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SOCRATES AND JESUS

COMPARED.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S.

*Amicus Plato, Amicus Socrates, sed magis amica
Veritas (christiana.)*

PHILADELPHIA :
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THE DEDICATION.

TO JOSHUA TOULMIN, D.D.

DEAR SIR,

MY having had for many years the happiness of your acquaintance and friendship, and particularly my having lately turned my thoughts to the subject of one of your valuable *dissertations*, have led me to take the liberty to address to you the following *Essay*, chiefly as a testimonial, and one of the last that I shall be able to give, of my esteem for your general principles and character.

Having here much leisure, and having been led to look back to some writings of the antients with which I was formely much better acquainted than I am now, and among others the *Memorabilia of Xenophon*, and *Plato's account of Socrates*, it occurred to me to draw out an exhibition of his principles and conduct from the words of those two original writers; and this suggested the idea of drawing a comparison between him and Jesus. Knowing that you had published an excellent dissertation on the same subject, I forbore to look into it till mine

DEDICATION.

was transcribed for the press. By this means I was not biassed, as I naturally should have been, in favour of your opinion; and I have seldom more than a very indistinct recollection of any work that I have not very recently read. On this second perusal of your Dissertation I was as much pleased with it as I remember I was at the first, though I found that in some particulars I differ from you. I hope that neither of us, inattentive as most persons now are to subjects of this kind, will have wholly written in vain.

I take this opportunity of publicly thanking you for your many excellent publications in defence of rational christianity. Having given so many specimens of your ability and zeal in the cause, it is to you, and your excellent coadjutors, Mr. Belsham, Mr. Kentish, and a few others, that the friends to the same cause will naturally look, whenever particular occasions, occurring on your side of the water, will appear to call for a champion. My labours in this or any other field of exertion are nearly over; but it gives me much satisfaction to reflect on what I have done in defence of what appeared to me important christian truth. As we have *laboured*, I hope we shall hereafter *re-joice*, together. But we must *hold out to the end*, without being *weary of well doing*, indulging no remission of labour while we are capable of any. Even a dying hand has sometimes done execution. According to the apostle Paul, the whole life of every christian is *a warfare*. Our enemies are *vice* and *error*, and with them we must make

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neither peace nor truce. Their advocates will not make either peace or truce with us.

I know I shall not offend you by acknowledging, as I now do, that I had a particular view to *you* in my late tract in favour of *infant baptism*..... Whatever you may think of the performance itself, you will not, I am confident, think uncandidly of the intention with which it was written. While we really think for ourselves, it is impossible, in this state at least, but that we must often see things in different lights, and consequently form different opinions concerning them. But with the ingenious minds which become christians this will only be an occasion of exercising that candour which is one of the most prominent christian virtues, in which I am persuaded you will never be defective.

With a very high degree of esteem,

I am,

Dear sir,

yours sincerely.

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, January, 1803.

ADVERTISEMENT.

All the quotations in this work are either from Xenophon's Memorabilia and Apology, by B. Simpson, Oxford, A. D. 1749; or from Plato de Rebus divinis, Ed. 2d, printed at Cambridge, A. D. 1683. In the quotations from Xenophon the pages only are mentioned. To those from Plato P is prefixed.

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SOCRATES AND JESUS

COMPARED.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE history of Socrates is so singular a phenomenon in the heathen world, and his general behaviour, and the manner of life to which he devoted himself, have in them so much that resemble those of the ancient prophets, and even of our Saviour, that they have always drawn the particular attention of the friends of divine revelation, though these have formed very different opinions on the subject.

If we look into any account of the Grecian philosophers who preceded Socrates, or who followed him (and some of the most eminent of the latter were his professed disciples) we shall find none of them to resemble him, even in the general features of his conduct, though his education as a philosopher was in all respects the same with theirs; and they all fell far short of him with respect to purity of moral character.

If we may depend upon what is transmitted to us concerning him by Xenophon and Plato, who were his cotemporaries and disciples, both men of great eminence, (and there were no writers in the heathen

world whose characters stand higher than theirs) he was a very extraordinary man with respect both to wisdom and virtue. And as Socrates had enemies as well as friends, and his accusers must have had their friends too, had the accounts of Xenophon or Plato not been in the main agreeable to truth, it would have been in our power, (as the age abounded with writers) to perceive some trace of their objections. But nothing of this kind appears.

From both these accounts we must conclude that Socrates was a man who, from early life, not only abstained from vice himself, and practised every thing that he thought to be a virtue, but one who devoted himself to the promoting of virtue in others; continually throwing himself in the way of every person whom he thought he could benefit by his exhortations or instructions; that by this means a considerable number of young men, especially those of the best families, of much consideration and wealth, in the city of Athens, were strongly attached to him; and yet, that though he was poor, and many of them were rich, he never accepted of any reward for his instructions.

In his conduct as a citizen he was most uncorrupt and fearless, risking his popularity, and even his life, rather than consent to any thing that appeared to him to be unjust. When he was falsely accused he behaved with the greatest magnanimity at his trial, and when sentence of death was passed upon him he yielded to it with the greatest calmness. He refused to solicit for any abatement of the sentence as a favour, and declined all the offers of his

friends to assist him in an escape from prison. When the fatal cup was brought to him, he drank it with the greatest readiness and composure, and died with much apparent satisfaction.

The sentiments and principles of such a man as this, who lived in the most polished city of Greece, at a period the most distinguished for every thing that can contribute to fame, in arts, science, or policy, and yet the most addicted to idolatry of any city in Greece, certainly deserves to be investigated, and his conduct to be scrutinized; and this I shall endeavour to do in the best manner that the materials we are furnished with will enable me.



SECTION I.

Of the Polytheism and Idolatry of Socrates.

That Socrates was an idolater, or a worshipper of a multiplicity of Gods, and such as were acknowledged by his countrymen, and that he conformed in all respects to the popular modes of worship, cannot be denied. “He sacrificed, says Xenophon, p. 2, “both on the public altars of the city, and often at “his own house; and he also practised divination “in the most public manner.” On his trial he said, p. 377, “he had never sacrificed to, or acknowledged, or sworn by, or even made mention of, any “gods but Jupiter, Juno, and others that were received by his fellow citizens. Do not I believe,” says he, p. 3, “that the sun, and the moon, are gods “as well as others?” “Do we not suppose de-

“mons” (and one of these he acknowledged to have given particular attention to him) “to be either “gods, or the sons of gods,” p. 21. And in his last moments, after he had drank the poison, recollecting a vow that he had made to sacrifice a cock to Æsculapius, he desired Crito, a pupil and particular friend of his, to discharge it for him, and begged that he would not neglect to do it, p. 186. Though on one occasion he speaks of *one God* that constructed and preserves the world, p. 318, he does not say that he was the *only God*.

All heathens and idolaters, civilized or uncivilized, were addicted to divination; imagining that by this means they could pry into futurity, and find out what their gods signified by certain signs, as the flight of birds, the form of the livers of the animals they sacrificed, and many other things which are generally considered as accidents. Socrates was so far from seeing the folly of these observances, that he was to an immoderate degree assiduous in his attention to them. Being of opinion, p. 8, that “the “gods signified their will by divination to those “whom they were disposed to favour,” Whenever he was in doubt about any thing of importance; he sent some of his friends to consult the oracle p. 5, and he advised his friends, if they had occasion for the knowledge of any thing that they could not attain to themselves, to apply to the gods in the modes of divination, p. 352; Saying, that “they who “would regulate either their own affairs, or those “of the state, stood in need of these practices.” p. 5

Besides having recourse to the usual modes of divination, Socrates believed that, upon every occasion of importance, the will of the gods was signified to himself in particular; but in what manner he does not clearly say. He sometimes calls it a *voice* (*φωνή*) p. 28. At his trial he said he had often been heard to say that a divine voice was frequently present with him.

Notwithstanding all this evidence of the polytheistic sentiments, and corresponding practice, of Socrates, Rollin and others suppose him to have been a believer in the *divine unity*, and to have been sensible of the absurdity and folly of all the popular superstitions, and of the popular worship of his country. But I am far from seeing any sufficient evidence of this. If he had had the weakness, which however is never ascribed to him, to conceal this before his judges, he might have avowed it before his death, bearing a dying and most honourable testimony to important truth; whereas, on both these occasions, his language and conduct were the very reverse of what, on the supposition of this superior knowledge, they ought to have been. Indeed I much question whether any person educated as Socrates was, among polytheists and idolaters, could possibly, by the mere light of nature, have attained to a firm belief of divine unity, though he might in some degree have been sensible of the folly and absurdity of the prevailing superstitions.

SECTION II.

The Sentiments of Socrates concerning the Gods, and their Providence.

A polytheist and idolater as Socrates was, he had just and honourable sentiments concerning the divine power and providence, and of the obedience that men owe to the gods. And though his ideas on these subjects are far short of what we find in the Psalms of David, and the writings of the Hebrew prophets, they are much more rational and sublime than the opinions of the heathens in general, or those of the philosophers that followed him.

We have seen that Socrates ascribed to *a god* the formation and government of the world, whereas, according to Hesiod (whose *theogony* was, no doubt, that which was generally received by the Greeks) the world had been from eternity, and the origin of the gods was subsequent to it. Socrates points out in particular the wisdom and goodness of providence in the disposition of the different senses and the several parts of the human body, as that of the eyes, the eye-lashes, and eye-lids; and in the structure of the teeth, which in the different animals are shaped and situated in the most convenient manner, the best adapted to their respective uses, p. 62. He had, no doubt, the same opinion of the wisdom and goodness displayed in the structure and disposition of every thing else in nature.

He, moreover, believed that the gods know every thing that is not only said or done, but that is even thought and intended, though ever so privately ; being present in all places ; so that, whenever they think proper they can give intimations to man of every thing relating to them, p. 14. "The deity" (*το θειον*) he says, p. 65, "sees and hears all things, "is every where present, and takes care of "all things." And he makes this obvious and practical use of the doctrine, viz. that "if men believed it, they would abstain from all base actions even in private, persuaded that nothing that they did was unknown to the gods." p. 70.

The gods, he also thought, know every thing that is future, though they conceal the knowledge of those things from men in general ; so that, "though "a man built a house, he could not be certain that "he should inhabit it, nor could a general be sure "whether it would be proper for him to march his "army, &c." p. 6. Agreeably to this, it was his custom, in his prayer to the gods, to request that they would grant him what was good, without specifying what he wished for ; since they best knew what was so. p. 45. Like the heathens in general, he considered lightning as coming more immediately from the gods, as one mode of giving intimations to men. p. 312.

According to Socrates, it is the gods that have made the distinction between men and the inferior animals, having given them rational souls, so that they only know that there are gods, and can worship them. "There is no such principle and excellent

“quality,” he said “in the brutes; and in consequence of this superiority, men are like gods with respect to other animals,” p. 66.

Speaking of the goodness of the gods to man, he says, p. 306, “they supply us not only with necessities, but with things that are adapted to give us pleasure.” He mentions particularly as their gifts, water and fire, the grateful and useful change of the seasons, and our various senses, adapted to peculiar species of good. “This,” he says, p. 310, “shews their concern for us.”

Socrates considered all unwritten laws, obligatory on man in society, the origin of which cannot be traced, as having the gods for their authors. Among these he mentions the universal maxim, that the gods ought to be worshipped, p. 327, that gratitude is due to benefactors, that parents ought not to have sexual commerce with their children, and all other universally acknowledged principles of morality.

In answer to the objection from our not seeing the gods, he mentions several things in nature, the existence and powers of which cannot be denied, and which are invisible or inscrutable by us, as lightning, the wind, and the intellectual powers of man, “Thus,” says he, p. 313, “when we see the powers of the gods, we must reverence them though we do not see them.”

Nothing can exceed the respect that Socrates entertained for the authority and will of the gods, whenever, and in whatever manner, it was made known. “If,” says he, p. 51, “the gods signify

“ their will, we must no more depart from it, and
“ take other counsel, than we should prefer the con-
“ duct of a blind man, who did not know the road,
“ to that of one who saw it and knew it; always
“ preferring the direction of the gods, to that of
“ men.”

Agreeably to this, when he was addressing his judges, he said, p. 40, that “ if they would acquit
“ him on condition that he would discontinue his in-
“ structions to young persons, which he believed
“ the gods had enjoined him, or suffer death, he
“ would answer that he must obey god rather than
“ man; and that if they should banish him to any
“ other country, he should think it his duty, to do
“ there what he had done at Athens.” p. 40.
“ Whatever be the situation in which a man is pla-
“ ced, there, he said, he should remain at any risk,
“ even of life, (p. 23) dreading baseness more
“ than any thing else. So the gods having, as, I
“ believe, placed me where I have been, and ordered
“ me to remain philosophizing, and scrutinizing
“ myself and others, I must not desert that station,
“ for fear of death, or any thing else.”

When Aristodemus, with whom he was discoursing on this subject, said that he did not deny that there were gods, but he thought they were too great to stand in need of his worship. Socrates replied, p. 64, that the greater they were, the more they were to be honoured.

As to the manner in which the gods were to be honoured, he, like other heathens, thought it was to be determined by the laws of every particular coun-

try. But he justly thought that the satisfaction the gods received from these marks of respect did not depend upon the costliness of the sacrifice. "The offering of a poor man," he said, p. 49, "is as acceptable to the gods, as the more expensive ones of the rich."

SECTION III.

Of the excellent Moral Character of Socrates.

These, it cannot be denied, are excellent sentiments, and much to be admired, considering the little light that Socrates had, viz. that of nature only, uninstructed by any revelation. And with him these sentiments were not merely speculative. His whole life seems to have been strictly conformable to them, being eminently virtuous, and wholly devoted to the service of his fellow citizens.

Xenophon, who knew him well (though, having been his pupil, we may suppose him to have been prejudiced in his favour) gives the following general account of his character and conduct, p. 359. "He was so religious that he did nothing without the advice of the gods. He was so just, that he never injured any person in the smallest matter, but rendered every service in his power to those with whom he had any connection. He was so temperate that he never preferred what was grateful to what was useful. He was so prudent, that he never mistook the worse for the better; nor did he

“ want the advice of others, but always judged for himself. In his conversation, he excelled in defining what was right; and in shewing it to others, reproving the vicious, and exhorting to the practice of virtue.”

Though the circumstances of Socrates were the reverse of affluent, he would never receive any gratuity for the lessons that he gave, as all other philosophers and public teachers did; and by this means, as he said, p. 74, he preserved his freedom and independence. When upon his trial he was urged by his friends to supplicate the judges, as was the universal custom, in order to move their compassion, he refused to ask any favour even of them; being of opinion that this was contrary to the *laws*, according to which, and not according to *favour*, judges ought to decide, p. 317.

In all the changes in the political state of the turbulent city of Athens, which were many in the time of Socrates, he adhered inflexibly to what he thought to be just, without being influenced by hope or fear. This was particularly conspicuous on two occasions. The first was when, being one of the judges in the case of the ten generals who were tried for their lives on account of their not collecting and burying the dead after a naval engagement, and all the rest (influenced, no doubt, by the popular clamour against them) condemned them to die, he alone refused to concur in the sentence. Soon after the citizens in general, convinced of the injustice of the sentence, though after it had been carried into execution, approved of his conduct. The other was

during the government of the thirty tyrants, when, though in manifest danger of his life, he refused to approve of their measures; and he escaped by nothing but their overthrow, and the city recovering its liberty.

That Socrates at the close of life expressed his satisfaction in his own conduct cannot be thought extraordinary. It was, he observed. p. 366, in concurrence with the general opinion of his countrymen, and with a declaration of the oracle at Delphi in his favour. For when it was consulted by Chærephon, one of his disciples, the answer was, that there was no person more honourable (ελευθεροτερον) more just, or more wise * than he. p. 371.

He put, however, a very modest construction on this oracle; which was that, though he knew no more than other men, he did not, like them, pretend to know more, p. 9, 12, so that he only knew himself, and his own ignorance, better than other men. His reputation in consequence of it, and of his conduct in general, had no other than the happiest influence upon him. For, addressing his judges (p. 34,) he observed, that “it being a generally received opinion, that he was wiser than other men,” he said that “whether that opinion was well founded or not, he thought he ought not to demean himself by any unworthy action.”

Notwithstanding Socrates’s consciousness of integrity, and general merit, and the good opinion of

* In Xenophon the response of the oracle is expressed by σωφρονεστερον, but Plato always uses the word σοφωτερον. Cicero in referring to it uses the word *sapientissimus*.

the wise and virtuous, he was so sensible of the malice of his enemies, that when he was brought before his judges he had no expectation of being acquitted, and therefore he expressed his surprize when he found that he was condemned by a majority of no more than three votes p. 36, out of 500.*

It being customary at Athens, when any person was found guilty of the charge brought against him, to require him to say what, in his own opinion, his punishment should be; and this question being proposed to Socrates, conscious as he was of no demerit, but on the contrary of his valuable services to his country; he said that, since he had made no gain by his profession of public instructor, had never held any lucrative office in the state, and he was poor, he was, like other persons in a similar situation, and with similar claims, entitled to a maintenance at the public expense in the Prytaneum, p. 37. If they destroyed him, he farther said, they would not soon find another like him, p. 27. This has the appearance of vanity and ostentation. But if the praising a man's self be at all justifiable, it is on such an occasion as this, when he is unjustly censured and condemned by others.

* This, exclusive of the president, Rollin supposes to have been the number of the judges.

SECTION IV.

*The Imperfection of Socrates's Ideas concerning Piety,
and Virtue in general.*

Just and sublime as were the sentiments that Socrates professed concerning the power and providence of the gods, and of the obligation that men are under to reverence and worship them, his ideas of the *manner* in which this was to be done were by no means such as might have been expected in consequence of them. According to him, all the duties that properly rank under the head of *piety* are the observance of the religious rites of the countries in which men live. "The gods, he says, p. 338, are not to be honoured by every man as he pleases, but as the laws direct." This was agreeable to the answer received from Delphi, when inquiry was made concerning the manner in which men should please the gods; for the answer returned was, "by complying with the institutions of our country," p. 313. After mentioning this, Socrates added, that "all states had decreed that the gods are to be placated by sacrifices, according to the faculties of each of them." p. 314.

Now, what the rites of the heathen religions were, those of Athens by no means excepted, is well known. Little did they accord with any just sentiments of what we now deem to be *piety*, i. e. a reverence for the perfections and providence of God, gratitude for his favours, submission to his will, in a strict obedience to the moral precepts he has en-

joined, and confidence in his protection and favour in consequence of it. With these sentiments sacrifices, and the other rites of the heathen religions, had no connection whatever. Rather, they were the occasion, and provocatives, of licentiousness, and lewdness, as must have been well known to Socrates himself.

The moral maxims of Socrates, independent of those relating to religion, are admirable, especially his saying, p. 83, that "there is no better way to true glory than to endeavor to be good rather than seem to be so." But his general rule concerning the nature of *justice*, in which he probably included virtue in general, was that, "whatever is lawful," or agreeable to the laws, "is just," p. 321, 326; whereas, nothing can be more variable than the laws of particular states, or more discordant with one another.

With respect to the subjects of religion and morals in general, Socrates always professed a greater regard to the laws than reason or good sense will justify, though he might be induced to say more on this subject in consequence of his being accused of being no friend to the popular religion, and of corrupting youth by attaching them to himself, to the neglect of their parents and others. And it is very possible that, in some of his instructions he had inculcated duties of a purer and higher kind than the institutions of his country would encourage or authorize. Such, however, might be expected from the sentiments he generally expressed.

Considering the wretched philosophy of the Sophists, whose ostentation, and absurdities, Socrates exposed, we shall not wonder at the advice he gave his hearers with respect to the principal object of their pretended science. He recommended to them the study of Geography, Astronomy, and the sciences in general, only so far as they were of practical use in life, p. 350; but he particularly dissuaded them from the study of *the structure of the universe*, because, he said, “it was not designed to be discovered by man, nor could it be agreeable to the gods to have that inquired into which they did not make known to man.” For nothing could be more presumptuous than the manner in which those Sophists, and the philosophers of those times in general, decided concerning this great subject; and with them it led to nothing of any real value with respect to men’s conduct, but puffed them up with conceit, without any foundation of real knowledge. On this account he is said by Seneca to have reduced all philosophy to morals. *Totam philosophiam revocavit ad mores, Epist. 71.*

But could Socrates have seen the progress that a truer philosophy than any that existed in his time has now made, and how directly it leads to the most profound admiration of the works and providence of God, unfolding the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great creator; and had he seen the connection which this reverence for God, and consequently for his laws, has (on the system of revelation) with moral virtue, he would have been the

first to lay stress upon it, and to inculcate it upon his pupils.

As the laws of his country, which with Socrates were too much the standard of right, with respect both to religion and morals, were very imperfect on many subjects, we do not wonder that he did not express a sufficient indignation (such as those do who are acquainted with the purer and more severe precepts of revealed religion relating to them) at some particular vices, especially sodomy, which the laws of God by Moses justly punished with death.

When Critias, then, his pupil, was in love with Euthydemus, and avowedly, as it should seem, for the vilest purpose, he dissuaded him from pursuing his object; but only as a thing that was illiberal, unbecoming a man of honour and delicacy. "It was" he said "begging of the object of his passion like a pauper, and for a thing that would do him no good," p. 29. The gratification of this passion he said, resembled a hog rubbing himself against a stone, p. 30. This, no doubt, shews a *contempt* for this vice, but no sufficient *abhorrence* of it, as such a degradation of human nature ought to excite. When another of his pupils gave a kiss to a son of Alcibiades, who was very beautiful, he only asked whether it did not require great boldness to do it, meaning that, after this, it would not be easy to refrain from endeavouring to take greater liberties with him. There is too much of pleasantry, and too little of seriousness, in this method of considering the subject.

A similar remark may be made on the interview that Socrates had with a celebrated courtesan of the name of Theodota, whom he had the curiosity to visit on account of what he had heard of her extraordinary beauty and elegant form, so that statuary applied to her to take models from her; and to whom the historian says she exhibited her person as much as decency would permit. In this situation Socrates and his pupils found her; but in the conversation that he had with her he discovered no just sense of the impropriety of her life and profession. She spake to him of her galants as her friends, who contributed to her support without labour, and hoped that by his recommendation she should procure more; adding, "How shall I persuade you to this." He replies, "This you must find out yourself, and consider in what way it may be in my power to be of use to you." And when she desired him to come often to see her, he only jestingly said, that he was not sufficiently at leisure from other engagements, p. 251. Ready as Socrates was to give good advice to young men, he said nothing to her to recommend a more virtuous and reputable course of life than that which he knew she led.

It was not in this manner that Jesus and his apostles would have conversed with such a person. He did not decline all intercourse with women of her character, but it was not at their houses; and what he said was intended to instruct and reclaim them. He considered them as the *sick*, and himself as the *physician*.

Women of the profession of this Theodota, if they had been well educated, were resorted to in the most open manner by men of the first character at Athens, as Aspasia by Socrates himself, and by Pericles, who afterwards married her. Nor was fornication in general, with women of that profession, at all disreputable, either in Greece, or at Rome.

How much more pure are the morals of christianity in this respect. So great, however, was the prevalence of this vice, and so little had it been considered as one, in the heathen world, that the apostle Paul, writing to the christian churches in Greece, and especially at Corinth, the richest and most voluptuous city in that part of the world, is urgent to dissuade his converts from it. See particularly 1 Cor. VI. 9 &c. where among those who would be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, he mentions fornicators in the first place. *Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived ; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

SECTION V.

Of Socrates's Belief in a future State.

Though Socrates had more just ideas concerning the nature and character of deity, and also of the nature and obligations of virtue, than the generality of his countrymen, and even of the philosophers, he does not appear to have had any more knowledge than others concerning the great sanction of virtue, in the *doctrine of a future state*. In none of his conversations recorded by Xenophon on the subject of virtue with young men and others, is there the least mention of it, or allusion to it; which was certainly unavoidable if he had been really acquainted with it, and believed it.

Speaking of the happiness of his virtuous pupils, he mentions the pleasure they would have in this life, and the respect that would be paid to them; and says that, “when they died they would not be without honour, consigned to oblivion, but would be for ever celebrated, p. 111.” Having said this, could he have forborne to add their happier condition after death, if he had had any belief of it:

All his dissuasives from vice are grounded on some natural and necessary inconvenience to which men expose themselves by it in this life, but none of them have any respect to another. Thus he represents intemperate persons as slaves to their appetites, p. 322; and treating of what he considered as being the laws of nature, and therefore as those of

the gods, as the prohibition of marriage between parents and their children, p. 828, he only says that “the offspring of such a mixture is bad, one of the parties being too old to produce healthy children;” and this reason does not apply to the case of brothers and sisters. Another law of nature, he says, is to do good in return for good received; but the penalty of not doing it he makes to be nothing more than being deserted by a man’s friends when he will have the most want of them, and to be forced to apply to those who have no friendship for him. p. 329.

It is particularly remarkable that nothing that Xenophon says as coming from Socrates, not only in his conversations with his pupils, but even at his trial, and the scenes before his death, implies a belief of a future state. All that we have of this kind is from Plato; and though he was present at the trial, and therefore what he says is no doubt, intitled to a considerable degree of credit, it wants the attestation of *another witness*; and the want of that of Xenophon is something more than *negative*; especially as it is well known that Plato did not scruple to put into the mouth of Socrates language and sentiments that never fell from him; as it is said Socrates himself observed, when he was shewn the dialogue intitled *Lysis*, in which he is the principal speaker, as he is in many others.

In Plato’s celebrated dialogue intitled *Phædo*, in which he makes Socrates advance arguments in proof of a future state, we want the evidence of some person who was present; for Plato himself was at

that time confined by sickness, (P. p. 74) so that it is very possible, as nothing is said of it by Xenophon, that he might not have held any discourse on the subject at all.

Besides, all that Socrates is represented by Plato to have said on this subject is far from amounting to any thing like certain *knowledge*, and real *belief*, with respect to it, such as appears in the discourses of Jesus, and the writings of the apostles. Socrates, according to Plato, generally speaks of a future state, and the condition of men in it, as the *popular belief*, which might be true or false. "If" says he (p. 46) "what is said be true, we shall in another state die no more. In death" he says to his judges" (p. 44 "we either lose all sense of things, or, *as it is said*, go into some other place; and if so, it will be much better; as we shall be out of the power of partial judges, and come before those that are impartial. Minos, Rhadamanthus, Æacus, Triptolemus, and others, who were demigods." Taking his leave of them, he says, "I must now depart to die, while you continue in life; but which of these is the better, the gods only can tell; for in my opinion no man can know this."

This certainly implies no faith on which to ground real practice, from which a man could, with the apostle, *live as seeing things invisible*, being governed by a regard to them more than to things present, the one as certain as the other, and infinitely superior in value, *the things that are seen be-*

ing temporary, while those that are unseen are eternal. 2. Cor. iv, 10.

Notwithstanding this uncertainty of Socrates with respect to a future state, he died with great composure and dignity ; considering his death at that time as, on the whole, better for him than to live any longer in the circumstances in which, at his time of life (being seventy years old) he must have lived ; especially as a coward, discovering an unmanly dread of death, in exile and disgrace ; dying also without torture, surrounded by his friends, and admirers, who would ensure his fame to the latest posterity.

That such *arguments* in proof of a future state as Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates should really have been advanced, and have had any stress laid upon them, by him, in so serious a time as just before his death, is exceedingly improbable, from the extreme futility of them. They are more like the mere play of imagination, than the deductions of reason.

His first argument is, that as every thing else in nature has its contrary, *death* must have it also, and if so, it must be followed by *life*, as day follows night, and a state of *vigilance* always follows *sleep*. p. 56. But might it not be said that, for the same reason, every thing that is *bitter* must some time or other become *sweet*, and every thing that is sweet become bitter ?

His second argument is, that all our present acquired knowledge is only the recollection of what

we knew before in a former state. p. 100. But what evidence is there of this?

His third argument is, that only compound substances are liable to corruption, by a separation of the parts of which they consist; but the mind is a simple substance, and therefore cannot be affected by the dissolution of the body in death. p. 111. This is certainly the most plausible argument of the three, but it is of too subtle a nature to give much satisfaction. If the mind have several powers and affections, and be furnished with a multiplicity of ideas, there is the same evidence of its being a compound as there is with respect to the body; and if the power of thinking, or mental action, bear any resemblance to corporeal *motion*, it may cease, and be suspended, though the substance remain.

Are these sufficient arguments for a man at the point of death to build his faith and hope upon? As this appears to have been all that the most sagacious of the heathens could attain to by the light of nature, what reason have we to be thankful for the superior light of revelation, and especially for the gospel, which *brings life and immortality to light*. 2. Tim. i. 10.

Socrates does not, in this celebrated dialogue, make any mention of the argument from the *universal belief* of a future state, as handed down by *tradition* in all nations; which, though far short of a proper *proof* of the doctrine, is more plausible than any of the three arguments above mentioned. For it might be presumed that the ancestors of the human race, from whom the tradition descended to

their posterity, had some proper evidence of what they delivered, though that had not been preserved, the doctrine itself only being retained. This, indeed seems to have been the case with respect to the Jews. Though they were in the time of our Saviour firm believers in the doctrine of a resurrection, the record of the revelation (for it could not have come from any other source) had been long lost.

How far short is every thing that Socrates is represented as saying of the perfect assurance with which Jesus always spoke of his resurrection to an immortal life, and the glory that was prepared for him in the counsels of God from the foundation of the world; when, as the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews say (c. XII. 20) *for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* How short it falls of the confidence which the apostle Paul, in the near view of death, expresses with respect to *his* future prospects, 2. Tim. iv. 7. *I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.* With what satisfaction and joy have thousands of christian martyrs relinquished this life in the assurance of a better.

Besides, after all that Socrates advances in proof of a future state, he seems to make it the peculiar privilege of those who apply to philosophy, who have in some degree abstracted the purer mind from the

gross body by intense meditation. p. 83. " This," he says, (p. 94) " was intended by the authors of the " *mysteries* when they said that none besides the " *initiated* would live with the gods after death ; " for that by the initiated were meant those who " philosophized in a right manner (*ορθως*) and that " whether he had succeeded or not, it had been his " endeavour through life to do so."

According to this, the great mass of mankind have no more interest in a future state than brute animals. But the gospel makes no difference in favour of philosophers, or any other class of men. According to this, *all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the son of man, (John v. 28) and shall come forth ; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.* Then too (Rev. xx. 15) *the sea shall give up the dead that is in it, and every man shall be judged according to his works.*

SECTION VI.

Of the Dæmon of Socrates.

Much has been advanced on the subject of the *dæmon*, as it is commonly called, of Socrates, or that *divine voice*, as he termed it, which gave him warnings about what he was about to do, if it was improper for him, and which was evidently something different from *divination*, to which he often had recourse, or from any casual *omen* that might occur to him. This he said had accompanied him from his youth; but though it forbid him to do certain things that he was deliberating about, it had never prompted him to any particular action. *ib.*

This divine voice did not respect his own conduct only, but sometimes that of others; and he declared that whenever he had, from this warning, signified the will of the gods to any of his friends, he had never been deceived by it. p. 370.

Speaking of his general manner of life, and plan of conduct, in devoting his time and talents to the instruction of others, he said, p. 32, it had been enjoined him "by the gods, by oracles, by the god" (probably meaning that particular deity from whom he had the hints above mentioned) "by dreams, and every other mode in which, by divination, they order things to be done." This was said by him in his address to his judges; and he added that, though the deity had checked him in the smallest things that he was about to do, if they

were improper (p. 44) yet that when he was thinking of his defence the deity had thus forbidden him to make any, and this not only once, but twice, p. 365, nor, while he was then speaking did he perceive any check with respect to any part of his conduct. p. 44. He therefore concluded that, since this divine voice had not interfered on this occasion, it was best for him to await the sentence of his judges, though they should condemn him to death. "The situation I am now in," he said, "did not come to me by chance; for nothing can happen amiss to a good man with respect to life or death; since the gods never neglected him. It is, therefore, better for me to die now, and to be exempt from all farther labours." p. 47.

These intimations, in whatever manner they were communicated, are now, I believe, generally thought to have been a mere *illusion*, when nothing really supernatural took place. Had these suggestions occurred only once or twice in the course of his life, the hypothesis of their being an illusion, or mere imagination, might have been admitted. But they had attended him, he said, from his youth, and had given him hints not only respecting his own conduct (which by his account had been very frequent) but sometimes that of his friends; and because he had received no check from this quarter with respect to his conduct at his trial, he concluded with certainty that it was right, and would have the best issue.

Besides the admonitions of this kind which were communicated while he was awake, he had others

he says, given him in dreams. One of these he mentioned just before his death ; which was that he should apply to music. On this he had put various constructions ; and lest he should not have hit upon the true meaning of it, he composed while he was in prison, a hymn in praise of Apollo, and turned some of the fables of Æsop into verse, which were always recited in a musical recitative. p. 77.

This might have been nothing more than a common dream, on which he put an uncommon construction, in consequence of imagining that there was something supernatural in it. But this could not have been the case with respect to the hints that he received when he was awake, whether by the medium of a real voice, or in any other way.

In no other respect does Socrates appear to have been an enthusiast. On the contrary, he was a man of a calm and even temper, not distinguished by any peculiarity of behaviour, or extravagance of any kind. And though he seems to have addressed himself to every person to whom he imagined that his advice would be useful, he was never charged with being impertinent, so as to give offence to any. On the contrary, his address was insinuating and pleasing ; so that his hearers in general were delighted with his conversation, and this through the course of a long life.

Since, then, he persisted in his account of these admonitions to the last, and in the most serious situation that a man could be in, and his veracity was never questioned, though I am far from forming any fixed opinion on a subject of so great obscurity, I

think it may admit of a doubt, whether they may not be supposed to have come, in whatever manner they were given, from God. I do not see any thing unworthy of the Divine Being in his distinguishing this extraordinary man in this way. Being no judge of the propriety of the divine conduct, we must be determined in every case of this kind by the *evidence of facts*, according to the established rules of estimating the value of testimony in general.

These admonitions are said to have been proper to the occasions on which they were delivered ; so that leading to *good*, if they came from any superior being, it must have been a wise and benevolent one. They would, therefore, tend to impress the mind of Socrates, and those of his numerous disciples and admirers, with an idea of the existence of a power superior to man, though not in a manner so decisive and convincing as the express revelations that were made to the Hebrew prophets. But why it should please God to distinguish any one man, or any particular nation, with his peculiar gifts, and in what degree he should do this, is not for us to say. If we see good to result from it, we ought not to cavil or complain, but be satisfied, and thankful.

That in any manner whatever, and in what degree soever, it shall appear that the maker of the world gives attention to it, it is a proof of the reality of a *providence* in general, and of the divine interference out of the usual course of the laws of nature. It is therefore a decisive proof of a great and important truth. And if he be not such a god as Epicurus and other philosophers supposed, one who, (whether

he had created the world or not) sat a perfectly unconcerned spectator of all that passed in it, but really interested himself in the affairs of men by occasional interpositions, it cannot be doubted but that, from the same principle, he does it at all times, though in a manner less apparent; and that his final treatment of men will be according to his proper character, whatever that be, If he be a righteous and good being, he will, no doubt, most approve of virtue and goodness in men, and show it by rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked.

The reason why he does not do this completely at present, though we are not without some intimations of his *disposition* to do so, it is not difficult to account for. There must be time and opportunity to form characters. The existence of vice, as well as of virtue, in the world is necessary for this purpose; and it is not till a character be properly formed that a suitable treatment can be adjusted to it. If our maker think of us at all, it must be for our good.

Thus do such supernatural suggestions as Socrates asserts that he had offered some obscure and indistinct evidence of a *moral government of the world*, and consequently of a future state of righteous retribution. Why such intimations were not more frequent, more distinct, or more general, is beyond our comprehension. If we be asked why the wise and benevolent author of nature permitted the rise and long continuance of the most absurd and abominable systems of polytheism and idolatry to prevail so long in the world, or why he

should suffer so much vice and misery to exist in it at present ; why mankind should be afflicted with war, pestilence, and famine, and be subject to such distressful accidents as lightning, hurricanes, and earthquakes, we can only say with Abraham of old, (Gen. xviii. 25) that the *maker and judge of the earth will do what is right* ; and therefore that all these evils, repugnant as they seem to our ideas of benevolence, may hereafter appear to have been the best methods of promoting general and lasting happiness.

If the present state be considered as nothing more than the *infancy* of our being, we may naturally expect to be no more able to account for our treatment in it, than a child is able to account for that of its parent, who, though ever so affectionate, must, if he be wise, do continually what the child, cannot see any reason for, and what he must think to be very often exceedingly harsh and unreasonable. And as appearances in nature, and in the structure of the world, furnish an unquestionable proof of a wise and benevolent author, the present imperfect state of virtue and happiness does, as such, afford some evidence that this *is* the infant state of our being ; and is therefore an argument, and a promise, as we may say, of future good. And slight as it may be, and less satisfactory than we could wish, it should be highly grateful and acceptable to us.

SECTION VII.

Of the Character, and Teaching, of Socrates compared with those of Jesus.

When we consider what was most obvious in the general disposition and behaviour of Socrates and of Jesus, we see no apparent difference with respect to the command of their natural appetites and passions, or their temper in general. Both were equally temperate, though as Jesus was not married, and was never charged with incontinence, he shewed a command of his natural passions in this respect for which there was no occasion in the case of Socrates. Both of these men seem to have been equally free from austerity and moroseness in their general behaviour, being equally affable, and no enemies to innocent festivity on proper occasions.

They were both capable of strong personal attachments, as Socrates to several of his friends and pupils, and Jesus to the family of Lazarus, to his apostles in general, and to John in particular. And his discourses and prayer before his death shows his affection for them in the strongest manner. Also his attention to his mother, while he hung upon the cross, deserves particular notice in this respect.

Both of them were the friends of virtue, and laboured to promote it; but Jesus expressed stronger indignation against vice, especially the vices of the

great, and of the leading men of his country against whose pride, hypocrisy, and injustice, he pronounced the most vehement and provoking invectives; whereas Socrates adopted the gentler method of irony and ridicule!

There was, I doubt not, great propriety, as well as ingenuity, in the ironical manner that Socrates is said to have very often used, in exposing the vices of particular persons: and by this means he is said, and with great probability, to have made himself many bitter enemies. But there was certainly more of *dignity* in the direct and serious invectives of Jesus, such as his saying, Matt. xxiii. 13 &c. *Woe unto you Scribes and pharisees, hypocrites &c.* And let it not be forgotten that this was pronounced by the son of a carpenter, of only about thirty years of age, and publicly in the temple, where he was always attended by great multitudes of persons of all ranks, and that no reply was ever made to him on these occasions. He by this conduct made himself as many enemies as Socrates, but it was in a manner that showed more courage.

Both Jesus and Socrates took advantage of present incidents, as hints for their instructive discourses; but those of Socrates have the appearance of having been contrived before hand, while those to which Jesus alluded were such as naturally presented themselves at the time.

[What was peculiar to Socrates was his proposing to his hearers a series of *questions*, by means of which he made the conclusions he wished to have drawn seem to be their own; so that all objections

were precluded. A great peculiarity in the discourses of Jesus, though his manner was very various, and often authoritatively didactic, which that of Socrates never was, consisted in his numerous *parables*, the meaning of which, when he intended it to be so, was sufficiently obvious, and peculiarly striking; as in those of the rich man and Lazarus, of the man who was robbed, and nearly murdered, on his way to Jericho, and the peculiarly fine one of the prodigal son, and therefore more easily retained in memory, as well as adapted to make a stronger impression on the mind, than a moral lesson not so introduced and accompanied.

At other times there was an intended obscurity in the parables and sayings of Jesus. He did not always wish to be understood at the time, but to have what he said to be remembered, and reflected upon afterwards. Such sayings were calculated to engage more attention from their being expressed in a concise, figurative and enigmatical manner; as when he said, (John ii. 19.) *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.* Such a saying as this would not be forgotten. His enemies, we find, remembered it and his friends would understand his meaning in due time; as they would his saying, (John xii. 31.) *If I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto me;* in which he alluded both to his crucifixion, his resurrection, and the universal spread of his gospel.

It is very remarkable that there are not in the most elaborate compositions of the ancients or moderns any parables so excellent for pertinency to the

occasions on which they were delivered, for propriety and consistency in their parts, and for important meaning, as those of Jesus. Numerous as they are, they all appear to have been unpremeditated, as they arose from circumstances in which the speaker had no choice. There is nothing trifling or absurd in any of them; and few others, though the result of much study, are free from some objection of this kind. It will be not supposed that the parables of Jesus received any improvement from the writers of his life, and yet the more they are studied the more admirable they are found to be.*

Both the discourses and the general manner of life of Socrates and Jesus have an obvious resemblance, as they both went about gratuitously doing good, according to their several abilities, situations, and opportunities; but we see an infinite superiority with respect to Jesus, though he had no such advantage of education and instruction as Socrates had.

Socrates had all the advantage that education, in the most polished city of Greece, and the most improved period of it, could give him; having been enabled by the generosity of a wealthy citizen to attend the lectures of all the celebrated masters of his time, in every branch of science then known: and

* On this subject of parables, and every thing relating to the *internal evidences of christianity*, I would particularly recommend a most comprehensive and excellent work of Mr. J. Simpson's, entitled, *Internal and presumptive evidences of Christianity considered separately, and as united to form one argument*, 1801.

with respect to natural capacity, he was probably equal to Jesus, or any other man.

On the contrary, the circumstances of the parents of Jesus, and his low occupation till he appeared in public, exclude the supposition of his having had any advantage of liberal education. This, indeed, was objected to him by his adversaries. John vii. 15. *The jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned,* that is, how did he acquire so much knowledge, without being regularly instructed by the professed teachers of the law ?

Notwithstanding this great disadvantage, we find that, without any previous preparation that was visible, Jesus, from his very first appearance, assumed more authority, as a teacher and reprover of vice, than any other man before or since ; addressing himself to great multitudes, or single persons, the most eminent for their rank or knowledge, without the least embarrassment, and with an air of superiority to all men ; and yet without the appearance of any thing impertinent, ostentatious, or insulting.

Had Socrates introduced any of his instructions with *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, or any language of a similar import, he would have exposed himself to the ridicule of his audience, even in the latest period of his life, when he had acquired the greatest respect and authority. But this language was usual with Jesus from the very first ; as in his discourse on the mount, when, instead of being insulted, he by this very means excited the greater veneration and attachment. For we read, Matt. vii. 28.

It came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

How must any other man than Jesus have exposed himself to ridicule, if, when speaking of the Ninevites repenting at the preaching of Jonah, and of the queen Sheba coming from her own distant country to hear the wisdom of Solomon, he had added, as Jesus did, *but a greater than Jonah*, and *one greater than Solomon is here*, Matt. xii. 41, &c, But for any thing that appears he was heard with the greatest awe and respect. Infinitely more arrogant must it have appeared in any other man to say, as he did, after his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.* No man but one who had actually risen from the dead, and who had before this performed such miracles as convinced his hearers that he had a commission from God, could have used such language as this; and have been heard with acquiescence and respect.

[To say nothing on the subject of miracles, to which Socrates did not pretend (but the truth of which in the case of Jesus can alone account for the air of superior dignity and authority that he constantly assumed, as a messenger from God, and having his authority delegated to him) his discourses relate to subjects of infinitely more importance than those of Socrates, the great object of them being to inculcate a purer and more sublime morality

respecting God and man, than any heathen could have a just idea of, and urging his hearers in all their behaviour in this life to have a principal respect to another, which was to commence when he himself, after a painful death, to which he knew that he was destined, and his removal from the world, should return, invested with power to raise the dead, and to judge the world, when he would give to every man according to his works.

These are pretensions that no other man besides Jesus ever made; but with these ideas of his present power from God, and his future great destination, his conduct, and his language, as a public teacher corresponded; and his hearers, believing this, heard him with suitable reverence and respect.

What other man, to mention but one instance more, would not have exposed himself to ridicule by making such pretensions, and using such language, as the following, John xi. 25 *I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* vi. 40. *This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.* Matt. xxv. 31. *When the son of man (by which phrase he always meant himself) shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him will be gathered all nations, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, &c.*

The most astonishing proof of extraordinary authority assumed and exercised, by Jesus was his driving the buyers and sellers out of the outter court of the temple at the time of a public festival, when that use had, of course, been made of it time immemorial, and with the permission of the rulers of the nation. This he did with only a whip of small cords to drive out the oxen and other cattle ; when as we read, Mark xi. 15. *he overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves ; saying ; It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations, but ye have made it a den of thieves.* This was done without opposition, remonstrance, or delay.

When this was done the scribes and pharisees asked him by what authority he had done it, and *who gave him that authority ;* but they declining to answer a question that he put to them, he refused to give them any answer. We do not, I will venture to say, in all history, read of an act of authority equal to this by any private person, and a person without any relations or patrons conspicuous for wealth or power ; and yet this bold unauthorized action was never alledged against him as a breach of the peace, or produced against him at his trial. We only read (Mark xi. 18.) that *the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.*

But independently of this superior *authority* with which Jesus always delivered himself, the

subjects of his discourses and exhortations were far more serious and weighty than those of Socrates. Indeed, some of those that are recorded by Xenophon are so exceedingly trifling, that we cannot help wondering that a writer of such judgement and good sense should have thought it worth his while to relate them. Some of those of Jesus are, no doubt, of much less importance than others; as when he advises persons how to place themselves at table where there are many guests of different ranks, &c. and observations and advices of far less importance than even this, are not unbecoming Socrates, Jesus, or any man in proper circumstances. For the gravest characters are not always speaking, as we say, *ex cathedra*. In the ordinary situations of human life, when nothing very serious is expected, but mere good humour and good sense, even innocent pleasantry is well received.

But the great inferiority in all heathens with respect to *knowledge*, especially concerning God; providence, and a future state, made it absolutely impossible that the moral discourses of Socrates should have the clearness, the weight, and importance, of those of Jesus. The comparison of their discourses in this respect shews the great superiority of the system of religious truth that was familiar to all Jews, as contained in their sacred books, to anything that was known to the most enlightened of the heathens, among whom Socrates shines with a distinguished preeminence.

To resort once more to the conduct of Socrates and Jesus. Socrates behaved with great propriety

and dignity at his trial; but it was by no means equal to the behaviour of Jesus in similar circumstances, though it is probable that he was wholly unacquainted with the forms and solemnity of courts of justice, especially those of the Romans, which would have thrown many persons entirely off their guard; whereas Socrates himself sat as a judge in one of the most important criminal causes that was ever brought before any court of justice. But Jesus replied to the interrogations of Pilate the Roman governor, as well as to those of the Jewish high priest, with the greatest presence of mind, and the utmost propriety; having the prudence and self-command, to make no answer at all to questions that were improper, and required none. This he did in a manner that astonished Pilate himself.

The readiness of Jesus to die after a hasty and most unjust condemnation, was certainly not less to be admired than that of Socrates, though the death of the latter was the easiest possible, and not in the least disreputable; being that to which the first citizens in the state, if sentenced to die, were brought: whereas that to which Jesus was sentenced was at the same time the most painful and the most ignominious.

Socrates had a very humane and compassionate person to administer the poison to him, shedding tears when he delivered it; and with great propriety Socrates spoke kindly to him on the occasion. But it is most probable that the Roman soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross did that office as they generally did, without any feeling of compassion, and

perhaps with mockery, as they had treated him before.] And yet it is probable that at the very time when they were putting him to the greatest pain he pronounced that admirable prayer in their favour, (Luke xxiii. 34.) *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, there being no particular guilt in their doing that office.

Rousseau, though an unbeliever, was struck with the great difference between the cases of Jesus and Socrates in their last moments, and describes them in the following energetic manner. “ The death of
“ Socrates, who breathed his last in philosophical
“ conversation with his friends, is the mildest death
“ that nature could desire ; while the death of Je-
“ sus, expiring in torment, injured, inhumanly
“ treated, mocked, and cursed by an assembly of
“ people, is the most horrible one that a mortal
“ could apprehend. Socrates while he takes the poi-
“ soned cup gives his blessings to the person who
“ presents it to him with the tenderest marks of sor-
“ row, Jesus in the midst of his agonies prays—for
“ whom ? for his executioners. Ah ! if the life and
“ death of Socrates carry the marks of a sage, the
“ life and death of Jesus proclaim a God.”

SECTION VIII.

Of the different Objects of the Instructions of Socrates and of Jesus.

There is a remarkable difference between the general conduct of Jesus and his apostles, and that of Socrates and the Grecian philosophers in general, with respect to the persons to whom they usually addressed their instructions. All the teaching of the latter was confined to persons of good condition, such as were likely to have influence in the important offices and concerns of the state; but this was no particular object with Jesus. Though Socrates, unlike other philosophers, took no money for his instructions, his admonitions appear to have been confined to persons of the same class with the pupils of the others. There is not one of the dialogues in which he is the speaker, either in Xenophon or Plato, in which the common people are any part of the audience; so that the great mass of citizens could not receive any benefit from his teaching.

On the other hand, the discourses of Jesus were addressed to persons of all ranks promiscuously, and generally to crowds of the common people, though without excluding any, and rather selecting those of the lower classes, who were held in contempt by the learned scribes and pharisees, for his audience. He was commonly attended by great multitudes, of whom very few can be thought to

have been what we call *persons of condition*, or who were likely to have any influence in public affairs, to which indeed his instructions had no relation whatever.

On two occasions, when crowds of this kind attended him, he fed them by a benevolent miracle ; whereas had they been opulent, they would, no doubt, have come sufficiently provided with every thing. We read Mark vi. 34, *that he was moved with compassion towards the multitude, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.* And again, (Matt. xv. 32) he says, *I have compassion on the multitude, because they have continued with me now three days, and have nothing to eat and I am unwilling to send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

Sometimes persons of better condition, and of a higher rank, such as Nicodemus, applied to Jesus ; but we never find that he sought their society, or first, in any manner, applied to them, or to any of the scribes and pharisees, who were the leading men in the country. Whereas, Socrates with the best views, no doubt, appears to have applied to no other. In this circumstance, however, we see a striking difference between these two teachers of virtue. The object of Socrates was the instruction of a *few*, but that of Jesus of the *many*, and especially those of the middle and lower classes, as standing in most need of instruction, and most likely to receive it with gratitude and without prejudice.

The apostles, in this and in every thing else, followed the example of their master, and addressed themselves to all classes of men without distinction, and without ever selecting the powerful, the rich, or the learned. To them, men of all descriptions were equal, as standing in the same relation to the common parent of all mankind; equally training up by him in the same great school of moral discipline here, and alike *heirs of immortality* hereafter.

Thus the apostle Paul says, (1 Cor. xii. 13,) *We are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.* Gal. xiii. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Coll. iii. 11. *There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all.* This is language suited to the equal nature, and equal rights of all men; but it was never held by the Grecian philosophers, nor did their conduct at all correspond to it. With them barbarians, and especially slaves, were of little account, any farther than they were qualified to serve them.

Accordingly, we find that the schools of the Grecian philosophers were attended by none but persons of considerable rank and wealth. The lower orders of the citizens took no interest in any thing that they taught, so that their morals could not be at all improved by them. But by the preach-

ing of the apostles a great and visible reformation was made among all ranks of men, and especially the lower, and of those some of the most depraved. Thus the apostle Paul, after observing what was quoted from him before, concerning those who should *not inherit the kingdom of God*, as idolaters, adulterers, thieves, &c. adds, *but such were some of you, But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.* Many passages in the epistles of the apostles shew the wretched state with respect to morals in which the gospel found men, and how much they were improved by it.

In none of the dialogues of Socrates do we find any *woman* to be present, except Theodota, the courtizan above mentioned; and though the domestic manners of the Grecian women of virtue, and of condition, were such as that they could not with decency attend public discourses, the middle and lower classes of women in Greece, as in all other countries went abroad as openly as men; and therefore might have been in the way of instruction, had the common people in general been addressed by the philosophers.

But christian teachers never made any account of difference of sex. When Jesus fed the five thousand and also the four thousand, there were *women and children* among them, as well as men. The same was the case with the christian churches in Corinth, and other cities of Greece. Even at Athens, where Paul did not make many converts, there was one woman of the name of Damaris,

Acts, xvii. 34. What her condition was is not said. But as she is mentioned by name, it is probable that, like Lydia, she was of some considerable rank, at least her own mistress, not subject to the controul of another.

SECTION IX.

Inferences to be drawn from the comparison of Socrates and Jesus.

1. In comparing the characters, the moral instructions, and the whole of the history, of Socrates and Jesus, it is, I think, impossible not to be sensibly struck with the great advantage of revealed religion, such as that of the Jews and the christians, as enlightening and enlarging the minds of men, and imparting a superior excellence of character. This alone can account for the difference between Socrates and Jesus, and the disciples of each of them; but this one circumstance is abundantly sufficient for the purpose.

— The manner in which the mind of Jesus must have been impressed by the persuasion that he had of his peculiar relation to God on the one part, and to all mankind on the other, could not fail to make him superior to Socrates, or any other man, in elevation of mind, whatever might be their superiority with respect to intellect, general knowledge, or natural advantages of any other kind.

The far greater extent of the views of Jesus, as bearing an important relation to all mankind, and the most distant generations of them; being their *prophet* and *king*, and also his own peculiar relation to God, the common parent of them all, being, as it were, his *vicegerent upon earth*, necessarily gave him an elevation of character that neither Socrates nor any other man could have.

Interested as he was for that should ever bear the christian name (which in due time he did not doubt would be the case with all men) with what fervour did he pray, (John xvii. 21.) that they might be *one with him and his Father, as they two were one*, and that they might share in *the glory that was destined for himself from the foundation of the world*. What dignity, as well as piety, do we see here? What other man could have used such language as this?

The habitual piety of Jesus was such as could not have been expected in Socrates, or the most virtuous of the heathens. He appears to have spoken, and acted, as at all times not only in the immediate presence, but as by the immediate direction of God. The words that he spake, he said, (John xiv. 80.) were not his own, but those of the Father who sent him; and who, being always with him, and always hearing him, performed the miraculous works by which his divine mission was evidenced. So assiduous was he in the discharge of his high commission, that, as he said, (John iv. 34) it was *his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly father and finish the work that he gave him to do*.

Raised as he was to a preeminence above all other men, he seems to have been even more than any other man sensible of his dependence upon God, and he had recourse to him on all occasions. We even read (Luke vi. 12.) of his spending *a whole night in prayer to God*; and it was in obedience to his will that, notwithstanding the dread that he naturally felt for the painful death to which he was destined, and the horror that he expressed on the near view of it, he voluntarily and patiently submitted to it. He prayed, and with peculiar earnestness, that the bitter cup might pass from him, but immediately added, (Matt. xxvi. 39.) *Not my will but thine be done*. Nothing like this could be expected of Socrates, or any heathen. Their knowledge of God, his providence, and his will, were too obscure and uncertain for the purpose, though they had been ever so well disposed.

As the worship of Socrates was nominally at least, directed only to Jupiter, Juno, and the other gods that were acknowledged by his country, it was hardly possible for him not to retain such ideas as were generally entertained of them; and notwithstanding his endeavours to divest his mind of every thing in their character that must have appeared unworthy of divinity, such is the power of association, that it was impossible he should ever do it completely; and if not, his reverence for the objects of his worship must have fallen infinitely short of that which Jesus, and the Jews in general, had for their God; and every sentiment of devotion must have partaken of that imperfection. Their love, or attachment to

them, their dread of their power, their devotedness to their will in doing, and their resignation to their will in suffering, the sense they had of their constant dependance upon them, and of their presence with them, must have been very little compared with the same sentiments in the mind of a pious Jew, with respect to the one great object of his worship.

This must be apparent to any person who will read the book of Psalms, and compare those devotional compositions with any (if there be any such) of a similar nature composed by heathens. But there was nothing in the religions of the heathens, at least among the Greeks and Romans, that could inspire any sentiments that deserve to be called *devotional*. This striking difference no person will say was owing to any superiority of genius in the Hebrew poets, and therefore it must have been owing to superior knowledge; and this superior knowledge could not have had any source but from divine revaluation. Without this the Hebrews would, no doubt, have been as absurdly superstitious as any of the neighbouring nations? and consequently their ideas of the power and providence of God as little proper to inspire sentiments of true devotion.

To persons of reflection, and acquainted with the state of the heathen world, and especially their turn of thinking and acting with respect to religion, there needs no other evidence of the truth of revaluation than a comparison of the hymns in honour of the heathen gods by Callimachus, and other Grecian poets, or the *carmen seculare* of Horace, with the

Psalms of David, and other devotional parts of the books of scripture, with respect to justness and elevation of sentiment, and correspondent sublimity of language.

2. In the account that we have of the dæmon of Socrates, what he says of it himself, and what appears to have been generally thought of it by others, we clearly perceive that there is nothing so naturally incredible as modern unbelievers represent with respect to divine interpositions, either in the case of the vulgar, or the philosophers of ancient times. The universal practice of having recourse to oracles and divination, is alone an abundant proof of this with respect to mankind in general; and the idea of a *mystical union with God*, and a consequent intimate communication with him, came into christianity from the later Platonists. In every thing of this kind the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Julian, the great boasts of modern unbelievers, were as credulous as the lowest of the vulgar.

Where, indeed, can be the impropriety, or improbability, of the Being that made the world, giving attention to it, and giving suitable intimations of that attention; and this no uniform appearances will do. It is not men's seeing the sun rise and set, or their observing the regular changes of the seasons, that impresses them with the idea of any thing supernatural; but unusual appearances, though equally natural, arising from the same principles and laws of nature, such as thunder, lightning, eclipses, and earthquakes &c. Both history and daily observation is a proof of this. And, surely miracles, performed

by duly authorized prophets, do this infinitely better than any merely unusual natural phenomena.

This opinion of the natural incredibility of accounts of miracles, on which Mr. Hume, and after him other unbelievers lay so much stress, as what no positive testimony can shake, is quite a modern thing. But had this incredibility had any foundation in nature, it must have been the same at all times, and in all countries; and it must have affected all classes of men, princes and peasants, the learned and the unlearned; whereas all history shews that a propensity to believe accounts of divine interpositions has been universal. It entered into all systems of religion whatever, and no nation was ever without some religion. It is impossible, therefore, not to conclude that a system which supposes miracles is naturally adapted to gain belief, and therefore that a pretension to miracles is far from being a circumstance unfavourable to its reception. It is rather a presumption in its favour. If it be any object with the Divine Being to give mankind intimations of his attention to them, and government over them, which no person can say is impossible, or improbable, he could not take any other method than that of miracles to gain his end.

Much has been said about Socrates referring Alcibiades to a *future instructor*, as if he had been sensible of the want of supernatural communication, and that he hoped for, and expected it. But supposing Plato's account of the conversation, (p. 295) to be depended upon, which it certainly cannot, I can by no means infer so much from it. After ex-

pressing the uncertainty men are under with respect to proper requests to the gods, he tells Alcibiades that "he must wait till some person inform him" (*τῆς ωαδῆς*) how he should conduct himself both with respect to the gods and to men."

When in reply to this, Alcibiades expresses much importunity to be informed who this teacher was, taking for granted that it was some man (for he says "I would gladly know who this man is,") Socrates only says, that "it was one who cared much "for him," meaning probably that he was much his friend; "but that at present a degree of darkness "hung over his mind, which must first be dispersed." I therefore think it most probable that he meant *himself*, but that he thought his pupil not then sufficiently prepared to receive farther instruction on the subject.

3. We see in the case of Socrates himself, as well as in that of the people of Athens in general, the strong attachment which the heathens had to the rites of their ancient religions. To disregard them, and to adopt other rites, was punishable with death. The Athenians, as well as other nations, occasionally adopted the worship of other gods, and other modes of worship, but individuals were not allowed to do it. It must be done by the authority of the state, and at Athens it was by the court of Areopagus. On this account the apostle Paul, who was said to endeavour to introduce the worship of strange gods, and a new religion, was brought before this court.

But though heathen nations sometimes adopted other rites, they never abandoned their ancient ones. There does not appear to have been any example of this in all antiquity. Nor can we wonder at this, when it is considered, that in all heathen countries, the prosperity of the state was thought to depend upon the observance of the religious rites of their ancestors, the founders of the respective states. No principle appears to have been more fixed in the minds of all men than this. We see it in the extreme reluctance with which some of the most absurd and indecent rites, as the Lupercalia at Rome, were given up. And to the very last, the more learned, and therefore, it may be presumed, the least superstitious of the Romans, constantly, upbraided the christians with being the cause of the decline of the empire, by the introduction of their new religion.

This attachment of the heathens to their religion was necessarily increased by its entering into all the customs, and confirmed habits, of common life; some rite of a religious nature being observed from the time of their birth to that of their death, and in fact from the morning to the evening of every day. Every entertainment, public or private, was tinged with it. No act of magistracy could be performed without it; and in countries the most advanced in civilization the public festivals, in honour of their gods, were very numerous. It will be seen in *Potters Antiquities of Greece*, that not less than sixty-six of them were observed by the Athenians, and several of them were of some days conti-

nuance. And in general there was so much in them of festivity and amusement, bordering, to say the least, on licentiousness, that they were very fascinating to the common people.

When it is considered how discordant and inconsistent all this was with the principles of christianity, so that when any heathen became a christain he must change every habit of his life, as well as his opinions; that let him live ever so privately, he could hardly pass a single day without the change being observed, and that at the birth of a child, a marriage, or a funeral, it must have been conspicuous to all his neighbours, and the whole city, though he might have found some excuse for not attending the public sacrifices, and other rites of a visible nature, and though he should not have thought himself obliged (which all christians are) to make an open profession of his faith, *confessing Christ before men*, we shall not wonder at the difficulty with which this great change must have been made, any more than at the alarm that was taken when many converts were made to christianity, and the consequent persecution of christians, as seditious persons, men *who turned the world upside down*, (Acts xvii. 6.) their principles tending to the ruin of all states.

While the christians were few, and generally considered as converts to judaism, which was universally tolerated, and while they behaved in a very peaceable inoffensive manner, they might not give much alarm, notwithstanding their singularities; but when they were observed to be numerous,

they would not fail to give alarm to all heathen governors. They were then exposed to the most unrelenting persecution, except where the acting magistrates were secretly disposed in their favour.

The rapid progress of christianity in these circumstances will ever appear the most extraordinary thing in the history of the world. It appears from the epistles of Paul, that in his time there were christian churches in all the more considerable cities in the eastern part of the Roman empire. In the time of the emperor Trajan the younger Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, complained that the rites of the ancient religions were generally discontinued in his province; and in the space of about three hundred years so numerous and respectable were the christians become, in the whole extent of that vast empire, that the emperors themselves found they might safely declare themselves christians.

To account for the rise and progress of christianity, and the overthrow of heathenism, and this without violence, in the whole extent of the Roman empire, in so short a space of time, is a problem that no unbeliever has seriously attempted to solve, except Mr. Gibbon may be said to have endeavoured to do it. But his observations on the subject are so exceedingly futile, that they discover equal prejudice and ignorance, ignorance of the common principles of human nature, of the nature of heathenism, and of the state of the heathen world. I pro-

posed to enter into the discussion of this important subject with him, but he petulantly declined it, as may be seen in the letters that passed between us relating to it, published in the *Appendix to the first volume of my Discourses on the evidence of revealed religion*, and also in the *Life of Mr. Gibbon* by one of his friends. At my time of life I cannot engage in this, or any other controversy; but I earnestly wish, as a friend to important truth, that some learned and candid unbeliever (and such I doubt not there are) would engage in it. He would find christians enow equally learned and candid to discuss the question with him.

4. Neither Socrates nor Jesus were writers, and there seems to be more of dignity in their characters in consequence of it, as if they were not very solicitous about transmitting their names to posterity; confident, that as far as it was an object with them, it would be sufficiently done by others. All the accounts, therefore, that we have of them come from their disciples and friends. And there is a remarkable difference in the manner in which the life of Socrates is written by Xenophon, and that of Jesus by the evangelists. There cannot be a doubt but that the evangelists had a much higher opinion of their master than Xenophon or Plato had of theirs. The traces of this are numerous, and indisputable; but there is not in their writings any direct *encomium*, or *praise*, of him, as there is in the Greek writers of Socrates; and yet without any

assistance of this kind a reader of moderate discernment cannot help forming a much higher idea of Jesus than he does of Socrates from the *facts* recorded of him, and the *discourses* ascribed to him.

Indeed, we have no example of such simplicity in writing as that of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in all the heathen world; and it is not easy to account for the difference, especially with respect to the latter writers; except that Moses having begun to write in this simple manner, the succeeding writers, having no other model, naturally followed that; inserting in their compositions nothing that appeared superfluous, as direct encomiums are, when the facts from which such encomiums are drawn, are before the reader; who may be supposed as capable of drawing a proper inference from them as the writer himself.

As the sacred writers say nothing directly in praise of those whom they most esteemed and admired, they say nothing directly in dispraise, or censure, of those whom they most disliked, but leave the circumstances they simply mention to make their natural impression upon their readers. And from the effects of these two different modes of writing, the *natural* and the *artificial*, as they may be termed, the former appears to be better calculated to answer the purpose of the writer than the latter. When a man directly praises or censures another, we suspect some previous bias for or against him, and are upon our guard; but when

we read a simple narrative of facts, without any explanatory remarks of the writer ; we have no suspicion of any thing unfavourable to truth. We think we see with our own eyes, and hear with our own ears, and that we thus judge for ourselves.

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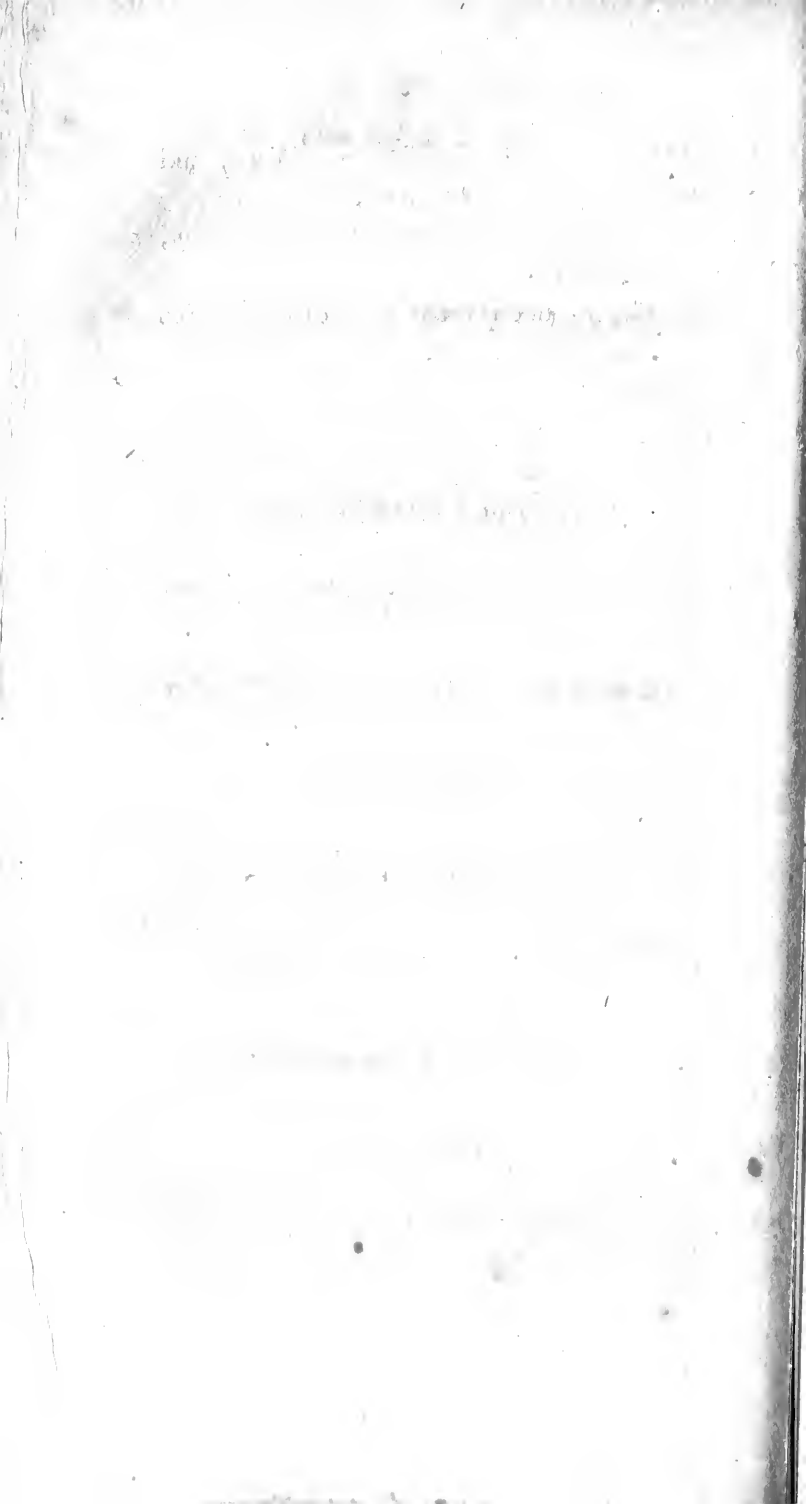
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IN ANSWER

TO HIS PERFORMANCE,

ENTITLED

SOCRATES AND JESUS COMPARED.

BY JOHN BLAIR LINN, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION
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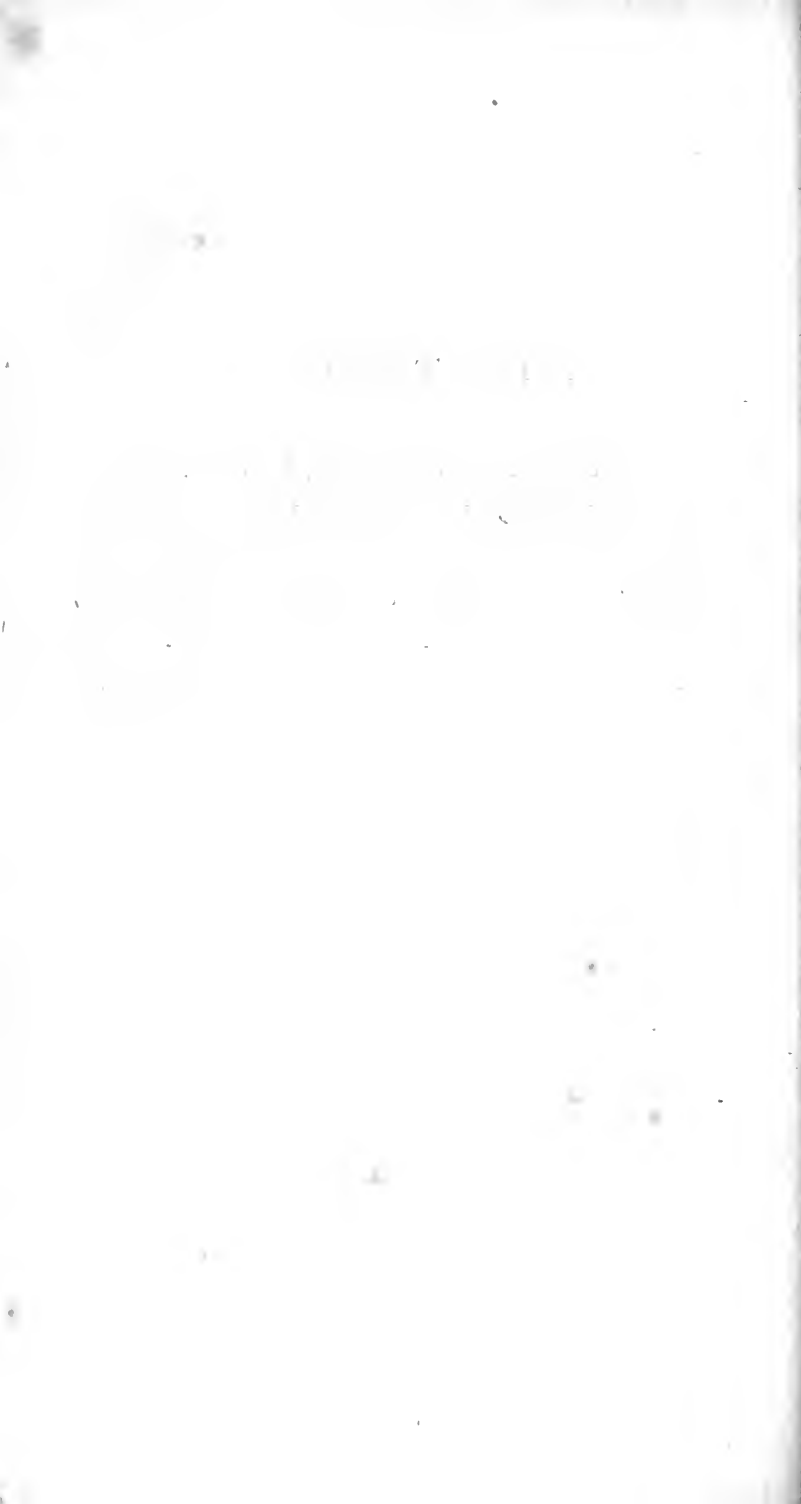
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AS the Greek language, to the largest class of readers, would be unintelligible, I have, in the following sheets, given in English the extracts from the Memorabilia, and will be responsible for their accuracy. In several instances, while collecting evidences in support of facts which I have mentioned, when I could not have recourse to the Greek writers, I have referred to modern historians, and connected with them the names of the original authorities, from which they derived their information.



A LETTER

TO JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S. &c.

IN ANSWER TO HIS PERFORMANCE,

ENTITLED,

SOCRATES AND JESUS COMPARED.

SIR,

THE present period may properly be termed the day of inquiry. On subjects of religion, politics, and criticism, free and uncontroled investigation has been exercised. That such unfettered licence is permitted, I am not sorry, being conscious that truth must finally prevail. May I be indulged in the same liberty which I am happy to see extended to others? Will it not be thought presumption in me to call in question the justice and accuracy of one so venerable in years as yourself? May I, without offending you, accost you with civility, while, in some instances, I venture to differ from you in opinion? I venerate the silver locks of age, but I love truth more. I was nursed with the strongest prejudices in favour of genius and learning, but there is a voice from Heaven to which

I owe a more implicit, a more awful respect. For your various acquirements and solid erudition, I entertain the highest respect. At your feet I would willingly sit, and be instructed in many of the precepts of science. But there are some opinions in which I cannot follow you. There are some opinions which you hold, in which I think you deviate from the word of God. The sentiments to which I more especially refer, are those which relate to Jesus Christ, the saviour of men. You hold him to be less than God; I hold him to be God. In a pamphlet which has been lately published in this city, you have drawn a comparison between Socrates and Jesus. My attention was arrested by the title of that performance. I procured it, and attentively read it. With much of it I was pleased; but with other parts I was dissatisfied, for I thought them unfounded and unjust. I thought the evident design of such a work was to lower Jesus Christ from that infinite station in which a certain number of Christians (to which I belong) suppose him to be entitled, and to elevate an heathen philosopher to a rank of which he is totally unworthy.

After some deliberation, after combating with the apprehensions of youth, I determined to seize those moments of leisure which I could spare from my usual professional studies, and to make known unto you and to the public, in the form of a letter, those objections which arose after I had read your performance. May I hope that I shall receive from

you an amicable and generous reception? In order to bring the investigation on which I propose to enter more immediately before you....I shall,

I. Consider the propriety of your comparison between Christ and Socrates as teachers of truth.

II. Consider the propriety of your comparison between Christ and Socrates as moral characters.

III. I shall endeavour to shew that you have magnified the demon of Socrates into an importance not warranted by history, or by any consequences which flowed from its real or supposed suggestions.

I. I shall consider the propriety of your comparison between Christ and Socrates as teachers of truth.

Though I have some doubts, which arise from the difference in the testimony given concerning Socrates, still I will allow that he was a wonderful man, for the age in which he lived. I will grant to you, that he was a partial luminary to the darkness which then shrouded the world, and may be called the prince of Grecian philosophers. I would not call in question your accuracy, were you to say, that he was one of Reason's noblest children, and perhaps, proceeded as far in his investigations, as the human mind can penetrate, when guided only by the light of nature. This is allowing, I am convinced, as much as is proper; but after granting all this, the example of Socrates,

and the circumscribed limits of his instructions, enforce the truth, that reason is insufficient to teach us all necessary truth. In divine subjects, an illiterate Christian is better informed than the wisest of Heathens. The Christian is cheered by the light of heaven; the Heathen gropes through the *dusky shadows* of the world. This, I have no doubt, you and I equally acknowledge. Just and eloquent are the lines of Pope, who appears by them to speak in a manner contradictory to some sentiments he had previously advanced in his Essay on Man:—

We wretched subjects, tho' to lawful sway
 In this weak Queen* some favourite still obey:
 Ah! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
 What can she more than tell us we are fools?
 Teach us to mourn our nature not to mend,
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend!
 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade
 The choice we make, or justify it made;
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,
 She but removes weak passions for the strong.

I do not assert that you have represented Socrates as a teacher of equal dignity with Jesus. You have unequivocally given the preference to the latter. You have expressed this preference in strong terms; but I am dissatisfied because you have not sufficiently marked the disparity between

* Reason.

them, and sufficiently noticed the errors of Socrates as a teacher. You well know, Sir, the state in which the heathen world was sunk with respect to Religion. Their boasted philosophy was but a lighted taper, which threw but a feeble ray on the dark and immeasurable expanse of ignorance. They followed false and mistaken guides, bowed their knee to the idol of the day, and through every labyrinth pursued deceitful happiness. The schools of Athens opened their doors, and called their pupils from all parts of the world, to be instructed in their doctrines. Though these imparted portions of useful knowledge, they still left the mind ignorant concerning many truths it should be most anxious to discover. The unity and perfections of God; his Creation and Providence; the Immortality of the Soul, and future judgment, were by them inexplorable. All the combined wisdom of the three most enlightened nations of antiquity, never advanced so far as this simple proposition, THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. Ignorant therefore of the one true God, they could form no proper idea of his perfections. On the other hand, they represented their gods as they were themselves, lewd, violent, sanguinary and capricious; so that, from the example of their deities, they could never learn virtue. “The groves of Daphne, and the temples of Cytherea, might make an Otaheitan blush.” The first chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, pre-

sents a picture of the Heathen world, which is by no means overcharged, but strictly true. From these errors which have been only mentioned, Socrates was not exempted; indeed, by his own confession, and by the accounts of his biographers, he indulged in them equally with his countrymen.

You have acknowledged, "that Socrates was an idolater, or a worshipper of a multiplicity of gods, and such as were acknowledged by his countrymen, and that he conformed in all respects to the popular modes of worship." p. 3. In consequence of this open and free avowal of the Polytheism of Socrates, I was disappointed, when I came to your comparison between him and Jesus as teachers, that you did not insist upon the errors and immoralities into which such a belief must necessarily lead him. *He that comes unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him.* Before we render God that honour which is due, before we can worship him in spirit and in truth, we must have a proper conception of him. God has been careful in his revealed will, to distinguish himself from idols, and to class idolatry among the highest crimes.

Socrates, therefore, who knew not God as he is; who was guilty of the most abominable idolatry, could not teach him to others; and this imperfection must have run through all his discourses, and blasted all his instructions, which

had reference to Deity. In further corroboration of our mutual belief in the idolatry of Socrates, I shall quote the following passages. The first is taken from "The Defence of Socrates before his Judges, by Xenophon;" the second from "Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates*." "In this manner, Socrates replied to Hermogenes and others; and his enemies having accused him of '*not believing in the gods, whom the city held sacred; but, as designing to introduce other and new deities; and, likewise, of his having corrupted the youth;*'.... Hermogenes farther told me, that Socrates, advancing towards the tribunal, thus spake :....

"What I chiefly marvel at, O ye Judges! is this;...whence Melitus inferreth, that I esteem not those as gods, whom the city hold sacred. For that I sacrificed at the appointed festivals, on our common altars, was evident to all others; and might have been to Melitus, had Melitus been so minded. Neither yet doth it seem to be asserted with greater reason, that my design was to introduce new deities among us, because I have often said, 'that it is the voice of God which giveth me significations of what is most expedient;' since they themselves, who observe the chirping of birds, or those ominous words spoken by men, ground their conclusions on no other than voices. For, who among you doubteth whether thunder sendeth forth a voice? or whether it be not the

* Defence of Socrates.

very greatest of all auguries? The Pythian priestess herself;....doth not she likewise, from the Tripod, declare, by a *voice*, the divine oracles?.... And, truly, that God foreknoweth the future, and also sheweth it to whomsoever he pleaseth, I am no way singular, either in believing, or asserting, since all mankind agree with me herein; this difference only excepted, that whereas they say, it is from auguries, omens, symbols, and divinities, whence they have their notices of the future: I, on the contrary, impute all those premonitions, wherewith I am favoured, to a Genius; and I think, that in so doing, I have spoken, not only more truly, but more piously, than they who attribute to birds the divine privilege of declaring things to come: and that I lied not against God, I have this indisputable proof; that whereas I have often communicated to many of my friends the divine counsels, yet hath no man ever detected me of speaking falsely.”

“*Now as to the first of these, *that he acknowledged not the gods whom the Republic held sacred*,what proof could they bring of this, since it was manifest that he often sacrificed, both at home and on the common altars? Neither was it in secret that he made use of *divination*; it being a thing *well known* among the people, that Socrates should declare, his *Genius* gave him frequent intimations of the future; whence, principally, as it seems to me,

his accusers imputed to him the crime of *introducing new deities*. But surely, herein Socrates introduced nothing *newer*, or more *strange*, than any other, who, placing confidence in divination, make use of auguries, and omens, and symbols, and sacrifices. For these men suppose not that the birds, or persons they meet unexpectedly, *know* what is good for them; but that the gods, by their means, give certain intimations of the *future*, to those who apply themselves to divination. And the same also was his opinion, only with this difference, that while the greatest part say, they are *persuaded*, or *dissuaded*, by the flight of birds, or some accidental occurrence....Socrates, on the contrary, so asserted concerning these matters, as he knew them from an *internal consciousness*; declaring it was his *Genius* from whom he received his information."

From these extracts, it is evident that Socrates, instead of reproofing his countrymen for their idolatry, instead of restraining them in their indulgence of their obscene and ridiculous ceremonies, was himself guilty of the same excess. From these passages it is evident, that Socrates offered the customary sacrifices upon the common altar. "With respect to sacred rites and institutions, (says Xenophon), it was ever his practice, to approve himself a strict observer of the answer the Pithian priestess gives to all who inquire the proper manner of sacrificing to the gods*."

* Memor, Book I Chap III

Several circumstances concerning the rites, institutions and sacrifices of the Greeks, are not fully explained to us.

There were several things, however, in them ridiculous, and extremely to be reprobated.

The Pythian priestess, to whose responses, the favourite pupil of Socrates declared that his master attended, was she who spoke from the sacred tripod, where she pretended to receive the prophetic intimations communicated by Apollo. The frantic sounds and obscure words which she uttered, were, by the Delphians, collected, arranged into meaning, and thrown into the music of measured numbers*. The Pythia, or the priestess of Apollo, at Delphi, was a mere instrument in the hands of these artful persons, and by them appointed and dethroned at pleasure. They were considerable in number, they were honoured as the family of their favourite god, and entitled to officiate in the rites of his sanctuary†. The inferior ranks belonging to the sacred city of Delphi, fascinated the multitudes who flocked to the oracle, by dances, processions, and festivals, and by all the exhibitions of their imposing superstition. By the sageful Socrates was this oracle often consulted, and by the pageantry of such an airy superstition was his mind enslaved. He taught and directed others to resort to the same counsels, and not to disobey the voice which proceeded from the

* Strabo, Lib. IX. † Lucian, Phalar. Gillies, Vol. I. p. 114, 115.

sacred tripod. The fetters which bound his countrymen, he was unable to break; and the darkness which shrouded the multitude, pressed heavily upon his intellect. The solemn sacrifices of the Greeks you know, Sir, consisted of three parts: *Σπονδή* or libation; *Θυμίαμα* or incensing; and *Ἱερεῖον* or the victim. But the chief part of the sacrifice was the victim. In these sacrifices different animals were offered. The kind of victim depended upon the nature of the deity who was invoked. To the infernal or evil gods, they offered black, to the good gods white victims. They endeavoured to select for each deity the beast who most partook of his nature. Examples of human sacrifices were very common in most of the barbarous nations; and some instances of this most deplorable superstition and inhumanity have polluted with blood, the hands of the more civilized Grecians. Aristomenes, the Messenian, sacrificed three hundred men, to Jupiter Ithome; among whom was Theopompus, one of the kings of Sparta. Themistocles, in order to procure the assistance of the gods against Persia, sacrificed some captives of that nation. Bacchus had an altar in Arcadia, upon which young virgins were beaten to death with rods*. The Achilles of Homer, butchered twelve Trojan captives at the funeral of Patroclus; and even Æneas, whom Vir-

* Broughton's Dictionary, Fel. Vol. II. p. 353.

gil, the Platonic poet, in a period long subsequent celebrates for his piety, is an example of the same practice.

.....Sulmone creatos
 Quatuor hic juvenes; totidem, quos educat Ufens,
 Viventes rapit, inferias quos immolet umbris,
 Captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammās.

Æn. X. v. 520.

Such sacrifices were frequently offered to the infernal gods, and betoken the most lamentable, the most shocking brutality. In such human sacrifices, I do not assert, and do not believe, that Socrates joined; I do not, however, discover in the MEMORABILIA, one word said by him against this highest species of murder.

Divination by the Greeks was considered of two kinds. These were natural and artificial. The one proceeded from an immediate *afflatus* from the supernatural power. The other was attained by the inspection of the entrails of beasts; by the observance of the flight of birds; of cracks in the earth; of flames; of appearances in the skies and air; and of the lines on the palm of the hand. Above the superstitious belief of the prognostications of such appearances, the mind of Socrates did not rise, and such a belief must have tinged all his discourses when he spoke of the gods. In section VII, p. 38, you very cursorily mention that the miracles of our Saviour must have given great

force and dignity to his instructions. On the nature and weight of these miracles, I wished, that you had dwelt. Awful was their importance, inconceivable their majesty. Yes, Sir, these miracles raise Christ above every other instructor.... these miracles declare him to be God. What voice but that of God ever assumed an equal authority with his, and whose voice excepting that of God, did nature equally obey? When he said to the angry waves, peace....be still, the storm was hushed, and the waves slept in silence. When he cried aloud Lazarus come forth, the grave opened, and Lazarus arose. In section V, you express your opinion that Socrates had no firm belief in a future state. I fully agree with you in this opinion; your reasons in support of it I think just and conclusive.

In Xenophon's memoirs there is no confirmation of such a belief of Socrates, and to Plato's celebrated dialogue entitled Phædo, you do not give the weight of confirming evidence. You acknowledge in section VII, p. 41, that this want of knowledge and firm conviction in a future state, must have diminished the excellence and dignity of the discourses of Socrates. Notwithstanding these acknowledgments, you assert, section VII, p. 36, that "both the discourses and general manner of life of Socrates and Jesus have an obvious resemblance, as they both went about gratuitously doing good, according to their several abilities,

situations and opportunities." This assertion, I am convinced that you cannot maintain. What, Sir, did Socrates point out to the Athenians, the same Being to whom Jesus directed the faith of his followers? Did Socrates like Jesus unfold the perfections of Jehovah? Did the discourses of Socrates like those of Jesus, bring to light life and immortality, did they declare that God had appointed a day in the which he would judge the world in righteousness? Did the discourses of Socrates inculcate the same system of morality with those of Jesus? Ah no, in no instances can I trace a resemblance between them, except in some shades of the representation they have both given of divine Providence, and in their agreement to recommend some virtues. Socrates taught that there were many gods, that these were in their nature both good and evil, and he taught that sacrifices should be offered upon the altars of the evil, as well as upon those of the benevolent deities. Jesus Christ taught that there was only one God, that he was possessed of all possible perfections, and was the Creator, the Preserver, the Redeemer, the Benefactor of men. The whole tendency of the discourses of Socrates was confined within the limits of this world, they looked not beyond the grave, nor the grave of the world. Jesus Christ taught his disciples not to labour after the meat which perisheth, but to labour after the meat which endureth forever; he pointed out to their view ano-

ther and a better world, and told them not to live as if they were to remain on earth forever, but to lay up their treasures in heaven. The discourses of Socrates acknowledged not the darkness of the understanding, the insufficiency of reason to discover divine truths, and the corruption of human nature. Jesus Christ taught that the understandings of men were darkened, that their wills were rebellious and their affections corrupted; he unfolded the great doctrine of atonement, and declared that there was no other way under heaven by which they could be saved than through him. If in these respects then there was no similarity between them, in what could consist the obvious resemblance which you intimate? I must confess that I am unable to discover it. Nay, so far from discovering it, I can trace no nearer resemblance between them, than that which the lisp of the infant bears to the rolling thunder of Demosthenes, or that which the glow-worm bears to the full blaze of the heavens. There are many of the instructions of Socrates, which, by your own confession were too trifling to be recorded. Not a sentence fell from the lips of Jesus but what was useful and dignified. The Socratic method of teaching, appears to me to have been insolent and provoking. "The method of instruction which Socrates chiefly made use of, was to propose a series of questions to the person with whom he conversed, in order to lead him to some unforeseen conclusion.

He first gained the consent of his respondent to some obvious truths, and then obliged him to admit others, from their relation or resemblance to those, to which he had already assented. Without making use of any direct argument or persuasion, he chose to lead the person he meant to instruct, to deduce the truths of which he wished to convince him, as a necessary consequence from his own concessions. He commonly conducted these consequences with such address, as to conceal his design, till the respondent had advanced too far to recede. On some occasions, he made use of ironical language, that vain men might be caught in their own replies, and be obliged to confess their own ignorance*.”

I have often been surprised at the praises given to the Socratic mode of conversation. It is somewhat deserving of praise, when employed by a professed tutor to his pupil, for in that case the parties meet, one with a full conviction of his ignorance, and the other with the express purpose of supplying him with knowledge: But in the intercourse of equals, no method can be imagined more unsuitable. There is no mode more likely to excite resentment; to awaken passions, that are sure to bar up the avenues of conviction. To have our error detected and proved, to extort from us the confession of our mistake, is always grating to

* See Enfield's Philosophy, 8vo. Vol. I. p. 167.

our pride, and the arts of a master in discourse, are chiefly shewn in preventing and soothing this passion. The conduct of Socrates is that of a man who not only believes himself able to confute our errors, but what is far more humiliating to our dignity, believes that he can make us confute ourselves. Let any one recollect his own feelings, on being entrapped by a reasoner of this kind, into conclusions which he did not foresee and intend: if his strongest emotion was not indignation, if he did not impute arrogance, finesse and disingenuity to his opponent, if he allows that he was more than silenced and bewildered by his adversary, he must be cast in a mould widely different from that of common minds. There is no reason to suppose that the people with whom Socrates conversed, were in this respect fashioned in a different manner from the rest of mankind. We see, indeed, nothing of these starts of indignation, these refusals to proceed in the debate, when the design of the interrogator is suspected; these efforts to repel question by question, which is incident to all real conferences of this sort among equals. In the dialogues of Socrates, as reported by his followers, we can expect to find nothing that will mar the even course of their master's logic. The person that is talked to is a mere machine, appointed to consent to every demand that is made, and to abjure, with the most edifying docility, every doubt

which the reporter of the dialogue can invent for him.

The men on whom Socrates employed his logic were either stupid or ingenious. The former are commonly vain and conceited, and would not fail to be exasperated by the treatment of Socrates, a treatment which had no purpose in view but to mortify their vanity. The latter would ill deserve the title of ingenious, if they could not escape from the conclusions to which they were pressed, by new distinctions, qualifications, or evasions. The tenets of Socrates were not such as soared above all cavil, or that could not be seemingly disproved by an artful and eloquent man, adopting the same mode of argument. The man of true wisdom will seldom excite enmity either by his words or actions. He proposes no other end by his instructions than to benefit mankind: and the wicked themselves will come in for a large share of his compassion and beneficence. In his endeavours to reclaim them, he will pave a way to their heads through their hearts. He will win their love before he gains their conviction; and even when he fails to make them converts to his cause he will secure their affection and esteem.

It is certain that Socrates had many and inveterate enemies. His encomiasts ascribe this enmity to the zeal with which he detected and defeated the schemes of bad citizens, but I think it by no means unreasonable to impute some part of it to

his mode of arguing. It is at least certain, that in the present state of society and manners, a man who should pursue the same system of talk, would be generally regarded with suspicion and dislike. His great merits in other respects might engage our reverence and imitation, but the habit of catching us with subtle questions, of involving us in inconsistency, and of so managing debate, as not only to get the *seeming* victory (for this method after all is extremely sophistical) but to compel us to acknowledge ourselves beaten, would be deemed a very great defect.

The Saviour's usual method of instruction was very different from this, he sometimes indeed repelled an improper question by proposing a question in return; but the general form of his discourses was the most mild, the most tender, and the most encouraging.

He was a mighty orb ordained with uncontrouled sway to illuminate the universe. He was like the appearance of a star to the weather-beaten mariner. He was like the pillar of fire which conducted the Israelites through the terrors of a wild and untrodden desert. On the darkened intellect he poured the light of day. He lulled by his endearing accents the heart which was wrung by anguish. He whispered peace to those who were forsaken by the world and who were sunk upon the bed of poverty. *He broke not the bruised reed;* but tempered his dispensations to the children of

sorrow. He called to his rest the wearied and the heavy laden, and enfolded in the arms of his mercy the humble and the oppressed. You say that both Socrates and Jesus "went about gratuitously doing good according to their several abilities," &c. In this respect they bore some, but not a close resemblance. The instructions of both were indeed gratuitous, but the friends and the audiences of each were of very different descriptions. The particular friends of Socrates were the wealthy the powerful and the ambitious. Those of Jesus were poor fishermen, who like their master were friendless and unprotected. As the design of our Saviour was vastly more extensive than that of Socrates, he called upon all who would hear his voice. He delivered truths adapted to every capacity, and calculated to leave lasting impressions upon every mind. His sermons were addressed to the world and their peculiar theme was the salvation of the world. Socrates, although he sometimes conversed with those whom he met in the market place and in the public ways, yet generally his instructions were confined to those friends who resorted to his house or to the favourite shade which he made the theatre of his eloquence. This representation of the limited bounds in which Socrates moved as an instructor, is justified by an expression of Xenophon in Book I. Chap. II, of his memoirs "He never undertook to be a teacher of others."

On the other hand Christ proclaimed himself the light of the world, and sent forth his disciples to teach all nations to bear his name and gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth.

Were we to attend to the effects produced by their instructions, how infinitely would Christ be raised above the Athenian philosopher. *Christ indeed came to his own, and his own received him not.* He was born of parents who were poor and obscure in the world. He was nursed in the lap of poverty and wretchedness. He enjoyed none of the advantages of education. The Jewish Rabbins taught not him their mysteries, nor did the schools of Greece unfold to him their philosophical lore: yet, when no more than twelve years of age, he astonished the wisdom of the Jewish doctors. When no more than thirty, he poured forth that knowledge which was eyes to the blind, which astonished the sage, which was saving to the soul, and which was to the moral, what the sun is to the natural world. Whence then proceeded this immense knowledge? Since it could not have been derived from the world, it must have proceeded from heaven; and Christ was what he declared himself, what his disciples declared him to be, equal with God the Father. At the time when Jesus Christ ascended from the earth to his kingdom of glory, the number of the Church was estimated at no more than 200. A few years afterward it exceeded 5000. Before the lapse of a century hundreds of thousands flocked to

the banners of Christ; and during the fourth century, when Constantine ascended the throne, his whole empire became professors of Christianity. Now, whence this mightier power of Christianity beyond that of all other systems? Whence but from the Spirit of Almighty God? In the propagation of the gospel the arm of the warrior was not raised, nor the trump of battle sounded. Jesus did not, like Mahomet, unsheathe the sword of destruction. He unfurled not the banners of contention. He led not on his embattled hosts, and flew not victorious from city to city, nor from region to region, nor encrimsoned the earth with the blood of his slain. But he and his gospel came as the messengers of peace. He hushed to silence the voice of war. He commanded the bow to be broken, the spear to be cut in sunder, and the chariot to be burned with fire. He proclaimed his empire over the hearts of men. He stood apart from Cæsar and the Roman power: He asked not for Cæsar, for Cæsar's sword, or for Cæsar's legions: He only asked for the breath of the Spirit, to breathe upon the slain!

The labours of Socrates were followed by no similar effects. We have no sufficient evidence that his instructions rendered men wiser and better. The Spartans were generally a more moral people than the Athenians, and it is well known, that they by law prohibited schools of philosophy being opened within their realm and jurisdiction.

Several of the most intimate companions of Socrates, to whom his instructions were especially addressed, were the most impious and dissolute characters of Greece. Those companions to whom I particularly refer, were Critias, Alcibiades, Eschines, Simon, Cleonymus, Aristippus, Aspasia and Theodota.

Of these I shall say more directly, when I speak of the propriety of your comparison between Christ and Socrates as moral characters. Plato who was the wisest disciple of Socrates, built upon the information of his master, and has handed down to posterity, a system which was the production of their united wisdom and labours. This boasted system, however, produced no reformation in society. Its rules were attended by no adequate sanctions. The corruptions of Athens increased after its introduction, and in the centuries succeeding the death of Christ, it served to perplex and to lead astray the minds of Christians, and to poison the simplicity of the gospel*.”

In your comparison, you have left unnoticed the dignity with which Christ appeared on the theatre of the world. You mentioned not, that by types and prophecies his appearance was foretold. With the same appendages of majesty, none before or after Christ appeared. God seems to have been engaged in preparing the world for

* See Du Pin and Mosheim throughout.

the mission of his Son. To the patriarchs he discovered his great design, and shewed them afar off his coming. He formed to himself a peculiar people, and rendered them the depositaries of his promises.

He bade an expectation to prevail through every region, that a messenger should descend from heaven, who should teach mankind the way of truth.

The kings and potentates of the earth, were forerunners to prepare the advent of the Sovereign of the universe. The progress of philosophy; the march of armies; the contentions of kingdoms; the rise and fall of empires, were all connected with the appearance of the God-man on the theatre of human glory. Even the Heathen oracles spoke of a deliverer who was to come, and with uplifted eyes, the bewildered Gentiles waited for this manifestation of mercy. At length Jesus appeared in the form of an infant. His star shone in the east; and the oracle at Delphi, to which Socrates had often listened with reverence, became forever dumb. Angels descended from heaven to proclaim his birth, and peace and good-will toward men.

II. I shall consider the propriety of your comparison between Christ and Socrates, as moral characters.

In the first sentence of your introduction, you say, "The history of Socrates is so singular a

phenomenon in the Heathen world, and his general behaviour, and the manner of life to which he devoted himself, have in them so much that resemble those of the ancient prophets, and even of our Saviour, that they have always drawn the particular attention of the friends of Revelation, though these have formed very different opinions on the subject." In the introduction, p. 2, you conclude, "That Socrates was a man who from early life, not only abstained from vice himself, and practised every thing that he thought to be virtue; but one who devoted himself to the promoting of virtue in others." In section VII, p. 21, you say, "When we consider what was most obvious, in the general disposition and behaviour of Socrates and Jesus, we see no apparent difference with respect to the command of their natural appetites and passions, or their temper in general. Both were equally temperate, though as Jesus was not married, and was never charged with incontinence, he shewed a command of his natural passions in this respect for which there was no occasion in the case of Socrates." In section VII, p. 36, you assert that, "Both the discourses and the general manner of life of Socrates and Jesus have an obvious resemblance."

From these passages it is evident that you find no fault with the moral character of Socrates, that you suppose him to have been equally temperate with the Saviour, and in the general manner of

his life to have borne to him an obvious resemblance. This I think is the mildest meaning which your words convey. In these opinions I cannot agree with you. No, I could not adopt such a comparison between my blessed Saviour, and a man who is a worm. I could not trace an obvious resemblance between man the son of pollution, the being of a day, and the most holy and eternal Jehovah. Pardon me blessed Jesus that I love thee no more, and serve thee no better! O forgive me, that my gratitude is not more fervent and my adoration more awful! I have been taught, Sir, by the word of God, that no one except Jesus Christ, ever appeared on this earth in the form of a man who was without sin. The sacred scriptures expressly declare that the carnal mind is enmity against God*....that there is no man who liveth and sinneth not....that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us†.... that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked‡....that a man is not justified by the works of the law||....that every mouth may become stopped and the whole world may become guilty before God††. If then the declarations of the scriptures be true, if their representations be just, Socrates was like the rest of his brethren, a sinful man; and your assertion that he abstained from sin, and was equally temperate with our Savi-

* Rom. viii. 7. † John i. 8. ‡ Jer. xvii. 9. || Gal. ii. 16. †† Rom. iii. 18.

our, who was declared by both heaven and earth to be holy, contradicts the most high God.... You have founded your opinion of the morality of Socrates upon the testimony of Plato and Xenophon, while you have rejected the testimony of other biographers and historians. Plato and Xenophon were the professed encomiasts of their master; the latter was bound to him by the ties of gratitude for saving his life at the battle of Delium, between the Athenians and Bœotians. Allowing, however, that they were not disposed to bestow undue praises upon Socrates, still it does not follow, that if they pronounced him to be perfectly good, that he really was so; for the standard of perfection with them was not correct, for their opinions of religion and morality differ from those of christianity

In the survey which I propose to take of the moral character of Socrates, I shall, however, willingly receive the declarations of Xenophon and Plato, and shall, I think, from their testimony prove his immorality: And I shall also in the survey, collect information from other writers, who have, at least, an equal right to be heard and to be believed in what they advance concerning this man. In the preceding part of this letter, in which your comparison between Christ and Socrates as teachers, is considered, I think that the leading opinions and sentiments of Socrates have been fairly exposed. That these opinions were erroneous and very different from those held by true christians, and which

Christ as a teacher would justify, I trust that you and no follower of Christ will doubt. If, therefore, the opinions of men have any influence upon their practice, Socrates was not a moral, but an immoral man. If an idolater, if one who offers improper sacrifices, if one who believes in divination, if one who holds sentiments unwarranted by the word of God, is a man of impious practice, Socrates cannot but be considered as an impious man. Without enlarging further on the pernicious operations of the tenets of Socrates; I shall proceed to state some general and particular instances of Socrates' conduct, which I should hope all would determine to be unworthy of a good man. It may be proper, however, to premise, that in order to determine concerning the temperance and morality or the intemperance and immorality of Socrates, he must be arraigned before the bar of the Gospel, as there is no infallible rule of right, but that which is prescribed by the word of God.

Socrates, in one period of his life was a soldier, and was hardy and intrepid. I admire the soldier who bravely fights when defence is necessary, who nobly contends in the cause of justice; but he who, from any principle separated from defence and strict justice, imbrues his hands in the blood of his fellow-men, violates the laws of God and of humanity. War is a deplorable evil....it is in every unauthorised case gigantic murder....The world has long been imposed upon by the false

glare of what has been called heroic virtue. The poet has truly said, "one murder makes a villain, millions a hero*." If we strip this boasted heroism of its meretricious grandeur, many of those whose praise has long been sounded by the trump of fame, will appear to be the scourges of the earth, or moral earthquakes, and volcanoes in flames. No one can deny, that the gospel and the dictates of enlightened reason are directly opposed to all wars and contentions, not authorised in the manner which has been mentioned, and that they condemn all those who are active, or have any agency in them. Upon what principle Socrates became a soldier, may be ascertained by an examination of his sentiments, which are recorded, and by reference to history. That his opinions concerning soldiership and war, were the same with those unjustifiable ones, commonly held in Greece, is, I think, evident from the testimony of Xenophon, who not only followed the footsteps of Socrates in the shades of philosophy, but in the fields of battle†.

In Book III, Chap. V, of the Memoirs, in the dialogue between Socrates and the young Pericles, are the following passages,...." But how, (said Pericles), shall we recover the lustre of the ancient

* Bishop Porteus.

† You will no doubt recollect, that Xenophon was one of the thirteen thousand Greeks, who entered as mercenaries in the service of Cyrus of Persia....and that he conducted the famous retreat of the ten thousand Greeks after the failure of their employer.

virtue? (meaning military prowess and skill). “Nothing more easy to point out, (replied Socrates): Let but people call to mind what were the virtues and discipline of their forefathers, and diligently endeavour to follow their example, and the glory of the Athenian name may rise again as high as ever! But, if this is too much for them, let them copy at least the people whom at present they are compelled to consider as far above them: Let them apply themselves with diligence to perform the same things; and let them not doubt of becoming again their equals.

“The greater part of our generals learn the first rudiments of war at the head of their armies. But I know, my Pericles, you are not of that sort of men; but have made it your employment to study the military art, and have gone through all the exercises so necessary for a soldier. In the memorials of your father, that great man, I doubt not your having remarked for your advantage, many of those refined stratagems he made use of, and can shew us many more of your own collecting.”

“Ah! Socrates,” cried Pericles, “it is not that you think I have done these things, but wish me to do them, that you talk in this manner.”

“It may be so,” replied Socrates: “But to add a word or two more....you know,” continued he, “that Attica is separated from Bœotia by a long chain of mountains, through which the roads are narrow and craggy, so that all access to our

country from that side, is both difficult and dangerous."

"I know it," said Pericles.

"It has been told you too, I imagine, how the Mysians and Pisidians, having seized for themselves several considerable places, and a large tract of land, in the territories of the king of Persia, are able, from the advantages of their situation, not only to secure their own liberty, but with their light armed horse, greatly annoy their enemies, by making perpetual inroads upon them?"

"Yes, I have heard this," replied the other.

"Why then, may it not be supposed," said Socrates, "that if we secured those passes on the mountains, which divide us from Bœotia, and sent there our youth, properly armed for making incursions, we might in our turn, give some annoyance to our enemies, while these mountains, as so many ramparts, secure us from their hostilities."

By these extracts, I think it is sufficiently proved, that he held sentiments concerning war, and what was termed heroic virtue, which corresponded with those of his countrymen, and that in this respect he differed not only from Jesus, but from almost every other philosopher. These quotations declare, that he pointed out to the view of Pericles the example of his father, who, although a man of splendid talents, was certainly to be condemned for his ambition, and his inclination to war and bloodshed....they declare that he advised

the young warrior, with whom he was conversing, to seize land upon the mountains, to which he or Athens had no right or title, for the purpose of making incursions upon their enemies.

But let us follow Socrates to the wars. Let us behold him armed with the sword, the spear, the helmet, and the buckler; wielding against his antagonists other weapons than sophistry and syllogism. Socrates first signalized himself in the battle of Potidea, which was fought at an early period of the Peloponnessian war. He there not only distinguished himself by his valour, but by his hardiness in enduring fatigue. Plato declares, that during the severe cold of a Thracian winter, while others were wrapt in furs, he wore his usual dress, and walked barefoot on the ice. It was in this battle that he defended and preserved the life of Alcibiades, who, fighting desperately, was beaten to the ground and severely wounded*.

It is said, that the prize of valour in this battle, was due to Socrates; yet was for some preponderating considerations given to Alcibiades.

Some years afterward, though uncalled, he entered as a volunteer upon a military expedition against the Bœotians, and in the battle at Delium, in which he was engaged, the Athenians were routed.

In his flight, observing Xenophon wounded, and extended upon the ground, he raised him in

* Plutarch in Alcibiad.

his arms, and bore him out of the reach of the pursuing enemy.

A third time he went forth in a military capacity, in an expedition for the reduction of Amphipolis; but here also proving unsuccessful, he renounced the profession of a soldier, returned to Athens, and courted the more congenial shades of ease and philosophy. In all these battles, Socrates, no doubt, manifested both resolution and enterprise. But viewed in the light of religion, and of genuine philosophy, did they not detract from his morality? I think they did. Confident I am, that tried by the rules of Christ, in these instances he is reprehensible. In neither battle did he fight on the defensive side, nor in the cause of strict justice. He was not compelled to enlist in the service of his country. In the expedition against Bœotia, we are expressly informed that he went as a volunteer.

Of all kinds of war, those which are termed civil, are the most deplorable; and perhaps, no civil war ever exhibited more scenes of wretchedness and brutality than the Peloponnessian.

Athens, from unjustifiable reasons, became a party in the Peloponnessian war, of which all the battles in which Socrates was engaged, were branches. Raised to an exalted station of power, by the splendid talents, the policy, and the bravery of Pericles, she endeavoured to extend her authority over all Greece. The Greeks beheld, but

would not formally acknowledge the full extent of Athenian greatness. In order to extort this reluctant confession, Pericles dispatched ambassadors to the republics and colonies in Europe and in Asia, demanding the presence of their deputies in Athens, to concert measures for rebuilding the ruined temples, and to perform the solemn vows and sacrifices, promised to the gods who had favoured the Grecian arms, during their long and dangerous conflict with the Persian empire. This proposal, which tended to render Athens the common centre of deliberation and of union, was accepted in such parts as had already submitted to the authority of that republic: But in the neighbouring states, the ambassadors were received coldly; in most of the assemblies of the Peloponnessians, they were heard with disgust, and the pride of the Spartan senate openly derided the insolence of their demands.

When at their return home, the ambassadors explained to Pericles the behaviour of the Spartans, he cried out, in his bold strain of eloquence, "I behold war advancing with wide and rapid steps from the Peloponessus*." Soon after the ill success of this embassy, a rupture took place between Corinth and its colony Corcyra. Both the Corinthians and Corcyreans sent ambassadors to Athens, who, after hearing their respective speeches, and

* See Plutarch in Pericle. See Gillies, vol. ii. chap. xv.

being actuated by ambitious views, espoused the quarrel of the Corcyreans and entered into a treaty of defence with them*. The Corinthians remonstrated against this conduct. They endeavoured to exasperate the Lacedemonians against the Athenians, and to excite them to take up arms in their favour. They finally succeeded, and drew into the confederacy against Athens the seven republics of the Peloponnessus.

The natural propensities of Socrates were, by his own confession, towards evil. He frequently jested on the resemblance of his features to those which were attributed to the god Silenus. Plato tells us that the outside of Socrates was that of a satyr and buffoon, and Plutarch informs us that when a physiognomist declared that his countenance betokened vicious inclinations, Socrates acknowledged that his face was the index of his heart, but that he regulated his conduct by the influence of philosophy.†

With such propensities as these, I should think it dangerous for him to encounter those temptations which were calculated to inflame his passions, and which he rather courted than avoided. Had he been equally temperate with Jesus Christ, as you have alleged, his face would not have borne those strong marks of evil propensities which he and his followers acknowledged, and the physiognomist discovered.

* Gillies, *ibid.* p. 192.

† Plutarch in Catone.

Socrates, it is well known, was married. The famous Xantippe was his wife. Her name has descended with that of her husband into the depth of years, and will probably still accompany his, until both are obliterated from the annals of time. It has been the fate of this woman to be represented as most capricious, passionate and violent in her disposition, and as treating her husband in a manner the most provoking and indecent. Yet it is certain that she at times manifested toward him the warmest affection, and at his death gave full vent to all the agonies of grief. May we not then reasonably suppose that he gave her some cause for her passionate extravagancies, and that his deportment fanned the flames of her jealousy and rage? † Some ancient authors declare that Socrates, during the life of Xantippe, married a second wife, named Myrta, who was the grand-daughter of Aristides, and that he suffered exceedingly from both of them, who were continually at war with each other, and loading him with reproaches. These writers say that during the Peloponnessian war, after the pestilence had swept away great numbers of the Athenians, a decree was made, in order to repair the more speedily the ruins of the republic, that each citizen should be permitted to have two wives, and that Socrates eagerly seized the benefit of this law. Those writers who have given this

* See Rollin, vol. iv. 12mo. p. 282.

information, Plutarch says, were Demetrius the Phalerian, Hieronymus of Rhodes, Aristoxenus the musician, and Aristotle.*

If this information be correct, Socrates was chargeable with bigamy ; but as Plutarch does not depend upon it, and as I know not what respectability was attached to any of the names of the writers enumerated except to that of Aristotle, I shall not insist upon its truth. There is sufficient evidence, though we reject the testimony of these men, that Socrates was not so temperate as you have represented him ; there are at least *suspicious* that while absent from the arms of the boisterous Xantippe, he occasionally reposed on the bosom and in the yielding embraces of two of the fairest courtezans of Greece. In the period in which this philosopher lived, there was a class of females who breaking from the restraining modesty of their sex and encouraged by the corruptions of pagan superstition, gave themselves up to the pursuits of licentious gaiety and voluptuous enjoyments. The fame of all those accomplished and mercenary beauties was surpassed by the lustre of Aspasia of Miletus, who first settled in Athens during the administration of Pericles. This woman was as remarkable for her brilliancy of wit and information as she was for her beauty and fascination. She obtained an ascendancy over the mind of Pericles,

* See Plutarch in Arist.

and was accused by the people of Athens of causing by her ambition and resentment the Peloponnesian war. She was in her manners uncommonly dissolute, even for the times in which she lived. She kept a number of courtezans for the gratification of men of sensual pleasure. Plutarch* declares that she was visited by Socrates and by his friends ; indeed he himself confessed that he had often heard Aspasia, and quotes some sentiments which he heard her utter, and which he highly approved†. Of the fact that he frequently visited Aspasia, there is no room to doubt. For what purpose then could he have courted the company of persons so polluted in sentiment and practice ? It was not to reprove them, for he speaks of Aspasia with commendation : he must therefore have been pleased with such society, and surely the dignity and morality of the philosopher must have relented when he entered the house of the courtezan.

There was another female at Athens of the same dissolute description which has been mentioned, whose celebrity and beauty only yielded to those of Aspasia. Her name was Theodota, and to her Socrates also extended his attentions.

It was a common practice with this woman, with Aspasia and with their companions, to unveil their persons before the inquisitive eyes of men, that they might serve as models for painting and

* Plutarch in Pericle. † Xenoph. Memo. Book 11. Chap. vi.

statuary, and themes for poetry and panegyric. “Nor were they merely the objects, but the authors of many literary works, in which they established rules for the behaviour of their lovers, particularly at table ; and explained the art of captivating the heart and gaining the affections*.”

Yet with characters of this vile and pestilential nature, Socrates delighted to associate ; and there is reason to suspect that with such he forgot the duties which he owed to philosophy and to his wife. A long and curious dialogue which passed between Socrates and Theodota is recorded by Xenophon. As it affords such strong evidence of the truth of what has been advanced, and displays such vivid traits of character, I shall insert here the translation of it, with Xenophon’s sentences of introduction. See *Memoirs*, Book III. Chap. xi.

“There was a courtesan at Athens, called Theodota, of great fame on the account of her many lovers. It being mentioned in company, that her beauty surpassed all description;...that painters came from all parts to draw her picture; and that one was now gone to her lodgings for that very purpose;....‘ We shall do well, said Socrates, to go ourselves, and see this wonder; for we may then speak with more certainty, when we speak from our own knowledge, and do not depend on the report of others.’

* See Gillies, Vol. 2. Chap. xiii. who quotes Atheneus.

“ The person who first mentioned this seconding the proposal, they went that instant to the lodgings of Theodota, and found her, as was said, sitting for her picture. The painter being gone, Socrates said to those who came along with him: ‘ What say you, Sirs,.... which of the two ought to think themselves the most obliged?.... we to Theodota, for the sight of so much beauty; or she to us, for coming to see it? Now, if the advantages of shewing herself are found to be altogether on her side; then, certainly, is she indebted to us for this visit:.... If otherwise, indeed,.... we must thank her.’

“ The reasonableness of what was said, being assented to by the rest, Socrates proceeded.... ‘ The praises we bestow at present, ought not even these to be had in some estimation by Theodota? But when we come to blaze abroad the fame of her beauty; what manifold advantages may not arise to her from it! while all our gain from the sight of so many charms, can terminate in nothing but fruitless longing! We take our leave with hearts full of love and anxiety; and are henceforth no other than so many slaves to Theodota, with whom she has no more to do, than to shew them her pleasure!’

“ ‘ If this is the case,’ replied Theodota, ‘ I am to thank you for coming to see me.’

“ Socrates, during this conversation, had observed how sumptuously she was adorned; and

that her mother was the same; her attendants, of whom there was no small number, expensively clothed; and all the furniture of her apartment elegant and costly :....He therefore took occasion from thence to ask her concerning her estate in the country; adding, it must of necessity be very considerable?

“ Being answered, ‘ she had not any;’

“ ‘ You have houses then,’ said he, ‘ in the city, and they yield you a good income?’

“ ‘ No, nor houses, Socrates.’

“ ‘ You have certainly many slaves then, Theodota; who by the labour of their hands supply you with these riches?’

“ ‘ So far,’ replied Theodota, ‘ from having many, that I have not one.’

“ ‘ But, whence then,’ said Socrates, ‘ can all this come?’

“ ‘ From my friends,’ returned Theodota.

“ ‘ A fair possession, truly!’ replied Socrates; ‘ and a herd of friends, we find to be a far better thing than a flock of sheep, or a herd of cattle. But tell me, pray,....do you trust fortune to bring these friends home to you, as flies fall by chance into the spider’s web; or do you employ some art to draw them in?’

“ ‘ But where, Socrates, shall I be furnished with this art?’

“ ‘ You may procure it,’ said Socrates, ‘ with far greater ease than the spider her web. You see

how this little animal, who lives only upon her prey, hangs her nets in the air, in order to entangle it?’

“ ‘ You advise me, then, to weave some artificial nets,’ said Theodota, ‘ in order to catch friends?’

“ ‘ Not so neither,’ returned Socrates; ‘ it is necessary to go a little less openly to work in a pursuit of such importance. You see what various arts are employed by men to hunt down hares; which, after all, are of little value. As these are known to feed chiefly in the night, they provide dogs to find them out at that season: And as they lie concealed in the day, the sharp-scented hound is employed to trace them up to their very forms: Being swift of foot, the greyhound is let loose upon them, as more swift of foot than they: ‘ And lest all this should not be sufficient for the purpose, they spread nets in the paths to catch and entangle them.’

“ ‘ Very well,’ replied Theodota; ‘ but what art shall *I* make use of, to catch friends?’

“ ‘ Instead of the hunter’s dog,’ said Socrates, ‘ you must set somebody to find out those who are rich, and well pleased with beauty; whom afterwards they shall force into your toils.’

“ ‘ And what are my toils?’ replied Theodota.

“ ‘ You are certainly mistress of many,’ said Socrates, ‘ and those not a little entangling. What think you of that form of yours, Theodota? accom-

panied as it is with a wit so piercing, as shews you at once what will be most for your advantage. It is this which directs the glance, tunes the tongue, and supplies it with all the shews of courtesy and kindness. 'Tis this which teaches you to receive with transport him who assiduously courts your favour; and scorn such as shew you no regard. If your friend is sick, you spare for no pains in your attendance upon him: You rejoice in all his joy; and give every proof of having bestowed your heart on him, who seems to have given his to you. In short, I make no doubt of your being well versed in all the arts of allure-ment; and dare venture to say, the friends you have, if *true*, were not gained by compliments, but substantial proofs of kindness.'

“ ‘ But,’ said Theodota, ‘ I never practise any of the arts you mention.’

“ ‘ And yet,’ answered Socrates, ‘ some management is necessary; since a friend is a sort of prey that is neither to be caught, nor kept by force; a creature no otherwise to be taken and tamed, but by shewing it kindness, and communicating to it pleasure.’

“ ‘ You say right, Socrates; but why will you not help me to gain friends?’

“ ‘ And so I will,’ said Socrates, ‘ if you can find out how to persuade me to it.’

“ ‘ But what way must I take to persuade you?’

“ ‘ Do *you* ask that!’ returned Socrates;.... you will find out the way, Theodota, if you want my assistance.’

“ ‘ Then come to me often.’

“ Socrates, still joking with her, said laughing;.... ‘ But it is not so easy for me to find leisure; I have much business both in public and private; and have my friends too, as well as you, who will not suffer me to be absent night or day, but employ against me the very charms and incantations that I formerly taught them.’

“ ‘ You are then acquainted with those things?’

“ ‘ Verily!’ returned Socrates; ‘ for what else can you suppose, Theodota, engaged Apollodorus, and Antisthenes, to be always with me? Or Cebes, and Simmias, to leave Thebes for my company, but the charms I speak of?’

“ ‘ Communicate these charms to me,’ said Theodota; ‘ and the first proof of their power shall be upon you.’

“ ‘ But I would not be attracted to *you*, Theodota;....I would rather you should come to *me*.’

“ ‘ Give me but a favourable reception,’ said Theodota; ‘ and I will certainly come.’

“ ‘ So-I will,’ replied Socrates, ‘ provided I have then no one with me whom I love better.’ ”

What think you, Sir, of this dialogue? Does it contain proofs of the stern unyielding temperance and morality of Socrates? Does it exhibit

impressions of temperance and morality, which should be compared with the spotless purity of Jesus Christ? Ah! no. But it unfolds the sage, sporting with a strumpet, teaching her the arts of seduction, and offering his homage to her charms. It discovers to us the man, who, by your assertion, *abstained from vice, and practised every thing that he thought to be virtue*, inviting this woman to his house, and declaring, that he would give her a favourable reception, if he had no one with him that he loved better.

We have previously observed, that several of the most intimate companions of Socrates, were the most corrupted and licentious men of Greece. Among these was the gay, the fascinating, the versatile Alcibiades. The history of this man, and his course of licentiousness must be familiar to your remembrance. They form some of the most vivid pages of history, and of the *Biographia* of the inimitable Plutarch. This man had not one quality to recommend him to others, or to win the affections of men, but splendid talents, and uncommon elegance of form. His morals and habits were sunk into the lowest regions of depravity. He was a blasphemer of the gods, and a violator of the public peace. There was no kind of intemperance in which he did not indulge, and no species of excess into which he did not plunge headlong. Without love for his country, and without being bound by the ties of domestic love, he performed daring and brilliant achievements,

led on by constitutional courage, by impetuosity of temper, and by love of power. Influenced by resentment against his countrymen, he engaged in the service of Sparta, and after his recall to his native state, he made it a subject of boast and ridicule, that he had in the most detestable manner, violated the laws of chastity and hospitality.

Yet, the attachment of Socrates, for this man, was so great, and so generally known, that he was vulgarly called Alcibiades's Silesius.

Another of the intimate companions of Socrates, was Critias. This man was a profligate in every respect, and was one of those thirty tyrants, who subverted and trampled upon the laws and liberty of his country.

The free and familiar intercourse, with persons of such characters, was one of the charges brought against Socrates by his accusers. "Critias* and Alcibiades," said they, "were two of his intimate friends; and these were not only the most profligate of mankind, but involved the country in the greatest misfortunes....for, as among the thirty, none was ever found so cruel and rapacious as Critias; so, during the democracy, none was so audacious, so dissolute, so insolent, as Alcibiades."

Xenophon in his reply to this accusation, acknowledges that "Critias and Alcibiades, were, of all the Athenians, by nature the most ambitious; aiming, at what price soever, to set them-

* Xenophon, Mem. Book I. Chap. II.

selves at the head of the commonwealth, and thereby exalt their names beyond that of any other*.”

Eschines was another of the favourite companions of Socrates. He is represented as one, who employed the arts of sophistry, for the purpose of evading the debts which he had contracted by extravagance and vice. He was accused by the orator Lysias, and convicted of fraud, and branded as a villain. After the death of Socrates, it is said, that he obtained some of his dialogues, and published them as his own.

Another of the scholars and friends of Socrates, was Simon, who, if Aristophanes is to be believed, was a plunderer of the public money, and of insatiable rapacity.

To the same degree of intimacy, were admitted Aristippus, a professed teacher of immorality, in the court of Dionysius; Cleonymus of bad character, and Theorus, “ who buried himself in the stews at Corinth †.” With indignation kindled against these men, Aristophanes burst forth into this passionate exclamation,

*Εἰπερδ' ἄλλοι τὰς ἐπιόρας, πῶς δῆτ' ἔχι Σίμων ἐνεπρήσεν,
Οὐδὲ Κλεωνυμον εἶδε Θεωρον; καὶ τοὶ σφοδρὰ γ' εἰς ἐπιόρκοι.*

It must certainly afford just grounds for suspecting the temperance and morality of Socrates,

* Xenophon, Mem. Book I. Chap. II.

† See Cumberland's Observer, Vol. II. No. 77, with reference to Aristophanes, Athenæus and Herodotus.

when his scholars and companions were of the characters which have been represented. It is a good old proverb "we can know a man by the company which he keeps." How different from those of Socrates, were the companions of our Saviour. One of them, it is true, was a traitor, but all the others were men, of whom comparatively speaking, the world was not worthy. Their love for God, for their master Jesus, and for their fellow men, was ardent and irresistible. Actuated by this principle, they renounced ease for labour, pleasure for pain and persecution, the world's approbation for the world's scorn; impelled by this principle, they went forth to carry the light of the gospel into the nations sunk into the deepest night of darkness, into the habitation of cruelty and blood. Death they preferred to concession to the power which opposed their God. Death they preferred, clothed in the frightful forms of the most ingenious cruelty, *to the commission of sin*. Holy men! *you have now received* an infinite reward from the hands of your master. Ah! I see in imagination the flames of the faggots by which some of you perished, which lighted up the torments of your bodies and illuminated your path to heaven!

The charges which were brought against Socrates, and for which he was condemned to die, were offered in the following terms:...."Socrates is criminal; for he acknowledgeth not the gods whom the republic holds sacred, but introduceth

other and new divinities: he is likewise criminal, because he corrupteth the youth*." Though I totally deny the first of these charges, yet were I to judge from the lives of some of the scholars of Socrates, might I not reasonably give some little credit to the latter? It is certain that two of the warmest prosecutors of Socrates, were men held in high respect in Athens. Their names were Lycon and Anytus. Lycon managed the proceedings against him. He was one of the public orators, who, in the assemblies of the senate and of the people, discussed the interests of the state; and whose opinions appear to have had, with his hearers, great weight. Anytus ranked among the number of citizens who possessed the greatest authority. He had successively filled the highest offices in the republic. He was always one of the zealous partizans for the democracy, and having suffered persecution from the thirty tyrants, he was one of those, who contributed most powerfully to their expulsion, and to the restoration of liberty†.

There is more direct testimony than that which was offered by the accusers, which militates against the morality of Socrates. Aristophanes the comic poet was violent in his invectives against him. He introduced him into his dramatic piece entitled the clouds, and exposed to ridicule his pretended ge-

* Xenoph. Memor. Book I. Chap. 1.

† See Travels of Anacharsis, vol. v. p. 428. Arist. de Rep. lib. 4. cap. 4. t. 11. Xenoph. His. Græc. lib. 2.

nus. He represented him suspended in a basket, comparing his thoughts to the subtle and thin air which he respired, and invoking the clouds, the deities of the sophists, whose voice he imagines he hears in the midst of the fogs and darkness with which he is shrouded. He also represented him teaching the youth of Athens to despise the gods, to deceive men, and to disobey their parents*. This piece was received with applause and repeatedly brought upon the stage. As Aristophanes was a professed satirist, I shall not depend upon his assertions. Without, however, he possessed the most matchless effrontery, and unless the populace of Athens, who applauded his piece, were bereft of justice and feeling, there must have been some grounds to support the edifice of his satirical muse. Other comic poets beside Aristophanes, ridiculed this philosopher; among whom were Eupolis and Amispiast†, who were men of less celebrity and inferior talents than the author of the clouds.

The historian who has treated the character of Socrates with the greatest severity, is Herodicus, who lived about 350 years before the Christian Æra. Athenæus quotes his writings, and considers him as good authority. As my knowledge of this historian and of his assertions, are derived from the 77th No. of Cumberland's Observer, I shall take from

* Travels of Anac. Vol. v. p. 426. with reference to the originals.

† Ibid, Vol. v. p. 425.

that paper a short extract, and leave it to make that impression which is proper. “ Herodicus charges Socrates with sitting up all night drinking and carousing with Agatho and others, whom, when he had left drunk and asleep, he reeled into the lyceum more fit for the society of Homer’s cannibals than of those he found there. In this debauch it is pretended, that although Phedrus, Eryximachus and many other potent drinkers fled the company, Socrates sate to the last, swallowing drenches of wine out of enormous goblets of silver: he describes him sitting amongst lascivious revellers at a banquet, where dancing girls and boys were exhibiting their indecent attitudes to the music of harpers and minstrels.”

A part of the paper which exhibits Socrates in a still more criminal point of view, on account of its indecency I have forborne to extract. If Herodicus is to be believed, the name of Socrates should be branded with infamy. I should hope, however, and am disposed to believe, that his statement is false. There is no necessity for depending upon testimony which you may reject, when so much has been produced which is clear*,

* I have observed that Dr. Enfield, in a note to the 1st. Vol. of his abridgment of Brucker’s *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*, says, “ The writer whom Atheneus quotes in support of the infamous tales which Cumberland has retailed, is Herodicus, of whom we know little, but from Atheneus himself, and who appears to have been not so much an historian as a collector of tales.” I could have wished that Dr. Enfield had shewn more fully why Herodicus is unworthy of credit, as I cannot acknowledge want of celebrity alone sufficient to invalidate his testimony.

and to me satisfactory. The evidence which has been collected in support of my dissent from your opinion of the strict temperance and morality of Socrates, will, I trust, justify me in your eyes, and in the eyes of the publick. In my endeavours to detect the fallacy of your comparison between Jesus and Socrates, I presumed all that I had to do was to exhibit Socrates in those points of view which the laws of the purest morality would condemn. If I have been able to bring him into any light which has detected his immorality, my purpose has been answered ; but if on the other hand the testimonies which I have brought forward have only served to confirm your assertions, then I have miserably failed, and will have no other reward than the consciousness of having laboured in vain in the support of what I thought was truth.

Were we in the strictest manner possible, to examine every sentiment, every word, every action of Christ by the law of God, we should find no fault, no blemish. Christ was the example of what he taught---his actions were even more eloquent than his lips, which spoke in the softest solicitations of mercy and in the loudest tones of thunder. No affected singularities, no supercilious moroseness, no frivolous ostentation of the performance of duty ; but meekness, sweetness, openness, simplicity and condescension, characterised his conversation and deportment. He did not seclude himself amidst the retirements of a cloister, nor

word. From the observation of his conduct on these and similar instances, several of the Athenians gave to him the character of an able and deceitful sophist†; and some went so far as to pronounce him either a knave or a madman.

I have now gone through the statement of those objections which were produced by an attentive examination of your performance. I have endeavoured to support and enforce them by such arguments as had influence in my own mind, and by such evidence as I could collect. I probably have written too hastily, and for this reason may be censured; but I wished that an answer to your pamphlet should appear as soon after it as possible. If I have been guilty of any mistatements, I can freely say that they were not made intentionally. If I have been guilty of any sophisms, I will thank that more enlightened reason which detects them. This letter has not proceeded from a want of respect for you; no Sir, while with freedom I have ventured in some instances to differ from you, I have not forgotten the great debt which literature owes to you; I have not forgotten the gratitude which the pupils of science should feel for you who have thrown light on many of the paths of science over

† Eschin. in Timarch. Anach. Vol. v. p. 422, 424.

which they must travel. I conclude with observing, that the cause in which I have engaged, I consider as sacred ; and that I trust I shall always in that cause exert the little strength which I possess, though that little may prove unsuccessful.

With respect and desires for your happiness,

I am your Friend and Humble Servant,

J. B. LINN.

Philadelphia,
April 6, 1803.

in the farther recesses of a wilderness, but conversed freely with all descriptions of men, even with publicans and sinners ; but never like Socrates admitted them into intimacy with him. Whether he exhorted his disciples to love God, to love their neighbours, to forgive their enemies, to be meek and lowly in mind, he bade them learn of him ; he bade them behold his precepts enforced by his practice. Whether considered as a man in private, subject to the divine law, or in his public capacity as a messenger from heaven, we can find no fault in the Saviour---He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners : he was a lamb without blemish and without spot ; he was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin ; he did no sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth : even Pilate confessed *that he could find no fault in him.*

The heavenly extraction of his humanity derived no original contagion from our polluted stock, and rendered him free from all the incentives to evil. The inseparable presence of the divinity with him, and the unrestrained effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, preserved him in this world from all the defilements of infectious conversation. A clear evidence of divine light always shining in his soul, directed him infallibly in the paths of truth and of righteousness. No revolutions of passion, no tempests of adversity, could discompose the calm serenity of his mind. No allurements of worldly pleasure, no temptations of profit, could pervert

his practice or seduce his heart. No scoffs of deluding multitudes, no persecution of his inveterate foes, could quench in his breast the flame of universal charity. No load of suffering which he had to bear, not the utmost rigour of inflexible justice, could in the least diminish his love for his Father, or his obedience to his will. Such was our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Such was the man who bled and died for sinners. How powerful his example! How inexhaustible his love! "Let no future Plutarch attempt the iniquity of parallel*," or if a mortal be contrasted with Christ, let him only serve "as the shade to his brightness."

With your comparison between the death of Jesus and of Socrates, I have no fault to find; it is accurate and just, and a specimen of fair and candid discussion. Had the whole of your pamphlet appeared to me, to have been of the same nature and tendency, I would not have ventured, as I have done, into the field of controversy, to which I am entirely unaccustomed, nor have subjected you to the trouble of reading this long and tedious letter.

III. I shall endeavour to shew, that you have magnified the demon of Socrates, into an importance not warranted by any consequence which flowed from its real or supposed suggestions.

* Mason.

In section VI, p. 29, 30....while speaking of the demon of Socrates you say, "Since then he persisted in his account of these admonitions, to the last, and in the most serious situation that a man could be in, and his veracity was never questioned, though I am far from forming any fixed opinion on a subject of so great obscurity, I think it may admit of a doubt, whether they may not be supposed to have come, in whatever manner they were given, from God. I do not see any thing unworthy of the divine Being, in his distinguishing this extraordinary man in this way. Being no judge of the propriety of the divine conduct, we must be determined, in every case of this kind, by the evidence of facts, according to the established rules of estimating the value of testimony in general." In this passage, you offer it as your opinion, that considering the character of Socrates, and the evidence of facts, there is no impropriety in supposing, that he received from God himself, those admonitions, which he said, were the directions of his conduct. In this supposition I cannot join with you, as I think that it is opposed both by the character of Socrates, and by the evidence of facts.

Socrates in his conversations with his pupils, spoke of a genius, or a demon, who had attended him from his infancy*; by whose inspirations he

* Plato in Conviv. p. 863. Anacharis vol. v. p. 418.

was urged in all his undertakings, and by whom he was frequently restrained, when on the point of executing some intention.

Xenophon declares, that when Socrates spoke in the name of his genius, he fully believed that he felt its secret influence. We cannot positively declare, what was in the heart of this man, when he declared that he was influenced by supernatural intimations, yet, certainly we have every reason to expect, that such uncommon pretensions would be supported by uncommon evidences. If you had discovered such uncommon evidences, and urged them in support of your supposition, then you might more justly hope to have carried conviction along with you. The word demon, from the Greek word *Δαίμων* signifies something of a divine nature. The Platonists who derived their opinions originally from Socrates, distinguish between gods, demons, and heroes. The gods are those, whom Cicero calls *Dii majorum gentium*; the demons are those who are of the same rank with our angels. Apuleius *De Deo Socratis*, while defining the nature of demons, says, they have a rational soul, and an aerial body; that they are immortal and obnoxious to the same passions with men: that predictions, auguries, divinations, oracles, dreams, and magical delusions belong to them: that they convey the prayers of men to the gods, and carry back to men the favours granted them by the gods. Broughton in his *Dictionary**

* Vol. I. folio, p. 338.

has given me the following information, concerning the opinions of Minucius Felix....“ The poets acknowledge the existence of demons. The philosophers make it matter of dispute. Socrates was convinced of it; for he had a demon always at hand, by whose advice he governed himself in all his actions. The Magi are not only acquainted with demons, but perform all their magical operations by the help of demons.”

From these passages it appears, that belief in demons was not peculiar to Socrates; that many beside him, pretended to have received their assistance and friendly admonition. If, therefore, we grant, that Socrates was attended by a friendly genius, who conveyed to him the voice of heaven, is it not reasonable that we should suppose, that the same supernatural power attended all others who made similar declarations, and afforded similar evidences with those of Socrates? In this case, these genii would become innumerable, and our examination of the claims of such pretenders would be endless.

Plutarch quotes the following lines of Menander, in which that poet says, “ That every man, at his birth has a good genius given to him, which attends him during the whole course of his life as a guide and director.

Ἀπαντὶ δαιμόνιον ἀνδρὶ συμπαραστέλει
 Εὐθὺς γενομένῳ, μυσταγωγὸς τῷ βίῳ
 Ἀγαθός.

“ When you have shut your door, (says Epic-tetus), and darkened your room, remember never to say, you are alone, for God is within, and your Genius is within, and what need they of light to see what you are doing.”

To the demon of Socrates, I can attach no greater importance than that which belongs to the dictates of a strong and inquisitive mind. The voice of the demon, I believe to have been nothing more nor less than the impulse of his exercised reason.

I have no doubt; but that Socrates was pleased with the supposition that he derived his wisdom from heaven. This would have a tendency to magnify his importance, and to teach a superstitious age to look up to him with the greater reverence. He therefore strenuously asserted, that he was continually attended by a demon, from whom, in every case he received advice. With intellects of an higher order than the most of his countrymen, he thought he could successfully manage the imposition, and deceive the artless multitude. When he, therefore, by the exercise of his understanding and penetration, discovered the impropriety of any undertaking, and saw that it would probably prove unfortunate, in expressing his opinion, and delivering his warning, he declared, that he had received the inspiration of his faithful genius. I know of nothing, however, which he predicted, but what a wise man

might foretel, even were his ears closed against the whisper of a demon.

When some neglected fabric nods beneath
The weight of years, and totters to the tempest,
Must heaven dispatch the messengers of light,
Or wake the dead to warn us of its fall*.

Several celebrated personages beside Socrates have travelled the same road of demoniac greatness. Solon and Lycurgus advanced their credit by the authority of oracles. Zeleucus pretended that his laws were not his own invention, but were dictated to him by Minerva. Numa Pompilius, in order to fill with wonder the infancy of Rome and to give a weightier and more dreaded influence to his laws, boasted, that in the dark shades of silence and of solitude, he held secret conferences with the goddess Egeria ; and the first Scipio deluded the people with the tale that he received from the gods secret and important counsels. Will it be hazardous to assert that to some of these men we should allow the same credit which is due to Socrates ?

But what were these communications which Socrates pretended to have received from a demon, and which you have honoured by asserting that there is no impropriety in supposing that they were derived from God ! Were these communications worthy of God ? Was the mind of Socrates, were

* JOHNSON.

his instructions of a superior order to those of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero? I think they were not. Did he deliver any thing which required the previous communication of Heaven? No, he delivered instructions which Heaven would disown---which dishonour God; this I trust has been fully proved in the first part of this letter, so that over these errors I need not again travel; therefore he could not have received from God his inspiration, for God never communicates error to his creatures. Independent of these errors, the conduct of Socrates did not testify the presence of a divinity with him. We are told by Plutarch*, that when followed by his disciples, he would suddenly stop, remain long in thought, imagine he heard the voice of a demon, and then advise his disciples to take another road, as he was warned that danger lurked in the one in which he was proceeding.

We are informed by Plato†, that, at the siege of Potidea he was seen from the dawn of day standing without his tent, motionless, seemingly wrapped in the profoundest meditation, and exposed to the rays of the sun. The soldiers gathering around him, made him the object of their observations. Some of them who watched him all night, declared that he remained in the same posture till the following day, when he rendered his homage to the rising sun, and then retired to his tent without uttering a

* Plut. de Gen. Socr. t. ii.

† Plat. in conviv. t. iii.

A LETTER

TO THE

REVEREND JOHN BLAIR LINN, A. M.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN THE
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

IN DEFENCE OF THE PAMPHLET,

INTITLED,

SOCRATES AND JESUS COMPARED.

BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S.

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1803.



A L E T T E R

TO THE

REVEREND JOHN BLAIR LINN, A. M.

S I R,

I HAVE received the letter you have been pleased to address to me, in answer to my pamphlet, intitled, *Socrates and Jesus compared*, and truly thank you for it. The reading of your poem on *genius*, when I was at Philadelphia, led me to form a high opinion of your ability, tho' out of the line of your profession. In this work, which is intirely within it, I am pleased with the zeal you discover for what you deem to be important christian truth, and also with the respectful manner with which you address me on the subject, and with the candour and modesty with which, as becomes a young man, you generally

A express

express yourself; as when you say, p. 65, “ I
“ have probably written too hastily, but I wish-
“ ed that an answer to your pamphlet should
“ appear as soon after it as possible.” You also
say p. 56, “ If the testimony I have brought
“ forward has only served to confirm your asserti-
“ ons, I have miserably failed, and will have no
“ other reward than the consciousness of having
“ laboured in vain in support of what I thought
“ was truth.”

To this merit, Sir, which is the greatest that
man can pretend to, you appear to me to be fully
intituled. At the same time, without taking the
liberty that is generally allowed to old men when
they address young ones, and wishing to go into
the discussion on perfectly equal terms, I must take
the liberty to say that, in my opinion, your suspi-
cion of having been too hasty in this business is
better grounded than you seem to have been aware
of; as you have not given a just idea of the object
of my pamphlet, have not formed a just estimate
of the character of Socrates, and have advanced
what you cannot support with respect to Jesus
Christ. All these articles I shall consider in their
order.

SECTION

SECTION I.

Of the Object of my Pamphlet.

YOU are pleased to say, p. 58, that
“ with my comparison between the deaths of Je-
“ sus and Socrates, you have no fault to find. It
“ is just and accurate, and a specimen of fair and
“ candid discussion ; and that had the whole of
“ the pamphlet appeared to you to have been of
“ the same nature and tendency, you would not
“ have ventured as you have done into the field
“ of controversy, to which,” you add, “ you are
“ intirely unaccustomed.”

Now I am not conscious of any difference be-
tween the general principles on which my compa-
rison of these two men is conducted with respect
to their *deaths*, and their *lives* ; but you seem not
to have understood my *object* in the comparison
that I instituted, tho’ I thought it would have
been sufficiently evident to every intelligent and
candid reader. It was to shew that, allowing to
Socrates

Socrates every thing that can make for his advantage (and you allow him, p. 7, to have been “the prince of heathen philosophers, and to have been a partial luminary in the darkness which then shrouded the world”) he was greatly inferior to what even an unbeliever must, if he reflect at all, acknowledge with respect to Jesus, tho’ he should rate him as low as, with any tolerable regard to his history, he possibly can. I therefore confined myself to the accounts of Xenophon and Plato, who were the encomiasts of Socrates for his character, and to the writings of the evangelists (because we have no other) for that of Jesus. Unbelievers consider them both as equally *men*, with certain peculiarities of constitution, education, habits, &c. Let them, then, consider them both in this light, and make the comparison between them. By this means I thought that something would be gained with respect to evidences of christianity.

You, however, thought, p. 6, that “it was my evident design to lower Jesus Christ from that infinite station in which you and a certain number of christians, to which you belong, suppose him to be intitled, and to elevate a heathen philosopher to a rank of which he was totally unworthy.”

That I do not consider Jesus in the same light that you do is true; but it was, I think, no part
of

of my object in this work to enter into that argument: It would not have been to my purpose. You say, p. 17, " You very cursorily mentioned " that the miracles of our Saviour must have given " a great force and dignity to his instructions. On " the nature and weight of those miracles, I wished that you had dwelt." But I cannot conceive how it would have been to any good purpose to enlarge on the miracles of Jesus in a comparison of him with Socrates, who did not pretend to any. Tho' I thought it proper just to mention the circumstance, as accounting for the superior dignity of the discourses of Jesus, it would not have been proper to *dwell* upon any thing that unbelievers would not allow. If we argue with men at all; and expect to gain any thing with them, we must argue on some common principles, or come as near to them as we can. Every thing, therefore, that I have enlarged upon in the character and teaching of Jesus is what appears on the face of his history, without taking in the miraculous part of it. You, however, expected, that he should, in the comparison, have been represented as " God equal to the Father." But what could you have expected to gain by this with any unbeliever, who, whatever he might think of the miracles of Jesus, would never allow him to be God? If, therefore, I had, with you, believed him to be so, I should

I should not have brought the sentiment into this argument, but should rather have concealed it.

You likewise say, p. 8, " I am dissatisfied because you have not sufficiently marked the disparity between Socrates and Jesus, and sufficiently noticed the errors of Socrates as a heathen." But it was my object you now see, to make as light as I reasonably could of the errors of Socrates, and to make every due allowance for them, that I might gain the more by the comparison. If it should appear that his errors were more considerable than I had represented them, my argument would have the advantage of being what logicians call *a fortiori*, having allowed to my opponent more than I was obliged to do.

With all the advantage that I have given to Socrates, I have not by any means made him so great a character as Rollin, who has written his history pretty much at large, and as I believe the generality of learned christians make him. Why, then, did you not censure their writings as well as mine? They are much more open to your censure, and much more generally known than my pamphlet is ever likely to be. Rollin's history is in almost every persons hands, in this country, I find, as well as in England; and it is in all the languages of Europe. It is, indeed an excellent work, and deserves to be so.

" As

“ As to Socrates,” Rollin says p. 248, “ it must
“ be allowed that the Pagan world never produ-
“ ced any thing so great and perfect. When we
“ observe to what a height he carries the sublimity
“ of his sentiments, not only in respect to moral
“ virtue, temperance, sobriety, patience in adver-
“ sity, the love of poverty, and the forgiveness of
“ wrongs, but what is far more considerable in re-
“ gard to the divinity, his unity, omnipotence,
“ creation of the world, and providence in the go-
“ vernment of it ; the immortality of the soul, its
“ ultimate and eternal destiny, the rewards of
“ the good, and the punishment of the wicked ;
“ when we consider this train of divine knowledge,
“ we ask our reason whether it is a pagan who
“ thinks and speaks in this manner, and can scarce
“ persuade ourselves that from so dark and obscure
“ a fund as paganism, should shine forth such
“ living and such glorious rays of light.” This,
Sir, is much higher than I have rated Socrates,
and yet Rollin was a christian, and with respect to
the doctrine of the *trinity* as orthodox as yourself.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Of the moral Character of Socrates.

INOW proceed to make some observations on what you say of the moral character of Socrates, compared with my account of him. "From saying," you observe p. 29, "that Socrates was a man who from early life not only abstained from vice himself, but one who devoted himself to the promoting of virtue in others, &c. and that both were equally temperate, it is evident that you find no fault with the moral character of Socrates, that you suppose him to have been equally temperate with our Saviour, and in the general manner of his life to have borne to him an obvious resemblance." This," you say, "you think is the mildest meaning that my words convey."

And this, from the accounts of Xenophon and Plato, may be defended; and it is from their testimony, you say, p. 31, that you think you can prove his immorality. But consider, Sir, that I
use

use popular language, and that when we say of any particular person, that he is *free from vice*, we do not mean that his character is absolutely perfect; because it is taken for granted, and therefore does not require to be mentioned, that no human being is absolutely perfect, but only that he is free from gross or obvious vices; and this is the meaning that your candour should have put upon words.

With respect to the temperance of Socrates, I know of no evidence of his intemperance. What you quote from Herodicus, through the medium of Athenæus, you profess, p. 50, to lay no stress upon, any more than you or Dr. Enfield, do on the ridicule of Aristophanes, p. 54. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, there are instances of his exhortations to temperance, as well as to other virtues; and this is a topic that an intemperate man would surely have avoided. Besides, a man, who, like Socrates, lives to the age of seventy, in good health, and retaining the perfect use of all his faculties, cannot well be supposed to have been intemperate. But let any man live ever so temperately, his enemies will assert the contrary. Did not the Pharisees say of Jesus (Mat. xi. 19) that he was "a glutton and a wine bibber," as well as "a friend of publicans and sinners." Had these Pharisees left any written account of Jesus, he

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would

would, no doubt, have been represented by them as Socrates was by Herodicus, or Aristophanes.

Of his temperance, in the most extensive sense of the word, respecting all our wants, natural or artificial, Rollin says, p. 195, “ he had accustomed himself early to a sober, severe, laborious life, without which it seldom happens that men are capable of discharging the greatest part of the duties of good citizens. It is difficult to carry the contempt of riches, and the love of poverty, farther than he did. He looked upon it as a divine perfection to be in want of nothing, and believed the less we are contented with, the nearer we approach to the divinity. Seeing the pomp and shew displayed by luxury in certain ceremonies, and the infinite quantity of gold and silver employed in them: How many things said he, congratulating himself on his condition, do I not want ?” p. 196.

“ Neither Aristophanes,” (the abbe of Fraguer observes) “ in his comedy of the *clouds*, which is intirely against Socrates, nor his vile accusation on his trial, have advanced one word that tends to impeach the purity of his morals; and it is not probable,” he adds, “ that such violent enemies as those would have neglected one of the most likely methods to discredit him in
“ the

“ the opinion of his judges, if there had been any foundation, or appearance, for the use of it.” p. 249.

To what purpose then, are your quotations from the scriptures, p. 30, to prove that “ no one except Jesus ever appeared in the form of a man who was without sin.” But allowing Jesus to have been the most perfect of all the human race, which I am willing to do, what would the maintaining of it have availed me in an argument with unbelievers ; who would cavil, and find as much fault with Jesus, as you do with Socrates, balancing, perhaps, the account of the Pharisees with those of the evangelists ?

If you interpret the scriptures literally, as when it makes for your purpose you are disposed to do, you must allow that other persons were sinless as well as Jesus. Of Noah it is said (Gen. xi. 9) that *he was a just man, and perfect in his generation* ; of Job (Ch. i. ii. 3) that *he was a perfect and upright man, and that there was none like him on the earth* ; of Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke, i. 6) that *they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. Jesus himself says (Luke xviii, 19) that *there was none that was good (meaning no doubt perfectly so) but one, that is God*. You may say that he secretly meant that *as man* he was not perfect

perfect, tho' as God he was so. But how unworthy of Jesus was such miserable equivocation as this. On this principle I might say of any man, that he was either a mortal or an immortal being at pleasure, and be justifiable in so doing.

Besides you allow an advantage to Socrates which you disclaim with respect to Jesus, without seeming to be aware of the natural consequence of the concession. "The natural propensities of Socrates," you say p. 39, "were, by his own confession, towards evil, but that he regulated his conduct by the influence of philosophy." He, then, had a difficulty to struggle with that Jesus had not, and yet he had strength of mind to overcome it, *principle* in him having got the better of natural *inclination*; whereas Jesus was by nature prone to no evil, but always inclined to every thing that was good. Where then, will the unbeliever say, was the great merit of temperance, or of any other virtue, in Jesus?

SECTION

SECTION III.

*Of the Principles on which you judge of the Merits
of Socrates.*

IF I have represented the character of Socrates in too advantageous a light (which if I have done has been inadvertently) besides that it is due to every man to judge as favourably of him as we can, it has been from a bias which you ought to forgive, as it was favourable to my argument in defence of christianity. But you have taken very unfair means to degrade and vilify him.

1. You infer from the *companions* of Socrates that he *must* have been an immoral man, because they "were so. It is a good old proverb," you say p. 52, "that we can know a man by the company that he keeps; and several of the most intimate of the *companions of Socrates*," you say p. 27, "to whom his instructions were principally addressed, were the most impious and dissolute characters in Greece." Those companions whom you particularly

particularly mention were Critias, Alcibiades, Æschines, Simon, Cleomenes, Aristippus, Aspasia, and Theodota. You again mention p. 37, “the gay, the fascinating, the versatile, Alcibiades;” and speak of Critias as “a man, p. 50, “profligate in every respect, and one of those “thirty tyrants who subverted and trampled upon the laws and liberties of his country. How “different from these,” you say, p. 52, were the “companions of our Saviour. The instructions “of both,” you acknowledge, “were gratuitous; “but the friends and audiences of each were of very different descriptions.”

But are you able, Sir, to produce any evidence that Socrates was so far the companion of these men as to approve their conduct, and join in their vicious excesses? The historians, by whom you profess to be guided, say the very contrary; viz. that his conversations with them were calculated to teach them virtue, and restrain them from vice. In the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, and the dialogues of Plato, you must have seen this. You yourself say that “they were those to whom his “instructions were addressed.” But can you suppose that any thing deserving the name of *instruction* could be designed to teach vice rather than virtue.

Rollin

Rollin calls Alcibiades “ the most ardent and fiery of all the Athenians. Socrates, however,” he says, “ never spared him, and was always ready to calm the sallies of his passion, and to rebuke his pride, which was his great disease.” p. 207.

As to Critias, tho’ he was a pupil of Socrates when he was a young man, yet when he was in power, Socrates was so far from being a favourite with him, that because he could not be brought into his measures, his life was in imminent danger; and he would certainly have been put to death by him if he had continued in power much longer.

As you seem not, lately at least, to have attended to the history of Socrates, I shall quote the account that Rollin gives of his behaviour during the reign of the thirty tyrants; that our readers may judge how far his friendship for Critias, and his intimacy with him, influenced him with respect to his flagrant conduct.

“ The Athenians seemed to have lost the very use of speech, not daring to vent the least complaint, lest it should be made a capital crime in them. Socrates alone continued intrepid. He consoled the afflicted senate, animated the desponding citizens, and set all men an admirable example of courage and resolution, preserving his liberty, and sustaining his part in the midst of the thirty tyrants, who made all else tremble,
“ but

"but they could never shake the constancy of Socrates with their menaces. Critias, who had been his pupil, was the first to declare most openly against him, taking offence at the free and bold discourses which he held against the government of the thirty. He went so far as to prohibit his instructing the youth. But Socrates, who neither acknowledged his authority, nor feared the violent effects of it, paid no regard to so unjust an order," Vol. 4, p. 66.

"Critias having determined to destroy Theramenes, because, tho' one of the thirty, he could not be brought into all his measures; of all the senators only Socrates, whose disciple Theramenes had been, took upon him his defence, and opposed the officers of justice. But his weak endeavours could not deliver him." p. 65. You must surely have read this, or something to the same purpose, in several histories of Greece. Yet you consider Socrates as one who joined with Critias in subverting, and trampling upon, the laws and liberties of his country. If ever you see Socrates, Sir, as I doubt not you will, you must ask his pardon for this gross and manifest misrepresentation.

There is as little evidence of the acquaintance that Socrates had with Aspasia, or Theodota, leading

ing him into vice, as his friendship for the *men* that you have mentioned. If there had been any evidence of his having had any criminal commerce with them, I doubt not you would have produced it. Besides, as to simple fornication, a vice as it certainly is, and justly condemned on the principles of Christianity, no heathen considered it in that light. Greeks and Romans, even the gravest characters among them, mention it without any particular censure, except that of imprudence. It was evidently with great difficulty that the apostle Paul could dissuade his gentile converts from it. Now not only candour, but justice, requires that we judge of all men by their own principles, and not by ours.

I thought that I had quoted enough of the interview that Socrates had with Theodota, and that I had sufficiently censured him for it, but you enlarge upon it as a favourite topic, p. 48, as if I had not mentioned it all; adding, "does it contain any proof of the stern unyielding temperance and morality of Socrates?" It certainly does not; nor could you expect that, as a heathen, it should; but neither does it afford any evidence of his intemperance, or immorality.

The objection that you make to Socrates the Pharisees, you well know, made to Jesus, and on the same principle, calling him a *friend of publican*

and sinners, because he was, no doubt (for he does not deny, but justifies it) frequently seen in their company. But with respect to both the question is, for what end were they in their company, and were they corrupted by the intercourse they had with them.

2. You add, p. 27, as a farther proof of the licentious principles of Socrates, and of the Grecian philosophers in general, that “the corruption of Athens increased after them.” But so, you know, did the corruption of the Jews in general after the time of Jesus, and to a far greater extent; and the divine institutions of Moses, tho’ promulgated in the most solemn and illustrious manner, were abandoned by the great body of the Hebrew nation soon after the death of Joshua.

3. Not content with proving Socrates to have been a very immoral man from the company that he kept, you advance, as a farther and unquestionable proof of the same charge, the character of the heathen world as given by the apostle Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, which you say, p. 9, “presents a picture of the heathen world that is by no means overcharged, but strictly true. From those errors which have been only mentioned, Socrates was not exempt. Indeed by your own confession,” you add, “and the account of his biographers, he indulged himself

“himself equally with his countrymen.” But where, Sir, have I confessed this? The thought, I am sure, never occurred to me before, nor any thing I hope so very unreasonable and absurd.

The character that Paul has given of the Gentiles world you have not quoted. I shall, therefore, do it here, to save our readers the trouble of looking for it. It is as follows, after mentioning their idolatry, and the absurdity and folly of it, he says (Rom. i. 24) “Wherefore God gave them up to un-
“cleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to
“dishonour their own bodies between themselves.
“— For this cause God gave them up unto vile
“affections. For even their women did change
“the natural use into that which is against na-
“ture; and likewise the men, leaving the na-
“tural use of the women, burned in their lust one
“toward another, men with men, working that
“which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves
“that recompence of their error which was meet.
“And whereas they did not like to retain God
“in their knowledge, God gave them over to a
“a reprobate mind, to do those things which are
“not convenient. Being filled with all unrighte-
“ousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness,
“maliciousness, full of envy; murder, debate, de-
“ceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of
“God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of
“evil

“ evil things, disobedient to parents, without un-
“ derstanding, covenant breakers, without natural
“ affection, implacable, unmerciful ; who knowing
“ the judgment of God, that they who do such
“ things are worthy of death, not only do the same,
“ but have pleasure in them that do them.”

Now, Sir, can you, or any man of common sense, tho' but superficially acquainted with history, or human nature, believe that it was possible for any human society to subsist, if every individual was of this character? And if any individual escaped the pollution, you must allow that Socrates might ; and therefore, that your inference to the prejudice of his character has no foundation. Can you believe that Paul himself meant to give this representation, as applying to every individual character in the Gentile world, or only meant that the vices he mentions were very common among them?

Should not only Paul, but Peter, and all the apostles, say what would authorize your inference with respect to Socrates, I could not believe them. Among other crimes the men must have been all Sodomites, and the women all Sappho's ; and the men and women too must have been all murderers. But had this been the case, there would soon have been an end of the whole of the guilty race, and one that they justly merited. But
who

who then, Sir, would Paul have found to preach to among them? And yet wherever he came he appears to have found the cities populous, and well policied. Notwithstanding the general character of the Gentile world, there were, I doubt not then, and now are, heathens in whose place I would rather stand at the day of judgment than in that of many nominal christians. And had I been a heathen, and in the circumstances of Plato, I should have joined in his thanksgiving. He is said when on the point of death to have thanked God for three things, that he had endued him with a rational soul, that he was born a Greek and not a barbarian, and that he had placed his birth in the life time of Socrates. *Rollin, Vol. 4, p. 206.*

4. You make the same unfair inference with respect to the character of Socrates from the cruel and obscene rites of the *heathen religions*. "It is evident," you say p. 13, "that Socrates instead of reproving them [his countrymen] for their idolatry instead of restraining them in their indulgence of their obscene and ridiculous ceremonies, was himself guilty of the same excesses. You have asserted," you say p. 10. "that Socrates was an idolater, or a worshipper of a multiplicity of gods, and such as were acknowledged by his countrymen, and that he conformed in all respects to the popular modes of worship. In consequence of this I
" was

“ was disappointed that you did not insist upon
 “ the errors and immorality into which such a be-
 “ lief must necessarily lead him.”

Now I did not do it because I did not believe that the principles of Socrates would *necessarily* lead him into the immoralities you mention ; and I am surprized that, young as you are, you should be so ignorant of the nature of the heathen idolatry, and of the general conduct of many idolaters.

The fact appears evidently enough to have been this, and in the nature of things it could not well have been otherwise ; viz. that certain obscene and indecent rites were practised in some of their modes of worship, but that no persons were compelled by the laws to join in them. It was altogether voluntary, and in general only those who were licentiously disposed took advantage of them ; the graver citizens at Athens, Rome, and other places, having nothing to do with them.

One of the disgusting ceremonies to which you probably allude was that of the festival of Bacchus, authorized no doubt, by the religion and laws of Athens, and of other states of Greece, in which, after sacrificing goats, the priests and the company made a wild procession, during which they devoured the entrails of the victims quite raw and warm from the slaughter. But do you think that
 Socrates,

Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, or even that Alcibiades, joined in this, tho' they were at liberty to have done so if they had pleased? The law was satisfied if it was done by any body; and there were always persons enow of low and beastly characters to keep up the custom. This, and other rites of a much worse kind, having been practised time immemorial (and the prosperity of the state being supposed by all heathens to depend upon the observance of the rites of their ancestors) were constantly kept up, but not, Sir, by *all* the citizens. For, as individuals, they were not under any obligation to do it, there being no penalty annexed to the neglect of them; and in consequence of this these disgusting rites, as well as the cruel one of human sacrifices grew gradually into disuse, without any charge of the violation of the laws, in the civilized states of both Greece and Rome. If there were any complaints of the more superstitious of the heathens on the subject, we hear nothing of them.

The Lupercalia at Rome was a business as offensive to decency and modesty as any thing that was practised in Greece, and what is truly remarkable, the observance of this particular custom was thought to have a nearer connection with the prosperity of the state than any other; on which account even some christians were not satisfied with the discontinuance of it. But according to the law
only

only two boys, tho' sons of Patricians, ran about the streets naked ; and all the women that threw themselves in their way did it voluntarily, and not from any compulsion. And yet your argument requires that Socrates, merely because he was a heathen, and because the heathens had obscene and disgusting rites, *must* have borne a part in them all.

One of the most sacred rites of the religion of his country, but of a suspicious nature (tho' Mr. Warburton had the best opinion of it) I mean the *Eleusinian mysteries*, we know that Socrates did not sanction by his concurrence ; for he was never initiated, tho' he was censured for not being so. He was not, however, subject to any penalty for his neglect.

You justly say, p. 9, that “ with the ignorance
“ of the heathens of the one true God, they could
“ form no proper idea of his perfections. On the
“ other hand, they represented their gods as they
“ were themselves, lewd, violent, sanguinary, and
“ capricious.” But these, Sir, were only the popular ideas, which were even allowed to be ridiculed on the theatres. That there were such Gods as these was no article of any creed, or confession of faith, to be subscribed, or in any other way asserted to, by every individual. It is well known that the philosophers in general had no such opinions.

With

With respect to Socrates in particular, you ought to have observed, as you profess to take your account from Xenophon and Plato, that tho' he acknowledged the gods of his country, he had by no means the same idea of their *characters*. From the extracts that I gave of his conversations on the subject of religion, it appears that, if you only conceal the term *gods*, and substitute that of *God* in its place, he had very honorable ideas of the character of the deity, and that he made an excellent use of them, as tending to restrain men even from secret wickedness, as well as from open crimes.

“Socrates,” you say p. 10, “who knew not God as he is, could not teach him to others, and this imperfection must have run through all his discourses, and have blasted all his instructions which had reference to the deity.” But you see, if you have read his discourses, that it did not do so. Even christians may be usefully impressed with what Socrates advanced on this subject. Let any unprejudiced person only read my quotations from him, and judge between us.

It is true, as I have observed in several of my publications, that the heathen philosophers not directly opposing the superstitions, and false religions, of their countries, but complying with them as far as the laws required, would ne-

ver have made any reformation in the world. Their disciples were only the wealthy, and the liberal; and whatever it was that was taught them, it does not appear to have been any thing that directly opposed the established system, and that it had no effect upon the common people. It was reserved for christianity to produce this great and most desirable change; and the apostles, and the primitive christians, had the *zeal*, as well as the *knowledge*, that was necessary for the purpose. As the heathen philosophers had not this knowledge, you could not reasonably expect of them the same zeal; especially as they had no real belief of a future state. Without this, what would the apostles themselves, or any other men, have done? What must they have thrown away their lives for? It was for the *joy that was set before him* that Jesus himself *endured the cross*. Heb. xii. 2.

Of one particular crime and that of a peculiarly heinous nature, viz. adultery, you think, p. 40 that Socrates may be reasonably suspected, because he was frequently scolded by his wife Xantippe. But tho' we hear much of this scolding, there is no evidence whatever that it was on this account. And if this be a sufficient ground of suspicion in the case of Socrates, it must be so with respect to all other men who have scolding wives. I fear there are such in christian countries as well as others,

thers, and yet I hope there are but few cases in which the scolded husband is driven to this extreme. You think Xantippe must, on the whole have been a good wife, on account of the affection she shewed for him at the time of his death; but does it not follow from the same fact, that she thought him, on the whole, to have been a good husband?

5. But what I object to the most, as most manifestly unfair in your censure of Socrates, is your judging him by rules that cannot, in reason or equity, apply to his case. You judge him not by the light, the knowledge, or the maxims, that he had, but by those that he had not, and which he had not the means of acquiring. "In order," you say p. 32, "to determine concerning the temperance or morality, or the intemperance and immorality, of Socrates, he must be arraigned before the bar of the gospel; as there is no infallible rule of right but that which is prescribed in the word of God." This, however, is no better than judging Hindoos by the laws of England, of which they have no knowledge. And according to the apostle Paul (Rom. ii. 12) the Gentiles who have not the law will not be judged by *it*, but by that which is *written in their hearts*, and with which they must, of course, be acquainted. What could Socrates know of the laws of Christ, when he lived

near

near four hundred years before his appearance. Perfect as the rules of christianity are, he will not be judged by them at the last day; tho' he is by you here.

6. Not considering the necessary imperfection of the knowledge of Socrates, as a mere heathen, your expectations from his teaching are most unreasonable. "What, Sir," you say, with an air of triumph, p. 17. "did Socrates point out to the Athenians the same being to whom Jesus directed the faith of his followers? Did the discourses of Socrates, like those of Jesus, bring to light life and immortality? Did they declare that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteousness?"

In reply to this, it is surely sufficient to say, that Socrates had no knowledge of that God, or of that day, nor had he the means of acquiring it; and yet he taught gratuitously according to his ability and opportunity, as Jesus did according to his; tho' "this," you say p. 18, is an assertion that I cannot maintain. I no where said that his instructions were as perfect as those of Jesus, but considered him as an idolater, and, contrary to the generally received opinion, shewed that he had no knowledge of a future state. I, therefore, see no call that you had to question me so imperiously as
you

you do on this subject. You will find the answer in the very pamphlet to which you reply.

7. "Socrates," you say p. 41, "was chargeable with *bigamy*." But surely Sir, you might have spared *this* out of your many articles of accusation: For on the same principle you must condemn Abraham, Jacob, and much more David and Solomon. Were they not chargeable with much more than bigamy? You will say there was not in that time any law of God or of man that forbid it. This also was exactly the case of Socrates.

Besides that this story of Socrates marrying Myrta (of whom neither Xenophon nor Plato say any thing at all) is very uncertain, you allow that, if it had taken place, it was in consequence of the permission, and even the express encouragement, of the magistrates of Athens, at a time when more citizens were wanted than had been produced in the way of single marriages; and I have allowed that Socrates was too much influenced by his regard to positive law in judging of the morality of actions, and have censured him for it, because in this respect he might have judged better. Had he married this Myrta, he must have kept her out of the way of Xantippe, or she would probably have pulled out her eyes, or have destroyed her if she could. *

* Rollin refers to a dissertation of Mr. Hardion, in

8. With equal injustice you censure Socrates for serving in the wars of his country. "His opinions concerning foldiership and war," you say p. 33, "were the same with those unjustifiable ones commonly held in Greece, and you are confident, p. 37, that by the rules of Christ in these instances he is reprehensible."

But surely this charge may be admitted without reflecting materially on the moral character of Socrates. At this day, in christian countries, individuals are not allowed to judge of the wars in which their country is engaged, and yet they are required to serve in them. Do you think that all the British who fought against America approved of the war? I know the contrary with respect to some who had commands in it. I did not approve of their conduct, but, tho' christians, they thought their conduct justifiable. What, then, could you expect of a heathen in such a case?

You allow, however, one good action of Socrates in this business of war, tho' it is in contradiction to your general maxim, which denies every virtue to every heathen. For you observe, p. 26, that "when Xenophon was wounded and lay extended on the ground, Socrates raised him in his arms in which he says he demonstrates that "the second marriage of Socrates, and the decree upon bigamy, are supposititious facts." p. 199.

“arms, and bore him out of the road of the pursuing enemy.” He was not then, *filled with all wickedness, murder, deceit and malignity, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful*, which is part of the character of the heathen world given by the apostle Paul, Rom. i. 29, &c. *

On this subject you are careful to remind me, p. 33, that “Xenophon was one of the thirty thousand who entered as mercenaries into the service of Cyrus of Persia,” and you think it evident that “he followed the footsteps of Socrates in the fields of battle, as well as in the shades of philosophy.” But if Xenophon only followed the footsteps of his master in this expedition, you should have brought some evidence that Socrates took the lead in it, at least that he advised, or approved of it. As far, however, as I recollect history is wholly silent on the subject. It does not appear that Socrates ever served in any wars besides those of his country, and in them he only served under others. We do not know that he advised, or approved of any of them.

Besides

* Rollin says of Socrates that “he bore arms, as did all the people of Athens, but with more pure and elevated motives. He made many campaigns, was present in many actions, and always distinguished himself by his valour and fortitude.” p. 195.

Besides, were not the christian Swifs as guilty of a breach of morality in this respect as the heathen Greeks? But would it be fair to charge every individual Swifs with the crime of his nation? Few persons, I think, would join you in so indiscriminate a censure.

9. But you say, p. 32, "If the opinions of men "have any influence on their character, Socrates "was not a moral but an immoral man." I wish, Sir, that opinion had more influence than it has on men's characters. They would then, in christian countries, be much better than they are. But as many persons are evidently worse than their known principles, and must, and do, condemn themselves when they think seriously; others, it may be hoped, are better than their principles. But those that you ascribe to Socrates were not *his* principles, but those of *his country*. and such as it is probable would not have been adopted in his time. But they had been of long standing, and it was thought unsafe to make any *innovations* in any thing respecting religion. The same, however, is the case with christian institutions. Were the articles of the churches of England, or of Scotland, to be made for the first time at present, they would, I am confident, be different from what they now are, and yet they are subscribed to by thousands
who

who do not approve of them. If you can apologize for their conduct (and they are christians, and in other respects very worthy men) much more may you for that of Socrates, who subscribed to nothing, and only complied with the customs of his country as far as the laws absolutely required, and no farther than he really approved.

SECTION IV.

Of the Dæmon of Socrates.

WITH your opinion of the general character of Socrates, as highly immoral, I do not wonder at what you say of him with respect to his *dæmon*. “To the dæmon of Socrates,” you say p. 62, “I can attach no greater importance than “to that which belongs to the dictates of a strong “and inquisitive mind. I have no doubt but he “was pleased with the supposition that he derived “his wisdom from heaven. With an intellect of

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“an

“ a higher order than most of his countrymen, he
“ thought he could successfully manage an impossi-
“ tion to deceive the artless multitude. I know
“ of nothing however, that he predicted, but what a
“ wise man might foretel.”

You seem, Sir, to have misconceived the whole business of this *dæmon*, whatever it was. He did not pretend to derive any part of his wisdom (if by *wisdom* he meant the subjects of his public teaching) from this source, nor had he any thing to do with the *artless multitude*, but with men of the same rank and degree of intellect with himself. All that he ascribed to it was hints respecting his conduct and theirs; and these did not respect what they were to *do*, but only what they were *not to do*. Nor are we informed concerning any thing that he can be said to have *predicted*. His own conduct might, no doubt, have been directed by his own good sense, and so might the advices that he gave to his friends. But he declared that those advices did *not* come from himself. He must, therefore, have been either an enthusiast, which you do not suppose, or an impostor with respect to them; and this you think he was. I am inclined to think better of him, and therefore I profess my ignorance on the subject; tho' I have said that I see nothing unworthy of a divine interposition
in

in any advices that he can be supposed to have given, as they all, it is said, led to proper conduct.

If you, Sir, pretend to judge of what is proper for the Supreme Being to do in such cases as these, I do not; and therefore I am determined by *evidence*, as in other cases that are in themselves *possible*. There are many things that are recorded of the Divine Being in the scriptures, which if they had not been there, it is probable that you yourself would have thought could not have come from him. But being there, we who believe the general authority of the scriptures, naturally endeavour to find reasons for them, as we do with respect to the works of nature, which we must allow to be the work of God. How many plants and animals should we have thought to be absolutely insignificant, and even noxious, unworthy of their author; and yet having discovered the use of some of them, we are content to wait with patience with respect to others, the uses of which we are unable at present to find out. Let us, Sir, exercise the same humility with respect to whatever is, upon any reasonable authority, ascribed to God.

SECTION

SECTION V.

Of the Divinity of Jesus.

AS it appears that one principal object in your answer to my pamphlet was to maintain the dignity of Jesus, as God equal to the Father, imagining that it was mine to lower his character, I think myself called upon to take some notice of what you have advanced on that subject. "I thought," you say p. 6, "the evident design of such a work was to lower Jesus Christ from the infinite station in which a certain number of christians (to which I belong) suppose him to be intitled."

Had this been the object of my work, I should certainly have dwelt more upon it; whereas all that you can say is that, in speaking of Jesus, I speak of him in a manner agreeable to my own opinion (which, as an honest man, I could not help doing) but without entering into any *argument*, or advancing any thing that could fairly lead to any discussion about it; my business evidently being

ing with *unbelievers*, and not with christians of any class. I thought I could not do less than I did. However, since you invite me, I shall note all that you say on the subject.

“ You imagine Jesus,” you say p. 6, “ to be less than God. I hold him to be God.” And you even call him, p. 30, “ the most holy and eternal Jehovah.” Let us then, attend to what you say in *proof* of this. For I shall not proceed any further in the argument than just to follow your lead. “ Christ,” you say, p. 25, “ declared himself equal with God the Father.” If he did, and if what he said was true, he must indeed be the “ most holy and eternal Jehovah ;” but where, and on what occasion, did he make this extraordinary declaration ? For extraordinary you must allow it to have been in any person in the form of man. I have attended to all his declarations, but so far am I from finding in them any thing to this purpose, that I find much that is expressly to the contrary ; every thing that he says concerning the Father evidently implying his inferiority to him. I shall for the sake of our readers recite a considerable number of them, that they may see the *general tenor* of his declarations, which is of much more consequence than any single expression.

“ Labour not,” he says, John vi. 27, “ for the meat that perishes, but for that which endures to
“ eternal

“ eternal life, which the son of man shall give unto
 “ you ; for him has God the Father sealed.”
 What occasion could there be for this *sealing*,
 (which, no doubt, implies the conferring of some
 authority) if it was not the act of a superior ? Could
 he not have come by his own authority, and in
his own name; another expression implying as much;
 and yet upon a variety of occasions, he most ex-
 plicitly disclaims it, as well as any power origina-
 ting with himself.

“ I can of myself,” he says John v. 30, “ do
 “ nothing. As I hear, I judge, because I seek not
 “ my own will, but the will of him that sent me,
 “ v. 36. The works that the Father has given
 “ me to finish, the same works that I do bear wit-
 “ nefs of me, that the father has sent me. And
 “ the father himself who has sent me, has borne
 “ witness of me, v. 43. I am come in my Father’s
 “ name, and yet ye receive me not. John vi. 29.
 “ This is the work of God, that ye believe in him
 “ whom he has sent, v. 38. I came down from
 “ heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of
 “ him that sent me, v. 37. As the living Father
 “ has sent me, and I live by the Father, so he
 “ that eateth me, even he shall live by me, Ch.
 “ vii. 10. My doctrine is not mine, but his that
 “ sent me, Ch. viii. 26. He that sent me is true,
 “ and I speak to the world the things that I have
 “ heard

" heard of him, v. 28. When ye have lift up the
 " son of man then ye shall know that I am he, and
 " that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father has
 " taught me I speak these things, v. 40. Ye seek
 " to kill me, a man that has told you the truth,
 " which I have heard of God. If God were your
 " father ye would love me; for I proceeded forth,
 " and came from God; neither came I of myself,
 " but he sent me, v. 54. If I honour myself, my
 " honour is nothing. It is the Father that honours
 " me; of whom ye say that he is your God."

It is evident from his language on this occasion
 that Jesus considered God as a being distinct from
 himself, and the same with the Father, the God
 of the Jews, or Jehovah; and certainly the pious
 Jews acknowledged no other than one person in
 their God. But I proceed to other declarations
 respecting himself and God.

John x. 18, " No man taketh my life from me,
 " but I lay it down of myself. I have power to
 " lay it down, and I have power to take it again.
 " This commandment have I received of my
 " Father, v. 25. The works that I do in my Fa-
 " thers name they bear witness of me, v. 27. My
 " sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they
 " follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and
 " they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck
 " them out of my hands. My Father, who gave
 " them

“ them me, is greater than all ; and none is able to
 “ pluck them out of my Father’s hands. I and my
 “ Father are one, v. 37. If I do not the works of
 “ my Father believe me not, but if I do, tho’ ye
 “ believe me not, believe the works, that ye may
 “ know, and believe that the Father is in me, and
 “ I in him.”

John xiii, 31; “ Now is the son of man glori-
 “ fied, and God is glorified in him. If God be
 “ glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in
 “ himself, and shall straightway glorify him.” He
 says to Philip, Ch. xiv. 10, “ Believest thou not
 “ that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ?
 “ The words that I speak to you, I speak not of
 “ myself, but the Father who dwelleth in me,
 “ he doth the works. Verily, verily, I say unto
 “ you, he that believeth on me the works that I
 “ do shall he do also, and greater works than these
 “ shall he do, because I go to my Father. I will
 “ pray the Father, and he shall give you another
 “ comforter, v. 24. The word that you hear is
 “ not mine, but the Father’s who sent me, v. 8.
 “ Ye have heard how I said unto you I go away
 “ and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye
 “ would rejoice, because I go to the Father. For
 “ my Father is greater than I, v. 31. As the Fa-
 “ ther hath given me commandment, even so I do.”

John

John xv. 1, " I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman v. 10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love, v. 15. All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you, v. 23. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you, v. 28. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father." In his intercessory prayer, he says (Ch. xvii. 3) " This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

These, Sir, are only a part of the declarations of Jesus concerning himself and his Father: collected from a few chapters in that evangelist who is said to have taught the doctrine of the divinity of Christ more clearly than any other;* and yet from these I think it is sufficiently apparent, that so far from

F. declaring

* All the early Christian writers were of opinion that the Jews in general were so fully persuaded of their Messiah being a man, that even the apostles did not chuse to divulge so offensive a doctrine as that of his divinity; that John, after the death of the other apostles, was the first who did it; and they are loud in their praises of him for having the courage to do it. This I have shewn at large in my *History of early opinions concerning Jesus Christ*. It is evident therefore, that, ac-

declaring himself to be equal to God, he uniformly represented himself as his inferior, as much so as any other prophet sent by God to men could do.

I shall, however, for the farther satisfaction of our readers, add a few passages from the other evangelists. Speaking of the time of his second coming Jesus says, Mark xiii. 32, "but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels that are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father. Math. x. 27. To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father, xxviii. 18, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth."

If this power was as much *his own* as it was his Father's (which, if he was God equal to the Father, it must have been) why does he speak of its being *given* to him? Also, why did he habitually *pray* to the Father, which he did with as much humility and resignation as any of his followers? If he was God, and of course himself the proper object of prayer, why did he not relieve himself? Why, in particular, in his agony in the garden, did he pray, saying (Math. xxxvi. 27,) "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," adding according to them, all the early christian converts must have been unitarians; and this I have proved that they actually were from the following considerations.

ding, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou' wilt?" Could he not, in this and every other case, have judged, and acted for himself? And especially why, when he was exhausted by his agony, was it necessary that an angel should be sent to strengthen him? When he was apprehended, he said he might have prayed (Matt. xxvi. 53) to his Father, and he would send him legions of angels for his rescue. What could angels do for God? And were not those angels subject to his own orders, as well as to those of his Father?

After his resurrection, Jesus speaks from the same sense of his inferiority to the Father that he had always done before his death. To Mary Magdalene, to whom he first appeared, he said (John xx. 17) "I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." To the apostles he says, on the evening of the same day, v. 21. As my Father sent me, so send I you."

Now I would ask any reasonable unprejudiced person, whether it was natural for a person conscious that he was himself equal to any being in the universe, even the "one eternal Jehovah," the maker and lord of all, to speak and act in this uniform manner, as inferior to a being to whom he was not inferior, and a dependent on one on whom I

was conscious that he was not dependent ? For on your hypothesis the Father is as dependent on the Son, as the Son is on the Father.

As the language of Jesus respecting his Father implies his inferiority to him, so, in correspondence with it, that of the Father respecting Jesus as evidently implies superiority. Thus in the account of his baptism, we read, Matt. iii. 17. *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Again, at the transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 5. *“ While he yet spake a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him. Lastly, in answer to his prayer in the temple (John xii. 28.) Father glorify thy name, there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

You yourself, Sir, seem to have forgotten your opinion of the equality of Jesus to his Father (as many trinitarians who read the scriptures, and cannot but be more or less impressed with the general tenor of them, are apt to do) when you say, p. 54. “ The inseparable presence of the divinity with
 “ him, and the unrestrained effusion of the Holy
 “ Ghost upon him, preserved him in this world
 “ from all the defilement of infectious conversa-
 “ tion,” and p. 58, “ Such was the man who bled
 and

“and died for sinners.” This, Sir, is the language of an unitarian. It was certainly improper to speak of the presence of divinity with any person, or of the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, when he himself was that divinity, and could not stand in need of the effusion of any spirit besides his own. With the assistance that you allow to Jesus, you, Sir, or I, or any other man, would have been preserved from the defilement of infectious conversation, as well as he.

You might have said, as many trinitarians do, that while Jesus was in the *form of a man*, on earth, he had divested himself of all divine power: But, absurd as the supposition is (for how could the Supreme Being deprive himself of any of his powers, since it implies a power of annihilating himself) you have deprived yourself of this evasion by ascribing the miracles of Jesus to a divine power possessed, and, actually exercised, by him while he was in the form of a man. For you say, p. 17, “These miracles declare him to be God. Whose voice, but that of God, ever assumed an equal authority with his? And what voice, excepting that of God, did nature equally obey?” If therefore, Jesus had the powers of divinity before his incarnation, he had them afterwards.

Let us, however, advert to this boasted argument for the divinity of Jesus. “Whose voice,”
you

you say, “ did nature equally obey ?” I answer it equally, as promptly, and as effectually; obeyed the voice of Moses, of Joshua, of Peter, and of Paul, as it did that of Jesus, when they acted by the same authority that Jesus did.

Jesus himself said to his disciples (Luke xvii. 6.) *If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree; Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea, and it would obey you.* He also said (John xiv. 12) *Verily verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because to go to my Father.* And certainly the conferring the gift of the *Holy Spirit* by the laying on of the hands of the apostles was a miracle of as extraordinary a nature as any that was performed by Jesus; and as far as appears, this was done by them whenever they pleased; and consequently this gift of speaking languages that men had not learned seems to have been nearly universal in the Christian church in their time.

All the inference that the persons who saw the miracles of Jesus drew from them, was that he wrought them not by any power of his own, but by a power derived from God. Thus Nicodemus says, John iii. 2. “ Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be

be

“ be with him.” Did Jesus reply to Nicodemus, that he was mistaken ; for that he wrought the miracles by a power that was properly *his own* ? By no means. He acquiesces in the inference of Nicodemus, and by so doing confirms it ; and in the same conversation he proceeds to speak as a person sent by God, his messenger, or prophet, and therefore inferior to him, as v. 10. “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world thro’ him might be saved.”

The Jews in general made the same natural inference from the miracles of Jesus that Nicodemus did. When he raised the widow’s son at Nain, it is said of all the people who saw the miracle (Luke vii. 16) that “ they glorified God ; saying that a great prophet is risen among us, and that God has visited his people.” They did not infer that Jesus was himself that God, but only a prophet, sent and empowered by him. After some other of the miracles of Jesus we read (Matt. ix. 8) “ When the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power unto men.” How different, Sir, are the conclusions that different men draw from the same things. Had you been there, you would have taught them a bet-
ter logic

You

You will probably say that I have slightly passed over, tho' I have quoted, one declaration of Jesus, that was fully to your purpose, viz. that *he and his Father are one*. But this is, I think, sufficiently answered by himself, when, in his intercessory prayer, he speaks of all his disciples as equally one with the Father and himself (John xvii. 20.) "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me thro' their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." What then, Sir, becomes of your boasted argument for the divinity of Jesus from this text? Are all the disciples of Jesus equal to the Father? If not, neither can you infer from the union of Jesus with him, that *he* is equal to him.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

Of the Doctrine of Atonement.

NOT to lose so good an opportunity of professing your faith in all the important articles of orthodoxy (for I cannot imagine any other sufficient reason for it) you have introduced into your answer to my pamphlet the doctrine of *atonement*; saying p. 19, that "Jesus Christ unfolded "the great doctrine of atonement." A great doctrine, no doubt, Sir, it is, if it be true; but you do not say *where* Jesus has unfolded it. I am, therefore, left to my conjectures with respect to the particular discourses in which you suppose that he unfolded it.

It could hardly be in the parable of the prodigal son, in which the good father represents the Father of us all. For he receives his offending son on his repentance only, without himself or a third person making any satisfaction for him. It does not appear that any common friend so much as interceded in his favour. The paternal affec-

tion of the parent made any such satisfaction, or intercession, unnecessary. You will not say that the elder son in this parable represented the son of God; for he was not friendly to his brother.

Neither, I apprehend, will you say that you find this great doctrine of atonement in the parable of the master (Mat. xviii. 27) who forgave his servant a debt of ten thousand talents. For that was *freely* forgiven without any person paying the debt for him, v. 27. *Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

Neither can I imagine, you will pretend to find this great doctrine of yours either unfolded, or carefully folded up, in the *Lord's prayer*, in which we are taught to say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." What rule are we to observe with respect to the forgiveness of an offending but penitent brother? Are we to demand any satisfaction or atonement? No. If he only *repent*, we are required to forgive him (Luke xvii. 3, &c.) *If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.* Here, Sir, appears to me to be an unfolding of something directly opposite to your great doctrine of atonement.

I sup-

I suppose you will urge that Jesus said at the institution of his supper (Mat. xxvi. 28) *This is the blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* And this is all that I think you can find in the gospels that can be supposed to favour your doctrine. But can this solitary expression be called an *unfolding* of any thing? *Unfolding* means explaining a thing at some length, in order to make it intelligible to those who did not understand it. Besides, this expression is a very obscure one; and as it is on the same occasion on which Jesus says of the bread, *This is my body*, which all Protestants allow to be figurative, it may be presumed that this expression concerning his blood is figurative also. Was not the body of Jesus given for the remission of sins, as well as his blood? If all his language on this occasion is to be understood literally, we must admit the doctrine not of atonement only, but that of transubstantiation also, which is much more clearly expressed than the other. But if the gospel which was established by the death and resurrection of Christ (the former being only necessary to the latter) and if the gospel was the means of reforming the world, and of course procuring the pardon of sin which no christian doubts of, it will sufficiently

ciently justify the language of Jesus, which is often highly figurative. *

Jesus never spared the Scribes and Pharisees, the teachers of the law in his time, but always censured them, and sometimes with peculiar severity, for their perversion of it. But can you say that he ever reproved them for abandoning this great doctrine of atonement, of which it is certain they had no knowledge. No Jew ever did, or does, believe any thing of the kind. Otherwise they would have expected a suffering, and not a conquering and triumphant Messiah. They could not learn it from Moses, who represents the Divine Being as proclaiming his name, or character, in the following emphatical terms (Exod. xxxiv. 6) “ And the
“ Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the
“ Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,
“ long

* So far was Jesus from having unfolded this great doctrine of atonement that when christians began to speculate on the subject, and to imagine that the figurative expressions of scripture must have a literal meaning, they supposed that since men had by sin put themselves into the power of the Devil, the price of their redemption was paid by God to *him*. This appears so late as in the writings of Austin; and the present great doctrine was unknown till after the reformation, when it was advanced in opposition to the popish doctrine of *merit*. This I have shewn in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*.

“ long suffering, and abundant in goodness and
“ truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving
“ iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” Neither
could they learn it from the language of any of the
prophets, of which what we find in Isaiah. Ch. LV.
7, is a specimen. “ Let the wicked forsake his
“ way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
“ and let him return unto the Lord, and he
“ will have mercy upon him, and to our God
“ for he will abundantly pardon.”

If we pass from general declarations to particular instances, in which the repenting sinner pleads with God for pardon, we shall still find nothing like your great doctrine of atonement. Thus David, repenting of his sins, only says (Ps. xxv, 1) “ Remember
“ not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.
“ According to thy mercy remember thou me, for
“ thy goodness sake O Lord.” When he mentions *sacrifice* on this occasion, it is not the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, but something of a very different nature, Ps. LI, 16—17, “ Thou desirest
“ not sacrifice, else would I give it. The sacri-
“ fices of the Lord are a broken spirit. A broken
“ and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not de-
“ pise.”

As it does not appear that either Jesus, or any prophet before him, unfolded the great doctrine
of

of atonement, you will perhaps do it in your reply; and you are certainly more directly called upon to reply to this pamphlet than you were to the other, and it will of course be more expected of you.

THE CONCLUSION.

I CONCLUDE with sincerely thanking you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity of declaring my disbelief of the *great doctrines*, as you call them of the *trinity*, and *atonement*; the former a manifest infringement of the truly great doctrine of the *divine unity*, and the latter a shocking degradation of the character of the one God and Father of all. I, therefore, reject them as nothing less than idolatry and blasphemy.

I do this the more willingly, as I am informed that some of my orthodox friends in England imagine that I am returning to the faith in which I
was

was educated. But I now give them what may be called my *dying testimony* to my faith in the proper unity, and the perfect placability of the God and Father of all, the God and the Father of Jesus Christ, as well as my God and Father. This may be considered as something better than a dying testimony, being given after the age of seventy, and before my faculties have materially failed me; whereas nothing that is said by a dying man can be of much value.

I scruple not to call the doctrine of the divinity of Christ as equal to God the Father *blasphemy*, because any infringement of the doctrine of the divine unity is always so considered in the scriptures. There the great JEHOVAH declares (Is. XLii. 8. XLviii. 11) that "HE will not give his glory to another;" and to admit any other to participate in his divine attributes must be giving his glory to another. Indeed, this necessarily implies a deficiency of perfection in him. For why should recourse be had to two beings, or persons, if one had been sufficient. It is usual with trinitarians to say, that the Father is the creator, the Son the redeemer, and the Holy Ghost the comforter. But if the Father can *redeem*, and *comfort*, as well as *create*, the other two were not necessary.

It was on this very principle that the antient heathen idolatry was founded. It not being imagined

gined that one being was sufficient for all the purposes of creation and providence, different divinities were assigned to the several parts and provinces of nature. There were *gods of the hills*, and other *gods of the vallies*, and each nation had its peculiar deity. And christian idolatry proceeded in the same manner, from the worship of Jesus to that of his mother, and others called saints; till the christian calendar had as many objects to whom prayers were addressed, as that of the heathens. Attend then to the old proverb *principiis obsta*; and in reformation do not do any thing by halves; but go back to the original constitution of *one God and Father of all, and one Lord, the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*. Eph. iv. 5. i. Tim. ii. 5.

Your doctrine of Christ being *the eternal Jehovah*, equal to *God the Father*, would have shocked Athanasius, and all the zealous defenders of the orthodoxy of their times. At the council of Nice; and for some time after, they had advanced no farther than the doctrine of the Son being *of the same substance* with the Father. That of his *equality* to him was expressly disclaimed. Of this there is the most abundant evidence.

Had you, Sir, been a Jew, and had advanced what you do in this pamphlet, while the polity of that *people of God* had been in vigour, you would have

have been stoned as an idolater or a blasphemer, and your metaphysical distinctions, by which you pretend to prove that *three* may be *one*, and *one three*, would not have saved you. Had you, on being interrogated, acknowledged that by the terms *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, you did not mean to denote the same thing by different words, but that there was a real difference between them, and that each of the persons so denominated was possessed of all the attributes of divinity, you would have been condemned as a worshipper of three Gods; and your plea of *mystery* would not have been heard. Be thankful, Sir, that you live in a country in which even idolatry may be professed without danger. The only plea that can avail you at the bar of reason, and of God, is that of the apostle, and of the unbelieving Jews, *viz. a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*

If you be shocked, as I doubt not you will be, at the manner in which I express myself with respect to your great and favourite doctrine, consider that I must be no less so at your calling a man, tho' a distinguished prophet, the *most holy and eternal Jehovah*. Against such horrible blasphemy, I have long thought it my duty (Is. lviii) to *cry aloud and not spare*, but, as far as I could, *to lift up my voice like a trumpet*. I did it in England, and as I have opportunity shall do it here. If you be

H

afraid

afraid of detracting from the honour of Jesus, I have no less dread of detracting from the honor of *the God and Father of Jesus*; and with my opinions you must allow that I ought to shew as much zeal as yourself. But let not this zeal, which I excuse in you, as you ought to do in me, prevent the most cool and temperate discussion of the very important questions between us.

I conclude with expressing what I have often done, that I consider you, and Mr. Miller of New York, as the most promising young ministers that I have heard of in this country. I only fear that in consequence of writing so early, you should so far commit yourself, as to make it difficult to retract any particular opinion, when sufficient reasons may occur to you to abandon it. In the meantime, while you maintain your present faith, it may be an useful exercise to you to go over this controversy along with me; and I am now at leisure to attend to it, provided my health, which has lately sustained several rude shocks, should continue what it is at present. Neither of us can advance any thing materially *new* on the subjects; but it will be new *here*, and therefore it may answer a good end to open the discussion. And free inquiry is all that is necessary to the discovery and establishment of truth.

This

This is ground that I have frequently gone over, but on that very account, it will not be disagreeable to go over it once more.

——— *fuvat exhaustos iterare labores,
Et sulcata meis percurrere litora remis.*

BUCHANAN.

Sincerely wishing the advancement of the genuine truth of the gospel,

I remain,

Sir,

Yours sincerely.

J. PRIESTLEY.

N. B. Not having the original of *Rolin's History*, the quotations from it in this work are from the English translation printed at Edinburg, in ten volumes, duodecimo.

SECT. I.	<i>Of the Object of my Pamphlet.</i>	P. 3.
SECT. II.	<i>Of the Moral Character of Socrates.</i>	8.
SECT. III.	<i>Of the Principles on which you judge of the Merits of Socrates.</i>	13.
SECT. IV.	<i>Of the Dæmon of Socrates.</i>	33.
SECT. V.	<i>Of the Divinity of Jesus.</i>	36.
SECT. VI.	<i>Of the Doctrine of Atonement.</i>	49.
	<i>The Conclusion,</i>	54.

E R R A T A.

N. B. (b) signifies from the bottom of the page.

Page	9.	1.	8.	for	upon,	read	upon my
—	24.	1.	3.	(b)	asserted	- -	asserted
—	46.	1.	13.	- - -	to	- - -	I

PRINTED, and nearly ready for publication, dedicated to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States,

A General History of the Christian Church, from the Fall of the Western Empire to the present Time, in four volumes, octavo.

The preceding part of the History printed in England, in two volumes, is in the press here.

A LETTER

TO

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S.

IN ANSWER

TO HIS LETTER,

IN

DEFENCE OF HIS PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED

SOCRATES AND JESUS COMPARED.

BY JOHN BLAIR LINN, D. D.
PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION
IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

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1803.



ADVERTISEMENT.

The length of this letter and unavoidable engagements have prevented its earlier publication. The extracts from the Memorabilia for the reason assigned in the former letter are given in English, and it is believed that they will still be found to be of indisputable accuracy.

Received of the Treasurer of the
Board of Education the sum of
\$100.00 for the year ending
June 30, 1870.

Wm. H. ...

Witness my hand and seal this
10th day of July 1870.

Attest my hand and seal this
10th day of July 1870.

Attest my hand and seal this
10th day of July 1870.

A LETTER

TO JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S.

SIR,

YOUR letter addressed to me in defence of your pamphlet entitled *Socrates and Jesus Compared*, is an evidence of your ingenuity, but it has not removed my objections against your comparison; nor has it, in my opinion, answered with precision those facts and arguments which were expressed in my former letter. It gives me pleasure to be informed by you, that the prosecution of the inquiry on which we have entered is agreeable to you, and that you are not displeased with the manner in which I have accosted you; but are rather grateful for the opportunity which I have afforded to you of more fully enforcing your favourite sentiments. Since such is your disposition, and since I profess a corresponding temper, let us proceed, with truth for our object, and candour for

our guide. I still retain that respect for your age and acquirements which I have already declared; although, perhaps, I could mention some passages in your letter to me, which violate the rules of gentleness and courtesy, and which might serve to convince me, that if youth has its rashness and impetuosity, age may have sometimes its peevishness and petulance. I thank you for those favourable opinions of me which you are pleased to express at the beginning and close of your letter. I should, indeed, be greatly flattered by the precedence which a man of your eminence has given me over so many of our professional brethren. I am more especially glad to know that you hold such sentiments concerning me, as you will of course consider me as more worthy of the honour of contending with you. I thank you for the condescending information extended to me (p. 2.) “that you will not take the liberty generally allowed to old men, but that you wish to go into the discussion on perfectly equal terms.”

This indulgence in you, certainly deserves my acknowledgments, though probably I might have thought, without it, that when I paid due deference to the experience and respectability of years, that I have as good a title to detect error, and to vindicate the truths of my God, as you or any other man can claim. Believing therefore as I do, and proceeding

under the influence of those professions which I have made, I shall not fly from your approach, nor shrink from a controversy which I believe on my side to be just.

I agree with you that a controversy when properly conducted may be productive of extensive benefits. Did I not think that by the one in which we have engaged, religion and virtue may be promoted, nothing should tempt me to prolong it, or to withdraw any portion of my time from those studies which are more strictly due to my congregation. I wish, Sir, to meet you exactly on the same ground on which I accosted you before. You have in several instances changed your positions; you have taken new ground from which you have hurled your anathema against me. To that new ground which you have occupied, you in vain expect that I at present will follow you. Before I answer this expectation, it is reasonable that I should demand of you to yield to me those points for which we have already contended. Certainly I sufficiently designated the subjects of controversy, and expected that these would be settled before new matter of contention would be introduced. It is not in favour of the cause for which you have contended when you thus endeavour to forsake it, and to substitute a new subject in its stead.

In my former letter I endeavoured to prove,

I. The impropriety of your comparison between Christ and Socrates as teachers of truth.

II. The impropriety of your comparison between them as moral characters.

III. I endeavoured to shew that you have magnified the demon of Socrates into an importance not warranted by history, or by any consequences which flowed from its real or supposed suggestions.

These were the points in dispute, and to these without equivocation, or evasion, you should have explicitly answered.

These are the divisions which I shall still keep before me; while I consider how far you have repelled, weakened, or refuted the facts and arguments advanced on these heads, and by what additional evidence they may be supported. Before, however, the way becomes sufficiently clear for such investigation, it is necessary to examine the merits of some assertions and accusations which you have made and brought against me.

You assert, section I. p. 3. That I have not understood the object of the comparison which you instituted, though you thought it would have been sufficiently intelligible to every intelligent and candid reader: and then to correct me you say, "That allowing to Socrates every thing that can make for his advantage, he was greatly inferior to what even

an unbeliever must, if he reflects at all, acknowledge with respect to Jesus, though he should rate him as low, as with any regard to history, he possibly can." You say, section I. p. 6, "It was my object to make as light as I reasonably could of the errors of Socrates, and to make every due allowance for them that I might gain the more by the comparison. If it should appear that his errors were more considerable than I had represented them, my argument would have the advantage of being what logicians call *a fortiori*, having allowed to my opponent more than I was obliged to do." You say section I. p. 4. 5. "That I do not consider Jesus in the same light that you do, is true; but it was I think no part of my object in this work to enter into that argument. It would not have been to my purpose.

"I cannot conceive how it would have been to any good purpose to enlarge on the miracles of Jesus in a comparison of him with Socrates, who did not pretend to any. Though I thought it proper just to mention the circumstance, as accounting for the superior dignity of the discourses of Jesus, it would not have been proper to dwell upon any thing that unbelievers would not allow." By these passages you plainly declare, that the object of your comparison between Jesus and Socrates, was to convince infidels of the superiority of the former over the

latter, even when you made as light as you could of the errors of Socrates, when you allowed to him every thing which could make to his advantage, and took only a limited view of the arguments which would exalt the character of Jesus. If this be your meaning, you were very unhappy in proclaiming it: Why did you not unequivocally declare it in some part of your work, and not leave it hidden under a form of words calculated to convey one which is very different? If this be your meaning I was deceived, and all who read your pamphlet and spoke of it to me were equally deceived. Well acquainted with your theological opinions, I conceived, as I think most others must conceive, that your comparison proceeded from a subtle and implacable animosity against the divinity of Jesus Christ.

In my former letter, before I attempted to controvert your opinions, I expressed my dissatisfaction, because you had not sufficiently marked the disparity between Socrates and Jesus, and sufficiently noticed the errors of the former. I should rather have said, that, as a believer in the divinity of Jesus Christ, I was indignant that any formal comparison should be instituted.....that man should, in any respect, be placed on a parallel with his God.

You must therefore pardon me for considering your explanation under consideration as a very ingenious evasion, as a most plausible interpretation to

avoid acknowledgments which you would otherwise be forced to make. You must permit me to indulge the belief that the arguments and facts which had been advanced, injurious to the character of your favourite Pagan Philosopher, were derived from such convincing authority, that you were compelled to acknowledge that you had gathered only the testimony of his professed encomiasts, refused that of all other historians and writers which militated against him, and restricted your inquiry into the immaculate character of Jesus merely for the sake of convincing unbelievers, that supposing the best of the one and the worst of the other, the Saviour was superior to the Heathen.

Do you not see, Sir, that you by this confession yield to me all for which I have contended? Remember the parts of your comparison with which I found fault. Did they not relate to the instructions of Jesus and Socrates, to their moral character, and to the whispering demon which hovered around the son of Sophroniscus? Reference to my former letter must convince you that they did....that they were confined to these. Now, Sir, have you not most explicitly acknowledged, that you have drawn your testimony in favour of Socrates from his two favourite disciples Xenophon and Plato; that you have brought forward all that could exalt, and kept out of view all that could depress, his character?

Have you not declared that the view which you have taken of the Saviour is limited, is not extended as far as it might be? Yes Sir, these declarations, these acknowledgements you have made. I appeal to your letter....to those sentences from it, which I have quoted. Did I not unequivocally declare that the main object of my letter to you was to shew that you had not sufficiently marked the disparity between Christ and Socrates, and that you had not sufficiently represented the errors of the latter? Proceeding upon this intention, did I not, under three divisions, produce testimony and facts in support of my opinions, and in detection of what I deemed your errors? And have you not by your explanation allowed the justness and the force of these?

Here then I might pause, terminate our correspondence, and bid you farewell in perfect satisfaction with your confessions, and in the cheering consciousness that I have not written in vain.

But, Sir, I have not proceeded beyond the introduction and first section of your letter. You would scarcely pardon me for so slight a notice of it. Parts of my letter to you have fallen under your severest scrutiny, and may require some vindication. You have formed representations injurious to my meaning; I shall, therefore, proceed in prosecution of the plan which I have suggested, and shall pave

my way till I come to the investigation of the divisions which I have said I would observe, by extending still farther my examination into this and other assertions which you have made, and into the accusation brought against me, already alluded to.

Allowing again full belief to the explained object of your pamphlet; it appears to me that if that were your object you were very unfortunate in adopting it: for I cannot conceive how the pursuit of it could in any way, have more effect upon the mind of an unbeliever, than the prosecution of an intention to ascribe to Jesus every excellency and advantage, whicheven you must acknowledge to belong to him, and to speak of Socrates in no other manner than he deserved. On the other hand, I think that it is evident that the heart of the most hardened unbelief must be more impressed by a full exposition of the glory, of the splendour, and spirit of our Saviour's ministry, than by a partial notice of them, and a contrast of them, thus imperfectly delineated, with those of an heathen whom you have exalted far beyond his merits. Suppose that I wished to convince an obstinate and hardy sceptic, that the sun was a larger and more lustrous body than a star, would it be the proper method to conceal from view half of his light, and to contrast his properties, thus dimmed and shorn of his beams, with those of the star? No Sir....but reason would dic-

tate that I should endeavour to unfold his full heat and lustre, till the faint twinklings of the planet were lost in the blaze of his majesty.

Allowing also, that the object of your pamphlet, as explained by you, was perfectly evident to the greater number of your readers, still I conceive that my objections against it were strictly and properly founded; because, Sir, whatever might be the views with which you wrote; still, while making a formal comparison, you were not justifiable in concealing the excellencies of the Saviour, and those appendages which would have a tendency to exalt him, while you ascribed to the heathen, qualities and supernatural illumination which did not belong to him. It, therefore, became the duty of the believer in the divinity of Jesus Christ, to endeavour to repel such error and misrepresentation; to endeavour to prevent such an insidious attack upon the Saviour, from having a dangerous influence upon the minds of those Christians into whose hands your comparison might come.

With a zeal no doubt disproportionate to my knowledge, I accordingly ventured to impeach the accuracy of your statements and arguments; and may I not look through the vista of religious hope, on my adventurous attack upon the opinions of one who is the enthusiast in controversy, who is familiar with all the bearings and windings of disputation, who has contended with the mighty in the fields of

science and theology, and who, in a certain respect, resembles Goldsmith's Village Master,

“ For ev'n though vanquished, he could argue still.”

Allowing, however, that the object was exactly what you may now, or may hereafter wish it to be, and that you followed the best method to enstamp conviction on the hearts of unbelievers; still you would not be justifiable in deceiving, that good might be produced.

I have now done with the object of your comparison. With the expression of my willingness that you may represent it to be whatever you shall think most proper and most advantageous to you in this dispute, I shall proceed with my preliminary consideration of parts of your letter. I propose not to follow you in the order which you have observed, as I rather prefer the one which I have already adopted.

You say, section I. p. 3, “ I am not conscious of any difference between the general principles on which my comparison of these two men is conducted, with respect to their deaths and their lives.” But I still think, as I asserted in my former letter, that there is considerable difference between them, though your intention, in both cases, may have been the same. It appears to me that you have marked a greater disparity between their deaths than between their lives. I am at no difficulty in account-

ing for this. Happily Rousseau had written before you, and drawn a comparison between Jesus and Socrates. You knew that his comparison was well known to most Christian readers. With the design, therefore, of shewing that you were not more restricted in your praise of Christ, than that brilliant and eccentric genius, who was a violent enemy of our holy religion, you adopted his eloquent passage in which he declares, "that if the life and death of Socrates carry the marks of a sage, the life and death of Jesus proclaim a God." No other sentence in your performance has given an equal degree of glory to the Saviour; and, judging from the passage which you have quoted, may I not indulge the opinion, that, if the unbelieving Rousseau had entered into a complete comparison between Jesus and Socrates, he would have done more justice to the character of the former than you have, although you say that you wrote with the design of convincing infidels.

There is another point of difference between us, to which it is necessary that I should attend before I enter upon the investigation of the divisions which I have proposed. In section III. p. 27, you say, "But what I object to the most, as most manifestly unfair in your censure of Socrates, is your judging him by rules that cannot, in reason or equity, apply to his case. You judge him not by the light, the knowledge, or the maxims which he had, but by

those that he had not, and which he had not the means of acquiring*." My words which you quote are these....*"In order to determine concerning the temperance or morality, or the intemperance or immorality of Socrates, he must be arraigned before the bar of the Gospel, as there is no infallible rule of right but that which is prescribed in the word of God."* In this sentence, were it yet in my power, I should wish to make no alteration. What do you understand me as asserting by it? Do you consider me as saying that if Socrates violated the rules of the Gospel, he was equally culpable with one who committed the same action under a fuller revelation from Heaven? Such a representation would be foreign from my meaning. What I declare is simply and evidently this....that there is no rule of right, which is infallible, but that which is found in the word of God; and that if we would judge of any man, and assign properly to him his degree of merit or demerit, we must examine his conduct by those directions which are given to us by our God. Certainly we would call that heathen the best man, who lived in the nearest correspondence with the morality of the New Testament, and him the worst, who violated all its rules, and who plunged into the most enormous

* When you wrote this sentence, you seem to have forgotten what you have in another place supported, that Socrates was supernaturally illuminated.

crimes which it has forbidden. You are, I believe, a powerful advocate for the strength of human reason. You most probably will join with me in the opinion that the moral sense is not acquired, and that it is the least corrupted of all the powers of the soul. I hope, also, that you will agree with me in the belief that the purest reason would at once subscribe to the superior excellence of the morality of the New Testament, and prefer it to all other systems, and that conscience would punish any glaring violation of its laws. Does it not then follow that he who approaches nearest to conformity to those rules of unrivalled excellence, which are thus acknowledged, stands first on the scale of merit? No man in his senses would believe that he is equally culpable who commits an action forbidden by the word of God, in ignorance, with him who is chargeable with the same offence amidst the illumination of the Gospel. But, Sir, it is to no purpose that you say that Socrates knew not the truths of Divine Revelation, when we are inquiring into the comparative merits of characters. If he did not know them, and did not observe them, it is sufficiently evident that he was far inferior to one who did know them and did observe them; and that he, from such ignorance, was not a proper subject of comparison with one who was a light to himself, who was a light to the world, and to whom the heathen was only a

spark blown through the immeasurable depths of night. Though you have not quoted, rightly, the words of the apostle Paul....Rom. 11. 12. yet I shall not dispute with you on that account. What I have said I deem abundantly sufficient to shew the propriety of my principles in judging of the comparative merits of two characters.

Socrates appears to have known that there were certain laws of reason and of conscience which were different from those which were written, and I wonder how, to these, he reconciled some parts of his conduct.

As, however, it would answer but little purpose to extract the dialogue between him and Hippias, in which he declares his ideas of these laws, I shall pass on with only marking the reference, so that you may have no trouble in turning to the original, and examining for yourself.*

You have tried to represent me as guilty of injustice towards the heathen world in general. I am not conscious of deserving such an accusation. You brought this accusation against me upon no other ground, which I can discover, than because I referred to the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, as an accurate and general exhibition of the heathen world. This reference succeeded some preliminary remarks on the state of religion

* See Memoir. Xen. Book iv, Chap. iv.

which existed where men were ignorant of the sacred scriptures.

Was it fair in you, on this account, to ascribe to me sentiments uncharitable toward the heathen? Was it generous in you to represent me as asserting that Socrates and every Gentile was guilty of every crime which Paul has mentioned in that chapter? Paul designed that chapter, and I only offered it, as a general representation of the darkness and depravity into which mankind were sunk, and if it were necessary, its accuracy, considered as a general picture, could be easily shewn by reference to facts. I should be very sorry to be considered, by you, or by any one, as presumptuous, illiberal, or bigoted. My blessed Saviour has taught me that this spirit is unworthy of his followers. I am not one of those who would hurl the whole pagan world into everlasting perdition. Without any pretension to decide what will be their situation in another world, I leave them in the hands of my merciful God, and heartily agree with you in your preference, rather to stand in the place of some heathens, at the day of judgment, than in that of many nominal Christians. *This is the condemnation that light hath come into the world, and that men have loved darkness rather than light.* But still, if you, “in Plato’s circumstances, would have joined in his thanksgiving to God for three things, that he had endued you with a rational soul,

that you were born a Greek and not a barbarian, and that he had placed your birth in the life-time of Socrates," much more should the Christian render to God, the tribute of his gratitude, that on his birth hath arisen *the sun of righteousness with healing under his wings*.

I am now prepared to enter on the investigation of those divisions which I proposed, and in prosecution of my plan I shall consider....

I. How far you have invalidated the arguments and facts, which I brought to shew the impropriety of your comparison between Jesus and Socrates, as teachers.

In the introduction to the first division of my former letter, I gave a general outline of the ignorance and error of the heathen world. To this you have brought no objection, and you were not able to offer any which would be valid. I then asserted, and enforced my assertion by producing the accounts of his biographers, and your own acknowledgments, that he indulged in them equally with his countrymen.* I am happy to find, that you, in your letter, have not detracted from this acknowledgment, but confessed what is still more favourable to my purpose; for you say, section III. p. 28, "Not considering the necessary imperfection of Socrates, as a

* See page 10, of first letter.

mere heathen, your expectations from his teaching are most unreasonable." What expectation do you here speak of? My expectations from the instructions of Socrates were very moderate. I have, throughout, considered him as enveloped in those clouds of sophistry, which the muse of Aristophanes conjured around him; and my object was to prove your unreasonableness in comparing this "mere heathen" with "the light of the world and the salvation of Israel."

I quoted some passages from the defence of Socrates and the memoirs of Xenophon in order to shew that Socrates joined in the sacrifices and other superstitious rites of his countrymen; and hence I deduced, what is an inseparable consequence, that his errors must have been diffused through his discourses concerning the gods. The accuracy of the quotations you have not doubted; but you have denied the accuracy of the deduction in one place, although in the last sentence quoted from you, and in other parts of your letter, one might infer that you had acknowledged it. In section III. p. 25, you say, not in the most courteous terms, "But you see, if you have read his discourses, that it did not do so. Even Christians may be usefully impressed with what Socrates advanced on this subject." I inform you, Sir, in answer to your gentle insinuation, that I have read the discourses, or rather dialogues, of Socrates;

that I profess myself to be an admirer of some of them, that I am especially pleased with his conversation with Aristodemus, with some sentences concerning Providence, with some of his observations on temperance, and with others of a lighter nature: but am, nevertheless, of the opinion that as a teacher, he held and uttered sentiments which dishonoured God and must have blasted those discourses which related to him. Need any thing more be said in support of this opinion than that by precept and example he advocated idolatry; that he taught that there were many gods; that there were good and evil gods and dæmons: that to these, ridiculous sacrifices were to be offered; that these were to be consulted by the mysteries of divination, and through the medium of oracles? In confirmation of these facts I have already brought forward satisfactory evidence; but should more still be wanting take the two following extracts; the first from the defence of Socrates, the second from the memoirs.

‘ The trial being ended, Socrates, as it is related, spake to the judges in the following manner’:....“ I stand here innocent of the crimes whereof I was accused: for no one hath proved against me, that I sacrificed to any new deity, or by oath appealed to, or even made mention of the names of any other

than Jupiter, Juno, and the rest of the deities, which, together with these, our city holds sacred*.”

“ Although Socrates always advised his followers to perform the necessary affairs of life in the best manner they were able; yet, with regard to every thing, the event whereof was doubtful, he constantly sent them to consult the oracle, whether it ought or ought not to be undertaken. He likewise asserted, that the science of divination was necessary for all such as would govern successfully, either cities or private families.†”

Aware of the charge of idolatry against Socrates, and of your acknowledgment, that he was an idolater, you wish to lighten in him the odiousness of the crime, and to remove those consequences which are inseparable from his errors. Section III. p. 24. you are pleased to allow, that I have justly said, that “ with the ignorance of the heathens of the one true God, they could form no proper opinions of his perfections. On the other hand they represent their gods as they were themselves, lewd, violent, sanguinary, and capricious.”

In answer to this you observe, “ But these, Sir, were only the popular ideas, which were even allowed to be ridiculed on the theatres. That there were such gods as these, was no article of any creed or

* Defence of Socrates.

† Xen. Memor. Book i. Chap. i.

confession of faith, to be subscribed, or in any other way assented to, by every individual. It is well known that the philosophers in general had no such opinions. With respect to Socrates in particular, you ought to have observed, as you profess to take your account from Xenophon and Plato, that though he acknowledged the gods of his country, he had by no means the same idea of their characters. From the extracts that I gave of his conversations on the subjects of religion, it appears that if you only conceal the term gods, and substitute that of God in its place, he had very honourable ideas of the character of deity." In these passages, you make me profess to take my account from Xenophon and Plato. You should rather have represented me as declaring that I could bring proof from the writings of Xenophon to confirm the immorality of Socrates, but that I would by no means reject the testimony of others, who had as good a right to be heard in what they advanced concerning this philosopher as his pupils and encomiasts. In these extracts there is much bold assertion, which is left solitary without the support of evidence. It follows not that if Socrates did not believe every idle tale which was told of the gods, that he did not hold substantially to the same gods with his countrymen. He mentions in his discourses almost every superior god recorded in the pagan catalogue of divinity. In the extract last

taken from him, he declares his faith in Jupiter, Juno, and the rest of the deities, many of whom were of a dark and implacable character. While in prison he composed a hymn to Apollo, and just before his death, he ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Æsculapius. “Crito (said he, which were his last words) we owe a cock to Æsculapius; discharge that vow for me, and pray dont forget it.*”

Xenophon and Plato have recorded many facts and expressions which discover Socrates to have been a most egregious idolater. “You know the answer (said Socrates to Euthedemus) which is given by the oracle at Delphos to those who inquire what they must do to make their sacrifices acceptable? Follow, saith the god, the custom of your country. Now this is the custom which prevaieth every where, that each one should offer according to his ability: And, therefore, my Euthedemus, what better can we do to honour the gods, than by acting in such a manner as they themselves have commanded.†”

Indeed, Sir, so far am I from agreeing with you, that Socrates was more rational in his idolatry than his countrymen, that I contend, that he, in some respects, outstripped most of them by his excess.

* Rollin, vol. iv. p. 326.

† Xenoph. Memor. Book iv. Chap. iii.

That certainly is the most stupid idolatry which endows inanimate objects with intelligence and worships them as gods. Yet of such stupid idolatry was Socrates guilty. The sun and stars he supposed animated beings, and such as ought to be worshipped with divine honours.

Plato relates his remarkable conduct and the homage which he offered to the sun at the siege of Potidea,* which confirms this assertion. In the discourse of M. de Ramsay on the theology of the pagans, is contained the following passage, which is drawn from the testimony of Plato.

“ L'idée vulgaire est qu'il (Socrates) fut martyr de l'unité de la Divinité, pour avoir refusé d'adorer les Dieux de la Grèce, mais c'est une erreur. Dans l'apologie que Platon fait de ce philosophe Socrate reconnaît quelques divinités subalternes, et enseigne que le soleil et les astres sont animés par des intelligences à qui il faut rendre un culte divin.†”

It is not possible that with such belief and practice Socrates could give much instruction worthy of

* See former letter with reference to Plat. in conviv. t. iii.

† “ The common notion is, that he was a martyr for the unity of Godhead, in having refused to pay his homage to the gods of Greece; but it is a mistake. In the apology that Plato makes for this philosopher, Socrates acknowledgeth certain subordinate deities, and teaches that the sun and stars are animated by intelligences who ought to be worshiped with divine honours.”

Deity. Xenophon has recorded very few of his discourses which have particular reference to the gods. In no part of his instructions, could you, with any degree of propriety, substitute the term God for gods, except when he speaks of creative power and general providence. And were any Egyptian or Grecian boor to say, god made all things; god govern and preserve all things; you might with the same justice make the same substitution. Your distinction is a very lucky one, that Socrates distinguished between the gods of his country and their characters, though every body may not be able to comprehend it. It serves your purpose just as well as the faculty which you have laid claim to in some precious portions of your writings, by which you can determine when Paul argues well, and when he reasons inconclusively.*

The imperfection of the discourse of Socrates, necessarily resulting from his ignorance of a future state, has not been a subject on which you have delighted to dwell in your letter to me; there your sagacity did not forsake you.... You touched it not; for in that touch was death.

Unless you have discovered some new method of magnifying the world and its transitory possessions.... Unless you have in your theological reveries

* See your Hist. corrup. vol. ii. p. 370.

and chemical experiments started some happy plan of stopping the wheels of decay, and staying the wings of inexorable time, which is rushing on with terrible celerity and bearing us all into an interminable state: you must agree with me that instructions which are not addressed to us as immortal beings, which are entirely confined to the life which a man spends on earth, are of little value when compared with those truths of revelation which speak eternity to man, and which teach him the necessity and manner of preparing to meet his God clothed in the terror of his justice. Socrates who knew not the immortality of the soul, who knew not that God had appointed a day of judgment, could not unfold them to his hearers, and awaken them by the light and startle them by the thunders of heaven. You would, therefore, say, that it would be unreasonable in me to expect to find such instructions in the discourses of a "mere heathen." You say rightly Sir....but I did not expect to find them. I knew that I should not find them: And I wonder, that you were not at first convinced of the impropriety of comparing such a blinded mortal with the son of God, from whom no truth was concealed; who saw amidst the depth of years, and whose omniscient eye pierced through every event rolled up in the mighty scroll of futurity. Not only Socrates, but the heathen world were immersed in this darkness, and in the gloom

of their midnight were haunted by the spectres of superstition. Cicero, the brightest name on the page of antiquity, whose vast mind grasped all the researches and discoveries of Greece; the polished, the philosophical Cicero could make no discovery in that dark region which lies beyond the grave. "*Lego sed dubito.*"*

The writings of Cicero* represent in the most striking manner, the darkness, the delusions and the uncertainty of the ancient philosophers with regard to the immortality of the soul. They describe them, when desirous of arming their disciples against the fear of death, as inculcating the melancholy consideration, that the fatal blow of dissolution delivers us from the afflictions of life; and that after death both existence and suffering shall cease. Since, therefore, all the efforts of philosophy could not explore the doctrine of a future state, there is nothing except a divine revelation that can fully ascertain the existence of the soul, and describe that invisible country to which it shall be received after its separation from the body. And does it not incontrovertibly follow, that those instructions, which have no reference to a future state, cannot be said, with

* See the first book of the Tusculan questions. The treatise *De Senectute*, and the *Somnium Scipionis*.

truth, to bear an obvious resemblance to those, which bring life and immortality to light, which speak of judgment to come, and point out to our view the world of happiness and the world of woe?

I therefore very properly addressed to you, those questions, which you have called imperious; but for what reason you have applied to them so harsh an epithet I cannot discover, as they are in the manner of almost all the discourses of your admirable philosophy. In the answer to those interrogations you had not the hardihood to utter an affirmation, but you evasively said “ I no where said, that his instructions were as perfect as those of Jesus.*” But if you did not say this, did you not say, section VII. p. 36. of your comparison, that both the discourses and manner of life of Socrates have an obvious resemblance? Were not my objections which were thrown under the first division of my letter, principally grounded on that sentence? And is it not evident, that you have asserted, that an obvious resemblance exists between two things infinitely different?

On the pages in my letter devoted to the consideration of the method in which Socrates conveyed his instructions, you have favoured me with no remarks. May I augur from your silence on this

* See your letter, section iii. p. 28.

head, and from your censure of that little specimen which I have given you of the Socratic mode, that your approbation has, in some measure, yielded to the irritation of your feelings?

On the gratuitous manner in which both the discourses of Jesus and Socrates were delivered, I am not called upon to make any additional reply. I endeavoured to shew the difference in the audiences of each instructor....that the design of the Saviour was vastly more extensive than that of Socrates.... that his truths were addressed to all capacities....to all descriptions of men....to the world....that Socrates confined himself to a more limited sphere....to a private spot....to a secluded shade....and that while Christ declared that he was a light to enlighten every one that cometh into the world; "Socrates, by the confession of Xenophon, never undertook to be a teacher of others."*

You have acknowledged the dignity which the miracles of Christ must have conferred upon his discourses, and that Socrates did not pretend to work any. You have said nothing against my representation of the dignity with which Christ appeared on the theatre of the world, of the prophecies which foretold his coming, and all those appendages of majesty which accompanied him from his cradle to

* Memor. Book I. Chap. 2.

his grave. These, connected with a life most holy, must have enstamped Divine energy on his instructions, and rendered the assertion, that there was an obvious resemblance between his instructions and those of Socrates, in the highest degree improper.

In my former letter to you, I observed, “ were we to attend to the effects produced by their instructions, how infinitely would Christ be raised above the Athenian philosopher.” Then after tracing the spread of the gospel and the manner in which its truths were propagated, I remarked, “ The labours of Socrates were followed by no similar effects. We have no sufficient evidence, that his instructions rendered men wiser and better. The Spartans were generally a more moral people than the Athenians; and it is well known, that they, by law, prohibited schools of philosophy being observed within their realm and jurisdiction.” “ Plato, who was the wisest disciple of Socrates, built upon the information of his master, and has handed down to posterity, a system, which was the production of their united wisdom and labours. This boasted system, however, produced no reformation in society. Its rules were attended by no adequate sanctions. *The corruption of Athens increased after its introduction,* and, in the centuries succeeding the death of Christ, it served to perplex and to lead astray the minds of Christians, and to poison the simplicity of the gospel.”

To these passages, or rather to one sentence of them, which refers to the corruption of Athens, and which is printed in italics, you make no reply, but that which is contained in the following sentence. “ But so you know did the corruption of the Jews in general after the time of Jesus, and to a far greater extent; and the divine institutions of Moses, though promulgated in the most solemn and illustrious manner, were abandoned by the great body of the Hebrew nation soon after the death of Joshua.” Did you mean to deny the blessed effects of the gospel of Jesus Christ upon society and upon human government, by pointing to my view those awful exhibitions of divine indignation?

On the city of Jerusalem rested the curse of incensed Jehovah, for its aggravated crimes, for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour before his death, when he beheld the unequalled grandeur of the Jewish metropolis, predicted its destruction...shed over human misery the tears of heaven, and breathed forth that pathetic lamentation which must thrill through every heart.

A portion of the Hebrew nation, after the death of Joshua, for their excessive crimes, were abandoned by God, and allowed to indulge in the most stupid idolatry.

But surely you cannot intend, by reference to these instances of corruption and divine punishment, to call in question, the truth, that the influence of the gospel upon the hearts and manners of men, is in the highest degree beneficial; or to contend, that the Socratic or Platonic philosophy has an equally good and extensive effect. No man who values his moral character would dare to make known such an intention. Why did you not then at once acknowledge the superior, the happier influence of the instructions of our Saviour to those of Socrates, and not so artfully allude to the corruptions of Jerusalem, and to the abandonment, by God, of a portion of the Hebrew nation?

I hope you will not dispute with me, when I say, that if we were to trace the influence of the gospel of Christ upon men in their private, domestic, and social capacities, we would find, that in all these, it is abundantly beneficial. It renders more amiable the sceptres of kings, bends their hearts with love toward those over whom they are placed, and impells them to labour for the promotion of their prosperity and happiness. It inclines rulers to be just and upright, to protect the oppressed, to encourage virtue, and to restrain the headlong rage of wickedness. It renders the servant faithful and dutiful, and lifts the poor man with gratitude toward his benefactor. It renders the parent the affectionate,

the provident protector of his child, and the child respectful, loving, and dutiful to his parent. It strengthens the ties of friendship, fills the breast with the most cordial affections, and harmonizes every action. It unites all good relationships more firmly, and binds by the bands of conscience. It renders men just and attentive in their dealings, restrains the insolence of pride, and banishes the corruption of sloth and luxury. It renders the mighty humble, and the poor and the humble rich.

How little is the influence of all other systems of religion and morality compared with that of the glorious gospel! How improper the assertion, that there is an obvious resemblance between the instructions of our Saviour, and those of a heathen, when so infinitely different are the effects produced by them! If Warburton in his *Divine Legation* has shewn that no government can exist without the co-operation of some kind of religion, in order to give a sanction to the laws of imperfect obligation,* how can a Christian possibly describe all the blessings of the gospel upon the social compacts of men?

Your acknowledgment that many of the instructions of Socrates were trifling, and the assent which all must yield to the dignity of every portion of the

* See Warb. Div. Leg. vol. i. 8vo. p. 57...72.

discourses of Jesus, aggravate the impropriety of the comparison which you have formed, whatever may have been your object in publishing it to the world.

Uniting together all the facts which have been produced, all the arguments which have been enforced....I appeal to all the friends of religion, I appeal to your own reason and heart to decide whether you have not said unjustly that "the discourses of Socrates and Jesus have an obvious resemblance."

II. I shall now proceed to consider, how far you have invalidated, the arguments and facts brought to shew the impropriety of your comparison between Jesus and Socrates, as moral characters. In entering upon this part of discussion, it may be well to recal your attention to the first position which I took. You assert, p. 2 of your comparison, "that Socrates was a man, who, from early life, abstained from vice." You assert, section VII. p. 21, "that Socrates and Jesus were equally temperate." You assert, section VII. p. 36, that "the general manner of life of Socrates and Jesus have an obvious resemblance." Now, Sir, I have endeavoured to shew that Socrates did not abstain from vice, but was grossly vicious; and that, of course, he was not equally temperate with the Saviour; and that his life did not bear, to that of the latter, an obvious resemblance. I should be perfectly willing, without say-

ing any thing more on this head, to let candid and discerning men decide whether or not I have sufficiently supported my allegation. But you have called upon me again to reply. You have contended, at least with plausibility, though not with justice. You might have the effect of deceiving those who would not examine for themselves, who will not look beyond the surface of a shallow stream.

Come on then, Sir, let us mark the ground; let us amicably settle all preliminaries, that we may not dispute concerning them hereafter. Do you, or do you not suppose Jesus Christ to have been a sinner? If you do, please to inform me in your next reply, what were his crimes. As you quote the declaration of the Pharisees, that he was a "glutton and a wine bibber." Do you suppose that he was either of these? Will you adventure to contradict the testimony, even of Pilate, when he said he could find no fault in him? Will you combat, as you have heretofore done, with Paul, and again call him an inconclusive reasoner? Or, shall some other apostle and disciple of Christ, be singled out to prove the strength of your reasoning and the delirium of your valour? Will you dare to lay your hand upon the mouth, and to impose silence upon the tongue which exclaimed....My Lord and my God? Or will you hurl your indignation against the dying Stephen, for the testimony which he gave, for the words

which he uttered....“Christ Jesus receive my spirit.” On the other hand, as I cannot suppose that you hold that Christ was a sinner, let me ask you if you hold that Socrates was immaculate? No, you reply you will find my answer in section II. p. 9. of my letter.... “ We do not mean that his character is absolutely perfect.” Very true, Sir, the character of Socrates was not perfect. And how is it possible, then, without you suppose that the character of Christ was not perfect also, that you can, by any equivocation or evasion, justify your expressions, that Socrates was free from vice, that he was equally temperate with the Saviour, or that there was an obvious resemblance in their lives? Either you are unjustifiable in your expressions, or you and I affix a different meaning to plain words. It is in vain that you attempt to explain what is meant by being *free from vice*, and bring passages from the scriptures to justify your interpretation. Allowing, however, that your explanation is perfectly just, that freedom from vice means exemption from gross or obvious vices, Socrates could not be free from sin, for he was guilty of obvious and gross vices. But, allowing again (for the present moment,) that he was not guilty of gross and obvious vices, still he was guilty of those smaller sins, of which Christ was blameless. Therefore, even upon these acknowledgments, he was not equally temperate with Jesus Christ: there was not

an obvious resemblance between the general manner of his life and that of the Saviour. I wish that you had followed a course which was open and direct, and which did not wind like the labyrinths of Crete. I wish that your path had been marked by candour as well as by ingenuity, and that you rather had grappled me with the irons of truth, than thrown around me a web of perplexity. It is difficult, indeed, to keep order amidst chaos and confusion. I shall, however, endeavour to follow you in the way which will be the least incoherent; and, with this intention, shall first examine those parts of your letter, which appear the most detached from the general body of your observations respecting the moral character of Socrates. In section III. p. 17, in order to exculpate Socrates from what you call simple fornication, you say, "not only candour, but justice, requires that we judge of all men by their own principles, and not by ours." Such doctrine I hope never to hear delivered from a Christian pulpit. I doubt whether even Socrates would justify, in his philosophical and brotherly advocate, such a sentiment. If I understand the meaning which you would convey, in the sentence, it is simply this, that whatever maybe the actions of a man, still, if his own principles justify him, we should justify him also. What opinion could you advance more dangerous to society, and more unwarranted by the

word of God? Of what use are the terms virtue and vice? for by your interpretation you can make virtue vice, and vice virtue;—for instance, theft at Sparta, if perpetrated with dexterity and success, was applauded. With many savages it is considered as a good action to dash out the brains of their parents, when they become too old to provide for themselves, and burdensome to their children. It is not against the principles of many who are stiled men of honour, to violate the innocence of the virgin, to murder the brother who defends his sister's purity, and to plunge a whole family into misery and ruin. Yet, these wretches, according to your *principles*, we must justify, because they act according to their principles. “Not only candor, but justice, (you say) requires that we should judge of them by their own principles, but not by ours.” Though openly as I avow my detestation of such a sentiment, yet granting to you that it is perfectly just, I cannot see that it will much help your cause, as I presume that you would not place, on the same equality, the man whom you judged by his own principles, and the man whom you judged by the principles of the gospel and found to be holy.

You seem in another part of your letter to doubt the influence which the opinions of men have upon their character, from the existence of depravity in Christian countries. This, Sir, was no fair way of

ascertaining accurately, how far opinion operates upon the mind; for how large is the proportion of those who dwell in Christian countries who wholly, or who partially reject the truths of the gospel. But can any one believe, that a man in his senses, where his highest welfare is concerned, would act wholly contrary to his belief?

A person may, indeed, make a profession without having a degree of faith sufficient to influence his conduct. But when the opinions are fixed, when the faith is strong, the actions must correspond with them. In the conduct of the true and fervent disciples of Jesus Christ, and of the intrepid followers of Mahomet, we see the operation of opinions which nothing could shake; we behold the mind roused into action by principles which are not only irresistible, but which excite to the hardest enterprises. My assertion, therefore, I still hold to be strictly just, that, "if an idolator, if one who offers improper sacrifices, if one who believes in divination, if one who holds sentiments unwarranted by the word of God, be a man of impious practice, Socrates cannot but be considered as an impious man.*

This position I considered as so evident, that I thought it unnecessary to spend any time in dwelling upon it. I did not think that the ingenuity of any

* See my former letter p. 32.

one would attempt to remove idolatry from the list of crimes, when God has, in so many instances, denounced his indignation against it, and in letters of blood inscribed upon it his terrible vengeance.

I believe that sufficient has been said on the divination of the Grecians to convince all, that those who indulged in the performance of its mystic ceremonies, betrayed a darkened, superstitious mind, formed ideas totally unworthy of deity.

You endeavour to lighten the immorality of Socrates in his indulgence in the sacrifices, in the obscene and ridiculous rites of his country* (section III. p. 22. 23. 24. of your letter) you say, that he did not indulge in them all, but this assertion you have not proved; you take it for granted from his character, that he would not indulge in them; but I, viewing his character in a different light from you, might, with the same reason, take for granted that he would. I wish you, however, only to confide in my assertions, when they are supported by convincing argument, or when they are confirmed by undeniable authority. Receive then, as evidence of the propriety of my belief, that Socrates offered the same sacrifices, and held as sacred the same rites and ceremonies with his countrymen, the following passage from Xenophon, and permit it to be thrown into the scale opposite to your naked asseveration.

* I except the Eleusinian mysteries.

“ *And, first, with respect to sacred rites and institutions;....

“ In these things it was ever his practice to approve himself a strict observer of the answer the Pythian priestess gives to all who inquire the proper manner of sacrificing to the gods; or paying honours to their deceased ancestors; *Follow, saith the god, the custom of your country.* And, therefore, Socrates, in all those exercises of his devotion and piety, confined himself altogether to what he saw practised by the republic, and to his friends he constantly advised the same thing, saying it only savoured of vanity and superstition in all those who did otherwise.”

Could words speak in a stronger and more decisive manner, and have a more direct tendency to confirm my opinion?

Of the Pythian priestess who responded from the oracle at Delphi, I gave such a representation, as history would authorize, in my former letter.† The honours paid by Socrates to deceased ancestors, I have not yet noticed, though they exhibit his conduct in a light both superstitious and culpable. They deserve now some attention.

These honours paid to the dead consisted of sacrifices, libations, and various other rites and cere-

* Xenoph. Memor. Book I. Chap. iii. † P. 14.

monies; and were performed on the ninth and thirtieth days after burial; and repeated when any of their friends arrived who had been absent from the solemnity; and upon all other occasions which required their surviving relations to have the deceased in memory. On these public days it was the custom to call over the names of their dead relations, one by one, excepting such as died under age, or had forfeited their title to this honour by dissipating their paternal inheritance, or some other crime.*

You say, p. 24. that Socrates did not sanction the Eleusinian mysteries by his concurrence. This is the general opinion, and from this I am not disposed to dissent. He was, however, censured for not being initiated into its mystic ceremonies, and this censure was leagued with those accusations which demanded his death. We have, however, sufficient evidence in the passage from Xenophon, which has been quoted, and from this being the only neglect of this nature imputed to him, that he joined in all the other festivals and sacrifices common in Athens.

It would be unnecessary to enumerate or explain all the festivals *and feasts* of Pagan superstition observed in Athens.

Passing over others, permit me to observe that the feasts of Bacchus, in which we have every reason

* Pott. Antiq.

to believe, from the testimony of Xenophon, that Socrates was an actor, partook of a nature probably as criminal as the festival of Ceres or the Eleusinian mysteries. These feasts of Bacchus were accompanied with games, spectacles, and theatrical representations, at which the poets contended for the prize in poetry.

Those who celebrated these feasts, imitated whatever the poets have feigned of the god Bacchus. They covered themselves with the skins of wild beasts, held *thyrses* in their hands, and made a noise with tymbals, sistrums, and with other loud instruments. They carried on their heads branches of vine, and of other trees sacred to Bacchus. Some represented Silenus, others Pan, others the Satyrs, and others were mounted on asses. In this manner they appeared in public, night and day, counterfeiting drunkenness, and throwing themselves into the most indecent attitudes. They ran in crowds over the mountains and forests with hideous shrieks and howlings, crying out *Εὐδὲ Βάκχε*. To these excesses they added other most obscene ceremonies, and worthy of the god whose festival they celebrated. They abandoned themselves to all kinds of licentiousness and debauchery, and committed the greatest abominations.

Plato, speaking of the *Bacchanalia*, says he had seen the whole city of Athens at their celebration

plunged into drunkenness.* Livy† informs us, that the licentiousness of the Bacchanalian feasts, having secretly gained footing in Rome, the most shocking disorders were practised under the cover of the night, and those who were initiated into these abominable mysteries, were obliged by an oath, attended by the most horrid imprecations, to conceal them. The senate being informed of this, prohibited the celebration of the Bacchanalia, and banished them first out of Rome, and then out of Italy.‡

If it would not be thought an improper digression, I would express my desire to know what was the great secret of the Eleusinian mysteries, which those who were initiated were forbidden to divulge,|| and my expectation that you, from your extensive knowledge, will be able to gratify my curiosity in this respect. I am acquainted with the supposition of Tertullian, Theodoret, Arnobius, and Clemens Alexandrinus, but think it unworthy to be believed, and too beastly to be expressed.

The ceremonies of initiation into the greater mysteries of Eleusis have been strikingly explained,

* Plato de legibus, lib. i. † Lib. xxxix.

‡ See Broughton's Dicty. Fol. vol. I. p. cxii.

||.....Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum

Vulgârit arcanæ, sub iisdem

Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum

Solvat phaselum.....

Hes. Od. II. l. iiii.

and must have had an imposing influence upon a superstitious mind. The candidates having sacrificed a sow to Ceres, and being crowned with myrtle, were led by night into a spacious edifice called the Mystical Temple. At their entrance they were bathed in water, which was considered as holy. After this purification the sacred mysteries were read to them by an officer who was called the *Revealer of holy things*, and as he closed his book and ceased speaking, it is said, that stange and amazing objects presented themselves to their view, peals of thunder burst upon their ears, an earthquake seemed to shake the foundations of the building, streams of bright and resplendent light appeared to illuminate the apartment, which were succeeded by a silence that was interrupted by piercing cries, and by deepest darkness peopled with the most terrible apparitions.

The explanation which Warburton has given of these mysteries, his idea that the Sixth Book of Virgil's *Æneid*, is an elucidation of them, are, I think, entirely unworthy of that "giant in literature," and I consider Gibbon's answer to it, contained in the third volume of his posthumous works, as irrefutable.

In section iv. p. 32. you say, "many persons are evidently worse than their known principles, and must and do condemn themselves when they

think seriously: others it may be hoped are better than their principles." In this sentence there is an evident violation of accurate and logical distinction. As you have in one place of your letter aimed a sarcastic blow at my logic; and as the Apostle Paul himself could not reason in such a manner, as to give you complete satisfaction, I was prepared to behold sentences moving from under the pressure of your pen, with all the lustre of the sun-beams, and with all the strength of Alcides, armed with his knotted club.

But ah! how lowered is the altitude of expectation, when, after the sound of your trumpet, you make your appearance, hurl the gauntlet of defiance, and shew us all that *you can* do.

The supposition, that a man is better or worse than his principles, I never heard embodied by expressions before. A man may, indeed, be better or worse than his *notions*, but not than his *principles*. *Notions* are vague and uncertain, impressions not deeply stamped upon the mind, and not influencing, decisively, his conduct; but *principles* are rooted and fixed determinations, which dictate the actions of moral agents. It is the motive from which a man acts, that determines the merit or demerit of his action. When, therefore, a man of corrupted principles, performs an action ostensibly good, with a sinister design, he remains still base, and his con-

duct is still detestable. This is the logic which a good old preceptor taught me; it may, however, be subjected to your revision and correction.

You say, section II. p. 12. " Besides, you allow an advantage to Socrates, which you disclaim with respect to Jesus, without seeming to be aware of the natural consequence of the concession. *The natural propensities of Socrates, you say, were by his own confession towards evil, but that he regulated his conduct by the influence of philosophy.* He then had a difficulty to struggle with that Jesus had not, and yet he had strength of mind to overcome it; *principle* in him having got the better of natural inclination: whereas Jesus was by nature prone to no evil, but always inclined to every thing that was good. Where then will the unbeliever say was the great merit of temperance, or of any other virtue, in Jesus?"

You have here not fairly quoted me. I did not say that Socrates regulated his conduct by the influence of philosophy, but that he himself said he did. If you look again at p. 39. you will see your error.

So you think, Sir, that Socrates has the advantage over our Saviour, because he had a corrupted heart, and regulated (as you affirm) his conduct by philosophy. This logic I like much less than the specimen which I last noticed, and I am especially sorry, that this and some other passages are found in your letter.

Holiness is undoubtedly the highest attribute of the mind. That which is most holy is most excellent. That which is purest from corruption, and from the impulse of sinful inclination, is more holy than that which has to combat with the dictates of a licentious heart. He who conquereth a passion is greater than he who taketh a city, but he who is possessed of angelic purity, is still greater than he who conquers a passion.

I have contended, and I have shewn, that the conduct of Socrates was not morally regulated; but even if your affirmation were true, that he did regulate it by philosophy, you assert, erroneously, that in this respect he had the advantage over Jesus who had no vicious dispositions to combat. By the extension of such unwarranted principles of reasoning, you might impeach the character of almighty God: He is infinitely pure and holy...every imperfection is far removed from him...he has no evil propensities to govern....therefore, you would say, if you followed the principle you have advanced, he is, in this respect, inferior to some powerful being who holds in subjection his impetuous passions. Such reasoning I cannot even call ingenious. I forbear to apply to it the proper epithet.

If I have, as you have intimated, *a zeal for God but not according to knowledge*, I am afraid that

it may be said of you, that you have written against light and against better knowledge.

The extract which I gave from Herodicus* has received from you but little notice; you say, p. 9. that I have laid no stress upon it; but Sir, whether I laid stress upon it or not, it stands as weighty evidence against you. I thought sufficient had been previously said to convince every one, that Socrates was not the character which you represented him to be; and I therefore, did not strenuously insist upon the testimony of Herodicus. I expected, however, that you would have either acknowledged the accuracy of this historian, or shewn that he is unworthy of credit. Permit me now then, to call upon you to do this; for you must acknowledge, that if Herodicus should be believed, your venerated philosopher must lay no claims, either to morality or decency.

I know of no other charge which Dr. Enfield brings against the accuracy of Herodicus, but his want of celebrity; but I hope that you will acknowledge with me, that there are many an honest man, and many an honest writer who have been steeped in obscurity and whose names have never been sounded by the loud clarion of fame.

In section II. p. 10. you have taken an extract from Rollin, in which he says† “ Neither Aristopha-

* See former letter, p. 55

† I take it from your word, that he says so, as you have not favoured me with a full reference.

nes (the abbe of Frageur observes) in his Comedy of the Clouds, which is entirely against Socrates, nor his vile accusation on his trial, have advanced one word, that tends to impeach the purity of his morals."

Were this a fact, the argument would not be worth much; because most of those things which revelation condemns are practised and approved among the heathen; and as, perhaps, none of his judges were more pure than himself, they would, surely, according to your opinion, p. 9. have avoided topics of accusation which he might have retorted upon them. But with all due deference to you, Rollin, and the Abbe of Frageur, the meaning of Aristophanes in the Clouds is misrepresented. The Comedy of the Clouds was designed as a satire against Socrates. It represents him as a corrupter of the youth and as a blasphemer of the gods. It represents the aged Strepsiades complaining of the extravagance and licentiousness of his son Phidippides, as groaning under the weight of his debts and the importunity of his creditors, and as going to Socrates to learn the way in which he might defraud them of their dues. After the exposition of the inaptitude of the father, it represents the son Phidippides, after initiation into the Socratic school, as having become so exceedingly depraved, as to in-

dulge in the greatest vice, and to lift his hand against his parent.

It represents Socrates as not only a licentious teacher, but as a blasphemer and a thief. It closes with the representation of the indignant Strepsiades tearing down the house about the ears of the philosopher and of his disciples.*

If this be no impeachment of the morals of Socrates, I would be glad to know what you and the Abbe of Frageur would consider as an impeachment of a man's moral character.

Aristophanes, notwithstanding your representation, was held in high repute in Athens. Plato, the disciple of Socrates, shared in his social hours, and has pronounced on him (according to Scaliger) the import of the following eulogy.

Ut templum charites, quod non labatur, haberent, invenère tuum pectus, Aristophanes.

“ He was (says Cumberland, vol. II. of his Observer, p. 280. 282.) an adopted, not a natural, citizen of Athens, and I incline to think he was the son of Philippus, a native of Ægina, where our poet had some patrimony. He was in private life of a free, open

* As it would swell this letter to too great a bulk to take extracts from Aristophanes; see in support of these representations, p. 26. 54. 75. 124, 125. 129, 130. 138, 139. of Cumberland's translation of the Clouds of Aristophanes.

and companionable temper, and his company was sought after by the greatest characters of the age with all possible avidity: Plato, and even Socrates, shared many social hours with him; he was much the most popular character in Athens, as the great demagogue Cleon experienced to his cost, not to mention Socrates himself: Every honour that could be paid to a poet was publicly bestowed upon Aristophanes by the Athenian people; nor did they confine their rewards to honorary prizes only, but decreed him fines and pecuniary confiscations from those, who ventured to attack him with suits and prosecutions: Dionysius of Syracuse in vain made overtures to him of the most flattering sort, at the time when Æschines and Aristippus, Socratic philosophers, were retained in his court with so much infamy to their private characters, and when even Plato himself had solicited his notice by three several visits to Syracuse, where he had not the good fortune to render himself very agreeable. The fame of Aristophanes had reached the court of Persia, and his praises were there sounded by the great king himself, who considered him not only as the first poet, but as the most conspicuous personage in Athens.

“ The comedies of Aristophanes are universally esteemed to be the standard of Attic writing in its greatest purity; if any man would wish to know the

language as it was spoken by Pericles, he must seek it in the scenes of Aristophanes, where he is not using a foreign or affected diction, for the purpose of accommodating it to some particular or extravagant character. The ancient authors, both Greek and Roman, who had all the productions of the Athenian stage before them, speak of him with such rapture and admiration, as to give him a decided preference before all other comic poets, with an exception, as I believe, of Plutarch only, who brings him into comparison with Menander, and after discussing their different pretensions decides peremptorily for Menander: This criticism of Plutarch's I shall reserve for future consideration; and when I said that he is single in his preference of Menander, perhaps I ought to recall the expression, as that poet has his admirers, but none that I know of, who have deliberately given judgment in his favour upon a critical comparison with Aristophanes, except Plutarch above mentioned."

I need not go over again the portraits of the intimate companions of Socrates, especially as you tacitly admit, not only that they were as vicious and worthless as I have painted them, but that of such was really composed the society in which Socrates chiefly delighted. His attachment to these men and to many others equally infamous, is certainly a most deplorable circumstance, since there is no

circumstance more irresistibly suggested by a man's intimacy with the wicked, than that he is wicked himself. There is no foundation for a cordial, affectionate and constant intercourse with others, but a congeniality between their sentiments and habits and our own. Out of this circumstance there naturally grew up one of the charges made by his accusers against him, for surely that man is a corrupter of the youth who sets so evil an example, as that of chusing his friends among the wicked.

You assert that he never spared their vices, but that his conversations with them were calculated to teach them virtue and to restrain their excesses. Had this plea been made at the bar of the Athenian tribunal, what answer would it have received? But that there is a manifest difference between the deportment of a man who allows himself the company of others for the sake of exhortation and reproof, and that of Socrates who associated with these obnoxious persons, as with his *friends* and *intimates*. That this was the light in which these persons were regarded by their fellow citizens, and by those who knew him best, there cannot be a doubt. And was not that man extremely blameable, who wantonly deprived his precepts of their natural force, and exposed his sincerity to question by selecting his friends and intimates from the profligate class? It may be safely affirmed that neither the conscience

nor delicacy of a good man will ever permit him to seek the company of the depraved, for any other purpose than to admonish and reprove them. If his efforts fail of success, and their habits be incurable, he is no longer seen among them; he abandons them to their fate; but his friends and intimates are *at all times* the good. What could draw Socrates to the house of Aspasia, which was filled with the vile instruments of sensual pleasure, but the desire of gratifying depraved propensities? Why should he court so frequently, interviews with the fairest courtesan of Greece, except it was to drown in her embraces, the remembrance of Xantippe, and to lull asleep in her lap, the cares and inquietudes of philosophy?

You say, that the dialogue which passed between Socrates and Theodota, affords no proof of his immorality. I must express my surprize to meet with such an assertion from you. Why, Sir, even Rousseau's Lord B. in his *Eloisa* (whom he leads into the most criminal actions,) would blush to hold such a dialogue, which did not crimson the cheek of your philosophical Grecian.

Without another word, I shall refer our readers again to that dialogue, and beg them, to decide between us.

You say, p. 26. in a most playful manner, that I have "suspected Socrates of adultery, because he was frequently scolded by his wife Xantippe;" but

this playfulness of yours is like that of a child upon the brink of a precipice; or, it in some measure resembles the attempt of a man to laugh, while under the distortions of bodily pain.

After the many injuries she has already suffered, the reputation of poor Xantippe has again smarted under your satirical scourge. But harmless was your irony, when you said, that because she scolded, her husband was unchaste. It would have been more honourable and more savouring of gentle courtesy in you to have confessed, as I only asserted, that the good lady had sufficient cause for scolding.

This cause, I think, that I have sufficiently illustrated; for I have exhibited your philosopher, as a frequent visitor of the voluptuous Aspasia, and as holding a very reprehensible conversation with the no less amiable and complying Theodota. If the detection of her husband in such a house, and in such a conversation, should not justly awaken the terrors of a woman's tongue, then should silence ever seal the lips of a wife.

Judging from what history has unfolded on this subject, I have no hesitation in declaring that Xantippe appears to me to have preserved a more virtuous deportment in the conjugal connection, than her celebrated husband. There is no proof that she ever violated those vows which she offered to a husband whose countenance was extremely ungainly,

and whose form was moulded under the pressure of no attractive grace....her vagrant footsteps were never traced to houses from which virtue had fled, where the flames of unhallowed desire were kindled, and where were held the midnight orgies of the Cyprian goddess.

After this view of the matter, and after your own concessions, as to the associates of our philosopher, I may repeat, with more confidence than ever, "that it must certainly afford just grounds for suspecting the temperance and morality of Socrates, when his scholars and companions were of such characters." This is all that I have asserted, and in this I doubt not, every candid person will concur with me. I have no where said, that because Socrates was at one time the particular friend of Critias, it must be inferred, that he concurred with this tyrant in subverting the Athenian liberty. You blame with such seeming warmth this imputed misrepresentation, that I am willing to believe, you did not invent it for me: and yet every reader may not judge you with so much lenity, for ascribing to me, what the most hasty reading of my pages must convince you, I never said. You tell me, p. 16. that when I meet Socrates in another world, I must ask his pardon for this gross and manifest misrepresentation....As I have not been guilty of this misrepresentation, I have neither his nor your pardon to ask...but if I had

made the misrepresentation to which you have alluded, Socrates, you, and I, will find other employment when arraigned at the bar of Almighty Justice, or when admitted into the world of spirits, than to make apologies to each other.

Whether or not Socrates was married to Myrta during the lifetime of Xantippe, I shall not spend any more time to inquire. The question is involved in considerable doubt, and so I represented it in my former letter. In comparison with so many charges brought and proved against Socrates, it is of so trivial a nature, that without any further notice, I shall pass it over.

I undertook to censure the opinions and conduct of Socrates in relation to war. As the happiness of mankind depends much on the sentiments which are held, concerning civil and national contentions; it is one of the most essential branches of duty and virtue to regulate our conduct in this respect. To fight in any other than a just cause, on any other principle than the defence of our own and our country's just rights; to fight for the sake of bloodshed or plunder; from the love of distinction, or the dictates of imaginary honour, is a plain and incontestible breach of one of the most sacred and most palpable of human rules. If Socrates, therefore, appears to be in this respect, a slave of those habits and delusions which tyrannize over the mass

of mankind; if not only his practice but his theory sanction the trade of a soldier, this surely is an indelible blemish in his character, and a mighty drawback on his claims to be ranked among the wisest of mankind. In this point of view does the disparity between him and the meek and inoffensive Jesus, strike me with great force.

I need not expatiate upon the conduct of Christ in this particular, his uniform aversion to violence, his earnest dissuasives from every species of offence on every occasion. We know the inferences which a numerous and respectable society has drawn from his precepts and example on this head; and those, who, like you and me, believe these inferences to be overstrained, must yet admit, that nothing but the strictest justice in our cause should induce us, either as philosophers or christians to take up arms. I am very glad you have not put me to the trouble of repeating the proofs that Athens was unjust in those wars in which Socrates served; and that you do not pretend to deny either the conduct or opinions which I have imputed to him. What then is your defence? How have you attempted to prove a similitude between the two personages, notwithstanding this essential difference between them?

Why you tell us p. 30. "that at this day, in Christian countries, individuals are not allowed to judge of the wars in which their country is engaged,

and are yet required to serve in them." You likewise tell us, that you knew officers who served against America, in the revolutionary war who disapproved of the war. "*I did not approve* of their conduct, (you say) but though Christians, they thought their conduct justifiable; what then could you expect of an heathen in such a case?"

I am glad to hear that you did not approve of the conduct of those who *voluntarily*, without compulsion or necessity, fought in a cause which their understanding condemned. You must, of course, condemn Socrates whose conduct was *somewhat* similar: It may be probable that he laboured under a delusion common to his countrymen, and imagined it his duty to exalt the power of Athens on the ruins of the liberties and properties of the rest of mankind.

Moderate as my estimate of Socratic virtue is, I must yet confess, that I expected from him, in this point, more than you seem to have done: I expected that had his conscience condemned the cause in which his country was engaged, he would not only have refused to bear arms, whatever penalty had followed his refusal, but he would have never ceased declaiming and remonstrating against it.

Of Socrates, though an heathen, I did not expect a conduct natural enough to that careless, unprincipled, and dissolute race of beings, who compose a

large portion of the officers of a modern mercenary army, who fight with equal alacrity in every cause; who have seldom either capacity or inclination to investigate the grounds of national quarrels, and who, if their reason condemn the cause in which they fight, yet imagine every human duty absorbed in that of obedience to those who pay them.

I find fault with Socrates for his blindness in a case where the light of revelation was not absolutely necessary to enable him to see clearly, where a generous spirit and a strong understanding would have dissolved the charm of vulgar prejudices, and taught him the iniquity of destroying the lives and liberties of men defending themselves from unprovoked injuries and wanton oppression.

I repeat, that the sentiments and practice of Socrates in relation to war, degrade him not only inexpressibly below Jesus, but very much below many enlightened individuals in both ancient and modern times.

In a part of your letter which you have devoted to the soldiership of Socrates, you have been exceedingly mistaken, you have supposed that I asserted, that Socrates was one of the mercenaries in the army of Cyrus of Persia; whereas, I have declared, that the battles of Potidea, of Delium, of Amphipolis, were all in which Socrates was engaged. You appear to be in perplexity whether you

shall believe or deny this imputed assertion. Is it possible that you could misconstrue the following plain expression? *He (Xenophon) not only followed the footsteps of Socrates in the shades of philosophy, but in the fields of battle.*

In your reply to me you have relied very much upon Rollin; he seems to be the bulwark of your defence, and instead of the profound researches which I expected from you, you have confined yourself to simple extracts from him. I agree with you in esteeming him as an excellent instructor, but by no means assent to your declaration, p. 6. that you have not made Socrates so great a character as Rollin. This declaration I think evidently erroneous...but were it, in the strictest sense, accurate, Rollin might be mistaken as well as yourself, and the authorities which I have produced are more than sufficient to overbalance his testimony.

But allowing that Rollin, has, in no instance, deviated from the path of truth, let us see, if he supposes Socrates to have been entitled to that eminence on which you have placed him.

I know not how any one could give to man greater dignity than to suppose that he was supernaturally illuminated. Now you, Sir, have supposed that the demon of Socrates communicated to him the dictates of heaven; whereas Rollin supposes, as we shall presently see, that the pretended whisper of the

demon, was nothing more than the exercise of his judgment.*

Secondly. You have compared Socrates with Jesus, and asserted, that there was an obvious resemblance between their instructions, and that they were equally temperate; whereas Rollin, a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, before he would have formed such a comparison, would have torn his tongue from his mouth, that he might not have uttered it, and have severed his arm from his body, that he might not have written it.

Thirdly. You have said that Socrates was free from vice; whereas, Rollin considers him as guilty of crimes, and as unworthy to be compared with the prophets, or even with religious infants. In proof of these assertions please to examine and digest the following extracts.

“ It is true his (Socrates’) reputation was not without alloy, and it has been affirmed, that the purity of his manners did not answer those of his sentiments. This question has been discussed among the learned; but my plan will not permit me to treat it in its extent. The reader may see Abbe Frateur’s dissertation in defence of Socrates, against the reproaches made him on account of his conduct.”†

* Rol. Lond. Ed. vol. iv. p. 283, 284, 285.

† Rollin, vol. iv. p. 330.

“ I confess that certain principles of Plato, his disciple, held by him in common with his master, upon the nudity of the combatants in the public games, from which, at the same time, he did not exclude the fair sex; and the behaviour of Socrates himself, who wrestled naked, man to man, with Alcibiades, give us no great idea of that philosopher’s delicacy in point of modesty and bashfulness.

“ What shall we say of his visit to Theodota, a woman of Athens, of indifferent reputation, only to assure himself, with his own eyes, of her extraordinary beauty, which was much talked of, and of the precepts which he gave her for the attraction of admirers, and the retaining them in her snares? Do such lessons consist much with a philosopher? *I pass over many other things in silence.* I am less surprised after this, that several of the fathers have censured him in regard to purity of manners, and that they have thought fit to apply to him, as well as to his disciple Plato, what St. Paul says, Rom. i. 17. 32. of the philosophers; that God, by a just judgment, has abandoned them to a reprobate sense, and to the most shameful lusts for their punishment.”*

“ But to judge rightly of Socrates, let us draw a parallel between this supposed hero and the martyrs of Christianity, who often were young children and

* Roll. vol. iv. p. 331.

tender virgins. Let us also compare the so much boasted death of this prince of philosophers with that of our holy bishops, who have done the Christian religion so much honour by their sublimity of genius, the extent of their knowledge, and the beauty and excellence of their writings; a saint Cyprian, a saint Augustine, and so many others who were all seen to die in the bosom of humility, fully convinced of their unworthiness and nothingness, penetrated with a lively fear of the judgments of God, and expecting their salvation from his sole goodness and condescending mercy. Philosophy inspires no such sentiments; they could proceed only from the grace of the Mediator, which we are taught to believe, Socrates did not deserve to know.”*

These extracts contain the declarations of Rollin, on whom you have principally relied, who speaks more favourably of him than any historian who has drawn his information from the ancient treasuries of Greece, and many of whose assertions in favour of Socrates are unwarranted and unsupported by sufficient authority. If you then permit Rollin to decide the difference between us, you see, that even he, though prejudiced in favour of our philosopher, would decide against you. If you appeal from his decision and call for the arbitration of others who

* Roll. vol. iv. p. 333.

were contemporaries with Socrates, or who lived near to his times; you can have no chance of confirming assertions so totally unfounded, as that the instructions of Jesus and Socrates have an obvious resemblance, that they were equally temperate, that Socrates was free from vice.

I proceed now to consider,

III. How far you have invalidated the arguments and facts brought to shew, that you have magnified the demon of Socrates into an importance not warranted by any consequence which flowed from its real or supposed suggestions.

The part of your letter which relates to the demon of Socrates, displays less ingenuity than those portions of it over which we have travelled: here *your genius* seems to have forsaken you....here certainly the light of no magical star directed your steps...nor did the whisper of any of the aerial race steal through the channels of your ear.

If, as you say, p. 34. I have misconceived the whole business of the demon, it may, perhaps, appear that you have misconceived it still more; indeed, Sir, it appears to me extraordinary, that one of your age and industry, and of your attachment to Socrates, should know so little about that genius from whose pretended suggestions he derived his greatest importance. As this subject is curious, I intended to have entered, at some length, into the

discussion of it; but as my letter has already imperceptibly been extended to an immoderate size, I shall endeavour to dispatch the demon in as concise and courteous a manner as I am able.

The inventive imagination of the Greeks conferred life on almost every object. With a wild and enthusiastic vision, they beheld all nature teeming with animation, and like the solemn, superstitious and dignified bard of Scotland, heard voices in the clouds, in the midnight air, and in the stillness of some enchanted forest. The waters, the woods, the fields, the villas, the altars, the harvests of Ceres, the shades of Diana, the haunts of the Naiads, and the gardens of Pomona, exhibited the genius, the superstitious creation of this remarkable people.

Having already imported all the idols of Egypt, they peopled their country with a new generation of their own.

A genius was an imaginary being very common with the heathen. The genii were divided into different classes. There was a genius who presided over empires...of this kind was the genius of Carthage mentioned by Polybius.*

There was a genius who presided over particular nations. There was a genius or demon who presided over individuals. This was the kind of genii

* Hist. lib. 17.

which Socrates said, watched over him, and gave him secret intimations.

Sometimes the term genius was applied by the Grecians to qualities of mind, to fortune, and to many of the appendages of human nature.

Thus were the fortune of Timotheus, the fortune of Julius Cæsar, and the wisdom of Socrates called their genii.* Thus was the apparition which stood before Brutus on the plains of Philippi called his evil genius.

Plato considers every human being as having elected in a pre-existent state, the attendant spirit who is his guardian in the present. He supposes these spirits to partake of the imperfections, and to be actuated by the passions of men. He represents them as unable to alter events; but as sympathising with us in our joys and in our sorrows, as admonishing us of that which is good, and of that which is evil.

After this explanation, let us endeavour to ascertain, which of us has understood best, what you call the business of the demon. I have said, that “to the demon of Socrates I can attach no greater impor-

* When Cæsar said to the mariner “thou carriest Cæsar and his fortune,” he considered the latter as a divinity.

Plut. in Cæsare.

See the account which Socrates gives of his demon in the Theages of Plato.

tance, than to that which belongs to the dictates of a strong and inquisitive mind. That he was pleased with the supposition, that he derived his wisdom from heaven." In this opinion I am more confirmed since I have seen your defence of your supposition, that he derived his admonitions from God.*

You say, with an air of confidence, p. 34. " All that he ascribed to it (his demon) was hints respecting his conduct and theirs (his friends); and these did not respect what they were to *do*, but only what they were not to *do*. Nor are we informed concerning any thing that he can be said to have predicted." In both clauses of this sentence you are wrong, you have misconceived the business of the demon, indeed you seem to know nothing about the spiritual correspondent of your friend Socrates. The genius of Socrates as is represented, told, I. what was to be done as well as what was not to be done, and, II. through its influence Socrates pretended to predict.

In proof of the first position, take the following extract from Xenophon, whose testimony you cannot

* Have you never heard that Socrates employed his friend Chærephon to bribe the priestess of Delphi to pronounce him the wisest of all men, and that he was himself the composer of that verse,

Ἀνδρῶν ἀπᾶντων Σωκράτης σοφωτάτος;

which Chærephon brought back as the answer of the Oracl

deny. "Socrates on the contrary so asserted concerning these matters (future things) as he knew them from an *internal consciousness*; declaring it was his genius from whom he received his information, and in consequence of these significations (communicated, as he said, by his genius) Socrates would frequently forewarn his friends, what might be well for them to *do*, and what to *forbear*.*

This extract plainly declares, that the demon told what was to be done, as well as what was not to be done. And it further discovers to us, that Xenophon did not believe, as you do, that his master Socrates received his admonitions from God, he says he spoke as from *internal consciousness*, and the doubtful language contained in the parenthesis (as he said by his genius) implies something very different from full credit to this pretended inspiration.

In support of the *second* position, that he pretended to predict, take the following extracts from Plutarch.

"The genius of Socrates on this occasion, warned that wise man by the usual tokens, that the expedition would prove fatal to Athens."†

"However, we are informed that Socrates the philosopher, and Meton the astrologer, were far

* Memor. Xen. Book i. Chap. i.

† Plutarch in Nicias.

from expecting, that these wars (those against Syracuse) would turn to the advantage of Athens: the former, it should seem, influenced by some prophetic notices with which he was favoured by the genius who attended him; and the latter, either by reasonings which led him to fear what was to come, or else with knowledge with which his art supplied him. Be that as it may, Meton feigned himself mad, and taking a flaming torch, attempted to set his house on fire.”*

These extracts prove, that Socrates did pretend to predict, if by prediction you mean the foretelling of future events: and they assure us, that one Meton an astrologer, or a pretended madman, joined with him in predicting the same calamities on Athens, if she persevered in the meditated expedition against Syracuse.

You see then, Sir, that the business of the demon of Socrates was, *at least*, as little understood by you as by me.

A considerable part of your letter, devoted to the demon of Socrates, seems to be taken up by a criticism upon what you think is an improper use of the word wisdom. You say, p. 34. “ He did not pretend to derive any part of his wisdom (if by wisdom be meant the subjects of his public teaching) from this source (from his demon).”

* Plutarch in Alcibiade.

By wisdom I did not mean the subjects of his teaching, but I considered it as the power by which he pretended to see the consequences of his own actions or those of his friends.

I applied wisdom in the same sense, in which I did the dictates of a strong and inquisitive mind. I do not pretend to judge "of what is proper for the Supreme Being to do in such cases as these," but I am determined by evidence, and I contend that every evidence is against your remarkable supposition, that Socrates was supernaturally illuminated. I think I properly said, that uncommon pretensions to divine inspiration should be supported by uncommon evidences.

I called upon you to produce these evidences in corroboration of your supposition. I looked for them in your letter, but I looked in vain. You have not been able even to cast the shadow of a cloud upon the sunshine which has detected the glaring deformity of your assertion, that Socrates received by a demon communications from God. Of what use then are your closing observations on plants and animals, which, disconnected with the evidences I demanded, are entirely irrelevant? Men who on the scale of intellect and excellence ranked higher than Socrates, laid no claims to inspiration.

Inspiration must have a tendency to exalt the subjects of it to a degree of excellence above others.

Plato, Aristotle, Epaminondas, and Cicero, were wiser than Socrates, or at least on an equality with him, but they pretended not to be inspired; therefore, Socrates was not inspired, he did not receive those supernatural communications which you suppose he did.

I gave you in my last letter, a list of men, who made the same pretensions with Socrates, and I asked you if we should allow to them the same credit which is due to Socrates? To this inquiry you have made no reply; perhaps you may answer it in your next communication.*

I have searched in vain for any ground on which you could support your supposition. The truth is undeniable, is self-evident, that God would never teach his creatures error.

If we look into the instructions of Socrates, we shall find he did teach error, for he was an idolater, and as a teacher, was chargeable with numberless

* I might have added to my former list the names of Amasis and Mneves, lawgivers of the Egyptians, who pretended to receive their laws from Mercury. Zoroaster, lawgiver of the Bactrians, Zamolxis, lawgiver of the Getes, who pretended to receive their laws from Vesta; Zathraustes, lawgiver of the Arimaspi, who said he received his laws from a good spirit or ganius;* Rhadamanthus and Minos of Crete; Lycaon of Arcadia, who pretended to have intercourse with Jupiter, &c. &c.

* See Warb. Div. Leg. vol. i. p. 157, 158.

errors as I have endeavoured to shew; therefore, he could not have derived them from God.

If we examine into the admonitions which Socrates pretended to have received, we must draw the same conclusion, for the demon of Socrates was often unsuccessful in accomplishing the purposes of his warnings according to the philosopher's own account.* Therefore, he could not have derived his admonitions from God. I again repeat the assertion, that I know of nothing which Socrates predicted, but what a wise man might foretel, even were his ears closed against the whisper of a demon; this you have not controverted: perhaps, however, you may yet condescend to bring forward some predictions to establish your belief.

Again; the conduct of Socrates did not testify that he had received, as you have supposed, communications from God. If the testimonies which I have produced are to be believed, he was grossly vicious; he indulged in the practices of his country: therefore, he was not taught of God.

I shall close my argument on the subject of the demon of Socrates by quoting the opinion of Rollin, on whom you so much rely, and to whom, on this point, you may give some credit.

“ It may be believed with probability enough, that the demon of Socrates, which has been so dif-

* See Plato. Oper. p. 537. 1054.

ferently spoken of, was no more than the force and rectitude of his judgment, which acting according to the rules of prudence, and with the aid of a long experience, supported by wise reflections, made him foresee the events of those things, upon which he was either consulted or deliberated himself. I conceive, at the same time, that he was not sorry, the people should believe that he was inspired, or that he knew futurity by any effect of the divinity whatsoever. That opinion might exalt him very much in the sense of the Athenians, and give him an authority, of which, the greatest persons of the pagan world were very fond, and which, they endeavoured to acquire by secret communications, and pretended conferences with some divinity.”

I have now the happiness of seeing myself drawing toward the conclusion of my long letter, which I have written under a burning sun, and amidst the pressure of my pastoral duties.

I have, however, endeavoured to give a full and sufficient discussion of the points in dispute between us, and I hope there will be no necessity for me again to disturb my own or your repose by any more controversial epistles. I have no doubt that I and the public shall again hear from you. He would be a most credulous opponent who should ever expect to silence you. To prostrate and to silence you are two very different things. It would

not be the height of presumption to hope to do the former, but it would be the delirium of belief to indulge the expectation of performing the latter.

You see, Sir, that I have confined myself entirely to those points, which I at first controverted, and have, indeed, with some forbearance, avoided entering into a discussion with you, on the great truths which have been the objects of your violent abuse.

You say, very improperly, (p. 37.) that I have invited you to a discussion of the divinity and atonement of Jesus. Surely you, in this instance, discerned what is invisible to others.

In speaking of Christ I certainly did not conceal, that I thought him to be God, and in comparing his instructions with those of Socrates, I asked if the latter like the Saviour unfolded the great doctrine of atonement. What was incidentally dropped on these topics, gave you as you thought an opening (which you ardently desired) to change the debate concerning the comparative excellence of Jesus and Socrates for a controversy relative to the divinity and atonement of the Saviour. Recall to your recollection the objections which I brought against your first pamphlet, and you must be convinced that incidental observations which fell from my pen in support of these, did not call upon either of us to enter into a formal debate on the atonement, or on

the divinity of Christ. If in the course of the argument, I spoke of Christ and any of his doctrines, as I thought, I acted as an honest man, as you say you have done in speaking of him; but I by no means invited you to a discussion, which I am convinced would prove unprofitable, and which is just now foreign to my inclination. I have no objection to offer to you more fully my reasons for not now going into this branch of dispute with you. Hear them, and say, if they do not justify my determination?

I. Our first subject of controversy is not yet settled: did we add another to it, it would open too wide a field, and would afford you an opportunity of adroitly extricating yourself from the absurdities into which you have run, by flying for refuge to another subject. I have no wish, however, to let you escape in this manner, and, therefore, unless you return to the positions which you at first took, I shall consider you as fairly driven from them.

II. The points which have been in debate between us are new, but those to which you have invited me at the close of your letter, are old and beaten. My object in writing to you, was to convince you of your historical inaccuracy, to shew that you had spoken of Socrates as you ought not to have done, and by your comparison of him with Jesus, had committed palpable errors. This afforded a developement of charac-

ter and of historical facts which to me appeared novel and interesting, and to this you should have confined your answer.

The divinity and atonement of Christ are subjects on which innumerable volumes have been written. You or I could probably throw no more light upon them than they have already received, were we to investigate them for the remainder of our lives.

In the hands of almost every Christian are plain and popular tracts which contain the best proofs in support of the doctrines in agitation, and which you, although assisted by the demon of Socrates, and by all the demons of the heathen world can never overturn.

I candidly confess, that were I to enter with you into the controversy which you have proposed, I would entrench myself behind the works of Witsius, of Owen, Barrow, Massillon, Usher, Abbadie, Bull, Gill, Wineperse, Horsely, and Jamieson; works which will bid defiance to all the attacks of Socinians till the end of time, and which shall ever stand untarnished and unshaken by all the smoke and artillery of Satan.

You Sir, on the other hand, could bring in support of your opinions, nothing more than you have already repeatedly said in your more vigorous years.

Let then plain Christians content themselves with their bibles, or seek instruction in those works which have been already written and which can be easily obtained.

You, Sir, have already received answers on the controverted subjects in which you wish to involve me, sufficient to satisfy any moderate man.

You say, against such horrible blasphemy, as belief in the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, you have long thought it your duty to cry aloud and spare not...this you say you did in England, and as you have opportunity, you shall do it here. Yes Sir, indeed your trumpet has long sounded a woeful blast, but praised be God, it has in England, roused the lion from his slumber, from whose mane all your Socinian reveries were shaken as dew-drops into thin air; and be assured, that in this country, your trumpet shall never be blown in triumph. The rustic who follows his plough is armed with arguments which you cannot overthrow, and there are men in this country able to repel all the efforts of your art and erudition.

III. You say, (p. 5.) "if we argue with men at all, and expect to gain any thing from them, we must argue on some common principles, or come as near to them as we can." Now, Sir, there is no common principle, upon which, you and I could argue on the subjects of the divinity and atonement.

These are doctrines which can only be discovered by the light of pure revelation; but you, just as it pleaseth you, or as it answereth your purpose, reject or receive what is recorded in revelation. You have called the most energetic writer of all Christ's disciples an unsatisfactory reasoner. When you are pressed by a passage which is directly opposed to your favourite opinions, and when all your ingenuity is tortured to discover some way to extinguish the light which it must convey, you have the boldness to assert, that it is a corrupt reading or interpretation; or that the speaker, though he uttered what is recorded, and what he thought was truth, yet was entirely mistaken, and asserted a palpable falsehood. How is it possible then, that one, who holds, that such conduct in you, is a most unwarrantable liberty, can argue with you "on some common principles" before you have given to the world an "expurgated edition" of the Sacred Scriptures, or before he first enters into a controversy with you on the authenticity and genuineness of those passages, which you would most violently blot from the book of God?*

* Were your conduct justifiable with regard to the bible, it appears to me impossible, that it could be received as the word of God. If one part be true and another false.....if an apostle argue at one time well, and at another falsely, he must have a very penetrating vision, who can follow, amidst such perplexities and delusion, the line of truth.

Besides, before the way could be paved to direct disputation on the subjects in question, something must be said concerning your "History of Corruptions;" as you have introduced that book of fables in order to support some of your opinions. Your reference to that work, I must acknowledge, somewhat surprised me; especially as I recollected, that it had lately fallen from the gigantic grasp of Horsely crushed into annihilation.

IV. I have no leisure at present to go into a controversy on the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Christ. From what has been said it is evident, that it would be indefinite and endless. It would lead to very intricate and learned investigations, which would call for an attention exclusively devoted to them. This attention, with the numerous duties of my pastoral charge I cannot afford. My congregation is large, and in all respects deserving of my highest affection and most unremitting labours. They have just claims to all my time, excepting those few hours which are given to necessary recreation and literary pursuits. The manner in which I have spent some of those playful hours, has been seen by the public, in my Poem on Genius, which you have praised beyond its merits in the letter which you addressed to me.

To detect the errors into which you have run by your comparison of Jesus and Socrates, I thought a

light and recreating exercise, which would not consume much of my time; but in that light I should not consider a controversy with you, on the two greatest and most interesting doctrines unfolded in the Scriptures of God.

While I am thus bound by engagements indispensable and necessary, you, on the contrary, without pastoral charge, can command your own time, and read and write at your leisure.

These reasons, which I have plainly and honestly stated, have determined me to decline, at present, all controversy with you on the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ. Should, however, God spare our lives, should you still have the desire to engage with me in an investigation on those subjects after the termination of the one which at present engages our attention; should the difficulties which I have expressed be removed; and any future occurrence convince me, that such a controversy would prove useful, you shall not then see me unwilling, but desirous of meeting you, and of contending with you as long as you shall think proper.

As this may be the last printed letter you shall ever receive from me, I cannot but express in it my wish, that the free interchange of opinions, which has passed, should rather promote harmony than discord between us. That we so widely differ in religious sentiments excites my regret, but not my

animosity. In looking over my letter, I find several passages which may be thought by some improperly harsh; but I meant not by them to offend you. I have written with zeal in support of my cause, but not with the spirit of anger. On your anti-christian tenets I have endeavoured to inflict the strongest censure; with a warmth I hope not unbecoming I have supported my assertions; but for your person, for your character as a philosopher and scholar, I should wish to be considered as holding the highest respect.

The fault which I have found with your theological writings, and the freedom with which I have written, should not be considered as a departure from that sentiment which I still profess, and with the assurance of which, I again subscribe myself

Your friend

And obedient servant,

J. B. LINN.

Philadelphia, }
September 16, 1803. }

APPENDIX.*

SIR,

THOUGH I have endeavoured for the reasons assigned, to avoid entering into a controversy with you, on the subjects of the divinity and atonement of Christ, yet it may be expected by our readers, that I should (since challenged by you) bring some proof in support of the assertions which incidentally fell from me respecting them. This expectation I shall endeavour to answer in the plainest and concisest manner possible; and that this answer may be considered as entirely disconnected from our subject of controversy, I have attached it to my letter in the form of an appendix.

* For valuable information contained in the part of this appendix, which relates to the divinity of Christ, I am indebted to the communication of a pious, learned, and distinguished friend. I mention this that I may not receive all the credit for what does not exclusively belong to me, and that I may thus publicly proffer to my friend the tribute of my esteem and gratitude.

In p. 25. of my letter, I drew an inference from a preceding statement of facts, and said that "Christ was what he declared himself to be, what his disciples declared him to be, equal with God the Father." In p. 19. while contrasting the instructions of Jesus and Socrates, I said "He (Christ) unfolded the great doctrine of atonement." Upon these sentences you have eagerly seized, and forgetting Socrates, and the object of our dispute, you have made them the innocent cause of your concluding sections, which afford as remarkable specimens of your method of controversy, as I have ever seen. You are too well acquainted with controversy, not to know that it is a much shorter as well as a much easier business, to ask questions and propose objections than it is to answer them. You must allow me, therefore, to decline answering to each of your inquiries in particular, as this would require a volume, instead of a part of a pamphlet; and to make an arrangement of my own, in which, however, I will endeavour not to evade the force of any thing you have advanced, though my reply must necessarily be short and general.

I will notice,

I. The stress you lay on the opinions that the Jews entertained, that their Messiah was to be a mere man.

II. The representation which our Saviour himself has given of his real character and dignity.

III. The opinion of Athanasius.

IV. Some arguments in support of the atonement. What our Lord and his apostles taught relative to this doctrine.

I. You appear to lay considerable stress on the circumstance, that the Jews did not expect their Messiah to be a divine person, or that he would make an atonement for sin. You advert to this three or four times in the pamphlet to which I am replying. To me it appears not a little wonderful, that you should love to dwell on a circumstance which furnishes a strong presumption against your opinions. It is known to every Christian who reads his bible, that the Jews in the time of our Saviour,* were in utter ignorance and error in regard to the true character of the Messiah. They expected him to be almost every thing that he was not; and they did not expect him to be hardly any thing that he was. They expected him to be a temporal prince, a military conqueror, and a restorer of their nation. They did not expect him to be a meek, lowly, suffering, crucified, and dying Saviour. So deeply rooted were these

* They appear once to have had better ideas, but at this time they had generally lost them, as they had degenerated in other respects.

prejudices, that the very disciples of our Lord could not relinquish them, even after his death, till they were fully enlightened by the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost. "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" was, you know, the question which they proposed to him after his resurrection. As it was, therefore, *the very character* of the Jews' opinion, in regard to Christ, to be mistaken, erroneous, and unfounded, it seems singular that you should try to justify them, and fortify your opinion by theirs. As they were certainly and grossly *wrong* in almost every thing they taught about the Messiah; the presumption clearly and strongly is, that they were *not right* in expecting *him* to be a mere man.*

* In your notes you refer to your "Histories of the Corruptions of Christians," and "Of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ." With some care I have looked into the controversy between Dr. Horsely and yourself on the subject of the first of these histories, and into what Dr. Jamieson has said in reply to the second, and the result honestly is, that I consider those histories of yours as possessing no more authority than the *Arabian Nights's Entertainments*. The gentlemen I have mentioned, have shewn, I think to the perfect satisfaction of every candid reader, that your hypothesis that "the early Christian converts must have been unitarians," is, in the most unqualified manner, groundless, and absurd. The short and simple truth seems to be, that, as it was in the beginning, so it is now, and till the millennial age, ever shall be: From the days of Cerinthus to those of Dr. Priestley there have been opposers of Christ; and from the days

Misconceiving in all the rest, they were likely to misconceive in this: And I shall now give you palpable evidence from the evangelic history that this is more than presumption,...that it is a plain fact. In the twenty-second chapter of Matthew we have an account of the Pharisees and Sadducees attempting to confound our Lord by asking him questions, and of his actually confounding them, in return, by a question which he put to them. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, what think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man, from that day forth,

of St. John to those of Dr. Jamieson there have been wise, holy, and orthodox men, to confute them, and to guard the churches against their pernicious errors; and the church in general has always been preserved from believing that the Saviour was no more than a man. Eighteen hundred years hence, another Dr. Priestley might attempt to shew, that the great majority of Christians, in the present day, were unitarians, with as much justice as you have attempted to shew it in regard to the days of the apostles. The proportion, in both cases, seems to have been about the same, that is, not one to an hundred.

ask him any more questions.” Here we see that the Pharisees were not able to explain their own scriptures, and the acknowledged prophecies of the Messiah, from the very circumstance, that they did not expect him to be God as well as man. If they had known the truth, that he was both God and man, they could and would have answered this question... They would have said, “ David called Christ Lord in reference to his divine nature, and yet, in his human nature, he was the son of David.”

Here then the Saviour (and no doubt with design, and for our learning, as well as the confusion of the Pharisees) has exposed the ignorance of some of the most distinguished men among the Jews. Yet you, Sir, chuse to be found on the side of their ignorance, and even to ground your arguments on it, rather than to have it corrected by the information given by the Saviour himself. You cannot, any more than the Jews, give a just, or even plausible exposition of this passage, with your notions of the *mere humanity of Christ*....If you attempt it, I hope you will not say, that the blessed Redeemer did not rightly understand and apply the passage that he quoted: Or that he took it in a *popular* and *received*, but yet in a *wrong* sense. You know who has sometimes done things of this kind, and, therefore, will excuse the caution,

II. You recite a large number of texts of scripture with a view to shew, that our Saviour did not consider or speak of himself as God, or as possessing a divine nature; while you keep out of view, as much as you can, every passage that contradicts your hypothesis. This is a common and mischievous artifice of Socinians, in their small tracts intended to influence the popular mind. You have practised it before, in the publication to which I have already referred. But by only exposing the artifice, I shall shew at once, that all you have quoted is of no avail to the cause which you advocate. Let it then be distinctly observed, that the Socinians affirm, that Christ was *no more than a man*; and that orthodox Christians maintain, that he was *both God and man*. Now, do any number of texts which prove that Christ was *a man*....truly and properly a man....prove any thing contrary to what the orthodox allow? Not in the least: on the contrary, such texts only prove *a part* of what they allow,....a part of what they are anxious to maintain against the Arians, and the whole tribe of visionaries. We can, with perfect ease, produce an equal number of texts, that with quite as much plainness imply, and in some instances directly assert, the deity of Christ. These the Socinians are *usually*, I do not say *always*, careful to pass over in silence. You Sir, have endeavour-

ed, in your last pamphlet, to keep them wholly out of view. A single passage "I and my father are one"* which forced itself on you, is all that you have

* Though the Jews, as I have observed, were extremely ignorant of the true character of the Messiah, yet they were certainly much better acquainted with the meaning of the words and phrases of their own language, even than Dr. Priestly. Now, if you had condescended to continue your quotation only a single verse farther, you would have shewn the public, that the Jews did understand Christ as plainly declaring by this expression, that he was "God;" and that they took up stones to stone him on this very account. Yet all you say to obviate this difficulty, which, indeed, you can never obviate, is only this, "You will probably say, that I have slightly passed over, though I have quoted, one declaration of Jesus, that was fully to your purpose, viz. *that he and his father are one.* But this is, I think, sufficiently answered by himself, when, in his intercessory prayer, he speaks of all his disciples as equally one with the father and himself." The learned, pious, and charitable Dr. Doddridge, shall answer you, Sir, on this subject. His note on the text that you have set aside so easily, is this,..." *I and my Father are one.*" "If we attend, not only to the obvious meaning of these words, in comparison with other passages of scripture, but to the connexion of this celebrated text, it so plainly demonstrates the *Deity* of our blessed redeemer, that I think it may be left to speak for itself, without any laboured comment. How widely different that sense is, in which Christians are said to be *one with God* (John xvii. 21.) will sufficiently appear by considering how flagrantly absurd and blasphemous it would be to draw that inference from *their union with God* which Christ does from his."

inserted, or attempted to obviate or to gloss. You, therefore, and all who follow this practice, have neither proved that Christ *was not God*, nor that he was *only a man*, and consequently you have proved nothing that you profess to have proved.* You have only adduced a number of texts which shew that Christ was *really a man*, and often acted and spake as such, which no orthodox christian denies. And consequently when you and other Socinians ask, whether in these texts...which represent Christ as really a man...he acts and speaks like God...it is all mere sophistry and evasion;...there is not the least force or propriety in what you say. We allow at once, that he sometimes acted and spoke as a man. But at other times we maintain, that he acted and spake as God. And hence we decisively and justly conclude, that he was *both God and man*. We cannot conclude otherwise without making him a deceiver.

* It will be trifling to say, in answer to this, that you attempt to shew, that it follows from what Christ says of himself *as man*, that he *cannot be God*. Another might as well say that from what he says of himself in *the other class of texts* he cannot be *man*. If there be a difficulty, every fair reasoner is bound to notice it, and to endeavour to remove it. The texts that speak of Christ as God, are the strong holds of the orthodox. Till you attack and vanquish these you do nothing.

In all the passages you have quoted, therefore, in which Christ actually speaks of himself as a man, you have said nothing to the purpose...nothing that I have even a wish to controvert. In the single text to which I have referred, and to your remark, on which I have replied, in a note, you ran against some evidence that proves the contrary of what it was your wish to prove. Little cause, then, had you to say, as you do with apparent triumph, "Now I would ask any reasonable unprejudiced person, whether it was natural for a person conscious that he was himself equal to any being in the universe, even the "one eternal Jehovah" the Maker and Lord of all, *to speak and act in this uniform manner*, as inferior to a being to whom he was not inferior, and dependent on one on whom he was conscious that he was not dependent?" I have marked with italick characters, in this sentence, what you did not so mark, because I wish the clause to be specially noticed, which I am satisfied you did not. It is, Sir, by artfully interweaving such clauses in a general sentence, that an experienced disputant deceives and misleads the unwary. This single clause contains or implies an unqualified error which vitiates the whole of your conclusion. Were it indeed true that Christ Jesus our Lord had spoken and acted *in an uniform manner* as inferior to the one eternal Jehovah, it is granted, at once, that your sentiments

would stand and that mine must fall. But though you represent this to be the fact, it is (I repeat it) a representation as unfair and unfounded as ever was made. Christ did not *uniformly* represent himself as inferior to God. Mark it well, that this is the very point where you affirm and I deny. I admit that he *sometimes* spake and acted as a man...You say that he *always* did so. I affirm that he *sometimes* spake and acted as God...You deny that he *ever* did so. You say that he was *only a man*...I say that he was *truly God* as well as *truly man*. I present this subject in these various lights, turn it over and dwell upon it in this manner, to impress "our readers" with the true nature of this controversy; and to make them see, that when you have proved that Christ was a man, you have done no more than proved a part of what I wish to be proved; and that when you say, that he *uniformly* spake and acted as a man you assert, what the New Testament directly contradicts. This, indeed, appears from the declaration already discussed, "I and my Father are one." But the New Testament, not merely in a solitary passage, but often, very often, in numerous, direct, and unequivocal passages, asserts, that Christ was God: and, what is fully as much to the point, ascribes to him acts and attributes that belong only to God, and which cannot, without blasphemy, be arrogated by any creature.

If I were now first introducing this subject I should think myself obliged in justice to exhibit the texts of scripture which speak of the Redeemer as a man, as well as those which speak of him as God; and to obviate any difficulties or objections arising from the statement that I should make. But as I only "follow your lead," and as you have given quotations enough, to prove that the blessed Saviour *was man*, which I also fully and cheerfully admit, it only remains for me to adduce the texts which shew that he *was God*, which is the point that you deny. These passages I shall take indiscriminately from the sacred volume, as it is all of equal authority; though the parts that I shall dwell on will relate to the words and actions of our Lord himself, as this is the particular view of the subject to which our controversy has led us. Matt. 1. 23. "Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is *God with us*." Matt. 2. 11. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, *and fell down and worshipped him*." Matt. 28. 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father, *and of the Son*, and of the Holy Ghost." John 1. 1. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God *and the word was God*." John 20. 28. "Thomas answered and said unto him *My Lord and my God*." Acts 7. 59. "And they stoned

Stephen calling upon God and saying, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.*" Acts 20. 28....feed the church of God which he hath *purchased with his own blood.*" Rom. 9. 5. " Whose are the fathers, and of whom, *as concerning the flesh*, Christ came, who is over all *God blessed forever*, Amen." 1. Tim. 3. 10. " And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness, *God was manifest in the flesh.*" Tit. 2. 13, 14. " Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of *the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ* who gave himself for us." Heb. 1. 6, 7, 8. " When he bringeth his first begotten into the world he saith, *and let all the angels of God worship him.* And of his angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire: But unto the Son he saith, *Thy throne O God is forever and ever.*" 1. John 5. 20...." And we are in him that is true even in his Son Jesus Christ, *This is the true God and ⁱⁿ eternal life.*"

Here are a number of passages, (many more might easily be added to them) in which Christ Jesus is explicitly called or manifestly treated as God. If he was not truly God, and if it be, as you hold, idolatry to call him God, you seem to me to bring a most dreadful charge against the sacred writers, and speakers, not excepting the glorious Redeemer himself. For it is the direct tendency of those, and a host of other passages, to teach what you call idolatry. Nay, I assert, without the fear of contradic-

tion, that unless the relation which the first person in the sacred Trinity necessarily bears to the second be considered as an exception, there is not one name, attribute, or work, by which God the Father is most highly distinguished in scripture, which is not also ascribed to Christ Jesus, the Son of God.*

* " Names are external signs and intimations of the distinction which takes place with respect to beings; and the distinction lies in their attributes. It is, therefore, an irrefragable proof of the Godhead of Christ, if, by the divine testimony, the attributes of the Supreme Being, and even those to which God appeals as distinguishing him from other beings, are ascribed to Christ. In general, then, it merits our deep attention, that Christ, though a man, and even after his glorification continuing such, is nevertheless often distinguished from, and set in opposition to all men; and this, at the same time, as an existence which is not human. *Paul an apostle, not of man, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father (Gal. 1. 1.)....For I neither received nor learned the gospel of any man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1. 10. 12.)...* What that more than human existence is, Paul teaches in the plainest words; to wit. *That Jesus Christ was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, having taken upon him the form of a servant, and become like unto men.*

Let us contemplate the special attributes of God in Christ. *His eternity....* He existed in power and glory, not only before his human birth, before John, before Abraham, but before the world was, before all things. (2 Cor. 8. 9. John 1. 15. John 8. 58. John 17. 5. Col. 1. 15....17.) He did not then begin to be, but he was. *He was with God and he was God.* As it is testified of Jehovah, so of Christ, that *he is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the*

In the form of baptism, likewise, "the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost" you know, are connected

last. (Is. 41. 1. 4. and 44. 6. Rev. 1. 11. and 2. 8. and 22. 13.) The proper, the clear meaning of these passages established by the connection, and the light, and strength they communicate to one another, is decisive. All the Arians acknowledged on this account, the existence of the Son before the world. The attempts to evade the force of these and of the following proofs, do so much violence to them, that thereby the natural sense is confirmed, and if other interpretations were admitted, no scripture phrases would convey a certain meaning.

*Omnipresence....*When walking about upon earth he was nevertheless in heaven. (John 3. 13.)....He is in the midst of all, who, many or few, are gathered together in his name: He is with his own always to the end of the world. (Matt. 18. 20. and 28. 20.)....Omnipresence is likewise presupposed in

*Omniscience....*This he allowed to be openly attributed to him. (John 16. 30. and 21. 17.) When he was upon earth he knew all men; "and had no need that any should testify of man; for he himself knew whatsoever was in man. Being now in heaven, he searches the reins and hearts, in all the churches. (Rev. 2. 23.) But this belongs to God only. (1 Kings 8. 39. Jer. 17. 10.) He is our advocate with the Father. (1 John 2. 1.) But how could he be so if he were not perfectly acquainted with all his people and with all their cases? [Wynpersse's proof of the true and eternal Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ....Bell's translation....Philadelphia edition, pages 36, 37, 38, 39.]

*" Omnipotence....*Col. 1. 17. *By him all things consist.* Creation is ascribed to Christ. John 1. 3. *All things were made by him;* and in the same chapter verse 10, *And the world was made by him.* Heb. 1. 2. *By whom also he made the world.* Col. 1. 15, 16, 17.

together...the Son or Jesus Christ standing between two appellations, by which you yourself acknowledge (p. 45.) that the Deity is designated. Now, Sir, you will readily admit that it was the great business of those who formed the New Testament to endeavour, by their preaching and by their writings, to convert the heathen world from idolatry, and to teach true notions of the Deity, and of the way of salva-

Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven or 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: And he is before all things and by him all things consist.

The argument from creation is very strong. It is the first and great relation we stand under to God, nor can we conceive any thing that more properly, or in a more distinguishing manner characterizes the true God, who pleads it so often to distinguish himself from the vanities of the Gentiles. “*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.* (Psalm 19. 1.) The fifth and last proof of the divinity of Christ, may be taken from divine worship being commanded to be given to him without reproof, and being accepted by him, when it is expressly rejected by the inferior ministers of Providence. It is commanded to be given to him, John 5. 22, 23. Phil. 2. 5. It is actually given him by the wise men, Matt. 2. 11. By a ruler of the Synagogue. Matt. 9. 18. By a woman of Canaan, Matt. 15. 25. By the disciples in general, Matt. 20. 5. And you see that worship is rejected by an angel, Rev. 22. 8, 9.” (Witherspoon’s lecture on divinity...Sec. 18. sub. fin. “Our readers” will do well to turn to all the texts here referred to.)

tion. With this in view, is it possible for an unprejudiced mind to believe that these writers and speakers would ever have used the language that I have shewn they did use, in regard to Christ, if they had considered him *as a mere man*? Is it possible that they would, as I have shewn that they actually did, ascribe to him all the divine names, attributes and agencies?....Is it possible that he himself, in the very initiatory rite of christianity, which every disciple, learned and unlearned, was to receive, would have inserted the name of *a mere man* between two names of the Deity, and connected the whole together as of equal authority? Is it possible that they would have taken these *direct and best adapted means* to teach idolatry, by making the early christians believe that Christ was God, if they knew him to be *a mere man*.Sir, it is impossible....They meant most certainly to teach, that our blessed Redeemer was verily God. The argument from idolatry is conclusively against you.

But as I have "come as near you as I could" in what I have just said, so I hope to come still nearer, in what I am going immediately to add; for I am deeply sensible of the truth of your maxim, that without common principles, we cannot argue at all. Though you suppose it lawful to question the truth and propriety of what is said by the sacred writers on some occasions, yet, when a miracle was wrought *expressly to sanction a particular claim or declaration*, you admit,

I believe, that, in every such instance, that particular claim or declaration is to be considered as receiving the signature of divine authority. This, then, is a common principle between you and me. Again. I cannot mistake in stating that you hold, with me, that no being except God can forgive sins. All Unitarians justly and earnestly contend for this truth. Once more....You expressly state in your letter to me (page 47.) that where our Saviour acquiesces in an inference (that of Nicodemus) he confirms it. This, therefore, is your principle whether it be mine or not. Let us now carry these principles along with us, while we read Mark 11. 3...12. " And they came unto him bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick man of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy,

Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say arise and take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick man of the palsy) I say unto thee arise and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, and took up his bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying we never saw it on this fashion,"

Here we are told that Christ said to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee, and that the scribes charged him in their hearts with blasphemy for saying so, because none can forgive sins but God. And what did the Saviour? Did he admit that he had spoken blasphemy? Horrible thought! No. Did he deny the justice of the principle that none can forgive sins but God? Not a word of the kind...He fully *acquiesced* in it. How then did he repel the charge of blasphemy? precisely thus... He affirmed that he had power (and remember that it is the power of God) to forgive sins. Nay, he does a great deal more than simply affirm this. Having first asked them, whether it was easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise take up thy bed and walk, he proceeds to state distinctly why he had made use of the former expression rather than the latter, and at the same time to re-

peat the expression. He tells them that he had made use of the language he did *with design*. Nay he tells them that he had wrought the miracle *with design to prove that he had power to forgive sins*. Observe his words. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power to forgive sins, I say unto thee arise and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." As plainly as language can do it, the Saviour here throws the whole force of the miracle on this very point, that he had power to forgive sins, and that he would have this truth understood. Here, Sir, I think I come very "near to you," and show on *your own principles* that Christ was God. For you admit, that God only can forgive sins: But Christ forgave sins: Therefore, Christ is God. You admit, that a miracle is the seal of God set to the truth of that for which the miracle is wrought. But a miracle was wrought to show that Christ had power to forgive sins, which power belongs only to God: Therefore, the seal of God was set to this truth...that Christ had power to forgive sins, a power that belongs only to God. You admit, that when our Saviour acquiesces in an inference he confirms it. But he not only acquiesced in the inference that he claimed the power to forgive sins but explicitly declared that he had wrought a miracle to prove it: Therefore, "*a forti-*

ori as we say," he did most certainly claim and exercise this power, a power which his *acquiescence* has previously declared, belonged only to God. I seriously aver, that as far as I can discern there is no flaw or fallacy in this reasoning, and that the conclusions formed are unavoidable and decisive. Beware, Sir, that in answering them you do not take part with the wicked scribes, and say, what will tend to bring the charge of blasphemy against the blessed Saviour....For this charge must stand if you attempt to prove that he had not power to forgive sins.

Having now shewn that the doctrine taught us in the New Testament is, that Christ was truly God and truly man, I have only farther to remark, that this doctrine is no way incredible. Who will dare to say that it is impossible to the God of infinite wisdom and power to take our nature into such intimate union with his own, as that after the union there shall be but one person. This is what Trinitarians maintain; and in this there is nothing impossible, nothing contradictory,...and considering the great ends to be answered by it...nothing improbable. To me it seems unspeakably less difficult to believe this than it is to believe that all the passages of divine inspiration that I have quoted relate to a mere man. The orthodox faith, therefore, I do verily think, is

not only truer and safer than your's, but also much easier to be received.*

* In Section v. p. 45, 46...You say " Let us advert to this boasted argument (referring to miracles) for the divinity of Jesus. Whose voice, you say, did nature equally obey?" I answer it equally as promptly, and as effectually obeyed the voice of Moses, of Joshua, and of Paul, as it did that of Jesus, when they acted by the same authority that Jesus did."

Allowing that you are perfectly correct in this assertion, allowing that nature equally obeyed the voice of Jesus, of his prophet, or apostle, still I contend that there is an obvious difference between their miracles, and that the miracles of Christ declare him to be God; in illustrating this position, I cannot do better, than by giving in translation the following extract from Massillon.

" Although heaven had not promised Christ to the earth with so much magnificence; although the expectation of the universe had not waited his coming, his wonderful works would have placed him far above every human being and attested to the truth of his divinity. In the ages which preceded the coming of Christ, there appeared extraordinary men, to whom the Lord appeared to bestow the sceptre of his power. Moses in Egypt and in the desert appeared almost sovereign of heaven and earth. Elijah in succeeding ages exhibited the same power to mankind. But when we examine them closely, these wonderful men bear the marks of weakness and dependence. Moses wrought his wonders by his mysterious rod; without it he was a powerless man. The Lord, it seems, had connected the power of working miracles with this dry wood, to teach the people of Israel, that Moses was nothing in his hand but an instrument. Jesus Christ performs the greatest miracles without even speaking...the mere touch of his garment heals diseases. Moses does

III. I propose to say a few words on the opinion of Athanasius in regard to the doctrine of the

not communicate to his disciples the power of working miracles; because it was a gift he had received from heaven, and of which he could not dispose...but Jesus Christ left to his disciples a power in this respect (in some measure) equal to himself...Moses always acts in the name of the Lord...Jesus Christ acts in his own name, he declares the works of his father to be his. Nevertheless this Moses who was not proclaimed by the voice of prophecy as Christ was, who did not forgive sins as Christ did, who called himself only a servant of God, fearing that the credulity of his people should render to him divine honours, retires alone to a distant mountain, and there makes his solitary grave, and withdraws forever from the adoration of superstition. He appears not again to his disciples after death, but vanishes forever from their sight. Whereas Jesus Christ, after all the predictions which had announced his coming, after all the miracles which he had wrought in Judea, after having appeared as a god upon earth, lets his tomb be known throughout the universe, exposed to the veneration of all people of every age. After his death he appears to his disciples...Was superstition then, in this case, less to be feared? Was Jesus Christ less zealous than Moses for the glory of the Supreme Being and the salvation of men? Elijah raises the dead, but he invokes a foreign power...he is not himself master of life and death...he recalls a soul from the empire of death, which is only obedient to the voice of God through his instrumentality...Whereas Jesus Christ raises the dead as he performs the most common actions...He speaks as a master to those who sleep in the grave, and the dead answer to his call."

Trinity. This is not done because I consider his opinion, or that of any other uninspired man of great moment on this subject. It was the command of Christ that we should "call no man father upon earth." While we have the unerring word of inspiration, as a light to our feet and a lamp to our path, it is of minor importance what any writers that succeeded the apostles might think or teach. They were fallible as well as we. They had to learn from the very same sacred records that have come down to us. In matters that are obscurely delivered in the New Testament, their understanding, construction, and practice may sometimes afford us aid. But where the sacred writers are so explicit, perspicuous, full and plain, as I have shewn that they are, in regard to the *Deity* of Christ, it would be folly to give up our faith, though the writings of uninspired men, allowed that the apostles were as generally hostile to the orthodox creed, as they are notoriously in favour of it. Let this question, then, about Athanasius, or any similar question about any other uninspired writer be determined as it may, I consider the merits of the question as untouched by the decision. Still I think it incumbent on me to remark on the following paragraph in your letter to me... "Your doctrine of Christ being *the eternal Jehovah*, equal to *God the Father*, would have shocked Athanasius, and all the zealous defenders of the orthodoxy of

their times. At the council of Nice, and for some time after, they had advanced no farther than the doctrine of the Son being *of the same substance* with the Father. That of his *equality* to him was expressly disclaimed. Of this there is the most abundant evidence."

I wish to place, as near to this paragraph as possible, a few sentences, fairly taken from that which has long been known by the name of "The Creed of St. Athanasius;" that "our readers" may judge whether you had "the most abundant evidence," for what you so roundly assert. The sentences of this creed which I wish to be compared with your words, are the following. "The Godhead of the Father, of the Son; and of the Holy Ghost *is all one: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost...And in this Trinity none is afore or after another: none is greater or less than another: But "the whole three Persons are co-eternal: and co-equal."* If ever there was a laboured attempt to shew and to have it clearly understood, that there is a perfect *equality* in the persons of the Trinity, we have it here. Every antithesis of words and variety of phrase is used for the purpose. Yet after all, you venture to say "Your doctrine of Christ being the eternal Jehovah *equal to God the Father* would have shocked Athanasius, and all the defenders of the

orthodoxy of the times... That of his *equality* to him (the Father) was *expressly disclaimed*." No, Sir, you see it was expressly asserted... So plainly and repeatedly asserted, that I mistake if "our readers" will not say, What could induce Dr. Priestley to commit himself in this unaccountable manner? I know not gentle readers: he has an *unaccountable* talent at making bold and unqualified assertions. Perhaps he will say, that the creed I have quoted was not the work of Athanasius, and will refer us to his histories for proof of the affirmation. But against these histories, I do again protest as void of all authority. Perhaps he will say (for this will be a little more to his purpose) that Dr. Waterland, who was himself a Trinitarian, has shewn in his "Critical History of the Athanasian Creed," that Athanasius probably did not compose this creed... That it was probably the composition of Hilary bishop of Arles, about the year 430, which was nearly a century after the time of Athanasius. But even this, if it be granted to be just, and it is only conjectural, will be of little avail to Dr. Priestley: For he asserts that the doctrine of Christ's equality with the Father would have "shocked" not only "Athanasius, but all the zealous defenders of the orthodoxy of their times." Now it unfortunately happens, that Hilary was *characteristically* a zealous defender of the orthodoxy of the times of Athanasius

and the council of Nice. Yet he (if he was the writer of the creed) was so far from being shocked at the doctrine, that Christ the Son of God was *equal* to the Father, that he subjoins to this very creed, “that except a man believe it faithfully he cannot be saved.” Besides, this same Dr. Waterland, who was indeed a very learned and ingenious man, though he thinks that Hilary composed what is called the Athanasian Creed, not only admits but insists that he composed it as a *system of the Athanasian principles* relative to the Trinity and Incarnation. What Dr. Waterland says, therefore, is entirely in my favour, as he denies not, but expressly maintains, that the creed contains the principles of Athanasius reduced to a system. How then could the assertion of the *inequality of Christ* with God the Father shock Athanasius and all the orthodox men of his time? Dr. Priestley will answer. But he never can answer satisfactorily to any candid and well informed mind.

Connected with what you say about Athanasius you are pleased to inform me what would have befallen me, if I had promulgated my sentiments among the Jews. Your words are, “Had you, Sir, been a Jew, and had advanced what you do in this pamphlet, while the polity of that *people of God* had been in vigour, you would have been stoned as an idolator or a blasphemer, and your metaphysical distinctions,

by which you pretend to prove that *three* may be *one*, and *one three*, would not have saved you. Had you, on being interrogated, acknowledged, that by the terms *Father, Son* and *Holy Ghost*, you did not mean to denote the same thing by different words, but that there was a real difference between them, and that each of the persons so denominated was possessed of all the attributes of Divinity, you would have been condemned as a worshipper of three Gods: and your plea of *mystery* would not have been heard. Be thankful, Sir, that you live in a country in which even idolatry may be professed without danger. The only plea that can avail you at the bar of reason, and of God, is that of the apostle, and of the unbelieving Jews, viz. *a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*"

And now, Sir, what is all this to your purpose. Will you always furnish arguments against yourself? Do you not know that the Jews took up stones to stone Christ himself for saying what they supposed, (and rightly supposed) implied that he was God? Do you not know that they frequently charged him with blasphemy? Do you not know that it was under this charge, brought for the very doctrine that I maintain, that they at last actually put him to death? And is it not "enough for the disciple that he be as his master?" Yes, Sir, the Jews that crucified my Saviour, would probably have stoned me, for

saying what he said, and avowing the truth that he avowed. And is this any argument in your favour?

IV. As you have denied the divinity of our Lord and Master, you must of necessity deny the doctrine of atonement. In stating your objections against it, you have indulged in a warmth of expression which discovers that your animosity against it is not small. You have proposed several questions, a general answer to which I shall give in the scriptural proofs which I shall produce.

In a note, p. 52. you have made an assertion which is passing strange: you say that the “doctrine of the atonement was unknown till after the reformation, and that Austin held, that the price of redemption for men was paid by God to the Devil.*”

* You contradict the testimony of your friend the Jews, as will be seen in the following extract.

“Many are the testimonies which the Jews bear to the truth of St. Paul's assertion, that all the sacrifices and rites of the Old Testament relate to the Messiah*. They set out with the following general proposition; ‘All things which are mentioned in the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, relate to the Wisdom;’ under which cabalistic name, they designated, as it is well known, the Messiah. To this rule they strictly adhere, and maintain, that under the literal sense of the words a mystical meaning lies concealed. Such is the doctrine of the Babylonian Talmud; ‘Whosoever expounds the text, according to its form,

* Heb. passim

This, Sir, bears the wild and fanciful tints of romance. And in what way do you support this

(i. e. its literal sense) lo! he is a liar.' The same notion is advanced by R. Samuel Laniadu, in his Commentaries; 'In the study of the Law, a double method is to be observed; the one, that its literal meaning may be acquired; and the other, that its hidden signification may be understood.' The Gloss upon the Talmud is yet more express; 'The figures of the tabernacle relate to spiritual figures, to learn from thence more sublime truths.' R. Bechai is perfectly in unison with the above citations; 'The statutes (of Moses) are a figure of spiritual things; and those spiritual things are above.' In short, they all agree, that the ceremonial Law had an immediate reference to the Messiah himself, and to the sublime truths, which it would be his province to inculcate*.

Upon the doctrine of the great sacrifices to be made by Christ for the sins of the whole world, the Jews are remarkably express. Let the following passage from the Jalkut Chadasch declare their sentiments on this point. 'The souls of the righteous make their boast† in the Messiah; the chastisement which is due to the sons of Adam, the Messiah immediately taketh away; upon him is the chastisement, and he taketh it away from Israel. And he is in the place of the offerings, which, during the appointed time of the house of the sanctuary, were stretching forth the neck in eager expectation of his approach‡.'

"R. Menachim speaks in the following terms of the intent of the sacrificial rites; 'The priest, whilst he ascends the altar, is found raising up his soul from the lofty One to the lofty One; and this is the mystery of the altar.' By these terms we can

* Præf. ad Maimon. de Vaccâ Rufâ.

† See Parkhurst.

‡ Dissert. in Maimon. de Vaccâ Rufâ, p. 492.

allegation? Let the world give ear to the mighty argument, "This I have shewn in my history of the Corruptions of Christianity." This is ponderosity falling after ponderosity, or to adopt a less figurative expression, it is "corruption falling after corruption." But, pray Sir, since you are so fond

only understand the Father and the Son; and indeed the Rabbii are sufficiently explicit in declaring, that this is their meaning. The idea then of the passage, when divested of its obscurity, will be, The priest rises in contemplation to the Most High, through the merits of the Most High his only begotten Son; and in the mysterious sacrifice, then offering upon the altar, he views with the eye of faith the sufferings of the one great sacrifice for lost mankind: such is the mystery of the altar*.

"The same belief in the divinity of the Messiah may be deduced from the following very remarkable passage in the Midrash. 'Thus he saved them by the hand of other judges, who being but flesh and blood, ye fell into slavery again: but in the age to come (i. e. of the Messiah) *I in my own substance* will redeem you, and ye shall not be reduced into servitude any more†.'

"According to R. Solomon Jarchi, the Talmuds, and Maimonides, when the priest sprinkled the blood of the victim upon the consecrated cakes, and other hallowed utensils, he was always careful to do it in the form of a cross. The same symbol was used when the kings and the high-priests were anointed. And whenever they had occasion to move the victims, or to wave the palm-tree, the motion was always made so as to express the figure of a cross.‡"

FABER'S HORÆ MOSAICÆ

* Dissert. in Maimon. de Vacâ. Rufâ, p. 495.

† Cited by Bp. Patrick, Comment. on Judges, c. iii.

‡ Dissert. in Maimon. de Vacca Rufa, p. 497.

of employing the catechetical method of reasoning, let me in my turn ask you, where, excepting in your own history, do you find any support for such prodigious assertions? Do you find it in the apostolic, the Nicean, and Athanasian Creeds? Do you find it in the controversy of St. Augustin with the Pelagians during the second century? Do you find it in the controversy concerning the efficacy of the blood of Christ, which was agitated long before the reformation? Do you not meet a contradiction to what you have advanced in your note, in almost every page of Mosheim? And what authority will you oppose to the following passage from that historian, which gives the palpable denial to what you have said?

“ The most weighty and important of all these controversies was that which certain Jewish doctors raised at Rome, and in other christian countries, concerning the means of justification and acceptance with God, and the method of salvation pointed out by the word of God. The apostles wherever they exercised their ministry, had continually declared all hopes of acceptance and salvation delusive, except such as were founded on Jesus the Redeemer, and his all-sufficient merits, while the Jewish doctors maintained the works of the law to be the true efficient cause of the soul’s eternal salvation and felicity. This latter sentiment not only led to many other

errors extremely prejudicial to christianity, but was injurious to the glory of the divine Redeemer. For those who looked upon a course of life conformable to the law, as a meritorious title to eternal happiness, could not consider Christ as the Son of God, and the Saviour of mankind, but only as an eminent prophet, or a divine messenger sent from above to enlighten and instruct a darkened world. It is not, therefore, surprizing, that St. Paul took so much pains in his Epistle to the Romans, and in his other writings, to extirpate such a pernicious and capital error.”*

This, Sir, is testimony of the highest authority, and speaks of the opinions of those, to whom highest deference is due. It declares what was the doctrine preached by the earliest disciples of Jesus, who being the inspired of God, should have our implicit confidence†.

* Vol. I. Chap. iii. p. 120. Amer. Edit.

† I have thought it useful in connection with the testimony which has been given, to insert in a note the corresponding opinions of men of great authority in the Christian church.

“ Hence it appears, to adopt the language of the Church, that ‘ all these fathers, martyrs, and other holy men, whom St. Paul spoke of, had their faith surely fixed in God, when all the world was against them. They did not only know God to be the Lord, maker and governor of all men in the world, but also they had a special confidence and trust, that he was and would be *their* God, *their* comforter, aider, helper, maintainer,

If such were the opinions of men who should be the most revered, let us see, if we have not other

and defender. This is the Christian faith, which these holy men had, and we ought also to have. And although they were not named Christian men, yet was it a Christian faith that they had; for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, as we now do. This difference is between them and us, that they looked, when Christ should come, and we be in the time, when he is come. Therefore, saith St. Augustin, The time is altered and changed, but not the faith: for we have both one faith in Christ*."

"He was the Lambe which was killed from the begynnyng of the world: that is to say, all they that beleved in him since Adam was created, they were saved by him." Bp. Latimer's Sermons, fol. 209. edit. 1584. "As touchyng the blessednesse which we have by Christ: it was alike at all tyme, for it stode Adam in as good stead to beleve the first promise whiche God made unto him: and hee was as well saved by it, in belevyng that Christ should come, as we be, whiche beleve that he is come, and hath suffered for us. So likewise the prophets are saved in belevyng that he should come and suffer, and deliver mankinde by his most paynfull death." Ibid. 224.

"Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself. Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury whatsoever; it is our comfort and our wisdom, we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered; that God hath made himself the son of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God." HOOKER.

In a similar manner Bp. Andrews, in his Discourse upon Justification in Christ's name. "He is made righteousnesse to

* Second part of the Homily of Faith.

reasons for believing in the doctrine of atonement, and whether Christ and his inspired disciples do not unfold it.

us, that we be made the righteousness of God in him. Which place St. Chrysostom well weighing; This very word *δικαιοσύνη* (saith he) the Apostle useth, *δεικνυς το αφαιτον της δωρεας*, to expresse the unspeakable bounty of that gift; that he hath not given us the operation or effect of his righteousness, but his very righteousness, yea his very self unto us; Marke (saith he) how every thing is lively, and as full as can be imagined. Christ, one, not only that had done no sinne, but that had not so much as knowne any sinne, hath God made (not a sinner, but) sinne itselfe; as in another place, (not accursed, but) a curse itselfe: sinne, in respect of the guilt; a curse, in respect of the punishment. And why this? To the end, that we might be made (not righteous persons; that was not full enough, but) righteousness itselfe; and there he staves not yet, and not every righteousness, but the very righteousness of God himself." *ANDREW'S Sermons*, p. 74. after 1008.

Also Bp. Latimer; " He suffered to deliver us from everlasting damnation; he tooke our sinnes, and gave us his righteousness." *Sermons*, fol. 224.

And Bp. Beveridge; " I believe that my person is only justified by the merit of Christ imputed to me; and that my nature is only sanctified by the Spirit of Christ implanted in me." *Private Thoughts*, art. viii.

And Bp. Reynolds; " Our life is conveyed from Christ unto us, first, by imputation of his merit, whereby our persons are made righteous and acceptable unto God. Secondly, by infusion or communion with his Spirit, which sanctifies our nature, and enables us to do spiritual services." *Life of Christ* p. 240.

I. The types and ceremonies under the mosaical dispensation looked forward, to the perfect oblation through Jesus Christ.*

And Mr. Parkhurst; "Righteousness" is "imputed to sinful man through faith in Christ, by which his past sins are forgiven or covered, or he is cleared, acquitted, or absolved from his past sins, and is himself accepted as righteous, to life eternal. This evangelical righteousness is opposed to that last mentioned (viz. inherent righteousness). It is several times called *δικαιοσυνη* Θεου, as being that method, which God hath exhibited in the Gospel, of man's *justification*, or *being made* righteous through the merits and death of Christ, whence it is once termed the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: and Christ is styled our Righteousness, as being the procurer of righteousness to us through his merits and sufferings, for he is JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Greek Lexicon, vox *δικαιοσυνη*.

"What can tend more to melt our frozen hearts into a current of thankful obedience to God, than the vigorous reflection of the beams of God's love through Jesus Christ upon us! Was there ever so great an expression of love heard of! Nay, was it possible to be imagined, that that God, who perfectly hates sin, should himself offer the pardon of it, and send his son into the world to secure it to the sinner, who doth so heartily repent of his sins, as to deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Christ! Well might the Apostle say, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. How dry and sapless are all the voluminous discourses of philosophers, compared with this sentence!

* It is remarkable that the custom of offering sacrifices has almost universally prevailed in the world.

The bloody rites of the law were shadows of that full satisfaction which was to be rendered by the

How jejune and unsatisfactory are all the discoveries they had of God and his goodness, in comparison of what we have by the Gospel of Christ! Well might Paul then say, that he was determined to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified. Christ crucified is the library which triumphant souls will be studying in, to all eternity. This is the only library, which is the true *Ἱατρειὸν ψυχῆς*, that which cures the soul of all its maladies and distempers. Other knowledge makes men's minds giddy and flatulent; this settles and composes them. Other knowledge is apt to swell men into high conceits and opinions of themselves; this brings them to the truest view of themselves, and thereby to humility and sobriety. Other knowledge leaves men's hearts as it found them; this alters them, and makes them better. So transcendent an excellency is there in the knowledge of Christ crucified, above the sublimest speculations in this world †.

STILLINGFLEET.

“ God, to confer on us, in the most excellent and endearing manner, the blessing promised to his ancient people, when he vouchsafed to assure them, that *he would love them freely*, was pleased to love us, not only when we were not at all, but when we were his enemies. Our inexistence indeed was a condition, wherein nothing in us was capable of being a motive of God's love: but our enmity proceeded further, and made us worthy of his detestation; as if his love were nothing, unless it vanquished obstacles, as well as wanted motives. This gave the Apostle a just cause to say, that *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*: that is, when we

* Heb. x. 10.

† Crig. Sacra, b. i. c. 6.

offering of the body of this divine personage. And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering,

wanted all motives to incite his love, unless our very want of them should pass for one....Men having displeas'd God, and consequently forfeited all right and natural possibility to happiness; even whilst they completed the forlornness of their condition, *by the lethargy of not being sensible of it*, and were as careless to seek means of recovery, as they had been unable to devise them of themselves: even then, his restless love would never be at quiet, till it had set his omnipotence on work to contrive expedients, and find out a way to reconcile his justice and his mercy, in reconciling sinners to himself....Without venturing to determine, whether or no God could, to redeem us, have chosen any other way, we may safely think, that he has chosen the most obliging and most endearing way, displaying, in this divine manner of rescuing us, the severest justice and the highest mercy; the greatest hatred of sin, and the greatest love to sinners....Though true faith be ever the pregnant mother of good works; yet are not these works *the cause*, but *the effects and signs* of God's first love to us. As though the needle's pointing at the poles be, by an effect, an argument of its having been invigorated by the loadstone; yet is not that respect unto the north the cause, but the operation of the iron's being drawn by the attractive mineral. *Thou art good, and dost good*, says the Psalmist to his Maker. The greatness of his goodness is that which makes it ours; nor doth he do us good, *because that we are good*, but because that *He* is liberally so; as the sun shines on dunghills, not out of any invitation his beams find there, but because it is his nature to be diffusive of his light; yet with this difference, that, whereas the sun's bounty deserves our joy, and not our thanks, because his visits are made designlessly, and by a bare

oftentimes, the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man after he had offered one

necessity of nature; God, on the contrary, for being necessarily so, is not less freely or obligingly so, to you or to me; for, though some kind of communicativeness be essential to his goodness, yet his extension of it without himself, and his vouchsafing it to this or that particular person, are purely arbitrary.... *Our highest performances, though they be dues, amount not unto tributes, but are rather like those pepper-corns of rent, which freeholders pay, not with hope or with intent to enrich their landlord, but to acknowledge, that they hold all from him.... Though, therefore, it be true, that God is pleased with our performances, yet is that welcome he vouchsafes to give them, so far from enabling us by them to requite his love, that it increases the unrequitedness of it; since he is delighted with them, as they afford him just rises to reward them.*"

BOYLE'S SERAPHIC LOVE, P. 69....94.

"It indeed may yield great joy and sprightly consolation to us to contemplate our Lord upon the cross, exercising his immense charity towards us, transacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies, and evacuating all the obstacles of our salvation.

May we not delectably consider him as there stretching forth his arms of kindness, with them to embrace the world, and to receive mankind under the wings of his protection? As there spreading out his hands, with them earnestly inviting and entreating us to accept the overtures of grace, procured by him for us?

Is it not sweet and satisfactory, to view our great high priest on that high altar, offering up his own pure flesh, and pouring out his precious blood, as an universal complete sacrifice, propitiatory for the sins of mankind?

sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God. For by "*one offering he hath perfected,*

Is it not a goodly object to behold humility and patience so gloriously rearing themselfs above all worldly, all infernal pride and insolence; by the cross ascending unto the celestial throne of dignity and majesty superlative?

Is it not pleasant to contemplate our Lord there standing erect, not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a noble conqueror, where *having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a solemn shew, triumphing over them?* Did ever any conqueror, loftily seated in his triumphal chariot, yield a spectacle so gallant and magnificent? Was ever tree adorned with trophies so pompous and splendid?

To the exterior view and carnal sense of men, our Lord was then indeed exposed to scorn and shame; but to spiritual and sincere discerning, all his and our enemies did there hang up as objects of contempt, utterly overthrown and undone.

There the devil, that *strong and sturdy one*, did hang up bound in chains, disarmed and rifled, quite baffled and confounded, mankind being rescued from his tyrannic power.

There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its bewitching pleasures, its fondly admired excellencies did hang up all defaced and disparaged; as it appeared to St. Paul: For, *God (saith he) forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.*

There, in a most lively representation, and most admirable pattern, was exhibited *the mortification of our flesh, with its affections and lusts: and our old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed.*

There, our sins, being (as St. Peter telleth us) *carried up by him unto the gibbet*, did hang as marks of his victorious prowess,

forever, them that are sanctified."* Thus was the lamb of God slain from the very foundation of the world; virtually in the councils of infinite wisdom, and typically in the sacrifices of the patriarchal and levitical religions.†

Through the whole of the ancient scriptures, the promised Messiah is perpetually kept in view, his

as malefactors by him *condemned in the flesh*, as objects of our horror and hatred.

There death itself hung gasping, with its sting pulled out, and all its terrors quelled; his death having prevented ours, and induced immortality.

There all wrath, *enmity*, strife, (the banes of comfortable life) did hang *abolished in his flesh*, and *slain upon the cross*, by the blood *whereof he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth*.

There manifold yokes of bondage, instruments of vexation, and principles of variance, even all *the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us*, did hang up *cancelled and nailed to the cross*.

So much sweet comfort by special consideration may be extracted from this event, which in appearance was most doleful, but in effect, the most happy that ever by Providence was dispensed to the world."

BARROW'S SERMON ON THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

And lastly, St. Austin: "Nec quisquam dicat meritis operum suorum, vel meritis orationum suarum, vel meritis fidei suæ, sibi traditam Dei gratiam, et putetur verum esse, quod illi hæretici (scil. Pelagiani) dicunt, *gratiam Dei secundum merita nostra dari*; quod omnino falsissimum est." EPIST. 47.

† The High Priest, the Passover, the Cities of refuge were types and shadows of the priestly office of Christ.

character is delineated, and his sufferings are described with uncommon precision.

From the first mysterious prediction in the garden of Eden that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent," till the concluding declaration of Malachi, "The sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings," type is joined to type, prophecy is succeeded by prophecy, expectation is kept awake, and the eyes of nations raised to the heavens in quest of the promised messenger of peace.

At length Jesus descends from the right hand of his Father; he imprints on the earth the footsteps of the visible God. For miserable men he commences a life of persecution and of sorrow...he fulfills the law...he publishes his gospel...he leads despondency and wretchedness to the habitation of rest...he cheers and illuminates the soul steeped in ignorance and guilt...he rescues his people from the bondage of idolatry....the long night he disperses from his presence, and on the world pours the full flood of day.

II. An atoning sacrifice for sin appears to us to have been necessary. The Almighty Father of the human race having made man, gave him a wise and righteous law, and promised him glory, honour, life, and immortality, for his obedience, but denounced tribulation and wrath, pain and death, should he violate this law...All mankind have broken this

law...there is none righteous, no, not one. We have by our sins, lost all claim to life, immortality, and glory, and we have subjected ourselves to guilt and to punishment. Would God, infinitely just, pardon sin, without some satisfaction for the violation of his law, without chastisement for the dishonour cast upon his government? If he had forgiven sin without satisfaction, then his laws would have appeared not worth vindicating, and men would have been tempted to persist in their rebellion. Therefore, God determined to make an illustrious display of his justice and mercy among mankind, such as would not only astonish this world; but should transcend the conception of angels, principalities, and powers; such as would reveal him to man, the God all-powerful, all-just, and all-merciful...Man not being able to render satisfaction to the law, nor to fulfil perfect righteousness for the time to come, God did not, therefore, doom him to destruction, but appointed his own son to suffer and to render obedience in his stead.

Jesus Christ, therefore, in fulfillment of his Father's appointment, breathed out his soul on the cross...He gave a most awful assurance, that the denunciations of God, should not be disbelieved, and that the sin of the creature should not go unpunished. He cried out, *it is finished*. The Father accepted the offering, and declared the work of redemption to be complete.

The necessity, therefore, for this atonement, proceeded from the justice of God, and the inability of man, to render satisfaction for the violated law. God is truth and justice, he had denounced a curse upon the disobedience of man...he must perform what he hath said. Man could not atone for crimes already committed, nor could he in future obey that holy law, which always imposes the same obligations. Who then shall dare to support the infinite vengeance of the almighty? who shall meet the horrors of his curse? The highest angel trembles at the thought; the united force of all created beings would shrink in dismay from such an undertaking. The Son of God alone stands forth, he alone is found both willing and capable: "He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God" took upon him the form of a servant, and bore in his own body our transgressions.

III. *Neither by the blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.**

The great design of the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, was to excite them to constancy and perseverance in their attachment to the gospel and its fundamental doctrines.

In order to answer this purpose, he made the principal subject of his discourses the Lord Jesus

* Heb. ix. 12.

Christ, the promised Messiah, the Son of God. The language of the apostle throughout all his writings, is, *I am determined to know nothing among you but Christ and him crucified.*

His design in the verse which has been quoted, is to declare the dignity of the person of Christ in the discharge of his priestly office above the high priest of old.

This he demonstrates from the excellence of his sacrifice, which was his own blood...from the place into which he entered after his sacrifice, which was heaven itself, and finally from its effect which was the eternal redemption of his people.

In the passage before us, Christ is said *to have entered into the holy place.* This expression means his ascension into heaven....Having made reconciliation by his sufferings and death, having confirmed the covenant, having obtained eternal redemption, he entered as our high priest into the holy place, into the temple of the Almighty, there to become the Intercessor for his church, there to reign forever with the rod of his power. He is said to have entered once, once only, once for all....not once every year as was done by the high priest of the Jews.... This denotes the full acceptance of his sacrifice, and the complete expiation, through it, of the sins of his people.

He made this entrance neither by the blood of goats nor of calves, for he travelled *in the greatness*

of his own strength. In this respect he was distinguished from the legal high priest who first offered up a bullock and then a goat, the one for his own sins, the other, for the sins of the people; but Christ had no sins for which to make atonement; he was holy, harmless and undefiled, and separated from sin. It is declared that he entered by his own blood... by his own blood which he poured out upon the cross, when he bowed beneath the judgment of his Father, by his own blood which was the price paid for the ransom of sinners. Here behold the centre of all gospel mysteries... Here behold the object of angelic and human admiration throughout eternity! What heart can conceive, what tongue can express the splendor of wisdom, of grace, and of love which are here combined? God purchased the church with his own blood! How unquestionable, how immutably perfect must be the atonement that was thus made. "Sing O heavens, and be joyful O earth, for the Lord hath comforted his people... O Zion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his own arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he

shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

The effect of the sacrifice of Christ was eternal redemption. *Having obtained eternal redemption.* This redemption implies that we were in a state of bondage and captivity. A great change took place at the fall of man. Death, which God made not, took possession of the world, and guilt and pain extended over it their dominion. God had mercy upon us....He beheld us in our fallen state, and sent one to our rescue, who continued to be one with the Supreme Nature while he assumed ours...he went about doing good, he preached righteousness, he suffered pain, he suffered death....restored himself to life, and now lives forever.

This redemption of Christ is said to be eternal... it snatched us from everlasting ruin, it raises us to eternal blessings, and not to those which are carnal and temporal; it is not a temporary rescue like that of the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, it is not a temporary deliverance like that which they enjoyed under the judges...But this was eternal in all its effects...none that are partakers of it shall ever return to a state of bondage...the joys of heaven shall flow upon them, and these joys shall be eternal.

IV. Other language used in the scripture is decisive. It is not only said, that Jesus “redeemed us

from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us"*...that "he suffered once for our sins, the just for the unjust;"† but that "he bare our sins in his own body upon the tree."‡

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the sufferings of Christ seven hundred years before, says, he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows...he was wounded for our transgressions, and he shews the reason of these sufferings, by adding, the lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all. We may, in many cases say, that the innocent suffers for the guilty, when one is exposed to loss or pain by the faults or crimes of another: but can it be said, that the Lord lays upon the innocent sufferer the iniquity of the offender, or that the latter bears the sins of the former; when no translation or imputation of guilt is intended, and no real atonement made? If so, what words can convey the ideas of imputation and atonement? What determinate meaning can there be in language? Or what doctrines can be deduced with certainty from the Sacred Oracle? The expressions, ransom, redemption, purchased, bought with a price, propitiation, and several others concur in support of this doctrine.

V. The testimony of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,"|| contains an argument conclusive on this subject. In whatever respects Christ may resemble a

* Galat. iii. 13. † 1 Pet. iii. 18. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 24. || John, i. 29.

lamb without spot and blemish...in whatever respects a lamb may be the emblem of the Saviour, he could not as a lamb take away sin except by the sacrifice of himself. He as a prophet gave rules and examples calculated to reform the world, he sent down his holy spirit to become the guide and consolation of his people. In these respects he may be said, in some measure, to take away sin, but as a lamb, he could only take away the guilt of sin by offering up his life, that he might redeem us to God with his own blood. The propitiatory oblation made by the lamb of God, being of infinite value, was as sufficient to take away the original and actual sin of mankind, as if it had been but one complex transgression. Millions of every age have received the benefit of it; and if the whole human race should at once apply for pardon and salvation through the blood of Christ, it would suffice to take away all their sin. The efficacy of the typical sacrifices was confined wholly to the Jewish Nation: but that of the atoning sacrifice of Christ extends equally to other nations. It is sent to them all without any exception, and we can assure every sinner throughout the earth, that if he believe in the Son of God he shall be saved. So that none perish because there is no help for them, but because pride, love of sin, aversion to the spiritual service of God, harden their hearts in unbelief, and they will not come to Christ that they may have life.

In this sense the lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world. He also taketh away guilt from the conscience by the sprinkling of his blood. "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."* Nothing but this view of the cross, this application to the blood of sprinkling, this washing in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness can give that peace of conscience which has been mentioned: because nothing else can shew the humbled and enlightened heart divine justice and holiness in harmony with mercy and truth, glorified in pardoning and in saving the chief of sinners. And whenever this peace has been lost by relapses into sin, there is no other way of recovering it, but that in which it was first obtained. Amidst the corruptions and uncertainties of life, there is no other way of obtaining this peace than by continual application to the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.†

VI. When the apostle argues, that if Christ were not risen, the Corinthians were yet in their sins;|| he means that as nothing could prove the reality and efficacy of Christ's atonement except his resurrection, so nothing could take away their guilt but that

* Heb. ix. † See Owen on the Hebrews. || 1 Cor. xv, 17.

atonement. For their reformation and conversion to the service of the true God was a truth which could not be denied whatever men might think of the doctrines in question.

The same apostle also says; that Christ will appear a second time without sin unto salvation. Did he, however, not appear the first time without sin? What then is the meaning of the words, but that at his first coming he bare our sins, but at the second he shall appear without sin? The words surely can have no other imaginable sense, than that at his first coming he sustained the person of a sinner and sufferer instead of us...but at his second coming he shall appear not as a sacrifice, but as the judge of the whole earth.

VII. The manner in which the apostles exhorted their hearers evinces the same truth. They un-deviatingly draw their motives, and their arguments and their conclusions from the cross of Christ. They pointed to the expiring Saviour and declared, Ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God with your bodies and spirits which are his. In this respect their exhortations were distinguished from all others...while others painted the lovely forms of morality and virtue, the apostles...taught that these without an interest in Christ would not save...but that being united to Christ, the practice of their duties would follow.

VIII. The appointment of the Lord's supper, in remembrance of the body of Christ broken and his blood shed for the remission of sins, is a most conclusive argument on this subject. This is my blood (said Christ) my blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: these words manifestly prove that his death was an atonement; that this atonement is the grand peculiarity of the gospel, and that no man is a genuine Christian, unless by true faith he become a partaker of that inestimable benefit.

The following words of our Saviour are still stronger confirmation of this doctrine. Mat. xx. 28. "Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister *and to give his life a ransom* for many."*

* "This doctrine of atonement for sin by his death, and the acceptance of it with God the Father, could not be so well preached in public till he died and rose again; for his death was the foundation of this atonement; his resurrection, and his ascension to heaven, were the proofs of its being accepted of God. Now it was divinely wise and proper for our Lord not to preach such doctrines too freely in public to the multitude, till these events should appear in the world. If he had spoken all these things concerning himself, it would have probably amazed and confounded the common people, and raised their rage or their ridicule; so ignorant and so full of prejudice as they were in that day.

IX. Lastly....The songs of the Redeemed in heaven are a confirming evidence of the truth of the

If Christ had publicly and plainly preached up the atonement of his death, he must thereby have foretold openly that he must die as a sacrifice; and this might have had very ill effects on the malicious Jews; either, To provoke them to kill him before his hour was come, and pretend that they only obeyed his own prophecy and commission, when they put him to death: or, they might lay hold on him, and keep him prisoner, without killing him, to endeavour to falsify his prophecies of his death, and thus attempt to make void his doctrine of atonement.

It is true, God, by his immediate influence on the wills of men, could have prevented these effects: but it is not the manner of God's conduct in providence to answer and accomplish his own predictions by such immediate, divine, and over-ruling restraints upon the wills of men, if it may be done otherwise. And therefore, indeed, the prophecies, and especially such as are accomplished in the same age in which they are spoken, are usually given forth in metaphors and parables, that men may not so clearly and perfectly understand them, and that God, in his moral government of the world, may not be constrained to go out of his common and ordinary methods, in order to bring these prophecies to pass.

It is evident, from many expressions in the evangelists, that it was not the design of Christ, in his own life-time, to publish the grace and glory of the gospel, in so clear, so distinct, and so complete a manner, as he designed to have it published by his apostles after he was gone to heaven. The design of his own public ministry was rather to *prepare the way* for the setting up of his own kingdom in the world, than to set it up in

atonement of Christ. The songs of those who had come out of the great tribulation and who had shed their own blood as martyrs in the cause of their master, may well close this brief survey of the grandest, the most precious doctrine which the scriptures contain...without one discordant voice the inhabitants of heaven ascribe their salvation to

the full glory of it in his own person. According to this view of things, his preaching was formed; *Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; that is, the gospel state approaches, or hath approached to you. The prayer he taught his disciples stands on the same foot; wherein they are instructed to pray, *T'by kingdom come.*

Therefore, when he spakè to the multitude of the special glories of his gospel, and especially of his atoning sacrifice, it was generally in parables; and when he instructed his disciples more particularly in private, he gave them but hints of it; and told them, that they should *publisb* these things *upon the house-tops* after the Son of man should rise from the dead, but not before.

Even just before his death, his own disciples themselves could not bear many things which he had to teach them, John xvi. 12. These things were reserved, therefore, for the forty days' communication with them, after his resurrection, when he spake with them *of things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, Acts i. 3. and more especially for the *teachings of his own spirit*, which he peured out upon them after he went to heaven. By these means they were more completely furnished for their ministry, and learned the doctrines of the gospel in a more perfect manner than ever our Lord himself taught them in his life-time."

the lamb that was slain, and has redeemed them to God with his own blood, who has washed them from their sins in his own blood. In what sense could the lamb that was slain, wash them from their sins in his own blood, unless he were truly and literally an atoning sacrifice for them?*

“ To sum up all (in the words of Dr. Watts) These were the doctrines that were witnessed to the world by those amazing gifts of the Holy Ghost, which attended the gospel. The gifts of tongues, the wonders of prophecy, the powers of healing and destroying, communicated to men in such a manner as the world never saw, and astonished the spectators, all confirm the truth of this atonement which the apostles preached. These were the discoveries that were made so gloriously successful for the conversion of nations. These doctrines subdued kingdoms to the belief of them, and triumphed over the souls of men: These were the truths that changed the corrupt natures of men into virtue, piety, and goodness, that turned sinners into saints in multitudes, and raised a church for Christ in the world, in spite of all the rage of enemies, the superstition of the priests, the learning and sophistry of the philosophers, the wild prejudices of the people, and the tyranny of princes. The primitive Christian writers, who were converted to the faith, teach each

* See Scott's Essays.

these same doctrines of the grace of God, through the atonement of Christ, the pardon of sin through his blood, which had so much power over their own souls. In the faith of these doctrines, and the hope of eternal life by them, they became the glorious confessors and martyrs of a crucified Christ, and cast down the tempter and the accuser of the blood of the lamb. This is the doctrine that has been delivered down to us through all the ages of the Christian church, and though the antichristian powers have mingled it with many of their superstitions, yet the gates of hell have never been able to prevail against it, so as to root it out. This is the religion which two hundred years ago, was reformed from popish corruptions; and while our blessed reformers laboured to recover and convey it to us in its primitive glory, many of them were called to witness and seal it with their own blood.”

In a manner more prolix than I at first designed, I have now contended for the truth of the great doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ. From what has been already said, I trust, it will be believed that I have done this, not for the purpose of combating with you on those subjects, but to testify to Christians, that though I waved a controversy with you concerning them, I could be under no difficulty in vindicating such important

and obvious tenets. The world is in possession of the volumes which you have written against these doctrines....I am perfectly willing, without agitating these any more, to let this simple, this imperfect Appendix stand against all you have published respecting them. I hope that you have sufficient confidence in your own productions, to form a disposition similar to mine and to confine your attention to the contrasted characters of Jesus and Socrates. If, however, you have the desire to be heard further on the doctrines mentioned, and should you wish to make this Appendix the ground of any objections and animadversions, I have not the least unwillingness to hear and examine, though I may not answer them.

Certain I am that you can never impress on this hard-beaten controversial path a firmer step than that which has already marked it; or, in plain language, that you can never direct against the Saviour a more plausible, eloquent, and convincing pen, than you have already wielded.

Again farewell,

J. B. LINN.

P. S. It is proper that Dr. Priestley and the public should be informed, that the manuscript copy

of this pamphlet was put into the hands of the printer during the month of August, and that it is entirely owing to his occupations, and to the alarms of malignant fever in the city, that it has not been published before the present time.

THE END.

A SECOND

L E T T E R

TO THE

REV. JOHN BLAIR LINN, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN THE
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,

*IN REPLY TO HIS DEFENCE OF THE DOCTRINES OF
THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST AND ATONEMENT.*

BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S. &c.

NORTHUMBERLAND

PRINTED FOR P. BYRNE, No. 72, Chesnut Street, Philadelphia,

BY ANDREW KENNEDY,

FRANKLINS-HEAD, QUEEN STREET.

1803.

I must know to be incapable of defence, and thereby deceiving and misleading my readers.

You call, p. 11, the account that I gave of my object in writing “an ingenious evasion, to avoid an acknowledgment, which I must otherwise have been forced to make. By artfully interweaving certain clauses in a general sentence,” with which you charge me p. 96, you say that “an experienced disputant deceives and misleads the unwary. I wish,” you say p. 40, “you had followed a course which was open and direct, and which does not wind like the labyrinth in Crete. I wish your path had been marked by candour, as well as by ingenuity, and that you had rather grappled me with the irons of truth, than thrown around me the web of perplexity.” You speak, p. 96, of “the common and mischievous artifices of the Socinians in their small tracts, intended to influence the public mind,” meaning, no doubt, my own in particular. You suppose in one case, p. 15, that “I deceive in order that good might be produced;” but this you very properly say is not justifiable. In short, you assert, p. 52, that “it may be said of me that I write against light, and better knowledge.”

I do not question your sincerity, or regard to truth, as you do mine; and therefore I must believe that you really entertain these sentiments of me. But then what signifies the respect you profess to have for me p. 86, as a *philosopher* and a *scholar*, when you have this low and despicable opinion of me as a *man*. And how could you say, “p 1. I cannot but express a wish that our free intercourse of opinions which has passed may rather promote ha

“many

mony than discord; when, if I be the person you describe, you would disgrace yourself by any harmony with me.

You say, indeed, p. 86, that, "in looking over your Letter you find several passages which will be thought by some improperly harsh;" but you do not say that you think so yourself, and you add, that you meant not by "them to offend me." After, in fact, calling me a knave, only in more decent language, you say, "you hope I shall not take it amiss." But how could you expect that such treatment would not give offence, and that I should not take it amiss? Having, however, been much used to language of this kind, both in England and here, I think I can bear it as well as most persons, let it come from what quarter it will. But I did not expect it from you. Only make the case your own, and suppose that I had represented you as acting the disingenuous part that you ascribe to me, and being conscious, as I am, that you did not deserve it, what would you have felt under the imputation?

It is very possible, however, that notwithstanding all that you have said against me as a controversial writer, you may have no bad opinion of my morals in other respects; so that, tho' I may not be honest as a writer, I may be so in the common transactions of life, and not be destitute of other good qualities. And tho' I think you uncandid with respect to me, I can excuse the too common feelings and language of controversy, and I do not infer from it any thing unfavourable to your general character, which I doubt not is honourable, and your general conduct exemplary. The *harmony*, there-

fore, that you speak of, whatever be meant by it, will not meet with any obstacle from me. We have all our infirmities, and, as christians, should bear with each other. I, as the older man, ought to have the most candour, and make the most allowance for the greater irritability of youth. If you can bear this answer to your letter, you will easily bear any thing that will ever come from me.

You Sir, cannot, in consistency with what you have advanced, believe me; but many persons, who are better acquainted with my character and my writings will, when I say that I hold the conduct you describe in as much detestation as you can. If I know my own heart, I write from a love of truth, and a desire to promote it, and I believe that you do the same, tho' labouring under prejudices from which my different situation and opportunities of better information have, through the conduct of a kind providence, delivered me. So at least I think, and for this I am truly thankful, and especially that I have been the instrument in the hands of God of enlightning the minds of many others.

Much as I have written to demonstrate the truth and the importance of christianity, both with respect to individuals and society (more I believe than any man living) you insinuate that my views are hostile to it when you say p. 35, " Did you mean to deny the blessed effects of the gospel of Jesus Christ upon society, " and upon human government," and when you enlarge as you do on that topic yourself in your Letter to me. Indeed Sir, I do not want your instructions on this head. Few men living, perhaps none, have had more opportunity

opportunity of knowing unbelievers of all kinds than myself, or have given more attention to their principles, and the effects of them. This has given me a much stronger impression than you can possibly have of the real value of revelation; because your advantages of this kind cannot have been much more than you have acquired by reading, whereas mine are from an extensive and pretty intimate knowledge of living characters in several parts of the world; and it is this strong impression, the result of personal observation, that has led me to write so much, and in such various forms, in defence of revelation. If you had only seen the Discourses that I delivered in Philadelphia, which are all relative to that subject, you must have seen that I do not want your admonitions or instructions upon it.

From a deficiency in point of candour, and I may add of civility, in an address to me, you never mention any of my writings but in language of contempt. "I consider," you say p. 90, "your Histories," (meaning those of the Corruptions of Christianity, and of Early opinions concerning Jesus Christ) as possessing "no more authority than the Arabian nights Entertainments." As many persons here, I find, as well as in England, are fond of reading Novels and Romances, I wish your readers would, from your account of those Histories of mine, consider them in that light, and think of reading them for amusement, as they do the Arabian Nights. They would find in them serious matter, worthy of their attention, and of yours. Works of great labour, as these are, and composed with a serious view, to promote what the author consi-

ders to be important truth, let him be ever so much mistaken, deserve to be mentioned with respect. You could not mean any thing but ridicule and contempt when you say p. 47, " May I expect from your extensive knowledge you will be able to gratify my curiosity with respect to the Eleusinian mysteries." I wish, Sir, that you, or any other person, would gratify mine on that subject.

By way of excuse for declining to enter into a controversy with me on the subjects of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and the atonement, you say p. 82, " there is no common principle on which you and I could argue on those subjects. These are doctrines which can only be discovered by the light of pure revelation, but you, just as it pleases you, or as it answers your purpose, reject or receive what is recorded in revelation." You also dwell much, and always with a tone of sarcasm, on my having expressed an opinion that the reasoning of the apostle Paul was sometimes inconclusive. You also say, " If we add another subject of controversy, it would open too wide a field, and would afford you an opportunity of adroitly extricating yourself from the absurdities into which you have run, by flying to another subject." This, Sir, is but another variation of the charge of artifice and insincerity which you so often bring against me, but it has no just foundation.

You and I have many principles in common with respect to the doctrines of the divinity of Christ and the atonement. There is not a single passage in the Old or the New Testament relating to them that I
would

would wish to have expunged. The reasoning of Paul to which I object does not affect his authority with respect to any thing that depends upon his own knowledge, or that he declares that he had in the communications with Jesus, with which he was favoured. What I object to in his writings you may see, if you please, in my Notes on all the books of scripture which are now in the press. There is not a word in any of the Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, to which I do not give implicit credit. Nor do I recollect a single passage of the least moment in all the New Testament which I think to be spurious, except that concerning the heavenly witnesses in the first epistle of John, which if you admit I believe you are singular, as it is given up by all the learned in England; and those as orthodox as yourself. Nor is this any text of any real consequence to you, as several believers in the divinity of Christ have acknowledged. The apostles, and all the other writers in the New Testament, I consider as perfectly honest and excellent men, but not as infallible; and you must know that many learned christians have ceased to defend their inspiration as writers; an hypothesis which candid men allow to be impossible to maintain, and which has given the greatest advantage to unbelievers.

All that you urge on these subjects, and upon my character as a writer, is only calculated to prejudice your readers against me and my writings, as written with a view to deceive them, and draw them into dangerous errors; the natural inference from which is that it is most safe for them not to look into them at all. But, *Mr.*, what should I get by the conduct which you ascribe

to me, and which, according to you, I must have followed through life, to the close of which I must now be very near? Consequently, I must be in expectation of very soon appearing before my final judge, with whom the artifice you charge me with will avail nothing. He will, however, be better qualified to decide concerning my character and conduct than you who are so ready to do it, and I hope to find him more candid.*

You still maintain, notwithstanding my serious declaration to the contrary (calling it an artful evasion, but against, I think, every appearance and probability) that in my *Comparison of Socrates and Jesus* I meant, p. 14. "an insidious attack upon our Saviour." You even say, p. 10, that "it proceeded from a stable and "implicable animosity against the divinity of Jesus "Christ." To shew you in what a different light the same thing may be viewed by different persons, I shall give you an extract from a letter which I have lately received from a person in England, and as sincere a christian as yourself. "I am excited," he says, "and desirous to send you a few lines, to convey my thanks, "for your *Socrates and Jesus compared*, and my great "approbation of it; By the perusal of it I have much "profited, as it has led me both to understand and value christianity more and better. This little work is
"calculated

* When I was transcribing this for the press from short hand, in which I always compose, I did not expect to live many weeks. For one whole day, unable to write myself, I employed other persons to write while I dictated. At present my prospects with respect to this life are very uncertain.

“calculated to do, and certainly will do, much good, ;
“it be attended to. Another correspondent says, “
“have read your Comparison of Jesus and Socrate.
“with much pleasure. You have placed the great su-
“periority of the character, and doctrine, of Christ a-
“bove that of Socrates in a very striking light.”

Indeed I cannot help considering your strange mis-
apprehension of my views in this publication as extra-
ordinary as Don Quixot's mistaking a windmill for a
giant, and a flock of sheep for an army ; and I had no
more expectation of such an attack upon it as yours
is, than that it would involve me in a contest with Bu-
onaparte or the Algerenes. I considered myself as
writing in the cause of common christianity, and that,
if I succeeded, I should have the thanks of all the
friends of it ; and in this light my pamphlet was confi-
dered by several intelligent christians in Philadelphia,
and some of them as orthodox as yourself.

SECTION

SECTION I.

Of Socrates.

THE greater part of your Letter relates to *Socrates*, and you expect a particular reply to every article in it. But, Sir, contrary to your expectation p. 78, where you say, "he must be a credulous opponent "who should ever expect to silence me," I have little more to say about *Socrates*. Being satisfied with what I have written, notwithstanding your additional observations on the subject, I now close my defence, and leave your observations to have what weight they may with our readers. I see no good reason for troubling them with what appears to me to be wholly unnecessary. I shall, therefore, only make a few brief remarks.

You lay great stress on the imperfection of my account of the *difference* between *Socrates* and *Jesus*; when I acknowledge all the difference that I find between them in the fullest manner, at the same time that I saw so much of a general resemblance between them, in their devoting themselves to the instruction of their countrymen on the subject of morals, and that gratuitously, which no other heathen philosopher did, that I thought it well worth while to draw a comparison between

tween them ; and this I think is sufficiently to the advantage of Jesus. Yet you now, p. 37, “ appeal “ to my own reason and heart whether I have not said “ unjustly, that the discourses of Socrates and Jesus “ have an obvious resemblance.” Now I should have thought the resemblance sufficient to my purpose, if Socrates had been a much less respectable teacher than he was. He was the best that the heathen world could exhibit, and I was desirous of shewing that, with all his advantages he was greatly inferior to Jesus. Besides, Sir, comparisons have been made between things the most distant, if there was but the smallest resemblance between them, even between the Supreme Being, as the author of all good, and Satan the supposed author of all evil.

Notwithstanding all that you allege by way of apology for underrating the merit of Socrates, I do not see why you should urge the argument from the abominable idolatries of his countrymen, or the general character that Paul gives of the heathen world, if you had not thought that they affected the character of Socrates individually ; and then they will equally affect the character of every heathen, as that of Aristides, Phocion, Timoleon, and any the most celebrated for their moral worth in all Greece. Indeed, with respect to virtue in general, according to the best ideas that the heathens had of it, there is no character known in detail that stands higher than that of Socrates himself. And so inconclusive is your argument, that it must surely be obvious to every person but yourself.

You

You lay as much stress as ever on the attachment of Socrates to those whom you call his *chosen companions*; but you mention none but such as were his pupils when they were young men, and what tutor may not have unworthy disciples. For his chosen companions take the following account of Xenophon. After a recital of a conversation that he had with Pericles and Alcibiades he says (*Memorabilia*, Lib. i, Cap. 2. p. 47) “When these men took the lead in the commonwealth, they no longer frequented the society of Socrates, because it would not have been agreeable to them, as they would have taken it ill to have been reprov’d by him for their faults, but engaged in the conduct of public affairs, with a view to which only they had applied to Socrates. But Crito, and Chærephon, and Cherecrates, and Simmias, and Cebes, and Phædo, and many others, were the familiar friends of Socrates; who frequented his society, not as lawyers or orators, but that they might be good and honourable men, and be of service to their families, their domestics, their relations, their friends, the city, and their fellow citizens. None of these, either while they were young, or advanced in life, did any thing that was reprehensible, nor were they ever charged with it.” Indeed Sir, you are not sufficiently well read in the history of Socrates.

If you had overlooked this passage in the *Memorabilia*, you might have seen who they were that attended Socrates in the last scenes of his life; and such were most likely to have been his intimate friends, and among

mong them you find not one of the persons that you have mentioned as his chosen companions. These among no doubt, many others, were Crito, Phædo, Simmias, Cebes, Echebrates, Apollodorus, and Plato, of none of whom do we know any thing disreputable. And why did you lay so much stress on the tyrannical conduct of Critias, if you had not meant to insinuate that he had in some measure the concurrence of Socrates. For it was not the character of Critias that was the subject of our discussion.

As to the dæmon of Socrates, on which you urge me so closely, I professed not to have any fixed opinion about it. If I had been asked what I thought of it a short time before the writing of my pamphlet, I should have said, as you do, that it was probably nothing more than his own good sense; but on considering his character more particularly, I was unwilling to think that such a man would persist through life, and to his dying moments, in telling a lie. And what the Supreme Being might please to do by or with him, or any man, neither you nor I can tell. But I never said, as you now quote me, that "God spake to Socrates by a dæmon," which you call, p. 75, "a glaring deformity of my assertion." Such an idea never occurred to me. As my opinion on this very unimportant subject is unsettled, it is very possible that I may revert to my former opinion, and yours about it.

With respect to the authority of Herodicus, on which you are disposed to lay great stress, in order to disparage Socrates, and on which you challenge me so peremptorily p. 52, I do not think it worth my while

to

to consider it at all, my business being not so much with the personal character of Socrates as with what he taught, whom he taught, and in what manner he taught, And whether Socrates was a little better, or a little worse, than he has been represented, is of little consequence to my object in writing, which I am sorry to find, it is not in my power to make you understand.

As I have now abandoned Socrates, you will, of course, triumph in your victory, while I shall proceed as if this unforeseen controversy had never happened, to draw a similar comparison between Jesus and other heathen moralists, giving them, as I did Socrates, every merit that I fairly can, in order to shew that, with every advantage, their maxims were far inferior to those of the Gospel, and their influence far less favourable to the exaltation of the individual character, or the improvement of the condition of society. I shall not be sorry to see you follow me step by step through them all, as you have done with respect to Socrates, and you will have just the same reason to think that the remainder of the work is what you call this first part, viz. an insidious attack on the character of Jesus; and with respect to some of the characters, you may perhaps have more advantage than you have had in the case of Socrates. It will be no object with me to give you less.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Of the Divinity of Christ.

SECOND thoughts, the old proverb says, are best. I am glad, that you, Sir, have had such thoughts, and that you did not, as you first intended, close your pamphlet with your *Letter*, but have added an *Appendix* on the only subjects on which I wished for an opportunity of addressing you, or rather our readers, viz. the doctrines of the *divinity of Christ*, and of *atonement*. These are, indeed, subjects of importance. You think them great truths, and I am as well satisfied that they are the most shocking corruptions of christianity, hindering the reception of it not only with Jews and Mahometans, but with men of sense in all christian countries. I, therefore, think that no rational christian can employ his time better than in an endeavour to expose them. And as you and your learned friend, without wishing to proceed with the controversy, have, nevertheless, thought it incumbent on you to produce those arguments which you consider as of the greatest strength in your cause, I shall endeavour to shew our readers the extreme futility, and the most glaring inconsistency, of them; referring for the farther discus-

sion of the subjects to my former publications with respect to them.

You say, p. 89, " You appear to lay considerable stress on the circumstance that the Jews did not expect their Messiah to be a divine person, or that he would make atonement for sin. You advert to this three or four times in the pamphlet to which I am replying. To me it appears not a little wonderful that you should love to dwell on a circumstance which furnishes a strong presumption against your opinion ;" urging that because the Jews were generally mistaken in other things, they probably were so in this. Now I shall endeavour to shew what you do not seem to be at all aware of, as you have not even adverted to it, in what manner this mistake of the Jews makes for my argument, and against yours.

We agree that the Jews were mistaken in their expectation of a temporal prince in their Messiah, and that the apostles themselves were under the same mistake till the day of Pentecost. But an obvious consequence of this is that, having no suspicion of their master being any thing more than a man, such as David, whose descendant he was, had been, nothing that they say before that event could imply that they thought him to be more than a man ; and this entirely destroys the force of your boasted argument, p. 98, from the short exclamation of Thomas, *My Lord and my God*. For the resurrection of his master, however unexpected by him, could be no proof to him, or to any person, that he was God. Otherwise, the resurrection of Lazarus would prove *him* to be God. It only shewed the power of

er of God in such a miracle ; and to this power the resurrection of Jesus was always ascribed by the apostles ever after. To express his satisfaction with respect to the identity of Jesus, and the power of God in raising him from the dead, was all that Thomas, by your own concession, could possibly mean. Indeed, his words make no proper sentence. He does not say, and could not, in his state of mind think, that his Lord and his God was the same person.

This concession equally invalidates your argument from what Jesus at any time said to the Jews of his being the son of God. "Do you not know," you say p. 114, "that the Jews took up stones to stone Christ himself for saying what they supposed, and rightly supposed; implied that he was God? Do you not know that they frequently charged him with blasphemy? Do you not know that it was under this charge, brought for the very doctrine that I maintain, that they at last actually put him to death?"

If on these occasions Jesus actually said what would amount to a confession that he was God, is it not extraordinary that his disciples, and especially the apostles, who put entire confidence in all his declarations, and who were predisposed to rejoice in any circumstance that tended to magnify him, did not understand him, but continued in perfect ignorance of his pretensions till the day of Pentecost ; especially if he had been publicly tried and condemned for asserting his divinity? Could a public sentence of a court of justice, the highest in the country, founded upon a man's own confession, have been unknown to any person in the country,

much less to his own disciples, who were so much interested in every thing relating to him ?

These, Sir, are strange and most improbable suppositions. Could any one in Judea, and especially one so obnoxious as Jesus was to the chief rulers, who wanted nothing but a plausible pretence for putting him to death, have escaped being stoned in any place where he could have been found, after seriously pretending to be God their maker ? Consider, besides, the apology that he made for his language, John x, 35, "If he called them gods to whom the word of God came," (meaning, probably, magistrates who are sometimes so called) "and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the son of God." Do you think that he used any artifice on this occasion, and that finding he had gone too far, he wished to explain away what he had really meant, contenting himself with saying that he was only the *son of God*, a declaration which had been made from heaven at his baptism, and which, therefore, was probably well known to the people in general. This, besides, is a title which the apostle John gives to all the disciples of Christ, John iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

You must, surely, know that with the Jews the crime of *blasphemy* was not confined to a man's pretending to be God. No such crime could ever have been thought of. Blasphemy was punishable with death by the laws of Moses, but surely this could not have been the meaning of it by him, for it could not have

have been thought to affect any person that was in his senses. Were not Stephen and Paul charged with blaspheming, but was their supposed blasphemy their pretending to be God?

Jesus was evidently condemned to die for pretending to be the *Messiah*, which they thought, or affected to think, a blasphemous presumption. That this was the precise meaning of Jesus is evident from the language of his confession. The question put to him was (Matt. 26. 63.) "I adjure thee by thee living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the son of God;" not whether he himself was God. And after answering in the affirmative, he added, "Nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power; and coming in the clouds of heaven," which, in the opinion of all his judges, was characteristic of the *Messiah*. Agreeable to this was their accusation of him to Pilate, viz. that he made himself the *king of the Jews*, and not that he had ever pretended to be God.

Consider also in what manner, and on what grounds the Jews insulted Jesus as he hung on the cross (Luke 23. 31) *And the people stood beholding, and the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ the chosen of God.* This clearly shows the ground, and the extent, of the charge that was brought against him. For had he ever pretended to be God, and especially if he had been condemned on that account, would not *that* have been mentioned on this occasion as infinitely more presumptuous and blasphemous than merely pretending to be the *Messiah*?

He was insulted also by one of the malefactors, who was crucified along with him, but only on the same account, v. 29. *And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, rail'd on him, saying, if thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.*

The Jews thought it blasphemous to pretend to forgive sins, thinking it was a power that God had never given to man, and therefore that to pretend to be possessed of it was blasphemous. But Jesus seems to have satisfied his captious audience by working a miracle in vindication of the propriety of his language, and by the words of his answer, which implied that it was only saying in other words that the sick man should be restored to health, and calling himself the *son of man* Matt ix. 4: “And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, wherefore think ye evil in your hearts. For whether is it easier to say *Thy sins be forgiven thee*, or to say *arise and walk*? But that ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then sayeth he to the sick of the palsy) arise, take up thy bed and go to thine own house.” The phrase *son of man*, whatever be the meaning of it, does not signify God.

You say p. 104. “I cannot mistake in saying that you hold with me that no Being except God can forgive sin.” I also say that no Being except God can work a miracle; but God might empower you or me, either to work a miracle, or to declare a man’s sins to be forgiven, a prophet being nothing more than the instrument, or the mouth, of God in the case. Jesus always acknowledged not only that *he could do nothing* of himself, but that the *words that he spake were not his own*,
but

but the Father's who sent him. As the Father giveth me commandment, says he, so I speak.

For the same reason, Christ being thought to be the *Immanuel* of *Iſaiah* could not be understood by the Jews, or the disciples of Jesus, to be a prediction that the Messiah would be God, an argument on which you lay much stress p. 98. This was the name of a child in the time of *Iſaiah*, and tho' applied to Jesus, could no more be understood to signify that he was God, than that any other person whose name ended in *el*, which signified God, or that contained in it any other known name of God, was therefore God. Names were given by the Jews to denote any extraordinary circumstance relating to the children themselves, or the times in which they were born. Thus because God had promised to appear in the deliverance of the land of Judah, when it was invaded by the kings of Israel and Syria, this name was given by way of assurance to *Ahaz*, that God would be with them, and therefore that they had nothing to fear. *Iſhmael* signifies *God that hears*, *Eli*, *my God*; *Elijah* *God and Lord*, *Eliſha* *God the ſaviour* and *Gabriel* the *power of God*; but was it ever thought that any of these men, or that this angel, was God? Why, then, should the name *Immanuel* imply it?

Mr. Blayney, an English divine as orthodox as yourself, ingenuously gives up this argument for the divinity of Christ in his note on *Jer* xxiii. 6. which we translate. "And this is the name by which he shall be called. "The Lord our righteousness" and which he renders. "And this is the name by which Jehovah shall call him, *Our righteousness*. Upon this he says "I doubt not

“ not but some persons will be offended with me for
 “ depriving them by this translation of a favourite argu-
 “ ment for proving the divinity of our Saviour from the
 “ Old Testament. 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 proper-
 “ ly admit of any other construction. The LXX have
 “ so translated before me, in an age in which there
 “ could not possibly be any bias of prejudice either for
 “ or against the before mentioned doctrine; a doctrine
 “ which draws its decisive proof from the New Testa-
 “ ment only.” From this it is evident that he does
 not lay the stress that you do on the word *Immanuel*.

The ignorance of the Jews concerning the divinity
 of their Messiah, also invalidates your argument for it
 from any person being said to *fall down and worship him*;
 besides that it is well known that this expression only
 means stooping so low as to kiss the hem of a person's
 garment, or at most prostration on the ground before him.
 Otherwise, David must be concluded to be God, as well
 as the Supreme Being to whom he prayed. For after
 his prayer it is said (1 Chron. xxix. 20.) *And all the
 congregation blessed the God of their fathers, and bow-
 ed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the
 king.* The worship, therefore, that the angels of God
 are said to pay to Jesus, on which you lay stress, can
 mean no more than their acknowledging him to be
 their superior, not that he was their God.

Since we agree in opinion that the apostles con-
 sidered Jesus as a mere man, tho' a distinguished prophet,
 till the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, I
 would

would ask how it appears that even *after* that event, they thought more highly of him. Peter in his speech on that occasion, calls him (Acts ii, 22) only *a man approved of God, by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him, and whom God had raised up.* The many converts, therefore, that he made by that speech must have all been unitarians. For it does not appear that he gave them any information concerning the superior dignity of their master. Nor does it appear in all the Acts of the apostles, that this communication was made to any of them. And surely a circumstance of so extraordinary a nature must have excited the greatest attention.

Would not the Jewish rulers, if this had been known to *them* (and if it had been the opinion of the christians in general, they could not have been ignorant that it was so) not have been shocked, and offended beyond measure, at it, as much as if they had heard it from Jesus himself before his death, and would not the whole body of christians have been exclaimed against, and considered as blasphemers, on that account? But tho' we well know from this history, all that the unbelieving Jews objected to the christians in that age, this is never mentioned. They only denied that Jesus was the Messiah, and questioned the truth of his resurrection. Would not an opinion of this extraordinary kind have occasioned some discussion and controversy even among the christians themselves, at least as much as the question about the admission of the Gentiles into their churches; and we see by this that it was no easy matter for the apostles themselves to give them satisfaction with respect

pect to any thing that shocked their prejudices. The new converts who must have been instructed in the principles of christianity before they were admitted to baptism, must, if the apostles did not studiously conceal it from them, have been informed of this article of christian faith; and would none of them have been startled, and have objected to a thing so abhorrent to their previous notions and prejudices? And yet we do not find that it was so much as noticed by any of them. When the eunuch was converted and baptized, all that Philip required of him was (Acts viii. 37) to confess that *Jesus was the son of God*, by which was only meant the Messiah.

The doctrine of the divinity of Christ is now the principal objection of all the Jews against christianity. Why did they not urge it before as well as now, and especially when it was first advanced, and therefore must have struck them more than it can do now? In fact, this prominent objection to christianity does not appear to have been made to it by any Jew till many years after the age of the apostles. But since that time it has ever been uppermost with them, as it is with all the Mahometans, and was so from the time of Mahomet himself.

You think that Stephen considered Christ as God p. 98, when (Acts [ix. 57) he *called upon God, saying Lord Jesus receive my spirit*. But if this doctrine was known to Stephen, it must have been so to all the christians, and could he only have given any intimation of his holding it? And what follows from any person seeing Jesus in vision, and, being about to die, requesting

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ing him to receive his *last breath*, which was an ancient custom with particular friends? Besides, the accusation and condemnation of Stephen were upon quite other grounds. The charge against him was simply this (Acts viii. 14) *This man ceases not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs that Moses delivered to us.* Here is nothing said about his asserting that Jesus was God, which would have appeared to his judges infinitely more blasphemous than any thing that they alleged against him.

If the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was not communicated to the apostles before the day of Pentecost, the words of Jesus in his commission to baptize (Matt. xxviii. 19.) on which you lay so much stress, p. 103. viz. *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, could not imply this. The meaning could only be an initiation into that religion which was the gift of God by Jesus Christ, and confirmed by miraculous powers. For that the term *Holy Ghost* is, as you say, another name of God, I do not admit.

Hilary, whom you quote as a defender of the highest doctrine of the trinity, interprets this last as the Unitarians do; viz. as signifying a confession of *the Father, of the only begotten, and of the Gift*, which very much resembles what Irenæus says on the subject*.

You say, p. 92, that "I cannot any more than the Jews give a just, or even a plausible, exposition of the
" question

Baptizari jussit in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti: id est in confessione et auctoritate, et unigeniti et doni Lib. 2. p. 22.

“question which Jesus put to the Jews (Matt. xxii. 45) “if David called him Lord how is he his Son.” Now really, Sir, I see no difficulty at all in the Socinian interpretation of it. All that the Jews expected in their Messiah was that he would resemble David, be a temporal prince as he was, and rescue them, as he had done, from the power of their enemies; in which respect they could not suppose him to be superior, or much so, to David. On what account he was to be superior to David, Jesus does not say; but surely he might be his superior without being God. Jesus himself was greatly superior on the Socinian hypothesis. Did David act as Jesus did by an immediate commission from God? Did he work the miracles that Jesus did? and is he to return, after being raised from the dead, and ascending to heaven, to judge the world? And yet all this may be done without his being himself God, if he was only authorized and inspired by God to do it. David himself will be judged by this son of his as well as you and I. You see, then, that whatever you may imagine we find no difficulty at all in the interpretation of this passage. Whether it will appear so to you does not much concern us. We satisfy ourselves.

You greatly boast, p. 82 and 97, of the great number of texts that you could produce in support of your hypothesis, which, you say, “in numerous, direct, and unequivocal passages, assert that Christ is God; and what is much more to the point, ascribe to him acts and attributes which cannot without blasphemy be arrogated by any creature.” These texts, however, as you have not recited them, I consider as soldiers on a muster list, which

which never appear in the field. But many persons, without seeing any of the texts themselves, will take your assertion for granted, without any examination at all. In my opinion your direct texts are none, and your plausible ones very few, and all these our readers may find explained in the easiest manner upon unitarian principles, in my *Familiar Illustration of particular texts*, a small and cheap pamphlet, reprinted in this country by Mr. Dobson, together with my *Appeal to all Christians* on the subjects in controversy between us, to which I am glad that you have given me this opportunity of directing our readers; as also to another small pamphlet of mine intitled *A General View of Arguments for the Unity of God, and against the Divinity and Preexistence of Christ, from Reason, from the Scriptures, and from History*.

What offends you particularly is my saying, and I now repeat it, that there is abundant evidence that the opinion of the perfect equality of the Son to the Father was unknown at the council of Nice, and not admitted by Athanasius himself. To this you and your learned friend, reply by appealing to the *Creed of Athanasius*, and the sentiments of Hilary. But if you maintain that this creed, tho' ascribed to Athanasius, was really written by him, you are, I will venture to say, absolutely singular; as it is given up by all who pretend to scholarship in Europe, the most orthodox, as well as others. The Benedictine editors of the works of Athanasius place this creed among the spurious articles ascribed to him. Cave, the most learned in ecclesiastical history of any writer in England, says of this creed in
"his

his *Historia Literaria*, Vol. i, p. 196, "That this is no
 "genuine work of Athanasius is evident; because nei-
 "their Athanasius himself, nor any succeeding writer
 "before Theodulph of Orleans, make any mention of
 "it, nor was it received by the church before A. D.
 "1000, or much noticed till it was produced by the am-
 "bassadors of Gregory IX, in A. D. 1233, in a dispu-
 "tation at Constantinople, when the authority of Atha-
 "nasilus was appealed to." He adds, "that it was pro-
 "bably composed by Vigilus Tapsensis in Latin, that
 "it was afterwards translated into Greek, and was
 "long hid in the archives of churches. This," he
 "says, "is the more probable, as Theodulph cites this
 "creed from those works ascribed to Athanasius which
 "are now certainly known to have been written by Vi-
 "gilius."

Very fortunately, my copy of the works of Atha-
 nasilus, which is that of Paris A. D. 1627, escaped the
 riots of Birmingham, and I find in them passages clear-
 ly inconsistent with your opinion of the equality of the
 Son to the Father. In a confession of faith, written on
 occasion of the councils of Ariminum and Seleusia, he
 says, Vol. 1, p. 879, "We do not say that the Son is
 "unbegotten ($\alpha\gamma\epsilon\gamma\eta\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$) like the Father, and without
 "origin ($\alpha\nu\alpha\rho\chi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ *) but that he had his origin from
 "being begotten by the Father, For God is the head
 "of Christ." He farther says in the same piece, p.
 893, "We piously believe that the omnipotent God
 and

* The word in my edition is $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$; but the sense evidently
 is $\alpha\nu\alpha\rho\chi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, and so the Latin translator understood it.

“and Lord begat his Son voluntarily and spontaneously (εκουστως και εθελουσην) believing what he himself says, the Lord created me in the beginning of his ways.” Does this, Sir, imply an opinion of the Son’s equality to the Father, when it is evident that as, in his opinion, the Father produced the Son of his own mere will, he must have thought that, if he had pleased; he might have had no Son at all? I would advise you, and your learned friend to look into my fabulous *History of Early Opinions*, where you might have found this passage, and many others, of which you seem to have little knowledge or suspicion.

With respect to your boasted authority from Hilary, you say, p. 112, “Now it unfortunately happens, that Hilary was characteristically a zealous defender of the orthodoxy of Athanasius, and the council of Nice.” And so, Sir, are you, and your authority is as much to the purpose as his. The council of Nice was held A. D. 325. but Hilary flourished in A. D. 354. According to Baronius, Hilary was made bishop of Poitiers about A. D. 355. For his opposition to the Arian doctrine, which prevailed in the time of Valens, he was banished to Phrygia, and it was in this exile, which continued five years, that he wrote his work on the trinity. *Cave’s Historia Literaria*, Vol. I. p. 213. How then can his opinion be any proof of the doctrine that prevailed at the time of the council of Nice?

With equal confidence, and no more truth, you boast of the prevalence of your principles, notwithstanding my endeavours, and those of others to overturn them. You say, p. 84, that “my *History of the Corruptions of*
Cdris-

“Christianity has lately fallen from the gigantic grasp
 “of Horsley, crushed into annihilation; and that my
 “trumpet” p. 82. has been long sounded; but be assured
 “that in this country your trumpet shall never be blown
 “in triumph.” You, sir, appear to be little acquainted
 with the state of things in England. You would never
 else have said that I had felt the grasp of your champion
 Horsley, but rather that he had felt mine, and that on
 this account he shrunk from the controversy, refusing
 even to read my *History of Early Opinions*. I am con-
 fident that my works are much more read, and with far
 more effect, than his. It cannot be denied that the number
 of Unitarians in England has been much increased since
 the commencement of my controversy with him, and,
 according to my information, they continue to increase
 far beyond what I ever expected.

In this country there are more Unitarians than you
 seem to be aware of. But, surely you must have known
 that in the eastern states there are several congregations
 professedly Unitarian. At Boston my fabulous *Histo-
 ry of the Corruptions of Christianity*, and other works of
 mine, have been re-printed. In Philadelphia the num-
 ber of Unitarians is not inconsiderable, and if they
 would unite, and form a society, they would appear res-
 pectable. Even in this place I found some Unitarians,
 and you may suppose their numbers are not lessened since
 I came hither. There is in this place another Unitari-
 an preacher besides myself, and his audience is always
 pretty large. Judging from present appearances, I
 have no doubt but there will be a considerable increase
 of Unitarians in consequence of this controversy, and
 that

that all your endeavours to prevent it will only add to what you lament as the mischief that has been done.

I cannot help smiling when you say, p. 107, that “the doctrine of the Trinity is not incredible, that in it there is nothing impossible, nothing contradictory, and considering the great end to be answered by it, nothing improbable. The orthodox faith, therefore, I do verily think is not only truer and safer, than yours, but much more easy to be received.” But, Sir, let the two schemes be proposed to a Jew or a Mahometan, or to any person that is not a christian. While you maintain that the three persons in your Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, have each of them, separately considered, all the attributes of divinity, you certainly believe in *three Gods*, a doctrine which I would not receive on the authority of Paul, or of Jesus himself. And when you say that these *three* call them *Persons*, or by whatever name you please, are *one*, it is as evident a contradiction, and an absurdity, as can be imagined; as much so as that the three persons of Peter, James, and John, having each of them all the properties of humanity, are nevertheless not *three men*, but *one man*. This, Sir, is not the whale swallowing Jonah, but absolutely Jonah swallowing the whale.

There cannot possibly be any difference between these two cases. If all the properties of humanity make a man, all the attributes of divinity must make a God; and therefore if three, or three hundred persons, having each of them the properties of humanity, make three or three hundred men, the same number of persons possessed of all the attributes of divinity, must

make the same number of Gods. And should you be able to find ever so many texts of scripture from which you should infer ever so clearly that there was this multiplicity of gods, I should think myself authorized to say, without any examination of them, that there must be a mistake either in the texts, or in the interpretation of them; since the sacred writers could never really mean to teach a doctrine so repugnant to the uniform tenor of their writings; and so evidently contradictory to one on which they always lay the greatest stress, viz. that of the *divine unity*.

I wish, Sir, you had mentioned any of the *ends* to which you allude as answered by these strange doctrines, equally inconsistent with reason and the scriptures. Is not the one God and Father of all equal to every thing that is ever ascribed to divinity? Is he not our creator, our preserver, and our redeemer also? And though no man can of his own authority forgive sin, surely God himself can, and this he repeatedly declares that he will do, and without any reference to an atonement or satisfaction. Is not his example in this very respect recommended to us? Are we not required to *forgive as we ourselves are forgiven*? But this leads to another subject, the last that I shall touch upon, and that will be very briefly.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the Doctrine of Atonement.

“**A**N atoning sacrifice for sin appears to us,” you say p. 128, “to have been necessary.” But Sir, why necessary if God can forgive sin without it; and we think it would be a degradation of the character of the Deity to require it, and inconsistent with his acknowledged attribute of *mercy*. For what would be left of his moral character but strict *justice*, if for every offence committed against him he received a sufficient satisfaction? And yet the mercy of God is the constant theme of David, and all the saints of the Old Testament, and those of the New too. How many verses in the psalms end as in a kind of chorus, with *His mercy endureth forever*?

You appeal, p. 119, to the authority of Mosheim for the history of this opinion. But this weighs nothing with me, who have given much more attention to the progress of this opinion, and that of many others, that have a connection with it, than he appears to have done; and I am confident that neither Mosheim himself, if he had been living, nor you or your learned friend, would

be able to refute what I have advanced, on the most indisputable authorities, in my history of it. If your doctrine had been universally received, as you maintain that it was, in very early times, how could it have remained a question so late as the time of Austin, to *whom* the satisfaction mentioned in the gospel was made, or that it would have been so generally thought to have been made *by God to the Devil*, into whose power men had fallen in consequence of sin; and that though God might have rescued them out of his hands by mere *power*, he chose to do it according to *justice*, giving a fair price for what he obtained, and this price was the blood of his son. Strange and absurd as this scheme now appears to us, it is really more plausible than yours, and more agreeable to the character of the Divine Being, who hereby sets us an example of justice and honesty.

Before your doctrine of atonement can be firmly established, you must answer a query originally put by the famous Mr. Penn, the founder of this state, and a zealous unitarian, in his treatise intitled, *The Sandy Foundation shaken*, which is that if Christ be God equal to the Father, why did he not require satisfaction to be made to himself as well as the Father? He must have been equally offended at the sins of men, and one of his attributes must have been justice as well as mercy. In Mr. Penn's own language, and under his title of *Consequences irreligious and irrational*. "It represents the Son
 " more kind and compassionate than the Father; where-
 " as if both be the same God, then either the Father is
 " as loving as the Son, or the Son is as angry as the
 " Father."

In

In the days of my ignorance I maintained the doctrine that you now hold. I even left the academy with a belief of the doctrine of atonement in a qualified sense. But the first thing that I did after I became a minister, and had leisure, was to collect and write out, every text in the Old or New Testament that bore any relation to this subject; and the result was the clearest conviction, which has remained to this day, that the doctrine of atonement, in every sense of the word, is as contrary to the scripture, as it is to reason.

My MS. on this subject was shewn by a friend of mine to Dr. Lardner, but without mentioning my name, and he was so much pleased with it, that he requested leave to publish it. To this I made no objection, and accordingly he did it, giving it himself the following title. "The Scripture doctrine of Remission, which shews that the death of Christ is no proper sacrifice, or satisfaction, for sin; but that pardon is dispensed solely on account of repentance, or a personal reformation, of the sinner." The date of the pamphlet is A. D. 1761. After this I was introduced to the Doctor as the author, and from this time I never failed to visit him whenever I went to London. Having undertaken to write the *History of the corruptions of Christianity*, and of this article among the rest, I applied to him (who was unquestionably better acquainted with the christian Fathers, than, I believe, any person then living) for assistance; but he was then old, and said he could only refer me to some passages of St. Austin, quoted by himself, as to my purpose. The last time that I saw him, I renewed my request, but his faculties had begun

begun to fail him. However, he took down a bundle of pamphlets, and turning them over, shewed me my own, saying, "This contains my opinion." When I told him I was the writer, he shook his head, and said he took me to be Dr. Harwood. About a year after this he died, at the age, I believe of ninety one. This tract I reprinted with additions in the *Theological Repository*, and I propose, if I live, to republish it, together with other articles of mine, in that work.

Do not boast, Sir, as you are apt to do, that learning and piety are wholly on your side. A more respectable man than Dr. Lardner, or a man more generally respected by all parties, both for his learning and his candour never lived. It was the perusal of his *Letter on the Logos* that made me an unitarian, but not till after his death. For, like yourself, I was pretty tenacious of the faith in which I was originally educated, being first a Trinitarian, and then an Arian, but since what is commonly called a Socinian, but more properly an Unitarian, as distinguished from both Trinitarians and Arians.

As, from what you say in this second Letter to me, it is not probable that I shall have another opportunity of addressing you and the public on the subject of the controversies in which I have been engaged, I wish to set you right with respect to some particulars of my history and conduct, with which you seem not to be acquainted, and you may give me what degree of credit you please.

You think that I have always had the last word in controversy, so that it is impossible to silence me. Now
this

this has seldom been the case. It was not so in the unitarian controversy in any period of it, except with respect to bishop Horsley himself. To many others that followed him, I never made any reply; nor did I ever write any defence of my *History of Early Opinions*, confident that it does not want any.

My first tract in controversy was an answer to a most virulent attack upon my principles in general by Mr. Venn, a clergyman of the church of England. To this he never replied; but I was so much assailed by many others of the same principles, and of various denominations, that I thought it necessary to write my *Appeal to the candid Professors of Christianity*, and tho' there were not less than ten answers to this in the first month after its publication, I never wrote a direct reply to any of them, but published my *Familiar Illustration of particular Texts*, as a general answer to all that my adversaries could say. Of the *Appeal* not less than fifty thousand copies had been printed and dispersed before I left England, and there were several editions of it, in different parts of England and Scotland, in which I had no concern. It is not speaking with contempt, as you do, of a publication that will answer it, or prevent its effect.

In the various controversies in which I have been engaged, I have seldom been the assailant; what I wrote having been generally in reply to those who attacked some or other of my publications, especially my *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, and my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. In this country I have engaged in no religious controversy but this with you, tho' Dr. Wharton

Wharton wrote against me on the same subjects, and tho' I rejoice in the opportunity that you have given me to make my sentiments more generally known (wishing to follow the lead of that providence which embraces the smallest things as well as the greatest, directing both your pen and mine) I was far from seeking, or expecting any such thing.

Tho' I have been a preacher half a century, I never delivered one sermon that could be called *controversial*, besides that at Philadelphia; and to this I was urged by its being said that in this country I concealed my sentiments, and durst not avow them. I therefore, at the close of my discourses of the evidences of revelation, preached the sermon intitled *Unitarianism explained and defended*. Before and since this all my sermons have been either practical, or in the defence of common christianity, tho' I never concealed my opinions in the pulpit when any particular occasion required the mention of them, and especially in my exposition of the scriptures.

Of four of my opponents in controversy, I gained the friendship of three, before unknown to me; and with the other our former friendship was much increased, at least not at all diminished; so that my manner of writing in controversy has not been so offensive to others as it is to you. But I never charged any of my opponents, as you do me, with "writing against light and better knowledge." I do not believe that any of them did so. Indeed, very few persons, I hope, are so abandoned as to be capable of it. Strong prejudices, especially those of early education, the force of
which

which I have felt myself, are able to mislead the best understandings, accompanied with the best dispositions; and this Sir, I believe to be your case, and the whole of it.

As an excuse for not continuing this controversy with me, you allege the multiplicity of your ministerial duty. My duty of this kind while I was engaged in all the most important of my controversies, I have reason to think, was more extensive than yours, especially in my catechetical lectures to the different classes of my younger hearers,* in the service of three of the most respectable congregations in England; viz. Leeds, Birmingham, and Hackney, all of which I left in a better condition than I found them, and with such marks of their esteem and affection, as I believe were never exceeded by any congregations to their ministers; as may appear from their addresses to me on our separation.

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At

* I made three classes of the younger part of my congregation; the first to the age of ten or twelve, for whose use I composed my *Catechism for children and young persons*; the second from ten or twelve to sixteen or eighteen, for whom I composed my *Scripture Catechism*, the sole object of this class being an acquaintance with the scriptures; and the third class of young persons from the age of sixteen or eighteen to thirty, beyond which I admitted none. For these I composed my *Institutions of Natural, and revealed Religion*; These classes were generally very full. At Leeds the young men of the highest class were about forty. They were the same at Birmingham, when that of young women of the same age amounted to fifty. This course of instruction generally continued about three years.

Having been requested to give a more particular account of these catechetical lectures, and of my method of conducting them, for the instruction of others who wished to follow my example, I did it in the Preface to my Discourse on entering on the office of pastor to the congregation at Hackney, printed A. D. 1791.

At the same time that I was engaged in this ministerial duty, and these controversies, I had a secondary object in *philosophy*, as you have in *poetry*. It is also to be considered that, besides what a minister owes to his particular congregation, there is something due from him to the cause of common christianity, which is a duty that cannot always be discharged without controversy, as you see in the conduct of many of the most eminent christian ministers of various denominations, from the earliest times to the present; so that the allegation of your ministerial duty is no valid excuse.

I am, Reverend Sir, with real esteem, overlooking every thing unpleasant in your style of controversy, and with every good wish, especially that you may soon come to the knowledge of the great truths that you now oppose, and which (owing to early and deep rooted prejudices) cost me much labour to acquire,

Yours sincerely,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, November 11, 1803.

E R R A T A.

N. B. (*b*) signifies *from the bottom*.

- F. 9 l. 16 *for any text, read a text.*
 P. 10 l. 16 — *implicable* — *implacable.*
 P. 21 l. 2 (*b*) *infinitely* — *infinitely.*
 P. 30 Note, *after evidently, add requires.*

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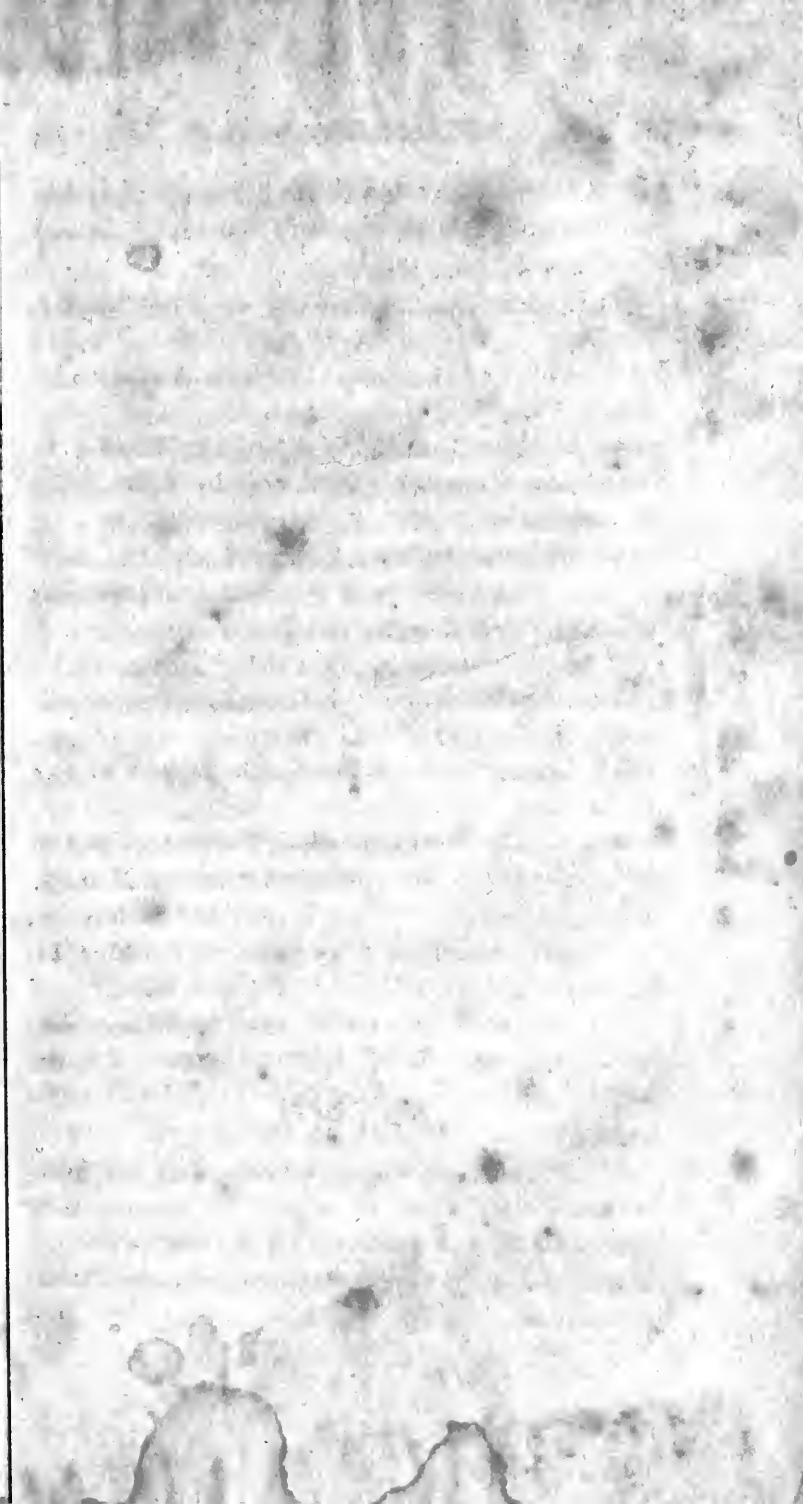
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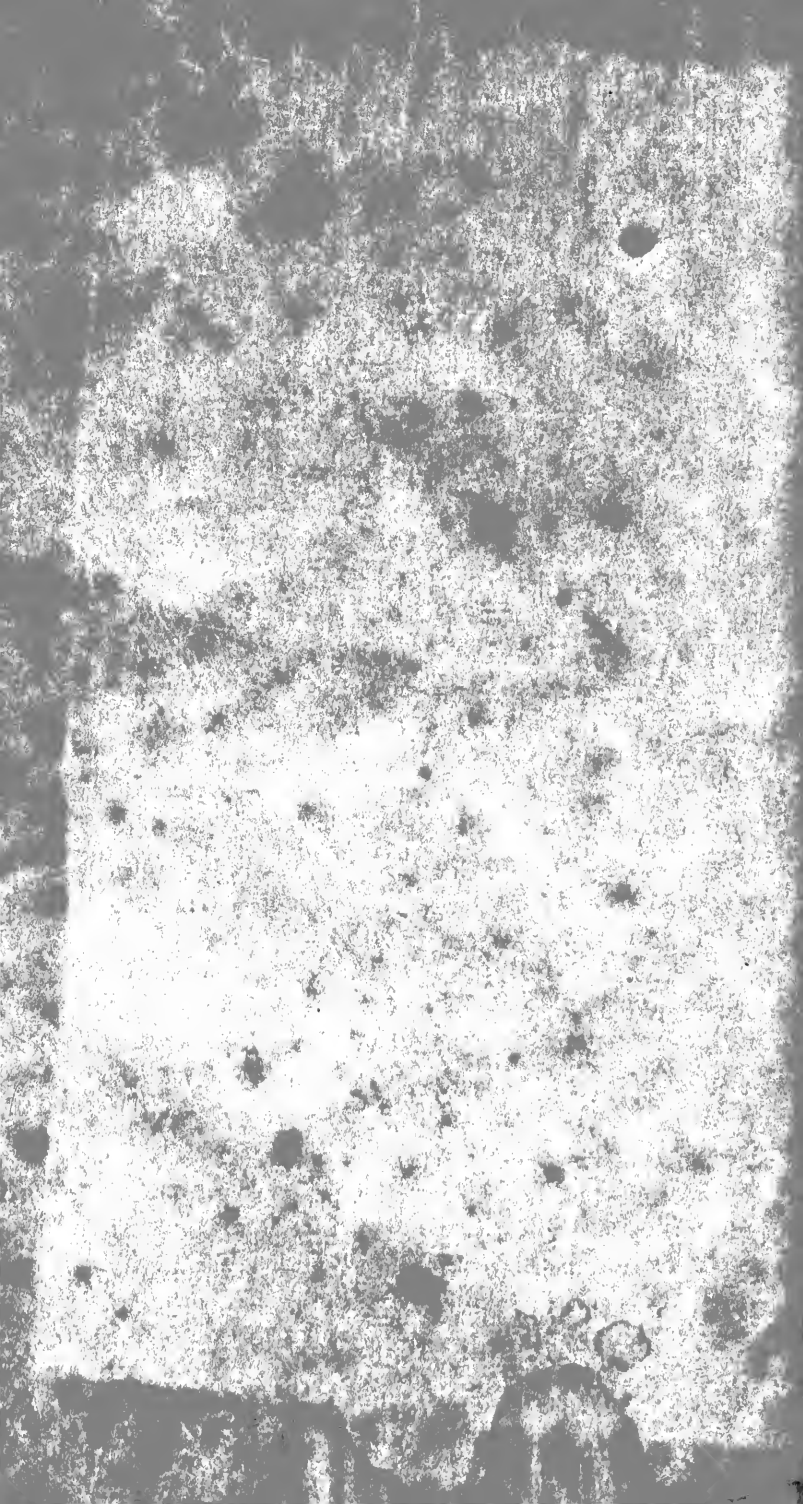
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