creature; for there is no medium between these two: and doth not the Scriptures over and over assure us, that no divine honors whatsoever are to be paid to any creature?

While we are discoursing upon the worship and nature of God who made us, we are certainly treading upon holy ground, and consequently should take good heed to our steps, and walk with all manner of holy reverence and caution. I shall suppose then that our author, or any of his adherents, enter their closet, and shut the door upon them, according to our Lord's direction, and in an act of religious worship, address the Saviour of sinners in the words of Peter, "Lord save me." Again, in the same religious exercise, let them adopt the Publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me the sinner." What an intermixture and confusion of ideas in the same duty. That Christ is to be worshipped is acknowledged, but care must be taken that in our offering him the sacrifice of prayer and praise, that we thus worship an inferior God, with inferior worship. Even the Saints in glory must be to eternity on their guard, that when they are ascribing salvation, power and glory to the Lamb, they attribute these not in their full latitude and extent, but in a limited manner and degree.

Our author argues in defence of inferior Mediatorial worship to Christ, and lays a great stress upon it, from his appearance on the throne under the character of a Lamb. Let us hear his own

words.—“ This is really arguing in defiance of the plain doctrine
 “ of the New Testament, wherein we are required to pay abso-
 “ lute supreme honor and worship to the one God and Father of
 “ all, and inferior or Mediatorial worship to the one Mediator
 “ Jesus Christ, who is represented at the very time he is receiv-
 “ ing the greatest honor recorded of him by the sacred writers,
 “ under the character of a Lamb that was slain; a character ab-
 “ solutely inconsistent with the notion of his title to supreme ho-
 “ nor and worship.”* It is very strange to find our author so
 peremptory and dogmatic, with regard to the New Testament
 command to pay inferior or mediatorial worship to Christ: God
 no less than *requires* us so to do. I am sure such a command is
 not contained in the moral law; for there, we are positively pro-
 hibited from acknowledging, or worshipping any but the one on-
 ly living, and true God: And if contained in the New Testa-
 ment, I own I never found it. But he imagines, the appearance
 our Lord Jesus makes on the throne as a slain Lamb, is a most
 invincible argument to prove both the inferiority of his nature,
 and of that worship which is to be given him. But I ask, in
 what other form, and under what other character can the Son
 of God the Saviour, appear in the midst of the throne, than that
 of a Lamb? Although our author and others, should improve
 this astonishing condescension to his dishonour and degradation;
 yet thanks be to God, that the same God who was “ manifested
 “ in the flesh,” and seen wearing our human nature here on earth,
 hath not laid it aside, now when he is on the throne! And as I
 already told you *Superbus*, that very same divine, and infinitely
 glorious person, appearing in the form of a Lamb; has salvati-
 on, honour and glory ascribed to him, as well, and with the same
 breath as to the Father. As an inferior God, so inferior and me-
 diatorial worship, is a doctrine unknown in heaven: I wish it had
 never been heard of on earth.

But *Superbus*, it is not easy to discover what our author means
 by mediatorial worship. Is it possible to define it? Is it religi-
 ous inferior worship? Doth it consist in constituting Christ the
medium of worship; or, in worshipping him under the character
 of Mediator? Let us examine these a little more particularly.
 An image has been sometimes thought a medium of worship,
 when God is supposed to be worshipped by, and through the im-
 age; as in the instance of the golden calf, and the calves set up
 at *Dan* and *Bethel*. Such mediatorial worship as this, leaves
 very little honour to the medium: All is supposed to pass through
 to the ultimate object. Thus the Egyptians in worshipping the

facred animals, supposed the worship to pass to the deity whereunto the animals belonged. Our author has some expressions which would seem to look this way—"It being declared by them, (viz. the apostles) in great numbers of instances, that the one God and Father of all is the only supreme object to whom, or to whose ultimate glory, all religious worship should be directed."—"Again, (says he) absolute supreme worship and honour are due to the person of the Father, as the one supreme God; and the worship of Christ is inferior or mediatorial, redounding to the glory of God the Father."* I will not from these expressions absolutely say, that our author meant that Christ is to be considered in no other point of view than merely as the medium of worship, if it was so, his notion of mediatorial worship is low enough.

Again, doth our author mean by mediatorial worship, as if we were to pray to Christ only to pray for us? Thus Saints and Angels are prayed to by the Church of Rome, in order that they may be their intercessors. This brings the Son of God to a very low ebb—he can give nothing to us, nor do any thing for us, but only asks another to give, and do what we want. But is there any warrant to pray to any but God? How dishonorable to the ever blessed Redeemer to suppose that he can of himself do nothing for us! Has he not declared the very contrary.† But we need not be at any great loss to find out our author's meaning, which seems to be this, that "Christ is to be worshipped with an inferior mediatorial worship redounding to the glory of God the Father." And again, adds he, "the one God and Father of all is the only supreme object to whom, or to whose ultimate glory, all religious worship should be directed." Now here he supposes, that Christ may be directly worshipped, but that that worship redounds to the glory of God the Father, through him, as through a medium. Now might not our author be asked, whether the worship that he supposes may be paid to Christ, is supreme, or inferior? He has answered this query himself, by plainly, and in the most peremptory terms declaring, that supreme worship is not his due. It must then be inferior; and if so, I maintain that it can never pass on to the supreme object who would not be honored, but greatly affronted with inferior worship. It must therefore rest in the inferior object, and so cannot be called mediate, but ultimate worship. And I may just add here, (let our author and his friends say what they will) that no worship of a *creature*, supposing that creature never so highly dignified, can terminate in the *Creator*, or be for his glo-

* pag. 92.

† John xiv. 13, 14.

ry, because he has absolutely forbidden all creature-worship; and in the very highest consideration of Christ in the opinion of the *Arians*, he is but a *Creature*. Doth not the Scriptures always suppose that all our religious worship terminates in the object to which it is directed? Is it not evident, that all image-worship, or creature-worship, terminates in the image, or creature to which it is directed? When the Israelites worshipped the calf, they offered sacrifices to an idol, not to God; and they worshipped the molten image, not God, in doing it; however they might intend, and mean it (as certainly they did) for Jehovah. They are said to have “forgot God their Saviour,” notwithstanding their intention to remember him in it; because it was not remembering him in a manner suitable to his commandment, which was to offer worship to God only: So also *Jereboam* is said to have made other *gods*, and to have cast God behind his back, notwithstanding his intention to terminate all the worship in the true Jehovah. Might it not here be queried, whether paying religious worship to any thing, is not in Scripture stile, making a God of it? This is true even of what is called mediate, or relative worship: e. g. in the case of the golden calf, and the calves of *Dan* and *Betbel*.

What then, doth our author ask, is the result of all this? Doth not the worship of Christ terminate in the glory of God the Father? Admit that it does so: Then certainly the worship of Christ is not creature-worship.

For, since all worship terminates in the object to which it is directed, or offered, if the same act of worship offered to Christ terminates in God the Father; then the case is plain that it terminates in *both*, and both in this case are one undivided object.

I may just observe here *Superbus*, that all religious worship has an immediate respect to the divinity of the person to be worshipped. That must be presupposed in all religious worship; otherwise such worship must be downright idolatry. This foundation being laid, whatever personal characters, or offices we consider the person worshipped under; *divine* goes along with it. Christ is a divine Mediator, a divine Priest, a divine Prophet, and a divine King: And so our worship of him never wants its proper object, never moves from its proper foundation, but remains constantly the same. Our considering the Son of God under the character, or office of Mediator, does not hinder us from considering him as God at the same time; (indeed, strictly speaking, if he had not been God, he could not have been a fit Mediator) any more than our considering the Father as King, Judge, Preserver, hinders us from considering him also as divine.

All the acts and offices of Christ relative to us, are only so many manifestations of his goodness, power, wisdom, and other attributes; which attributes are founded in his divine nature, which nature is common to the Father and him: Thus all our religious acknowledgments centre and terminate in one and the same divine nature, and all our particular acts of worship, amount to no more than one worship, one divine worship belonging equally to the Father and Son.

“ *Philemon*, I would be very glad if you could inform me of the practise of the Christian church, with regard to the article of religious worship, for the three first centuries? Did they pay divine worship, and give divine honor, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three co-equal, and co-eternal persons?”

Superbus, I am very happy to think that I am able to satisfy you on this head; and to give you incontestible proofs, that the constant practise of the church in that period was, to ascribe all praise, honor and glory to the undivided Trinity.

The brethren of Smyrna conclude their epistle concerning the martyrdom of *Polycarp*, in these words: Brethren we bid you farewell, adhering to the precepts and gospel of Jesus Christ; through whom, and with whom, be glory and honor, to God the Father, and the Holy Ghost.—Parallel to this, is that in the acts of *Ignatius’s* martyrdom: Glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ; through him, and with whom, to the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory and power, in the holy church, throughout all ages.—Amen.* Nothing can be more express on this head than the following passage of *Gregory Thaumaturgus*—For so I believe, and may whosoever is my friend agree with me to worship God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, three persons, one God-head, not divided in glory and honor, and essence and kingdom.†

I may just observe to you here *Superbus*, that the christians during the three first centuries, as they believed that in the unity of the God-head, there were three distinct subsistences, and whilst they worshipped these three divine distinct persons from this principle of faith, they were not so careful with regard to the mode of expression: But when the subtleties of the *Arian heresy* had spread a very dangerous contagion through the church, and wrested such general expressions, which were used, while “the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul,” to

* See Trapp’s Serm. page 86.

† See more to the same purpose in the Lord Bishop of London’s Letter defended, page 37.

that pernicious scheme of divinity, departing from the orthodox sense in which they were originally intended, and framing such new modes of worship as to suit their hypothesis, the famous council of Nice was assembled under *Constantine* to remedy this growing evil. The Fathers in that council declared the Catholic doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father in the most explicit terms, as is to be seen in the *Nicene Creed*.

The question which was then agitated with so much heat and contention, related only to the nature of the Son. In that matter therefore the *Nicene* Fathers declared themselves at large, and in some subsequent councils confirmed and ratified what they had done. But with regard to the Holy Ghost, they only briefly professed their belief in him, as not thinking it needful to enlarge farther upon a subject which was not then in debate.

But it was not long until the *Macedonian*, or *pneumatomachian* heresy gave the church the same disturbance upon this article, as the *Arian* had done upon the other. Whereupon another council in the same century was held at *Constantinople*, wherein the Holy Ghost was declared to be *Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who together is worshipped and glorified*; and this was added to that creed or confession of faith, which the *Nicene* Fathers had drawn up before. We are by no means to imagine as our adversaries alledge, that this was the first rise of such doctrines being held in the church, for though the use of some new words was found necessary for the clearer explication of the primitive faith, and to guard it against the new subtleties of those who were studying to pervert it, yet these councils never assumed an authority to alter "the faith which was once delivered to the saints," but only to declare what had been taught from the beginning.

"*Pbilemon*, is it true what I have oftentimes heard asserted, that few of the learned and impartial *Atbanasians*, from the very days of their founder, till some controversial writers such as Bp. *Bull*, Dr. *Grabe*, and Dr. *Waterland* denied the truth of this fact, viz. that the *Anti-nicene* Fathers were generally against the *Atbanasian*, and for the *Eusebian* doctrines?"*

Superbus, it would be a most a material point gained if it could be proven by the *Arians*, that the tenets embraced by them were handed down successively from the Apostles, and generally embraced by the Christian church until they came to be found fault with, and even anathematized by that hot-headed innovator *Atbanasius*: That is, if they could prove that the Apostles, and the Christian church for the three first centuries were *Arians*.—

* See Mr. Whiston's reply to the Earl of *Nottingham*, page 3.

In this case it is certainly high time for those whom we call the Orthodox to be looking about them. If this be true, the Lord knows, they are in a most horrid mistake.

In order to find out whether this be truth or not, let us trace this matter down from the first beginning of *Arianism*, about the year 319. And it may be known from *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria*, what opinion the Catholics in general then had of the novelty of the *Arian*, or *Eusebian** doctrines.

In the year 321, he with his clergy, in their circular letter, represents the *Arians* as fallen into a great apostacy, and as fore-runners of *Anticbrist*. They exclaim against the *Arian* doctrines in this manner, and in these words. Whoever heard such things as these? Or who, that now hears them, is not astonished at them, or does not stop his ears for fear of polluting his ears with such impurity of doctrine? Who that hears *John* declaring that "in the beginning was the word," does not condemn those that say that he once was not? In the conclusion of the epistle, they compare them with *Hymæus* and *Philetus*, & the traitor *Judas*. And they anathematize them as enemies to God, and subverters of souls. Now can any one suppose that these good men would ever have gone these lengths in their censure, had they had the least suspicion, that the *Arian* doctrines were at all agreeable to the faith of the *Ante-nicene* churches?†

Two years after this, the same *Alexander* in his letter to *Alexander* of *Constantinople*, goes on in the same warmth of zeal against the *Arian* doctrines. The abettors and favorers of them he ranks with the *Ebionites*, *Artemonites*, and *Samosatenians* (condemned heretics) brands them as novelists of late appearing, as men that thought none of the ancients worthy to be compared with them, pretending to be the only wise men themselves, and to be inventors of doctrines which never before entered into man's head. Little did this man imagine that the *Ante-nicene* church adopted the doctrines introduced by the *Arians*.

About the year 352, *Atbanasius* wrote his epistle concerning the decrees of the *Nicene* Council. What was his opinion of the *Ante-nicene* church, will sufficiently appear from this one passage, which runs thus—We give you demonstration that our doctrine has been handed down to us from Father to Father. But you, ye revivers of Judaism, and disciples of *Caipbas*, what writers can you bring to father your tenets? Not a man can you name

* They were called *Eusebians* from *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia*, one of the chief promoters of the *Arian* cause.

† See the preface to Dr. Waterland's second defence, page 7.

of any repute for sense or judgment—all abhor you excepting only the Devil, who has alone been the Father of such an apostasy.

I may add further *Superbus*, the testimony of *Epiphanius* on this head; who about the year 371 says, that the Apostolical faith continued pure and uncorrupted 'till the time of *Arius*, who divided the church;—and who by the instigation of the *Devil*, and with an impudent forehead let his tongue loose against his Lord. So little did he imagine that *Arianism* was primitive Christianity. He further observes, that had it not been for the subtle practices of *Eudoxius*, Bishop of *Constantinople*, in perverting and corrupting the most pious Emperor *Valens*, the very women and children, and all that had been in any tolerable measure instructed in Christian principles, would have reprov'd and routed the *Arians*, as blasphemers and murderers of their Lord. Such was the assurance the *Atbanasians* then had, that their faith was the settled and standing doctrine of the primitive churches, all the world over, till the time of *Arius*.*

My dear *Onesimus*, I have just to inform you, that I had scarcely finished the last sentence, when *Superbus* fainted away; and continued for such a length of time in that state, as made me apprehensive that he had indeed paid the last debt of nature; nothing else was judged by the disconsolate family. Loth was the affectionate wife to part with the object of her affections. Fain would she have recalled (as she imagined) the departed soul. O! with what reluctance did the tender offspring of a tender hearted parent yield him up, who was their present comfort, and the hope of their future support. But alas! who can retain the Spirit winging its way to another world; or who can obtain a discharge in that war? However for the present, we were all disappointed, agreeably disappointed. Enfeebled nature made one struggle more. The soul seemed unwilling to leave its present habitation, and launch into unknown regions. He opened his eyes once more, and speech returning, he soothed the griefs, and comforted the hearts of his disconsolate weeping family.—He tendered each of them respectively his dying advice. Grace seemed to be poured into his lips. Raising himself on his pillow, he took an affectionate farewell of all present. Holding his wife by the hand, he addressed her in the following terms.

“ You, the dear object of my affections I must leave. The union between you and me must shortly be dissolved. You will be no more mine—I will be no more yours. Where I am go-

* See more to the same purpose in the preface to Dr. Waterland's 2d defence.

ing, all the relations by which we stand connected to one another in this world, shall only be remembered as waters that fail. I leave you under a burden of cares ; but remember, God, the Almighty God, defendeth the cause of the widow. Trust his faithfulness pledged in his promise ; “ let your widows trust in me.” Let this support the wife of my bosom, and the object of my tenderest affections. What more could you desire than the promise of an infallible Jehovah. Consider that “ he is not a man that he should lie ; nor the Son of man that he should repent. Hath he said it and shall he not do it, hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass ? ” Let this then comfort you in all your straits and support you in every difficulty.”

After this, with an eye of the most complacential affection he looked round upon his children, addressing them in the following terms :—“ I die my dear children, but God, the everlasting God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be with you. It is your mercy, it is my present comfort, that you have a Father in Heaven, which lives for ever and ever. You have I often dedicated to the fatherly care and protection of this kind and generous Parent. You are no more mine—O! may you be the Lord’s. Seek him early, and ye shall find him. When sinners would entice you to go along with them into the paths of immorality and vice, tell them you are not, you dare not be the servants of sin ; tell them you are children of the living God, and him you will serve, and him you will obey. I leave you my dear children, but I leave you on the paternal care and protection of that God before whose tribunal I must in a few moments appear : Let these my dying words have their due influence on you ; and O! may the blessing of the God of Jesurun, and the blessing of your dying Father rest on you through life.”

After a short pause he cast his eyes on me who was sitting close by his bed side, full of the most poignant grief, and stretching out his hand, he said, “ *Pbilemon,*” here the tears came trickling down his pale cheeks ; this gave some relief, and added new strength to more than overburdened nature. Being supported in his bed, and ordered all present to listen attentively to what he had to say, he thus began.

“ My dear *Pbilemon,* what I am now to declare needs not to be construed as the effusions of a weak and disturbed imagination, but as the words of truth and soberness. I bless God, my understanding is as quick, my memory as strong as ever.—To know that we are mortal, and to depart out of this mortal state, are, I find very different things. When our breasts are

" full of milk, and our bones moistened with marrow ; if we ad-
 " mit the thought of a future dissolution, we admit it rather as
 " an intruding guest. Seldom do we ruminate on this great
 " truth as we ought, *that we are mortal*. In the gaiety of our
 " spirits, how transiently do we think upon an *hereafter*. It is
 " not the happiness of every one to *die daily*. This grim mes-
 " senger has now a hold of me ; I can neither plead a discharge
 " nor a delay. All arguments would be of no avail to that re-
 " lentless tyrant. I die—in a short time, I must depart to that
 " place from whence I shall not return until the Heavens be no
 " more. I must say to corruption thou art my Father, and to
 " the worm thou art my sister and brother. Dreary thought !
 " And if it was not for the joyful prospect of a blessed immor-
 " tality, the thought would be entirely insupportable. I bless
 " God that I can in some measure say with *Paul*, I know in
 " whom I have believed.

" *Pbilemon*, I bless that kind auspicious providence that sent
 " you my way. You know my dear friend, that the current of
 " our disputations turned upon points with which the salvation
 " of our souls are nearly, and necessarily connected. I spoke
 " my mind without reserve ; and I spoke nothing but what
 " from my infancy I was taught, and eagerly imbibed. Long
 " did my mind waver—sometimes almost a proslyte to your
 " principles ; no, but to these contained in the oracles of the
 " living God. At other times, new objections were started to
 " my mind which drove me back, and I soon lost what I had
 " gained. But he that commanded the light to shine out of
 " darkness, hath shined into my benighted mind, and hath given
 " me an understanding to know him that is true. He hath gi-
 " ven me his Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation
 " in the knowledge of Christ.

" And now *Pbilemon*, I will, if your time and my strength
 " will permit, give you a brief summary of my faith and belief,
 " the sincerity of which I think you cannot dispute.—I believe
 " that there are three persons in the one undivided God-head,
 " Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, equal in power and glory.—I
 " believe that none but one who is possessed of infinite power,
 " could have expiated our sins, and made an atonement for our
 " souls. I believe therefore, that the second person in the ever
 " blessed and adorable Trinity, and who is the supreme God,
 " equal with the Father, in the fulness of time assumed our hu-
 " man nature into a personal union with the divine ; and in that
 " human nature, lived a sorrowful life, and died the cursed death
 " of the cross ; and that from this union of the two natures,
 " flows the virtue and efficacy of his death as a ransom for our

“ sins.—I believe the obedience of his life to the law precept,
 “ and his sufferings unto death in consequence of the law
 “ threatening, constitute that righteousness, upon the footing of
 “ which I must stand justified before the impartial tribunal of
 “ God.—I believe that no righteousness of the creature will be
 “ pleadable at God’s bar as the ground of our acquittance there.
 “ On this head I utterly and for ever renounce my former pha-
 “ risaical Creed : this I cordially disclaim and for ever aban-
 “ don. I look upon all my moral endowments and qualifica-
 “ tions to be but filthy rags ; yea, but loss and dung for the ex-
 “ cellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord. I be-
 “ lieve independent of Christ’s atonement and satisfaction in
 “ the room of the guilty, no flesh living can be justified ; and I
 “ am persuaded, that all who believe in him, shall be justified
 “ from all things, from which they could not be justified by the
 “ law of Moses.—I believe the absolute necessity of the vica-
 “ rious death of the Lord of glory, in order for pardon and ac-
 “ ceptance with God ; and that all those who have reached the
 “ throne, obtained the end of their faith, the salvation of their
 “ souls, upon the footing of his atoning righteousness.—I be-
 “ lieve that those who lived prior to his incarnation and death,
 “ were received into glory by virtue of their faith in him as the
 “ future Messiah ; who was the Lamb slain from the foundation
 “ of the world—And that he was the sum and substance of all
 “ the promises under the Old, as well as under the New Testa-
 “ ment dispensation—That he was the substance of the whole
 “ ceremonial law ; and that the Jews had the gospel preached
 “ to them under that legal dispensation, as well as we who live
 “ under the gospel economy, although vastly different with re-
 “ gard to perspicuity and evidence.—I believe also, with regard
 “ to the second person of the ever blessed Trinity, our Lord Je-
 “ sus Christ, that he is the centre where all the great lines of
 “ divine revelation do meet—That he is the sum and substance
 “ of all gospel preaching ; and that to preach Jesus and him cru-
 “ cified, as the great ordinance of Heaven for the salvation of
 “ sinners, is the only and effectual mean, to put a stop to the
 “ progress of vice and immorality, and to promote the interests
 “ of holiness among gospel professors—In a word, that to
 “ preach Jesus, and his vicarious propitiatory death, will be
 “ found in the issue, to be the only grand mean to promote the
 “ glory of God, humble the pride of human nature, and promote
 “ piety in the world.
 “ I believe that the third person in the Holy Trinity, the
 “ Holy Ghost, is equal with the Father & the Son, in all the es-
 “ sential and glorious perfections and attributes of deity ; that

“ he is equally the object of our religious worship and services
 “ with the Father and Son.—I believe, that in the economy of
 “ man’s redemption, he is that divine agent who works in the
 “ hearts of sinners, and begets in them all saving gifts and gra-
 “ ces ; and that independent of his gracious supernatural agen-
 “ cy, no man will ever be convinced of sin, or converted to the
 “ love and practice of holiness. I am persuaded, that sooner
 “ can the *Ethiopian* change his skin, and the leopard his spots,
 “ than men who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well, in-
 “ dependent of his all gracious operations on their souls.—I
 “ believe that moral suasion is entirely incompetent to answer
 “ this great end.—I am persuaded, that men, along with their
 “ holiness, have lost all power and ability to perform any action
 “ acceptable in the eye of infinite purity ; and that although
 “ the religious actions of wicked men may be, as to the matter
 “ of them, such as the law requires, yet formerly considered
 “ they are but splendid sins in the sight of God.

“ I am further verily persuaded that, to deny a Trinity of
 “ persons in the one undivided God-head, is subversive of the
 “ whole scheme of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures.
 “ That it tends in the issue to pour the greatest contempt on the
 “ grace of the Father, and to vilify the blood of the Son, in
 “ counting it a common thing ; and that also, such an opinion
 “ doth despite the Spirit of grace, by divesting him of his su-
 “ preme deity, and taking these offices which he executes in
 “ the application of redemption out of his hand, and lodging
 “ them in the hands of poor, sinful, and impotent creatures.

“ I believe the absolute necessity of faith to interest a sinner
 “ in Christ’s atonement and satisfaction ; and that it is only
 “ through faith in his blood, that we come to be actually and
 “ formally pardoned. I am persuaded that this grace is the
 “ gift of God ; an effect of his omnipotent power : and that
 “ wherever this supernatural grace is implanted, it will evi-
 “ dence its genuine and saving nature by its fruits ; it will work
 “ by love, purify the heart, and overcome the world. In a
 “ word, its genuine tendency will be to lead forward the belie-
 “ ver in the practice of universal holiness.—And I am also per-
 “ suaded, that there is no man living that will lead a godly life,
 “ or can do it, but a genuine believer in Jesus.

“ I further believe in the absolute sovereignty of God, who
 “ may do without any impeachment on the holiness and justice
 “ of his nature, in the armies of Heaven, and among the inha-
 “ bitants of this lower world, what he sees meet. I am persua-
 “ ded, that he may do with, by, and upon his creatures what
 “ pleaseth him : and that the sovereignty of his grace and love

“ t. sinners, runs through the whole scheme of our salvation from its commencement, to its final consummation.

“ I believe the absolute necessity of holiness in order to render us meet for happiness; and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and that no man living and dying in the practice of any known sin, or in the omission of any known duty, shall ever see God’s face in glory. And I am firmly persuaded, that without faith in Christ’s blood, there can be no holiness of heart or conversation; that his blood which is the meritorious cause of our justification, is also the meritorious cause of our sanctification. I believe there is no scheme that will fully answer the end to promote holiness and virtue, but that which directs the sinner immediately to that blood which cleanseth from all sin, and to that Holy Spirit, the beginner and promoter of all genuine holiness in the heart of a believer.

“ I believe and am firmly persuaded, that all true believers shall persevere unto the end, and in the end obtain the salvation of their souls; that Christ shall never lose one of those whom the Father gave him to be saved from wrath, through the virtue and efficacy of his all-atoning obedience and death, but shall be preserved through faith unto complete and eternal redemption.”

After having expressed himself in the foregoing manner, he desired to be laid down on his pillow, which was accordingly done. After pausing a few minutes, I asked him, if he was under any dread of his approaching dissolution; to which he replied, “ no. I know in whom I have believed. Insupportable would the thoughts of my entering into the world of Spirits be, if it was not for this, that I know that my Redeemer liveth.”—I asked him again, if he was now thoroughly sensible, that there is more requisite to beget confidence and courage in a dying hour, and secure a happy death, than the obedience and righteousness of the sinful creature. To which he replied: “ Yes *Philemon*, how could I face death with comfort, or appear before God with safety, upon the footing of that righteousness, which at best is as filthy rags. I thank God he hath effectually broken my proud heart, and hath discovered to me a rock upon which I may build with safety.” With a low and faltering voice he added, “ I have waited for thy salvation O Lord.” “ Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear none evil.” “ Lord Jesus receive my spirit.” And having thus spoken, he fell asleep in the Lord.

Farewel my dear *Oncsimus* : that you may die the death of the righteous, and that your last end may be like his, is, and ever will be the most fervent prayer of

PHILEMON.

RECANTATION,

OF THE

Baltimore Deist.

THE late opposition I have made to *deism* in the *Polemic Hall*, has answered my expectations to the full. It has caused the Christians to doubt, enquire, and with high seasoned suspicion ask, "Can any good come out of Gallilee?" On the other hand, it has caused the open and avowed deist to represent me as one of the most hateful and abominable pests; as one that never was, nor never will be stable in any cause; but like a weather cock, ever changing with the shifting breeze. In short, one in whom no dependence can be placed, in any situation, circumstance or state of life.

Had this ever been my disposition, I should have kept my excellent business in London, and at this time been as I then was, dyer and calender to the queen and princeesses of England; but my stable and invincible attachment to equal rights and equal laws, forbade me to shift with the times, but rather sacrifice my all, and cast myself almost penniless upon a foreign shore. Had I not done this, I should have been a mere *despicable slave*—a wretch that did not deserve existence, who for a little vile, contaminating trash, nicknamed wealth, could barter his integrity, join with despotism against the poor, and basely betray that cause for which a thousand Sidneys bled.

But my most formidable enemies are amongst those deists who wear the Christian mask; for they can vent their acrimonious spleen with double the effect, because their words are tipped with apparent sanctity, and come from hearts that seem to feel a decent and respectful zeal for the Christian cause. This class of men are assuredly the most infamous that have existence. Some of them were fickle enough, as well as I, to leave their

native land: and what are they doing here? I will tell you. In private they are republicans; in public drinking success to the cause of kings; in private they are deists; in public Christians; and frequently at church humbly watching for the loaves and fishes, if peradventure there should be a few to spare. From such stability as this, with all the sincerity of my soul I pray God to deliver me.

They have however put one truth in circulation about me, and so doing, have inadvertently paid Christianity a deferred compliment, for which I return my hearty thanks. Say they, "*whatever his pretensions may be, he is no Christian.*" To this I plead guilty. There is indeed, a wide difference between being a Christian in fact, and talking about Christianity; but this is a truth they have as yet to learn, and the time may come, when to know it, will only serve to aggravate remorse, feed the flame of bitter anguish, and blow reflection into an inward hell. Though I can call God to witness, that as it respects hypocrisy, I am guiltless, yet my mind, my affections, my every faculty, have been too long buried in the *rubbish of deistical delusion*, and fed too greedily in the company of filthy swine, on the husks of Pagan darkness, to be easily or speedily restored, so as to assume even the name of Christian. 'Tis an easy thing to sport and play upon the smooth surface of an ebbing tide, till we have gone beyond our depth, and almost out of sight of land, but how to return with safety is always exceedingly difficult, and sometimes, alas, impossible.

Others make a necessary inquiry—*How say they, came this man so suddenly to change his principles; and from a fierce defender of deism, instantly become an apparent zealot in the cause of Christianity?* To this I answer, that the change was by no means so sudden as they imagine; for I had doubts long before I knew their meaning, and when I did I kept them within my own breast; and I candidly confess that I was determined not to part with favorite principles on slight or flimsy proof; especially as I saw that the recantation would bring upon me every species of imputed infamy that malice could invent; but doubt succeeded doubt, and circumstance after circumstance occurred, till at last I was resolved fully and freely to investigate the two opposite systems, and bring them both to that touchstone by which all professions, all religions, all men and systems must be tried and fully proved, viz. "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*"

The result of my inquiry then, take as follows:—

1. That I never saw, heard or read of any man, woman or child that was reformed, either in the whole or in part, by embracing the principles of deism.



