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A N
E X A M I N A T I O N
O F

Mr. ROBINSON of Cambridge's PLEA

F O R T H E

DIVINITY of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

By a late MEMBER of the UNIVERSITY.

In the Preface, a part of Mr. White of Oxford's Appendix
to his late Bampton-Sermons, is considered.

Tantum rem tam negligenter—

TERENT. ANDR.

L O N D O N :

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M DCC LXXXV.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

The following work not controversial. Anecdote of Father Paul of Venice. Christ's true character to be chiefly sought for in the New Testament. Justin Martyr, a fanciful interpreter of Scripture. The Koran of Mahomet right in respect of the true doctrine of the Unity of God. Present State of opinions concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. Mr. White's very reprehensible language concerning Socinianism and Socinians. Remarks upon it. A sketch of the Scripture-evidence for and against the preexistence of Jesus Christ. Citation from the late Lord Barrington.

THE title of this work may cause it to be looked upon by many as mere theological controversy, of which they have heard so much and been so heartily tired; and determine them to look no further. If the writer knows any thing of himself and his dispositions, there is nothing to which he is more averse than to wrangle and dispute about any thing, and particularly on such a subject. His engaging himself therein at present, took its origin, as is intimated in the Introduction, from a concern to see the Scriptures ex-

hibited in such a manner, on a very important point both of faith and practice, as to impose on the greater number who are wont to take bold assertion for demonstration, and so as to discourage all rational inquiry. An attempt to shew the wrongness of such treatment of those sacred writings, and to point out the way to arrive at their true meaning, will, 'tis hoped, be found to have nothing of contentious divinity in it. Indeed the Author here examined has seldom given himself the trouble of doing any thing more, than barely to bring together texts of Scripture, without explaining them, or even shewing how they apply to his purpose, in proving Jesus Christ to be *truly* and *properly God*: presuming that it would be taken for granted, at sight, and upon his authority, that they prove the point for which he assigns them. So that the title of this tract of mine might with very great propriety have been; "An explanation of all the texts of Scripture produced by Mr. R. in proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ." How far it may afford any thing new or useful, the reader will judge.

Bishop Burnet, in his life of Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, in Ireland, who had been chaplain to the English embassy at Venice, and on terms of intimacy with the great Father Paul; mentions, in one place, " that (a) Bedell found the Father

(a) " Life of Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, in Ireland, 1685.
" p. 9."

“ had read over the Greek New Testament with
“ so much exactness, that having used to mark
“ every word, when he had fully weighed the
“ importance of it, as he went through it; he
“ had, by going often over it, and observing
“ what he passed over in a former reading, grown
“ up to that at last, that every word was marked
“ of the whole New Testament; and when Bedell
“ suggested to him critical explications of some
“ passages that he had not understood before, he
“ received them with the transports of one that
“ leapt for joy, and that valued the discoveries of
“ divine truth beyond all other things.” I
should be glad to emulate the diligence and
exactness of these two eminent persons, as I
profess an equal regard and reverence for those
divine writings: and to see any just illustration
of them, or an error of my own rectified, would,
I trust, give me pleasure above any worldly ac-
quisition. If I have been mistaken in what is
here put before the Public, it has not been for
want of application and pains to come at the
truth. And I have been as careful not to set
down any thing for which I had not good grounds,
and not to give a false colouring or undue weight
to any interpretation, as if I had been telling out
money to a child.

I am very far however from imagining, that I
have always given the true meaning, and fallen
into no errors in explaining the many passages

that have come before me; especially those from the Old Testament, which are so numerous, and by which our author would continually prove Jesus Christ to be Jehovah, the supreme God. I have not indeed the least doubt, but that I have always clearly shewn, that they make not for his purpose; though I am not always so certain, that I have assigned the true sense.

A Divine of the church of England, cited with respect in the following pages, who has given proof of superior knowlege of the Scriptures; though himself approving the Divinity of Christ, does nevertheless remark, with great judgment, that it is “ a doctrine which draws its *decisive* proofs from the New Testament only.” The contrary opinion and method has been a most lasting cause of much misconstruction of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and of many errors. It had its rise from the custom of the Jews in our Saviour’s time, of applying their Scriptures to religious subjects, upon all occasions. Some instances of the kind, Grotius, Hammond, and the most esteemed commentators have observed, even in the writers of the New Testament; of their applying the words of their antient prophets to the matter they were treating of, by way of accommodation only, when the prophet himself was far from intending any thing of the kind. The christian writers, after the apostles, gave still more into this custom. In the catholic epistle of Bar-

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nabas,

nabas, whoever was the author of it, for the learned are not agreed, though he was probably coeval with the times of the apostles; we are presented continually with spiritual significations of the ceremonial law of the Jews, applied to Christ and the gospel. But Justin Martyr takes a wider range, and seems to have entertained the wild opinion, that whatever was enjoined to the Israelites in the Old Testament, might be mystically applied to the New, and had its fulfilment in it. I put in the margin (*b*) one instance out of a thousand,

(*b*) In the predictions, which the Patriarch Jacob was made to utter upon his death-bed, relating to his sons and their future destinations, he says Gen. xlix. II. concerning Judah; that *binding his foal unto the wine, and his ass's colt unto the wine of Sorek, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.* The best commentators, and among them our Bishop Patrick, interpret this of the fertility of Judah's country, abounding with vineyards and pastures, which is set forth in hyperbolical expressions, viz. that the vines should be as common there, as the thorn-hedges in other places; so that they might tie asses with their colts to them; and that wine would be as common as water, so that they should have enough, not only to drink, but to wash their clothes in it. But Justin says; "That which is related here by Moses, and foretold by the Patriarch Jacob; *that he shall wash his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes,* signified that Christ should wash those that believed on him in his blood. For the holy Spirit called those *his garments*, who received remission of sins by him, among whom he is always present by his power, and shall be evidently so at his second coming. But that which the
" Scripture

thousand, that continually occur in his writings. Whether he borrowed it from Barnabas, or rather perhaps from Philo, the Platonizing Jew of Alexandria, who deals much in allegorizing the facts of the Bible, and giving them a moral meaning; Justin's fruitful imagination improved upon it. And coming to the reading of the Bible, full of veneration for Plato, and his philosophy; as what we wish to be true we easily believe, he there soon finds, that Plato agreed with Moses (c), that the world was made by *the Word*; and taking it for granted upon very weak proof, that this *Word* was Jesus Christ, he runs away with it, and actually in a manner finds nothing else in the Old Testament. For he makes Christ God's minister in the creation of the world; a subordinate God, still keeping to Plato's idea; his representative; who

“ Scripture mentions of *the blood of the grape*, with great
 “ nicety signifies, that Christ himself should have his blood,
 “ not from the seed of man, but from the power of God.
 “ For in like manner as man did not generate *the blood of the*
 “ *wine*, but God: so he here predicted, that the blood of
 “ Christ should not proceed from human seed, but from the
 “ power of God. And this very prophecy, Sirs, shews, that
 “ Christ was not a man of men, born after the common way
 “ of men.” Justin Martyr. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 149, 150.

He repeats the same in his first Apology, p. 6. The reader will judge with what caution and reserve a writer who indulges such fancies continually, is to be trusted, in his interpretations of Scripture.

(c) Apol. i. p. 78. See also Apol. ii. or more properly i. in many parts of it.

appeared

appeared and acted for the supreme God. It was Christ, according to him, who appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, and to Moses. In short, Jehovah, the one supreme God, is little seen in Justin's system of the Old Testament: but only Christ, his agent, and delegate, *the first of the creatures* that he made: for this pious, mystic interpreter, does not fall into the extreme of aftertimes, in making Christ *the most high God*; though he principally led the way to it.

I have dwelled the more on this matter; because this early writer has misled the whole christian world in this fancy of making Christ the chief transactor of every thing in the Old Testament; and also because it is owing to the like prepossessions and prejudices, by which he was misled, that to this day, we are still in our infancy as it were, with respect to our understanding the language of the Scriptures, and their true interpretation, in many respects. The right way certainly would be, to endeavour to attain a just knowlege of the sacred, as we would to understand other antient authors, the Greek and Latin historians and philosophers. To these latter we come, to find out what they relate and teach, without any partiality in favour of particular facts, or doctrines. But this method is intirely reversed in the common way of studying the Scriptures. All persons in general go to them, not to search out what they teach, but to confirm themselves in what they have been taught already from their childhood,

or

or have taken up on the authority of the church or sect to which they happen to belong: and being thus resolved beforehand, their jaundiced eye can see nothing in the Scriptures, but what intirely agrees with their own sentiments.

The method espoused by the Author here examined is of this kind. For laying it down as a doctrine, of which he was most fully persuaded himself, that Jesus Christ *was truly and properly God*; in which he was surely at his full liberty, as others, to declare their contrary persuasion: instead of shewing, by a proper research into the Scriptures, that they teach this doctrine; he contents himself with heaping up a great number of texts, which, he strongly asserts, do prove it; but never takes any pains to shew that they do so, except by setting his invention to work, and boldly maintaining the same point; under various assumed characters. And thus his readers are allured implicitly to rely on his authority, and never to go any farther, in making use of their own eyes and understandings. And when *the blind thus lead the blind*, I beg pardon if the expression be too strong; the Scripture- proverb tells us what will be the consequence.

I hope it will not be deemed a needless detaining of the reader, to point out by one example, what a wrong bias is hung upon the mind by this summary way of proceeding with the Scriptures, so as to hinder its coming at the truth. When

our Lord says, John vi. 38. *I came down from heaven*, not to do mine own will, &c. And in another place, xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father*, and am come into the world: the generality of christians immediately conclude, that Christ thereby signifies, that he lived in a former state, before he was born at Bethlehem; and are ready to think those persons most unreasonable, if not impious, that do not allow so obvious a conclusion as they think is necessarily to be formed from it. And yet this language conveyed no such meaning to our Lord's apostles; nor would it to us, if we properly examined into it. For, with regard to the first instance; if we quote the whole verse, of which I have only given a part, it will shew, that our Saviour meant no more by his *coming down from heaven*, than that he was the Messiah, God's chosen messenger. For *I came down from heaven*, says he, not to do mine own will, but the will of HIM THAT SENT ME; where evidently the last clause explains the former, and shews its meaning. But being *sent from God*, or *from the Father*, implies no more than being a divine messenger, or prophet. For of John the Baptist it is said, John i. 6. that he was a man *sent from God*. And in like manner our Lord himself expounds his own *coming forth from God*, John viii. 42; when he says to the unbelieving Jews; *I proceeded forth, and came from God*: neither came I of myself, but *he sent me*. His *proceeding forth* and *coming from God*

God therefore, was his being God's extraordinary messenger, the Messiah. See p. 48.

It is by deductions thus made directly from the Scriptures themselves, that christians should be informed concerning what is therein revealed, relating to the Person and office of Jesus Christ, or any other important point; and not from separate, detached passages of Scripture, any how patched together, and thus seeming to have a different sense from that which they really bear in their proper connection.

In examining what Mr. Robinson has brought to oppose the unity of God as taught by Mahomet, in the following work; it was judged proper to take under consideration at the same time, what has been offered by a very (*d*) late writer upon the subject; and we have found nothing advanced by them of any weight whatsoever. And though neither of these gentlemen have treated the subject on set purpose, but incidentally; I am persuaded that neither they, nor any other person, will ever be able to produce any thing, that shall invalidate the doctrine of the false prophet in this respect, as delivered in the Koran: for he had the wisdom and the art to build his foundation on the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

(*d*) "A comparison of Mahometism and Christianity"—Sermons at the Bampton-Lecture; by Joseph White, B. D. Fellow of Wadham college, and Laudian Professor of Arabic. 1784.

As this will be found to be the truth, the more it is fought into; it will shew that Mr. White has given a very defective, and in one respect too unfavourable an account of the Mahometan religion (*e*). For dreadful as the ravages were, which its votaries at first committed, and fatal as its effects have been in many countries; yet in the hands and under the direction of that Divine Providence, which overruleth all things, and bringeth good out of evil, it has retained, and preserves in

(*e*) I am glad to insert the opinion of a venerable writer, in concurrence with what is advanced in the following work, of the benefits of Mahometism to the world, as it was at the time when he appeared: though he does not touch upon the great advantage which I trust the christian nations will derive from that religion, false as it is in many respects. “ All
 “ authors agree, that what gave Mahomet the greatest room
 “ to advance his new religion, was the distracted, ignorant,
 “ corrupt state of the eastern church at that time; the misera-
 “ ble contentions, and most horrid persecutions, on every re-
 “ ligious pretence; the dissoluteness of all sects and parties:
 “ and ’tis evident that he contributed not only to reform the
 “ morals of a great part of the world, but likewise reduced
 “ them from polytheism and gross idolatry, to the belief and
 “ worship of one God; which was the principal doctrine he set
 “ out with at first, and gained great reputation by; and which
 “ he made the ground of his pretended mission. His system
 “ contains a great deal of pure christianity; it enforces the vir-
 “ tues of charity, justice, fidelity, temperance, in the strongest
 “ manner; it prohibits extortion, and all kinds of cruelty,
 “ even to brutes; and binds its votaries to the strictest order,
 “ regularity, and devotion.” Considerations on the Theory
 of Religion, by Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, p. 162, 163.
 Ed. iv. 1759.

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its purity, the doctrine of the Divine Unity, taught by Moses and Jesus Christ; and may, and probably will be the means in time of bringing back the christian nations to the acknowledgement of it.

Imperfect knowlege, mistakes, prejudices in favour of particular opinions, belong to mortals. We are none of us exempt from them. But all should watch over themselves, that these natural infirmities do not kindle unreasonable passion against those who dissent from them, and hurry them into misrepresentation and untruth. It will be judged, whether this has not been the case and conduct of Mr. White, from the extract I shall make from him. But I would first put down a very brief state of facts relating to the subject; of the truth of which the learned and impartial will decide.

The sacred writers of the Old and New Testament, are strangers to any God, but one; one single Person, Jehovah, as he is stiled in the hebrew Scriptures; and in the New Testament, *the Father, who is in heaven*. Our Lord knew no other God, spake of no other, prayed to no other, nor directed his followers to pray to or worship any other. After he had left the world, and before his apostles were all dead, the learned heathen converts, not able to endure, that a mortal man, who had been crucified, should be the founder of their new religion, took upon themselves to
main-

maintain, that this was mere appearance, and no reality. Those that came after went on mistaking Christ's true person, till in the course of a few ages, it was established by the first christian emperor, that he was God equal to the Father. By other emperors the Arian doctrine concerning him, was revived and enforced. That of the council of Nice however prevailed, and continued, during the more than midnight darkness that overspread the whole christian world, till the Reformation. The learned divines in our own and other countries, who then separated from the church of Rome, were contented with what had been handed down to them concerning Christ, without farther inquiry. Others doubted, and searching the Scriptures, found there was no foundation for it; and some of them published their sentiments, embracing either the Arian, or what then began *to be called*, the *Socinian* opinion concerning Christ; but which was *in reality* the doctrine of the apostles. About a century ago, were published, what are stiled *Unitarian Tracts*, of different anonymous authors; among whom the famous Mr. Locke is named as one. From the reception these met with, it was imagined the learned inquisitive part of the clergy and laity were disposed towards the sentiment they held forth: but soon after that, those two great and good men, Mr. Whiston and Dr. Clarke, appearing openly upon the lists, defenders of the Arian doctrine, and maintaining it most ably by

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their

their writings; it became after that a very prevailing opinion among the learned in the established church, and with the more liberal Dissenters. In 1759, Dr. Lardner published a Letter, written by him in the year 1730, and addressed to *Papinian*; who was the Rev. Mr. Tomkins, a learned and worthy dissenter, of the Arian persuasion. The publication of this letter, together with two additional Postscripts, soon made a great revolution in the opinions of learned men. For the piece was soon known to be his, though without his name; and his numerous writings were already in the highest request, his character also for probity, impartiality, for critical skill, and the knowledge of the Scriptures and of ecclesiastical history, inferior to none, and in some of these respects, superior to any of the age in which he lived. The doctrine he defended was what Mr. White calls *Socinianism*: but Dr. Lardner had drawn it not from Socinus or his followers, but from a better source, that of the Scriptures themselves (*f*). In one of his Post-

(*f*) “ I must acknowledge, that I have not been greatly
 “ conversant with the writers of that denomination, *viz.*
 “ *the Socinians*.—I have formed my sentiments upon the
 “ Scriptures, and by reading such commentators, chiefly,
 “ as are in the best repute. I may add, that the reading
 “ of the ancient writers of the Church has been of use to
 “ confirm me, and to assist me in clearing up difficulties.”
 “ Lardner on the Logos, p. 55.

scripts, that learned man has also *demonstrated*, if I may be allowed to use the term, that the Holy Spirit, is no third part of the Deity, no distinct divine agent, but only the power and influence of Almighty God. From that time, and by the labour of others, the Scriptures have been more diligently and accurately investigated, and the early christian writers examined as to this point; a disquisition, which is still carrying on. And by the openings thence already made, and the farther illustrations given of the Scripture-language concerning Christ, many have been brought to see, that he was really what he declared himself, and his apostles declared him, a *man*, (John viii. 40. Acts ii. 20.) a human being, but invested with extraordinary divine powers: and this opinion is daily gaining ground.

In this state of things among us, one wonders at the extreme ignorance, or whatever else we must call it, which could put Mr. White of Oxford upon writing the following *Philippic* against the learning, the principles, the christianity, of those whom he stiles Socinians. After insinuating, that “ the doctrine of the DIVINITY of
 “ Christ is alike unknown to the Koran of Ma-
 “ homet, and the Creed of Socinus: he pro-
 “ ceeds;

“ Yet notwithstanding this remarkable coinci-
 “ dence of opinion, says he, there is scarcely any
 “ thing the modern Socinian affects to regard with

“ greater abhorrence and indignation, than a
 “ comparison that associates his tenets with those
 “ of Mahomet. To the eye of reason, how-
 “ ever, the similitude is clear and apparent. The
 “ title of Unitarian is equally boasted of by the
 “ disciple of Socinus and the Arabian prophet.
 “ Both of them reject the Divinity of our Lord ;
 “ and, with a confidence wholly unbecoming a
 “ being, whose faculties are so overclouded as
 “ man’s, both of them maintain the impossibi-
 “ lity of a *threefold mode of subsistence in the*
 “ *divine nature*, because the human intellect is
 “ incapable of forming any precise idea of the
 “ subject: as if nothing could be real in the
 “ *essence of the divinity*, which is not level to
 “ the comprehension of man.”——

“ The Socinian and the Mahometan object to
 “ our doctrine its inconsistency with human rea-
 “ son. The objection supposes, that man is
 “ possessed of a larger comprehension than falls
 “ to the lot of mortality; and that what he can-
 “ not comprehend, cannot be true.”

“ We appeal to the Scriptures. But the Ma-
 “ hometans and Socinians have both discovered
 “ the same methods of interpretation; and either
 “ by false glosses pervert their plain obvious
 “ meaning; or when the testimony is direct and
 “ explicit, that no forced construction can evade
 “ it, they have recourse to the last artifice of
 “ abortive zeal; the cry of interpolation.”——

“ There

“ There is no period of the Christian Church
 “ in which the Divinity of Christ was not ad-
 “ mitted as a primary article, &c.”

“ If Christ was nothing more than *a mere man*,
 “ how can it be accounted for, that his Divinity
 “ should be the general and current sentiment
 “ of the Church in so early a period as the pre-
 “ sent enemies of the doctrine are obliged to ac-
 “ knowledge it was?”————

“ Socinianism makes every thing doubtful.
 “ And no wonder——while it makes so little of
 “ the most express declarations of Scripture, we
 “ need not be surprized that it should pay so
 “ little respect to the plainest evidence of
 “ history, &c.”

“ The gradation from Socinianism to Deism
 “ is very slight (g), &c.”

REMARKS.

Remark 1. Such general, superficial declama-
 tion, as the greater part of what is here pro-
 duced, without facts to support it, would not
 have merited the least regard, had it not been in
 a book, where the author has displayed learning
 and judgment in other respects; which may there-
 fore give him too much credit in this, with
 his numerous readers. But deficient as he is

(g) “ Notes and authorities to Mr. White’s Sermons,”
 p. lv;——lvi.

here in *good* reasoning, there is one species of argument, of which he knows well how to avail himself, *viz.* the *argumentum ab invidia ductum*; in trying to excite the prejudices and bad passions of his readers, against the persons he opposes, if he cannot confute their arguments. This is studiously pursued through many paragraphs, in his coupling Socinians and Mahometans together; as if the former were equally enemies to the gospel with the latter, and their opinions equally obnoxious and to be avoided by those who seek to become true Christians.

He is however much misinformed, if it be not a flight of imagination, in his assertion, that there is scarcely any thing the modern Socinian affects to regard with greater abhorrence and indignation, than a comparison that associates his tenets with those of Mahomet. They who are persuaded from the Scriptures, from which alone they can learn any thing of him, that Jesus Christ was a human being, and not God; and that there is but one God, who is the Father of Christ and of all beings; so far from looking upon it as a reproach, or being angry at being ranked with Mahometans in the belief of this great truth, they would rather glory in it; and do sincerely rejoice in the thought, that so large a part of their fellow-creatures, in numbers surpassing christians, retain a knowlege of such infinite importance

portance as the unity of God ; which cannot but have the best effect upon their minds, and may in time turn out a great blessing to the whole christian world ; as is particularly mentioned in the following work.

Remark 2. In the body of his Sermons, and in this Appendix, Mr. White repeats over and over ; that the grand objection of Unitarians to the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ, is its being incomprehensible to human reason, and inconsistent with it. I will frankly own to him, that I must reject whatever comes to me under the latter predicament, as inconsistent with and contradictory to my reason ; because this is the only light and direction which my Maker has given me, by which to judge of any thing, even of his own character and perfections, and the credibility of any farther discovery he may make of his will, than this his light of nature affords. And I am persuaded, he cannot require the belief of any thing which shocks and goes against the natural understanding he has given me : for that would be to put me under different and impossible obligations at the same time. I cannot therefore believe the greater part of the Creed falsely ascribed to Athanasius ; that for instance, the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal : and yet that they are not three eternals, but one eternal ; and *so on*. However I do not find that Almighty God calls upon me in the Scriptures to believe

any thing of this kind. And I am happy, that I can express my faith, agreeably to the gospel, in more intelligible terms than our author is constrained to make use of in explaining his; where he talks of *the essence of the Divinity*, and a *three-fold mode of subsistence in the Divine nature*; which it is very well if he himself can understand. I neither pretend to it, nor desire it. But I would remind him, that no Unitarian that I know, or have read of, did ever object to any part of a Divine revelation, because it was beyond his comprehension. Let me but know clearly, that God has signified his mind and will; and then, let the subject be ever so unfathomable by me, I will receive and believe it; because no better reason can possibly be given for any thing, than that God hath said it.

Remark 3. It is easy in words to assert, that the Divinity of Christ, or his being the supreme God; was the general and current sentiment of christians from the first: but the inquiry is, what was the fact. At the close of these remarks, Mr. White will see a brief sketch of the Scripture-evidence relating to it. And an author to whom he points, but whom his invectives cannot reach, has produced such evidence to the contrary from this and other sources, as it would have well become him to have confuted, before he ventured to pronounce upon it with so much confidence. The substance of what that author has elsewhere exhibited

exhibited more at large, is to be found in a very short compass, under this title: *Arguments from history against the divinity and preexistence of Christ*, and is contained in a small Tract, entitled a General View of the Unity of God, &c. (*b*).

Remark 4. “ But the Socinians, says Mr. White, “ imitate the Mahometans; and either by false “ glosses pervert the plain and obvious meaning “ of the Scriptures; or when the testimony is so “ direct and explicit, that no forced construction “ can evade it, they have recourse to the last “ artifice of abortive zeal; the cry of interpola- “ tion! and it is no wonder, while they make so “ little of the most express declarations of Scrip- “ ture, that they should pay so little respect to the “ plainest evidence of history.”

As these reflections are cast on modern unitarians, it becomes him to name who they are that

(*b*) By Joseph Priestley, LL. D. F. R. S. This tract is so compleat and comprehensive for its size, that I know few that are to be named with it; except a small piece, on a very different subject, admirably drawn up, and calculated to teach the common christian the use of his rational powers in religion, as well as his duty, at the same time: the abridgment of a larger most valuable work, which has exhausted and exhibited every thing that good sense or exact criticism could furnish on a subject of much controversy among christians, but to which it has probably put an end: I refer to “ A “ practical enquiry into the authority, nature, and design of “ the LORD’S SUPPER, as they are explained in the New “ Testament itself.” By William Bell, D. D. Prebendary of Westminster.

are guilty of such unfair arts; or where they allege that the Scriptures are interpolated, when there is no ground for it. Such insinuations will recoil upon their accuser, unless he gives proof of them; and will shew, that he speaks from no good fund within.

To praise the living would be invidious and awkward: but of those who have finished their course well, we may speak freely and be heard. Is there a literary character, that stands higher upon the lists of fame, as a man, a christian, and a divine, than the late Dr. Lardner? After an education in an University abroad, at that time not inferior in learned Tutors to either of our own, on his return to his own country, he became early acquainted with the worthy and learned in the Church established, and out of it. Archbishop Secker, bred a Dissenter, like himself, cultivated and courted his friendship through life. His Vindication of some of our Lord's miracles against Mr. Woolston's attacks, is among the first upon that occasion, and (*i*) the most candid. But his *Credibility of the Gospel*, in 17 vols. 8vo, and *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies to its truth*, in 4 vols. 4to, have exhibited such a mass of evidence for it, and established it on so broad a foundation as nothing can shake. In this he gives

(*i*) See his preface to that work, and correspondence upon it with the Bishop of Chichester. *Memoirs of Dr. Lardner's life*, p. 14—31.

continually curious and useful instances of critical skill and judgment: but his love of truth and impartiality is without example, in fairly representing every argument and objection, without the least discernible bias to any opinion or party. His piety and humility are conspicuous in all his writings, and particularly in his Sermons in three volumes; the last containing Memoirs of his life and writings; some of which are among the best models for pulpit-discourses in our language, in explaining important passages of the gospel, and pointing out the easy and natural instruction to be deduced from it.

And yet this Dr. Lardner, to whom christianity and the christian world, and our own nation in particular, in that respect, owes so many obligations, shall be classed with Mahometans, as an equal enemy to the gospel; shall be reckoned by Mr. White one remove only from a Deist, because he was in his phrase a *Socinian*; i. e. because on the strictest and most serious examination of the Scriptures upon the subject, he could not find that Christ was any other than a human being, divinely and extraordinarily enlightened and empowered by Almighty God. I hope we shall hear no more general harangues against Socinianism and Socinians as such; lest they be found to be in reality pointed against the gospel and its divine founder himself.

Remark 5. Mr. White is very frequent in his assertions, that the cause of the rejection of the doctrine

doctrine of the Trinity and of the Divinity of Christ by unitarians, is merely because they cannot account for it, nor reconcile it to reason. The chief cause however is, that they can find no such doctrine concerning Christ in their Bibles, but intirely the contrary; and that they have taken some honest pains to come at the truth, the following account will shew; and whether they have attained it, the reader must judge.

A general sketch of the Scripture-evidence, for, and against, the Preexistence of Jesus Christ.

*For the Preexistence of
Christ.*

Old Testament.

Isaiah vii. 14. *Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel:* cited Matth. i. 23. See this explained p. 14.

— ix. 6. *His name shall be called, wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace.* See p. 37, 38, 39, 40.

Against it.

Old Testament.

The prophecies which point out to the Israelites the promised Messiah, as a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, and as a prophet, one of their brethren, like unto Moses: these cannot be understood as referrible to any other than a human be-

For the Preexistence.

Against it.

— liii. 8. (k) Instead of—*who shall declare his generation?* it should be translated: *and the men of his generation who will be able to describe?*

Micah v. *Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* See p. 105, 106, 107.

Malachi iii. 1. *The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.*

The Lord here named, is not Christ; but Almighty God: who came to his temple, in or by Christ, his messenger and great prophet. See p. 104, 105.

These are all the passages I know, in the

ing; and as such the Jews constantly and uniformly looked for their Messiah. Gen. xxii. 18. xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15. 18. Isai. xi. 1.

All those passages, which speak before of Christ, as receiving all his powers from God; and as being his *servant*; denominate him to be a creature, like all others, depending upon God for every thing. Is. xi. 2, 3. xlii. 11.

Those texts which describe beforehand his birth, his death, and burial, plainly and evidently define and bespeak him a human being; and most certainly forbid the very thought

(k) See Bishop Lowth upon the place: or rather see a New Translation of Isaiah, lii. 13.—liii. 12. in “Commentaries, &c. by the Society for promoting the knowledge of the “Scriptures,” p. 36. &c. Justin Martyr reckoned much upon this text for Christ’s preexistence.

For the Preexistence.

Old Testament, that are supposed to favour the preexistence of Christ. For I make no account of the chimerical Platonic idea of Justin Martyr; that Jesus Christ was an inferior, created God, the delegate of the One Supreme: who, he supposes, never appeared or acted himself; but Christ for him.

*New Testament.**Matthew.*

There is nothing in this evangelist, that gives the least countenance to Christ being any other than the Great Prophet of God, the Messiah, with high powers from him; except i. 23. For which see p. 14.

Mark.

There is no trace in this writer's account of

Against it.

of his being God, or any thing but a limited, dependent creature. Micah v. 2. Isaiah liii. 8, 9.

*New Testament.**Matthew.*

This evangelist describes the birth, life, and death of Christ, as of any other of the human race; and therefore affords no ground to conclude him to have been any other.

Mark.

In perusing this sacred writer, we see all Christ,

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Christ, which is related to have been inspected by the apostle Peter; as if he had any idea, that Christ had lived in any other world, but this.

Luke.

There appears nothing in this evangelist, which implies that he had any thought that Christ had existed in any other state, before he was born at Bethlehem.

Against it.

cause to reverence the holy Jesus, as a character of perfect goodness, indued with divine gifts and powers: but nothing to lift him up above the condition of a human creature so dignified by its Maker.

Luke.

Describes Christ throughout, as one of the human race: born a senseless infant at first; and acquiring knowledge and strength with his years, like all others of mankind; applying to God for help on all occasions, especially under his extreme sufferings, and having his prayer heard, and assistance given; and when expiring at last, resigning his life to God, in full assurance of having it soon restored to him. Luke ii.

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Against it.

7. 16. 52. xxii. 43.
(Heb. v. 7.) xxiii. 46.

John.

John.

Through long prejudice, and inattention to the true meaning of Scripture-language, some parts of St. John's gospel have been thought so much to favour the notion of Christ being God, and having lived in a former state; that some persons are ready to think ill of those who can doubt of what appears to them so clear: but a proper inquiry, would shew them, how greatly they are mistaken.

Texts in this evangelist supposed to prove Christ's preexistence.

John i. 1, 2. See p. 10, 11, 12. 138, 139; that it is God himself,

There is a presumption, though it be no proof, against John's teaching that Christ was a preexistent being, and the supreme God; because the three other evangelists never mention any such things in their gospels, which they wrote for the instruction of the world after themselves were dead, without knowing that John would write after them. If they had known or believed such things concerning their Master Christ, it is not credible they would have concealed and not told them.

John having seen the writings of the other who

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Against it.

who is the *Word*, or *Wisdom* here spoken of; and not *Christ*.

— 15. *For he was before me*; i. e. was my principal; to whom I was to lead men.

— 18. *No man hath seen God at any time: the well-beloved Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*: i. e. No man has a perfect knowledge of the will and designs of God for men, but myself.

iii. 13. is much the same as the above; highly figurative: as is his whole discourse with Nicodemus. None supposes the *Son of man*, to have *literally* ascended into heaven, or to have been there at all.

evangelists, omits in general what had been before noted by them, and therefore says nothing of the birth and parentage of Jesus, and the like: but mentions his mother and relations, and speaks of his being weary and faint, and suffering and dying; circumstances that belong to mortals; and to no other creatures that we know of. And as he records more of our Lord's own discourses than the other evangelists, no one can avoid observing his continual declarations, that he received his being, his extraordinary knowledge, and all his powers from God: which shews, how very far Christ was

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vi. 6. is very highly figurative also. *The Son of man* had literally never been in heaven; whatever be to be understood by it.

from claiming to be any thing but a creature dependent upon God, and infinitely indebted to him for his favours.

viii. 42. See Pref. p. xiii.

— 58. See p. 24, 25, 26, 27.

xvi. 28. See p. 48. and Pref. xiii.

xvii. 5. See p. 162, 163.

— 8. *they have known of a certainty that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* The former clause is explained by the latter.

The Acts.

In this second treatise of St. Luke, so far is there from being any

The Acts.

It is remarkable, that this book which particularly treats of the thing

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Against it.

thing to prove Christ to have been the supreme God ; that there is nothing whatsoever, which indicates him to have been any other than one of human kind, for his virtues highly promoted in the heavenly world.

manner in which the gospel was preached to the world after Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, distinctly informs us, that his apostles describe him as a man, highly favoured by Almighty God, and nothing beyond this. Acts ii. 22. xvii. 24. 31. Christ also speaks of himself, as having been a man, and nothing more. xxii. 8. In short, if any one be disposed to give names, he may call this a Socinian book, and St. Luke a Socinian.

Romans.

ix. 5. See p. 18, 19.

Romans.

This epistle begins with declaring Christ to have been a mortal man, but invested with extraordinary

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Against it.

ordinary powers from God; and so continues throughout. See p. 157—160.

I Corinthians.

i. 2. *With all that in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.* It should be translated—*with all that in every place are called by the name of Jesus Christ our Lord: viz. that are christians.* See Hammond.

x. 4. *They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ.* This is only a reference and allusion, which the apostle makes to Christ; and no proof that Christ had any concern with the Israelites, or lived at that time.

I Corinthians.

Throughout this epistle, Christ is spoken of as no other than a human being; the great prophet and lawgiver of the christian church; who suffered death for the truth, but was soon raised to an immortal life, as a pledge to his followers of their being also raised from the grave in their appointed time. And the apostle in one place expressly declares, that Jesus Christ was equally a man as Adam was. xv. 21, 22.

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Jesus Christ.*

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x. 9. *Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted (God,) and were destroyed of serpents.* That the word *God*, here put in different characters, is to be understood, has been the opinion of good critics. But in some manuscripts, the reading is—*Let us not tempt the Lord*: which is probably the true reading.

xv. 47. See p. 32.

2 Corinthians.

viii. 9. *For ye know the grace (or kindness towards us) of our Lord Jesus Christ; that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

2 Corinthians:

No one can read this epistle, but must see that God is one single person; and Christ his great prophet, and lawgiver of his church, and the appointed future judge of all.

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Christ's riches were the high powers and communications he had received from God; which he made no use of for his own ease or benefit, but solely for the good of others. There is no reference to any supposed powers in a former state of existence.

Against it.

Philippians.

ii. 5—9. See p. 76,
77. 164, 165.

Philippians.

ii. 5—9. This passage proves Christ to have been a human being; who received his great powers and dignity from Almighty God.

Colossians.

i. 16. p. 54—61.

Colossians.

See p. 54—61.

Hebrews.

i. 2. *God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he*

Hebrews.

Of all the epistles of St. Paul, there is none in which he is so full
hath

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Against it.

hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also he made the worlds. This last should be translated — *By or for the sake of whom, he constituted the ages.* See Dr. Doddridge on the place.

— 3. *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.*—See p. 140.

— *But unto the Son he saith; Thy throne, o God, is for ever and ever.* It should rather be translated: *But concerning the Son he saith, God is thy throne for ever and ever.*

ii. 14. 16. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. For verily he took not on him the*

and particular in describing our Lord as a human being, like others of mankind, as in this to the Hebrews: *viz*, that he was equally mortal; was placed here upon his trial, as we are; and disciplined and made perfect thereby: ii. 9, 10. 14. 18. iv. 15. v. 7, 8, 9. xii. 2.

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Against it.

nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. It should have been translated: *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner was a partaker of the same. For verily he helpeth not angels; but he helpeth the seed of Abraham.*

xiii. 8. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. See P. 43.*

i Peter.

i. 11. *Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The spi-*

i Peter.

It is not possible to read this epistle without seeing, that Jesus Christ is as distinct from God, as a creature subject to death, can be from its creator. But then it also appears, that

rit

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Jesus Christ.*

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rit of Christ in the prophets, was not, properly speaking, any power of Christ, but of God himself, by which they were enabled to declare things to come. And it is called *the spirit of Christ*, because Christ was the object about whom it is here said to be employed; in the same manner, as the miraculous power to be communicated to the apostles, Joh. xiv. 17. is called *the spirit of truth*, because it was to testify that the doctrines delivered by them were true.

(1) iii. 19. 20. *By which*
(spirit, or power of God,) *after he was gone* (into

the blessed Jesus had been one highly distinguished by Almighty God, and designed before his birth to fill a most important station in the moral world, to promote the virtue and happiness of the whole human race, by his divine instructions and exemplary holiness, fortitude and integrity, in dying in the cause of truth. i. 19. 20. 21. iv. 11. 19. v, 10. 11.

(1) I give this obscure text, with some addition, in other characters, to explain its meaning: for which see the most judicious commentators; particularly Beaufobre.

heaven)

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Against it.

heaven) *he preached* (by his apostles) *to the spirits in prison* (i. e. to the heathen world, men of the same race with those,) *which at one time were disobedient, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, i. e. during that patriarch's preaching to them.* But now he would have it inferred, the case was different: many of these heathens repented at the preaching of the gospel.

I *John.*

iv. 2. 3. *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in flesh, is not of God. To come in the*

I *John.*

flesh,

*For the Preexistence of
Jesus Christ.*

Against it.

flesh, is to be a mortal man, liable to sufferings and death. And this is said by the apostle against some christians who denied this.

Revelation of St. John.

Revelation.

I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. See p. 27. 28.

ii. 8. *These things saith the first and the last; which was dead, and is alive.* See as above.

1. The reader will observe in the preceding sketch, the vast amount of Scripture-evidence which there is for Jesus Christ being a mortal man; and neither the supreme God, nor a great angelic spirit, the maker of the world under God:

2. That Matthew, Mark, and Luke, appear to have lived and died, without knowing that Jesus was any thing more than their Great expected Prophet, and messenger of the divine will to mankind for their final happiness and salvation; which may reasonably give men pause, and make them

them reflect; whether they are not mistaken in their interpretations of the writings of their fellow-evangelist, when they make him maintain that Christ was the most high God :

3. That this evangelist, St. John, the favourite disciple, in the general strain of his history, speaks of Christ, as being a dependent creature, receiving life and every thing from God, even more than the other evangelists; and that those few passages in comparison, in his gospel, which have been supposed to declare him to have been a preexistent spirit, or the supreme God; are, in general, capable of a most easy solution, and may be shewn to relate to his office and dignity from God, in being his highly favoured creature, messenger and servant, and not the supreme Being himself, or a subordinate God and creator under him: where men will attend to the connection of the discourse, to the idiom of the language, and the sense, and not merely the sound of the words made use of :

4. That St. Paul, in his famous speech at Athens, before the court of Areopagus, as well as in all his epistles; sometimes directly asserts, that Jesus Christ was merely one of the human race, raised up for the greatest purposes, for the benefit of mankind, which he nobly answered, and was therefore exalted to honour; and never at any time, says any thing inconsistent with this, or
which

which might argue our Lord to have been God, or any thing above the condition of a human being, so distinguished by the supreme Father :

5. That the same may be averred of the epistles of the other apostles ; and of the *Revelation* of St. John :

And, if, upon the whole, a few passages should not appear to be satisfactorily cleared up and solved, yet a wise man will judge of a point so important, by the general tenour of a book or discourse ; by what is plain, evident and uncontrovertible ; and will always be decided by the greater weight of evidence.

I would therefore now ask Mr. Professor White, and many others ; who betray such a profound ignorance of what Deism, Christianity, and that which they term Socinianism, really is ; and who by such little paltry arts and insinuations affect to depreciate the integrity, simplicity, and general character of those against whom they write : whether such men as the late excellent Dr. Lardner, and those who now are in his sentiments concerning Jesus Christ, which they believe on the grounds offered above, to have been the very sentiments and doctrine of the apostles concerning *the person* of their lord and master, Jesus ; whether they are to be calumniated as enemies to the gospel, and insinuations thrown out in the dark without proofs of their using sinister

sinister means to support their peculiar opinion? whether the doctrine of Christ being truly and properly man, and not God, be not as favourable to piety, and virtue, as the contrary, nay more favourable; though this is not the proper criterion by which the point is to be decided? whether they who maintain this opinion, do not manifest an equal love of truth, and zeal for the gospel, with those who hold the contrary? whether also they do not hold forth to others the grand peculiarity of the gospel, the hope of an eternal existence after death, with God and Christ, and all virtuous and good beings; and whether their own lives do not appear to be regulated and governed by this hope, as much as those of their opponents?

It is to be hoped, that ingenuous men, and scholars, will inform themselves better, and change their language; lest they give room for suspicion, that they are influenced by other motives, than those that belong to the honest man, and the christian.

The late Lord Barrington, in one part of his works, passes the following censure on some controversial writers of his time, which contains hints and admonitions, worthy the attention of many in our day. “ I (*m*) cannot but have a very

(*m*) *Miscellanea Sacra*. Vol. i. p. 157, 158. ed. 1770. I am obliged to the last valuable edition of the *Biographia*, under the article *Barrington*, for this citation.

“ mean

“ mean opinion (says this truly noble person) of
“ writers, who will put on the appearance of
“ assurance and certainty, that they may carry
“ the guise of perfect knowlege and judgment
“ to the bulk of their readers, in points where
“ they are far from being at that certainty which
“ they affect so much to be thought to have ;
“ and every one must have a much worse opinion
“ of those who give themselves the air, only to
“ serve party or private views. The first pro-
“ ceeds from a degree of pride to which human
“ nature is too easily carried ; while the second
“ arises from a degree of dishonesty that has
“ been contracted by lower arts of it repeated
“ from time to time, till it has grown habitual,
“ and ends in venturing on *this high injury to*
“ *mankind. The first moral virtues of a writer are*
“ *to divest himself of these enormous passions ; to*
“ *search for truth alone, and to propose it to his*
“ *reader, with that degree of evidence or certainty,*
“ *of doubt or difficulty, which it has in his own*
“ *mind : considering himself as accountable to God*
“ *for misleading any man by the superiority of his*
“ *talents ; and as accountable to his reader, for the*
“ *insolence of endeavouring to impose on him, by the*
“ *means of any real or imagined advantage he has*
“ *over him. If these virtues were practised by*
“ every writer, we should receive more profit
“ from the best, and least harm from the worst,
“ than

“ than we now reap from either of them; and
 “ writing would then be in the best state that this
 “ state of imperfection would allow *.”

* The following extract of a letter from this nobleman, who was himself a Dissenter, to Dr. Lardner, shews on what intimate terms they conversed together, and is inserted here as it does equal honour to the memories of both of them.

—“ Thus I think our controversy ends. But our friendship and correspondence I hope never will, but with our lives. And our friendship, I hope then, but for a season. I have had so much satisfaction and instruction from your great learning and judgment, and from your patience, candour, openness, and obliging manners, that whenever I have difficulties to put, in the future course of my enquiries, or want to see what difficulties my sentiments are liable to, I shall take the liberty to trouble you, unless you forbid me; or (if your great civility will not allow you to do that) I forbear, from the sense I have, of how much I rob the world, in the result of the learned pursuits they justly expect from you, by such kinds of interruptions as those I have given you.” *Memoirs of the life and writings of Dr. Lardner, p. 41.*

P O S T-

P O S T S C R I P T.

Those whom Mr. Professor White calls Socinians, are known greatly to differ from Socinus in many things; particularly in not paying religious worship to Jesus Christ, or praying to him: which was a point that Faustus Socinus vehemently insisted on, though he considered Christ as a man only, with divine powers conferred upon him. If such are to be distinguished by any other name, than that of Christians, one, who can speak for many of them, would say, that they are Unitarian christians; as holding the unity of God in the strictest sense, to the exclusion of Jesus Christ, and of every other Person whatsoever, from being named or compared with The Supreme Father, as equal to him, or as any thing but dependent on HIM; WHO IS THE BLESSED AND ONLY POTENTATE, THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY; DWELLING IN LIGHT UN-APPROACHABLE; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, NOR CAN SEE: TO WHOM BE HONOUR AND POWER EVERLASTING. AMEN. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

E R R A T A.

Page 85. *for Gacius read Gaius.*

—97. l. 15. *for give into the weaknes, &c. put fall greatly below himself.*

—1. 28. *for to be hereafter put as above.*

—115. l. 10. *doe similar to them.*

—197. l. 6. *from the bottom, insert Titus ii. 12. 14.*

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

IN reviewing and examining this “Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ,” I have lamented to see a great deal of pains and ingenuity wasted, as it appears to me, in supporting popular errors; which might have been usefully employed in illustrating and propagating the genuine truth of the gospel.

It was also a continual mortification, to find the whole strain of the sacred writings, which relate to God and to Christ, mistaken, and turned from their true meaning, to exhibit Jesus Christ as being *truly and properly God*; where the writers, or Christ himself, whose words are sometimes quoted, never thought of any thing of the kind.

And it has been an infinite drudgery to go over again an old beaten track, in remarking numberless misrepresentations of the Scriptures, and *false readings* of them cited as *genuine*, which are well known to scholars; and which one wonders should have escaped a person, who had advantages of being better informed.

WHEN an author steps forth, and boldly maintains Jesus Christ to be the GOD OVER ALL, after so much written and demonstrated to the contrary, by our Clarke, and Whiston, by Whitby, (a) Peirce,

(a) These pious conscientious men, Whitby and Peirce, two of the most learned men of the learned age in which they lived, are remarkable for having been at first strenuous maintainers of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the divinity of Christ; but by their own honest enquiries and the strong force of evidence, they were brought to see their error, and publicly confessed it. In Whiston's memoirs of his own life, (Vol. I. p. 139.) there is a curious letter of Peirce's to him,

Peirce, &c ; not to mention celebrated names, Ben Mordecai, and others, still living ; he will be sure to find admirers and favourers of one class or other, according to the stile of his composition, so long as what he pleads for is the established and prevailing doctrine. And as too many are disposed to hold the book last published if no reply be made to it, incapable of being confuted ; some good *Philadelphian* should have undertaken the task however tedious and irksome : to shew this writer his mistakes ; to undeceive the ignorant and unwary, who may have been misled by him ; and to vindicate the incommunicable, peculiar honour and worship, due to the only true God and Father of all, to the exclusion of all other beings or persons whatsoever throughout the universe, and especially of *him*, whom christians have forced into a throne of equality with the supreme Father, but than whom none could be farther (*b*) from claiming such honour, *Jesus*, (*c*) *the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.*

to bring him back to the orthodox faith. Whitby confuted Bishop Bull's arguments for the Trinity, in his *Disquisitiones modestæ*, and in his answers to Waterland. The latter of these tracts being in English, together with his LAST THOUGHTS, or retraction of his Trinitarian sentiments, should be bound up and sold along with his *Paraphrase and Notes on the New Testament*, that the readers may have the benefit of the author's maturer judgment, and justice be done to him, and to them.

(*b*) Matth. xxi. 11. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* xix. 16, 17. *Behold one came and said unto him, good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.* Christ here manifestly owns his dependance upon God, and disclaims his having any thing good in himself, but what he received from the almighty Parent of him and of all.

(*c*) Matth. xxi. 11. Our Lord did not blame the people for proclaiming him under this title ; but the contrary.

I have long wondred, that a treatise so juſtly reprehensible on many accounts, as this will appear to be, has not been animadverted upon by ſome judicious and liberal hand in that famous ſeat of learning, in the neighbourhood of which Mr. Robinſon has his abode. I was the more induced to expect it from a local conſideration, which concerns themſelves, and is not, I believe, much known abroad. For although this gentleman is a Miniſter among the Diſſenters in the town of Cambridge, his book was much circulated and recommended, in the University, at its firſt publication 1776, by ſome perſons of the eſtabliſhed church, who were glad to lay hold of any reed however ſlender, to ſupport a tottering cauſe, and to guard the youth of the place againſt the opinions and writings of ſome of their own body, who had openly aſſerted and made many converts to the belief of the ſtrict unity of the Supreme Cauſe and Author of all things.

When I at any time inquired, why no notice was taken from the Preſs of this new *Plea*, which had much vogue at the firſt; all I could learn was, that it was looked upon as ſo very ſuperficial, and had ſo little argument in it, that it could not long deceive any one, and needed no confutation.

But this reaſon of ſome able ingenious men for declining to lay a juſt account of the weakneſs of the performance before the Public, proceeded from the want of a proper attention to thoſe who would be moſt likely to be miſguided by it, and from meaſuring others too much by the ſize of their own underſtandings. For as it is written with great ſmartneſs and an air of triumph, and deals throughout in aſſertions without proofs; this method, however diſgulting to every intelligent mind, is peculiarly calculated to win upon the unlearned, and

those who are unaccustomed or unwilling to be at the trouble of judging for themselves; whom nevertheless it would have been right and necessary to have put upon their guard.

There is moreover something very imposing, and that would weigh more than a thousand arguments with common readers, in the very positive and decisive tone with which our author speaks, where the strength of his argument often but ill supports him; and also in the liberties he takes in censuring even the apostles and their writings, if they are not to be understood and interpreted, in the way that he presumes they ought to be.

It will suffice to give one specimen here; as others will unavoidably present themselves in the course of our inquiry.

After having produced divers texts of Scripture, to shew that the perfections of God, which are ascribed to Jesus Christ, prove him to be the Supreme God; but without any argument to shew, that the instances brought by him are real divine perfections, or that they really belong to Christ; he thus pronounces upon them, p. 17.

“ If they who ascribe the perfections of Deity
 “ to Jesus Christ, have fallen into an error, they
 “ may have been led into it by the writers of the
 “ New Testament.—If Jesus Christ be God, the
 “ ascription of the perfections of God to him is
 “ proper: IF HE BE NOT, THE APOSTLES ARE
 “ CHARGEABLE WITH WEAKNESS OR WICKED-
 “ NESS, and either would destroy their claim of
 “ inspiration.”

The few who examine and decide for themselves, are not to be dazzled and over-awed by these confident declarations, knowing that mortals are oftentimes most ignorant, where they are most presumptuous and assured. But it is not so with
 others;

others; especially if their prejudices lean that way already. Such violent language overpowers them before they are aware of it, and puts an end to all cool and fair inquiry, so that they will hear no reason from those of a contrary sentiment; and it will be well, if even their resentments are not instantly kindled against them. And though Mr. Robinson is not unmindful to instill principles of benevolence and kindness towards fellow-christians of different religious persuasions, his admirers will be in danger of becoming bad scholars under him, by such strong paintings of the fatal consequences to the moral characters of the apostles and to the divine authority of their writings, which result, according to him, from denying Christ to be God.

It may be doubted whether upon any subject or occasion, these vehement oratorical expressions, tending to inflame the passions, ought to be used: but they ought surely to have no place in disquisitions of so serious a nature as that in question; *viz.* “whether the Scriptures teach Jesus Christ to be the Supreme God, or a creature.” Here every one should be left to form his judgment calmly according to evidence, and to be wholly indifferent with respect to consequences, on which side of the balance the truth falls.

S E C T I O N I.

Whether the sacred writers speak of God, in peculiar, appropriated terms.

THERE is one observation, with which our author sets out, and often recurs to, and which will appear plausible at first sight; but is nevertheless a capital mistake. This is, the supposition taken up by him, that the sacred writers

were exceedingly careful and exact in the terms in which they speak concerning GOD, not to apply them to any others but to HIM alone; lest they should give occasion to and countenance idolatry and the worship of a multiplicity of gods, to which the world was then, and has ever been most prone.

“ If Jesus Christ (says he, p. 9) were not God, “ the writers of the New Testament discovered “ great injudiciousness in the choice of their words, “ and adopted a very incautious and dangerous “ stile.—Paul and Barnabas had seen a miracle “ and a sermon procure an offer of their own deifi- “ cation at Lystra; and the general description of “ the heathens afforded them a strong probability “ that the history of Jesus Christ, which is made “ up of miracles and sermons, expressive of extra- “ ordinary wisdom and power, would procure a “ deification also of him.— —We naturally expect “ that men who *rent their clothes* (Acts xiv.) in “ abhorrence of confounding the creature with the “ Creator, should express the nature of God, and “ the natures of all creatures, in the most circum- “ spect language. In speaking of Jesus Christ, where “ the temptation to idolatry was the strongest, we “ naturally expect a more than ordinary caution: “ the case required it.”

In making remarks of this kind, persons should beware of indulging imagination, and taking upon them beforehand to prescribe and determine what *ought to be* the conduct of Divine Providence, till they have examined and seen what is the *real fact*, and the language of the prophets of God, concerning his adoreable majesty: And it happens to be quite the reverse of what our author lays down and decides in so peremptory a manner.

For, on a perusal of the books both of the Old and New Testament, we immediately discover, that
the

the writers use not any cautious management or curious nicety in their phrases concerning the Great God and other beings, his creatures. They never seem to have been under any apprehensions, that they, for whose immediate use they composed their writings, should ever mistake, or forget the sacred everlasting distinction and infinite distance, between the Great Creator, and any one, however highly gifted and favoured, whom they mention along with him; or that from any ambiguity of expression used by them; or application of the same terms, or assignment of the same acts, to Moses, to Christ, or to any other; they should be led to conclude, that there was any other Person, who was Jehovah, *truly and properly God*, but the single Person of the Father, the Almighty Maker and Governor of all things. Thus

(b) “ 1. Moses is said to be a God, *Exod. vii. 1.* And the LORD said to Moses; *See, I have made thee a God unto Pharaoh.* And *iv. 16.* *Thou (Moses) shalt be to him instead of God.*

“ 2. Moses is prayed unto, and that to forgive sins, *Numb. xii. 11.* And Aaron said unto Moses; *Alas, my Lord, I beseech thee, lay not this sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.* There is the like again in *Exod. x. 16, 17.* where Pharaoh calleth for Moses and Aaron, and saith; *I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, &c.*

“ 3. Moses is worshiped, *Exod. xi. 8.* *All these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, or worship me, as the word signifies.*

(b) These remarks I find ready made to my hand, in the remains of a respectable English writer, a most pious and virtuous man; who suffered in the cause of the Divine Unity, in the last century, dying in a loathsome jail.

“ 4. It is said of Moses, *Exod.* xxxii. that he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, ver. 7. *And the LORD said unto Moses, go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves:* and xxxiii. 1. But in the preface to the ten commandments, *Exod.* xx. 1, 2. *God spake all these words saying, I AM THE LORD THY GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* See also *Deut.* v. 6.

“ It is said, the *Israelites* did believe in *Moses* as well as the *LORD*, *Exod.* xiv. 31. *And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and his servant Moses;* (*Heb. believed in the LORD and in Moses his servant.*) Again, *Exod.* xix. 9. *Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever;* (*Heb. believe in thee.*)”

This single specimen is sufficient to evidence the weakness of our author's assertion, concerning the supposed reserve used by the sacred writers, in never speaking of the Great God, but in such language as was appropriated to him alone. And it shews how little is to be inferred, towards the proving Christ to be God, from what is attributed to God in one place, being attributed to Christ in another; because, according to the same way of arguing, we may prove Moses also to be God. But there will be frequent occasion to note the fallacious conclusions into which this unhappy mistake, and stumble at the very threshold, has led this writer.

S E C T I O N II.

Whether Jesus Christ is the Supreme God?

HOWEVER formidable the undertaking, I only speak as to the irksomeness of it, I shall
not

not decline the labour of surveying and weighing one by one, I must not say Mr. Robinson's *proofs* of the Deity of Christ, but his allegations of Scripture-words and phrases, of similar sound and appearance, applied to Christ, with those ascribed to God himself; from which he would have it inferred, that Christ is the Supreme God.

That I may not misrepresent or injure him, I shall commonly give his own words, printed also exactly in his own way.

Under his first head, to shew "that the writers of the New Testament meant to inform their readers, that JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY AND PROPERLY GOD (*d*);"—I take up (says he) the New Testament, and read these words of truth and soberness, in which the Holy Ghost teacheth me the nature of Jesus Christ; and I find these propositions.

"*The Word was GOD.* John i. 1. *GOD was manifest in the flesh.* 1 Tim. iii. 16. *His name is Emanuel, GOD with us.* Matth. i. 23. *John turned many to THE LORD THEIR GOD.* Luke i. 16. *The Jews crucified THE LORD OF GLORY.* 1 Cor. ii. 8. *GOD purchased the church with his blood.* Acts xx. 28. *Jesus Christ is LORD OF ALL.* Acts x. 36. *Christ is OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVLR.* Rom. ix. 5. *We shall all stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST, so every one of us shall give account of himself to GOD.* Rom. xiv. 10. 12."

Nothing more is offered; no interpretation or illustration of these texts; no argument to shew that they are applicable to his purpose: only a laboured descanting upon them in a general way, in the following, and the like high terms, contrived to captivate the incautious unlearned reader:—

(*d*) Mr. Robinson's Plea, &c. p. 10.

" By

“ By the richest words (says he) in this copious
 “ language, (the Greek) the New Testament-
 “ writers describe Jesus Christ. The language
 “ would have afforded lower terms to express an
 “ inferior nature : but it could have afforded none
 “ higher to express the nature of the Supreme God.”

His first instance then, in proof of Jesus being
 the supreme God, which he alleges, is ;

John i. 1. *The Word was God.*

And he supposes, it will be taken as a thing quite
 certain, upon his word, for he offers no argument
 in its support ; that by the term, *Word*, *logos*, Christ
 is intended ; and that these words of the evangelist
 contain an express declaration of Christ being the
 Supreme God.

But no one who would act a wise and reasonable
 part, should take up a belief, without very great and
 strong proof, that a Jew by descent, and education,
 like the apostle, owning Moses for a divine lawgiver,
 could begin his book with declaring, what was
 never known or published before ; viz. that there
 was another person, who was Jehovah, the Supreme
 God, and Creator of all things, besides the one Je-
 hovah, God of Israel, by whom Moses professed
 himself to be sent ; and thus assert two Jehovahs,
 two Creators, where Moses had asserted but one,
 and the prophets after him had declared no other :
 all of them using the words He, Him, Thou, Thee,
 when speaking of him or to him ; and I, me, when
 this Being is himself introduced speaking ; terms
 which admit of no plurality of persons whatsoever ;
 and especially, that this same writer should begin
 with declaring Jesus to be THE TRUE GOD, when
 he soon after describes Jesus, in a solemn act of
 prayer, invoking the Father as THE ONLY TRUE
 GOD ; and declaring his own highest character, and
 most

most honourable distinction, to be that of being *sent by him*, his messenger. John xvii. 3.

Such contradictory assertions belong not to the sacred writings; but are the offspring of unhappy prejudice, and of human contrivance and authority: otherwise it would easily have been perceived by all, that it is not Jesus Christ, who is the Word, the Logos, here intended, but God himself; who is denominated and characterized by his attribute of Wisdom, or his commanding word and energy, which gave birth to all things; as in other places of Scripture, by other attributes. Thus *God is love*. 1 John iv. 16. *God is light*. 1 John i. 5. By this last, the aptest and most striking emblem in nature, the sacred writer would denote his most perfect wisdom and knowledge. Such language is readily understood, and without difficulty applied in these instances: and why not here, in that before us?

Writers also of opposite sentiments on this subject, have seen and owned, that St. John in using this language, has a reference to Proverbs viii. where *Wisdom*, though brought in as a Divine Person speaking and acting, is acknowledged to be nothing but an attribute of the Supreme Mind; and the whole of that prosopopoeia or personification in Solomon, is considered in no other light than as a beautiful animated description of the God and Creator of all things, acting every where by the rules of the most consummate wisdom. And what should hinder us from interpreting the apostle here in like manner; not as introducing a new Supreme God, called the Word, Logos, quite unknown before, and never named by the other three evangelists; but asserting, that all things were made by God, at first, with the most perfect wisdom; and that from the same source of the divine wisdom, all the

the different communications of light and instruction to mankind have been derived since; especially that best and chief of all, which we have by Jesus Christ?

And that this is the intent of the introductory part of his gospel, St. John himself explains to us, if we only have the patience to listen to him. For having asserted with that simplicity of style for which he is remarkable; *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God*—he immediately subjoins (shewing himself incapable of a thought that there was any person, who was God, but one;) *and the Word was God*; or as, rather more agreeably with the original, the sentence might be transposed, *and GOD was the Word*: viz. that *Word*, of which he was speaking, was none other than God himself. It was his Word, or Wisdom, by which all things were made; which planned all the divine councils and designs, those especially that related to the human race, and their deliverance out of their dark and degenerate state by Jesus Christ; to whom a portion of this wisdom was in an extraordinary manner imparted, sufficient to enable him to act the great part assigned to him. Which is the meaning of verse 14. that follows; *and the Word was (e) made flesh, and dwelt among us, &c.* i. e. This wisdom was communicated to a mortal, dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, and was by him dispensed to the world (*f.*)

(e) It should rather be translated, *the Word was flesh*, ο λογος σαρξ εγενετο, as before verse 6. εγενετο ανθρωπος, *there was a man sent*, &c.

(f) Our author in a subsequent part of his work, has these words: p. 62.

“ I appeal to any one of you, my brethren,——Whether
“ these considerations ought not to induce us to allow St.
“ John’s proposition; *He WHO WAS MADE flesh, was GOD.*”

But it has been just now shewn, how far the apostle is from asserting any thing so very degrading, concerning the Supreme Being.

Mr. Robinſon next introduces

1 Tim. iii. 16. *God was manifeſt in the fleſh.*

And here alſo it muſt be taken upon truſt from him, for he aſſigns no proof of it, that Chriſt is the God of whom the apoſtle ſpeaks. But others will conſider, that in agreement with the common phraſeology of Scripture, as well as with the preceding interpretation of *The Word being made fleſh*, &c. it may be aſſerted of the Almighty, inviſible God, even the Father, that *HE was manifeſt in the fleſh*; that is, was made known in a manner truly glorious and worthy of him, by the communications of his wiſdom and power which were given to the man Chriſt Jeſus, and by the discoveries and revelations which this his honoured instrument, great prophet and meſſenger, was thereby impowered to make of the divine will and benignity; and all this in perfect conſiſtence with, nay in no other way to be explained than by Chriſt being truly and properly man, a creature of God, and *not* truly and properly God; which our author would hence infer him to be.

In the ſame way of ſpeaking, the ſame apoſtle aſſerts, 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf*; or as the ſame thing is expreſſed in the preceding verſe, *God hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt*; i. e. Chriſt was God's inſtrument in bringing men to holineſs and the divine favour for ever.

This eaſy explanation may be given of the apoſtle's language, even as our author has quoted it, without countenancing ſuch concluſion as he would draw from it. But after the ſtrict, impartial ſcrutiny that has been made in the preſent century concerning the paſſage, and eſpecially by the labours and reſearches of Sir Iſaac Newton, Wetſtein, Griefbach, &c. upon it, the learned in general,

neral are convinced, that the apostle wrote, not, *God was manifest in the flesh*, but, *WHICH was manifest in the flesh*, referring to the mystery of godliness he had immediately before mentioned. Of this our author should not have been ignorant, nor his readers unapprized.

Then follows Matth. i. 23.

His name is Emanuel, GOD with us (g).

Mr. Robinson again presumes his reader will put implicit confidence in him, that this text is an evidence of Christ being the supreme God: for he offers not a tittle to make it out.

The words are cited by the evangelist from Isaiah vii. 14. where they immediately relate to a child, that was to be born at that time; and no more prove Christ to be God, than they prove the like of the child so described by the prophet. But as that child, who was to be called *Immanuel, GOD with us*, was not therefore God; but so called, to signify according to the known idiom of the Hebrew prophetic writings, that God would at that time afford his peculiar presence and assistance to Ahaz: so the application of the same name and phrase, *Immanuel, GOD with us*, to the child Jesus, implies not that *he was God*: but only that God would manifest himself and his goodness, in an extraordinary manner, by him.

We have afterwards, Luke i. 16.

John turned many to THE LORD THEIR GOD.

This quotation upon the face of it certainly needed some explanation from our author, though none is given, to shew how it applies to Christ, and proves him to be the supreme God. For it is so

(g) The words in the evangelist are; *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name, or he shall be called, Emanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.*

far from being self evident, that it is not easy to discover, in what way Mr. Robinson can make out what he must be supposed here to intend, *viz.* that Christ is THE LORD GOD, to whom many were to be converted by John the Baptist: for Christ is not at all referred to or mentioned. Perhaps it is presumed, that he is the person *intended* here, from the verse immediately following, which is capable of being applied to him, *viz.* *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias*; and that this indicates Christ to be THE LORD GOD before named, as the Baptist was to be his fore-runner. But though John the Baptist went before Christ in the spirit and power of Elias, he may in a just sense be said also to go before the Lord God himself, because in and by Christ the Lord God appeared and manifested himself. So that John might turn many to Christ, and turn them at the same time to the Lord their God, without making Christ, God; or any thing but his great prophet, and messenger.

He next produces 1 Cor. ii. 8.

The Jews crucified THE LORD OF GLORY.

The fact is unquestionably true; but what argument this language affords that Christ is God, the author tells not, but would have it taken for certain on his authority, that styling Christ the *Lord of glory* was the same as styling him the supreme God, and that the apostle here declares, in other words, that *the Jews crucified* GOD.

But in whatever sense Christ is called *Lord*, it is to be remembered that he is such, merely by the constitution and appointment of God. For the apostle Peter in his first discourse after our Lord's resurrection, says (Acts ii. 36.) *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD hath made*

made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Besides, St. Paul, in this place, is far from intending to speak of Christ, as any other than an excellent creature, highly gifted and honoured by Almighty God. In the preceding ver. 7. describing the true glory of a christian, in opposition to the vaunting and boasting which was among the Corinthian converts, on account of the pretended superior eloquence and talents of an ambitious man among them, whom they would set up in preference to the apostle; *We speak (says he) the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world, unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD OF GLORY: that is to say, in other words; “ Why do ye make divisions by glorying as ye “ do in your teachers for their fine rhetorical “ abilities and learning? The glory that God has “ ordained for us teachers and professors of the “ gospel, is to be the preachers and expounders “ of those revealed truths and benevolent purposes of God, which though contained in the “ Scriptures of the Old Testament, were not understood in former ages. To teach this wisdom, “ is all the glory that belongs to us; and it is “ what none of the rulers of this age attended to; “ for otherwise they would not have crucified the “ Lord of glory; would not have put him to a “ violent unjust death, who was the Lord, the “ giver, the dispenser of this glory and honour “ of which we boast.”* See Locke and Pearce upon the passage.

Next comes Acts xx. 28.

God purchased the church with his blood.

It is well known, that the best and most antient manuscript copies of the New Testament read here; feed the church, not of God, but of the Lord, (i. e. of Christ) which he hath purchased with his blood; and so also it is cited by the most antient christian writers.

How can our author leave his readers unacquainted with a circumstance, of such importance, and suffer the present reading to pass as genuine, without informing them of these just reasons for rejecting it, and for believing that such words as the *blood of God*, never fell from the apostle?

Of the same kind is what follows 1 John iii. 16. *GOD laid down his life for us.*

To deliver this text, as it is here put, without hesitation, as a proof of Christ's being the supreme God, is a token of very inexcusable negligence in our author. He ought to have known better. Dr. Doddridge (g), whose sentiments concerning the divinity of Christ are well known, plainly saw that the word *GOD* had nothing to do here, and accordingly expunged it out of his New Testament. See Mill, Wetstein, and Bengelius. Instead therefore of *GOD laid down his life for us*, it is to be read, *HE* (i. e. Christ) *laid down his life for us.*

One cannot but lament the injury and injustice done to the *english* reader, by permitting these and other acknowledged spurious readings to remain in our Bibles as the real words of the sacred writers. If they were marked out or removed, as they ought to be, christians would entertain a just horror of language to which they have been too much familiarised; viz. of *GOD dying, laying down his life, being crucified, shedding his blood*, and the like;

(g) See his paraphrase upon the place.

as they would perceive the shocking idea to be so wholly without foundation in the sacred writings.

Our author proceeds to cite Acts x. 36. *Jesus Christ is LORD OF ALL.*

Mr. Robinson would have it believed upon his bare assertion, that LORD OF ALL in this place signifies the sovereign almighty Being, the supreme God, and that Jesus Christ is HE. But the Scriptures instruct us better to interpret these sayings, and give us another account of the origin, nature, and extent of the lordship and dignity of Jesus Christ. According to them, Jesus Christ is *Lord of all*, because God hath so constituted him in the things relating to the gospel, and for accomplishing his purpose in bringing his creatures of mankind to virtue and an eternal felicity. And these Scriptures also assign a reason for this high honour conferred upon the Lord Jesus; that it was for the sake of his eminent virtue and tried obedience to God. Says the apostle, Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11. *because he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: Therefore GOD also hath highly exalted him, and hath graciously given him a name which is above every name: That in 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.*

We are next presented with Rom. ix. 5. *Christ is OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.*

It has often been shewn, that this our present english translation is not a just rendering and representation of the apostle's words and meaning. He does not say, *Christ is OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER*: but his words should be translated *Of whom (i. e. of the Israclites) Christ came: GOD,*
who

who is over all, be blessed for ever! Or, as others construe it; *Whose are the fathers; of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; whose is THE GOD OVER ALL, blessed for ever.* It is not needful to allege those very probable arguments by which learned men have proved one or other of these to be the words and genuine sense of the apostle. But it affords a farther presumption that so it is, and that our english version is wrong, because Origen, that honest man and most diligent student in the Scriptures, in his time, charges those persons with being guilty of a precipitate rashness, who stiled Christ, THE GOD OVER ALL. This shews, that he did not hold it to be St. Paul's doctrine, nor understood the clause in question to relate to Christ, but to God (*h*). "Be it so, says he, that in the vast number of christians, and amidst the diversity of opinions which is unavoidable among them, there should be found some so rash as to suppose the Saviour to be THE GOD OVER ALL: yet we are not of that sort, but pay more regard to his own account of himself; *My Father, who hath sent me, is greater than I (i).*"

(*h*) Εγω δε τιςα, ως εν πληθει ποιγευστων, και δεχομενων διαφωσια, δια την προπιθειαν υποτιθισθαι τον σωτηρα ειαι τον επι πασι θεον· αλλ' επι γε ημεις τοιαυτοι, οι πειθομενοι αυτω λεγοντι, ο πατηρ, ο σιμψαα με, μειζων μη επι.

Origen. contra Celsum. l. viii. p. 387. Ed. Spenc.

(*i*) "The known phrase, ο επι πασι θεοα, *God over all*, both in the Scripture, and most primitive antiquity, directly and singly means, God, *the Father*. And it was thought in those ancient days, that to say the Son was ο επι πασι των θεοα, was little less than ignorance, herefy, blasphemy." Whiston's Primitive Christianity revived, Vol. IV. p. 14. where is much more on the subject deserving perusal.

The last of Mr. Robinſon's citations of Scripture directly declaring, as he imagines, Chriſt to be the ſupreme God, is, Romans xiv. 10. 12. *We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST:—ſo then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to GOD.* This is all moſt true: but we ſee no proof in it of Chriſt being God; for which our author produces it. For St. Paul explains to us, upon another occaſion, in what manner it is that *we ſhall ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and give account of ourſelves to God* at the ſame time, yet without making Jeſus Chriſt, God, or any thing more than a human being, high in his favour. *GOD hath appointed a day, ſaith he, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that MAN whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 30, 31.

S E C T I O N III.

Whether the ſame Titles are given to Chriſt in the Chriſtian Scriptures, which are given to God in the Jewish Scriptures.

OUR author's next head and poſition is, p. 12, that "the writers of the New Teſtament describe Jeſus Chriſt by the very names and titles, by which the writers of the Old Teſtament had deſcribed the Supreme God:" whence it is to be inferred, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Supreme God. And to confirm this, he produces the following arrangement of texts from the Old and New Teſtament.

The

The titles given to God in the Jewish Scriptures.

Thou shalt say, I AM hath sent me. Exod. iii. 14.

I (Jehovah) am THE FIRST AND THE LAST. Isai. xlv. 6.

Jehovah your God is LORD OF LORDS. Deut. x. 17.

THE HIGHEST himself shall establish Zion. Ps. lxxxvii. 5.

The Lord of hosts is THE KING OF GLORY. Ps. xxiv. 10.

I will save them by THE LORD THEIR GOD. Hof. i. 7.

Belshazzar lifted up himself against THE LORD OF HEAVEN. Dan. v. 23.

Jehovah is exalted as HEAD ABOVE ALL. 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

Here, in like fashion as under the former head, Mr. Robinson is unfortunate in all his instances, whereby he would maintain Christ to be the supreme God. For it will be found, that the TITLES which he assigns to Christ for this purpose, are either such as are not so peculiar to God as to be incompatible with the condition of any creature highly favoured by him; or, if they are TITLES peculiar to God, they are by our author wrongly ascribed to Jesus Christ.

The titles given to Christ in the Christian Scriptures.

Before Abraham was, I (Jesus) AM. John viii. 58.

I (Jesus) am THE FIRST AND THE LAST. Rev. i. 11. 17.

The Lamb is LORD OF LORDS. Rev. xvii. 14.

John went before the face of THE HIGHEST. Luke i. 76.

Jesus Christ is LORD OF GLORY. James ii. 1.

The SAVIOUR born is Christ THE LORD. Luke ii. 11.

The second man is THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. 1 Cor. xv. 47.

Christ is THE HEAD OF ALL principality and power. Col. ii. 10.

But what is wanting in argument, is made up by much too confident assertion; which will supply its place with many: for he scruples not to say here;

“ If they who described Jesus Christ to the Jews by these sacred names and titles, intended to convey an idea of HIS DEITY, the description is just, and the application safe: but if they intended to describe a mere man, they were surely of all men the most preposterous. They chose a method of recommending Jesus to the Jews, the most likely to enrage and alarm them. Whatever they meant, the Jews understood them in our sense, and took Jesus Christ for a BLASPHEMER. *We stone thee*, said they, John x. 33, for BLASPHEMY; *because thou, being a man, MAKEST THYSELF GOD.*”

In his application of this last passage from St. John's gospel, our author himself mistakes, and of course misrepresents the sentiments of the Jews concerning Christ. Gross as the apprehensions of that people were, they never entertained an idea, that there was any but *one Person*, who was Jehovah, the supreme God. It is an extravagance that none ever fell into but christians of the race of the heathens, to hold *more persons than one to be the supreme God.*

Our Saviour's answer here, and modest vindication of himself, shews, that all that his adversaries meant by their *aggravated* expression of his MAKING HIMSELF GOD, was his assuming the character of the Messiah, without what they thought the proper credentials for it: though as he tells them in his reply, *the works of the Father which he did*, i. e. his miraculous works, proved him to be the *Son of God*, i. e. the Messiah, the Christ: for the terms are equivalent; and *the Son of God, the Son*
of

of the living God, the Son of the Blessed, are synonymous phrases, by which the Jews at that time were wont to speak of the great divine prophet and deliverer whom they expected. This is farther demonstrated, if a thing so plain can need it, by this; that when our Lord was capitally convicted by the Jewish Sanhedrim, the charge brought against him was, *not* that he made himself Jehovah, the supreme God; but the Christ. *Again,* it is said, *the high priest asked him and said to him; Art thou THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE BLESSED? And Jesus said; I am. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and said; What need have we of any other testimony? Ye have heard the BLASPHEMY: What think ye? And they all condemned him as guilty of a capital crime.* Mark xiv. 61, &c. And after this, when the same persons accused him before Pilate, they make no mention of *his deity* as our author speaks, but of his pretended claim to be the Messiah, their king and prophet. *The Jews answered Pilate; We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he hath made himself THE SON OF GOD.* John xix. 7. It may be hoped, that we shall hear no more of the Jews in our Lord's time imagining him to claim to be the most high God, or to be any thing more than his great prophet, the promised Messiah.

We turn ourselves then to consider the TITLES given to Christ in the New Testament, which being the same, according to our author, with those attributed to God in the Old Testament, indicate Christ also to be in like manner God. Still however as before, all is to be taken upon his word; that his texts of scripture prove that for which he brings them: for he contents himself merely with quoting them.

He first brings, *Before Abraham was, I AM.* John viii. 58.

It is a mistake into which many have fallen, as well as Mr. Robinfon, that our Lord here alludes to Exod. iii. 14. *Thou shalt say, I AM hath sent me;* and that he thereby asserts himself to be GOD, Jehovah, the self-existent Being. But had this been Christ's design, the evangelist, who could not but have some knowlege of the Greek language in which he wrote, would not have couched it in such ambiguous terms, as very imperfectly conveyed it, and so that in the same way of construction it might be maintained, that the man blind from his birth, whom Christ healed, was also the supreme God. For this poor beggar's reply to those who were making this inquiry about him, was; *εγω ειμι, I AM.* Joh. ix. 9. And farther, as the sacred historians of the New Testament appear to have been acquainted with, and to have made use of, the Septuagint version of the Old, which had been made some few hundred years before, the apostle John, if he had supposed his divine Master had referred to Exod. iii. 14. would most probably have expressed himself in the words of that Greek translation, *εγω ειμι ο ων (k), I am he who exists;* the self-

(2) Mr. Robinfon however asserts the title of *ο ων*, the self-existent Being, to be given to Christ, in another part of his work; introducing it with very great pomp, a small part of which only I lay before the reader.

P. 97. "The Jews, it is well known, having lost the use of their pure native Hebrew tongue, had a Greek translation of their Bible in high repute among them. The New Testament writers all quoted scripture from this translation. All the Greek churches, to whom St. John wrote, had no other copy. The translators of the Greek Bible had rendered the incommunicable name, *ο ων*. The Lord said to Moses, *εγω ειμι ο ων*. The person appearing to St. John quotes this passage, and says to John, *εγω ειμι ο ων, και ο νυν, και ο ερχομενος,*" i. e. *I am—he, which is, and which was, and which is to come.* But

self-existent God: which would have put the matter out of all doubt.

As it is not therefore likely, for these and other reasons, that Christ's answer in this place had any respect to this NAME, which God gave himself formerly to Moses, the words he here makes use of, *I am*, cannot be brought as a proof of Christ being GOD. What he really intended by them, he himself has furnished us with a key to unfold, in the very discourse that he is holding with these Jews. For verse 24. he says; *If ye believe not that I AM he; ye shall die in your sins*: and verse 28. *When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I AM he*. In both these instances, our english translators have held it necessary to add *he* to *I am*, *I am he*, i. e. I am the Christ, to make proper sense of it; plainly seeing that the holy Jesus intended only to declare that he was the Christ, the promised Messiah, whom they ex-

But it will be evident, that the person who says this, is not Jesus Christ, the person who appeared to John; but one totally and infinitely different, the Almighty Being himself. For the apostle's salutation to the churches of Asia, four verses before, thus opens; *Grace be unto you and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come;—and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth*. Christ is here described as a man who suffered death for the truth, and in consequence of this, had the honour of being raised to an immortal life for his consummate virtue and loyalty to God, and exalted above all others of mankind. And he is hereby as expressly distinguished, as words can mark the distinction, from the eternal God, *who is, and who was, and who is to come*, ο ων, και ο ην, και ο ερχομενος, who cannot die. Therefore in the 8th verse, it can be none other than Jehovah, the self-existent God, who is introduced thus declaring his eternal being and perfections, pervading all time, past, present, and to come; *I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come; the Almighty*.

pected; which his countrymen would not admit him to be notwithstanding the miraculous proofs he gave of it, on account of his low outward appearance and condemnation of their worldly ambitious views and pursuits.

These translators, to have been consistent with themselves, should have rendered the same phrase here in the same way; viz. *Before Abraham was, I AM he*; that is, the Christ. And this they would have done, had they not been prepossessed with the notion, that Christ was the supreme God, and glad to lay hold of any thing that favoured it. For they would otherwise have perceived, that our Lord intended the same thing here as in those other passages. And although he was not to fill the office of the Messiah till many ages after the time of Abraham, he might say that he was the Messiah before that patriarch was born, *Before Abraham was, I am he*, by reason of his destination to that office by Almighty God, *known unto whom* (Acts xv. 18.) *are all his works from the beginning of the world.* See Gen. xxii. 18. And perhaps our Lord might have in his mind, that obscure oracle concerning himself, delivered immediately after the transgression and forfeiture of our first parents, (Gen. iii. 15.) *of the seed of the woman being to bruise the serpent's head.*

They must moreover be great strangers to the stile of the sacred writings, who have not observed, that it is customary with them to speak of future things and persons, intended by Almighty God to take place and to exist, as if they already had a being. So (Isai. xlv. 1.) *Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whom I hold fast by the right hand*: although that prince was then unborn. Thus also (Luke xx. 37.) *Moses calleth the LORD* (Jehovah) *the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, when those patriarchs were dead*; because on account

of God's purpose to raise them from the dead, they were in his sight as alive: *for* (as our Lord himself expresses it, ver. 38.) *all* (they) *live unto him*. Our Lord likewise (John xvii. 5.) prays for *the glory which he had with the father before the world was*; i. e. the glory of being the chief instrument of bringing a dark and degenerate world to virtue and eternal life. For that, and not any thing he had before been possessed of, is the glory that he there speaks of; and for which he prays. Which way of speaking, the apostle Peter well explains, when he says concerning Christ, (1 Pet. i. 20.) *who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these latter times*. And so here, our Lord, though he had no being, till he was brought forth by his mother Mary, at Bethlehem in Judea, 1785 years since, according to the vulgar era; was nevertheless the Messiah, the Christ, before Abraham was born; because God had foreordained, that there should be one of human kind raised up to sustain that character, at some future period.

His next instance of the same title being given to Christ, as to God himself; is,

I (Jehovah) *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST. *I* (Jesus) *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST.
Isai. xlv. 6. Rev. i. 11. 17.

It is a mark of very blameable neglect or ignorance in Mr. Robinson to refer his readers to Revel. i. 11. as an example of the title of *the first and the last* being given to Christ; when it is a point well known to and allowed by (*k*) the learned, that the words, *I am alpha and omega, the first and*

(*k*) See Mill and Weistein. Griesbach has, to his honour, left them out of the text in his late most valuable edition of the New Testament; where they ought to have no place.

the last, in the beginning of this eleventh verse, are an interpolation, being wanting in all the best manuscript copies and ancient versions of the New Testament; having probably been inserted in later times by some mistake of Transcribers.

And although in the 17th verse of this chapter, Christ undoubtedly calls himself, *the first and the last*; yet this does not prove Jesus to be Jehovah, the most high God? It is not sufficient evidence of it, that Almighty God used the same terms in speaking concerning himself, many ages before, by his prophet Isaiah. Unless the reader be disposed at all events, to take it on trust from Mr. Robinson, it may very naturally be presumed, and he will easily perceive, that God may stile himself *the first and the last* in one sense, and Jesus be so termed in another sense, so as not to give the least colour to suspect Jesus to be the most high God on this account.

God, for instance, is most truly *the first and the last*, in that he is before all things, and all things are from him, depending upon him, and which will for ever depend upon him, for their existence. They may perish, but he endureth for ever and ever. Christ, on the other hand, was *the first and the last*, in the divine dispensation of the gospel, as the whole was appointed to begin with and had thus its origin from him, and shall be carried on to its final completion, by his ministry, and according to his predictions, whatever opposition be made to it by the powers of this world. That these terms, *the first and the last*, are here to be applied to our Lord, in some such qualified sense as this, is most apparent from the words immediately following; viz. *I am he that liveth and was dead. And behold I am alive for evermore.* i. e. “ Although I once
 “ suffered by the hands of unrighteous men, and
 “ was put to death; I shall now live for ever, and
 “ be

Another example of the same supposed title ascribed to Christ as to God, from which it is to be concluded, that Christ is the most high God ; is,

THE HIGHEST *himself shall establish Zion.* *John went before the face of* THE HIGHEST.
 Pf. lxxxvii. 6. Luke i. 76.

Here is unquestionably a title peculiar to God ; and Mr. Robinson, according to custom, expects we should take it upon his word, without any proof, that it belongs to Jesus Christ. But he imposes on himself and his readers, as in a former instance, (p. 14.) by not considering and distinguishing ; that although John the Baptist was Christ's forerunner and harbinger, who went before him to prepare the Jews for his reception ; the same John might also in very customary, intelligible language, be said at the same time to go before the most high God : because God was in Christ, in this sense, in that he manifested himself by him, and spoke to men by him, as his prophet and messenger. Mr. Robinson by the same kind of argument might infer that the twelve apostles were each of them God, as well as their Master Jesus, because he told them, (Matth. x. 40.) *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.*

A farther instance of a similar title assigned to God and to Christ, from which it is infer'd, that Christ is the supreme God, is ;

The Lord of hosts is *Jesus Christ is* LORD
 THE KING OF GLORY. OF GLORY. James ii. 1.
 Pf. xxiv. 10.

Our author should here again have paid some attention, that *Lord of glory, king of glory*, or any the like title, though ascribed to God, yet does not in so absolute a manner belong to him, but that it may

may be ascribed to his creatures, whom he qualifies for it. Christ is Lord of glory, and King of glory, without all doubt; yet he is not therefore LORD and KING OF GLORY as Jehovah, the supreme God; but such a Lord and King as God made and appointed him.

Another instance to his point, as he supposes, is;

I will save them by The Saviour born is
 THE LORD THEIR GOD. *Christ THE LORD.* Luke
 Hosea i. 7. ii. 11.

If Mr. Robinson would have his readers understand this passage in Hosea, as if Almighty God, *the Lord of hosts*, had said he would save his people by another Almighty God besides himself, (as some have supposed,) and by the latter would have it concluded Christ to be meant: it is sufficient to say, that such construction is owing to a total ignorance of the idiom of the Hebrew language, so frequently recurring, in repeating the noun, instead of substituting the pronoun for it. So we read 1 Kings viii. 1. *Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children, unto king Solomon:*—not surely to another king Solomon, but to himself. In like manner Psalm l. 23. The Almighty Being says; *Who so offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God:* not again, the salvation of another God; but *my* salvation. So Gen. xix. 24. *The LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from the LORD out of heaven:* i. e. from himself, not from any other LORD or Jehovah. And St. Paul expresses his devout wishes for his friend, (2 Tim. i. 18.) *THE LORD grant unto him that he may find mercy of THE LORD in that day:* i. e. may find mercy from HIM.

But

But if our author would have it supposed, that there is something that denotes Christ to be the supreme God, by his being called *the Lord, the Saviour*; he should have recollected, what we have so often mentioned, that in whatever way he is *Lord*, and the same might be shewn that in whatever way he is *the Saviour*, it is God who made him such, and impowered him to fill those characters respectively.

It next follows;

Belshazzar lifted up himself against the LORD *The second man is the LORD FROM HEAVEN.*
Dan. v. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 47.

Supposing the true state of the sacred text to be given, in this quotation from St. Paul, which is not so, there is great inattention to its true meaning in contrasting it with the passage from Daniel, and proposing them both together as furnishing a proof of Christ being the supreme God, for having the like title ascribed to him as to God; which is however by no means true here. For the apostle says, *The first man is of the earth, earthy*, or created out of the dust: i. e. Adam was perishable, like the materials out of which he was framed. But *the second man*, to whom belongs the spiritual body he had mentioned just before, who is Christ *the Lord*, *is from heaven*, of a heavenly or divine fabric and constitution.

But waving this, the learned know, and Mr. Robinson should have known, that the term, *Lord*, in this passage, has crept in by the mistake of Transcribers, and was not written by St. Paul; whose words are only, *the second man is from heaven*; leaving out *Lord*. N. B. Luther omitted *Lord* in his German translation of the Bible. Others also of the Reformers rejected it, as not being a part of Scripture.

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The last instance alleged, of a similar title given to God and to Christ, intended to shew the latter to be the supreme God; is;

Jehovah is exalted as *Christ is* THE HEAD
HEAD ABOVE ALL. I OF ALL *principality and*
Chron. xxix. 11. *power.* Col. iii. 10.

The producing together these parallel places, and marking them so as to point out their resemblance to the eye, which is done throughout, and which I have copied, does more credit to our author's diligence in turning over the sacred pages, than to his discernment in furnishing the means of interpreting what is contained in them. What if Christ be, as he is undoubtedly said to be, *the head of all principality and power?* Whatsoever sense you put upon this description of him, it does not therefore follow that he is Jehovah, God, exalted as head above all. The same apostle, who thus describes Christ in this place, when he speaks of him in another, (1 Cor. xi. 3.) as being *the head of every man*, declares at the same time, lest there should be any mistake about the origin or extent of his power; *I would have you know, that THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD.* So that however exalted he is, whatever principality or power Christ possesses, there is ONE who, in the apostle's account, is transcendently and infinitely above him, and who controuls and governs him, and all things, and persons, whatsoever.

S E C T I O N IV.

Whether the Perfections which are ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, are the same with those that are ascribed to God?

MR. Robinson's next head is, that "the writers of Revelation ascribe the same perfections to Jesus Christ, which they ascribe to God."

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And

And from certain texts of Scripture, collected and ranged together for the purpose, but without any proof offered, either that they are the incommunicable perfections of God which are therein described; or, if such, that they are really ascribed to Christ: he nevertheless scruples not to say, as was above noted, “that if Jesus Christ be not God, the apostles are chargeable either with weakness or wickedness.”

To work upon the passions of his readers, for our author is no where unskilled in that art, he touches beforehand upon “the most alarming consequences that would follow, were the imperfections of creatures to be ascribed to God, or the perfections of God to creatures.—And yet, adds he, notwithstanding so many reasons for, precision, Jesus Christ declares, *all things, that the Father hath, are mine*; a very dangerous position, if he were not God.” How easy is it for a person of a fruitful imagination, and ready volubility of speech, to give an imposing turn to words, intirely different from their real meaning! For our Lord is far from intending here all things throughout the wide universe of being; (as our author would have it supposed,) when he says (John xvi. 15.) *All things that the Father hath are mine*: but only all the things of which he was speaking at the time, as every one’s unbiaſſed reason would dictate to him; namely, what related to the divine assistance, which he had been promising, would be given to his apostles after his decease and restoration to life and ascension to heaven: *All these things, saith he, that the Father hath, are mine*: i. e. he has promised them to me, and they will be imparted to you. In his prayer to the heavenly Father, our Lord uses similar phrases; *mine are thine, and thine are mine*, not to bespeak

bespeak himself equal to the supreme Father and Possessor of heaven and earth, whom he was humbly supplicating at the time for favour and assistance; but to denote, with all thankfulness, that every thing relating to the gospel dispensation and salvation of mankind, had without reserve been communicated to him.

With the same design, of prepossessing the reader by strong asseveration without proof, our author goes on to say; "The writers of revelation ascribe to Jesus Christ the same perfections which they ascribe to God. They affirm; *In Christ dwelleth* "ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD bodily." Col. ii. 9.

But before this had been so peremptorily asserted, it should have been considered, that whatever perfections are here implied, Christ, in our apostle's account, received them from God, and depends upon him for them. For a little before, in the same epistle, he had said, Col. i. 19. *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.* And moreover, the same apostle prays, Eph. iii. 19. that the christian brethren at Ephesus, *might be filled with all the fulness of God.* So that the gifts or perfections here intended, were in some degree common to Christ with those his first followers.

The phrase, *fulness of the godhead*, does not signify all the perfections belonging to the deity; nor is that sense countenanced by any similar language throughout the Bible. But all that is intended by it, is; that in Christ dwell all those excellent gifts which were communicated to him from God, and were to be bestowed upon his followers, in that first age of the gospel (*l*).

(*l*) See an admirable note of Peirce's upon the place; whose interpretation is here followed.

Mr. Robinson employs some pains in classing the several texts of Scripture, which in his estimation, declare Christ to have the perfections of God, and therefore to be truly and properly God: a labour he may well bestow, for he takes no other; but according to custom, presumes the reader will implicitly rely upon his judgment, that they prove the point in question. I transcribe him exactly.

PERFECTIONS ascribed to God.	PERFECTIONS ascribed to Christ.
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E T E R N I T Y.

<p><i>GOD is an EVERLASTING king.</i> Jer. x. 10.</p>	<p><i>The name of THE CHILD is the EVERLASTING FATHER.</i> Isai. ix. 6.</p>
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<p><i>JEHOVAH shall reign for EVER AND EVER.</i> Exod. xv. 18.</p>	<p><i>Unto the SON he saith, THY THRONE, O GOD, is for EVER AND EVER.</i> Heb. i. 8, &c.</p>
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O M N I P O T E N C E.

<p><i>The name of the LORD OF HOSTS is the MIGHTY GOD.</i> Jer. xxxii. 18.</p>	<p><i>The name of THE CHILD is THE MIGHTY GOD.</i> Isai. ix. 6.</p>
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<p><i>I JEHOVAH appeared by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY.</i> Exod. vi. 2, 3.</p>	<p><i>I THE LORD am THE ALMIGHTY.</i> Rev. i. 8, 11, 12, 13, 18.</p>
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I M M U T A B I L I T Y.

<p><i>I Jehovah CHANGE NOT.</i> Mal. iii. 6.</p>	<p><i>The heavens and the earth shall be changed: but THOU (the SON) ART THE SAME.</i> Heb. i. 10, 12.</p>
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<p><i>Thou MY GOD art THE SAME, and thy years have no end.</i> Ps. cii. 24, 27.</p>	<p><i>JESUS CHRIST THE SAME yesterday, to-day, and for ever.</i> Heb. xiii. 8.</p>
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O M N I P R E S E N C E.

DO NOT I JEHOVAH
FILL HEAVEN AND
EARTH? Jer. xxiii. 24.

IN ALL PLACES *where*
I Jehovah record MY
NAME, there will I come
unto thee and blefs thee.
Exod. xx. 24.

Christ is he, WHO
FILLETH ALL IN ALL.
Eph. i. 20. 23.

WHERE *two or three*
are gathered together in
MY NAME, there am I
(Jesus) in the midst of
them. Matth. xviii. 20.

O M N I S C I E N C E.

Jehovah is a God of
knowlege. 1 Sam. ii. 5.

I JEHOVAH SEARCH
THE HEARTS, I TRY THE
REINS. Jer. xvii. 10.

We are sure that thou
(Jesus) knowest all things.
John xvi. 30. ii. 24, 25.
xxi. 17.

I THE SON OF GOD,
AM HE, WHICH SEARCH-
ETH THE REINS AND
THE HEARTS. Rev. ii. 23.

We are now to examine this pompous exhibi-
tion of texts, in their order, to see how far they
indicate Christ to be possessed of the divine per-
fections, and therefore to be the most high God.

Texts to prove the eternity of Jesus Christ.

1. GOD *is an EVER-*
LASTING king. Jer. x. 10.

The name of THE CHILD
is the EVERLASTING fa-
ther. Hsa. ix. 6.

One may wonder, that in the year 1782, for
that is the date of the edition of our author's book
before us, there should be found any one so inad-
vertent to the true rendering of this passage in
Hsaiah, as still to give it a sense that reflects so
much discredit on a prophet of God; as if he could
assert that *a child*, or that any Person but one, *could*
be the everlasting Father. The old Greek interpret-
ers, who lived before and soon after our Saviour's

time, and the Vulgate, render it *πατηρ το αιωνος το μελλοντος*, *pater futuri seculi*, *the father of the age or the world to come*. So it is (*m*) rendered by Mr. Lowth. His son, the present Bishop of London, translates it, *the father of the everlasting age*. Grotius; *Pater seculi, qui multos post se relicturus sit posteros, et in longum tempus*; i. e. the father of the (christian) age, as who should leave a numerous and lasting posterity of believers behind him. Munster; *Pater eternitatis*, i. e. *semper gignens novam sobolem in ecclesia*: i. e. the father of eternity, in this sense, as having a new offspring in the church continually born to him. In which sense also Martin, in his French translation renders it; *le Pere d' éternité*.

I hope, for the sake of truth and decency, that we shall hear no more of a child, the child Jesus being *the everlasting Father*; and that such obnoxious language will in time be removed out of our Bibles.

2. *JEHOVAH shall reign* *Unto the SON he saith,*
for EVER AND EVER. *THY THRONE O GOD, is*
Exod. xv. 18. *for EVER AND EVER.*
 Heb. i. 8. &c.

If the words of the apostle to the Hebrews are to be thus translated, Mr. Robinson in justice to his readers should have apprized them, that although Christ be styled God, he is at the same

(*m*) “ The Septuagint render the words, *πατηρ μελλοντος αιωνος*, the father of the world to come; and the vulgar Latin follows this translation: which since the Hebrew words admit of, I can’t but have a particular regard for it, because I am persuaded it is from the authority of this text, that the state of the gospel, or the kingdom of the Messiah is called in the New Testament by the title of *μελλον αιων*, the world to come. See Matth. xii. 32. Hebr. ii. 5. vi. 5.”—Lowth, on Isai. ix. 6.

time declared to have a God over him and above him, who made him what he is: for it follows immediately after, in the same address still continued to Christ;—*A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore GOD, even THY GOD, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*; i. e. hath conferred superior honour and felicity upon thee.

But the better reading and translation of the words, which they equally admit, is; *To the Son he saith, God is thy throne for ever and ever*; i. e. God is the stabiliser of thy throne; thy support. See Peirce upon the place. Whatever therefore is here said of Christ, is very consistent with his having a beginning of existence like all the other creatures of God; is far from implying, that he is the eternal God, as our author would make him.

Texts to prove the omnipotence of Jesus Christ.

1. *The name of the LORD OF HOSTS, is the MIGHTY GOD.* *The name of THE CHILD is THE MIGHTY GOD.* Jer. xxxii. Isai. ix. 6.

18.

Ep. Lowth, no less than our author, appears to me wholly unjustifiable in translating this passage in Isaiah, *the mighty God*; and letting it pass, as if *the most high God* was intended by it; without giving any notice of the different versions and readings of the place, ancient and modern; which may assure any one, that the present reading in our Bibles is not to be depended upon. I shall barely transcribe some of them, as they lie before me in *Calmet*; who, by the way is very angry with the antient Interpreters for leaving the word, *God*, out of their translations. Aquila renders it: *His name shall be called, wonderful, counsellor, the*

strong, the mighty, the father of the age. Symmachus: *His name shall be called most extraordinary, a counsellor, the strong, the mighty, the father of the age.* Theodotion: *And be called his name, wonderful, a counsellor; the strong, the mighty, the father of the age.* The Vulgate has it: *Wonderful, God, powerful, the father of the age.* The Roman edition of the Vatican has also: *His name shall be called the angel or messenger of the great counsel: for I will make peace and health to come upon his princes.* Le Clerc follows the antients, and translates the word *Al* or *El*, *powerful*, and not *God*. Martin understood it so, in his French translation, but added the word *God*, as he thought, to make out the sense, "le (Dieu) fort et puissant." Vatable, the learned French professor renders it, *heros fortis*, as Martin Luther is said to have done in his German translation of the Bible, viz. *the mighty hero, or prince*. I would hope again, as I expressed myself upon another ill interpreted part of this verse of the prophet Isaiah, that the common unlearned christian will not much longer continue to be imposed upon by high authority, as if a CHILD could be THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, the infinite eternal Being.

2. I JEHOVAH appear- I THE LORD am THE
ed by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY Rev. i. 8.
ALMIGHTY. Excd. vi. 11, 12, 13. 18.

23.

It will readily be perceived, that there is not any pretence for our author to assert Christ to be the omnipotent God, by stating justly and at length the whole of the passage to which he appeals for it; which is as follows:

Ver. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

11. Say-

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, &c.

12, 13. *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

The 8th verse here contains evidently a description of God, the one supreme almighty Governor of all things, who is ever the same, unchangeable, and able to accomplish his purposes throughout all time. But the part of the eleventh verse, [*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*] which Mr. Robinson presumes to be descriptive of Christ, and to indicate him to be the Almighty Being described ver. 8, are not the words of the sacred writer, as was above noted. As for the 13th and 18th verses, they speak of Christ expressly as a human being, and point at his suffering death in the cause of God, and being on that account raised to life, never to die more, with a power also of conferring a blessed immortality on his true disciples.

Texts to prove Christ to be the unchangeable God.

1. <i>I Jehovah</i>	<i>CHANGE</i>	<i>The heavens and the</i>
NOT. Mal. iii. 6.		<i>earth shall be changed:</i>
		<i>but THOU (the SON) ART</i>
		<i>THE SAME. Heb. i. 10. 12.</i>

Although Mr. Robinson here inserts the words [the Son] in a parenthesis, to ascertain that this address is made to the Son, he is very unfortunate in it; for it is God, and not Christ, to whom the words

words are applied, as was thus many years since shewn by an able writer, and skilful interpreter of Scripture.

“ Here we may observe (says Mr. Emlyn, vol. ii. p. 340, 341.) that the tenth verse, *And thou, Lord, &c.* (though it is a new citation) is not pre-faced with, *And to the Son he saith*, as ver. 8; or with an *Again*, as ver. 5, 6. and so ii. 13; but barely, *And thou, Lord.* Now the God last mentioned was Christ’s God, who had anointed him; and the *author* thereupon addressing himself to this God, breaks out into the celebration of his *power*, and especially his *unchangeable duration*; which he dwells upon, as what he principally cites the text for, in order, I conceive, to prove the stability of the Son’s kingdom before spoken of. *Thy throne, O God, is (or God is thy throne) for ever and ever: God, thy God, has anointed thee: and thou, Lord, i. e. thou who hast promised him such a throne; art he who laidst the foundation of the earth, and by thy hands madest the heavens, which though of long and permanent duration, yet will at length perish; but thou remainest; thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* So that it seems to be a declaration of GOD’S IMMUTABILITY made here, to ascertain the durableness of Christ’s kingdom before-mentioned: and the rather so, because this passage had been used originally for the same purpose in the CIII^d Psalm, *viz.* to infer thence this conclusion in the last verse; *the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.* In like manner it here proves, the *Sen’s* throne should be established for ever and ever by the same argument, *viz.* by God’s immutability; and so was very pertinently alleged of God, without being applied to the *Sen*; to shew how able *his God*,
who

who had anointed him, was to make good and maintain what he had granted him, viz. a durable kingdom for ever." He then goes on to shew, that these words were so understood by the early christian writers, Irenæus and Tertullian; and that no one antient writer ever applied them to Christ during the three first centuries; and that Dr. Waterland does not pretend that they were ever so applied till the fourth or fifth."

2. *Thou, MY GOD, art JESUS CHRIST, THE THE SAME, and thy years SAME yesterday, to-day, have no end.* Psal. cii. *and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8. 24. 27.

This text Heb. xiii. 8. from which Mr. Robinson would have us conclude, that Christ is the unchangeable God, spoken of by the Psalmist, is much beside his purpose; as it relates not to Christ himself, but to his doctrine, which is often so called. Thus Eph. iv. 20. *ye have not so learned Christ, i. e. the christian doctrine.* Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me; i. e. through the teachings of Christ.* Eph. iii. 17. *that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; i. e. the doctrine of Christ.* And taking in the preceding verse, and the connection of the discourse, it will be evident, that the Apostle is here speaking of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, not of his person. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines.* "For there would
" be no force in the argument, to say; *Imitate*
" *your pastors, because the Person of Christ is al-*
" *ways the same.* But the other way, it is a clear
" and

“ and very good argument. *Adhere to the faith*
 “ *of the apostles who first instructed you, and be not*
 “ *carried about with a variety of new doctrines :*
 “ *For the doctrine of Christ is always one and the*
 “ *same, and cannot be changed by men.”* Dr.
 Clarke’s Reply to the Objections of Mr. Nelson,
 p. 169.

Texts to prove Christ to be the omnipresent
 God.

1. *Do not I JEHOVAH* Christ is he WHO FIL-
 LETH HEAVEN AND EARTH IN ALL. Eph.
 i. 20. 23.

A common reader, who submits to our author’s
 judgment, will imagine from these two passages
 compared together, that he has made out his point,
 and that Christ is God, present every where.
 But he greatly deceived himself, and misleads
 others, by putting together passages that appear to
 the eye to agree, without considering their real
 meaning and difference. For that which is here
 spoken of Christ *filling all in all*, or “filling all
 things with all things,” has not the least reference
 to his being God, or being omnipresent as God.
 For going back to verse 17. we find, that it is,
the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of
glory, from whom he received this power, what-
ever it be. Ver. 22, 23. He, i. e. Christ’s God,
hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to
be head over all things to the church, which is his
body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The *fulness* then here spoken of evidently re-
 lates to the church, which is stiled the fulness of
 Christ, considered as the head of a body, which
 consists of divers members, all together constituting
 a perfect body. Christians therefore in general,
 composed of Jews and Gentiles, were the fulness
 of

of Christ, by which he was compleated; and he filled all things with all things, by imparting to the members of his church all those spiritual and divine blessings of which they partook, and which were derived from him as their head, and which he received from God: *for* (as our apostle speaks in a parallel passage, Coloss. ii. 19.) *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*: or, as the original Greek is better translated by Castellio and Peirce, *it pleased the Father to inhabit all fulness by Christ*: i. e. God appointed him to be the head of the church, that he might in or by him, inhabit, dwell among them, by communicating his extraordinary gifts and blessings to them; as our apostle elsewhere expresses it (Eph. ii. 22.) *in or by whom, (i. e. Christ,) you also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.*

2. IN ALL PLACES *Where two or three where I Jehovah record are gathered together in MY NAME, there will I come unto thee and bless (Jesus) in the midst of thee. Exod. xx. 24. them. Matth. xviii. 20.*

If Mr. Robinson had paid due attention to our Lord's words in this place, he would have seen, that they are very far from implying him, either to be God, or to be present every where. For Christ is not speaking of christians in general, at all times, when joining together in the worship of God, as his disciples; but only of a particular rare case of his apostles, in that first age of his religion, when miraculous powers were afforded, and their prayers and requests for particular things immediately answered. This is evident from the preceding verse, where Christ addresses himself immediately to his apostles, and confines what he says to them

them only. Ver. 19. *I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* Here it is to be observed, that it is to God, the Father, that Christ directs them to offer up their prayer, and not to himself. And to strengthen their confidence of their requests being granted on such especial extraordinary occasions, he subjoins; *for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them, or among them.* Not that he was to be personally present with them, when they were thus assembled for prayer to God: but he should be *with them*, by that extraordinary divine power which would be vouchsafed to them, when thus assembled in his name. In other places we find him expressing himself in the same manner, as if he himself was to be in person with his disciples, when all he intended by it was, that he should so far be with them by the extraordinary divine assistance that would be granted them, that it would intirely supply his place, and be the same to them for their direction and assistance, as if he were actually present. Thus John xiv. 3. 18. *And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself.—I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you (o).* In these passages, Christ speaks of the gifts of the holy Spirit, which after his resurrection he promises to his disciples, and which would as effectually supply his place, and help them, as if he himself were to be again actually present with them.

(o) See Commentaries and Essays of the Society for promoting Scriptural knowledge, No. 1.

Texts

Texts to prove the omniscience of Jesus Christ.

I. Jehovah is a God of knowledge. 1 Sam. ii. 5. *We are sure that thou (Jesus) knowest all things.* John xiv. 30. *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.* ii. 24, 25. *Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.* xxi. 17.

There can be little doubt but that all, who judge from what appears to the eye, and not from what is really intended by the words they read in a book, will be imposed upon, as our author is, by this heap of texts; that Christ is all knowing as God. But with those who will make the least use of their own understandings, the veil will soon be withdrawn, and they will see that infinite wisdom and knowledge belongeth only to God, and a limited degree of it, more or less, according to his good pleasure, belongeth to Christ, or any the most exalted of his creatures.

In the first instance, if Mr. Robinson had only taken the trouble to look to the end of the verse he quotes; or had produced the whole of it before his readers; both he and they must have been sensible of his great mistake, in alleging it for such a purpose. Our Lord seems to have removed some perplexity which his apostles were under, concerning something

something not mentioned to us, before they had even proposed their doubts to him, and when they were persuaded he could not by any merely human power have known the state of their minds at the time; they say to him, (John xvi. 30.) *Now we are sure, that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.* It is evident, that by their divine Master *knowing all things*, his disciples did not mean his possessing all possible knowledge, such as belongs to the all-comprehensive mind of God; but mercily the secret knowledge he had just been shewing, of what related to themselves, of their doubts and difficulties; and such as belonged to him as a divine messenger and prophet of God. This is confirmed by their farther adding, what our author omitted; *by this we know that thou camest forth from God*—not, by this we know that thou art God, or that thou art all-knowing as God, (such a thought never entered into their hearts, or could be suggested by the occasion)—but *that thou camest forth from God*, that thou hast such extraordinary knowledge and communications from God, as fully convince us, that thou art the Christ.

That, *coming from God*, and *coming forth from God*, was well understood by the Jews, as signifying nothing more than being a prophet of God, is demonstrated by that declaration of Nicodemus to Jesus, recorded by this evangelist. (John iii. 2.) *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.* Observe, that this learned Jewish ruler believed Jesus to *come from God*, to be a prophet, though he was not yet convinced, that he was their great promised prophet, the Christ, the Messiah. Our

Our author's next instance will appear still to have as little foundation as the former. Therein the evangelist remarks, that at the beginning of Christ's public ministry and display of his miraculous power, great numbers resorting to him, and with different views professing a respect for him, he was nevertheless much upon his guard; knowing many of these to be false hypocritical characters, and having a full discernment of their secret thoughts and bad designs. *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.* This language does not imply his being all-knowing as God; but that he had a knowledge of the hearts and characters of men, such as was proper and necessary for the due discharge of his great office of a divine teacher, and Saviour of the world: i. e. *it was given to him thus to know what was in man; agreeably with what the sacred writer soon after mentions; (iii. 34.) that God gave not the spirit by measure unto him.*

The third text produced by our author in proof of Christ's omniscience, is but another instance of the same nature as the foregoing. For in this, his sorrowful apostle Peter appeals to his knowledge of what passed in the hearts of men, for a proof of his own sincerity and affection for him; *Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee.* These general expressions in all writings and discourses are limited by the particular subject and occasion. Thus Christ says to his disciples, Mark xiii. 23. *Behold, I have foretold you ALL things; i. e. all things that were necessary to prevent their being misled by those false Christs and deceivers, that he had been mentioning immediately before.* He says of himself, Matth. xxviii. 18, *ALL power is*
E given

given to me in heaven and in earth: but by what immediately follows in the next verses, it appears, that he intended only that such an extraordinary divine power was bestowed on him by Almighty God, as would be sufficient to propagate the gospel with effect, and give it an establishment among different nations. And the apostle John says to some sincere christians in those days, who had extraordinary divine gifts imparted to them; (1 John ii. 20.) *Ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know ALL things.* They did not know all things that were to be known; they were not all-knowing as God, which is the interpretation our author heedlessly gives of such language; but they had all that knowledge of the true gospel of Christ, communicated to them, which was sufficient to secure them from the error of those antichrists, he had just before mentioned; who, in those very early days, began to be ashamed of Christ being a real man, who suffered and died, and wanted to make him something (*p*) different from a human being.

The whole then of the three instances produced by our author under this head, *of Christ being omniscient, and therefore God*; amount only to this: that he had an extraordinary divine knowledge communicated to him, such as was sufficient for the proof of his mission from God, and to enable him to (*q*) finish his important work, which was committed to him.

(*p*) That most industrious and useful commentator, Dr. Benson, upon 1 John ii. 19. says; "The persons, whom St. John had his eye more particularly upon, denied that Jesus, *who came in the flesh*, was the Christ. (See ver. 22. iv. 3. 2 John 7.) I take them to have been of the number of the Docete, who held *that Christ only seemed to have flesh, and to suffer.*"

(*q*) *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* John xvii. 4.

2. I, JEHOVAH, SEARCH
THE HEART, I TRY THE
REINS. Jer. xvii. 10.

O JEHOVAH; THOU,
even THOU ONLY, know-
est the hearts of all the
children of men. 1 Kings
viii. 39.

I, THE SON OF GOD,
AM HE, WHICH SEARCH-
ETH THE REINS AND
HEARTS. Rev. ii. 23.

In bringing these words of Rev. ii. 23. to prove Jesus Christ to be Jehovah, the omniscient God, Mr. Robinson forgets, that in the beginning of the book, it is declared to be, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.* This therefore limits his knowlege to the particular things and subjects specified in the book; and forbids us to consider Christ in the least degree, or in the most distant manner, as being *the Searcher of hearts*, so as to be all-knowing as God himself, from whom he received the revelation of these things, of which he was before ignorant. When therefore our Lord here says, *I am he, which searcheth the reins and hearts*: he is necessarily and of course to be understood, as speaking of that vast knowlege which he had received from God, in being made acquainted with the inward hearts and most concealed principles of action of some false and wicked teachers in those early times of the gospel, whom he characterizes under the name of *Jezabel*, who defiled Israel with her lewd and idolatrous practices.

Mr. Robinson thus concludes this division of his book. "Whatever other excellencies we can conceive in the divine nature, are ascribed to God and to Christ, in the two following passages. The last is evidently a quotation from the first."

Whether any of the *excellencies in the divine nature* are ascribed to Christ; and whether what is spoken of Christ in this place, is copied from that fine hymn of David to the Almighty Being, uttered a little before that prince's death, will be seen by placing them in our author's manner, over-against each other.

Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven, and in the earth, is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah; and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. 1 Chron. xxix. 10—13.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever. Rev. v. 12, 13.

Does now the ascribing blessing, and honour, and power to the Lamb, to the innocent Jesus, in any degree resemble that sublime language; *Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory: for all that is in the heaven, and in the earth*

earth is thine : thine is the kingdom, and thou art exalted above all?

Is not *the Lamb that was slain*, he who died so nobly in the cause of the divine truth upon the cross, as distinct as possible, and at an infinite distance, from him *that sitteth upon the throne*; from *God that cannot die*; who a little before is described, as *he that liveth for ever and ever*? And what if this holy and exalted sufferer be classed together with Jehovah, the most high God, in having blessing, and honour, and glory given to him at the same time? This does not take him out of his creature-like state, or equallize him to God, any more than king David being in like manner ranked and worshiped together with Jehovah, transformed that king into the most high God. And how could this author take upon him to say, of this worshiping of the Lamb, Jesus, together with him that sat upon the throne, that it is called *worshiping him that liveth for ever and ever*, on account of it being immediately added, ver. 14, *And the four and twenty elders fell down, and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever*? If he had used the least reflection, he must have perceived, that this language, and the pronoun *him* denoting necessarily one single person, could refer only to *him that sat upon the throne*, as the only person living for ever and ever.

The real state of the case however is, of which this writer ought to have taken notice; that the words, *him that liveth for ever and ever*, are not in the original as it came from the sacred penman; but have been added in later times, from ch. iv. 10. either by mistake, or by the officious ill-judged zeal of some transcriber. Upon this matter, Mill, Wetstein, and Bengelius, will satisfy the reader who can consult them. The reflection

which the latter makes upon these words that have been foisted in, is ; “ that it is even an act of piety “ to cut out such patch-work, without any scruple :” “ Talia additamenta, deposito timore, “ refecare pium est.”

S E C T I O N V.

Whether the Works which are ascribed to Jesus Christ, are the same with those that are ascribed to JEHOVAH, the Supreme God ?

IN his next division, Mr. Robinson maintains Jesus Christ to be the supreme God, on account of the same works being ascribed to him as to God ; and after terrifying his reader, according to custom, with the *dangerous* consequences, and *the injustice done to God*, by a slip here ; concludes with saying, that “ nothing can account for the “ conduct of the writers of the new Testament in “ what they advance in this respect, except in “ their system Jesus and Jehovah be the same.”

But here again, he only produces certain portions of Scripture, which must be taken upon his bare word, to be such as really ascribe to Christ, the works that are peculiar and appropriated to God : for he gives himself no trouble to ascertain their true meaning, or to shew that they are at all applicable to his purpose. And having so hastily and superficially formed his own judgment, his whole manner and language is calculated to prevent and lay asleep all farther inquiry in others. He begins ;

“ IS CREATION a work of God ? *By Jesus Christ*
 “ *were all things* CREATED, *that are in heaven,*
 “ *or that are in earth, visible and invisible, whe-*
 “ *ther they be thrones, or dominions, or principali-*
 “ *ties,*

“*ties, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.* Colof. i. 16.”

That the apostle does not mean here to ascribe the creation of the visible world and all things in it to Jesus Christ, is plain from these following reasons.

1. All the other apostles are represented as joining, soon after Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, in the following solemn prayer to God; (Acts iv. 24.) (r) *O LORD, thou art the God, who hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.* The language here is exact and decisive: THOU ART *the God who HAST made*, bespeaks one single person only to be God and maker of the world, Jehovah, the LORD, and no other: there is no way of evading it. In this very prayer also, soon after the above, Jesus Christ is expressly and by name excluded from being God, the Creator of all things; ver. 27. *For of a truth, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together against thy holy servant (s) Jesus, whom thou hast anointed: and again, ver. 30. grant, that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy servant Jesus.*

(r) The expressions in the original are exceeding strong and emphatical, and declare the absolute supremacy, as well as the unity of God, as being one single person, in a most remarkable manner; Δεσποτα, συ ο Θεος, ο ποιησας, κ.τ.λ. *O thou sovereign Master of all; thou art the God, who hast made, &c.*

(s) N. B. Jesus is here by the apostles in their prayer stiled the *servant* of the LORD God, who made heaven and earth. That the original Greek is rightly translated *servant*, rather than *son* or *child*, cannot be doubted by those who are capable of consulting it. Bengelius honestly so renders it. See him on the place, and also on the chapter before, on Acts iii. 13. 26.

2. St. Paul himself also, who in the passage before us, Col. i. 16, is inconsiderately presumed to assert Jesus Christ to be the creator of the universe, does elsewhere assert the direct contrary doctrine; and marks out and distinguishes Christ from God, the Maker of the world, in such a way as shews that he had not the least idea of any thing of the kind belonging to Christ. For speaking before a most learned and cultivated audience at Athens, many of them philosophers by profession, he asserted in the most express manner; that the Being that made the universe, the first cause of all things, was one single Person, and that Jesus Christ was as different a person as possible; as different as the creature from its creator, the son from his father, the servant from his master. *God that made the world, (ὁ ποιησας, manifestly defining him to be one person) HE (i. e. that single person, for it is impossible the pronoun he should refer to more than one person,) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whercof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts xvii. 24. 31.*

Here then, we have first, all the other apostles; and after them, St. Paul, declaring God to be one single person, and as such, the Creator of all things; and this also declared, at the same time, in express contradistinction to, and in direct exclusion of Jesus Christ. And the Scriptures cannot contradict themselves; neither can it be supposed that the apostles of Jesus Christ should be ignorant who he was, or who was the creator of the world. St. Paul therefore certainly did not intend the creation of the universe, when he here speaks of *all things being created by Jesus Christ*. What he intended will not be difficult to discover, if we will

will take any pains in our researches. For the term, *creation*, is by no means confined to the first production of things by an almighty power. It is used in other senses by all writers, profane and sacred; and by our apostle in particular. Thus, speaking of our advantages by the gospel, Eph. ii. 10. he says; *We are his (God's) workmanship, created in (or by) Jesus Christ unto good works*: i. e. formed by the gospel of Christ to the love and practice of all virtue. In another place (2 Cor. v. 17.) *If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE*: i. e. a true christian is a man made over again: has new tempers and dispositions wrought in him, a new nature; changed from vice to virtue, from the world to God.

This *moral* and *spiritual creation*, the reformation of the whole world by the precepts and motives of the gospel, will be found to be the thing here designed by the apostle, in Col. i. 16. For ver. 14. having spoken of that *redemption*, or deliverance from sin and death, which we have by the *blood* of Christ, i. e. by that gospel, which he courageously sealed with his blood, by dying in attestation of it: and going on further to extoll him, as *the image of the invisible God*; i. e. not God himself: (the image of a thing cannot be the thing itself of which it is an image,) but resembling him in holiness and goodness, and by a divine wisdom and authority communicated to him: as being also the *first-born*, or the chief, the lord, not (*t*) of every creature, as we wrongly translate the words; but of *all men*, of all God's creatures

(*t*) So Mark xvi. 15. *And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*, ($\omega\sigma\alpha\sigma\eta\ \tau\eta\ \kappa\tau\iota\sigma\tau\iota$, as it is here $\omega\sigma\alpha\sigma\eta\ \kappa\tau\iota\sigma\tau\omega\varsigma$) i. e. to all men, to every human creature.

of mankind; i. e. not of Jews only, who were formerly peculiarly favoured of God, but of Jews and Gentiles now combined into one, and brought into a new relation to God and to each other.

Having thus characterized Christ as the head and lord of this new people, the apostle proceeds to shew how he was so; ver. 16. *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.*

Very able and impartial interpreters of the New Testament, of very different sentiments concerning the person of Christ, have seen here, that St. Paul uses this lofty pompous language, not as if the inhabitants of the heavenly world, and of the whole universe, were affected by the gospel, and underwent a very considerable change from it: but that it is merely language which he (*u*) borrows from the popular notions of his countrymen about the different orders of beings in the unseen world, their names and powers, thereby to set off and magnify the gospel the more.

It is also customary in the prophetic writings, to speak of great events in terms of allusion to their ancient history, especially the account of the creation by Moses.

And from all these circumstances laid together, the attentive reader will perceive, that what the apostle intended by this grand imagery, was, that mankind, of whom alone he had been treating, all the individuals, and the different states and powers upon earth, would undergo a mighty revolution, would be renovated and reformed, put into

(*u*) See Wetstein in locum, Zanchius also, upon Eph. i. 20.

a new state and condition, which might well be stiled nothing less than a *new creation*, by being brought acquainted with Jesus Christ, and becoming subjects and obedient to the laws of his kingdom.

This account appears to be confirmed, by the long list which is given of the dignities of Christ; concluding, verse the 18th, with his being *the beginning, the first-born from the dead*; that is, by ranking it among his highest honours, that for his consummate virtue, benevolence to men, and loyalty to God, in suffering for the truth, he was speedily raised from the dead to an immortal life and glory. For this, however glorious and honourable for a creature, must be considered as a very inferior circumstance, and such as could not be added by the apostle, to crown a character which had before been denominated by him, the omnipotent and eternal author of the universe.

I am sensible that many persons will have great prejudices against this interpretation, who have been always accustomed to annex the production of things out of nothing by a divine power, to the word *creation*; and have been led from that to consider Jesus Christ as here pronounced to be the creator of all things.

It will be difficult also for some to reconcile themselves to St. Paul's literal representation of the whole universe of Beings as created by Christ, when all he intended by such magnificent language, was only to give a more grand and sublime idea of the gospel itself.

But a proper acquaintance with and understanding of the prophets of the Old Testament, and their writings, who frequently make use of images and allusions equally daring and bold, and with which the sacred writers were continually conversant,

fant, would satisfy them, that there was nothing improper or uncommon in St. Paul's adopting such a way of speaking. To give only one instance. Says the Almighty Being by his prophet Isaiah; (lxv. 17, 18.) *Behold I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former ones shall not be remembered, neither shall they be brought to mind any more. But ye shall rejoice and exult in the age to come, which I create.* What now is intended by these lofty terms, of the *creation of new heavens and a new earth, &c?* Not surely that the present universe of things is to be done away, and a new one created in its stead: but only to prefigure and represent that new state, and happy change of things upon earth for the better, in the increasing virtue and happiness of mankind, which in future times would be effected by the gospel.

The prophets of the Old and New Testament were left to themselves by divine Providence, to express things in their own way, and according to their natural feelings, temper and education. Hence the apostle James, a plain man, without any learning, delivers himself suitably in plain and easy language. But Paul of Tarsus, bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a man of genius and warm imagination, and full of jewish and heathen literature, which mixes itself continually with his ideas and expressions, is on that account obscure oftentimes, and requires more pains to understand him. If christians will not make a due discrimination, and use their faculties in the understanding of the sacred as they would of any other writers, they must continue in error, and bear the blame, whatever it be, that belongs to it. But to those who are desirous, and would take pains to come at the truth, but cannot see the whole force of the explanation here given, though I should

should think it could not be hard to be comprehended; they will do well to abide by what they do know and comprehend: and in the present case, which has given rise to these reflections, to be mindful to give its due weight to what is produced above from all the apostles, and never at any time contradicted by them; *viz.* That God is one single person, and HE only the creator of all things. And therefore, if at any time, the *creation* of all things seems to them to be ascribed to Jesus Christ, they may rest assured, and would find upon due examination, if they were competent to make it, that it is wrongly ascribed to him, and belongs to God: Or, if it belong to Christ, it is not to be understood of the first formation of the universe; but in a different sense, of the new moral and spiritual creation, the reformation of mankind by the gospel.

Mr. Robinson's next instance of Christ doing what is peculiarly the work of God, and being therefore God himself; is put by him in the same brief authoritative stile, to strike the common reader; presuming without proof, that the Scriptures are to be taken exactly in the sense that he gives them.

“ IS PRESERVATION a work of God? *Jesus Christ UPHOLDS all things by the word of his power.* Hebr. i. 3. *By him all things CONSIST.* Coloss. i. 17.”

With respect to this first citation from the beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews, a very able and pious critic, whose words I have put in the margin (*w*), shews; that it is not to be understood
of

(*w*) “ The common way of expounding the expression, is, that the Son upholds all things by the word of his own power. And accordingly, our printed copies have here *ἀντὶ* and

of Christ *upholding all things by his own power*, but by the power of God. So that whatever be the meaning of it, *preservation*, or any thing else, it cannot be a proof of Christ being any thing but God's instrument, employed by him.

I shall not enter into a discussion, what it was that the author of this epistle proposed to teach concerning Jesus Christ in this introduction, and especially in the preceding sentence, viz; *by whom also he (God) made the worlds*, τῆς αἰῶνας, or as it ought rather to be translated, *the ages*: but that he did not intend to convey, that Christ was the original or subordinate creator of the visible world, is proved by many judicious interpreters, Dr. Sykes, Lardner, and others, and not needful to repeat here.

The other citation, brought by our author, belongs to a passage just considered by us, Coloff. i. 16. And if we have there rightly explained its meaning, this, which that is a part of it, can by no means prove, what our author would draw from it; viz. that Jesus Christ is the Preserver of all things, and therefore the supreme God. For it relates not to this outward natural world, but to the *new creation*, the christian world, who subsist by Christ, that is, are preserved and kept together by their adherence to him and his doctrine: the apostle still continuing to speak in language borrowed from the old Mosaic account of the first creation.

and not ἀὐτῶν. And it is urged, that the MS. copies, which have accents added, read it with an aspiration. But none of the ancient MSS. having any accents at all, every reader is at liberty to affix such spirits as are most agreeable to the scope of any text. And it is easy to observe that our author in this verse distinguishes αὐτῶν and ἐαυτῶν; and therefore as αὐτῶν just before relates to the Father, it is reasonable to judge it does so here also." Peirce in locum.

Mr.

Mr. Robinson goes on in the same concise, decisive manner; IS THE MISSION OF THE PROPHETS A WORK OF GOD? *Jesus Christ is the Lord God of the Holy Prophets*; and it was the Spirit of Christ which testified to them beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

It will be proper to produce the whole of the evidence upon which author here asserts Jesus Christ to be *the Lord God of the holy prophets*.

Yet many years didst Thou forbear them, and TESTIFIEDST against them BY THY SPIRIT IN THE PROPHETS; yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. Nehemiah ix.

And he said unto them; these sayings are faithful and true. And THE LORD GOD OF THE HOLY PROPHETS sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

3.

I JESUS HAVE SENT MINE ANGEL TO TESTIFY unto you these things in the churches. Revel. xxii. 6. 16.

Searching what or what manner of time, THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST which was in them did signify, when it TESTIFIED beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1 Pet. i. 11.

First, let us take a view of what he brings to shew, that Jesus Christ is *the Lord God of the holy prophets*; from the Revelation of St. John. At the conclusion of the prophecies in that book, for the encouragement of faithful christians, it is declared, that the same God, who inspired the antient prophets so punctually to foretell the circumstances relating to Christ, for the comfort and instruction of

his people Israel; had sent his angel, by the revelations then delivered, to support the faith and patience of the christian church. *These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*

Some space after, Christ himself is introduced, thus speaking; *I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.* And because *Jesus* is said to have sent his angel, as well as the *Lord God of the holy prophets* to have sent his, Mr. Robinson therefore infers *Jesus* to be the *Lord God of the holy prophets*.

But our author should have considered, that Almighty God, in giving a commission to Christ to make these revelations, may have been said to have sent his angel on that account; since, according to the old adage, *qui facit per alium, facit per se, viz;* he that does a thing by another, does it himself.

And that God gave Christ these revelations, and a commission to send his angel to make them known, is declared, as often observed, in the very first words of the book; *viz. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants, things which must shortly come to pass.* It is extraordinary that Mr. Robinson should be ignorant of this, or pay no attention to it. It is certainly so far from proving *Jesus* to be the *Lord God of the holy prophets*, as he would make him; that it shews him to be at the time *one of those prophets* and servants of God, under a special commission from him.

Of the same kind is his other assertion, that Christ was the Inspirer of the antient prophets. For because it happens, in that fine prayer and confession of the Levites for themselves and their nation, preserved by Nehemiah; that they use this

language, viz. that *the Lord God testified against his people by his spirit in the prophets*; and because the apostle Peter in like manner says, that *the spirit of Christ which was in the prophets testified beforehand his sufferings*, he thence would have it inferred that Christ is the God that inspired those antient prophets; imagining the spirit of Christ which was in the prophets, to be Christ himself, or some power coming or derived from him.

But had he paid the least attention to the apostle's explanation of his meaning, he would have seen his own great mistake. For what St. Peter calls here *the spirit of Christ which was in the prophets*, he styles *the holy spirit* in his second epistle, where he says; *holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the holy spirit.* 2 Pet. i. 21. But it follows immediately after the verse in question, where the inspiration of the prophets is mentioned—*Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported to you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, by the holy spirit sent down from heaven.* So that according to Peter's express declaration in these citations of his own words, *the holy spirit*, that is, the same divine power, which had inspired the old prophets, was in the apostles of Christ; and *this holy spirit sent down from heaven* upon the latter, was those gifts of a divine power, mentioned in the *Acts*, and elsewhere.

The *spirit of Christ* then, which was in the prophets, was not any energy or power exerted by Christ, but the energy and power of God himself. And it is called *the spirit of Christ*, because Christ was the object about which it was exercised, in predicting the things concerning him; in the same way as it is called *the spirit of truth*, John xiv. 17. because it was to testify and prove that the doc-

trines delivered by the apostles were true, i. e. from God, of divine authority.

Another instance brought by our author of such works ascribed to Christ as prove him to be God, is thus put by him.

“ IS the SALVATION of sinners a work of God? *Christ is THE SAVIOUR of the world.* John iv. 42. —THE AUTHOR of *eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* Hebr. v. 9.

When once the imagination is forcibly impressed with a particular idea, a man will often believe he sees strange sights, which no mortal but himself can perceive. This must be our author's excuse for adding to his catalogue, such proofs of Christ being the most high God, as he here produces. What if he be called (John iv. 42.) by a woman of Samaria, *the Saviour of the world?* She certainly supposed him to answer that character, though she looked upon him in no higher light than that of the Messiah, the great promised prophet of God. Nor from his being so called, is there any ground to think him any other. For although God is also our Saviour, this may be very consistent with Christ being so called, without lifting him up above the condition of a creature. This Mr. Robinson would have discerned, if he could have considered those Scriptures without prejudice, which teach that *God is our Saviour*, as he formed the benevolent plan and appointed the method by which we are to inherit eternal life: and *CHRIST also is our Saviour*, as commissioned and employed by Almighty God in the great work: a distinction St. Paul often makes. Thus Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6. *After that the kindness and love of GOD OUR SAVIOUR toward man appeared, — by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR.*

SAVIOUR. See also 2 Tim. i. 8, 9, 10. And another apostle expressly affirms Christ to have been God's messenger and servant in saving mankind: *We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* 1 John iv. 14.

There is still a more extraordinary oversight in the other passage produced by Mr. Robinson, to confirm what he calls, Christ's *claims* to be Jehovah. For if he had only attended to the verse preceding that which he quotes, he would have seen that the all-perfect, unchangeable God could not be the person intended; because the person spoken of, *this Saviour*, was one, who was disciplined to virtue and obedience to God, and fitted for his work, by sufferings appointed to him for that end: *Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.* Hebr. v. 8, 9.

Our author thus closes his list of those *works*, which, according to him, evidence Christ to be the supreme God.

“ IS THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN a work of God? *The Son of man hath power to forgive sins.*”

As Mr. Robinson throughout spares himself the trouble of drawing his conclusions, leaving that work to his readers, we may suppose his design here is to assert, that since it is the sole prerogative of God to forgive sins, and Christ here declares himself possessed of that power, therefore he must be God. But should it not have occurred to him, that this power of forgiving sins is not so fixed and appropriated to the Supreme Being, but that he may delegate it to others? Thus Nathan the prophet pronounced to David upon his repentance; (2 Sam. xii. 13.) *The LORD also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die.* Our Lord

also says to his apostles (John xx. 21. 23.) *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* Jesus here acknowledges his own mission from God, and consequently all his powers to fulfil it, to come from him, that of forgiving men their sins among the rest. And the apostle Paul, in his exhortation in one place, to mutual kindness and forbearance, recommending the example of Christ, uses these words; (Coloff. iii. 13.) *even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* But in another place he explains himself, that it was only, as commissioned by Almighty God, and not from any power of his own, that Christ forgave sins: Eph. iv. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, by (x) Christ, hath forgiven you.*

It seems to me to have been proved, that our author has mistaken and misapplied every passage of Scripture brought by him under this head, to prove Christ, from his performing such works, as he asserts are peculiar to the Deity, to be the supreme God. But were it much otherwise, he must surely be unmindful of the fallibility of human judgment, who can break out into such strains of censure as the following, upon the sacred writers themselves, if the sense he fixes upon their words be not the true one.

“ Consider now, says he, into what contradictions
 “ these writers must fall, if Jesus Christ be not God.
 “ They contradict one another, they contradict
 “ themselves. They degrade writings, which, they
 “ pretend, are inspired, below the lowest scribbling

(x) Not, as in our english translation, *for Christ's sake*: but *by Christ*; as hath been often remarked.

“ of the meanest authors.” He then thus continues his career, in triumph, as it were;

“ *In the beginning*, says Moses, *GOD created the heavens and the earth.* Gen. i. 1. It is a mistake, says the apostle John; *In the beginning, THE WORD THAT WAS MADE FLESH, made all things, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* John i. 1. 14. 3. Elihu asks, *WHO hath disposed the whole world? Jehovah asks out of the whirlwind, WHO laid the measures thereof? WHO stretched the line upon it? WHO laid the corner stone thereof?* Job xxxiv. 13. xxxviii. 1. 5. 6. All the Old Testament writers reply, *THE LORD OF HOSTS founded the heavens, the earth, the world, and the fulness thereof.* Psalm lxxxix. 11. No such thing says the apostle John; *THE WORD, that was made flesh, and dwelt among us, made the world.* John i. 14. 10.”

The contradiction is all his own. There is no difference or contrariety between Moses and the apostle, or the apostle and the Old Testament writers. Moses and the prophets, with whom the apostle John agrees, describe the first formation of all things, as the effect of the same supreme cause, Jehovah, God, the Father, without the agency or interference of any other person. And *THE WORD*, of which the apostle treats, as above shewn, was not any distinct person from God, from the Father and Creator of all things; but *HIS* wisdom and energy divine; which dwelt in, and was communicated to the man Christ Jesus; and which, in an inferior degree, dwelt in and was communicated to prophets and apostles. He continues in the same vein,

“ *Hezekiah looks up to heaven, and says, o Lord God of Israel, thou art the God, even thou alone,*

“ of all the kingdoms of the earth ; thou hast made
 “ heaven and earth ! 2 Kings xix. 15. Paul lifts
 “ up his eyes to Jesus, and says ; THY THRONE,
 “ O GOD, is for ever and ever. THOU, LORD, in
 “ the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,
 “ and the heavens are the work of THY hands.
 “ Hebr. i. 8. 10.”

This is all mere oratorical flourish. Paul’s lifting up his eyes to Jesus, is a flight of Mr. Robinson’s own imagination, without any support from the sacred text. For the words, in the original, are a prophetic apostrophe of the Almighty Father to the Messiah ; and in what way soever they are taken, have been shewn above, (p. 39. 42.) to afford no ground to conceive of Christ, as any other than an inferior dependent being. Where also our author’s other citation, *Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, &c.* was proved to be an address to God, and not to Christ.

S E C T I O N VI.

Whether the like worship is given, or commanded to be given, in the Scriptures, to Jesus Christ, as to Almighty God.

IN the next division of Mr. Robinson’s work, he maintains Christ to be the most high God, from the worship paid to him being the same that is paid to God.

And he begins very well with citing those words of St. Matthew, as a command of God, repeated and reinforced by our Saviour ; *thou shalt worship THE LORD THY GOD, and HIM ONLY shalt thou serve.* Matth. iv. 10. Deut. ii. 20.

But to prevent the reader from being imposed upon and misled, as our author has imposed upon and

and deceived himself; there is one circumstance to be mentioned, which one wonders should not have been attended to; *viz.* that the word προσκυνειω, *to worship*, is not descriptive only of the honour which is appropriated to God, but is indifferently used to signify the honour and respect which are paid to superiors of all kinds, in heaven or on earth.

If this distinction of civil and religious worship, as they are often denominated, had been adverted to, much of what our author has advanced on this head might have been spared. But to proceed with our examination.

After having cited the authority of God and of Christ, that the LORD God, or Jehovah God only is to be worshiped, he instantly adds;

“ Yet these very Scriptures command *all the angels of God to worship Christ* ;” for which he refers to Hebr. i. 6. *And, when he again bringeth the first begotten* (or rather (y) *first born*) *into the world, he saith; And let all the angels of God worship him.*

According to the best interpreters, this *bringing again of the first born*, or dearly beloved, into the world, was effected, when God having raised Christ to life, the promised *holy spirit*, or various divine gifts and powers were bestowed by him, to enable his followers to preach the gospel with success

(y) N. B. The very same word is used Exod. iv. 22. *Thus saith the LORD; Israel is my son, my first born*, υιος πρωτοτοκου μου; i. e. best beloved; speaking after the manner of men, who are wont to shew partiality to a first born child. And so our translators would have rendered the same word here, (οταν δε παλιν εισαγη τον πρωτοτοκου εις την οικουμην) not *first begotten*, but *first born*; if they had not been prepossessed without cause, that there was something mysterious always to be understood, when such words were applied to Christ. See Peirce upon the passage.

through the world ; and probably to this last circumstance, the command given to angels to worship Christ, has some reference, as the extraordinary minister of God in the first propagation of the gospel.

But what is this ? or how does it prove, that Christ is to be worshiped as God, and that he is the supreme God ? There is no ground whatsoever to understand it of worship properly divine, but of such worship as *God commanded* to be paid to Christ ; such reverence and respect, or whatever else might be intended by the phrase, as was suitable and due to so excellent a character, and one so highly honoured and exalted by Almighty God.

But with this our author is by no means satisfied : for he builds much on this text, which he repeats twice afterwards ; and in one place launches out in the following very extraordinary manner, to prove, that it is such worship as was paid to God himself, which the angels are commanded here to pay to Christ, and such as proves Christ to be God. I shall give his words at length, lest I should be thought to injure his argument.

(z) “ I cannot dismifs this article, says he, without
 “ remarking one passage more, the quotation of
 “ which would give me *the most contemptible idea* of
 “ the writer’s abilities, did I not believe that he took
 “ Jesus Christ to be God. This writer is St. Paul.
 “ St. Paul, in the first of Hebrews, elevates Christ
 “ above the whole creation, and *requires all the*
 “ *angels to adore him*. We ask ; by what authority
 “ do you require the celestial spirits to adore a
 “ man ? Because, replies he, *God saith, Let all*
 “ *the angels of God worship HIM*. We answer ;
 “ there is no such passage in the genuine Scrip-

(z) Mr. Robinson’s Plea, &c. p. 43, 44.

“ tures.

“ tures. There is, indeed, a passage in the ninety-
 “ seventh psalm, which saith, *Confounded be all*
 “ *they, that serve graven images, that boast them-*
 “ *selves of idols : worship JEHOVAH all ye gods,*
 “ *or angels.* But how does a command to worship
 “ JEHOVAH apply to the worship of JESUS? If
 “ Jesus and Jehovah be not the same, art not thou
 “ the least and last of all pretenders to reason?

“ Let us hear the psalmist. *THE LORD reigneth,*
 “ *let the earth rejoice : let the multitude of the isles*
 “ *be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round*
 “ *about HIM : righteousness and judgment are the*
 “ *habitation of HIS throne. A fire goeth before*
 “ *HIM, and burneth up HIS enemies round about.*
 “ *HIS lightning enlightened the world : the earth*
 “ *saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at*
 “ *the presence of JEHOVAH ; at the presence of THE*
 “ *LORD OF THE WHOLE EARTH. The heavens de-*
 “ *clare HIS righteousness, and all the people see HIS*
 “ *glory. Confounded be all they, that serve graven*
 “ *images, that boast themselves of idols : WORSHIP*
 “ *HIM ALL YE GODS.* The natural impressions,
 “ which these passages make on the reader, are
 “ these. The psalmist describes the SUPREME
 “ God, and commands the angels to worship HIM.
 “ St. Paul quotes the psalm, applies it to JESUS,
 “ and commands the angels to worship HIM. Jesus
 “ is therefore, in St. Paul’s account, GOD SU-
 “ PREME.”

Ordinary readers are much to be pitied, who
 are easily borne down and overcome by such a
 profusion of words, and strong asseverations con-
 cerning a particular point ; and especially when a
 writer has no scruples of making an apostle re-
 sponsible for his own very fallible judgment, and
 is so bold as to represent St. Paul as a contemptible
 writer, if he did not intend in this quotation to
 declare

declare Christ to be the SUPREME GOD, exactly according to Mr. Robinson's ideas.

The plain state of the fact, with which our author makes such a parade and flourish, appears to be this.

The learned are much divided, from what part of the Old Testament, the words on which Mr. Robinson would erect such a doctrine concerning Christ, are taken. Pyle, Sykes, and others maintain that they are a citation from Deuteron. xxxii. 43; and that though they are not to be found in our present Hebrew copies, nor consequently in our English version, which is taken from the Hebrew, they are nevertheless to be met with most exactly in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament into Greek, which was most probably made use of and followed by St. Paul. The words in this ancient version, are; *Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him! Rejoice, ye nations, with his people!* And the passage is considered, as pointing forwards to the Messiah and his kingdom; which was to be matter of joy not to the Israelites only, but to all people. And this interpretation seems to be confirmed by the application, which St. Paul makes of the latter clause of it, in another place; as foretelling the bringing in of the gentiles to share in the privileges of the gospel, and become the church and people of God with the Jews; where we read, Rom. xv. 10. *And again he saith; Rejoice, ye gentiles, with his people!*

These just and well founded doubts, that the words in question are not quoted from Psalm xcvi. should have diminished our author's great confidence, that St. Paul took them from that Psalm; and we shall do well all of us, not to be over-positive, or to make any important point depend upon the citations from the Old Testament
by

by the writers of the New, where there is so much room for doubt and uncertainty.

But conceding to him, which is far from being certain, that our apostle did make his citation from Psalm xcvi. 7 ; it must then be supposed, that the writer speaks by inspiration of the future times of the gospel. And if this be the fact, the exulting strain with which it begins ; *The LORD (JEHOVAH) reigneth : let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof :* will be a declaration of the setting up of the kingdom of God upon earth, and calling upon all its inhabitants to rejoice in and partake of so great a blessing. The same again is signified, ver. 6. *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory :* or rather all the *peoples* ; a familiar and usual phrase, when the Gentiles are intended, as Pearce remarks, and as Bp. Lowth in his Isaiah always renders the word. And with respect to the clause, *worship him, all ye gods !* whether by the term in the original, which we render *gods*, be understood, the princes and magistrates of the earth, or angelic beings ; its primary signification would be, a fresh call upon them to worship *Jehovah, God*, as manifesting himself in the Messiah, the appointed king of this new kingdom, that was to be set up. For it was a general persuasion among the Jews, that God was to dwell in an extraordinary manner in their Messiah ; and therefore they were wont to apply, what was spoken of God in their prophetic writings, to the Messiah. But if the words in the Psalmist, *worship him, all ye gods*, are to be considered as immediately applied to Christ, for which I can see no grounds, and a command to worship him in person, it cannot be understood of such worship, as denominates him the SUPREME GOD ; but of such as is due to a character of consummate worth,

worth, to a most excellent creature, highly honoured and exalted by God; and this is confirmed by the worship mentioned by the apostle, as being *ordered* to be paid him, after his having *been brought again into the world*; i. e. after his having been raised to an immortal life, by the extraordinary interposition and power of God: but God, as we have often occasion to remind some men, CANNOT DIE.

Mr. Robinson's next assertion of the same worship paid to Christ as to God, from which he would deduce Christ to be the most High God; is brought from Philip. ii. 10. "*At, (or rather in) the name of Jesus, every knee, in heaven, and in earth should bow.*" But he expects the reader, as usual, to take the matter to be as he states it, upon his bare word. A brief consideration of the whole passage will shew how much he is mistaken.

The apostle is professedly teaching his Philipian converts a lesson of humility, from the example of Christ. *Let this mind be in you, says he, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, i. e. having the form, the appearance or likeness of God; which consisted in, and was manifested by those divine powers, which he exerted, of healing diseases, raising the dead, by a word's speaking;*

—*thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*

All persons of learning and judgment will own this not to be the sense of the apostle's words; but it should be, (a) *be thought not the being LIKE TO God*

(a) Mr. Robinson, in another part of his tract, p. 55, deals very negligently by his readers, in taking up with our faulty English translation of this passage, and thus expatiating with great pomp upon it.

“ Jesus Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. That is, say some, Jesus,
“ not

God a thing to be greedily seized by him, or, was not tenacious of retaining it; made no ostentatious show of this form of and likeness to God, i. e. of the divine powers bestowed upon him;

—*but emptied him himself*, ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, i. e. emptied himself of that form of God; demeaned himself as if he had not been invested with such divine powers.

taking the form of a servant, not being actually a servant, but putting himself in the state and condition of one: devoting himself to toil and labour for the good of others. Hence he says, *Whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* Matt. xx. 27, 28. and Luke xxii. 27. *I am among you as he that serveth.*

—*Being* (not, as we translate it, *being made*) *in the likeness of men*,

that is, subject to infirmities, pain, and suffering, as mortal men are: for this is a frequent sense of the term here used for man, ἀνθρώπος. See Acts x. 26. and Heb. ii. 14. 17. iv. 15.

—*And being found in fashion, or being in figure, as a man*;

i. e. being in his whole exterior nothing above the most ordinary rank of men; aiming at nothing

“not being God, thought not of the robbery of being equal
“with God. Glorious humility! A creature did not
“think of ranking himself with the creator! The hum-
“blest effect of the wisest human mind was only not to equal
“itself with Jehovah!” His readers should not have been
uninformed, that the apostle says nothing of *the robbery of
being equal to God*, nor gives any occasion to entertain such
an idea of the holy Jesus, as pretending to any thing of the
kind; but, that he was not vain of that *likeness* to the most
high God, with which he had been favoured, nor eager to
make display of it.

beyond

beyond it; affecting no state or pomp, but the contrary;

—*he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

i. e. his humility extended itself still farther: for in obedience to God, and to confirm the truth of the gospel, he willingly submitted to death, attended with infamy and the most exquisite tortures.

—*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him (rather, hath graciously bestowed upon $\epsilon\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$, or favoured him with) a name, which is above every name;*

i. e. on account of his humility and obedience, God hath greatly advanced him, and given him out of his free bounty a dignity or authority, above what he ever granted to any other.

—*that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.*

St. Paul seems here to refer to that great authority to be conferred upon Christ at the day of judgment; of which he himself speaks, Romans xiv. 9, 10. But it is difficult to account, by what connexion of ideas our author could impose upon himself, so as to produce this passage as evidence of such divine worship being commanded to be paid to Christ, which proved him to be the supreme God. For,

1. The phrase bowing the knee in the name of any one, implies in itself nothing more than an acknowledgment of the authority of the person, and of the respect due to him. See Gen. xli. 43. So that the apostle might say, that God had commanded every knee to bow in the name of Jesus,

fus (*b*), without the least thought of those persons offering divine worship to him. And

2. The affixing such a meaning to the words, is contrary to the very context and declaration of the apostle at the time; who teaches us, that this name or authority, whatever be to be understood by it, was the gratuitous gift of Almighty God to Jesus. And can he be the supreme God, who depends for what he possesses upon the favour and bounty of another?

But the apostle himself precludes all such supposition and interpretation, by immediately explaining, what he intended by bowing in the name of Jesus; namely,

—*and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father;* i. e. all mankind are called upon and bound to acknowledge and openly confess Jesus Christ to be

(*b*) Our author's talent of amplification may be seen in the use which he makes of this passage, where he is speaking of the insuperable difficulties, (*but in his own imagination only*), which attend the denial of the divinity of our Lord.

P. 61. "The writers of the New Testament required EVERY KNEE to bow at the name of Jesus, every knee in heaven, every knee in earth, and every knee under the earth; they demanded this homage to be paid to Christ by men, who had always protested against the paying of such homage to any but God; however, (*this our author adds by way of irony*) they never intended to persuade men to worship Jesus as God, they only meant to procure a high degree of veneration to him as a very great man."

Here is however amplification not a little beyond the truth: *for no instance can be produced of the New Testament writers demanding such homage to be paid to Christ by men, which they had always protested against paying to any but God.* And however Mr. Robinson may represent it, seriously or otherwise, *the New Testament writers never persuaded, nor intended to persuade men, to pay any worship to Jesus Christ, but such as was due to an excellent creature of consummate virtue, and therefore highly honoured and exalted of God,*

Lord;

Lord; i. e. to bow the knee to him, to own his authority; but then, they are to confess also, that he is so by the gift of God who constituted him such; and also that the honour and glory of it, primarily and ultimately belongs to God, the Father; i. e. to HIM, from whom he himself and all other persons, have received their being and all their powers.

His next instance of divine worship being commanded in the Scriptures to be given to Christ, is contained in those words of our Lord; John v. 23. *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*

But how are the words of this humble Saviour perverted and abused, who was far from aiming at any thing of the kind? and who just before, ver. 19, had said; *The Son can do nothing of himself*: and who also immediately after the words which our author cites, gives a reason for the honour he required to be paid to himself, and shews it was something infinitely short of divine honour and worship: viz. *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which HATH SENT HIM.* The honour he demands for himself, was that only which was due to one, who was *sent of God*; the respect belonging to one bearing God's authority in the high degree that he did; and nothing more.

The apostles of Christ never say that their divine Master gave any command for men to worship him. Which they would have done and have appealed to this text, if it had been so understood by them. The misfortune is, that men come to the reading of Scripture, under the influence of former prepossessions, which makes them apply its words to purposes very different from what they were intended to signify. But Mr. Ro-

binson is not alone deceived here. The famous Socinus, though he held Christ to be a human being, contended that he was the object of worship and prayer, and placed much dependence upon this passage for it.

Our author's next assertion of the same worship being paid to Christ as to God, is couched in these terms. "Twenty times in the New Testament, *grace, mercy, and peace*, are implored of *Christ*, together with the Father."

Nothing more whatsoever is offered; but we are to take the fact to be as he pronounces it to be, in this brief way, and on his bare word. Judicious persons will wonder at so great presumption, where there is such a poor foundation for it. It is incredible, however, what power these general authoritative decisions have over weak minds: so that it seems not fair or equitable, and is doing such persons a great injury, to make use of them in dubious points, especially such as are of importance. As our author does not produce, nor refer to, one of the numerous instances which according to him prove his point, that Christ is the object of prayer together with the Father; I must not decline the trouble of selecting such as I apprehend he might refer to, and laying them before the reader, to form his judgment of them.

Rom. i. 7. *Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor. i. 3. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Cor. i. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

— xiii. 14. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.*

Gal. i. 3. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Eph. i. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

—— vi. 23. *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Philip. i. 2. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Col. i. 2. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Theff. i. 1. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

—— iii. 11. *Now God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.*

2 Theff. i. 2. *Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

—— ii. 16, 17. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father,—comfort your hearts, &c.*

1 Tim. i. 2. *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2 Tim. i. 2. *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Tit. i. 4. *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

Philem. — 3. *Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 John — 3. *Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*

Rev. i. 4, 5. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus, the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead.—*

It will be perceived, that fourteen out of these nineteen instances, for I count no more, are almost word for word the same; and are nothing but a customary salutation, or greeting, used by the apostles in their letters. Mr. Robinson calls it, *praying for*, or *imploping* grace and mercy of Christ together with the Father. But his saying it, is no proof of its being so. Had it really been so, the words would have been directly addressed to God, and to Christ, in some such way as this; "O God, our Father, and o Jesus Christ, our Lord, vouchsafe grace, mercy, and peace," &c. But the writers address themselves, not to God or Christ; but to the persons to whom their epistles are sent, Grace be *to you*; and therefore their words can only be considered as devout wishes of good for them; *viz.* that the grace, mercy, and peace, of which God was the author, and Christ had been the messenger and instrument to convey them to mankind, might be imparted to them; in short, that they might partake of all the blessings of the gospel: a very proper beginning of a letter from an apostle, where a prayer would have been less suitable.

But the last instance here produced from *Revelation* i. 4, 5. will make it very evident, that it is a very wrong turn given to these apostolic salutations, to call them *prayers*. For if so, it would follow that we are to pray to angels as well as to God; since according to this way of interpretation, grace and peace are there *implored*, not only of God, and of Jesus, but of *the seven spirits before the throne*, who are afterwards called, (v. 6.) *the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth*; and by some, though on what authority I know not, supposed to be the guardian angels of the seven churches, to whom St. John writes.

The remaining instances are somewhat different in form; though not unlike in substance, or in their real meaning, from the salutations I have just explained. For, 1 Theff. iii. 11. *Now God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you*; is not an imploring or invoking of God and of Christ; but only a pious wish, that the apostle's journey to them might be so ordered by divine providence, that the glory of God, and the success of the gospel might be promoted by it. So, 2 Theff. ii. 16, 17. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father,——comfort your hearts*; he wishes them all the comforts that arise from the gospel of Christ, and the favour of the heavenly Father of all, therein revealed.

Mr. Robinson next affirms; "Baptism is an act of worship, performed in *his* (i. e. Christ's) name."

The Scripture-account of baptism, Matth. xxviii. 19. gives no ground to call it an Act of worship done to Christ, or even to Almighty God himself. It is rather an act of obedience to Christ, as the messenger of God, and a (John iii. 2.) teacher sent from him. And though the ceremony of baptism, as an initiation into Christ's religion, may be fitly accompanied with prayer to God, it may be performed without it; and the institution and form itself, as it lies in the sacred writings, does not indicate it to be any act of worship to Christ in the least degree, unless so far as it is an acknowledgement of his authority from God to teach his will to mankind.

The idea, which the hebrew nation, and among them, our Lord and his apostles, entertained of any one's baptizing people, was the making them his disciples, engaging them to be of his sect and persuasion.

suasion. Hence John iv. 1. (c) making disciples is synonymous with baptizing them. And the apostle Paul says, (1 Cor. i. 4, 5.) *I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say, that I had baptized into mine own name:* not as if the baptizing them into his own name would have been an act of worship paid to him as God; but lest he should be thought to set up himself for a leader, and not Christ alone. So we read, (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.) that the Israelites *were baptized into Moses.* But no one imagines that the language implied an act of divine worship to Moses; but only the acknowledging him to be their divine leader and deliverer. And so the being baptized into the name of Christ, is an acknowledgement of him as our divine master and Saviour; and nothing more. To finish the subject; Baptism is nothing but the prescribed mode of making disciples, or initiating persons into Christ's religion: *Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit.* Matth. xxviii. 19. And Christ being herein joined and ranked with the Father, is no more a proof of his being one God with the Father, or God equal to him, than that which St. Paul says, 1 Tim. v. 21. is a proof of the *elect angels*, being one God with the Father, or so many different Gods equal to him. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things.*

Mr. Robinson proceeds; "Swearing is an act of worship, a solemn appeal in important cases to the omniscient God; and this appeal is made to Christ. Rom. ix. 1."

(c) *When therefore the Lord knew, how the Pharisees had heard, that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.*

This pretended proof from Scripture, of Christ being the object of worship, because the apostle is supposed to swear by, or appeal to him as omniscient, is unworthy of regard. If our author had attended properly to the words used, he would have found, that there is no appeal whatsoever made to Christ by the apostle, but a solemn declaration, in the sincerity of his heart, as became a christian, of his feelings and concern for his countrymen; *I say the truth in Christ; or as a christian;* (for so, *ἐν Χριστῷ*, (*d*) properly signifies) *I lie not; my conscience also* (guided and enlightened) *by the holy spirit, bearing me witness; that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart.*

Our author's next assertion of such worship being paid to Christ, as argued him to be the most high God, is thus put. "The committing of the soul to God at death is a sacred act of worship; in the performance of this act Stephen died, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* Acts vii. 59."

Upon this case of Stephen, Mr. Robinson spends eleven pages. He maintains, that the holy martyr's committing his spirit to Christ, is an exact counterpart to that of David, Pf. xxxi. 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth!* But he forgets to remind his reader of the very different circumstances of the two cases; and that Stephen speaks of the person he addresses, not as being Jehovah, God; but *the SON OF MAN, standing at the right hand of God.* This makes it utterly impossible that the two cases should be alike, and that this application of Ste-

(*d*) In like manner towards the conclusion of the same epistle, xvi. 7 *Salute—my kinsmen, who were in Christ, (i. e. christians,) before me, &c. &c.*

phen to Christ, should proceed from a persuasion of his being the same *God of truth*, to whom David recommended his spirit.

To as little purpose is that soliloquy of a Jew upon the same subject, whom our author introduces as living at the time of the transaction; but only to darken a plain subject with words that have little sense in them, and are quite beside the purpose. For, in reality, no Jew would or could have had any scruple, in offering the like address to Elijah, had he beheld the prophet in the same exalted station, and been possessed with the same belief concerning his great power, and favour with God, which Stephen entertained concerning Jesus. So that all the oratory of this *feigned personage*, calculated to lay hold of a certain rank of readers, comes to nothing; and they are only frightful words, without any ground of truth, with which he makes *his Jew-friend* bring in a verdict against the holy martyr: viz. "*Stephen was guilty: he died with that confidence in a creature, which he ought to have placed in God alone. Cursed is the man, that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. Jer. xvii. 5.*"

Stephen's trust was only in that power, which he believed Almighty God had granted to Christ; *who is the resurrection and the life*; (John xi. 25.) and by whose voice the dead are to be called to life, at the last day.

Our author then presents his reader with a long dialogue, in six pages, of his own fabric and device, between two other supposed Jew-christians, Timon and Caleb, whom he makes to be living at the time in Jerusalem, and one of them present at the stoning of Stephen. The whole of it is very obscure and dull, contrary to our author's usual

manner, with very little resemblance of truth in the circumstances, or force of argument. But those who can be pleased with such sort of fictions, will do well to read what he has put together.

A late excellent person seems to have stated this whole affair of Stephen's address to Christ, in so just a light, and so plain a manner, that I shall give the reader the conclusion of it, as a proper reply to Mr. Robinson's rhetoric upon it.

" In truth, this of *Stephen* seems to have been a *singular* excepted case; and, perhaps, the only one that can be mentioned, where our Saviour is invocated as the immediate and direct object of a devout address.

" And we may, in a great measure, account for it. *Stephen*, we reasonably conclude, would have called upon *God*, when thus dying by the hands of violence, as he had at all past times been wont to direct his prayer, had he not been surprized with a sight of the man Christ Jesus, God's first minister, standing at the right hand of the glory, ready to receive him. He saw him in the form and likeness of the *Son of man*, or of *the lamb that had been slain*, as represented in the vision, *Revelation* v. 6. This would naturally, and with the utmost propriety, lead him to call on Jesus to help him, (c) or eagerly to place his confidence in that succour he shewed himself officially ready to give him.

(c) Although Stephen did not address himself to Jesus, and call out to him, at the very moment of the vision; yet it is evident from his being instantly seized by the mad rabble upon the mention of it, and hurried out of the city to be stoned, the traces and impression of it would remain strong upon his mind so as to put him upon such an application to Christ, which he would not have used at any other time, and in a different situation.

He well knew what he had taught his disciples to expect from him, as *the resurrection and the life*, or as the vital head of all his followers. This was as natural as it had been for his disciples, who had seen his miraculous power, to call on him thus in a great storm at sea; *Lord, save us; we perish.* Matth. viii. 24, 25. All the while, and in both cases, *Stephen* and the disciples must have well known, that it was their duty to call upon God, as their supreme refuge in all perils and extremities. And inasmuch as, like *Martha*, they were all of them fully persuaded, that whatever Jesus would ask of God, God would grant it; nevertheless, it is not to be wondered at, that upon their being with Christ, or seeing him, they should readily apply to him, well knowing that he had great power with God, and stood in the highest favour with him.

“ Upon the whole, the *example* of Stephen is no rule to others, unless they are encouraged by a like vision. And no *single, extraordinary* instance will justify our departing from the universal and eternally established rule of observance, *viz.* that the address of supreme worship be made to the one God, and to HIM alone; whom we christians know to be the God and Father of all. There is no other who can be the object of what is properly and truly called, *religious worship* (*f*).”

(*f*) “ An Enquiry, whether we have any Scripture-warrant for a direct address of supplication, praise, or thanksgiving, either to the Son or to the Holy Ghost. By the late Rev. Paul Cardale, &c. p. 41, &c. Printed for Johnson, 1776.”

In this tract, as in all the author's serious and valuable writings, there is much to be learned; especially concerning the Being to whom our prayers and worship are to be addressed; whether to one person, that of the Almighty Father, or to two other persons besides, in conjunction, and upon an equality with him.

S E C T I O N VII.

Whether there be any passages belonging to JEHOVAH, the Supreme God, in the Old Testament, and applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, which prove Jesus Christ to be JEHOVAH, the Supreme God?

MR. Robinson's next division of his work, is thus stated and introduced. "Observe, my brethren, the application of the Old Testament passages which belong to Jehovah, to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, and try whether you can acquit the writers of the New Testament of *misrepresentation*, on supposition that Jesus is not God."

One would think that even those whom our author may be supposed here immediately to address, must be offended with such invidious reflections on the sacred writers. They, it seems, must be nothing less than guilty of misrepresentation, if their language express not the ideas which our author entertains of Christ being Jehovah, the supreme God.

The inconsistency in his first instance, with which our author would charge St. Paul, if Christ be not the supreme God, has been before considered; for he frequently deals in repetitions: where it was seen, that [in perfect agreement] with truth and the apostle's own declarations, Christ might be said to judge the world, and Almighty God also, and yet Christ all the while be nothing more than a creature, with high powers from God. But as our author, contrary to his usual wont, enlarges upon the point, it will be fitting to give his words at length, p. 32. "St. Paul says, (Rom. xiv. 10.)

“ *We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of*
 “ CHRIST. That we shall all be judged, we al-
 “ low. But how do you prove that *Christ shall*
 “ be our judge? (g) *Because*, adds the apostle,
 “ *it is written*, (Isa. xlv. 20.) *As I live, saith THE*
 “ LORD, *every knee shall bow to ME, and every*
 “ *tongue shall confess to GOD.* What sort of rea-
 “ soning is this? How does this apply to Christ,
 “ if Christ be not God? And how dare a man
 “ (i. e. *the apostle*,) quote one of the most guarded
 “ passages in the Old Testament for such a pur-
 “ pose? The passage is this. Isaiah xlv. 20, &c.
 “ *There is NO GOD ELSE BESIDE ME. A just God,*
 “ *and a Saviour, there is NONE BESIDE ME. I*
 “ *am God, and THERE IS NONE ELSE. Unto ME*
 “ *every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*
 “ The apostle’s reasoning is this. Jehovah says,
 “ every knee shall bow to him. Jesus is Jehovah.
 “ Therefore every knee shall bow to Jesus.”

St. Paul’s reasoning however is very different, and the conclusion the very reverse of what our author would draw from his words.

He is here exhorting the christians at Rome, to forbear censuring each other for their little differences in religious matters, and rather to turn their attention to their own christian conduct, that it might be such as it ought to be; because they would have to give account of themselves to Christ, their future judge.

Having said this, he throws in a citation from Isaiah: not to prove that Christ shall be our judge, from the Old Testament, as Mr. Robinson puts it: but to prove that all the world is and will be subject

(g) The apostle says—*For* it is written; not *Because*, as changed by our author.

to the dominion, controul and jurisdiction of Almighty God himself; and thereby to teach, not that Christ is Almighty God, but that it is from God that he receives his commission and powers: so that we may be said, ultimately to be judged by the Almighty, and to give account of ourselves to him.

If it be asked, how mankind can be judged at the last by Christ, and also by Almighty God? The same apostle furnishes a full solution of the difficulty. *God shall judge the secret things of men by Jesus Christ.* Rom. ii. 16. And; *God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 31.

Our author proceeds with his other instances of *misrepresentation* of passages in the Old Testament, by the writers of the New Testament, if Christ be not Jehovah, the supreme God. “*John the Baptist—(Matth. iii. 13.) is he, who was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying; Prepare ye the way. Isaiah saith, (xl. 3. 9, 10, 11.) Prepare the way of THE LORD, make straight a highway for OUR GOD. Say unto the cities of Judah, behold YOUR GOD. Behold the LORD GOD will come, and feed his flock like a shepherd. But what has John the Baptist to do with all this description, if Jesus Christ be only a messenger of Jehovah, and not Jehovah himself: for Isaiah saith, Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH.*”

Answer. As our author very soon resumes this point, and expatiates in a very singular manner, and through many pages, upon the application of this and the like language to Christ, i. e. of God
himself

himself being said to come, when Christ came to preach the gospel; there will then be an opportunity of shewing, with what just propriety and consistency, John the Baptist might be introduced speaking as he does here, though he looked upon Christ as nothing more than the most honoured messenger or servant of Jehovah, the supreme God.

His other instances, our author contents himself with barely citing, as saving him trouble, and answering his purpose. And it is to be feared, the laziness of many readers will but too readily incline them to be satisfied with his positive assertions, without farther inquiry. We must not, however, so pass him over. He begins :

“ A prophet, speaking in the name of God, says; “ *The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall look upon ME, “ whom they pierced.* Zech. xii. 10. An evangelist says; *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced “ the side of Jesus; and the Scripture was fulfilled, “ which saith, They shall look on HIM, whom they “ pierced.”* John xix. 34. 36, 37.

The present hebrew reading of this text in Zechariah, in our printed bibles and in our english translation made from them, is, *they shall (b) look on me, whom they have pierced.*

But

(b) I give here in the margin the passage of the prophet at length, as it ought to be read.

Zech. xii. 10. &c. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, &c.

The best interpreters agree, that in this passage, we have a prediction of the murder of an illustrious person, one very dear to God, since God makes his cause his own: a general
punishment

But it is plain, from its citation by the apostle, that he read it, *they shall look on him, whom they have pierced.*

And the learned have been very generally of opinion, that there had been a mistake in the Hebrew manuscripts, from which the printed copies have been taken, and translations made; as it might easily be done by a transcriber, through the omission of a small letter. And unprejudiced scholars have been the more inclined to believe, there had been this small mistake made, because it is hardly possible to make sense of the prophet's words, in their connexion with the whole passage, if you retain the reading, *they shall look on ME.*

Mr. Robinson, not attending to this, nor perceiving the most *shocking incongruity of the eternal self-existent God being pierced through unto death*; for that is the signification of the term in the original; cites it notwithstanding as spoken by the almighty Being of himself, and as a proof that Jesus, whom the soldier pierced with a spear, was Jehovah, the most high God.

However, the late learned Dr. Kennicott, whose design and immense labours, ought ever to be mentioned with honour, in his most valuable edition of the Hebrew Bible; has found *they pierced HIM*, to be the reading of this passage in no less than forty Hebrew manuscripts.

punishment also of the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem on account of this sin, and as general a repentance and pardon, and restoration in consequence of their repentance of that their sin; and that it is impossible to find any thing in the Jewish history that answers this prophecy, besides the crucifixion of the Messiah; and that this application is strengthened by the apostle's citation of it. The reader will soon perceive, how much the sense and connection would be disturbed, by reading *ME whom they have pierced*, instead of *HIM*.

His words relating to it, are these (i); "I have but a few things to add concerning the other passage in Joh. xix. 37. which is quoted by the apostle; namely, the prophecy in Zechariah xii. 10. *They shall look on him, whom they have pierced*: where, although the printed Hebrew Bible has it, *they shall look on ME*, (which destroys the sense of the passage) yet the reading, *they shall look on HIM*, is evidently preserved in FORTY Hebrew manuscripts."

It is to be hoped therefore, that we shall now no more hear of this text being brought, as a proof of Christ's being Jehovah, the one supreme God; or of the supreme God being pierced to death.

"A prophet (continues Mr. Robinson) says; *I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple. And Seraphims cried one to another, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD OF HOSTS; the whole earth is full of HIS glory.* Isai. vi. 1, 2, 3. An evangelist saith; *These things said Esaias, when he saw HIS glory, and spake of HIM; that is, of Jesus.* John xii. 39."

If these words of St. John are to be interpreted, as though the prophet himself spoke directly of Christ, the learned Dr. Clarke seems to have hit upon their true meaning. "When *Esaias*, says he, ch. vi. 1. saw the glory of *God the Father*, revealing to him the *coming of Christ*, he then saw the glory of *him*, who was to come in the glory of his Father. Matt. xvi. 27. *Esaias*,

(i) "Pauca dicenda restant de altero loco quem citavit Johannes, nempe vaticinio, Zach. xii. 10. *Relatissimi ad eum, quem transfixerunt*; ubi, quanquam impresseus textus legit *אֵלַי ad me*, (quod contextui repugnat) servatur tamen lectio *אֵלָיו ad eum* manifesto in codicibus Heb. QUADRAGINTA."—Kennicott. *Dissertatio Generalis*. p. 29.

“ in beholding *the glory of God*, and in receiving
 “ from him a *revelation of the coming of Christ*,
 “ *saw* (that is, *foresaw*) *the glory of Christ*; just
 “ as *Abraham*, John viii. 56. *saw* (that is *foresaw*)
 “ *his day, and was glad.*” Script. Doctr. of the
 Trinity, p. 109.

But the apostle’s words may perhaps appear to
 some, more justly to be understood of God, and
 not of Christ; since God only is spoken of in the
 preceding verse, to which they relate. And
 moreover, in the Coptic and latter Syriac versions,
 and in one manuscript, though this not of very
 early date, the reading is, *when he saw the glory*
 OF GOD, τὸ θεῶν, *and spake of him*: which some
 may esteem to be the true reading.

And the ground of the apostle’s making this re-
 flection in this place is; because the glory of God,
 of which the prophet speaks, is nothing else but
 the propagation of the gospel over the whole
 earth. As though it had been; “ *These things said*
 “ *Esaïas*, when he had an immediate revelation
 “ made to him concerning the gospel.”

For the whole of this sixth chapter of *Isaiah*,
 and the vision with which it opens, relates to the
 gospel-times, though nothing is therein expressly
 delivered concerning the person of Christ. And
 the hymn of adoration, offered up by the *Seraphim*,
 is a solemn declaration, “ that not one peo-
 “ ple only, as hitherto, but all mankind were to
 “ be called to the knowlege of *Jehovah*, the one
 “ true God, and to eternal life; to the sole un-
 “ rivalled honour and praise of that sacred Being,
 “ Creator of all things, and source of all happi-
 “ nefs and perfection, who stands by himself alone,
 “ unequalled in the universe he has made.” For
 so is that repeated epithet *holy*, &c. and alternate
 song

song to be understood, when the seraphic choir chaunt one to another and say ;

Holy, holy, holy, JEHOVAH, God of hosts !

The whole earth is filled with his glory.

But Mr. Robinson is not mistaken by himself in his interpretation and application of this passage.

Bishop Lowth's just and animated translation of so noble and original a writer as Isaiah, and his fine and useful illustration of the general plan of the prophet, will always place him in the foremost rank of interpreters of the sacred volume. But one is grieved, that so great an author, of such true sense, should one knows not how, in the present instance, give into the weakness of the narrowest interpreters of the sacred volume. For after having recited, and admirably explained this emblematic description of Jehovah, sitting on a lofty throne in the Temple, attended on and encircled by the brightest and highest of angelic powers, presenting themselves in the humblest postures, and covering their faces before him, in their worship of him ; he coldly and degradingly remarks, in his note upon the place, " The Lord upon the throne, according to St. John xii. 41. was " Christ." In too great haste, to say the least, overlooking the different and juster interpretations, which the passage in the apostle admits, to be hereafter considered ; and giving countenance to the self-contradictory, impossible, polytheistic doctrine, that the holy Jesus, the Son of Mary, is the most high God himself ; is Jehovah, the God of the universe, adored by surrounding angels, who veil their faces before him, as unable to bear the splendor of his presence.

But this is not all. In the same note, the Bishop so far commits his good sense, and conde-

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scends to vulgar prejudices, as to quote with approbation this idle remark of an ancient Father, on the threefold repetition of the word *holy*, in the hymn of the Seraphim; “the design of which
 “ is, saith he from Jerom on the place, ut mysterium Trinitatis in una Divinitate demonstrant;” viz. to demonstrate the mystery of the Trinity in one Divinity, or in the Divine Unity.

The famous Calvin, neither in fine parts or learning inferior to any one, and whose sentiments are well known, shewed much more judgment in his reflexion on this comment of Jerom’s (*k*).
 “ The Fathers, says he, made use of this proof,
 “ when they wanted to maintain against the Arians,
 “ that there were three persons in the one divine
 “ essence. I am far from rejecting their opinion
 “ upon this subject: but in disputing with heretics,
 “ I should chuse to make use of stronger arguments:
 “ for they are rendered only more obstinate and
 “ glorying in their errors, when you oppose them
 “ with proofs that are not plain and convincing;
 “ as in the present case they may easily and
 “ plausibly alledge, that number three is only used
 “ to denote perfection in the subject it is applied to,
 “ as appears from many places of Scripture.”

It next follows; “ A prophet says; *The LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF shall be for a stone of stum-*

(*k*) “ Veteres hoc testimonio usi sunt, cum vellent, adversus Arianos, tres personas, in una Dei essentia, probare. Quorum ego sententiam non rejicio; quanquam, si mihi res cum hereticis esset, mallet firmioribus testimoniis uti. Nam redduntur pervicaciores, et secum ipsi plaudunt, cum minus apertis testimoniis oppugnantur; ut hoc loco facile esset et promptum ipsis excipere ternario numero perfectionem notari, ut in aliis Scripturæ locis.”

Calvin. apud Cleric. in loc.

“ *bling.*

“ *bling*. Isai. viii. 13, 14. An apostle says ; Christ “ is that *stone of stumbling*, 1 Pet. ii. 8.” And hence our author would have it concluded, that it was the sentiment of the apostle, that Christ was the LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF. What ground he has for it, will appear by considering both his citations. That from Isaiah runs thus, in Bp. Lowth’s valuable translation :

Jehovah, God of hosts, sanctify ye Him ;
And let Him be your fear, and Him be your
dread.

And he shall be unto you a sanctuary ;
And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence,
To the two houses of Israel ;

A trap, and a snare to the inhabitants of Jeru-
salem.

And many among them shall stumble,
And shall fall, and be broken ; &c.

If we have here a direct prophecy relating to the gospel-times, which is the opinion of some good interpreters, and the inspired writer, according to his frequent practice, after having spoken of the enemies of Judah, and their vain unsuccessful attempts, strikes into a description of the future enemies of the Messiah, and of the cause and consequences to themselves, of their enmity and opposition to his gospel : then, Jehovah, God of hosts, may, by a very easy intelligible metaphor, be said to be a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence ; a stone*, on which the nation stumbled and fell ; because, that knowledge of himself, of his will, and merciful designs, which God bestowed in so large a portion upon them, especially by Jesus Christ, through their neglect and abuse of it, became the occasion of their fall, and of their being rejected by him from being any longer his peculiarly favoured people.

The apostle Peter might also remark, in the same way, with a reference to this passage in Isaiah; that Christ was *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*: because his humble condition and appearance, so contrary to the vain expectations of his countrymen; and his doctrine, too pure and heavenly for their worldly minds, disgusted, and indisposed them towards him, to such an extreme degree, as to put them upon violently taking away his life; which issued in their ruin and destruction, and that of their country.

But though God and his anointed prophet, Christ, were alike in this respect, does it follow that they were so in all other respects? Or does this particular resemblance and agreement denominate Jesus to be *Jehovah, God of hosts*, the omnipotent, eternal God? It surely did not change his condition of a highly favoured creature, and instrument of the Supreme Being in forwarding the everlasting happiness of the human race.

If we enter into the more particular consideration of this passage, which our author cites from the first epistle of Peter; we shall easily perceive, by attending to the way in which it is introduced, that though the apostle might have the words and sentiment of Isaiah in his mind, and allude to it, as is customary with the sacred penmen; nothing could be more remote from his intention, than to signify by such an allusion, and adoption of the prophet's language, that Jesus was *Jehovah, God of hosts*, spoken of by the prophet. For having in his eye some passages of the Old Testament, in which the future Messiah is compared to a *corner-stone*, which is the support of the building, he accordingly speaks of him, as a *living* (i. e. a sound and strong) *stone, chosen of God, and precious*; and having applied the same figurative language

to christians his followers, as *lively stones*, i. e. found members and supports of the spiritual building, the church: he proceeds, in the same way to declare, that this *stone*, Jesus Christ, *unto them that believe would be precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: i. e. to men of wicked and worldly minds, all their opposition to Christ and his gospel, would be vain, and recoil only on themselves, to their own destruction.* Thus all that can be collected from this passage is, that Christ was a chosen vessel of God, and highly approved by him. And from these samples, the reader will be able to judge, whether there be any thing of more validity behind, which Mr. Robinson may have to produce, as he would have it thought; and also whether there be any cause for the following reflection, very defective in the respect due to the sacred writings, as well as too complimentary to his own judgment, which we have detected in so many instances to be hasty and superficial. “ It would
 “ be endless, concludes he, to enumerate all the
 “ passages, which are thus applied to Jesus Christ.
 “ Allow Jesus Christ to be God, and all these ap-
 “ plications are proper: if we deny it, *the New*
 “ *Testament we must own is one of the most unac-*
 “ *countable compositions in the world, calculated*
 “ *to make easy things hard to be understood.*”

Our author next gives us, p. 34, 35, another dialogue of his own fashion; feigned to have been held between John the Baptist and two of his disciples, whom he names Reuben and Othniel; and he introduces them conversing together upon the subject of Christ, who had lately made his appearance among them, and asserting him to be Jehovah,

the most high God. Dialogues of the dead are certainly an ingenious and useful, as well as amusing species of composition; of which the witty Lucian set the example among the ancients; which has been well followed by some fine writers among the French, and by our countrymen, Lord Lyttelton and Bishop Hurd. I suppose it however to be a necessary rule of such a way of writing, especially when it is of the graver cast, to adhere strictly to the truth of character, and that the several speakers should not be mere images of wood and wire, to vent and patronize the particular sentiments and opinions of the author, but such as the persons respectively are known or may justly be supposed to have entertained when existing in this world.

————— personæ convenientia cuique

Dicere. —————

HORAT.

How far this precept has been observed, and whether in reality John the Baptist be not our author himself in disguise, brought in by him to countenance his peculiar notions; and thus a prophet of God made responsible for his own very fallible comments on the Scriptures, and some palpable mistakes; will be judged from what follows.

The subject of this supposed conversation takes its rise from the message, (a) placed in the margin, which Jesus returned back to John, to satisfy him upon the business, for which he had sent two of his disciples to him. In which he bids the two disciples to go and report to their master John,

(a) *John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying; Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? Jesus answering said unto them; go, and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, &c. Matth. xi.*

3. 4. 5.

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the things which they had heard and seen; that the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the deaf heard; and leaves it to him to draw the conclusion in answer to his inquiry: whether he who performed the very works, which the prophet foretold should be performed by the Messiah, was not indeed the Messiah himself.

Mr. Robinson immediately subjoins a large extract from Isaiah xxxv. which I also put in the (b) margin; to which our Lord appears to allude, in his answer to John, as treating of himself and his miraculous works. But our author is not satisfied with the conclusion, which Jesus would have the Baptist to draw from it, relating to himself; viz. that he was the Christ, the Messiah, the extraordinary prophet and messenger of the most high God: but would have it inferred, that he was nothing less than the most high God himself. “The prophet, says he, p. 36. does not ascribe these events to man; he says, *GOD will come; behold, YOUR GOD will come, and save you*; and he calls the whole combination of events, a display of the *GLORY OF JEHOVAH, the excellency of OUR GOD*. What has Jesus of Nazareth to do with the incommunicable name of the blessed God?”

Our author here charges the feigned personages in his dialogue with his own ignorance and preju-

(b) *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.—Then shall they SEE THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, and the excellency of OUR GOD. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart; be strong; fear not: behold, YOUR GOD will come with vengeance, even GOD with a recompence: HE WILL COME and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. Is. xxxv.*

dices, by making them interpret the prophet, as if Jehovah their God in person was to come, when the gospel was to be preached in future time, and as if Jesus was God himself. But to say that God came, and did what his prophets and messengers performed in his name and by his command, was a phraseology so well understood by the Jewish nation in general, as to be quite familiar to them, when treating of the Almighty being, and his extraordinary condescensions towards them. Thus, after our Lord had raised the widow's son to life, as they were carrying him out to be buried, the sacred historian relates, Luke vii. 16; *And there came a fear on all; and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us; and that God hath visited his people.* They did not intend by this language, that God visited or came to them himself in person; such an idea never entered into their thoughts: but as they well explain themselves; *God visited* them by raising up a great prophet Jesus, and sending him to them. So, that prophetic hymn of Zacharias, the Baptist's father, begins, Luke i. 68, 69. *Blessed be the LORD God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people: and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David!* Here again; how is God said to have *visited* his people? Not by any personal appearance himself among them; but as the holy man himself expounds the term, by raising up and sending to them a Saviour and deliverer, of the family of David, the promised Messiah. And in the like easy well known dialect, when it was heretofore told in Isaiah, that the future Messiah, of the family of David, should give sight to the blind, feet to the lame, and do mighty miracles, to confirm his heavenly mission and doctrine: it might, in the prophetic language be asserted, and fitly expressed,

that

that thus GOD *himself*, Jehovah, THEIR GOD *should come among them*: because HE came by Jesus, who spoke and acted by an authority and extraordinary power immediately derived from him. And the Jews also, who heard his doctrine and saw his miracles, might also be said to see THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *the excellency* of THEIR GOD; since *Jehovah*, their God, displayed his glorious perfections of wisdom, goodness and power by Christ, in their sight, and among them.

It being a matter of no small difficulty in our author's system, how Jesus Christ could possibly be Jehovah, the most high God, when the prophets, particularly Isaiah, stile him God's *servant*: in order to solve this problem, he brings in John the Baptist, like a modern metaphysician, arguing upon and recommending to his two disciples, the chimerical doctrine of two natures in Christ, the one human, the other divine, as the only way to reconcile a contradiction of his own making: thus forgetting all decorum of character, and not in the least attending to the strange anachronism he is guilty of; for he might with as much propriety have introduced this forerunner of Christ, arguing upon the Copernican system of the world, or Mr. Herschell's late discoveries. "The truth is, replies the Baptist in the dialogue, according to him; the Messiah is *one extraordinary person, in whom two natures, the nature of God, and the nature of man, are united. What is affirmed of him in one view, cannot be said of him in another.* The idea of the person of the Messiah is a key to the prophecies. Without using it, you will never be able to satisfy yourselves."

Another passage of Scripture, where the Baptist is made to give his sanction to our author's wrong and injudicious comments, is in Micah v. 2. *But thou,*

thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. The hebrew word (*c*), rendered to *come forth*, signifies, *to be born*. And christians are generally persuaded and agreed, on satisfactory grounds, as the Jews were before Christ, Matth. ii. 1—6; that there is contained in this passage a direct prophecy, that Bethlehem was to be the place of the nativity of the future Messiah. And after mentioning therein this circumstance of the place of his birth, the Almighty Being, who is himself the speaker, immediately added, (to signify that he whose birth was thus foretold, would be no ordinary person, and was intended for great things;) *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

Those who do not attend to the prophetic language, concerning the Almighty Being, or where HE himself is introduced speaking; hastily conclude from such expressions as these, that they indicate the persons spoken of to have existed from all eternity; whereas they speak only of the councils and designs of God concerning them. Thus, in the example before us: He, who immediately before is foretold as to be born in some future period at Bethlehem, is nevertheless said to have been from ancient times, from the beginning; because he had been intended and appointed from the beginning by Almighty God, to sustain the character of the Messiah, the great prophet and messenger of God: in like manner as, in similar language, Christ is elsewhere stiled (*d*) *the lamb slain*

(*c*) See Bishop Chandler's defence of Christianity. Vol. I. p. 152.

(*d*) Revel. xiii. 8. See also Matth. xxv. 34. Eph. i. 4. 1 Peter i. 20.

from the foundation of the world; because God had from the beginning of the world intended, that he should promote the cause of righteousness and the salvation of mankind by gloriously suffering a violent death for those great purposes.

(e) The most judicious commentators have seen, that this sentence, *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*; implies a declaration on the part of Almighty God, that he, who had just been predicted by him, as to be born at Bethlehem, had before all time been destined for the great part which he was to act; the designs of God being all planned out, and known to him, long before they are put in execution. But then, these learned men, unhappily coming to the reading of this passage in the prophet, with a prepossession that Christ was the supreme God, they were led to maintain that he whose birth was thus foretold, had nevertheless existed from all eternity: not feeling the contradiction which they fix upon the sacred writings, in making them speak of a person *to be born*, and therefore *never having had any existence*, as *having been for ever*; and also, how utterly impossible it would be, that Jehovah, the eternal God, should here speak of another, who was eternal like himself, without making *two* eternal Beings, *two* Gods. This contradiction, our author, with many others, having fallen into, he has moreover no scruple of making John the Baptist answerable for it.

(e) “*Egressiones ejus ab antiquo. i. e. Ante conditum mundum decretum fuit, ut hisce diebus in mundum prodiret, qui semper fuit, et qui olim patribus fuit promissus.*” Munster. So Cal. in alto is said to have interpreted it; *whose goings forth have been decreed from the days of eternity.*

Unitarian Tracts.

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He next proceeds to make John the Baptist maintain, that Jesus was the Jehovah, that was worshiped by the Israelites. The argument however to prove it, is not his own; but he hath the merit of being the first, who ventured to pronounce it to have been the opinion of him, whom Christ declares (Matth. xi. 11.) to have been above the common rank of prophets. His positions, stripped of the conversation-form, which is rather tedious and insipid, are these:

Jehovah, the most high God, being a spirit, invisible, could not appear to, or be seen by men.

A person did appear, taking upon him the name and character of Jehovah, and was worshiped as Jehovah.

Jesus, who was afterwards born at Bethlehem, was the Jehovah, who appeared to, and was worshiped by the Israelites.

In reply to this, it is to be noted, that although God be an invisible spirit; yet he may manifest himself, his extraordinary presence, his will and commands, by outward symbols and tokens, by an audible voice, by a human, angelic, or any other particular figure or shape, without any degradation or incongruity; and thus *appear* to mankind. And therefore, in all those places of scripture alleged by our author, it may very consistently be shewn, that it was God himself who appeared, and not any other for him. And though this appearance was sometimes made by borrowing a human form, it was at other times by a voice, by a flame of fire, or the like; which, in their turns, were all stiled, the *angel of the Lord*; as being manifestations of his extraordinary presence: the phrase, *angel of the Lord*, not being confined to signify an intelligent agent, but inanimate things; fire, a voice, and the like, when manifesting the divine presence,
being

being so stiled. This will be found to be the true solution of these divine appearances by those who will take the pains to make the Scripture its own interpreter; and it is the sentiment of learned jews and christians, of the first rank for discernment and impartiality. Some of the early heathen fathers indeed, ignorant of the peculiar phraseology of the Scriptures, without any grounds but those alleged here by Mr. Robinson, *viz.* of it being impossible for God, who was an invisible Spirit, to appear himself; did on this account imagine, that it was Christ that appeared, having taken up wrong notions of him from their heathen philosophy; yet did not suppose him to be Jehovah, God himself, as our author would make him, but, his representative, the first being produced by him and the maker of all things under him. But that there is no foundation in the Scriptures for any such conclusion, or to infer that any other being or person appeared and was worshiped as Jehovah, but the single person of the one omnipotent creator and Father of all, has been shewn by Lowman; and after him by Lindsey, in the Sequel to his Apology, who has considered the subject very fully. However, if the divine appearances had been all along in a human form, on which our author lays such great stress; there would have been no good ground of forming the conclusion he does, (or rather of bringing in John the Baptist, whom he personates, thence concluding, for these are the words that he makes him utter in his supposed dialogue,) that “Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem, existed before his birth, appeared to our fathers, and was worshiped by them as Jehovah, the Lord their God.” For the passage of the prophet, Micah v. 2. *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, from which he*
would

would deduce all this, has been shewn to be intirely mistaken by him, and by others before him; and to have no reference to any pre existent state of Jesus, but to the divine decrees and designation concerning him, before he had any existence.

I shall add only one thing more, and then we shall have done with this curious dialogue of the dead, which has turned out so little to the credit of its inventor, in any way. And that is, I am sorry to say, another instance of carelessness and presumption, in taking advantage of a very wrong translation of a passage of the Old Testament in our english bibles, which seems to make Christ equal to Almighty God, Jehovah's *fellow*, and ascribing this interpretation to John the Baptist, as being that prophet's, and not his own. It is in Zech. xiii. 7. where we translate: *Awake, o sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts*: but the true rendering is—*against the man that is near to me, or my favourite*. The Septuagint renders it: *επ' ανδρα πολιτην μου, against the man that is my citizen or countryman*. Aquila, *επι συμφυλον μου, against the man of the same tribe with me*. Symmachus, *επ' ανδρα τε λαου μου, against the man of my people*. Theodotion, *επ' ανδρα πλησιου αυτου, against the man who is his neighbour*. Junius and Tremellius, *Hebræa vox proximum aut amicum sonat, &c. i. e. the word in the original signifies a neighbour or friend*.

S E C T I O N VIII.

Whether the Scriptures, which foretell the destruction of idolatry by the gospel, have not been fulfilled, although Jesus Christ be wrongly worshiped as God.

MR. Robinson's next proposition, p. 44. is; that if Jesus Christ be not God, the prophecies which foretold the coming of the Messiah, and the

the destruction of idolatry by his coming, have not been fulfilled: *for that christians in general worship Jesus: which is idolatry, if he be not God.*

Whether upon our author's definition of idolatry, the greater part of the christian world have not been for many ages, and are now, idolaters, I shall not controvert, but shall leave to him to determine. But notwithstanding the lamentable departure of christians from the Scripture-rule in respect of the true object of worship, it will not be found so inconsistent as he imagines with those prophecies which predict the downfall of idolatry, and that all nations should be brought to the knowledge and worship of Jehovah, the one only true God, by the gospel.

For however eager and precipitate we are wont to be, in our projects and expectations, to see things instantly executed, as our lives are but of a few days continuance; it is otherwise with that almighty eternal Being, who has an infinite variety of ends in view that we know not of, who brings about his purposes by a variety of means, and with whom no length of time makes any alteration. The same Scriptures foretell, that all mankind would be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and become virtuous and reformed in their lives by it: but we still complain, and with too much reason, of the immoralities that prevail among the followers of Christ; and not more than one sixth part of the world are supposed to profess faith in him.

The prophecies concerning the extinction of idolatry and the putting down the worship of any other person but Jehovah, the supreme Father of all, will be answered, if the effect has been in some degree produced; and if there be a tendency in the means appointed, to accomplish it in the
pro-

progression of ages, still more largely, and universally. Concerning this, it will not be difficult for any one to form a true judgment, who attends to the following facts ;

1. Our Saviour always taught, that *the Father*, was *the only true God* (f), John xvii. 3 ; from whom he had his mission ; and that HE was also *his God and Father* (g), John xx. 17 ; from whom he received his being, in common with his disciples and the rest of mankind.

He directed men to *worship the Father*, and never let fall the least intimation, that himself or any other person whatsoever, was the object of worship ; Luke xi. 1, 2. John iv. 21, 22, 23, 24 : and so far from requiring men to worship himself, he was all his life long a devout worshiper of the Father in private, Matth. xi. 25. John xi. 41, 42. Matth. xxvi. 29. 41 ; and also was a constant attendant on the temple, and synagogue-worship ; where Jehovah alone, the God of Israel, was addressed and adored.

2. His apostles, after their divine Master's death, and removal out of this lower world, in their applications to men to become his disciples, which were first made to their countrymen, instructed them ; that Jesus, though he was a man of no note among them, having passed the greatest part of his life in the obscure town of Nazareth, was nevertheless highly acceptable to God for his eminent virtues, and distinguished by extraordinary gifts of a divine power conferred upon him ;

(f) *This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus, the Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

(g) *Go to my brethren, (i. e. his disciples) and say unto them ; I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*

(b) Acts ii. 22: that though he died by violence and injustice in the cause of truth, God vindicated him by a speedy restoration to life, and by raising him to great honour and dignity; ver. 23, &c. All the apostles, united in a solemn act of worship, speak of their master Jesus, as the (i) *servant* of the supreme Potentate, who made the world, &c, iv. 24: and Peter declares, that it was *the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of their fathers*, who had honoured this his faithful *servant*, by raising him to life. iii. 13. &c. The Roman officer, Cornelius, and his friends, had learned, probably from living among the Jews, the knowledge and worship of the one true God; so that Peter's preaching to them is not as to heathen idolaters, and very little different from his first sermon to his countrymen, viz. to inform them of the commission and extraordinary powers, as a divine Teacher, which Jesus of Nazareth had received from God; who had put his last seal to the authority of this his chosen messenger, by restoring him to life, after he had been most unrighteously put to death; and honouring him with the appointment of being the future judge of mankind: x. 38. Paul exhorted the men of Lycaonia, to *turn from idols unto the (k) living God, who made heaven,*

(b) *Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.*

(i) Such awful sentiments did they entertain of the sovereign unequalled glory and dignity of the Almighty Father, and the infinite distance betwixt HIM and their lord and master Jesus.

(k) Jupiter, and the other false gods, whom the heathens worshipped, had all been men, who had been deified after their deaths. The *living God*, is a name peculiar to Jehovah,

heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein. At Athens, Paul taught, that God that made the world, and all things that are therein; — had appointed a day, in the which HE would judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he had ordained: whereof he had given assurance to all men by having raised him from the dead. xvii. 24. 31. When Christ appeared in a vision to Paul, and gave him his commission to awaken men out of darkness and ignorance, and bring them to virtue and the knowledge of the true God; he called himself, (1) Jesus of Nazareth. Acts xxvi. 18. 15. xxii. 8.

Thus did Christ lay the ground-work, and his apostles after him built upon it, in preaching against the worship of idols, and teaching the nations in all countries throughout the known world, that there was but one God, the Father of all mankind, who was to be worshipped. And the immediate success was answerable to what might be expected from the extraordinary divine assistance that accompanied these apostolic teachers of the divine unity. Idolatry generally gave way. The heathen temples were deserted; and in the

the one true God; from whom all beings, Christ and all mankind, receive their existence, and on whom all depend for the duration of it.

(1) When this holy Saviour, even after his ascension into heaven, and exaltation at the right hand of the Father, whatever be to be understood by it, styles himself Jesus of Nazareth; should not his followers be careful and consider well, what grounds they have to call him Jehovah, the supreme God? Is he likely to approve their paying him such undue honours, which he was so very far from claiming, that he utterly disclaimed every thing of the kind himself? And would he not have intimated a matter of such importance to our apostle, at this or at some other season, if it had been true: whereas, on the contrary, he tells him, that it was to God that men were to be turned, and not to himself.

course

course of a few ages, in christian countries, the worship of their heathen gods was heard of no more.

This may satisfy us, that the predictions of the prophets were not void, concerning the success of the gospel in putting idolatry to flight.

But alas! although the worship of the heathen false gods, Jupiter, Juno, Mercury, &c. was in many parts abolished, christians made to themselves new gods, similar to them; and in other ways departed from the true worship of the Father.

There was a sect of christians, which arose in the days of the apostles, who are the chief subject of St. John's first and second epistle; which appear plainly to have been composed by him to counteract their errors.

Through a false philosophy, and a mistaken, misplaced regard for Christ, these persons would not allow him to have been a mortal man, who had the infirmities of our nature, and was liable to sufferings and death: but they maintained, that he was of a nature incapable of what was so degrading; and was all those things, in appearance only, and not in reality.

The apostle's endeavours to check the growth of this sect of christians, seem to have been effectual. For we hear not much of them, after the time of the immediate successors of the apostles, who make frequent mention of them. But the principles of that false philosophy, by which they had been misled, were too deeply rooted in the learned heathen converts and their successors, who took the lead in the christian church, to make them contented with such a founder of their religion, who was only a human being; though of the sublimest piety, the most tried integrity, and consummate benevolence, the highest possible perfections of a creature. They

proceeded therefore by degrees to raise and aggrandize, as they thought, the blessed Jesus, but in reality to obscure and diminish his true character, till in the course of a few centuries, at the council of Nice, in the year 325, the fathers, as they are called, the learned heads of the christian church, pronounced him by imperial synodical authority equal to the supreme Father, and anathematized all who would not submit to their decree.

Of heathen origin, though from different causes, came the idolatrous worship of dead men and women into the christian church, its most lasting disgrace; which in process of time spread itself universally, and is found to this day in the greek and roman churches, in every quarter of the globe. It first took its rise from an excessive veneration of those most excellent persons, the martyrs, who courageously resigned their lives in torments, rather than deny the truth of Christ, and worship the false gods of their heathen persecutors.

To render honour to such characters was natural; but their mode of doing it became a snare to them. They began with paying a particular regard to the birth-days of these holy men, or the anniversaries of their martyrdom; and took pleasure in shewing their respect for them by visiting their sepulchres. Their imaginations there soon caught the superstitious idea, that their prayers would be more acceptable to the Almighty, by being offered on such holy ground, that had been watered with the blood of the pious sufferers; and thence, by an easy transition, from praying *at* their tombs they soon grew to pray *to* those who had been buried in them. Stated times of feasting and rejoicing were appointed, to do honour to their memories; and this the more, when they observed how agreeable it was to their heathen neighbours,
and

and a means of inducing them to become christians, being so like their own heathenish practice.

Sir Isaac Newton makes the following citation and remark on this subject (*m*). “ *Gregory Nyssen* tells us, that after the persecution of the emperor *Decius*, *Gregory* Bishop of *Neocæsarea* in *Pontus*, instituted among all people, as an addition or corollary of devotion towards God, that festival days and assemblies should be celebrated to them who had contended for the faith, that is, to the *Martyrs*. And he adds this reason for the institution: *When he observed*, saith *Nyssen*, that the simple and unskilful multitude, by reason of corporeal delights, remained in the error of idols; that the principal thing might be corrected among them, namely, that instead of their vain worship they might turn their eyes upon God; he permitted that at the memories of the holy martyrs, they might make merry and delight themselves, and be dissolved into joy. The heathens were delighted with the festivals of their Gods, and unwilling to part with those delights; and therefore *Gregory*, to facilitate their conversion, instituted annual festivals to the Saints and Martyrs.”

Had this excellent person, sufficiently considered the character of *Gregory*, the learned and truly pious Bishop of *Neocæsarea*, grave, sober, sedate and virtuous, a favourite pupil of *Origen's*, and converted from heathenism by him, he would have been far from fathering upon him such unworthy methods of bringing men to embrace the gospel. But he paid too much deference to *Gregory* of *Nyssa*, an author who deals much in the marvel-

(*m*) Observations upon the prophecies of *Daniel*, &c. by Sir Isaac Newton, p. 203, 204.

ous; and who, at the distance of an 100 years gives this account of his great uncle, and may justly be suspected rather to describe the corrupt practices of his own times than those of the Bishop of Neocæsarea. Nor is it likely that christians would have taken such liberties, and given this loose to their passions and to revelry at the tombs of their martyrs, or that the heathens would have been forward to join with them, and from such motives embrace christianity, when heavy persecutions hung over them, and often fell upon them for their religion. These are the fruits and consequences of ease and security; and belong rather to the middle of the fourth century, when christians in their turn enjoyed the protection of the state, and made but a very bad use of it, in this and many other ways.

Corruptions then in point of christian worship did not immediately take place; but came on by degrees. For the space of many years after the apostles, Christ was not taken into an equality with the supreme Father, and the same worship paid to him; nor was prayer offered to his mother Mary, and other dead persons, called Saints.

Mr. Robinson however maintains that it was otherwise with respect to the first of these, p. 46; "that the practice of the primitive christians was "to worship JESUS CHRIST;" and he brings some examples to prove it: which it will be proper to examine.

His first instance is taken from the famous letter of Pliny the younger, governor of Bithynia, to the emperor Trajan his master, to consult him about the methods he was to pursue with the christians, who were already numerous and increasing in that province. Speaking of the confessions which they had made to him concerning
ing

ing their religion, he says; “*They affirmed, that the whole of their fault, or error, lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ (n) as a God, and to bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, or to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it.*”

Inconsiderate persons may be imposed upon at first by this account: but a little reflection on the circumstances, and the person who gives it, will shew that nothing can be concluded from it. For able critics, of different opinions concerning Christ in this matter, have agreed in holding it a doubtful point, whether the words (o) *quasi deo, as a God*, used by Pliny, were not rather his own expressions, than those of the christians he had

(n) The learned Mr. Melmoth translates these words in this manner: *and address'd themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some God.* “And I must acknowledge,” says Dr. Lardner, (whose version is here followed) “that his translation appears to me as proper as my own. For *carmen*, or *ῥῆμος*, does not always denote a metrical composition. Julian concludes his oration upon the mother of the Gods, with what he calls *a hymn to her honour*, which is a prayer in prose. And, unquestionably, Julian speaks properly. Therefore Pliny’s *carmen Christo quasi deo*, may have been a prayer to God, in the name of Christ, a prayer upon christian principles, in which God was praised for all the blessings of the christian revelation.” *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, Vol. ii. p. 36. So says that most fair and accurate of all writers. And I should suppose, that all unprejudiced judges will look upon this as a fine criticism and just interpretation.

(o) “*Vocabula, quasi deo, qua vi prædita hic sint, determinare haud audeo. Incertum enim est, suis hoc verbis Plinius loquatur, an christianorum.*”

Motheim apud Lardner, *Ibid.* p. 34.

examined. And being a bigotted heathen idolater, though a person of fine parts and accomplishments, and finding that Jesus, the founder of the christian sect, as his friend Tacitus the historian relates, was a Jew, who had been put to death lately in the reign of Tiberius; he would naturally conclude, that he had been deified by the Jews, as eminent men were deified among themselves, and speak of him as such.

This interpretation of Pliny's language is rendered most probable, if not quite confirmed by this fact, namely; that we have elsewhere no account of worship paid to Jesus Christ in these early times, Justin (*p*) Martyr says; "In all our oblations we praise the Creator of all through his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit." And "The President (of the christian assembly) gives praise and glory to the Father of all, in the name of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." And says Tertullian; "The God, whom we worship, is the God who made this whole universe, and every thing therein, by his powerful word." In another place; "We worship God through Christ. Call him a man if you think fit. It is by him, and through him, that we have been brought to the knowlege, and the worship of God. And the Jews themselves were taught how to worship God, by the man Moses."

To give farther strength to this argument, I shall subjoin the private prayers of two most distinguished christians in their dying hours; the one of them reckoned by many in the number of the apostles; the other, one who had lived and conversed with them.

(*p*) I quote here Dr. Lardner—Heathen and Jewish Testimonies, Vol. ii. p. 35, 36.

The first is taken from an account of the death of James the Just, (as he is called,) at Jerusalem, supposed to have happened in the year 62. It is preserved by Eusebius, in a fragment of the works of Hegesippus, a Jew-Christian, who lived not long after the time of the apostles. Some have held the whole narrative to be apocryphal, from certain improbable stories mixed with it; and that this James the Just was some unknown person, and not James the Lesser, as he is otherwise called, the brother of our Lord. But a good defence of the history in general, and of the person being James the apostle, and our Lord's kinsman, may be met with in Lardner's Supplement to his Credibility, &c. Vol. iii. p. 36—83; from whom I transcribe Hegesippus's account, as taken from Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, Book ii. ch. 23.

“When the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees, and others, came to James, to desire him to tell the people his opinion of Jesus, they say to him: “For we and all the people bear witness to you, that you are just, and accept no man's person.” Afterwards James says to them: “Why do you ask me concerning *Jesus, the son of man?* He *sits in heaven, on the right-hand of the Great Power, and will come in the clouds of heaven.* Whereby many were fully persuaded, and glorified God for that testimony of James, saying, *Hosanna, to the son of David.* His enemies being exasperated at this, when they had thrown him down from the battlement of the Temple, he not being quite dead, they began to cast stones upon him. But he kneeling down, said; *I beseech thee, O Lord God, the Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do.*”

The prayer is very short; and some may be ready to think, it needed not so long a preface: but

but it is important. For it teaches not only what was the pious practice of an apostle, but also what was the opinion entertained of the great object of prayer and worship by Hegesippus and the christians of that early period: and the preceding part of the quotation shews, what sentiments they then held of the person of Christ, under the sanction of one of his apostles, and how very far they were from looking upon him as Jehovah, the supreme Being.

The other instance is extracted from a relation of the martyrdom of Polycarp, a holy and excellent person, who had been a disciple of St. John, and had probably conversed with others of the apostles. Standing before the stake, at which he was going to be burned alive, and looking up to heaven, he said; *O Lord God almighty, the Father of thy well-beloved, and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowlege of thee; the God of Angels, and Powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of righteous men who live in thy presence: I bless thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to bring me to this day, and to this hour; that I should have a part in the number of thy Martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, to a resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, in the (q) purity of the holy spirit. Among whom may I be accepted this day before thee, as a rich and acceptable sacri-*

(q) Or, *purified by the holy spirit.* The words in the original are, *εν αφθαρσια πνευματος αγιου.* Archbp. Wake and Mr. Whiston render it, *in the incorruption of the holy spirit.* The apostle says, Eph. vi. 24. *Grace be with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ εν αφθαρσια,* as here—in *incorruption*, in *sincerity* as we translate it, in *purity*: i. e. who adhere to his gospel without judaical or heathenish mixtures, which diminish or defeat its good effects.

See;

fiſe; as Thou, the true (r) God, with whom is no falſhood, haſt both before ordained, and mani- feſted unto me, and alſo haſt now fulfilled it. For this, and for all things elſe, I praife thee, I bleſs thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal and heavenly Jeſus Chriſt, thy beloved Son (s). With whom, to thee, by the holy ſpirit, be glory, both now, and to ſucceeding ages. Amen.

In the Greek copy of this epiſtle in Cotelerius's edition, which is here made uſe of, it is put; *I glorify thee with the eternal, &c.* But in Eufebius, it is, *I praife and glorify thee, through the eternal high-prieſt, Jeſus Chriſt, thy well-beloved Son.* With whom the old verſion agrees, as Archbp. Wake points out, though he follows Cotelerius.

Our author's ſecond witneſs to the worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt is Mahomet. Concerning whom he obſerves, p. 47, that "in the light of infidels
" and idolaters he conſiders chriſtians throughout
" the Koran; and indeed, had not chriſtians wor-
" ſhiped Chriſt, he could have had no ſhadow of
" a pretence to reform their religion, and to bring
" them back to the worſhip of one God."

But Mahomet, in the beginning of the ſeventh century, comes too late to bear teſtimony to the

(r) ο αληθινος Θεος, the true God. Obſerve that this holy martyr, who lived and converſed with St. John, the favour- ite apoſtle, in his ſolemn prayer at going out of the world, declares, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Lord God Almighty, to be the true God.

(s) If this laſt clauſe ſhould be thought genuine, Mr. Whiſton has given many reaſons, that it ſhould be as here read, *by*; and not *with*, the holy ſpirit, as Cotelerius has exhibited it. See Dr. Jortin's criticisms on this account of Polycarp's death, and vindication of it: where he inſinuates his opinion, that the epiſtle which contains the account, may have paſſed through the hands of interpolators before it came into thoſe of Eufebius. Eccleſ. Hiſt. Vol. ii. p. 133.

early

early prevalence of the worship of Jesus Christ. At the period when he began to arrogate to himself the prophetic character, the light had nearly forsaken the christian world, with respect to the true object of worship. The followers of Christ had been for some ages quarrelling and destroying each other in their heats and disputes, not concerning the supreme Father of all, to whom they paid little attention; but about the nature of Christ, and of the holy Spirit, and many other objects of worship, which they had invented. “(t) The notion of the divinity of the virgin *Mary* was believed by some even at the council of *Nice*: who said there were two gods besides the Father, viz. *Christ* and the virgin *Mary*, and were thence named *Mariamites*. Others imagined her to be exempt from humanity, and deified: which goes but little beyond the popish superstition, in calling her the *complement of the Trinity*, as if it were imperfect without her. The foolish imagination is justly condemned in the *Koran* as idolatrous, and gave a handle to *Mahomet* to attack the Trinity itself.”

Without regarding the order of time, for reasons best known to himself, our author reverts to Justin Martyr, as his third evidence of Christ being worshiped by christians in that early day, i. e. about the year 150. In proof of this he cites a passage from Justin, which I shall give, putting over against it a fuller and more exact translation of it; and the original Greek in the margin. But it may be proper to mention, that immediately before, Justin advances his own superstitious notion concerning the heathen gods, and asserts; that it was by the suggestion of

(t) Sale's *Koran*, Prelim. Disc. p. 35.

evil demons, *δαίμονες φάυλοι*, whom the emperor and his subjects worshiped, that they were prompted to persecute the christians; and remarks, that these evil demons sometimes made their appearance, and committed adultery with women, and the unnatural crime with boys, alluding to the story of Jupiter. After which he proceeds to the passage before us.

Mr. Robinfon.

(u) *The pagans tax us with atheism: and, if by atheism they mean a refusal of worshiping heathen deities, we own we are atheists: but, if by atheism they mean a refusal of worshiping any God, we disown the charge. The true God, the Father the Son and the Spirit WE WORSHIP, AND ADORE, &c.*

Justin Martyr.

(u) *It is on this account, because we acknowlege not these false gods, that we are called atheists. And we acknowlege the charge; that we are indeed atheists with respect to those gods who are so esteemed by you: but not with respect to HIM, who is THE MOST TRUE GOD, and Father of righteousness, soberness and all other virtues, in whom is no stain of wickedness whatsoever. But we worship and adore HIM; as also his Son who came from him, and taught us these things; and the*

(n) Ενθεοῖς καὶ ἀθεοῖς κειλημεθα. Καὶ ὁμολογούμεν τῶν τοιούτων νομιζομένων θεῶν ἀθεοὶ εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἔχει τὴν ἀληθεῖατῃ, καὶ πατὴρ δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν, ἀνεπίμικτη τὴ κακίας Θεῶν· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνον τε καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ υἱὸν ἐλθόντα καὶ διδάξαιτῃ ἡμᾶς ταῦτα, καὶ τοῦ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπομείων καὶ ἐξομοιωμένων ἀγαθῶν ἀγγέλων στρατῶν, πνεῦμα τε τὸ προφητικόν, σέβομεθα, καὶ προσκυνούμεν, λόγῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ τιμήμεντες, καὶ παντὶ βηλομένῳ μαθεῖν, ὡς εἰδᾶχθημεν, ἀφθονῶς παραδιδόντες. Justin. Martyr. Apol. i. p. 47. Hagæ Comitum. 1742.

hoff

host of oher good angels, who follow and resemble him; and also the prophetic Spirit: honouring them rationally and truly; ready most gladly and without any reserve, to impart this knowlege to all who are desirous of it.

There is something here, in Mr. Robinson's manner of citation, which it will be difficult for him to justify; especially after inviting his readers to put the most implicit confidence in him, in a short preface which he makes to this translation from Justin in particular, two pages before. His words are; p. 46—" *In proof of this, (i. e. of Christ being worshiped by the primitive christians) I will adduce three unsuspected witnesses, who, having no share in our dispute, can have no kind of interest in deceiving us. The works of the two first, (i. e. of Pliny, and Mahomet, whose evidence has been examined) you have in English: and ask any one, who is capable of answering, whether I impose on you in the last.*"

1. But how can our author acquit himself, or be acquitted of the blame of imposing upon his readers, who cannot go to the original; when he disguises the words of Justin, in such a way as to give an appearance to the eye, as if that good man believed *the true God to be composed of three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit*; when Justin's own words, in the place, expressly declare one single person (HIM) to be *the most true God* ($\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \Theta\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$); and with the like precision, immediately after *distinguish the most true God from his Son that came from him, and from the prophetic Spirit.* This great fault stands the same, uncorrected in

the edition of his book in 1782, as in the first in 1776.

2. The indolent and unlearned reader is no less imposed upon by Mr. Robinson's contrivance, in admitting only some of Justin's words, and leaving out others, to make it seem, as if he and all other christians at that time, were worshipers of a Trinity of persons, of Father, Son, and Spirit equally: whereas, if he had produced the whole passage, the direct contrary would have appeared.

For the reader, who attends to Justin's own words, as they are given above, will easily perceive, that he uses the terms, (*w*) *worship* and *adore*, in the highest sense, when applied to *the most true God and Father of righteousness*; of that peculiar honour and worship, which are due only to HIM: but, in an inferior sense, when applied to *the Son*, and the *prophetic Spirit*. Otherwise it would follow, that *the host of good angels are to be worshiped and adored*, as Gods; for they are put exactly in the same line and level, and are said by Justin to be worshiped and adored by him, as well as *the most true God*, and *the Son*, and *the prophetic Spirit*. It must give compunction to a good mind to have been the cause of misleading ignorant persons in matters of great moment, by a partial untrue representation of facts.

Notwithstanding Mr. Robinson is thus unsuccessful in his proofs of Christ being worshiped by the primitive christians; yet, that he was afterwards worshiped as the supreme God, and is now by the greatest part of christians, is a fact that is

(*α*) This twofold sense of the term *worship*, is very frequent in the Bible. So 1 Sam. xii. 18. we read, *And all the people greatly feared, or revered the LORD and Samuel*. So also 1 Chron. xxix. 20. *All the congregation bowed their heads, and worshiped the LORD and the king*; i. e. David.

but

but too true ; although we have shewn, in the foregoing part of this work, that there is no manner of foundation for it in the sacred writings, by examining all the texts that he has heaped up together in its support.

Our author however in this Section, does not allow such worship to be wrong or idolatrous, for this singular reason, because we are not so directly and expressly told and warned of it in the christian scriptures, as he thinks we ought to have been. His words are ; “ If the apostles did not foresee
 “ this idolatrous worship of Jesus Christ, God
 “ gave them a less degree of the spirit than he
 “ gave Moses ; and then what become of all those
 “ passages in both Testaments, which declare the
 “ most plentiful effusion to the apostles ? If the
 “ apostles did foresee, and did not foretel this
 “ dangerous departure from their doctrine, what
 “ become of all their fine professions, of *declaring*
 “ *the whole counsel of God, of keeping back*
 “ *nothing that might be profitable, of imparting*
 “ *their own souls, and so on ? Are not all these*
 “ rather romantic ?” p. 50.

To this it may be answered ; that sufficient information is given in the apostolic writings, to have kept christians from the idolatrous worship of Christ as the supreme God, although Mr. Robinson takes upon him to arraign the conduct of divine Providence for their not being more explicit in this respect. And there might be, and unquestionably there were reasons satisfactory to the divine mind, for not predicting this idolatry by name as it were, though we are not made acquainted with them. If a humble conjecture may be allowed, where we know so little, and can assert nothing positively, I would say ; That to have foretold in direct terms such a total departure from the truth and from all probability ;

bility ; as that Jesus, the son of Mary, at first a poor helpless babe ; increasing afterwards like others in wisdom with his years ; working most probably for a long space of time at a mechanic trade ; liable to all the infirmities of our nature, suffering hunger, pain, and at last death itself ; one who constantly declared God to be his Father, i. e. that he received his being from him ; who worshiped the Father continually as the only true God, and taught his followers so to worship him : that a human being so circumstanced, and with such dispositions, should also be truly and properly God, Jehovah, God of Israel, the eternal God, equal to the supreme Father, and worshiped equally with him : a mixture this, so heterogeneous, so out of nature, and beyond all bounds of credibility, to suppose that rational creatures could ever make, with so much evidence to the contrary before them as the testimony of the apostles afforded, that it is not to be wondered it was not made the subject of a particular revelation to them, as it might have given too great a shock to their minds. It was an extravagant idea, which christians in after-times did not arrive at all at once ; but was fabricated gradually, as is well known to all that are conversant in ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the fathers. And ordinary christians now are not struck with the astonishing incredibility of such a doctrine, because it is instilled into them before they attain the use of reason, as a matter of divine authority, of which they are told, that they are not to take upon themselves to be the judges, and they are thus accustomed and familiarized to it : but it must for ever be a stumbling block to rational inquirers, and prevent many from receiving the gospel, so long as they believe this doctrine to make a part of it.

As our author maintains the worship of Jesus Christ to be idolatry, if he be not the supreme God; and we have seen the insufficiency of his allegations from Scripture to prove him such; all that follows, “ of this idolatry (x) being so wide spread, of so long standing, interwoven with civil constitutions,” &c. is beside the purpose; unless it may excite all that read it, to flee from it. His long declamation afterwards, p. 51, 52. with which he finishes this section; especially his invocation of the Almighty in so strange a fashion, (*in reality* to be a witness of his own mistakes,) may work upon the weak and credulous, but must be offensive to judicious readers, of proper seriousness and sobriety of mind. I should have passed it wholly unnoticed, had not I found two passages of the prophets greatly misapplied by him, to prove Jesus to be Jehovah, the most high God.

The first is, Jeremiah xxiii. 6. *This is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD (or Jehovah) our righteousness.* The words are generally allowed to be spoken of Christ: but they are here wrongly translated in our english Bible, as has been lately pointed out by a (y) learned and judicious writer. He renders them: *And this is the name by which JEHOVAH shall call him, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* To which he subjoins this valuable note. “ Literally, according to the hebrew idiom, the words run thus; *And this is his name which JEHOVAH*

(x) Is not the worship of dead men and women, male and female-saints, as widely extended, of as long standing, established also by the civil power through the Greek and Roman churches, and held equally sacred with the worship of Jesus Christ as God? and yet this is not esteemed by Protestants any good argument in favour of saint-worship.

(y) Jeremiah: a new translation. By Benjamin Blayney, B. D. Oxford. 1784.

“ SHALL

" SHALL CALL, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ; a phrase
 " exactly the same as, *And Jehovah shall call him*
 " *so* ; which as I have before observed in note on
 " ch. xx. 3. implies that God would make him
 " such as he called him ; that is, ' our righteou-
 " ness,' or the author and means of our salvation
 " and acceptance. So, by the same metonymy,
 " Christ is said to *have been made of God into us*
 " *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and*
 " *redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30. " I doubt not," con-
 " tinues this candid author, " but some persons will
 " be offended with me, for depriving them by this
 " translation of a favourite argument for proving
 " the divinity of our Saviour from the Old Testa-
 " ment. But I cannot help it : I have done it
 " with no ill design, but purely because I think,
 " and am morally sure, that the text, as it stands,
 " will not properly admit of any other construction.
 " The lxx have so translated before me, in an age
 " when there could not possibly be any bias of
 " prejudice, either for or against the before-
 " mentioned doctrine ; a doctrine which draws it's
 " *decisive* proofs from the New Testament only.
 " In the parallel passage, ch. xxxiii. 16. the ex-
 " pression is a little varied, but the sense, accord-
 " ing to a just and literal translation, is precisely
 " the same ; *And this is He whom JEHOVAH shall*
 " *call, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*"

The other passage, by which our author would
 prove Jesus to be the most high God, is in Isaiah
 xlii. 13. 16. 11, 12. and is thus exhibited by him.
The Lord Jesus came forth as a mighty man ; he
stirred up jealousy like a man of war ; he cried ;
yea roared ; he prevailed against his enemies. He
brought the blind by a way that they knew not,
he made darknefs light before them. Well may the
wilderness, the cities, the villages, the caves, give
K 2
glory

glory to Jehovah Jesus, and declare his praise in the islands.

The manner in which our author prints the text, shews the additions that he has taken upon him to make to it; how far justifiable therein, the reader will judge. But the success of the gospel in future times here predicted, and the thanks and praise due for it, he makes the prophet to ascribe, not to Jehovah, the single person of the one almighty Creator, whom alone Isaiah knew and acknowledged; but to another person, a new Jehovah, unknown, as far as appears, to the prophet and to many others, stiled by him, JEHOVAH-Jesus. This will appear the more extraordinary, if we look back to the beginning of the chapter, where there is a prediction concerning Christ, [uttered by Jehovah himself,] in which he is very particularly stiled the *servant* of Jehovah: which makes it utterly improbable, to say the least, that he should immediately after be addressed, as Jehovah himself. And though our author, as will be hereafter seen, can digest and maintain such evident contradictions, the words of the prophet should not be tampered with and altered to make *him* chargeable with them.

In our author's putting this addition to the words of Isaiah, out of a full conviction, I have no doubt, that he was so to be interpreted; we have an example of the method, by which as Sir Isaac Newton well conjectures, the spurious text of the three heavenly witnesses, 1 Joh. v. 7. *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit*, may have come into our Bibles. Some fanciful persons at first imagined that the apostle's three witnesses, *the spirit, the water, and the blood*, were an apt illustration of their notion of the Trinity, and might put it in the margin of their New Testament, as such; and afterwards, by mistake,

mistake, or by the boldness of some transcriber, what was first a note, was inserted into the text, and became reckoned a part of the apostle's own words and writing. "This mystical interpretation," says that great author, "of the spirit, water, and blood, to signify the Trinity, seems to me to have given occasion to somebody, either fraudulently to insert the testimony of 'the Three in heaven,' in express words into the text, for proving the Trinity; or else to note it in the margin of his book by way of interpretation. Whence it might afterwards creep into the text in transcribing(z)."

S E C T I O N IX.

Whether, if Jesus Christ be not the supreme God, Mahomet has written more clearly on the nature of Jesus Christ, than the apostles have; and whether Mahomet was right in his doctrine of the Unity of God?

MR. Robinson's next argument and division of his work, stands thus: "If Jesus Christ be not God, you will be obliged to allow, that Mahomet has written more clearly on the nature of Christ, than the apostles have; and that the Turks, who reject the gospel, have clearer notions of the nature of Jesus Christ, than Christians have, who receive and study it." p. 53.

It is no new thing for writers, who apply to the passions more than the understandings of their readers, to insinuate that the religion of those christians who hold the proper humanity of Christ,

(z) Two Letters of Sir Isaac Newton to Mr. Le Clerc, London, 1754. p. 17, 18.

is little better than Mahometism; because its founder agrees with them in part that Christ was a prophet of God, and in maintaining, at the same time, that he was only the son of Mary, and nothing antecedent to that, any more than other men. This method our author pursues here. But he would have stated the matter more agreeably to the truth, if his position had been, that Mahomet *had spoken more justly of the nature of Jesus Christ than himself, and the bulk of christians*; and this, because he therein agrees with the apostles, who uniformly describe their master (z) as a human being only: which is also the constant language of Christ concerning himself.

Indeed in one very material respect Mahomet differs from the apostles, in denying Christ to have been crucified, and so far joining in the opinion of those first erroneous christians, against whom principally, as we have often remarked, St. John wrote his two first epistles; (a) who denied Christ to have *come in flesh*, to have been mortal, liable to sufferings and death: but that all this was mere

(z) For this, see the Unitarian Tracts, published at the close of the last century; *Lardner* on the Logos; *Cardale's* True doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ, *Prisley's* works, *Lindley's* Sequel to his Apology, and History of Unitarian doctrine and worship; with many lesser tracts in our times.

(a) After having blamed some who "had spoken against MARY a grievous calumny;" Mahomet proceeds to blame them in that they have said; "Verily we have slain CHRIST JESUS the son of MARY, the apostle of GOD; yet they slew him not, says he, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness." Sale's Koran, p. 79. They were probably unbelieving Jews, who thus boasted, that they had slain Jesus Christ, and put an utter end to him; and therefore that in vain did men believe in him. See *Lardner's* Letter on the Logos, p. 9. See also *Ignatius*, and *Irenæus's* works throughout.

appearance,

appearance, and no reality : and as those persons probably took up such a mistaken doctrine to do honour to him ; this candour bids us to own, might be Mahomet's motive for embracing it.

Mr. Robinson will be found far from being happy and well grounded in all the instances he produces of disagreement between Mahomet and the inspired writers, with respect to the nature and person of Jesus Christ ; which we are to examine.

But to place this important point in its true light, I would premise ; that the superiority of the gospel to the Koran, of Christ to Mahomet, lieth not in the opinion entertained concerning the nature of Christ. But herein consists their everlasting difference, and the divine excellency of the one above the other ;

The pretensions of Mahomet to an authority from God, were enthusiastic and feigned : those of Jesus real, being confirmed by numerous miracles.

Never in any one action of his public life that is recorded, and from this we may form a just idea of its more private scenes, do we see Jesus acting out of a view to his own ease, self-gratification, or honour among men, but purely for their good, and to promote their virtue and eternal happiness. The aim of the Arabian false prophet, after he had succeeded so far as to have his mission owned, was too often directed to serve the private ends of ambition, and of impure, extravagant, sensual desires.

Jesus taught and enjoined his followers, by love and kindness, and persuasive argument to win men over to his religion ; and whilst these methods alone were pursued, it gloriously prevailed : Mahomet succeeded by carrying fire, and slaughter and desolation, where any would not submit to his law ; and

while *he* locks up the human mind in darkness, and forbids inquiry, Jesus invites it.

Mahomet ordained the gentler part of our species, and the most useful, where they fulfil their proper duties; to be slaves to the lusts, caprice, and tyranny of the men: but Jesus ordains one man to be the husband of one woman; and though in all societies there must be some head to govern, he prescribes the law of kindness and benevolence, which equalizes all.

Jesus, himself the image and pattern of the most perfect purity, proposes to his disciples the happiness of virtue for their reward in the future world, *where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage*: the lascivious Mahomet provides beautiful damsels for his followers, with every thing enchanting to the imagination, and that can minister to sensual delight.

Mr. Robinson thus lays down what appears to him the contrariety betwixt the New Testament and the Koran, concerning the nature of Christ.

Inspired Writers.

Mahomet.

1. *The Word was GOD.*
John i. 1.

1. They are INFIDELS who say, God is Christ. Sale's Koran. ch. v.

2. *Jesus is THE BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY, and THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON.* Heb. i. 3.

2. Christ the son of Mary, is no more than an APOSTLE. ch. v.

3. *He shall be called the SON of God.* Luke i. 35.

3. Christians say, Christ is the SON of GOD. How are they infatuated! Far be it from God, that he should have a SON. ch. iv.

4. *Jesus*

4. *Jesus Christ is LORD OF ALL.* Acts x. 36. 4. *Jesus is no other than a SERVANT.* ch. xliii.

The whole of the passage in the Koran, from which our author makes his two first citations, is curious, and worthy to be produced at length.

“ They are surely infidels, who say, Verily, “ GOD IS CHRIST the son of MARY; since CHRIST “ said, O children of ISRAEL, serve GOD, my “ LORD (*b*) and your LORD; whoever shall give a “ *comparison unto GOD*, GOD shall exclude him “ from paradise, and his habitation shall be hell- “ fire, and the ungodly shall have none to help “ them. They are certainly infidels, who say, “ *GOD is the third of three: for there is no GOD “ besides ONE God.*—Will not they therefore be “ turned to GOD, and ask pardon of him? since “ GOD is gracious and merciful. CHRIST, the “ son of MARY, is no more than an apostle; “ other apostles have preceded him; and (*c*) his “ mother was a woman of veracity: they (*d*) both “ did eat food.” Sale’s Koran, p. 92, 93.

1. In

(*b*) Mahomet continually borrows from and alludes to the hebrew and christian scriptures. Here he had perhaps in his eye, our Lord’s words to Mary Magdalen, soon after he was raised from the dead; *go to my brethren, (his apostles) and say unto them, I am soon to ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God, and to your God.* John xx. 19.

(*c*) *His mother was a woman of veracity*] “ Never pretending to partake of the divine nature, to be the mother of “ *God.*” Sale.

(*d*) *They both did eat food.*] “ *Being obliged to support their lives by the same means, and being subject to the same necessities and infirmities as the rest of mankind; and therefore no Gods.*” This is also a remark of Mr. Sale’s, the editor of the Koran; and is one among many circumstances, which justified Mahomet in thinking Christ to be a human

· 1. In the first instance; if, instead of calling them *infidels*, Mahomet had alleged, that they who say, that GOD is CHRIST, the son of MARY, are mistaken christians, he would not have said amiss: for men may err in this important point as well as in others, and yet be true believers and acceptable to God, if they act the sincere part, and as far as their light goes.

But I apprehend, that if Mr. Robinson himself should abruptly put the question to any one, even the most orthodox; *Is GOD Christ, the son of MARY?* they would hesitate, and not immediately answer him in the affirmative. Nay, I much question, whether any one can bring himself really to think, that GOD is CHRIST, *the son of MARY*, as Mahomet puts it. So far is he from being in the wrong in this respect.

The text which our author opposes to Mahomet, to prove Christ to be God, John i. 1. *The word was GOD*; has been shewn to prove no such thing. For it is not Christ who is the *word* there spoken of, (see p. 10.) but God himself; as the apostle expressly declares in the same verse, *the word was God, or GOD was the word*. Should any one think, that it must be of some other person besides God, that the apostle here speaks, of because he

human being, and not God; and the consideration of such things, joined to the constant tenour of the Scripture-declarations, must in time open the eyes of all, to distinguish between the all-perfect, all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable God, the benevolent author and parent of all, and his well beloved Son and servant Jesus; who was once, whilst he was as we are now, subject to sufferings and death; but is now, for his perfect obedience, raised to an immortal life, and crowned with glory, in being the instrument of bringing the whole human race to share with him in so astonishing a favour and felicity.

says; *the word was with God*, and repeats it again, ver. 2, *the same was in the beginning with God*; let them reflect, that the same language is used concerning *Wisdom*, Prov. viii. 22, 23. 30. *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. I was jet up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.—Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Wisdom*, according to Solomon, is not another divine person, another God, another Jehovah; nor is the *word*, or *wisdom* here introduced by the apostle: but in both places, according to the lofty eastern prophetic stile, it is God himself who is intended, characterised by his wisdom; which is himself. The same stile of speech is common with us, in poetry, or any immediate addresses to the Almighty. Thus we say; *Assist me, o thou gracious Power, that gavest me my being! Lead me, o thou Wisdom divine, wherever thou pleasest!* invoking God himself, by two of his attributes.

2. With respect to Mr. Robinson's second citation from the Koran, there would have been nothing to be blamed in it, if Mahomet had denominated Christ, *an apostle* of God. For so Christ calls himself, every time that he says; that he was *sent* from the Father, or that the Father *sent* him: for being *sent* is being an apostle; the same word, or one from the same root, being used in the original. St. Paul, Heb. iii. 1. expressly stiles *Jesus Christ, the apostle of our profession*. But it was very wrong, and unjustifiable to say, that Christ was *nothing more than an apostle*. For he is exalted to be the Lord of christians, and the final judge of the world. The crafty Mahomet however, was too guarded, to allow any such extraordinary

ordinary powers to Christ, as an apostle of God; lest it should diminish and counteract his own pretended superior apostleship.

What our author cites from St. Paul, couched in such magnificent figurative language; that Christ was *the brightness of* (or a bright ray from) *God's glory* (or power), *and the express image* (print or character) *of his person*; bespeaks him indeed to be far above what Mahomet would confess him to be: but does at the same time indicate, that he is what he is, and that all he possesses is from God; and also that he cannot possibly be God, the almighty, supreme Being. For however dignified by it, he is here mentioned but as a ray proceeding from that glory, which is infinite in the one supreme author and source of all power. And farther, as a print or image of a thing, cannot be the thing itself of which it is an image: in like manner Christ cannot be God; and if not God, he must be his creature; for whatever is not God, is such: his creature, beloved by him, and resembling him in his imitable perfections.

3. In the next instance, Mahomet is highly to be blamed for denying to Christ the title of *Son of God*. And as he was well acquainted with the Scriptures of the New Testament, where this title is continually given to our Lord, it may be apprehended, that he was induced to deny it him out of artifice, as thinking that for Christ to be called *the Son of God*, by way of honour and distinction, would give too much splendor to his character, and tend to eclipse his own. It is possible, indeed, that he might be unwilling to admit it into the Koran, lest he should thereby give countenance to the gross ideas concerning the Deity, which the ancient natives of Arabia had adopted, who
spoke

spoke of God (*e*) as having *female issue, daughters that were angels.*

4. In the last instance, as in the second, we cannot help ascribing it to politic contrivance, to depreciate our Saviour's character, that this pretended prophet stile him *no other than a servant.* Our author very properly confronts and confutes the disparaging insinuation, by citing Acts x. 36. *Jesus Christ is Lord of all.* But although Christ is to be ever honoured with this dignified name and title, with respect to his followers, and to mankind; and he himself knew how to assert it (John xiii. 13.) on proper occasions: Yet it must always be remembered, that with respect to almighty God, he invariably acknowledged himself to be his servant, *sent* by him. God also speaks of him, as one who was to be his *chosen* and *beloved servant*; before he was born. Isaiah xlii. 1. Matth. xii. 17, 18. His apostles, as before noted, so stile him, Acts iv. 25. 27. 30; where in our english translation, *servant* should be put instead of *child.* And though he is here called, *Lord of all*: this is not to be taken, as some have construed it; that he is *Lord of all*, in an absolute sense, as God himself; but such a Lord, as God hath constituted him: and the sense and connection of the sentence, being part of Peter's discourse to Cornelius and other heathens, leads us to consider it as

(*e*) Koran, p. 109. 218. 397.

Chapter cxii.

“ Intituled, The Declaration of God's Unity.

“ In the name of the most merciful God,

“ Say God is one God; the eternal God: *he begetteth not, neither is he begotten*: and there is not any one like unto him.” Mr. Sale observes, in a note, that this chapter is held in particular veneration by the Mahometans, and declared, by a tradition of their prophet, to be equal in value to a third part of the whole Koran. Ibid. p. 507.

setting

setting forth Jesus Christ, as the Lord of all mankind, Jews and heathens, who were thenceforth to be united together under him.

It soon after follows; “ If the generality of christians believe the divinity of a mere man, they believe a lie, and *the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive*, hath forsaken the christian church, and dwells in the mosques of a vile impostor.”

Although I am persuaded myself, and think I have clearly proved in the series of this examination, that those who hold Jesus Christ to be Jehovah, the supreme God, do widely err from the truth, I should blame myself for saying, they *believe a lie*; for the use of this phrase by the apostle, 2 Theff. ii. 11. does not countenance its application in such a way, by our author or myself; and though it be in itself a most prodigious defection from the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning Christ, they who hold it, are convinced that they have sufficient ground of evidence for it. Nor has *the spirit of truth* wholly forsaken the christian church, though it has in *this one* respect, for many ages, in its professing to acknowledge Jesus to be the most high God, and worshipping him. Our Lord's promise to his disciples, of *the spirit of truth abiding with them for ever*, was confined to them in their apostolic office, and therefore not inconsistent with or contradicted by his followers afterwards falling into the greatest errors. *The spirit of truth*, since the apostles quitted the stage of this world, has resided only in the holy Scriptures; and there it is that we are to search for its dictates and decisions, and not in the creeds and confessions of different churches or sects of christians, or in the conclusions of men, however pious and learned. The honest conclusions, which each
of

of us form for ourselves, from what we know of those Scriptures, are what we must depend upon; and no mistakes which we may thus fall into, will affect our final acceptance with God.

Impostor as Mahomet was, and is justly stiled; he seems not to have been void of some serious (f) good

(f) " It was at this time that he formed the scheme of establishing a new religion, or, as he expressed it, of replanting the only true and ancient one, professed by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets, by destroying the gross idolatry to which the generality of his countrymen had fallen, and weeding out the corruptions and superstitions, which the Letter Jews and christians had, as he thought, introduced into their religion, and reducing it to its original purity, which consisted chiefly in the worship of one only God.

" Whether this was the effect of enthusiasm, or only a design to raise himself to the supreme government of his country, I will not pretend to determine. The latter is the general opinion of christian writers, who agree that ambition, and the desire of satisfying his sensuality, were the motives of his undertaking. It may be so: yet his first views perhaps were not so interested. His original design of bringing the pagan Arabs to the knowledge of the true God, was certainly noble, and highly to be commended. For I cannot possibly subscribe to the assertion of a late learned writer, (Dr. Prideaux, Life of Mahomet, p. 76.) that he made that nation exchange their idolatry, for another religion as bad. Mahomet was, no doubt, fully satisfied in his conscience of the truth of his grand point, the unity of God, which was what he chiefly attended to; all his other doctrines and institutions being rather accidental, and unavoidable, than premeditated and designed."

" Since then Mahomet was certainly himself persuaded of his grand article of faith, which in his opinion, was violated by all the rest of the world; not only by the idolaters, but by the christians, as well those who rightly worshipped Jesus as God, as those who superstitiously adored the virgin Mary, saints, and images, and also by the Jews, who are accused in the Koran of taking Ezra for the son of God: it is easy to conceive, he might think it a meri-
" torious

good principle at his first setting out : for which I would refer to a very capable judge, whose words I put in the margin.

For his crimes, which he fell into afterwards, he must answer at that tribunal, where we must all likewise stand, and be judged. This however is certain, that in the midst of such things as shock our minds ; *viz.* his pretended communications with the Deity, and continual feigned revelations from him, his violence and injustice towards all that would not receive his doctrine, and the like ; at leaving the world, he was perfectly (*g*) calm, and satisfied with his future prospects ; without any compunction for the part he had acted, yet not destitute of a just humility and sense of his many defects ; imagining perhaps, as has not been unusual with other enthusiasts, and imposing upon him-

“ torious work to rescue the world from such ignorance and
 “ superstition ; and by degrees, with the help of a warm
 “ imagination, which an *Arab* seldom wants, to suppose
 “ himself destined by Providence for effecting that great re-
 “ formation. And this fancy of his might take still deeper
 “ root in his mind, during the solitude he thereupon affected,
 “ usually retiring for a month in the year to a cave in
 “ mount *Hara* near *Mecca*.” Sale’s *Koran*, Prelim. Disc.
 p. 38, 39.

A late writer observes of Mahomet, with candor, and his usual good sense : “ Nor is it easy to conceive, that he could
 “ ever have supported the severe character of the great re-
 “ former of mankind, whose morals were not specious at
 “ least, according to those ideas of morality, which pre-
 “ vailed among the people to whom his pretensions were im-
 “ mediately proposed.”—White of Oxford’s *Bampton-Sermons*, p. 158.

(*g*) “ In one of the last revelations, pretended to be given
 “ to him, and said to be sent to warn him to prepare for
 “ death ; he is exhorted to praise God, and ask him for-
 “ giveness : and it was remarked that after that, he was
 “ more frequent in those devout exercises.” *Id. Ibid.*
 p. 506.

self

self therewith, that his most important object of reviving the knowlege and worship of the one true God, to which he had perswaded himself that he had a divine call, would sanctify whatever means he might use to promote it.

The success which it pleased the divine providence to give to this false prophet and his religion (*b*), is one of those events which fills us with awe and astonishment. In the course of a few centuries, it had established itself, and well nigh extinguished christianity, by destroying or converting its professors, in those once flourishing churches of Asia and Africa, many of which were planted by the apostles; and spread itself to the extremities of India. It has now subsisted for near 1200 years, and though without any great accession of late, yet without any diminution, and its professors are believed to be more in number than christians.

We cannot take upon us to fathom the reasons of the divine moral administration, in giving greater light and knowlege of the truth to some

(*b*) “ Mahomet arose to that heighth, as to make one of
 “ the greatest *Revolutions* that ever happened in the world ;
 “ which immediately gave birth to an empire, that in 80
 “ years time extended its dominion over more kingdoms and
 “ countries, than ever the *Roman* could in 800. And al-
 “ though it continued in its strength not much above 300
 “ years, yet out of its ashes have sprung up many other
 “ *kingdoms* and *empires*, of which there are three at this day,
 “ the largest and most potent upon the face of the earth ;
 “ I mean the empire of *Turky*, the empire of *Persia*, and
 “ the empire of the *Mogul* in *India* : which God hath per-
 “ mitted, of his all-wise providence, still to continue for
 “ a scourge unto us *christians* ; who having received so holy
 “ and so excellent a *religion*, through his mercy to us in
 “ Christ Jesus our Lord, will not yet conform ourselves to
 “ live worthy of it.” Prideaux—*Life of Mahomet*, p. 79.
 first printed 1697.

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nations,

nations, and withdrawing it from others; unless where our Maker has condescended to discover them to us.

In the present case, that judicious and truly learned person, Mr. Mede, has been thought by many to have fully evinced, (i) that in *the trumpet of the fifth angel*, Rev. ix. 1. there is an express prediction of this sore calamity that was to befall the christian church from the *Arabians and Saracens*; who would be permitted to exercise great cruelties upon all that *had not (k) the seal of God in their foreheads*; who were not the worshipers of the only true God.

And all writers conspire in bearing testimony to the extreme depravity of christians at that period, (l) and their dissensions, animosities, and murdering

(i) The Works of Joseph Mede, B. D. p. 467.

(k) *That had not the seal of God in their foreheads*] Many of the inhabitants of Savoy, Piedmont, Milan, and the southern parts of France, are said to have been untainted with the idolatry and corruptions of the christian church in that age, and to have been remarkably preserved from the ravages of these Mahometan invaders. See Whiston on the Revelation, p. 194.

(l) “ To these causes of the progress of Mahometism, we may add the bitter dissensions and cruel animosities that reigned among the christian sects, particularly, the Greeks, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Monophysites; dissensions that filled a great part of the east with carnage, assassinations, and such detestable enormities, as rendered the very name of christianity odious to many.” *Mosheim*, Eccl. Hist. vol. II. p. 9.

“ The terrible destruction of the eastern churches, once so glorious and flourishing, by the sudden spreading of Mahometism, and the great successes of its professors against the christians, necessarily inspire a horror of that religion in those to whom it has been so fatal; and no wonder, if they endeavour to set the character of its founder, and its doctrines, in the most infamous light. But the damage done by Mahomet to christianity seems

“ to

ing of each other, in their disputes about the supposed divinity of Jesus Christ, and the mode of it; whether he was of the *same*, or only of a *like* nature to God; whether he had one nature only, the human being absorbed in the divine, or two natures, a divine and human; whether he did not consist of two persons, and the like: in the mean while, the number of demons, or of deified men and women, called Saints, continually increasing, with their idolatrous worship, and the supreme Father of all and only true God, being in danger of being set aside or forgotten by his creatures. So that Mahometism, with all its stains and blemishes, may have been a purer religion, than christianity was likely to have turned out in that dark age, and in those countries. And as the Almighty, after the flood, separated the family of Abraham from the rest of the nations, to preserve the knowlege and worship of himself from being intirely lost: so in his ordinary providence this false prophet arose, and was permitted to forge and propagate a new religion, to give a check to the growing idolatry of christians, to keep up the knowlege of the Divine Unity, and to be a standing witness against giving any equals, any associates or companions to the infinite, almighty, eternal God, and Parent of the universe.

In the view of such an awful visitation, and desolation of the christian church, and bar put to its progress for so many ages and over so large a

“ to have been rather owing to his ignorance than his malice.
 “ For his great misfortune was, his not having a competent
 “ knowlege of the real and pure doctrines of the *christian*
 “ religion; which was in his time so abominably corrupted,
 “ that it is not surprizing if he went too far, and resolved
 “ to abolish what he met with. Incapable of reformation.”
 Sale's Koran. Prelim. Disc. p. 46.

part of the globe, it ministers a peculiar satisfaction to find this false prophet professing such a veneration for Moses, and the prophets, and for (*m*) Christ in particular, in acknowledging their divine missions, in founding his own upon them, and in borrowing so much continually from the hebrew and christian Scriptures, and inserting it in the Koran, or Mahometan Bible.

There we meet with just and affecting descriptions of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Almighty Being.

There encouragement is given to have recourse to the Almighty in prayer; and the frequency of the practice is enjoined.

There they are commanded to shew kindness, and to do good, without looking for any thing again, from men.

Whilst most pernicious, unlawful indulgencies are granted to the men in the commerce between the sexes; the strictest temperance in all other respects is prescribed.

And above all, (*n*) a resurrection to life, and a day of solemn, awful judgment, in which men's actions,

(*m*) " We also caused JESUS the son of MARY to follow the footsteps of *the prophets*, confirming the law which *was sent down* before him; and we gave him the gospel containing direction and light; confirming also the law which *was given* before it, and a direction and admonition unto those who fear God: that they who have received the gospel, might judge according to what God hath revealed therein: and whose judgeth not according to what God hath revealed, they are transgressors." Sale's Koran, p. 89.

(*n*) " God produceth creatures, and will hereafter restore them to life: then shall ye return unto him. And on the day whereon the hour shall come, the wicked shall be struck dumb for despair: and they shall have no intercessors from among the idols, which they associated with God, and they shall deny the false gods, which they associated
" ciated

actions, good and evil are to be weighed in a balance, and sentence accordingly to happiness or misery pronounced upon them; are described in the strongest and most awakening terms.

“ciated with him.—They who shall have believed, and wrought righteousness, shall take their pleasure in a delightful meadow: but as for those who shall have disbelieved and rejected our signs, and the meeting of the next life, they shall be delivered up to punishment. Wherefore glorify God, when the evening overtaketh you, and when ye rise in the morning: and unto him be praise in heaven and earth; and at sun-set, and when ye rest at noon.” Id. *ibid.* p. 332. N. B. There follow in this chapter many fine proofs of the greatness, power, wisdom and dominion of God, with frequent condemnation of those who *attribute companions unto HIM*, and *associate other gods*, and objects of worship with him.

“The just—give food unto the poor, and the orphan, and the bondman, for *his sake*, saying, we feed you for God’s sake only: we desire no recompense from you, nor any thanks: verily we dread from our LORD, a dismal and calamitous day. Wherefore God shall deliver them from the evil of that day, and shall cast on them brightness of countenance and joy; and shall reward them, for their patient persevering, with a garden, and silk garments: therein shall they repose themselves on couches; they shall see therein neither sun nor moon; (*viz.* as not needing the light of either) and the shades thereof shall be near spreading over them, and the fruits thereof shall hang low so as easily to be gathered:—and their Lord shall give them to drink of a most pure liquor; and shall say unto them, Verily this is your reward: and your endeavour is gratefully accepted.” He then closes with this exhortation to himself for the divine goodness to him. “Wherefore commemorate the name of thy LORD, in the morning, and in the evening: and during some part of the night worship him, and praise him a long part of the night.” Id. *ibid.* p. 475, 476.

How much to be lamented, that these right and affecting sentiments of God and human duty, and chaste images of the expectations of the righteous from him hereafter, should, in other parts, be debased and contaminated by accommodating his doctrine to his worldly ambitious views, and the low brutal passions of himself and his countrymen!

Who can but rejoice, that so many thousands and ten thousands of God's creatures, for many long successive generations, however deprived of the purity of the gospel-light, do nevertheless continue to enjoy so much of it, and of the means of virtuous improvement for a future state, so as to set them far, very far above what nature's light unassisted ever taught.

It affords also a most pleasing prospect, that the high regards expressed in the Koran for Moses and Christ, will open an easy door to shew the false pretensions of Mahomet, as a divine prophet, when christians shall revert to the knowlege of (*o*) the only true God, and Father of all, and the simplicity of his worship; and when they shall better adorn the pure and perfect moral of the gospel by their own practice. And in the mean time, the continuance of this false religion, so just and true in this article of the Divine Unity, is a providential warning to christians, to return to the doctrine of nature, and of every revelation given by the God

(*o*) " O ye who have received the scriptures, *exceed not the just bounds in your religion*, neither say of GOD any other than the truth. Verily CHRIST JESUS, the son of MARY, is the apostle of GOD, and his Word which he conveyed unto MARY, and a spirit proceeding from him. Believe therefore in GOD, and his apostles, and say not, *there are three Gods*: forbear this; it will be better for you. GOD is but one GOD. Far be it from him that he should have a son! (see p. 140, 141.) Unto him belongeth whatsoever is in heaven, or on earth; and GOD is a sufficient protector. CHRIST doth not proudly disdain to be a servant unto GOD; neither the angels who approach near to his presence. And who so disdaineth his service, and is puffed up with pride, GOD will gather them all to himself at the last day." *Salé's Koran*, p. 80, 81.

" *Exceed not the just bounds in your religion.*] Either by rejecting and contemning of Jesus, as the Jews do; or *raising him to an equality with God*, as do the christians." Mr. *Salé's* note.

of nature; viz. that He is but one Person, one single intelligent agent; and that no other person is to be joined or associated with him, as God; or as an object of devout religious application and prayer.

We cannot but observe the change in Mr. Robinson's stile and manner, in the few words that he opposes to the doctrine of the Divine Unity, as taught in the Koran. It would seem as if he felt the great difficulties of the task he had undertaken, and the ground not to be quite safe under him. And it is no discredit to him, nor a thing to be wondered at: for I believe the difficulties will be found to be insuperable. But let us attend to what he produces.

It being universally allowed, that Mahomet held that there is but one God; a thing indeed that cannot be denied, for it shines through every page of the Koran; Mr. Robinson thus remarks upon it. "We answer the unity of God is discoverable by the light of nature; it is a truth of natural religion: but the doctrine of Christ's person is a truth of revelation. Of the truths of revelation, Christ and his apostles speak. The generality of christians understand a truth of revelation in one sense. Mahomet and his followers understand it in a contrary sense. A high degree of probability is against the latter." p. 54.

It is not here denied, that Mahomet holds the unity of God, but that the unity which the generality of christians hold, is the righter of the two. Our author's judgment however will be found here as much mistaken as at other times. For it is of no consequence what the generality of christians understood concerning a truth of revelation, if it may be proved, and it has been abundantly shewn in this instance, that they *mifunderstand* it, by a

strange unscriptural multiplication of Deity, and by their joining two other persons, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, with the supreme Father, and calling *them*, these three persons, one God. Some things Mr. Robinson scatters in different parts of his work, tending to shew that the divine unity is not broken, by his asserting Jesus to be the supreme God. But they are of no validity. Thus, p. 25. citing John x. 20. *I and my Father are ONE*; he says, with reference to it, "According to my system, *Jesus, the Father, and the true God, ARE ONE.*" But it may equally be proved, by the like argument, that *Jesus, the Father, the eleven disciples, and the true God, ARE ONE.* For Christ prays, John xvii. 11. *Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me; that THEY may be ONE, as WE ARE.* In the passages of Scripture hitherto quoted by him, it has been shewn, and will be seen in all that remain, that he is intirely mistaken in his deductions from them, that Christ is Jehovah, the supreme God. For that the person of the Father of the universe, by himself alone, is God, the only true God; and Jesus Christ is no person or part of the Deity, more than any other creature may be said to be, when receiving a commission and extraordinary power from the Father of all, to act in his name, or by his express direction and authority, and thereby more nearly as it were related to and connected with him.

Whatever efforts be used, it seems to me that it will not be possible to set aside the unity of God, taught by Mahomet, without condemning that which Moses taught and Jesus adopted (Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 28, 29.) from him: both of whom this false prophet acknowledged to have been prophets of God, and in this great point copied after them. We have
a strong

a strong proof of this, in a valuable work (*p*) very lately published, being “ A Comparison of Mahometism and Christianity, in their history, their evidence, and their effects;” where it is very conspicuous how much the learned writer is embarrassed in this respect. In one place, p. 311. after having justly, and with much beauty and energy remarked, that there is nothing new in the fine descriptions of the Deity and of his natural and moral perfections, which affect us so much and surprize us with their unusual grandeur, in the Koran; “ that it only recchoes the doctrines, and feebly imitates the expressions of the inspired penmen of the Old and New Testament. Even (proceeds he) that grand and fundamental doctrine of the Unity of the Supreme Being, the establishment of which was constantly alleged by the impostor as the primary cause of his pretended mission, contains no novel or unknown truth. It is the leading principle of the religion of nature; and it constituted one of the most important and distinguishing parts of a former revelation. The manifestation and preservation of this momentous truth was one great end, to which the Mosaic institution was subservient.” —So far is distinctly and justly defined and delivered. But here the writer ought to have stop’d: for here Mahomet took his stand, as he well might; and called aloud to christian as well as heathen idolaters, to return to and acknowlege the God of nature, and the God of revelation, JEHOVAH, sole Creator of all things, the only true God. What Mr. White goes on to subjoin, as an im-

(*p*) Sermons preached before the university of Oxford, &c. by Joseph White, B. D. fellow of Wadham College, and Laudian Professor of Arabic. 1784.

provement of the doctrine of the Divine Unity made by the gospel, is in reality one of its great corruptions; being nothing else than heathenish additions, brought in by learned converts from the false philosophy of the times, and grafted unhappily on the new religion which they had embraced. And the very language in which this ingenious author describes what he calls *a clearer and fuller discovery of the divine nature*, (but in truth involving it in inextricable darkness) would have been rejected by himself as unintelligible and unscriptural, if habit and religious prejudice had not rendered it sacred and familiar to him. But let us hear his own words, the continuation of what is quoted above.

—————“ and even the gospel, though it
 “ unfolds new scenes to our astonished view, and
 “ presents us with a clearer and fuller discovery of
 “ the divine nature, by revealing to us the myste-
 “ rious doctrine of the existence of three Persons
 “ in the Godhead; yet it still maintains, and pre-
 “ serves inviolate, the Unity of the supreme
 “ Being.”

“ *The existence of Three Persons in the Godhead!*”
 Where in the Bible is this said; or where is it to be learned? Certainly not from Moses or the prophets, from Christ or his apostles; but principally from that *creed* of an unknown author, falsely ascribed to Athanasius; which Archbishop Tillotson, a century past, *wished the Church of England were well rid of*; whose Reformation, one of his pious and upright (*n*) successors, a few years ago,

(n) See Archbishop Herring's approbation of Dr. Clarke's Reformed Common Prayer Book, in a letter to Dr. Jortin, in the year 1753. New Review by Mr. Maty, Vol. I. p. 271.

ardently

ardently wished to be carried further, and made conformable to the Scripture-model, with regard to the unity of the first cause of all things, and single object of worship therein recommended. Throughout the sacred code, from the beginning to the end, the one, supreme, almighty Being, speaks of himself, and is spoken of by his prophets, and by holy men his servants, as *one single Person*, as clearly as I that now write this, am *one single person*. Jesus, in most express terms, declares *the Person of the Father*, as distinguished from himself, (John xvii. 3.) to be *the only true God*. All the texts of Scripture, which from the sense, the sound, or the appearance of them, Mr. Robinson has with great diligence gleaned and ranged in order, as furnishing evidence of Christ's being the supreme God, have been considered, and shewn not to prove him to be any thing above the condition of a creature. As to the Holy Spirit, supposed to be a Third Divine Person, distinct from the Father: this notion is now very generally (*p*) abandoned by all careful unprejudiced inquirers into the word of God; it being plain there, that *the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit*, is either the divine influence and power; or else, the *Spirit of God is God* himself, not a person distinct from him; (1 Cor. ii. 11.) as the spirit of a man is the man himself, and not a person distinct from him. This learned Professor, with many others, may figure to themselves *the existence of* what he calls, *Three Persons in the Godhead*; may stile these persons by distinct proper names, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; may also

(*f*) The late pious Dr. Watts, *is said* to have left out of his creed this third Person of the Trinity: which if it be fact, for I am not conversant with his works, his admirers would do well to consider.

worship

worship and invoke in prayer each of these Persons separately, and imagine all the while they worship but one God; but this will have no effect upon those, who find *no existence of any Person as God*, in the Scriptures, but the Person of the Almighty Father alone; and who feel it a thing impossible to be admitted, that three intelligent agents are numerically one intelligent agent; for that the three divine Persons, as christians commonly understand them, speak of them, and address them in prayer; are three Gods.

Near the close of his work, Mr. White gives this just encomium of the sacred writers; that, "instead of bewildering us in intricate and abstract speculations upon *Unity*, they tell us that we are *to worship the LORD our God, and him only we are to serve.*" But this ingenious writer did not consider that by this citation of Christ's words, he excludes the admission of any other Person but Jehovah, the *LORD our God*, from being God, or worshiped; and destroys, what he styles p. 81, "the sacred and mysterious doctrine of a Trinity in *Unity.*" For when Christ says of Jehovah, the *LORD our God*; that *HIM only we are to serve*: he himself, and every other person is thereby shut out from all claim of adoration and worship; and one single Person, that of Jehovah, the Father only, pronounced to be the object of worship.

May we not then hence conclude, that Mahomet had just sentiments of the Unity of God; and that whatever false and impure doctrines be adopted; yet in worshiping and calling upon all to worship the God of Moses, and of Christ, he was a worshiper of the one true God.

SECTION X.

Whether numberless passages of Scripture have no sense, or a very absurd one, if Jesus Christ be a mere man.

THE next head of our author's work, is thus expressed. "Consider what numberless passages of Scripture have no sense, or a very absurd one, if Jesus Christ be a mere man." He then thus proceeds to give a few instances.

"Jesus Christ was (q) made of the seed of David according to the flesh. Rom. i. 3. What a strange expression! It might as well be said, Paul was made of the seed of Benjamin according to the flesh. What would such a saying mean?"

Our author is very unlucky at his first setting out; since the very passage he produces, is a direct assertion of the apostle's, that Jesus Christ was a mortal man. For that is intended by the phrase, "being made of the seed of David according to the flesh." This will appear from attending to the

(q) *made of the seed of David*] It should be *born*, not *made*: as it ought also to be rendered, Gal. iv. 4. *born of a woman*, &c. Grotius well says, *cepit existere*; he then began to exist, having had no existence before: for that is the meaning of *being born*. And when christians are at liberty from ancient inveterate prejudice to make use of their understandings, and interpret the Scripture-language when applied to Christ, as they do when applied to themselves, and according to the same rules of sound sense and just criticism, by which they investigate the meaning of words in other ancient writings, they will come to a better agreement on these points. Raphelius has a good note here upon the groundless fancy of some of the fathers, and others since maintaining, that it ought to be read *made* and not *born*, to signify that Christ was not born after the ordinary manner of men; which he well observes, if it were not elsewhere declared, could never have been proved hence.

meaning

meaning of it in other parts of the sacred writings, especially those of Paul.

Acts ii. 30. *That of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh (s), he would raise up Christ; i. e. of the fruit of his mortal body; one of his lineal descendants.*

Rom. ix. 4. *My kinsmen according to the flesh; i. e. in this mortal state.*

— — 5. *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, rather, according to the flesh, το κατὰ σαρκα, Christ came: i. e. from whom Christ, in his mortal state, descended.*

2 Cor. v. 16. *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after (κατὰ σαρκα, according to) the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. i. e. Being now wholly devoted to Christ in the service of the gospel, he would know no man after the flesh, i. e. would not be swayed by any mortal connections: nay, had he known Christ in his mortal state, or been of his near kindred, he would not value himself for it: as it was not a thing that Christ regarded at all, or estimated characters by it.*

Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. *Servants, be obedient to your masters according to the flesh: i. e. your masters in this mortal state.*

Heb. v. 7. *Who (i. e. Christ) in the days of his flesh, (i. e. in the time of his mortal life) when*

(s) *Flesh* signifies man as mortal. Isaiah xl. 5, 6. Acts ii. 17. Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. But though κατὰ σαρκα, according to the flesh, generally signifies man as in this mortal state; it sometimes is used for earthly privileges, worldly appearances, John viii. 15. 2 Cor. x. 13: at other times, the following carnal appetites, Rom. iii. 4, 5, 6. &c. 2 Cor. x. 3: both of them by an easy derivation from the original meaning of the word.

he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears (alluding to his agony in the garden) was heard, i. e. had assistance granted him.

The true sense then of this passage, whatever our author would fix upon it, is; that Christ was a mere man, a mortal creature. And there would have been nothing absurd, if our apostle, in speaking of himself, had adopted the same language which he uses concerning his divine master; that he (*Paul*) was made or born of the seed of Benjamin according to the flesh. And the answer to a question put here, "what would such a saying mean?" is; it means and demonstrates, that in the account and estimate of Paul, Jesus Christ was a (*t*) human creature as well as himself.

But then, lest any should go away with the notion, that by his being a mortal, or mere man, as our author words it, was to be understood, that he was in no respect above the ordinary rate of men; the apostle, it well deserves to be observed, goes on to add; that he was also, ver. 4. declared (or demonstrated) to be the Son of God (i. e. (*u*) the Christ, the Messiah) with power according to the spirit of holiness (or the holy spirit), by the resurrection from the dead.

What now does Paul tell these christians at Rome, to whom he is writing, in these four first

(*t*) It is the stile in which our Lord speaks of himself, in his present exalted state in heaven; *I am Jesus of Nazareth*, Acts xxii. 8: as though he had said; *I am he who was once a mortal man.*

(*u*) *The Son of God* was a phrase in common use among the Jews, like *the son of David*, to signify their great expected prophet, the Messiah, the Christ. This is acknowledged by writers otherwise of different sentiments concerning our Lord's person.

verses of his letter to them? He says then, in other words; "That being a servant of Jesus Christ, and having had a divine extraordinary call to preach the gospel, and an appointment to be the apostle of the gentiles, he took the opportunity of speaking to them concerning Jesus Christ, their common lord and master: who, a few years before only had been brought into life, a mortal man, of David's family, as had been foretold by their Hebrew prophets. But that he was to be regarded in a much higher light by them; as having been, in a most express manner, *ορισθευτος*, *most decisively declared* to be *the Son of God*, the Messiah, their great promised prophet, *with power according to the holy spirit*, i. e. the attestations of a divine most extraordinary power, manifested at his baptism, which accompanied him during his public ministry, and was most particularly exerted in his resurrection from the dead, which wiped away all the ignominy of his last sufferings and death.

I have not dwelled so much on this passage for the sake of obviating our author's trivial conclusions from it; but because it exhibits a clear account of the person and true character of Jesus Christ, as they appeared to the apostle.

His next instance is thus put: *Great is the mystery of godliness*, "God was manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. According to the principle which we oppose, St. Paul says, *Great is the mystery of godliness*: What? God made a very wise man. "A great mystery indeed!"

It has been seen above, p. 13, 14. how this passage of the apostle is to be *read*, and understood; and that he is far from intending therein to describe Jesus Christ as any other than a human being, highly favoured of almighty God.
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The apostle most probably wrote ; (20) WHICH *was manifest in the flesh* : but if the *reading* be ; *God was manifest in the flesh* ; and it be interpreted, as it then must be, of the almighty Being making known himself to mankind, by investing a *mortal* man, Jesus of Nazareth, with extraordinary gifts of wisdom and power, to declare his will and goodness, and to bring the whole human species to virtue and an immortal existence : I do not see any thing herein to be undervalued, or that is unequal to the grandeur of the preface, with which it is introduced ; *viz. Great is the mystery of godliness.* For it contains all that is most glorious and sublime, and worthy the most perfect Being ; and is not to be disparaged by our author's diminutive account of it : *God made a very wise man.*

He proceeds. “ *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* John xiv. 19. That is, He, “ that hath seen me, hath heard my doctrine.”

It is difficult to discover, why this passage is introduced by our author, unless he would have it inferred from the literal construction of it, that Christ is the supreme Father of all, or a person equal to him. But it might in the same way be

(20) Dr. Mill remarks, that none of the catholic fathers, that he knew of, who professedly collected all the texts of Scripture in proof of Christ's divinity, ever alleged this text, before the year 380 ; *Gregory Nyssen* first of all, &c. And Dr. Clarke notes : “ It must not be judged from the *present* “ copies of the text in *Nyssen* and others, but from the “ manner of their *commenting* upon the place, how the text “ was read in *their* days. In the days of *Julian*, when that “ emperor asserted, that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, “ nor Paul, ever ventured to stile Christ, God ; it is plain, “ from *Cybil's* answer to this assertion of *Julian*, that even “ at that time, the word, *Θεός*, *God*, was not found in this “ text.” Script. Doctr. p. 89.

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proved,

proved, not only that Christ, but that his apostles, were equal to the Father; from Christ saying to them, Matth. x. 40. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.*

The true state of the case is; that *seeing the Father* here, the same with *knowing him*, ver. 7. signifies, the being acquainted with his will and gracious designs in the gospel. We find the passage thus expounded John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time; the beloved Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared, or rather hath made him known; i. e. "No other person hath ever been admitted to the knowledge of the designs of God for the salvation of mankind, but the well-beloved son, who is in his bosom, i. e. is intimately intrusted by him."* As this then is the true meaning of the language here used; it by no means suits our author's particular system, or comes up to the high notions of Christ being the supreme God, into which it has led him.

Our author then adds; "O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. John xvii. 5. According to the notion which we oppose, our Saviour means; glorify me with the glory which was decreed for me before the world was. As well might Paul have said, when he was shipwrecked; save us on boards and on broken pieces of the ship, with that safety which we had with thee before the world was."

Whoever considers our Saviour's situation at the time of his offering this prayer to Almighty God, and what he afterwards mentions concerning this *glory* that he here prays for, viz. that he had promised it to his disciples, and that they were to share with him in it; will find, that it was not any dignity,

dignity, preeminence, or felicity, which he had possessed in a supposed former state, and to which he desired to be restored; but that what he besought of God, was the success of the gospel, in promoting the virtue and happiness of mankind; which lay near his heart, and would now naturally be the subject of his prayer; of which he had been the prime instrument, and was soon to resign his office to his disciples. And he speaks of it with pleasure and confidence, as a thing which he *had with the Father before the world was*, i. e. had designed for him: because there had been various prophecies given by the Almighty concerning it, from which he was as fully assured of it, as if it were actually in his possession. It is the very language which is used concerning him, when it is said, that he was (Rev. xiii. 8.) *the lamb slain before the foundation of the world*—that is, so designed to be by that Being, known unto whom are all his works from the beginning: though his violent death actually took place, not 1800 years since. It is the very language which he himself uses in this prayer concerning his disciples, where he says, ver. 22. *And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them.* Where, let it be observed, how God had given it him: not *actually* bestowed it; for then he would not have prayed for it, as it would have been a vain thing, to have asked for what he had already, and did not want: but God had *given it him* by promise; had foreordained that he should enjoy it. And in the same way, by permission and warrant from Almighty God, he had given it to his faithful followers; i. e. had promised them the actual possession of such high glory, honour and happiness, to be successful instruments in forwarding the final salvation of men.

The case of Paul therefore put by our author, by way of ridicule of what he understood not, is too trifling to be noticed : Only it may be observed, that if Paul's preservation from shipwreck, had been of importance enough to have been foretold by Almighty God, it might have been said of him ; that *he had been saved with a safety, which he had with God before the world was.*

The last instance to be mentioned, wherein our author charges the Scripture with having no sense or a very absurd one, if Jesus Christ be a mere man, and not the supreme God, is thus stated. "*Jesus Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* Phil. ii. 6. " That is, say some ; Jesus, not being God, thought " not of the robbery of being equal with God. " Glorious humility ! A creature did not think of " ranking himself with the creator ! The humblest " effort of the wisest human mind, was only not to " equal itself with Jehovah !"

It hath been intimated above, that there is a degree of negligence in our author far from being commendable, in recurring so often to our faulty english translation of this verse, which so much misrepresents the apostle's meaning. For in exhorting the christians of Philippi, to imitate the humility of Christ Jesus, he does not say, that being in the form of God, *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God* ; but (x) that *he did not eagerly covet*

(x) There is a fine passage, in a letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne in France, written soon after the year 177, concerning their brethren who underwent the most cruel tortures for the gospel at that time ; which shews that they understood the apostle's words in the sense we have given them. Eusebius, who has preserved these valuable remains, prefaces them with saying ; " It may be worth the while to take some-
" what

covet to be like to God, i. e. to make an ostentatious use of those divine powers with which he was endowed. In this way of construction, all our author's remarks are lost. Creature as the blessed Jesus was, of the human race, it was a glorious humility in him, in the use of such a godlike power as he was intrusted with, not to be elated by that which above all other things is the most dangerous snare to the human mind; to be carried out by it to seek his own ease, or honour from men: but in the midst of the most unwearied labours, and exertions to do them the greatest acts of kindness, in respect of their present and future life, to shun the praise of it, and to be the more humbled thereby before God; generally injoining them to pay their thanks to HIM, for those stupendous acts of divine goodness which himself did for them; and often taking occasion to dis-

“ what more from that Epistle, wherein the meekness and
 “ humanity of the forementioned martyrs is described in
 “ these words. ‘ Who also were so far followers and imita-
 “ tors of Christ, *who being in the form of God did not eagerly*
 “ *covet to be, or to appear like God*: that though they were
 “ in so great glory, having suffered as martyrs, not once
 “ only, or twice, but often: although they had been tossed
 “ by wild beasts, and then committed again to prison: al-
 “ though they had the marks of fire, and scars and wounds
 “ all over them: they did not declare themselves to be mar-
 “ tyrs, nor allow us to call them by that name. But if at
 “ any time any one of us, either in a letter, or in discourse,
 “ termed them martyrs, they reproved us sharply. But
 “ they readily ascribed the honour of martyrdom to Christ,
 “ *the faithful and true witness, and the first-begotten from the*
 “ *dead, and the prince of the life of God.*” See Lardner’s
 Testimonies, Vol. ii. p. 209, 210. It is well observed, that
 the parallel here drawn between Christ and these martyrs,
 shews undeniably in what sense the phrase in St. Paul to the
 Philippians was understood: and that they knew how to dis-
 tinguish between God and his most faithful witness, and
 martyr, Jesus.

claim all merit in himself, and to ascribe every thing to the Father; i. e. to the God that made him, and gave him all his powers.

After this, our author produces Rev. v. 13. but it will be better to cite the whole passage to which it belongs, ver. 11, 12, 13. *And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice: *Worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying; blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever and ever.**

This passage is introduced, to shew that Mr. Lindsey in his Apology argues inconclusively; where he would shew, that the worship in this visionary representation ascribed to Christ, was such as belonged to a creature, and not to God. With this charge we have nothing to do. But it may be observed, that this ascription of honour to Christ in the same terms as to God, no more implies that Christ is God, and the object of religious worship, than the worship spoken of in similar terms, as paid by the Israelites to David (1 Chron. xxix. 20.) and Jehovah, implied David to be Jehovah, God of Israel. In both cases the degree of honour or worship appropriate to each, was tendered; to David, what was due to a king set over them by Almighty God; to Christ, what was due to *the lamb slain*, as he is expressly stiled; i. e. to a mortal creature, highly exalted for his glorious sufferings

sufferings in the cause of truth and virtue, and of God.

The reader must judge, whether Mr. Lindsey is mistaken in what is farther alleged by our author; or whether he be not deceived himself, in taking advantage of the ambiguous meaning of the term *worship*: which, both in Scripture, and in common discourse, is indifferently applied to the respect paid to creatures, as well as the supreme Being; and therefore it cannot be concluded that authors mean the worship appropriated to God, when they speak of paying worship to Christ; although it would become them to be more guarded in their use of such terms; and Mr. Lindsey is not sufficiently so, in calling Stephen's request to Christ, a *prayer*, (though it be a word sometimes used of petitions which mortals make to each other;) of which our author fails not to avail himself, p. 78.

It would be wrong perhaps to pass by unnoticed an extraordinary conclusion, which our author makes soon after, p. 59, from the narrative of St. Paul's conversion, in *The Acts*.

In the first account of it, given by the sacred historian; Ananias, who was the instrument employed, says; (Acts ix. 17.) *Brother Saul, the Lord, (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest,) hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the holy spirit.* But St. Paul, in his own recital, Acts xxii. 14. relates, that Ananias said; *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.* And from *Jesus* being said in one place to have commissioned Ananias, and *the God* of their fathers in another, our author says, that

Ananias declares Jesus to be the God of their fathers.

But Mr. Robinson did not enough consider, what we have often had occasion to remind him of, that nothing is more common than to say; that what a person orders to be done by another, he does himself. So the prophet said to David, 2 Sam. xii. 9. *Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword.* And Paul here might say, that Ananias had his commission from the God of their fathers to appoint himself to the office of preaching the gospel, very consistently with Ananias having said that Jesus Christ had sent him to do it; because Christ always acting under orders from God, whatever he did, Almighty God might very properly be said to do also. For it is too notorious to give any formal proof of it; that in his highest character, as the Messiah, as a divine extraordinary prophet and messenger, the blessed Jesus never assumed any thing to himself, but uniformly declared that he was the messenger of the Father, *sent* by him; that he delivered nothing but what he had *heard of*, and *seen with him*; i. e. had been taught by him. Even after his resurrection, speaking to his disciples of the extraordinary support that would be vouchsafed to them in preaching the gospel throughout the world, he tells them, *All power is GIVEN unto me in heaven and in earth*; i. e. that the divine extraordinary assistance would be supplied, as it was wanted by his disciples, in their great work, from the heavenly Father, and Giver of all things to himself and to all. And the preface to the last book of the christian Scriptures, opens thus, “The Revelation of *Jesus Christ*, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass.” Which declaration being made at the beginning, it necessarily follows, that whatever authority
Christ

Christ assumes afterward; whatever knowlege he lays claim to; he must be considered as having received it from Almighty God, and holding it under him. And therefore when he says, Rev. ii. 23. *I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give to every one of you according to his works:* he only speaks of that high discernment and ability, which God had bestowed upon him, upon that occasion.

After a brief recapitulation of the former part of his work, a sample whereof hath been exhibited above p. 79, our author spends the next ten pages, in considering their opinion, who hold Christ, before he was born at Bethlehem, to have been a created, subordinate spirit, by whom God made the world. We have nothing to say to this doctrine; but would remark this only: that our Saviour Christ himself seems to have been totally ignorant of it, as well as of his having been the supreme God, as our author would have him to be; never requiring any regards to be paid to him on such accounts, or grounding any obligation upon any thing that he was before he was born: which plainly speaks as if he himself was not conscious of having lived in any former state.

We are next presented with a *Primitive christian*, raised up for the purpose, to be catechized upon the great point of Jesus Christ being the supreme God. One would unquestionably be glad to hear the genuine sentiments of a disciple of the apostles, directly and expressly, upon a matter of such importance. But unfortunately here, as before when he exhibited John the Baptist, it is none other than our author himself under a mask, who personates a primitive christian, the better to enforce his own peculiar notions; for he is very fertile in such ingenious devices to allure his readers. One or two specimens of his method
of

of catechizing, will satisfy any one, that this is the real fact.

“ Q. Who is Jesus Christ? A. *Jesus Christ is a man.* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *Jesus Christ is God.* John i. 1.”

One wonders how any one can be so presuming, as to put his own words instead of the apostle's, and cite them as the apostle's (y). The apostle says, *The Word was God*; and though it is Mr. Robinson's private opinion, that the term *Word* signifies Jesus Christ, he should not have substituted a different term from the apostle's to countenance his own notions, and put, *Christ is God*, instead of *The Word was God*. The proposition however is intirely his own. For we have seen above that the genuine words and right construction of them, do not favour any such extravagant hypothesis. A true primitive christian would have replied to him; *Jesus Christ was a man, and not God*; and would perhaps have quoted that assertion of Paul's; *To us, there is but ONE God, the Father.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 6.

“ Q. Do christians worship Jesus Christ? A. “ We do not worship the man Jesus: but we do “ worship the God who dwells in the man; for *in “ him dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily.* “ Col. ii. 9. and *through him we have access by “ one spirit unto the Father.* Eph. ii. 18.”

A primitive christian would not have understood or endured these metaphysical subtilties, and division of Christ into two parts, one of which was to be worshiped, and the other not: but would have answered downright; “ We worship not Jesus Christ, nor any part of him, but the LORD our

(y) What impenetrable confusion should we have had in the sacred writings, if those who transcribed, or quoted from them in ancient times, had been as bold, or as careless and negligent as our author!

· God

God only ;” and would moreover have added, that the passage cited by St. Paul, Col. ii. 9. was nothing to the purpose : as we also have shewn above, p. 44, 45

Our author proceeds with his catechumen. “ Q. Do christians think the Father is the godhead of Jesus Christ ?” *I answer here* ; A primitive christian would have been in much astonishment at such a strange unintelligible question ; and still more, if possible, at such a misconstruction and misrepresentation of St. Paul’s words, which our author hesitates not to put in his mouth, viz. “ A. No. “ We think *Jesus being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* Phil. ii. 5, 6.” Here again, this generally acknowledged false rendering of the apostle’s words is brought in, to place the *bumble* Jesus (for his humility is the very point the apostle is proving,) upon an equality with the supreme God, and Father of all.

The supposed catechism goes on ; “ Q. Do not christians then worship two Gods ?” A. We abhor the thought. We say with the Jews ; *The Lord our God is one Lord ; for there is one God, and there is none other but he.* Mark xii. 29. 32.”

A primitive christian would certainly have made such an answer ; but it is not easy to discover with what truth and consistency Mr. Robinson can do it, who is continually declaring, p. 5. “ I affirm, “ because I believe, that Jesus Christ is TRULY “ AND PROPE LY GOD. P. 9. The writers of the “ New Testament meant to inform their readers, “ that JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY AND PROPERLY “ GOD.” In another place, p. 43. through ignorance of the prophetic language concerning Christ and the gospel, as has been shewn above, he scruples not to introduce John the Baptist saying ; “ If there be therefore any fixed meaning in
“ words,

“ words, any credit to be given to Jesus, JESUS “ IS JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL.” But Jesus, in his own words, in his prayer to the Father, for himself and his followers, most expressly describes that benevolent Parent of himself and of all beings, to be the *only true God*; John xvii. 1. 3. O FATHER!—*this is life eternal, to know THEE, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; or, me, to be thy messenger and servant!* Now since Jesus thus declares his Father, and the Father of all mankind, to be *the only true God*; and our author, contrary to this declaration, will make Jesus himself to be *truly and properly God*, to be *Jehovah, God of Israel*, who can absolve him from the mistake of introducing two Gods? He may satisfy himself, as I doubt not but he does, and perplex and persuade others by words without meaning, which we find him making use of in one place, p. 5. “ that God is one undivided essence; “ that the three persons in the deity may be distinguished, but cannot be divided;” and the like. But those who will not renounce the use of their own understandings for *school-moonshine*, as one well terms these metaphysical distinctions in the Deity; and who will allow themselves to follow the first, the plainest, and most incontrovertible principles of common sense and common arithmetic, will acknowledge; that *one, and one, make two*; that *one God*, the Father, and *another God*, Jesus Christ, do certainly count *two Gods*.

Sensible, I will not say, of his own self-contradiction, but of the inexplicable difficulties under which his doctrine laboured, our author takes refuge in one of the methods (z) which ingenious christians

(z) The other method of reconciling contradictions, and proving Christ to be the supreme God, in spite of his own positive

christians have invented, of silencing all doubts and reconciling contradictions of Jesus Christ being God, and the Father also being God, and yet that they are but one God; namely, that it is *a mystery*, i. e. a secret, which is the meaning of the word *mystery*; a thing hidden from mortals, not to be penetrated into by any created understanding, but reserved by the Almighty for himself. We readily allow, who can be ignorant? that there are mysteries, things unsearchable by us, relating to the Deity, his nature, perfections, and administration of the great universe, and of this small spot of

positive and peremptory declarations to the contrary, is, by giving him two natures, and making him consist as it were of two persons: so that if at any time he says, as he does say, that he was a creature of limited faculties; that comprehensive as the extraordinary knowledge was, which God had given him to fit him for his great office, yet there were some things that he was not intrusted with, and of which he was ignorant, Mark xiii. 32. Acts i. 7. it is straightway replied, that these degrading creature-like things are spoken by him of his human, not of his divine nature: so that though he says *he did not know the day of judgment*, they will contradict him, and tell him he did know it; not enough considering, that by such comments of their own; they make him who was the truth itself, a dissimbler, and shut out all light concerning his real person and true character, from entering into their minds.

Did we not know the power of prejudice on persons of the best understandings, we should not be able to conceive it possible that a very late and justly admired author should attempt to build this doctrine of two natures in Christ, on so very weak a foundation, as the following extract exhibits. "The mysterious union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, was plainly shadowed out, and might have been fairly inferred from these very prophecies; which now pathetically predicted the meanness, the sufferings, and the ignominious death of the Messiah; and now with all the warmth and boldness of eastern poetry, painted the temporal grandeur, the victories, and the eternity of his kingdom." White's Bampton-Lecture Sermons, p. 108.

our's, a part of it. But our concern and inquiry here, is, not about the secrets of the divine nature and providence, but about those things which God has condescended to *reveal* to us concerning himself by his prophets, and particularly by Jesus Christ. And we do not find them suggesting, that there is any thing difficult or mysterious in the divine unity. But they appear to consider, and we are left by them to consider, God as one person, as we, each of us, consider ourselves (*a*) as one person; and they give us not the least ground to suppose God to consist of two, three, or more persons, any more than we are to consider ourselves as made up of two or more persons. This simple idea of God, that he is one single person, literally pervades every page of the sacred volumes; and there is no mystery that is told us to be in it, or that is to be found in it. Our author however, after having receded so far from the true Scripture-doctrine concerning God and Christ, might well proceed to put the following question to *his* primitive christian.

Q. Is not this a little mysterious?

A. *The acknowledgement of the deity, both of the Father, and of Christ, is a mystery, in which are treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

I would not be uncandid: but I cannot but say, that no books will bear to be so treated, as our author here and elsewhere treats the Scriptures: their meaning will be misrepresented, and error be everlasting. Careless readers, of which the number is too great, will pass all over, without consulting the original, while multitudes are unable

(*a*) “How can we form any notion of the unity of the Supreme Being, but from that unity of which we ourselves are conscious.” *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. Gray*, p. 266.

to consult it, and will all of them implicitly believe, what such careless writers as Mr. Robinson, impose upon them as the truth. For where, in the original Greek, does he find the word, *deity*, mentioned, which he here foists in? and marks with the same Italic characters as the rest which are really the apostle's; and thereby deceives the reader, as if Paul spoke of the *deity* of Christ as well as of that of the Father; for which there is not any the least ground whatsoever.

The true state of the matter is this. The apostle is here (*b*) mentioning his earnest desires and endeavours, that the gentile christians of Colosse and Laodicea, might be firmly united in mutual love, and in the pursuit of the truth he preached, so as to attain the fullest assurance of it; *to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God even the Father, Θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ, καὶ τὸ χριστὸν, and of Christ.* The very form and construction of the words, *exclude, as might well be supposed, all deity from Christ, and appropriate it to the Father.* And the *mystery* here intended, (*c*) is no mystery concerning the
nature

(*b*) The passage at length is; *I am very desirous that ye should know, what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God even the Father, (i. e. of HIM who is the Father of all,) and of Christ: In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. ii. 1, 2, 3.*

(*c*) "*The mystery of God even the Father and of Christ.*]
 " The only mystery here intended is that mentioned before
 " ch. i. 26, 27. in the belief of which our apostle throws
 " himself on all occasions so solicitous to establish the *Gen-*
 " *tiles.* Had he here meant any other than that, he would
 " have certainly told us what it was. This mystery is called
 " *the mystery of God, the Father,* as it well may be, since it
 " w2.

nature of God; but the mystery mentioned just before, i. 26, 27; the mystery or secret purpose of God, then no longer a mystery, but brought to light and discovered particularly by St. Paul; *viz.* the calling of the Gentiles, i. e. of the whole heathen world, to the hope of eternal life, to equal privileges with the Jews in that grand point, without subjection to their law.

S E C T I O N XI.

What is the source of men's erroneous opinions about the person of Christ, according to our author.

TOWARDS the close of his work, he turns himself to give some account, why wise and worthy men mistake this notion of Christ's (*supposed*) divinity, and maintain erroneous opinions about it. One or two of his reasons it may be proper to consider. The first is thus expressed, p. 73.

1. "Men mistake by not distinguishing objects of *pure* revelation, from objects of natural reason, and therefore they confound believing with reasoning.—God requires me to believe the deity of Jesus Christ. Deity is an invisible ob-

" was *hid in God*, Eph. iii. 9. and HE *made it known*, Eph. i. 9. Col. i. 27. It is also called *the mystery of Christ*, Col. iv. 3. Eph. iii. 4: nor is it strange it should be denominated from him, who is himself the subject matter of it, it being *Christ among the Gentiles, the hope of glory*, ch. i. 27; and who is the more immediate *revealer* of it, Eph. ii. 17. The apostle here joins both together, as he might very properly do: though perhaps the chief reason why he chose here to add, *and of Christ*, was, that he might the more handsomely fall into the following discourse concerning him." This is an excellent note of *Peirce* upon the place.

" ject.

“ject. I never saw, nor ever conceived an object
 “analogous to it. I cannot reason about it. I
 “believe it.”

If the doctrine of Christ being the supreme God, which our author seeks to establish, were to be found plainly legible throughout the Scriptures, as is the doctrine of the unity of the first cause and supreme Father of all; our author might have some grounds for striving thus to stop all inquiry about it, and requiring us to believe only, and not to reason upon what the Scriptures say of it. But the contrary is the fact. Mr. Robinson however says; “God requires *me* to believe the deity of Jesus Christ.” It is very well: if *he* be so persuaded, he ought to believe it. But then, added to this, he has also laid before the public a large selection and heap of texts of Scripture, which he asserts to afford such plain proof of Christ being Jehovah the supreme God, that the sacred writers must have been weak men or worse, if they did not intend to teach that doctrine concerning Christ. As *our* faith however must be founded on the evidence of Scripture as it appears to us, and not on Mr. Robinson’s authority, I have therefore been at the great pains of weighing his texts of Scripture, one by one, in an even balance, as far as I have been able, and have not found one of them to be of the least validity to prove Christ to be God. It appears to me, and I hope it has appeared to the reader, that Almighty God requires no belief of any deity but his own: and so far from requiring us to believe the *deity* of Jesus Christ, he has most strictly forbidden us (*d*)
 to

(*d*) *Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.* Exod. xx. 3.
 The second article of faith of the modern Jews, is an excellent illustration of this first commandment of Jehovah. *I*
 N believe.

to acknowledge any deity but his own. And therefore we are constrained to conclude, that our author has imposed upon himself in this matter, and imposes upon others, by such a vain imagination, and multiplication of the Deity. Our author goes on;

ii. " Men mistake by subjecting God to laws, which actually prevail in some cases; but which, we dare not say, prevail in all. The rev. Mr. Lindsey says, Christ's character as mediator is **UTTERLY INCOMPATIBLE** with the practice of making him the object of religious worship. He **CANNOT** be God, and the minister of God. Is Mr. Lindsey sure of this? Were we to grant, that nothing like this passeth among men, would it certainly follow, that nothing like this passeth in heaven? The possible world is a region unexplored, and it is rash to say, God cannot be this, he cannot do that. St. Paul writes, as if he thought God could do this."

It does not appear that Mr. Lindsey asserts any thing that is wrong; or in an improper manner. For though our author makes him to say, that God *cannot* be this, *cannot* do that; he only says, that *Christ cannot* be both God and the servant of God. It would be absurd to attempt the proof of such a proposition: and therefore Mr. Robinson lets that alone. But he supposes he can bring St. Paul to vouch for it. It appears plainly however that he is deceived in the first examples he produces, by trusting to our english translation, and neither consulting the context nor the original. The first passage he cites, is thus given by him; *God hath ac-*

believe, with a firm and perfect faith, that God is one; there is no unity like his: he alone hath been, is, and shall be eternally, our God. Tephilloth, or the Prayers of the Synagogues, &c. London. Printed by Tooke.

cepted

cepted us in the beloved: but in St. Paul it is; *ΕΝ Τῃ ΕΧΑΡΙΤΩΣΕΩ ΗΜΑΣ ΕΝ Τῷ ΗΓΑΠΗΜΕΝῳ*, with which (God) hath favoured us by his beloved Son. Eph. i. 3. 6. The second is in the words of our translators; *we labour to be accepted of Christ*: the apostle's words are, *φιλοτιμηθεθα, — εὐαρεσει αὐτῷ εἶναι*, *we labour to be approved of, or, acceptable to him, i. e. to Christ*; (1 Cor. v. 9, 10.) viz. at the future day of judgment; as he proceeds to mention. Now what is there in these texts to prove Christ to be any thing but the highly favoured son, or servant, or delegate of God, and by no means God himself? I take no note of Eph. v. 27, as unworthy of regard. But his last instance is not to be so lightly passed over. I shall give the apostle's words as he prints them, and as they are in our common english translation, in a column opposite.

The translators of the
Bible.

Mr. Robinson.

— *Looking for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people.*

THE GREAT GOD, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, GAVE HIMSELF for us, THAT HE MIGHT redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF a peculiar people.

Remark 1. The reader will observe here, that in our common translation, as in the original, *the Great God and our Saviour Christ*, are represented as two distinct Persons: but as Mr. Robinson renders it, *Jesus Christ is the Great God himself* (d).

2. Our

(d) He might have alleged, that some of the fathers took the apostle's words in the way he does; which the original may bear, as there is an ambiguity in it: though the other be the more natural sense, and best agreeing with the con-

2. Our translation, rightly and properly holds forth, that it was *Jesus Christ*, who gave himself for us, &c: but our author puts, THE GREAT GOD, &c. GAVE HIMSELF for us, THAT HE MIGHT PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF, &c.; all this in capitals to catch the eye, as if St. Paul taught, that it was GOD who gave himself for us, i. e. gave himself to die, for that is the meaning of the phrase: (See John iii. 16.) thus making the eternal God subject to death. And the design of all this contrivance, is to bring in the apostle a favourer of his own strange imagination, that Jesus Christ was both the supreme God, and his minister or servant.

3. It was surely a justice due to his readers, to have made them acquainted with such a signal alteration he makes in our english version, and with his

text, and the other parts of Scripture, and of St. Paul's writings. This point, and the whole passage, has been fully considered by Dr. Clarke; to whom I would refer, but shall transcribe part of what he advances. "These words, *the glorious appearing* (or, *the appearing of the glory*) of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, (as our english translators rightly render the text,) very naturally signify, *the appearing of the Great God By our Saviour Jesus Christ*; according to the analogy of those other Scripture-expressions, that *God shall judge the world by Jesus Christ*, and that Christ shall *come in the glory of his Father*, that is, *the glory of his Father shall appear invested in him*. Besides; the words, *το μεγαλε Θεου*, *the great God*, being in the *Old Testament* the character of the *Father*; Deut. x. 17. 2 Sam. vii. 22. 2 Chr. ii. 5. Nehem. ix. 32. Job xxxvi. 26. Ps. lxxxvi. 10. Jer. xxxii. 18; and in the *New Testament* never used of *Christ*, but of the *Father* only, Rev. xix. 17; 'tis therefore very reasonable that they should here also be so understood. Especially considering the *general stile* of St. Paul: Who, having laid it down as a *foundation*, 1 Cor. viii. 6. that *to us there is but One God, the Father; and one LORD. Jesus Christ*: and Eph. iv. 5, 6. *one LORD, one GOD, and Father of all*, does constantly and uniformly keep to this *same expression*, through his whole writings, &c." Reply to Mr. Dodson, &c. p. 85, &c.

reasons

reasons for it; that they might use their own judgment on the point. Whereas, as the passage now stands, the generality of readers, high and low, who are most of them too lazy to turn to the Scriptures themselves, will be led into and confirmed in superstitious demeaning notions of God; while others, of a different cast, will have their prejudices increased against the Bible, for patronizing such absurd, incredible things.

iii. Dexterity in criticism, p. 75. is with our author, another source of men's not believing the Divinity of Jesus Christ. And in support of this, he brings in again the case of Stephen, on which he had laboured through ten pages before; imagining the address made by that holy man to Christ, in his peculiar circumstances, under the impression of a heavenly vision, in which Christ had been exhibited to him in glory; to be nevertheless a precedent for all christians every where to pray to Christ, and to consider him as the supreme God. But this subject has been canvassed above, p. 86, &c. to which I would refer.

He goes on afterwards, p. 85. to inveigh against "the critical dissection of texts by learned men, critical anatomists," as he calls them; mentioning Dr. Clarke by name, as one of them; and indulging himself in a way, in which he is not much to be commended. "I have read Dr. Clarke, says he, and a hundred doctors more; and I have read also a saying of one, who although he was no graduate, was greater than them all. He says; Call no man master upon earth; for one is your master, even Christ. *Math. xxii.*" It would not however have been amiss for him, if he had profited by the example of that admirable critic, Dr. Clarke, and most ingenuous writer, instead of endeavouring thus to pour contempt

upon his honoured name. Whether the want of some skill in criticism, be not one, among many causes, of our author's manifest ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures, the reader will judge from the examination that has been now made of all the passages cited by him. In his notes we meet with several instances of his deficiency in this respect: one of which I shall exhibit.

Our Lord, after his resurrection, being about to take a final leave of his apostles, spoke to them; (Math. xxviii. 18, 19.) *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, &c.* To come at the true meaning of this declaration, it is proper to observe, though it has been touched upon before; that Christ the speaker; the persons, his chosen disciples, to whom he addresses himself; the time of his speaking, and all other circumstances, plainly lead us to conclude, that he here refers only to that divine extraordinary power, which he had not long before promised his disciples on the part of Almighty God, and which was now soon to be conferred upon them, to enable them to preach the gospel with success throughout the world. And although he says; *ALL power is given unto me*; such general expressions, in all writings, are, in all fair construction, to be limited and interpreted by the occasion, the situation and circumstances of the Speaker, &c. Our author however, takes the word *ALL* in its utmost latitude, to signify *infinite power*; and argues upon his own groundless supposition; boldly averring, p. 104, "When it is objected to us, *All power is given to Jesus, therefore he is not God.* We reply, *All power is given to Jesus, therefore he is God,*" and so on. To prove afterwards, that the term, to *give*, does not imply any superiority in the giver, or dependence

dence of the receiver in that respect, he proceeds to say; "The word *give* is equivocal. Our opponents take it for the *conferring* of a right; we take it for the *acknowledgement* of a right. The word *δίδωμι* is very vague; and wo be to the system that rests on its precise etymology. What a fine inference is this! Magistrates give glory and strength and worship unto Jehovah; therefore Jehovah is not God; at most he is only a subordinate God; for he derives glory from magistrates. All power is given to me, said our Redeemer; that is, all heaven allow what the Jews deny, that I am Lord of all. The Father hath given me power over all flesh; that is, the Father allows and approves of my right as God, and he has constituted the display of it in me, Jesus, the man." To such idle talk, and unlearned sophistry, no reply can be made. One is only concerned that a person with some talents, through hasty prejudice, and giving a loose to his imagination, should so lamentably impose upon himself on so serious a subject, as he appears to have done here, and throughout his whole work.

S E C T I O N XII.

Concluding Observations.

IT is very remarkable, that our author, who selects such a number of passages of Scripture, to prove Jesus Christ to be the most high God, takes no notice of those many others, which in direct terms, exclude Christ and every other person, from all pretensions to be the Deity, to belong to it, or to be any part of it, in any other way than is competent to any creature, to whom God may be pleased to communicate high divine powers.

One or two of these passages I would mention ; and shall begin with one before intimated.

1. The personal pronouns, *I, me, thou, thee, he, him*, with which the prophets speak of or to Jehovah, the most high God, and which he uses concerning himself, demonstrate the single Person of Jehovah who is so spoken of, or who so speaks of himself to be God alone, and no Person else whatsoever. Almost every page of Scripture proclaims this truth. But to make one exhibition of it, I shall take some verses of the xlvith chapter of Isaiah, so happily illustrated by Bishop Lowth, containing a prediction of Cyrus king of Persia, before he was born, by name, and of his conquests, particularly the taking of Babylon.

Thus saith JEHOVAH to his anointed ;
 To Cyrus, whom I hold fast by the right hand :
 That I may subdue nations before him ;
 And ungird the loins of kings :
 That I may open before him the valves ;
 And the gates shall not be shut.
 I will go before thee ;
 And make the mountains level :
 The valves of brass will I break in funder ;
 And the bars of iron will I hew down.
 And I will give unto thee the treasures of darkness ;
 And the stores deep hidden in secret places :
 That thou mayest know that I am JEHOVAH ;
 He that calleth thee by thy name, the GOD of
 Israel.

I am JEHOVAH, and none else ;
 Beside me there is no God :
 I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me.
 That they may know, from the rising of the sun,
 And from the west, that there is none beside Me :
 I am JEHOVAH, and none else ;

Forming

Forming light, and creating darkness ;

Making peace and creating evil ;

I JEHOVAH am the author of all these things.

It follows afterwards, ver 18.

For thus saith JEHOVAH,

Who created the heavens ; HE is God :

Who formed the earth and made it ; He hath established it :

He created it not in vain ; for he formed it to be inhabited ;

I am JEHOVAH, and none besides :

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth ;

I have not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain :

I am JEHOVAH, who speak truth, who give direct answers.

Assemble yourselves together, and come ;

Gather yourselves together, ye that are escaped from among the nations.

They know nothing, that carry about the wood, which they have carved ;

That address themselves in prayer to a god, which cannot save.

Publish it abroad, and bring them near ; and let them consult together :

Who hath made this known long before, hath declared it from the first ?

Is it not I JEHOVAH, than whom there is no other God ?

A God, that uttereth truth and granteth salvation ; there is none beside me ?

Look unto me and be saved, o all ye remote people of the earth ;

For I am God, and there is none else.

Remark 1. The weight of the language here used is so strong ; I am JEHOVAH, and none else, beside

beside ME there is no God: there is none besides ME. JEHOVAH, who created the heavens, HE is God. Is it not JEHOVAH, than whom there is no other God? there is none beside ME: This language, I say, is so express, distinct, and forcible, as to resist and forbid every thought and idea of Jesus Christ, or any other person, being Jehovah, or God. We are sure of nothing, if we are not sure of this.

2. Jesus Christ, with every other person whatsoever, is also hereby excluded from being the creator: for Jehovah here, as well as elsewhere, appropriates that to himself alone. This is here mentioned only to confirm the interpretation above given of John i. 1, 2, &c. that the *Word*, by which all things are said to be made, (if thereby the natural creation is intended,) could not be Jesus Christ, but is the Wisdom, Power, or Energy of Jehovah, God himself.

3. GOD is said here *to go before Cyrus, to make the mountains level for him to pass over.* Not surely God in person. But it is a grand, sublime description of the Divine Providence attending that prince, and prospering his expedition against Babylon. And this adds strength to the explanation above (p. 103, &c.) given, of the like language, Isaiah xl. 9, 10; *Say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God. Behold the Lord God will come,* &c; where the preaching of the gospel, with an extraordinary divine power, by Christ, and his apostles, is described, as if *God himself was present and acted.*

I shall barely point out a few other passages of Scripture, totally inconsistent with the idea of Christ, or any other person, being God but one, the Almighty Father himself. Our Saviour declared directly, that he himself was *not* God;

God; and that there was but one Person who *was* God; in the reply which he gave to an application made to him; *why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.* In his humble, devout prayer, John xvii. 3. he addressess the Father, as the only true God; thereby shewing that he had no idea of himself, but as being his highly favoured and beloved creature, dependent upon him. To name only one instance more: St. Paul says, 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things;* Eph. iv. 6. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* It follows therefore that there is no other God, but the single Person of the Father. If Christ, or any other Person be at any time called God; the term is used in a less proper inferior sense; as when Moses (Exodus vii. 1.) is said to be a god to Pharaoh. These, with many other the like passages, should have been explained and made consistent with his hypothesis, which never yet has been done; before Mr. Robinson had ventured to declare Christ to be the Supreme God, Jehovah, and to speak less respectfully of the sacred writers for using the language they do of him, if he be not God.

II.

In reading the Scriptures, no man of plain understanding, unless taught the contrary beforehand, would ever suspect there more Gods than one to be therein revealed; or that any other person was God besides HIM, who is described in the beginning as the Creator of all things; who manifested himself to the Antediluvians, and to the patriarchs after the deluge; who separated one people from the rest of the nations to preserve his name
and

and true worship among them, and gave them a law by Moses; who spoke by the prophets; and who according to his promise by them, and especially by Moses, did at last raise up and send unto them Jesus Christ, a prophet resembling this their divine lawgiver, but in extraordinary power and communications from the Deity far exceeding him: by which he was qualified to teach those truths that Moses could not teach, and particularly to give assurance of an eternal life after death, to all those of the human species, who by following the gospel, should become fitted and qualified for it. This holy one of God, the blessed Jesus, was so far from assuming any thing to himself as God; that he constantly declared, that he received all his power from him, and was sent and acted by the authority of the one God, and supreme Father of all. And though in our english Bibles there are several wrong translations made through ignorance or prejudice, and in the printed Greek testament some words changed, and one whole verse inserted, 1 John v. 7. by design or mistake, to favour the notion of Christ being God: Yet the general tenour of the whole is so full and clear, that one Person, even that of the Almighty Father, is God alone, and no other; as to bear down any suggestion to the contrary, that might arise from one or two such particular passages. So that it is a most natural account and conclusion, which we are told of; that when (a) Job Ben Solaman, the African prince (who was master of the Arabic, and had acquired a competent knowlege of the english language,) was in England about fifty years ago, and was asked, after reading the New Testament, if he found three

(a) A friendly dialogue between a common Unitarian Christian, and an Atranasian, 1784. p. 23. *note.*

Gods: he replied, NO, NO! ONE GREAT GOD,
ONE GREAT GOOD GOD.

But when we turn to the generality of christian writers and commentators, and particularly to the author here examined; it then becomes a laborious research, and extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find out that there is but One God. For we are presented with three persons, each of them claiming to be God, claiming also peculiar and distinct honour and worship as such. Mr. Robinson indeed intirely drops the mention of the Third Person, and confines his pen to maintain that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, and to be worshiped; and to support this amasses together a prodigious variety of passages both of the Old and New Testament; and on contrasting them together, boldly asserts that they prove his point. So that, as he would have us to read and understand it, the Bible wears quite a new aspect, and presents a different God and object of worship, from what a common unprejudiced reader finds to be in it. To this new object of christian worship he gives the new name of JEHOVAH-JESUS; making him to be the God that appeared to the patriarchs and to Moses, and who was worshiped by them as Jehovah, the Lord their God. p. 42.

III.

It is not easy to describe the great harm that is done to true religion and the gospel, by such representations of it. Those who have not abilities or leisure for learned inquiries are thrown quite into a wood by it. They think the book of Revelation to be all mystery and darkness; and finding their rational faculties of no use to them in their study of it, they abandon themselves implicitly to the guidance of others. And what they have thus

imbibed without reason, knowing no other way, they defend with passion; and thus possessed with the notion that Jesus is the supreme God, and that it is a point of the first consequence, they have little charity for those that differ from them therein: nay, they will oftentimes proceed so far as to esteem them wicked, their enemies, and enemies to God, who by fair argument only, and from the Scriptures, attempt to prove Jesus to be but the highly favoured creature and servant of the great God and Father of all, and not God himself.

Another great mischief resulting from the ascription of such contradictory impossible doctrines concerning the Deity to the Bible, is in its indisposing men to the gospel, who are of sceptical minds, and have never examined into the rational grounds of evidence there are for it, and how far it is in itself from teaching such doctrines. When they see that its learned professors cannot agree whether one person be God, or three persons; when they hear such language as our author continually uses (b) in the support of his own notion, that Jesus Christ is the supreme God; they are rendered averse to the whole system of revelation; they look upon it to be all a riddle and uncertainty, and turn away from it.

IV.

The misfortune farther is, that with such writers there is no alternative; but if you do not subscribe

(b) “ *The apostles, says he, ought to have kept up an idea of the distance between a mere man and the infinite God. They have not done so. On the contrary, they have ascribed the glories of God to Jesus Christ. Either Jesus Christ is God, or their conduct is unaccountable.* p. 20.” With what little ground these confident assertions are made, has been abundantly shewn.

to all that they have worked up from their imaginations and prejudices, you shall be supposed to injure the gospel, and to believe little of it. "To deprive christianity of its mysteries," says our author towards the close of his work, p. 109, "is to reduce it to a feeble human science; we get rid of mystery and motive together. The removal of, what are called by some, corruptions of christianity, is to be rewarded, it seems, with the conversion of Jews and Mahometans. But let us not too eagerly follow these illusory dreams. Let us consider four things. 1. It is not certain, that Jews and Turks reject christianity on account of our doctrine of Christ's divinity."

I shall not attempt to satisfy one who can doubt of a fact of such great notoriety, as that one great cause of the rejection of the gospel by Jews and Mahometans, is the doctrine of the Trinity, and of Christ's divinity in particular. But I shall produce the contrary sentiment of Dr. Jortin, whom Mr. Robinson cites with respect; not with a view to oppose one man's assertion to another's, but because what the Doctor advances falls in so directly with the subject of this work. That judicious and most learned writer, in making some remarks on the difficulties attending the conversion of the Jews, says, *Eccles. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 438. "Another great and well known difficulty in the conversion of the Jews, (as also of the Mahometans,) is the doctrine of the holy Trinity, which they have always been taught to look upon as not reconcileable with the unity of God." Going on then to point out what method it might be best to pursue in their conversion, he adds; "It will be well worth the while to consider, how the
"oldest

“ oldest christian apologist (c) now extant, (i. e.
 “ Justin Martyr) hath reasoned with the Jews upon
 “ this subject, as also how Linborch managed that
 “ part

(c) The passage in Justin Martyr, is in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, and is this.

“ Trypho. *I am sufficiently acquainted with your sentiments in these things. I beg therefore you would resume and finish the subject with which you began: for you tell me of a most unheard of (παράδοξος) thing, and such as is impossible to be proved. For to maintain, that this same Christ was a God before the world was made, and afterwards submitted to be born and to be made man, and that he was not man of man as others are, is a thing not only beyond all belief, but quite foolish.*” “ Justin. *To this I replied. I am sensible that such an opinion would appear incredible, especially to those of your nation, who were never well-disposed to understand or to do the will of God, but to follow your own Rabbis, as God himself exclaims against you. Nevertheless, Trypho, said I; it would not follow that he was not the Christ (i. e. the anointed prophet) of God, if I should not be able to demonstrate, that he did preexist as the Son of the Creator of the universe, and as God, and was afterwards born a man of a virgin. But since it has been already shewn, that he is the Christ of God, whatever else he be; if I should not be able to make good my point, that he did preexist, and submitted according to the will of the Father to be born a mortal man, subject to the like infirmities and sufferings, and having flesh and blood as we have: it is but just to say that I am mistaken in this thing, and not to deny that he is the Christ, though he should appear to be a man born of men, and nothing more be proved than that he was the Christ only by the choice that God had made of him. For some of our race, my friends, (meaning heathen converts to christianity like himself) who confess him to be the Christ, do yet affirm him to be only a man of men. To whom I do not assent, though the greatest part of them should say that they have been of the same opinion: since it is the injunction of Christ, that we are not to listen to the commands of men, but to the things that have been delivered by the holy prophets, and by Christ himself.*” Justini Opera, Hagæ Comitum. 1742. p. 143, 144.

Thus we see, that this early christian writer, wedded as he was to his own notion of Christ's preexistence, did nevertheless allow those to be christians as well as himself, for which

“ part of the controverſy with Orobio. What
 “ right hath a modern controvertiſt to require
 “ more from a Jew, than Juſtin Martyr required
 “ from Trypho? I might ſay, than the apoſtles
 “ and firſt preachers required from thoſe whom
 “ they converted, when they admitted them to

which Dr. Jortin commends him, who only believed Jeſus
 to be the Chriſt, the anointed prophet of God; though they
 did not eſteem him any other than a man like themſelves;
 but choſen of God, and highly favoured by him. There
 are alſo other important concluſions to be made from this
 paſſage of Juſtin, which induced me to give it the reader in
 the exacteſt manner I have been able to tranſlate it. For,

1. We here ſee that the doctrine of Chriſt's preexiſtence,
 by Juſtin's own confeſſion, was a thing quite new, and para-
 doxical, and that aſtoniſhed the Jew with whom he is con-
 verſing. And this gives reaſon to conclude, and confirms
 the opinion, that it was a doctrine firſt diſcovered by Juſtin
 himſelf, and was the off-ſpring of Plato's philoſophy, which,
 he ſays, led him to embrace chriſtianity; joined to his intire
 ignorance of the hebrew language and idiom.

2. This further is ſeen from the reſerve and diffidence
 with which he broaches this novel opinion of his; not ex-
 pecting that others would immediately give into it, and allow
 his arguments: and ſo far from throwing out anathemas
 againſt or quarrelling with them for not believing the pre-
 exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt, he ſpeaks in the ſoſteſt tone, with
 great modeſty, deſiring only that if they agree not with him
 in that point, and hold Chriſt to be a mortal man, they would
 not reject the evidence that he had given of his being the
 Chriſt. And it is obſervable, that he dwells and lays much
 weight upon this.

There is a difference among learned men, how one part of
 the laſt ſentence of this paſſage of Juſtin, ought to be under-
 ſtood. Whether he aſſerts, that the opinion of Chriſt being
 a man like all others was held by the greateſt part of chriſ-
 tians at that time; or that the greater part were in his ſenti-
 ment of the preexiſtence. To me, not only the words of
 Juſtin, but the context, appear plainly to favour the former
 opinion of the real humanity of Chriſt being that which
 generally prevailed: for this pious father's allegation, that
 he was bound to follow the teachings of Chriſt and the pro-
 phets, and not the authority of men, is evidently an apology
 for differing from the majority.

O

“ bap-

“ baptism? *And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized. And he answering said; I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Acts viii. 37. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John xvii. 3.*”

After this, Dr. Jortin quotes a very remarkable assertion of Orobio the Jew, in his friendly conference with Limborch; and the reply which the latter made to it. And I would wish it to be observed, that these two great men, Limborch and Jortin, scholars of the first rank, of solid judgment, and of unimpeached integrity, do both of them agree with the Jewish physician of Amsterdam, that if Christ had taken upon him to be the most high God, the Jews at that time would have been bound by their law to have put him to death for it. And as both the law and the gospel came from the same God, and cannot contradict each other, this is one demonstration among a thousand, that Jesus Christ is not the most high God, but his creature. The extract of the conference alluded to and cited by Jortin, but not translated; is as follows;

“ Orobio. *The prophet, who shall require men to believe in him, as the true God of Israel; who shall take upon himself to be the Almighty Being; who shall command the people to listen to his words, upon his own authority; ought not to be believed or received: and granting, which is impossible, that the Messiah, whom the Jews expect, should teach that doctrine to Israel, the law would require him to be stoned to death as a false prophet.*

Limborch. *To this inference and conclusion I replied; that Jesus Christ always declared himself to be the messenger, and son of the Father; and required men to believe in him only as such. Nor doth*

doth the gospel require any thing more concerning the person of Christ, as necessary to be believed. If others have laid down more articles as necessary, I am not bound to submit to their authority, as I hold the Scripture alone to be the rule of my faith. Therefore it is from that source of the Scriptures only, that my learned opponent, as I have often reminded him, should draw his arguments against christianity; and not from the doctrines about which christians differ with one another, and such as the Scripture does not propose as necessary to salvation."

IV.

Our author proceeds in the same way to add; "Were we to divest religion of all these offensive *credenda*, and were we to reduce it to the gospel of Socrates, or to the more refined gospel of Professor Hutcheson, would it convert the Turks and the Jews?" However lightly Mr. Robinson thinks concerning the matter, it would certainly be one great step towards bringing Jews and Mahometans to believe the gospel, were we able to convince them, that christians revered Jesus Christ as the most highly favoured prophet of God, but did not worship him, nor any other person, but the single person of Jehovah, the almighty Father and Creator of all things, the God of Abraham, the God of Israel, the one, only true God.

But something must be said in defence of two such eminent teachers of truth and virtue; who, notwithstanding the disrespectful way in which they are here mentioned, will continue to spread their light, and benefit mankind to latest generations. There is no need of lessening what was good and excellent among the heathens, to set off the gospel. Be the moral lessons of Socrates ever so excellent, and why should we seek to detract from them? they will still fall infinitely below the teachings of

Jefus, as much as he furpassed the Athenian philosopher in moral excellence. How defective the lectures and exhortations of the latter must have been, in the most powerful excitement to virtue of all others, the hope of the divine favour for ever which the gospel holds forth, appears in the account that Plato gives of his master's behaviour and conversation with his friends in his last moments; where he appears under much uncertainty about a future state. Nevertheless, instead of depreciating the morality of this excellent heathen, it would be better to make our fellow-christians acquainted with the holy rules which he laid down to himself and to others, and the height of virtue to which he attained by them, of which too many christians with their superior advantages, come greatly short. In proof of this we may allege one part of his daily practice, in his own words, from his apology for himself, upon his trial, which may excuse his speaking in his own commendation. "However you may understand it," says he to his judges, "I think a greater blessing never befell this city, than my ministry among you, which I have received from God. For I do nothing else, but go continually about, (e) persuading both young and old, not to be so much solicitous

(e) He had said a little before; "If therefore, as I observed, ye would absolve me upon these conditions, that I should no longer teach my philosophy; I should reply, I respect and love you, O ye Athenians, but chuse rather to obey God than you. And so long as I live, and strength is afforded, I will not cease to philosophize, and to exhort and teach every one of you whom I meet, in this my usual way; *Well now, my friend! you that are a citizen of Athens, that mighty city, so illustrious for wisdom and extent of power; are not you ashamed to be so anxious after riches and fame and honours: but bestow not the least care or thought in seeking wisdom and truth, and acquiring a habit of virtue and all goodnes.*" Platon. Apol. Socr. p. 25, 26. Cantab. 1683.

"to

“ to gratify the bodily appetites, to heap up wealth,
 “ or to gain any outward advantage whatsoever;
 “ as to improve the mind by the continual exercise
 “ of all virtue and goodness. And I say to them,
 “ that a man’s true value doth not arise from his
 “ riches, or from any outward circumstances of
 “ life: but that true riches, and every real good,
 “ whether public or private, proceeds wholly from
 “ virtue. If any one therefore say, that in teach-
 “ ing these things, I corrupt the youth of this city,
 “ he should shew that these things are pernicious
 “ and hurtful,” &c.(f) That fine scholar and
 true christian, Erasmus, thought far higher of
 Socrates than our author. I shall gratify the reader
 with an extract out of one of his Colloquies, a
 book put into our hands at school, but which in
 many parts may instruct and edify us in our riper
 years. It is in that which he intitles, *A Religious
 Entertainment*. “ I never remember,” says one
 of the company, “ to have read any thing in hea-
 “ then antiquity, that seemed more exactly to cor-
 “ respond with the character of a true christian,
 “ than Socrates’s short speech to Crito, just as he
 “ was going to drink the poison, by which he was
 “ condemned to end his life. *Whether*, says he,
 “ *God will approve my actions or no, I cannot tell.*
 “ *But this I know, that it has been my constant*

(f) Xenophon, another of Socrates’s pupils, has pre-
 served a conversation between their master and Aristodemus,
 in which he proves the being of a God, and a particular
 providence, in a very convincing, affecting manner. At the
 close of it, Xenophon says; “ It seems to me, that by such
 “ discourses, Socrates formed those with whom he conversed,
 “ to refrain from all impious, unjust, and base actions; not
 “ only when in the sight of the world, but when in secret
 “ and alone; convincing them, that nothing which they
 “ did could escape the notice of God.” *Memorab. Ed.*
 Simpson. p. 73, 74.

“ *aim and endeavour to please him. And I am not*
 “ *without hope, that my endeavours will be ac-*
 “ *ceptable to him.* A most extraordinary pious
 “ and humble disposition,” replies another of the
 company, “ in a man that never heard of Christ,
 “ nor ever saw the holy Scriptures. I declare when
 “ I read of such things in a heathen, I can scarce
 “ refrain from crying out ; *O holy Socrates, pray*
 “ *for me !*” A fine satyr this on their saint-worship
 at that time, when they were often canonizing men
 of immoral or dubious characters ; and a tacit
 condemnation of all such worship.

Our author’s censure of the late Professor
 Hutcheson of Glasgow, is, that such “ a refined
 “ gospel as he taught, would not be likely to con-
 “ vert Jews and Turks ;” and he afterward terms
 it, “ the reducing of the gospel to an enfeebled
 “ system of mere moral philosophy.” I cannot
 see any grounds for such a reflection on the memory
 of this worthy person, that he was less a christian
 than our author and his friends ; nor any motive
 for it, unless his piety and christianity were of too
 rational a complexion to please some persons. Such
 a judgment can hardly be formed from any of Dr.
 Hutcheson’s writings that are extant : for he did
 not publish any thing directly upon the gospel. In
 his treatise on Moral Philosophy he does not touch
 upon it, his subject not leading him to it. But he
 is particularly mindful therein to secure, and in-
 culcate on his pupils, a belief of, and inward regard
 to God, the first and great relation of all rational
 beings, as what was to influence them in all other
 things ; which was laying a good foundation for
 the gospel. And though he enforced his moral
 lessons by other motives than those of the gospel,
 yet they were not such as were inconsistent, but
 concurred with it ; and we have need of every
 possible

possible motive to make us attend to what is of such vast importance to our true happiness. Nor is there any just cause hence to conclude, that he was uninfluenced by them himself, or neglected in proper time and place to impress upon others, those most powerful christian motives to virtue and obedience to the will of God, arising from the revelation of his boundless love to mankind by Jesus Christ, and his intending us for an eternal happiness. If our author had looked into the short account of the life (g) of this eminent person, prefixed many years ago by the venerable Rector of the University of Glasgow, still living; a name to be mentioned always with respect by all lovers of good letters and true religion; he would have found that Dr. Hutcheson was not unmindful of what belonged to the Christian as well as the Moral Professor. “ After mentioning his constant lectures
 “ five days of the week, on Natural Religion,
 “ Morals, Jurisprudence and Government; and
 “ that he had another lecture three days of the
 “ week, in which some of the finest writers of
 “ antiquity, both Greek and Latin, on the subject
 “ of morals, were interpreted, and the language
 as well as the sentiment explained in a masterly
 manner, he adds; “ Besides these sets of lectures,
 “ he gave a weekly one on the Sunday evening,
 “ on the truth and excellency of christianity :
 “ in which he produced and illustrated, with clear-
 “ nefs and strength, all the evidences of its truth
 “ and importance; *taking his views of its doc-
 “ trines and divine scheme, from the original records*

(g) A system of Moral Philosophy, by the late Francis Hutcheson, LL. D. Professor of Philosophy in the University of Glasgow.—To which is prefixed some account of the life, writings and character of the author, by the Rev. William Leechman, D. D. 1755.

“ of the New Testament, and not from the party-
 “ tenets, or scholastic systems of modern ages. This
 “ was the most crowded of all his lectures; as all
 “ the different sorts and ranks of students, being
 “ at liberty from their peculiar pursuits on this
 “ day, chose to attend it, being always sure of
 “ finding both pleasure and instruction.” This
 Sunday-lecture, it is to be observed, was quite
 a voluntary service; it not being an attention
 to which his professorship called him. And al-
 though therein he might not treat of some doc-
 trines in the way that Mr. Robinson would approve,
 he might not be a less perfect teacher of the gospel
 on that account. I shall transcribe one or two
 features of his character from Dr. Leechman’s
 preface, p. xxix, xxx. wishing our author nothing
 better, I can wish him nothing better than that as
 a man, a christian, and teacher of truth, he may
 resemble Professor Hutcheson.

“ No symptoms of vanity or self-conceit,” says
 his biographer from personal knowlege, “ ap-
 “ peared in him. He sought not after fame, nor
 “ had he any vain complacency in the unsought
 “ possession of it. While he was visibly superior
 “ to others about him, he was the only one that
 “ was quite insensible of it. His own talents and
 “ endowments were not the objects on which his
 “ thoughts were employed: he was always carried
 “ away from attending to himself, by the exercise
 “ of kind affections, zeal for some public gene-
 “ rous designs, or keen inquiries after truth. This
 “ was such an acknowledged part of his character,
 “ that those who were least disposed to think well
 “ of him, never insinuated that he was proud or
 “ vain. The natural modesty of his temper was
 “ heightened and refined by his religious senti-
 “ ments. He had a full persuasion and warm sense

“ of the great truths of natural and revealed re-
 “ ligion, and of the importance of just and ra-
 “ tional devotion to the happiness of human life,
 “ and the stability and purity of a virtuous charac-
 “ ter. The power of devout sentiments over his
 “ mind appeared in his conversation. In his pub-
 “ lic prelections he frequently took occasion from
 “ any hints which his subject afforded him, as well
 “ as when it was the direct subject itself, to run out
 “ at great length, and with great ardour, on the
 “ reasonableness and advantages of habitual re-
 “ gards to God, and referring all our talents, vir-
 “ tues, and enjoyments, to his bounty. Such
 “ habitual references appeared to him the surest
 “ means of checking those emotions of pride,
 “ vain complacency, and self-applause, which are
 “ apt to spring up in the minds of those, who do
 “ not seriously and frequently reflect, that they did
 “ not make themselves *to differ from others*, and
 “ *that they have nothing but what they have re-*
 “ *ceived*. Such sentiments deeply rooted in the
 “ mind, he looked upon as the proper foundation
 “ of that simplicity of heart and life, which is the
 “ highest perfection of a virtuous character.” (b)

(b) In the appendix, vol. ii. to a noble work, intitled,
 “ Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Esq. (τῆ μακαρίτη, that first of
 Englishmen,) London, printed, 1780:” amidst many prints
 and engravings of eminent persons, and of curious remains
 of antiquity, to excite to virtue and the love of the fine arts,
 with which its worthy patron hath adorned it; we have a
 print of Dr. Hutcheson, from a medallion of him, done, at
 the desire of a disciple of his, by Ant. Selvi, of Florence;
 and a description of it from Mazzuchelli's Numismata, &c.
 with a short account of the excellent Professor. The print
 is said to have preserved a just likeness of the original, and
 seems to bespeak the manly, candid, open, liberal, benevolent
 mind, that dwelt in him.

V.

Our author, in the conclusion, adopts the hymn of a pious author addressed to Christ :

Hail, thou eternal fulness, hail ;
Great source of blifs divine !
In whom adoring angels see
All thy great Father shine.

The character, the virtues, the excellency, the consummate worth of the blessed Jesus, are, and will be a most pleasing theme of contemplation and joy to his sincere followers ; and the heart will oft overflow with gratitude at the recollection of that love so strong and powerful, which led him, for the good of his brethren of mankind, to give up his life in torments, thereby to seal that holy doctrine, designed and calculated to bring us to virtue and to eternal life ; and to set also an example of what we owe to one another, and to the truth : Nor will there be wanting humble hope of knowing and being known to this benevolent Saviour, as we have a promise of being for ever with him (1 Theff. ii. iv. 17.) in the future world. But I cannot pray to him as God, because he himself tells me continually, that he is not God ; but his creature, his son, his servant, his messenger, his great prophet. Nor did he ever say, that he was to be worshiped, or prayed unto, or that hymns of prayer and thanksgiving were to be addressed to him, as authorized and enabled to hear them.

There is a very remarkable prayer of Simplicius, a heathen philosopher, which I hope may be no unsuitable conclusion to the present disquisition. It was composed by him and placed at the end of a work, concerning which an eminent christian (g) writer

(g) Simplicius's Commentary on Epictetus. Fabricius apud Lardner, Vol. IV. Testimonies, p. 318.

speaks ;

speaks; " that there are few things in all antiquity, " which contain fonder precepts to form men to " virtue, or that better assert and defend the divine " providence in the government of the world." He was a person of great piety and virtue; and perhaps might be discouraged and kept from properly inquiring into and embracing the truth of the gospel, by the very immoral lives of christians in the sixth century, when he lived; and by their idolatrous worship at that time. Whether he may not allude to something of the latter kind in the close of his prayer, the reader will judge.

(h) *O Thou sovereign Lord of all, the father and the guide of the reason that is in us! Make us continually mindful, I beseech Thee, of the dignity which Thou hast conferred upon us; and afford us thy assistance (συμπράξει, cooperate with us) that we may act with freedom, and being purified from the bodily appetites, and unreasonable passions, may subdue and get the mastery over them, and render them subservient to the best purposes; and that by the light of truth, our judgment may be so directed, that we may adhere to those things that are really good. Finally, I intreat Thee, the Saviour, to disperse and remove intirely the mists, which darken the eyes of our minds; that in the language of Homer, we may know how to distinguish between GOD and man.*

(h) Ἰκετω σε, Δεσποτα, ο πατηρ και ηγεμων τη εν τω εν λογη, κ. τ. λ. Simplic. Comment. in Epicteti Enchiridion, Londini, 1670. p. 297.

Texts of Scripture, which contain *spurious* and *false* readings, quoted as genuine by Mr. Robinson.

N. B. The words put in a Roman character, are known not to have been the words of the sacred writers.

p. 16, 17.—Acts xx. 28. *Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

p. 32.—1 Corinthians xv. 47. *The second man is the Lord from heaven.*

p. 17.—1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.*

p. 27, 41.—Revelation i. 2. *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest write in a book.*

Instances of very blameable alterations made in the words of Scripture, to favour the doctrine of Christ being Jehovah, the most high God.

p. 131, 132.—Isaiah xlii. 13. 11, 12. *The Lord Jesus came forth as a mighty man: Let the wilderness, the cities, the villages, the caves give glory to Jehovah Jesus, and declare his praise in the islands.*

p. 170.—John i. i. *Jesus Christ is God.*

p. 174.—Coloff. ii. 3. *The acknowledgement of the deity, both of the Father, and of Christ, is a mystery in which are treasures both of wisdom and knowlege.*

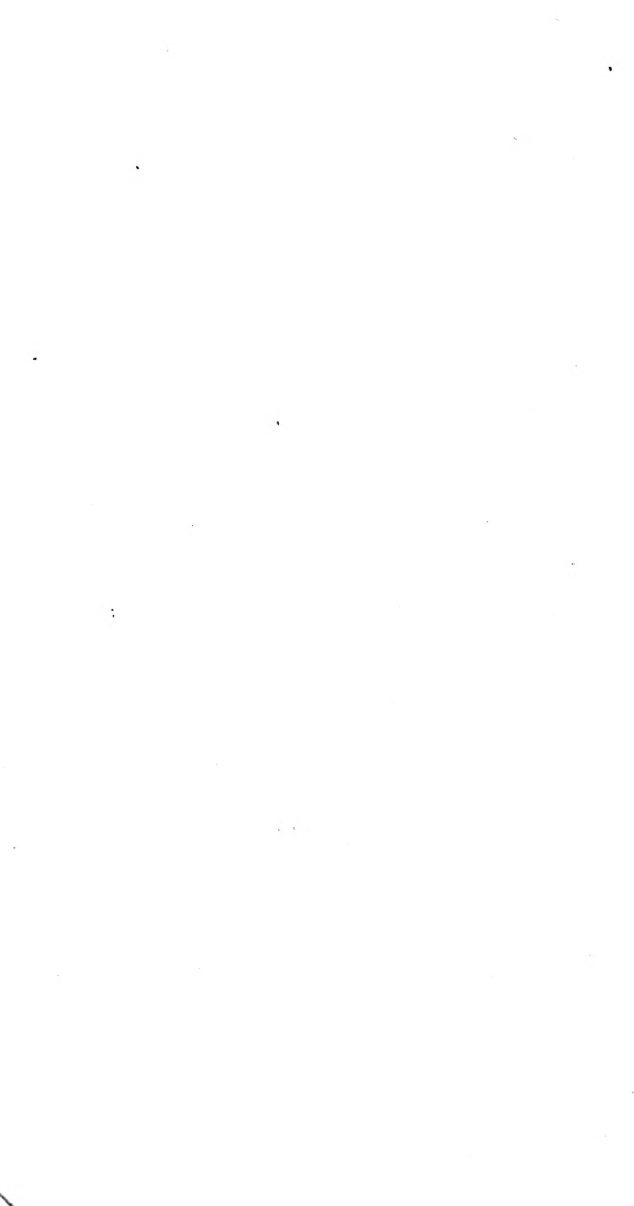
p. 179.—Titus ii. 13, 14. *THE GREAT GOD and our Saviour Jesus Christ, GAVE HIMSELF for us, THAT HE MIGHT redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF a peculiar people.*

Instances of acknowledged wrong translations of the Scriptures, made use of to countenance the doctrine of Christ being the most high God.

p. 37, 38.—Isaiah ix. 6. *The name of THE CHILD is the EVERLASTING Father.*

Zechariah xiii. 17. *Awake, o sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts.*

p. 76, 77.—Philippians ii. 10. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*



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N. B. *The cyphers in roman characters refer to the Preface.*

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