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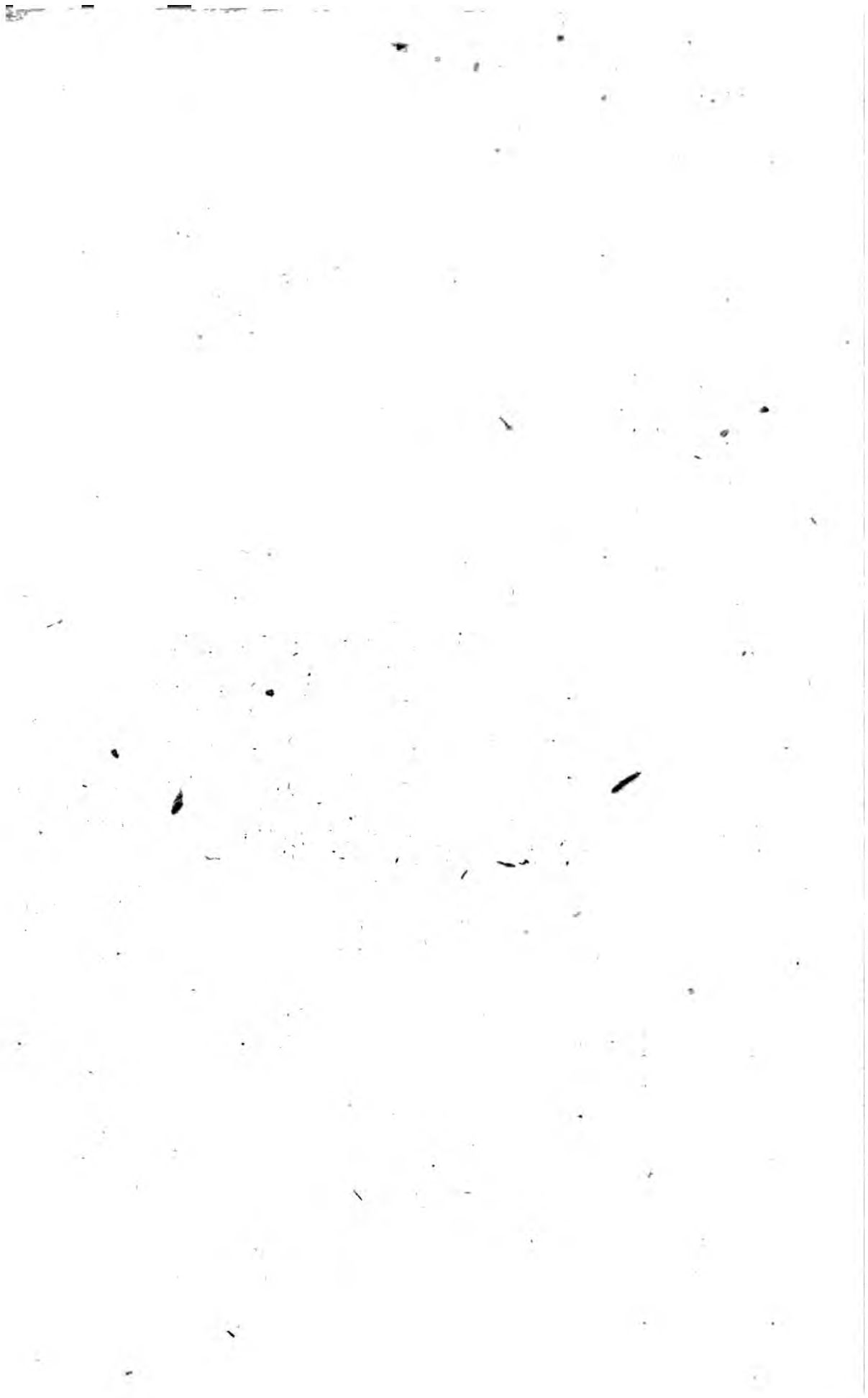
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11 Q. 314.





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T H E
T H E O L O G I C A L
R E P O S I T O R Y ;

CONSISTING OF
O R I G I N A L E S S A Y S , H I N T S ,
Q U E R I E S , & c .

C A L C U L A T E D T O P R O M O T E
R E L I G I O U S K N O W L E D G E .

V O L . I V .



Παῦλα δοκιμαζέσθαι.

PAUL.

— *Si quid novisti rectius istis,*
Candidus imperii. —

HORACE.

B I R M I N G H A M,
P R I N T E D B Y P E A R S O N A N D R O L L A S O N , F O R J . J O H N -
S O N , N O . 7 2 , S T . P A U L ' S C H U R C H - Y A R D , L O N D O N .

M D C C L X X X I V .

T H E

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

IT is with peculiar satisfaction that I resume the publication of this *Theological Repository*, as it was with much reluctance that, for want of sufficient encouragement, I submitted to the discontinuation of it, in the year 1771. While it was open, it was certainly of great use for the purpose of the free discussion of several questions of great importance in Theology, and was the means of bringing before the public many valuable *illustrations of scripture*, which would otherwise never have seen the light. I hope that the work will be no less useful, or less acceptable to the friends of free enquiry,

now that it is revived. There are many new topics of great importance still before us, and the spirit of free enquiry is likewise much increased since the time of the former publication; so that there is every reason to hope that it will be resumed with better auspices than those under which it was first taken up. A trial, however, will be made; and if only another volume be added to the former *three*, the friends of truth will have some reason to be thankful.

The public, having had experience of my conducting this work before, will, I doubt not, have the same confidence in me that they then had, with respect to *perfect freedom*, and *impartiality*; and I have not yet heard that I ever incurred the least suspicion of blame in this respect, even with those who maintained opinions different from my own. The work was equally open to all parties, and it shall be so again. No paper shall be refused ad-
mittance

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mittance that shall contain observations on any subject of importance, that are either properly *new*, or that set things in a clearer or stronger point of light; and objections to religion, natural or revealed, shall be as welcome to a place in this work as the defences of it. I shall even consider communications from serious unbelievers as of peculiar value; for truth never has, and we may be confident, never can suffer, but, on the contrary, must gain, by the freest investigation. I shall only except against tracts in which I shall perceive no love of truth, and no regard to the rules of decorum. The writers of any papers which may be refused admittance will always have it in their power to publish them in some other way, and thereby expose my conduct to deserved censure, if I should reject any thing without sufficient reason.

I shall not, however, take upon myself to be the sole arbiter in this case, but

A 3 shall

shall be happy to be assisted by the advice of some valuable and judicious friends who reside with me in Birmingham, and to their judgment the papers that may be sent for this work will generally be submitted; as in the former publication of it I generally took the advice of my excellent friend and neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Turner, of Wakefield, whose own communications will always give a value to those three volumes.

Left any persons should imagine that this work is now revived by way of opposition to *the society for promoting the knowledge of the scriptures*, who publish a work in occasional numbers, entitled, *Commentaries and Essays, &c.* I will inform them, that I am one of that society, and a sincere well-wisher to its success; and had it been thought adviseable to enlarge the plan of that work, so as to admit papers, the object of which might be not merely *the illustration of scripture*,
but

but the promoting of *religious knowledge in general*, and especially such as might lead to controversy, this work would not have been resumed. But it was thought that both the publications might have their separate uses, and go on with advantage together; *that* being confined to the illustration of the scriptures, in the analytic method explained in their introduction, and *this* admitting papers in defence of particular opinions, and likewise such as shall have for their object the clearing up of difficulties in ecclesiastical history, the evidences of revelation, or any other subject that comes within the general character of *religious knowledge*, without any particular view to the illustration of the scriptures.

There is a great field open for both these schemes, and whatever interference may arise from the plan of the *Repository* being so much more comprehensive than that of the *Commentaries*, it will give no

pain to any of the persons concerned. If the cause of truth be promoted, it will give equal satisfaction to us all, by whatever channel the communications may be made to the public.

That *public controversy*, or the free discussion of theological questions (which does not suit with the plan of the *Commentaries*) has its use, cannot be denied. Nothing but the free discussion of any question of importance, by persons who have different views of it, has ever produced all the evidence for or against it; and till a serious enquirer has a persuasion that he has before him all the evidence that he can reasonably expect, he naturally hesitates, and does not form a decided judgment. But when any question has been so long agitated, by persons of competent knowledge and ability, and likewise sufficiently interested to collect and to produce every thing they could in support of their respective opinions (so that
he

he may presume that nothing of any consequence remains to be alledged) he no longer suspends his judgment, but forms his opinion in the best manner that he can, from the evidence that is before him.

No man, I will venture to say, thinks so highly of himself, as to come to the same satisfactory decision, with respect to any question which admits of a great compass of argument, merely from his own enquiries and speculations about it, as when he knows that he has all the light which his friends or his enemies can throw upon it. For he will naturally suspect that, without some assistance, he may have overlooked some considerations, even in favour of his own opinion, and much more in favour of that of his opponents.

No christian could have had that complete satisfaction with respect to the evidences

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dences of christianity that many persons now have, if no unbelievers had written upon the subject. But being acquainted with all that it has been in their power to produce, and being satisfied, after a careful examination, that all their objections are greatly overbalanced by the fulness and clearness of the evidence in favour of it, their minds are perfectly easy; and they acquiesce and rejoice in it, with the fullest *assurance of faith*, a faith which those who believe *implicitly* cannot have. The same observation may be made with respect to any particular doctrine of christianity, and indeed with respect to every article of any importance in a system of philosophy. All the discoveries of Galileo, Copernicus, and Newton were the occasion of eager debate and much controversy, before they were generally received, and completely acquiesced in. Christianity itself, with every article belonging to it, must necessarily go through the same trial, which, however, has its natural period,

period, before its reception can be hearty and universal. Let us all therefore concur to bring on, and to accelerate this natural progress in the spread of all great and important truths; looking forward to the time when all controversy will have completely answered its end, and no doubt shall remain, either with respect to Christianity itself, or any of the proper doctrines of it; and when nothing shall be called christianity, that does not really belong to it.

Some evils, no doubt, have resulted from that *spirit of controversy* which has agitated the christian church from the very beginning; but the evils have been infinitely overbalanced by the good which has been derived from it. This chiefly respects christianity itself, its fundamental principles, and its evidence; but controversy having exercised the ingenuity of men, and having called forth all their powers,

powers, it hath likewise had what may be called a *lateral effect*, as well as a *direct* one, and has eminently contributed to the advancement of knowledge in general, especially that which is of an abstract nature, such as is commonly termed *metaphysical*. This any person, who is acquainted with the history of *school divinity*, must acknowledge. In the same manner, it is well known, that we are indebted to inventions in the *art of war*, for much of that knowledge which is most eminently useful in the *arts of peace*, and civilized life. Every attempt, therefore, and every wish, to preclude all controversy on religious subjects, arises from narrow views of things; since, for the sake of a trifling inconvenience, those who have such wishes would cut off the source, and the only source (as men are constituted) of the greatest advantages, with respect to the ultimate object of their own wishes.

The

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The inconvenience that has arisen from religious controversy has seldom extended farther than to the persons immediately engaged in it, who, wanting sufficient coolness of temper, have been apt to be irritated, and too much influenced by the desire of victory, rather than that of finding the truth. But without that spirit of emulation, which excites these passions, sufficient justice would seldom be done to any cause ; and the by-stander, who enjoys, undisturbed, the benefit of a thorough investigation of the subject on which he wishes to form a judgment, will easily perceive the intemperance of the disputants, and make proper allowance for it.

There are examples, however, though, it must be acknowledged, they are not numerous, of persons who have done the fullest justice to their argument, having spared no pains to throw upon it all the light they could procure, and yet have
possessed

possessed a perfect command of temper in controversy ; who have frankly acknowledged the mistakes they have fallen into, and have, to all appearance, sincerely rejoiced in the discovery of truth, whether made by themselves or others.

All these things considered, I think that a proper *theatre for religious controversy* a very useful thing, and such I shall endeavour to make this *Repository*. As the *Director*, I shall keep out of it whatever shall appear to be improper, and admit as little as possible of any thing that does not tend to enforce any particular argument, and do justice to any cause. As the papers will generally be *anonymous*, the writers will have the less temptation to exceed the bounds of decorum ; and I hope I need not add, that no person shall have reason to repent of any degree of confidence that he may chuse to put in me in this respect ; though
I had

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I had much rather be ignorant myself of the real names of those writers who wish them to be concealed.

For the sake of the more effectual concealment of others, it will be proper that I should myself make use of some other signature than that of my own name, as I did in the preceding volumes; though I shall probably take some opportunity (as I did at the discontinuation of the work) to acknowledge every paper written by myself. I have nothing that I wish to conceal for a moment, except for such innocent purposes as this.

In the mean time, our readers will be at liberty to amuse themselves, as before, with conjectures about the writers of the several papers. But, to check the extreme confidence of some persons, I will inform them, that on the former similar occasion the opinions of the most knowing were often wrong, and particularly several papers

pers were almost universally ascribed to myself, in which I had no hand, and the sentiments of which I did not approve.

Though I do not propose that this Repository shall contain a regular *Review of all theological publications*, yet if considerable light be thrown upon any subject, for the illustration of which the Repository was intended, some notice will be taken of it; that the purchasers of this work may be in possession of all the information that this inquisitive age can throw upon any important question in theology.

BIRMINGHAM,
Nov. 13, 1784.

J. PRIESTLEY.

THE

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TO THE
D I R E C T O R S
OF THE
THEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

AS you invite communications from persons of all descriptions, even unbelievers in natural or revealed religion (rightly judging, that the cause of *truth* can never suffer by the freest investigation) I send you the inclosed *Essay*, in the fullest confidence of its being by you laid before the Public; and it will probably be followed by some others on the same subject. I do not pretend to have formed a decided judgment on the questions which I here propose for public discussion; but they appear to me to be of considerable importance; and for this reason I wish to have the assistance of some of your correspondents, who may think them deserving of their consideration.

All the judicious friends of revelation will, I think, agree with me, in acknowledging, that the less we embarrass ourselves with the defence of what does not belong to christianity, the more success we may promise ourselves in defending what is really such; the greatest part of the objections of unbelievers having been of

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such

such a nature, that the christian might have granted them, not only without any injury, but even with real advantage to his cause.

The axioms, or principles, from which I argue in the following essay, are these: 1. Divine communications have never been made where the reason which God originally gave to man, was sufficient for his instruction. 2. No messenger from God is to be considered as inspired by him, any farther than he himself pretends to be so, or than the object of his mission required. In other things, if he was a mere man, he must have been as fallible as other men, who had enjoyed advantages for knowledge equal to his.

If, in the course of the following essays, I shall appear to have deduced too much from these premises, I shall be very ready to retract it, and shall be sincerely obliged to any person who will set me right.

As the greatest objection to such liberties as I shall think myself obliged to take with the books of scripture, in the following essay is, that, in proceeding in this manner, "we shall never know where to stop, till we reject the whole;" and as this idea has contributed to make many persons even afraid to use their reason, and to give any scope to their own judgment on these subjects, I shall consider it more particularly in this introductory letter.

In the first place, I would observe, that it is an apprehension that has no existence, except in the minds of those who have either never tried the experiment themselves, or who do not seem

to have attended to their own feelings as far as they have tried it. For, in fact, observation and experience give no countenance to the fears they entertain on this subject. The Roman Catholics complain of the liberties that all Protestants take in interpreting the scriptures, *v. g.* in supposing those expressions to be *figurative* which they think ought to be construed *literally*. Some persons, whose opinions are such as are termed Calvinistical, have even said that they would burn their bibles, sooner than think them favourable to the opinions of Arminians, or Arians; and many Arians have said, that the scriptures teach nothing with clearness, if they do not contain the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence. And yet the fact is, that Protestants, Arminians, Arians, and Socinians, are all as firm believers in christianity, as those who are so much alarmed at the liberties which they take with the records of it; and they only smile at the weakness of those who express so much concern for them.

There must, therefore, be some fallacy in the reasoning of their adversaries; and it appears to me that there are several circumstances in the case which they do not sufficiently attend to, especially what is really necessary to denominate a man a christian, and also what it is on which the credibility of christianity depends. If these two things only were well understood, no christian would see any cause to be alarmed at the liberties which I shall take with the books of scripture, or with the writers of them. Indeed, they are not, in

fact, any greater than have already been taken by Protestants, Arminians, Arians, or Unitarians. I only carry their principles to what appears to me their proper extent, so as to make their reasoning and conclusions uniform and consistent; and we may often observe, that a long time frequently intervenes between the discovery of a *principle*, and some of the most necessary and valuable *applications* of it.

To be a christian, in my opinion, implies nothing more than the belief that Christ and the apostles, as well as all preceding prophets, were commissioned by God to teach what they declare they received from him; the most important article of which is the doctrine of a resurrection to immortal life. And as to the evidence of the gospel history, it is exactly similar to that of any other credible history, depending upon human testimony: and so far is my faith from being weakened in consequence of rejecting, what does not appear to me to belong to christianity, that it is considerably strengthened by that means. For the natural improbability of any particular article in a system of religious faith must necessarily take from the credibility of the whole, as *one connected system*, though the evidence for the whole system may be so great, as to overpower the separate influence of that particular article.

In fact, all *objections* to any opinion, every circumstance that makes the reception of it difficult, in consequence of its want of analogy to other known truths, &c. operates like a *negative quantity* in an algebraic expression, which

lessens the value of the positive ones; so that the positive arguments have proportionably greater force, when the negative ones, if we may use that term, are extinguished.

No person, I will venture to say, if it had been proposed to him *a priori*, would have said that the doctrine of transubstantiation was, in itself, probable, but would rather have chosen, if it had been in his power, that his system of faith should not require the belief of it. Consequently, that system, of which this doctrine is a part, must require more evidence than would have been necessary, if it had not been a part of it; and therefore if that doctrine can be detached from the rest of the system, while the evidence for the whole remains the same, a man's faith in the remainder must be the stronger; having the same weight of evidence in its favour, and less to counterbalance it, and weigh against it.

In like manner, to a person who saw Jesus in all respects like other men, wanting the refreshments of eating, sleeping, &c. in common with other men, it must have appeared probable that, like other men, he had no being before he was born into the world; and also that, like other men, he had a human father as well as a mother; and therefore, though the evidence for christianity in general, on the supposition that the doctrines of the pre-existence and the miraculous conception must be included in it, may be such as to entitle it to sufficient credit; yet, that evidence remaining the same, the system of christianity must appear to him to

be entitled to more credit without those circumstances.

The same mode of reasoning may be applied to every other article which may have been deemed necessary to the faith of a christian, but which is afterwards found not to be so. Though, therefore, while we considered all the writers of the books of scripture as having been dictated to by the holy spirit, and consequently that there could be no error, oversight, or mistake, in any of their writings, we still thought ourselves obliged, by the super-abundant evidence for revealed religion, to struggle with all the difficulties which that hypothesis laid us under; yet it is certainly a great relief to us, to find that every thing which is really valuable in the system of revelation may be retained without that doctrine of inspiration which we find, by experience, lays it open to so many embarrassing objections.

In like manner, though we are far from seeing any reason to reject christianity, because we think ourselves obliged to maintain that the apostles (being, as we think, illuminated with the perfect knowledge of the scriptures of the Old Testament) could never misapply any passage in them; yet, considering what use they sometimes did make of the scriptures, and what trouble the defenders of revelation have had to reply to objections that have arisen from this source, our difficulties are much lessened, and our faith is consequently strengthened, when we see reason to think that they had no supernatural illumination of that kind. Because we can then satisfy ourselves

ourselves and others with saying, that they applied the scriptures according to the best of their judgment; which would, of course, without particular interposition (which does not appear to have been necessary in their case) be biassed by the mode of applying them which was prevalent in their age and country; and consequently, that we are at liberty to judge of the propriety of all of their quotations, as well as of those that are made by persons now living.

I will add, that it will perhaps appear, that some part of this reasoning may be found applicable to our Saviour himself, as well as to the apostles and other divine teachers; all of whom, we have reason to conclude, were divinely instructed *for a particular purpose*, and therefore had a particular and definite degree of knowledge communicated to them, a degree requisite for the object of their mission, but not more.

I shall endeavour to exemplify this reasoning by the consideration of the credibility of civil history, that of the Romans for instance. Supposing that we had no history of the Romans before the age of Augustus, besides that of Livy, and that it had been a maxim with us to admit *the whole of any work*, or else no part at all of it; many persons, I doubt not, would have been so well persuaded of the truth of the greater part of the history, especially that part which was nearest to the times of the author, from its easy connection with the subsequent history, that, rather than reject the whole, they would have admitted the history of Romulus and Remus

having been suckled by a wolf, and even his account of oxen speaking, and of other prodigies. Because these things, though strange, were not impossible, as implying no contradiction. It is probable, however, that they would have many doubts, and much hesitation, before the evidence in favour of that part of the history, which was on other accounts highly credible in itself, prevailed over their disposition to reject the whole, on account of what was, *a priori*, improbable in it; and they would certainly therefore find themselves relieved, and would believe the more important part of the history more firmly whenever they should find themselves at liberty to reject the history of the infancy of Romulus and Remus, and all the accounts of prodigies. Now the same rules of just reasoning will enable us to distinguish between the evidence of things that are equally contained in the scriptures, as well as in other histories; and our faith in every thing that is important in them will be much strengthened when we find ourselves at liberty to reject what is not essential to them.

If, in the next place, we judge from *observation*, we shall find sufficient authority for the principle on which I argue. For certainly great numbers pass from the extreme of *popery* to absolute *infidelity*, for one who goes through the several stages of Protestantism, Arminianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, to the same point. For my own part, I know of no firmer believers in christianity than Unitarians; and I never knew a single instance of any person, who was once well grounded in unitarian principles, becoming an unbeliever.

It

It may be said that, though the persons who reject so much of what has been deemed to belong to christianity be not themselves injured, their conduct has a disagreeable effect both on those who believe more, and on those who believe less than they do, that is, on unbelievers. But, in fact, this inconvenience is very trifling. Zealous believers will certainly be shocked to see others disregard what they deem to be sacred, and they will be disposed to think harshly of those who believe less than they do; but they may relieve themselves by viewing the thing in its proper light, and by considering that it is better for a person to believe something of christianity, and especially what is most important in it with respect to the conduct of life, viz. the doctrine of a future state, than to believe nothing at all of it. And though the unbeliever may triumph in the thought that freethinking christians are making near approaches to himself, he will soon find that the gulf which separates them is thereby rendered more impassable to the true believer, than it was before.

Also, serious unbelievers may by this means be led to look back, and consider what it is that has offended them in christianity; and finding that there are serious christians who reject the very things at which they stumbled, as well as themselves, they may be induced to resume their examination of it with better lights than they were in possession of before, and thus come to embrace that religion, which they rejected merely because they did not understand it, on account of the
unfair

unfair representations which had been made of it to them.

On no account, therefore, should any persons be discouraged from enquiring, with the greatest freedom, into every thing relating to christianity, or revelation in general, or from publishing the result of their enquiries, wherever they may have been led by them. Whatever some may apprehend, my own object in the essays which I propose to send you is to strengthen, and not to weaken, the proper evidences of christianity, and that this will be the result, I am fully confident from my own experience, as well as for the reasons which I have here alledged. I even think that no time should be lost (on account of the proneness of philosophical people to infidelity) in bringing forward the most rigorous scrutiny of every thing relating to christianity itself, or to the evidence of it; and I think it is more reputable to the christian cause, that this should be done by believers, than by unbelievers. I rejoice in the opportunity that the revival of the *Theological Repository* gives me and others for this purpose, and am,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

P A M P H I L U S.

ESSAY

E S S A Y I.

Observations relating to the Inspiration of Moses.

I Shall begin the series of Essays which I propose to send to your Repository, with applying the maxims laid down in the preceding letter, to the case of Moses.

Moses, having been empowered to work miracles, had, no doubt, a divine mission; but this divine mission did not render him either infallible, or impeccable. Whatever he declared that he received from God, I readily admit; but where he himself does not pretend to that source of information, I have a right to conclude that he derived his knowledge from some other source; and therefore I think myself at liberty to examine it, and that I do not need to admit his account of things, unless its evidence, internal or external, appear to me sufficient to entitle it to credit. When he relates the transactions of his own time, of which he was himself a proper witness, I readily admit his testimony, especially as it is in fact confirmed by all his cotemporaries, who would never have received his writings, or have transmitted them to posterity, if they had contained notorious falsehoods. But with respect to things which Moses could only learn from the testimony of others, he must be considered as being in the same circumstances with many other writers, who, notwithstanding the pains they took to get

good information, were liable to be misled themselves, and therefore may have undesignedly misled others.

The great outline of the history of Moses's own nation, and that of his own ancestors, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and he does not go beyond the outline of their history) might easily have been transmitted from father to son, and would be related so often, and by so many persons, that his account may well be supposed to be sufficiently genuine. The genealogy also of Abraham and Noah, as far as Adam, would not be very difficult to remember; and the flood was so remarkable an event, that the remembrance of it would not be obliterated in many ages. But with respect to what passed before the creation of Adam, it was not possible that even Adam himself should have known it, unless he had had some revelation on the subject, of which we have no information. And as Moses does not say that he himself had any revelation with respect to it, we have no reason to believe that he had any; especially as he is so very particular in relating every other article of divine communication, and so carefully distinguishes it from every thing that either came from himself, or that was suggested to him by others.

Admitting, however, that the divine being should have informed Adam, or any other person, in the early ages of the world, concerning what passed before the creation of man (though we have neither any account of it, nor can see any important reason for such a communication)

yet,

yet, as it was a long time before the art of writing was invented, and consequently all the particulars must have been handed down by tradition, the story could not well escape adulteration; so that all that Moses could collect concerning it, must have been very imperfect, and would probably be mixed with fable. And certainly several of the circumstances in his history of the early state of the world, and of man, have very much the appearance of fable.

It is generally thought that we are at liberty to suppose, that by *days* in the Mosaical account of the creation, long *periods* of an indefinite length were intended. But as Moses distinguishes each of the days by its *morning and evening*, it is more probable that, in his idea at least, they were *natural days*, such as are to be understood when, in other parts of his writings, he makes use of the same term. But if we suppose that the appearances described by Moses, as peculiar to each of the six days, were produced by the operation of the regular laws of nature, such as we see to take place at present, those days must appear to be much too short for their respective purposes. And there are few persons indeed, who are willing to admit that the account is literary true; because, judging from the analogy of the divine dispensations, they think that so much of *interposition*, and *deviation from regular laws*, was not necessary; and they cannot help thinking it improbable, considering the slowness with which the course of nature proceeds, that the constitution of things should have advanced so very rapidly at its first establishment.

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On the whole, therefore, the probability seems to be, that Moses's account of the creation is not absolutely to be depended upon, and therefore that it is to very little purpose that so many ingenious persons have taken the pains that they have done to account for the appearances which he describes, according to the present laws of nature, as if the credibility of the divine mission of Moses had depended upon it; whereas it is not in fact at all concerned with it. It is possible that one circumstance which recommended this account to Moses, was its supplying so good a reason for the *rest of the seventh day*, which it was in his instructions to inculcate.

That the term of human life should have been considerably longer at first than it is at present, is by no means improbable; and the less so, as after the flood it is represented as having been gradually reduced to the present standard. But that man was ever intended not to die at all, I cannot but think highly improbable, unless the animal creation should have had the same privilege. For the analogy between men and brutes is so great, with respect to their composition, form, generation, diseases, and other circumstances, that we cannot help concluding that, in both the cases, the individuals were intended to go off the stage, and that there should be a succession in both alike.

It is evident, from the account of Moses, that, from the beginning, man was intended to propagate his species, in the same manner as any of the animal creation; for otherwise the distinction of sexes would have been absurd.

Also

Also, what must have become of the human race when they were so multiplied, that the earth could no longer supply them with sustenance? In a future state, men are not to die; but then, as our Saviour informs us, *they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as the angels which are in heaven.* The difference of sexes, therefore, I consider as a proof that mankind were intended to be mortal; whereas the Moisaical account, whoever was the original author of it, goes upon the idea that mankind was intended to be immortal, and that they became mortal in consequence of sin. For if the *mortality of the species* was not intended by the penalty annexed to the eating of the forbidden fruit, it was never inflicted at all. That all men now die in consequence of their own sins, is certainly not supported by fact, for then none would die in infancy; and judging by appearances, the most perfectly regular and absolutely sinless life would only be the means of prolonging the term of it a few years longer than it would otherwise continue, and would be no security at all against a variety of accidents which would certainly be fatal.

The earth also must, in every respect, have been constructed otherwise than it is at present, if the laborious cultivation of it had not been necessary to the subsistence of man, at least in some of its climates; and yet this is represented as one part of the penalty of Adam's transgression; and, according to that system, the plants called *thorns* and *thistles* either did not
exist

exist at all before that event, or they were not produced in so great abundance as afterwards.

The pains of child-bearing, and the subjection of the woman to the man are likewise enumerated by Moses among the consequences of the fall. But do not all females bring forth their young with pain and risk of life; and through the whole creation, is not the female subject to the male, for which Moses's account of the fall supplies no reason whatever? And why was it more necessary to provide an hypothesis for these circumstances respecting the human race, than as they are incident to the brute creation? The probability, therefore, is, that both women and female brute animals were originally formed so as to be equally subject to the pains of parturition, as well as that both men and animals were destined to a laborious and often precarious subsistence, and equally liable to suffer by the inclemency of the weather, and other accidents.

The aversion which men generally have for serpents is not greater than they have for toads, lizards, and various other animals, from which they derive more apparent harm than good; and that the cause of this aversion should have been what Moses makes it, is highly improbable; for it supposes that serpents had the power of speech, without ever observing that they were deprived of it; that they did not crawl upon their bellies; and that, according to a vulgar error, their food is the dust of the earth. It is also supposed by Moses, that the condition of the
serpent

serpent is more wretched than that of any other animal, for it is said, Gen. iii. 14. *Thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field.* Whereas there are many other animals whose condition is, to appearance, not at all better than that of the serpent. Many of this species are sufficiently formidable to other animals, and even to man; and the most defenceless of them have the same means of hiding themselves, and of avoiding danger, that others of the weaker kind of animals are provided with. That man should be subject to have his feet bit by serpents, and that serpents should be subject to have their heads crushed by men, besides being a circumstance unworthy of the solemnity with which it is announced, is not a case peculiar to men and serpents, but what is common to them and many insects which creep upon the ground, and whose bite is venomous.

It is generally supposed that it was not the serpent itself, but the Devil, or some other evil spirit in the serpent, that tempted our first parents. But this is an hypothesis that has no foundation in the original story, the writer giving no hint of any such thing. Indeed, if the history did not go upon the idea of the serpent having had a natural power of speech, Eve might have been expected to have expressed some surprize at the prodigy of being accosted by such a creature, and would rather have fled with precipitation, than have been allured by any thing that it could say; as any woman, or any man, would now do, if a serpent should speak to them.

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Besides, it is somewhat remarkable, that there is no mention of the *Devil*, or of *Satan*, in any of the books of Moses. Indeed, if this hypothesis, of all evil having been introduced into the world by an intelligent malevolent being, of great powers, and having other ill-disposed beings at his command (such as the Devil is generally represented to be) had been known to Moses, and adopted by him, it might have been expected that some trace of it would be found in the history of Pharaoh. But his wickedness and obstinacy is never ascribed to any such cause. The first mention of Satan is found in the book of Job, which was probably not of Hebrew origin, nor does it appear in any other part of the Old Testament, except the book of Chronicles, which was probably compiled after the Babylonish captivity; so that this hypothesis seems to have been derived from the East, and to have been gradually adopted by the Jews, among whom it seems to have been very prevalent in the time of our Saviour; but to have been posterior to the time of Moses.

That any other intelligent beings should enter into, or have access to the minds of men, and much less those of brutes, so as to think and speak for them, is in the highest degree improbable, and has no countenance in the scriptures, except what may be thought to be given to it by the story of Baalam's ass, in the Old Testament, and of demoniacal possessions in the New. But the ass seems to have said nothing but what any ass, having the power of speech,

speech, might have said, without the impulse or suggestion of any other being; not to say, that many suppose, and with no small degree of probability, that the story is an account of a visionary representation, and no real history of an ass speaking at all. The notion of madness being occasioned by evil spirits, disordering the minds of men, though it was the belief of the heathens, of the Jews in our Saviour's time, and of the Apostles themselves, is highly improbable; since all the *facts* may be accounted for in a much more natural way, as has been shewn by many writers, and especially by Mr. Farmer, in his excellent treatise on Demoniacs.

The story, therefore, of the serpent having spoken to Eve, without giving her any alarm, must greatly add to the improbability of the whole; so that, on this account only, we might conclude, that it is either an ill-founded tradition, or the allegorical representation of some real fact.

Upon the whole, the account which Moses gives of the fall is such an attempt to account for the introduction of death, and other evils, as himself, or some other person before him, thought to be most probable; or it may be some truth veiled in allegory.

That God, the maker of all things, is a good being, was evidently the opinion of Moses; and it is probable that he was more particular in asserting it, at the close of his account of the creation, and after every period of it, as the heathens in general held a different system. For the object of

worship among them was not supposed to be the maker of the world, but either the heavenly bodies, or dead men; and the philosophical system that prevailed in the east, and which was probably as old as Moses, was, that the world was made by some inferior being, who either would not, or could not, exclude the evils that entered into it. It might be in opposition to this system that Moses ascribed the origin of all things to God, who was the author of every thing that is good, and that he ascribed the introduction of death, and of all evils, to sin. But the latter is an hypothesis that is by no means favoured by fact, and I think myself at liberty to treat this system of cosmogony delivered by Moses with the same freedom with which we treat other systems that we meet with, without the least impeachment of his credit as an historian, or of his divine mission, of which I entertain no doubt.

If we consider Moses as writing from the best accounts that he had been able to collect, we must read all that he has advanced concerning the history of the early ages of the world, especially before the time of Abraham, the great ancestor of his nation, with an allowance for the possibility of mistake. His account of the intoxication of Noah, and of his prophecies concerning the fate of Canaan, the son of Ham, as well as of the first appearance of the rainbow, and the use of it, may be just for any thing that appears to the contrary; but I think it very possible that he may have been misinformed with respect to some of the particulars; and what I lay the chief stress upon is, that I do not think that a believer in the divine mission

mission of Moses is at all concerned to defend them. For he may be supposed to have been mistaken in these things, and yet to have given a faithful account of every thing that passed in his own time, and especially of his being empowered by God to work miracles, in order to deliver his countrymen from their servitude in Egypt. Indeed, that the history of Moses has always been considered by the Jews as genuine, and that they submitted to the laws and regulations contained in his writings, when they appear to have been so extremely averse to them, is a proof that the history is genuine, and as much to be depended upon as any other history whatever.

Lame as I think I have shewn the cosmogony of Moses to be, and contradicted by facts recorded by himself, especially the original distinction of sexes in the human race, as well as in brute animals, and by continual supplies of *food* being necessary to the continuance of their lives, it is much superior to that of Hesiod, or that of any other heathen writer, and its *object* is infinitely greater. The ideas of Moses are just and sublime. He represents the whole visible creation, including even the sun, moon, and stars, the objects of worship among the heathens, as well as the earth on which we live, as the production of one great being, who created the whole without labour, as it were, by merely issuing a command, and in a wonderfully short space of time. He represents this great being as perfectly good, and producing nothing but what was good; and he does not represent *evil* (which the oriental philosophers did) as having been introduced by another great intelligent being,

the rival of the Supreme Being, but by man's abuse of the liberty that God had given him. He also naturally accounts for the obligation of a weekly day of rest. And lastly, he uniformly represents the Supreme Being as perfectly knowing, and minutely attentive to, all the affairs of men, as the rewarder of virtue, and the punisher of vice.

These truths are so great, and so important, and also so little known to the gentile world, as sufficiently to prove that Moses had a source of information which the heathens had not, and that if he himself had not these truths from God, they must have been derived from him ultimately, and must have been received by Moses, and the Jewish nation in general, by tradition from their ancestors, who had communications with God. Consequently, the *religion* of Moses must have been divine, whatever we think of his *cosmogony*, which is founded upon the principles of it.

P A M P H I L U S,

Of

Of the Island on which the Apostle Paul was shipwrecked.

THAT the island now called *Malta*, and formerly *Melite Africana*, was that on which the apostle Paul was shipwrecked, was always the general opinion, and the tradition of the inhabitants is clearly in favour of it. But in the tenth century, Constantine Porphyrogeneta advanced a different opinion, viz. that it was the island called *Melite* in the Adriatic gulf, near the coast of *Illyricum*.

His reasons for this opinion, as they are quoted by Bochart (*Geographia Sacra*, lib. i. cap. 26.) are the following. 1. The ship was tossed in *Adria*, or the Adriatic sea, before it was wrecked. 2. The inhabitants of the island are termed barbarians. 3. No mention is made of any city in the island, though in the African *Melite*, there was one of the same name with the island.

To these arguments Bochart replies, 1. The ship was driven by a wind called *Euroclydon*, which, as the vulgate renders it *Euroaquilo*, was probably a north-east wind, which would carry them towards the African *Melite*, but from the Illyrian island of that name. 2. The ship's crew were afraid of being driven upon the quick-sands, or *Syrtes*, which, can only mean the famous ones near the coast of Africa. 3. They were driven upon a place called *διθαλασσον*, where two seas met, which is the description that is given by Horace and Ovid of the isthmus on which Corinth

stands; and such an isthmus there is in the isle of Malta, where the inhabitants say the shipwreck was. 4. Luke calls the governor of the island *παπυλος*, and on a Greek coin, the Roman governor of the African Melite, is called *παπυλος*. 5. The ship's crew, consisting of 266 persons, and also that of a ship from Alexandria, wintered in this island, which they could not without difficulty have done in the Illyrian Melite, but might do very conveniently in the African Melite. 6. The crew proceeded on their voyage to Rome in a ship from Alexandria, which had wintered there, and the African Melite was in their course; whereas the Illyrian Melite was quite out of it. 7. On the way from Malta to Rome, they touched first at Syracuse, and then at Rhegium, which places, in this very order, were in their way to Rome from the African Melite, but it was a most preposterous route from the Illyrian Melite.

With respect to the objections of Constantine, Bochart says, 1. That the *Adriatic* was, with the ancients, synonymous to the *Ionian* sea, which lay between Sicily and Greece. Hesychius expressly asserts this. According to Horace and Ovid, the isthmus on which Corinth stood was washed by the Adriatic sea to the west. Pausanias, speaking of the river Alpheus (which is said to have removed from Peloponnesus to Sicily) says, that it must have crossed the Adriatic sea. According to Ethicus and Orosius, the Adriatic sea extended quite to Africa. Jerom says, that the Adriatic sea was in the direct course from Alexandria to Sicily; and Procopius says, that the islands Gaulus and Malta divided the Adriatic sea from the Tyrrhenian

nian. For the passages themselves, I refer to my author. Afterwards the *Adriatic gulf*, which was originally considered as an arm of the Adriatic, or Ionian sea, was itself called the Adriatic sea.

2. As to Luke's making no mention of the city of Melite, Bochart observes, that, though they landed both at Coos and Rhodes, in both of which there were cities of the same name with the respective islands, yet no mention is made of the cities by the same historian, but only of the islands.

Notwithstanding these arguments, which seem to be conclusive against the hypothesis of Constantine Porphyrogenita, Mr. Bryant has defended this opinion against Bochart, with so much learning and ingenuity, that there are few persons, I believe, who have read Mr. Bryant's dissertation on this subject, but are pretty well satisfied, that it was the Melite Illyrica on which Paul was shipwrecked, and not the Melite Africana; and this I imagine, is the general opinion of the learned at present. I was of this opinion myself, and continued so till very lately; when having occasion to consult Bochart for some other purpose, I had the curiosity to examine what he had advanced on this subject; and after reading him with some care, I thought that he had not been satisfactorily answered by Mr. Bryant. The reasons why I now think so, are the following:

1. Mr. Bryant makes very light, p. 25, of the argument from *tradition*. He does not even attempt to invalidate it, nor does he hint that there was any similar tradition in favour of the Illyrian Melite, to oppose to that in favour of the present Malta. But as christianity, for any thing that appears, con-

tinued

tinued to be professed, without interruption, both in the island of Malta itself, and all the neighbouring countries, and the history of Paul was so exceedingly interesting to christians, it is not probable that so remarkable a circumstance in it would ever be forgotten. I therefore cannot help thinking, that the argument from uniform uninterrupted tradition is, in this case, entitled to more credit than Mr. Bryant is willing to allow.

2. Mr. Bryant has certainly the authority of Strabo, and others, for the Adriatic sea being, in his time, or in his opinion, the same that we now call the Adriatic gulf, or the gulph of Venice. But it appears from Strabo himself, that the Adriatic gulf was more anciently called the Ionian gulf, and it also appears from him, that the name of the Adriatic had extended itself to the wider part of the gulf, which lay between the foot of Italy and Greece, bordering upon the Lybian sea, through which the ship must have passed from Crete to Malta. And if, according to Pausanias, to which Mr. Bryant makes no objection, the sea between Peloponnesus and Sicily, was called the Adriatic, it could be no great impropriety in the historian to comprize within that appellation the contiguous sea, that lay between Crete and Sicily. With respect to the other authorities alledged by Bochart, Mr. Bryant contents himself with saying they are *too modern*. But this remark does not much affect that of Jerom, in whose time it can hardly be supposed that those seas, or countries, had changed the names that they had in the time of Paul, as the same government, and the same languages had continued in them. But admitting that the historian

might inadvertently call that the Adriatic which is allowed to be contiguous to it (as the boundaries of seas cannot be so accurate as those of countries) the mistake is very trifling; and Mr. Bryant's reply to the other arguments of Bochart appear to me to be exceedingly unsatisfactory.

3. I am particularly surprized that Mr. Bryant should insist so much as he does on the argument from the term *barbarous*, which Luke gives to the inhabitants of the island on which Paul was shipwrecked. "Whenever," he says, p. 40, "the Apostle calls a people *barbarous*, you may be sure it was the real character of the nation." But it is well known that the epithet *Barbarians* is, in the New Testament itself, opposed to *Greeks*; so that the inhabitants of this island, having been a colony of Phenicians, and not speaking Greek, would of course be denominated *Barbarians*. That they were so, however, in name only, is evident from the history itself. For it is said, Acts xxviii. 2. that *those barbarous people shewed them no little kindness*, which agrees very well with the civilized state of the African Melite; whereas the inhabitants of the Illyrian Melite are always represented as truly barbarous and uncivilized; as Mr. Bryant himself, though in fact against his argument, has abundantly proved. The treatment, therefore, which the crew of the shipwrecked vessel met with affords an argument greatly in favour of the African Melite, the inhabitants of which Mr. Bryant says, p. 44, had never that he could find, "the least pre-
" tence

“ tence to the character of barbarians. Such
 “ an imputation,” he adds, “ can never be
 “ fixed upon it without great injustice and im-
 “ propriety.”

4. Mr. Bryant acknowledges, that the *fyrttes*, which the ships company were afraid of being driven upon were those on the coast of Africa; but he says, that those fears soon vanished, as we hear no more of them. These apprehensions, however, could only arise from their being driven towards those *fyrttes*; and, therefore, this tempest must have come from the North, rather than from the South, which would have been necessary to carry them into the Adriatic gulf. And though the *fyrttes* might not be in a direct line with this tempest, as Mr. Bryant urges, they might be sufficiently near it to excite their apprehensions.

5. Mr. Bryant lays great stress upon the word *επιπεσσει*, which, he says, p. 47, signifies “ to fall upon a thing contrary to their ex-
 “ pectation, and their will, by erring and
 “ wandering from their original scope and de-
 “ stination.” But in this I see nothing that favours his argument. For certainly to have been driven upon these quicksands, would have been contrary both to their *will* and their *destination*, though they might lye so much in a line with their course, as to give them great alarm; and nothing but the direction of the wind being towards them could have done this. Admitting, therefore, that Mr. Bryant may be right in supposing that the wind called *Euroclydon*, may not signify a North-East wind, but
 such

such as is generally termed a *levanter*, or a tempestuous wind in general * (though I do not see that the word being a compound of two different languages, is a sufficient objection to Bochart's interpretation of it) it must have been such a tempestuous wind as, when it began to blow, drove them rather towards the African than the Illyrian Melite; and nothing is said of the wind having shifted its quarter.

Indeed, if we only consider where the ship was when the storm overtook it, we may be satisfied that the wind must have blown from the North, and not from the South, for they were then to the South of the island of Crete, which is of a great length, and extends from East to West; and their manner of navigating as we may easily perceive from the whole history of the voyage, was near the coast. The storm overtook them some time before they approached the island Clauda, which, in Mr. Bryant's own map, is situated nearer to the East than to the West end of the Island, and his own line of the course is drawn between the two Islands. In this situation, had the wind blown from the South, it must have driven them upon the island; and that danger being the nearest, and most alarming, they would certainly have expressed their fear of *it*, rather than that of being driven on the coast of Africa.

* That this wind, called *Euroclydon*, was not a *point wind*, or a wind blowing to or from any particular point of the compass, is well proved by Mr. Brekel, of Liverpool, in his discourse, intitled, *EUROCLYDON, or the Dangers of the Sea improved.*

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We have also, as I have observed before, no account of any change in the direction of this wind, which would have been necessary in order to carry them to the Illyrian Melite, the course to which is winding and intricate; whereas they might have been driven directly to the African Melite; there being nothing but an open sea between that island and Crete, without any land, or promontory, to intercept them..

6. I am ready to acknowledge that the word *διθάλασσος* is not necessarily descriptive of an *isthmus*, such as that on which Paul is supposed to have landed in the Isle of Malta, but may denote, as Mr. Bryant insists, a *promontory* lying between two seas, or two arms of the sea. But still the word *may* have the sense that Borchart affixes to it, as his authorities clearly prove. And as Mr. Bryant does not pretend that there is any such place as he describes in the Illyrian Melite, the argument, upon the whole, is certainly in favour of the present Malta. This argument, however, is not one on which I see any occasion to lay much stress; any more than I would on the term *πρωΐτης*, by which the governor of the island is described, for not being a Latin word, it might be the Greek rendering of any term by which the Romans should characterize the chief governor of any place.

7. As to the capacity of the island to maintain such a number of persons as that of which this ship's crew consisted, Mr. Bryant is far from denying that the African Melite was abundantly provided

provided for the purpose, though he may have lessened that difficulty with respect to the Illyrian Melite; since necessary sustenance might either have been found upon the island, or have been brought to it, on an emergency, from the neighbouring continent. However, as no mention is made of any difficulty of this kind, even this argument weighs something, though, perhaps, not much, in favour of the African Melite.

8. The argument from Paul's company meeting with a ship in the island on which they were cast, bound from Alexandria to Rome, I cannot help thinking is very greatly in favour of the African Melite, which lies very nearly in that course, and much against the Illyrian Melite, which was very far indeed out of it; and I do not think that the argument is at all invalidated by any of Mr. Bryant's observations. He supposes that this ship might have been overtaken by the same storm in which that of Paul was wrecked, and that the crew, finding that they had overshot the strait of Messina, were obliged to take shelter in the Adriatic. But if they had weathered the storm, and were afterwards at liberty to go whither they pleased, it can never be supposed that they would have, voluntarily, gone so much out of their way, or to so inhospitable a place as this Illyrian Melite is described to be; or that, being so near the continent, and entirely at their own disposal, they would not afterwards have taken some opportunity of quitting that place, for some other, in which they might have been better accommodated.

Besides,

Besides, nothing is said of any *storm* which **this** ship met with. On the contrary, we may rather infer, from the manner in which it is spoken of, that it was a ship wintering in the island from choice, Malta being a commodious port, and lying not far from the usual course of ships bound from Alexandria to Rome.

9. The argument in favour of the African Melite from Paul's calling at Syracuse in his passage to Rhegium, and the coast of Italy, which supplies an argument very strongly in favour of the African Melite, is very slightly touched by Mr. Bryant, who only says, p. 64. that "a favourable wind from the Illyrian Melite to the straits of Messina, must have been a wind from the north, which would likewise have carried them to Syracuse." But he might just as well have added, "and to Africa." It supposes what is in the highest degree impossible, viz. that the crew of the ship, sailing with a favourable wind (for no storm is mentioned or supposed) had no power of altering their course, or of putting into any other port, rather than go so much out of their way as to Syracuse; when they must know that they had to go directly back again to find the straits of Messina. And, according to Mr. Bryant, there would have been danger, lest a proper wind for this purpose should have carried them back to Melite again. I will venture to say, that no example can be produced in the history of navigation, of any ship going so far out of its course, except it was driven by a violent tempest.

Upon

Upon the whole, I think that Bochart's arguments in favour of the present Malta having been the island on which the apostle Paul was shipwrecked, have by no means been satisfactorily answered by Mr. Bryant. And with respect to Constantine Porphyrogenita, who first advanced the opinion of which Mr. Bryant is an advocate, it is said of him, in Le Clerc's edition of Moreri's dictionary, that " he is an author not to be
" credited, except in what relates to his own
" times; for that in every thing else he is full of
" gross faults." Mais il n'en faut croire l'Auteur,
" que sur ce qu'il dit des choses de son tems:
" il est plein de fautes grossieres dans tout le reste.

HERMAS.

D

Observations

Observations on the Mission of John the Baptist.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

IF the under-written be thought worthy of insertion in the *Theological Repository*, I doubt not its admission; if not, I shall cheerfully acquiesce in its suppression. It relates to the expectations of the Jews respecting the introduction of the *Messiah's* kingdom; and to John the Baptist's answers to the Priests and Levites, who were sent from Jerusalem to ask him, Who he was?—If what is advanced should be supposed bold, as well as novel, your *Repository* seems the proper place in which to introduce it to the notice of divines: a publication, the avowed purpose of which is to afford an opportunity for a free representation of *all* matters relative to theology.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.

CHRISTOPHILOS.

IT is universally agreed, that about the time of our Lord's appearance, a general expectation prevailed among the Jews, that the Messiah's kingdom was approaching. And it is absolutely certain, that they expected one or more prophets to precede him. That *one* was looked for by their
learned

learned men, is clear, from that saying of the Scribes, that "*Elias* must first come." Mat. xvii. 10. It has been inferred, from the manner in which the Priests and Levites interrogated John the Baptist, *John* i. 19. 26. that they even expected *two* fore-runners of the Messiah. From this latter opinion I dissent, believing that their *learned* men in general, had no expectation of the appearance of more than *one* prophet before the Messiah himself should come: and that when John the Baptist was asked, "Art thou the Christ, or *Elias*, or the Prophet?" the same character was intended both by the one and the other of these latter appellations; or in other words, that *Elias*, and *the Prophet*, were synonymous terms, to point out the harbinger of the expected king of Israel.

The question, "Art thou *Elias*?" had, no doubt, a reference to the prophecy in Mal. iv. 5. "Behold I will send you *Elijah* the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Such a prediction as this, would of course, have two interpretations given it. Some would hold that *Elijah* should return again from heaven in person; others would suppose merely, that a prophet, whom they ought to hold in equal veneration with *Elias*, was intended; many, however, would be cautious, and form no fixed or precise opinion on the subject. Now with these two latter classes, the usual appellation for the expected fore-runner of the Messiah, would naturally be *the Prophet*, and with the former *Elias*. When, therefore, the Priests and Levites had asked John the Baptist, "Art thou *Elias*?" and he replied

in the negative, a natural and necessary question remained to be proposed; namely, but "Art thou *the Prophet*," predicted under that name: and no farther enquiry was necessary; for the end of their errand was obtained, when they had received John the Baptist's reply to this.

In confirmation of this state of the case, I observe, that it is quite unnatural to suppose the *learned Jews in general*, should expect *two* prophets before the Messiah, when *one* only was foretold; and much more so, that they should distinguish *him*, for whose appearance they had no well-founded expectation, with the emphatic title of *the Prophet*. John i. 21. 25. That the learned Jews expected but *one* harbinger of the Messiah, may, I think, be further evinced from this circumstance, that the disciples, as they were descending from the mount on which Jesus had been transfigured, demanded of him, "But how say the Scribes, that Elias must first come?" Not, that *Elias and the Prophet* must first come; which would undoubtedly have been the expression, had the Scribes expected *one more* than him, whom they intended by the title of Elias.

The expectations of the *unlearned*, on the subject were, it is pretty evident, various; those perhaps of the *most illiterate* totally unfixed. This we know, that after the death of John the Baptist, some supposed Jesus to be *him*, others that he might be *Elias*, others *Jeremias*, or one of the *old* prophets risen again, Matt. xvi. 14. Luke ix. 8. The common people, however, seem to have been prepared to receive any one as *a* prophet, who should assume that character, provided it were well supported;

ported, and, accordingly, we are told, that *all men*, i. e. *great numbers of the lower ranks*, accounted John as a prophet, Matt. xxi. 26. but we are nowhere told, that *they* were nice to be informed whether he were *Elias* or some *other* prophet; contenting themselves with awaiting the result of his mission, to enable them to decide upon his precise character; or, perhaps, thinking it an enquiry of no great moment.

But the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders, wanted to know the exact extent of his pretensions, before they chose to receive him as a prophet *at all*; and sent to demand of him, "Who art thou? Art thou the Messiah? He replies, "No. Art thou Elias? No. Art thou the prophet predicted under that appellation? No." "And they asked him, Why baptizest thou then, "if thou be neither the Messiah, nor Elias, nor *the prophet* meant by Elias?"—By the bye, the question, "Why baptizest thou then?" does not, I apprehend, imply, as commentators have generally thought, that the Jews expected baptism, either from the Messiah, or Elias, or the prophet meant by Elias. It seems to be a mere expression of the indignation of the enquirers, at John's drawing together such great multitudes, by so unusual a method; or their mortification at finding their own hopes disappointed, or at being unable to obtain any certain information concerning his pretensions, to carry back to their employers. "Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us?" Or, finally, all these considerations might have operated together, to extort from them the above interrogation, with-

out their having any reference to an expected baptism from the Messiah, Elias, or the prophet. And this is the more likely to have been the case, as no just ground for such an expectation existed. But to return, I am well aware, that part of the above representation will be supposed liable to a very formidable objection, namely, that it makes John the Baptist to deny his real and proper character. I confess it; but so doth even our Lord himself. St. John, for instance, declares, that when the Baptist was asked, "Art thou Elias?" he replied, "No." But St. Matthew tells us, that our Saviour on the contrary declared, "I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatever they listed; likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." Matt. xvii. 12, 13. And even before this (but in the absence of the *twelve*) he had told the people, "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and, if ye will receive it, this is the Elias who was to come." Matt. xi. 13, 14.

Let it then be noticed, that no *peculiar* difficulty lies against the above state of facts; nor *any other* than that which lies against the gospel history itself, from which it is taken. My solution of the difficulty is briefly this, that John the Baptist did not know his own character, or that he was the prophet predicted by Malachi.

I know it has been, and expect it will again be said, that John the Baptist only denied, that he was the prophet Elijah in person, come down from heaven, whither he had been taken up. But
I think

I think it very apparent, from the story itself (which I beg the reader to peruse and re-consider, if he entertain any doubts) that the Priests and Levites who came to question him, are enquiring simply concerning the *public character* which he sustained; and his final answer (after denying that he was the Messiah, Elias, or *the* prophet) shows that he understood their interrogatories in that light, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." The meaning is, I who lift up my voice in the wilderness, am, in my *public character*, making straight the way before Jehovah (See, in the Hebrew, Isa. xl. 3.). Now had John the Baptist known that he was the person predicted by Malachi under the title of Elias, he could not, in this situation, when questioned about his *public character*, have denied that he was Elias; or if he did, he must have been guilty of a mean and dishonest prevarication; which, at the time, he must have been sensible operated against the proper end of his mission. A charge much too heavy to be brought against so good and excellent a person; who was, as our Saviour declared, not only a prophet, but much *more* than a prophet. He really was, as hath been shown, *that very Elias* after whom the Priests and Levites were enquiring, and the person whom our Saviour directly asserted to be Elias. How much better is it to suppose him to have been ignorant of his own proper character, than to charge the harbinger of the Messiah, either with prevarication or falsehood?

If there be any truth and reason in what I have here urged, I think no objection can lie against

supposing, that by *the prophet* was meant, as above advanced, the very same prophet that was before intended by the name of Elias; for this will only prove, that John *twice* denied what he was ignorant of, instead of denying it *once* only. But if he denied it *once*, no reason can be assigned for his not persisting in his denial, how often, and in what terms soever, he might be questioned on the subject.

I wish the reader to take notice, that if we translate, as the original will undoubtedly allow, *a prophet*, the difficulty is thereby rendered insurmountable. For John must have known himself to have been a prophet, as he had actually announced himself to be the forerunner of a *greater* prophet, and predicted the destruction of Jerusalem before this conversation took place. If he, therefore, denied at this time, that he was *a prophet*, he would stand chargeable with a wilful falsehood, which must by no means be admitted.

If my ideas on the above subjects be right, some important consequences will unavoidably follow, which I have long weighed, and intend, in due time, to submit to the public judgment.

Remarks

Remarks on Dr. Taylor's Key to the Apostolic Writings.

IN the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, great difficulty was found in the interpretation of what is advanced by the apostle Paul, concerning *election, justification, and salvation*; the Calvinists contending, that certain individuals of the human race are asserted by him to be elected, justified, and finally saved, without any regard to their good works, in consequence of the arbitrary decree of God. On the other hand, the Arminians have generally contended that the term *election*, in the writings of Paul, is to be understood as relating to *external privileges* only, such as men enjoy in consequence of the knowledge of the gospel; which, as well as other advantages, God grants or withholds at pleasure; but that none are ever said to be *justified, or saved*, besides those who make a proper use of their privileges, by the practice of virtue, and the acquisition of a truly christian character.

But the late Dr. Taylor of Norwich, advanced a new and a bolder hypothesis on this subject, by which he thought that he could easily solve all difficulties in the writings of the apostle, and reconcile him both with himself, and also with the apostle James. It is, that all the terms above-mentioned, viz. *election, justification,*

tification, salvation, with others connected with them, are used by the apostle in two different senses, and that we are sometimes to understand him according to one of these senses, and sometimes according to the other.

This, however, I cannot help thinking to be a most unwarrantable liberty in the interpretation of scripture, and that it goes upon the supposition of the apostle using words as no other writer before or since his time has ever done, or that any person would ever do, if he meant to be understood. For it is not pretended that the apostle any where asserts that he does use the same words in different senses, much less that he ever apprizes his reader when he uses them in one sense and when in the other. But I shall quote what he himself says with respect to the two senses of the term *justification*, by which his whole plan will be sufficiently understood, and shall then make a few remarks upon it.

“ The first, or fundamental justification,” says the Doctor [Key to the Epistles, s. 245] “ hath relation to the heathen state of us Gen-
 “ tiles ; and consists in the remission of sins, and
 “ in our being admitted, upon our faith, into
 “ the kingdom or covenant of God. Nay, fur-
 “ ther, our present common salvation, or jus-
 “ tification, is so of grace, and reaches so far,
 “ that in case any professed christian hath lived
 “ disagreeably to the rules of the gospel ; yet
 “ upon his repentance and return to God, his
 “ interest in the divine grace, and the pardon
 “ of

“ of sin stands good, notwithstanding his former evil life.”

And afterwards, f. 246. “ It is by virtue of this first justification, that we enjoy the benefit of repentance, and forgiveness of sin, after we are taken into the church and covenant of God ; and, therefore, the forgiveness of sins, to those who are in the church and covenant of God, comes under the same rules with the first justification (for it is the same justification continued or repeated) and is of grace, not of works, as it necessarily must. Or, in other words, it is in virtue of our first justification, that our present life is a day of grace, the grace of our first justification, or the benefit of repentance and pardon, being continued throughout our whole present life, and giving us opportunity and means of obtaining eternal life.”

Afterwards, he proceeds to inform us, what those works are which contribute nothing towards our first justification ; and what that faith is which doth justify us, f. 257. “ By works, excluded from justification, he [St. Paul] does not mean only ceremonial works, or ritual observances of the Mosaic constitution : for he expressly excludes works of righteousness, or righteous works, Tit. iii. 5. Now this sets aside, not only ceremonial works, but all acts of obedience properly moral, f. 250. It is also evident, what that faith is, which gave a right to that first justification, or an admittance into the kingdom of God in this world. Certainly it was such a faith
“ as

“ as was consistent with a man's perishing eternally, f. 251. The faith, which gave a person a place or standing in the christian church, was *profession*, considered simply, and separately from the fruits and effects of it; though, I conceive, it did include a profession of repentance, of forsaking sin and idolatry, and of bringing forth the fruits of righteousness.”

On the other hand, “ final justification,” he says, “ consists in our being actually qualified for, and being put into possession of, eternal life, after we have duly improved our first justification,” f. 246.

I cannot but wish that the worthy author had left his meaning less doubtful, by expressing himself with more clearness and precision. The passages I have quoted above, if they are consistent, are liable to be construed in two senses: but both of them appear to me to be indefensible, and to draw after them consequences, which the author himself strongly disclaims.

If, as he asserts, the first faith, which is no more than a *simple profession*, gives us a right to the first justification, which consists in the remission of all our past sins; and if that justification whereby we obtain remission of sins after our profession, is *the same justification continued or repeated*, and comes under the same rules with it: It follows, that all the sins of mankind are remitted upon their simple profession, without regard to any works of righteousness whatever; and yet, I am persuaded, the author did not intend any such thing.

For,

For, in the first place, if the first justification avails to the forgiveness of all our sins, committed before, and after conversion, what occasion is there for any other justification. Secondly, it would be a reflection upon the rectitude of the divine being, to suppose that he pardons sin committed before, or after conversion, upon any *simple profession*, separate from its fruits and effects. Mankind had been taught both by the light of nature, and the uniform tenor of revelation, that nothing but repentance and a good life would entitle them to the divine mercy and favour.

This view of the doctrine of a double justification is, therefore, very absurd, and draws after it consequences which the author would certainly reject.

But, on the other hand, if we may collect the doctor's sense of his first justification from the following description of it, expressed in his own words, a different conclusion, but equally false, and shocking, will follow from it; and which is likewise expressly disclaimed by the author. He says, that "It is in virtue of our first justification
" that our present life is a day of grace; the grace
" of our first justification, or the benefit of re-
" pentance and pardon, being continued through
" our whole present life, and giving us oppor-
" tunity and means of obtaining eternal life."

If this be true, viz. that our day of grace, and capacity for the benefit of repentance and pardon, commences at our first justification, or conversion to christianity, in what a deplorable condition must the whole heathen world be, who are not yet justified in any sense? They can, therefore, "have
" no

“no day of grace, and can reap no benefit of re-
 “penitance and pardon. They have no oppor-
 “tunity or means of obtaining eternal life, but
 “must, without doubt, perish everlastingly;”
 which is a conclusion, that is not only in the
 highest degree shocking to charity, and even com-
 mon sense, but what the author expressly dis-
 claims, in an entire section, intended to prove that
 the heathens are in a capacity of obtaining pardon
 of sin, and future happiness.

This account, therefore, of *two justifications*
 (supposing the author to have found authority for
 it in scripture, which I think it evident that he
 hath not) avails nothing to the clearing up of
 difficulties and inconsistencies in his writings. For
 either of the senses of justification which may be
 deduced from his words, implies an absurdity;
 since we must suppose, either that the divine being
 actually pardons sin upon a mere profession of
 faith, in direct violation of his rectitude; or else,
 that christians, and they only, enjoy a day of grace,
 and a possibility of receiving pardon of sin, and
 acceptance with God.

It appears to me, that this elaborate hypothesis,
 which is still thought by many to furnish the only
 true key to the apostolic writings, is rendered al-
 together unnecessary by the supposition, that the
 apostle always uses the term *justification*, &c. in the
 same sense; viz. that which implies that a man's
 sins are forgiven, that he is a proper object of the
 divine favour, and qualified for future happiness;
 and that when he speaks of *a whole church* being
 thus *justified*, it was upon the supposition that the
 members of it improved their privileges, and on

that account were the proper objects of the divine favour, though many of them did not do so, and therefore would finally perish.

It is evident that the christian church at Corinth, as may easily be collected from the epistles of Paul, was in a very imperfect state with respect to practice as well as knowledge; and notwithstanding the state of things at the time of the promulgation of christianity was such, as that the generality of those who embraced it would be well disposed and virtuous persons, yet the number that abandoned the profession of it, on account of the difficulties to which it exposed them, shews that *all* of them were by no means well-grounded in the principles of it, and that they were very far, indeed, from having imbibed the proper spirit of it. This the epistles of Paul abundantly prove. Had the apostle attended to the case of such persons only (of which there were probably a considerable number in all christian churches) without considering them as part of a *collective body*, of which he thought favourably on the whole, it cannot be imagined that he would have said that *they* were in a state of justification, or that they ever had been in that state, notwithstanding they were nominally christians.

The knowledge of christianity could only operate like *knowledge* of any other kind, viz. gradually; by furnishing new motives to men to reform their conduct, and thus producing a change in their character. But till it had produced this effect, for which *time* was requisite, those who embraced christianity might continue addicted to very gross vices, and therefore could never be considered as
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in a state of justification and favour with God, merely because they were convinced of the truth of the christian religion. Simon Magus, and no doubt many others, were thus convinced; and in consequence of it were baptized, who nevertheless remained *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*. To them, therefore, the profession of christianity, instead of being any plea in their favour, would be an aggravation of their guilt and condemnation.

No person can be supposed to be fit for the happiness of heaven whose general character and habits are not such as are required by the gospel; and it is neither said, nor supposed, that the mere conviction of the truth of christianity, or any other truth, could immediately produce this effect. It must then have operated like a charm. And if this be admitted, so that a total change of moral character be supposed to have instantly taken place in all the new converts, the effects of it would have remained. A truly christian character being once fixed, could not but have produced its proper effects; and then christian churches could never have contained so many unworthy members, persons actuated by a spirit so much the reverse of that of the gospel, as it is evident from the epistles of Paul were actually found in them.

I own, I find no great difficulty in interpreting all that the apostle has said concerning *justification*, by supposing that he meant by it, not an admission to mere *privileges*, but that state of favour and acceptance with God
- which

which is promised to those who repent of their sins, and obey the precepts of the gospel.

With respect to the term *election*, I acknowledge that, in general, when the apostle makes use of it, he does refer to *external privileges*, connected with the knowledge of the gospel. But when he connects *salvation* with *election*, I see no reason to suppose that he means any thing else than *final salvation*, that which men will be entitled to in consequence of improving their external advantages. As the apostle sometimes makes the strictest connection between *election*, *justification*, *sanctification*, and *glorification*, the most natural interpretation is, that he supposes justification, and glorification, to be *conditional*, depending upon the improvement of the privileges obtained by election, and by no means necessarily connected with a circumstance which depended upon the arbitrary pleasure of God. For with respect to the greater part of christians (and he generally speaks of them *collectively*) he might reasonably suppose that they who were *elected*, were likewise *sanctified*, and *justified*, and therefore would at last be *glorified*.

I am sensible, however, that the term *sanctified*, or *made holy*, in the Old Testament, is applied to things, or persons, particularly *devoted to God*, and has no relation to *moral character*; and therefore when the apostle calls the christians in general *a holy and peculiar people*, he might mean nothing more than was intended when the Jews were called *a holy nation* and *a peculiar people*, viz. persons distinguished by

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God

God with peculiar advantages for knowledge and virtue; so that *sanctification* will be nearly synonymous with *election*; but still that does not appear to me to be the general use of the word in the New Testament. As men are there considered as *individuals, holiness, or fitness for the divine service* (as the term originally signified) came naturally and necessarily to mean that *purity of heart and of life*, which alone can recommend men to the favour of God.

Upon the whole, I own I would rather suppose that the apostle sometimes expressed himself unguardedly, and improperly, in the use of the terms election, justification, &c. than suppose that he wrote upon such a system as Dr. Taylor frames for him; for that would render his meaning uncertain, and consequently, destroy the use of his writings

The Doctor lays peculiar stress upon the Jewish nation being said to be a *peculiar people, sanctified, or holy*; and he says the christians, as a body, stand now in the place of the Jews, that they succeed to the same privileges, and are entitled to the same appellations. But with respect to this, I would make the following observations.

1. The Jewish nation, having been set apart for a particular purpose, by an everlasting covenant, still continue in the same peculiar relation to God, and will do so to the end of the world, and the ceremony of circumcision, and the other rites which distinguish that nation, are, as far as appears from the scriptures, always
to

to be practised by them, whenever their circumstances shall admit of it. And if there be any truth in prophecy, I cannot help concluding, that the Jews are to be a much more distinguished nation, after their return from their present dispersion, than they have ever been yet, even *the glory of all nations*. It is impossible, therefore, that the body of christians should succeed to the peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation; and, therefore, if the same phraseology be applied to them, it must be in a borrowed or figurative sense; as the death of Christ is called a sacrifice, he is called the high priest, and christians in general priests. Besides, the Jews were called a peculiar people with respect to other nations, who were not the peculiar people of God, whereas christianity is designed to be the religion of the whole world, and to be embraced by all nations; so that, with respect to them, the propriety of the appellation must necessarily cease, which it does not need to do with respect to the Jews.

2. The Jews are said to be *holy*, or set apart by God for a particular purpose *as a nation*; whereas christians are considered *individually*, and therefore, though the same terms be applied to both, they cannot have the same signification. Consequently, though a nation may be said to be *holy* without moral virtue, it does not follow that a single person can be called holy in the same sense.

3. Notwithstanding the Jews are called a holy people, &c. yet when mention is made of the *forgiveness of sin*, no account is made of their

external privileges ; but the Jews themselves were considered individually, as the subjects of God's moral government, which always required repentance and moral virtue as the only terms of acceptance with him. Allowing, therefore, the strictest resemblance between the relation that the Jews bore to God, and that which christians now bear to him, there can be no authority for interpreting what Paul says concerning *justification*, and *pardon of sin*, in the epistle to the Romans concerning external privileges ; and yet Dr. Taylor contends, that it is the first justification only that Paul treats of in that epistle.

Indeed, I do not find any phrase of the same import with *justification*, the *pardon of sin*, or *acceptance with God*, among those which Dr. Taylor has collected from the Old Testament, as applied to the whole Jewish nation, when their *external privileges* only are spoken of. But such phrases as these frequently occur in the epistle to the Romans, as chap. v. ver. 1. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* To interpret this, and other similar phrases, which Dr. Taylor does, as referring to *gospel privileges* only, and not to a state of proper favour with God, such as will qualify men for future happiness is, I think, exceedingly unnatural.

Lastly, it is an argument exceedingly unfavourable to Dr. Taylor's hypothesis, and which he does not seem to have attended to, that the term *iustification* is never used in the gospels, or the book of Acts, in the sense in which he contends that it is used in the epistle to the Romans. For it always

means *the forgiveness of sin, and a state of acceptance with God*, the same that he makes the second or final justification. Indeed, it has always this sense in the Old Testament.

The term *salvation* properly signifies *deliverance* from any evil or danger, and therefore may have many acceptations. But, in general, this term also means *final salvation* in the gospels, and the book of Acts ; and never, I believe, a mere admission to gospel privileges.

As proofs of what is here advanced, see Job xiii. 18. Pf. cxliii. 2. Luke xviii. 14. Acts xiii. 39. Luke viii. 12. xiii. 23. John iii. 17. Acts ii. 47. xv. 1.

PELAGIUS.

*A Query relating to the Rise of the Arian
Doctrinē.*

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

I SHALL be much obliged to any of your learned readers, if they will give me some assistance in tracing the first distinct mention of the Arian hypothesis concerning the person of Christ; by which I mean his being *made out of nothing* before the creation of the world, and not the Logos, or wisdom of the Father.

This opinion has been said to be found in the writings of Origen. But I own that, after a pretty careful perusal of them, I do not find that they contain any such idea. According to Origen, the Logos (which he makes to be the same with Christ) was originally an attribute of the Father, as much as it appears to have been so in the opinion of Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, or any other of the Ante-Nicene fathers. Indeed, it was not till long after the age of Origen that any such opinion as that of Arius was ascribed to him. It was in an age in which the mere term *created*, as applied to Christ, was thought to be exceptionable; whereas it had been occasionally used before to signify that remarkable change of state in the
Logos,

Logos, when, after having been a mere attribute of the Father, it assumed a *proper personality*, so as to become an intelligent person *per se*, as much as the Father himself from whom he sprung.

For my own part, I must confess that I have not been able to find any trace of the proper Arian hypothesis earlier than the age of Arius himself. On the other hand, there can be no doubt but that the opinion of Christ having been *simply a man*, who had no existence before his birth, may be traced as high as the age of the apostles; and it appears to me to have been the general opinion of the *unlearned christians* till about the time of the council of Nice; whereas the Arian opinion appears to have had its origin with the *learned*, and philosophizing christians, as much as that of the personification of the Logos, and it was some time before we find it among the common people.

This circumstance, I own, is with me an argument of considerable weight in favour of what is called the Socinian, or proper Unitarian hypothesis; and I cannot help distrusting any interpretation of particular passages of scripture, such as the Arians avail themselves of, which make them teach a doctrine of which I find no trace in any christian writer before the fourth century, and which till that time does not appear to have been known to the common people; especially when it is considered that these common people read the same scriptures that we now do, and when, being written for
their

their use, they must be thought to have been better qualified to understand the true meaning of them than we are at this day, without seeing in them any such doctrine as the Arians imagine them to contain.

Opinions generally held by the common people among christians cannot well be supposed to have had any other origin than the teaching of the apostles themselves. In reality, the common people had no other teachers; whereas the opinions of the learned and philosophising christians, whether they held the doctrine of the personification of the Logos, or that of the creation of the world by a created Logos, may easily be traced to another and a very different origin viz. the doctrine which they had learned in the schools of philosophy, and especially that of Plato, for whom the early christian writers expressed a very undue veneration. Wishing, however, to be better informed on this subject by any of your learned readers, I am,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

B E R Y L L U S.

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version, may be admitted, I should think that this which I have proposed may have some title to a reception by the learned. But I submit it to the judgment of your readers, and am,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

B I B L I C U S.

P. S. The word גרל is frequently used in a figurative sense, to denote rank and distinction, as well as mere magnitude; and it is no uncommon thing in writing Hebrew to drop the letter ך when it is only used as a vowel.

*An Addition to the Paper, signed HERMAS,
relating to the Island on which Paul was ship-
wrecked.*

THOUGH I am ready to admit that the wind, called *Euroclydon*, might not be a wind in any particular direction, but only a *tempestuous wind* in general, it is pretty evident, from the circumstances of the history, that it must have continued to blow in one direction the greatest part at least of the time that the storm lasted. For the ship was driven by it, without any tackling (Acts xxvii. 19.) about 720 miles (the distance from Crete to Malta) in fourteen days, which is at the rate of about 50 miles per day; and this I suppose is nearly as fast as a ship without sails could be supposed to drive. This is upon the supposition that the island on which the ship was cast was the present Malta. But if it was Melite, in the Adriatic gulph, the distance is somewhat greater, and therefore will less admit of a change in the direction of this wind.

It is to be observed, that the storm does not appear to have blown with much violence, except at the beginning (indeed high winds are seldom of long continuance) and at the last the wind was so much abated, that the crew thought of making their escape in an open boat; and all the ship's company, some by swimming, and others on broken pieces of the ship, got safe to land; which they could not have done if it had been very stormy.

A Query

*A Query relating to the Doctrines of Plato,
concerning the Divine Essence.*

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

AS much has been advanced concerning the *Platonic trinity*, I shall be much obliged to any of your correspondents, who are versed in the writings of Plato, if they will state, *in his own words*, what his opinion concerning the divine essence really was; that it may be compared with that which Philo, and the Christian Fathers ascribe to him; and that a better judgment may be formed, how far it may be supposed to have given rise to the generally received doctrine of the trinity.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

J O S E P H U S.

* * * Those who are possessed of the three first volumes of this work are desired to make the following correction.

Vol. III. p. 461. l. 14. for *difficulty*, read *ductility*.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING had occasion to peruse the works of Plato with some attention, and especially with a view to the very question that *Josephus* has proposed in the *Repository*, I submit my observations on the subject to your judgment, and his, and am,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

PÉLAGIUS.

*Of the Doctrine of Plato concerning God, and the
general System of Nature.*

THE doctrine of the *personification of the Logos*, or the *divine intellect*, consisting of the attributes of *wisdom, power, &c.* was certainly introduced by the Platonists, and from them it was adopted by the christian Fathers; but it appears to me, from a pretty careful examination of the writings of Plato, that this was not done by himself, though the confusion of his ideas, and the inaccuracy of his expressions, gave occasion to it in his followers.

F

According

According to Plato, the universe was made by the supreme God, whom he often stiles αγαθός, or *the good*, without the instrumentality of any subordinate being whatever, only making it according to a *pattern* previously formed in his own mind. Language to this effect is frequent in his writings; but there is a manifest confusion in his account of the *ideas of the divine mind*, by means of which the plan of the universe was formed; so that he sometimes makes them to be a *second principle* of things, and the world itself, which was produced from those ideas, a *third principle*; but I do not find that he ever proceeded so far as to make the divine mind, νοῦς, or λογός, a *second God*, a distinct intelligent being. The *Demiurgus*, or immediate maker of the world, according to the following passage, was evidently the supreme Being himself, and not any subordinate agent, or principle, whatever. "You will say," says he, "that all animals that are produced, and perishable, and which formerly were not, either have their origin from God, who made them, or according to the opinion of the vulgar. What opinion? That nature produced them as a self moving cause, without (διανοία) intelligence; or with a divine knowledge, and reason (λογός) which comes from God*."

I have

* Ξενός. Ζωα δὴ πάντα θνητὰ καὶ φθιτὰ — μὴν ἀλλὰ τίνος ἢ θεοῦ δημιουργοῦ φησομεν ὑπερον γιγνεσθαι, προτερον ἐκ οὐρα; ἢ τῶν πολλῶν δογματι καὶ ρηματι χρωμεοι; Θεωρησθαι. Ποιῶ; Ξενός. Τῶ τὴν φύσιν αὐτὰ γενναν, ἀπο τίνος

I have not met with any passage more favourable to the doctrine of a *second God*, employed in making the world, in all the writings of Plato, than this; and yet it is evident that the *Logos* here spoken of, as that by which God made the universe, was, in his idea, synonymous with *διανοια* and *ἐπιστημη*, or his *understanding*, and by no means any other proper *person* or *agent*.

That, in Plato's idea, it was the supreme Father who himself accomplished the work of creation, is evident from his representation of him as rejoicing at the conclusion of it. "When he saw the system in motion, and considered the beautiful image of the eternal Gods, the generating Father rejoiced, and was glad, and thought to make it more to resemble the pattern*." The resemblance between this passage and that of Moses, Gen. i. 31. *And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*, is very striking; so that it is no wonder that many persons should have thought that Plato had seen the writings of Moses, and copied from them. But I think that if Plato had taken *this* from Moses, he would have taken more; and in other respects the theology of Plato is very different indeed from that of Moses, though they both agree in representing

τινὸς αἰτίας αὐτομάτης, καὶ ἀνευ διανοίας φύσεως, ἢ μέγα λογὸς τε, καὶ ἐπιστήμης θείας, ἀπο θεῶν γιγνομένης. Sophistes, p. 114.

* Ὡς τε κινήθην τε αὐτὸ καὶ ζῶν ἐγένετο, τῶν αἰδίων θεῶν γειομένου ἀγαλλμα, ὁ γενήσας πατήρ ηγαθή τε, καὶ εὐφρανθεὶς ἐτι δὴ μάλλον ὁμοίον πρὸς τὸ παραδειγμα ἐπένευκέν ἀπεργασέσθαι. Timæus, p. 480.

the supreme Being himself as having made all things by his own power, and to have pronounced them very good.

That the supreme Being himself is the *Demiurgus* according to Plato, and not any subordinate being, is also evident from this passage. "Nothing can be produced without a cause, for when the *Demiurgus* looks to what is always the same" (meaning the images of things always existing in his mind) "and making use of this as a pattern, produces into act his idea and power, every thing must necessarily be finished in the most perfect manner*."

Plato never distinguishes the *Demiurgus* from the Creator of the world, as his followers and the christian Fathers were careful to do; and with respect to all the *immortal beings*, Plato introduces the supreme Father as solemnly addressing them, and calling himself their *Demiurgus*, "Gods of Gods, of whom I am the maker, and the Father of the works, which are made by myself †." &c.

Much has been said concerning the *Platonic Logos*; but if by this be meant a person distinct from the being whose logos it is, we must not look for it in the writings of Plato himself, but in those of his followers. According to Plato,

* Παν γὰρ τι αδυνατον χωρις αιτις γενεσιν χειν. Οταν μεν εν ο δημιουργῳ, προς το καλα ταυτα εχον ελεπων, αι τοιςτω τιμι προσφομενῳ παραδειγμασι, την ιδεαν η δυναμιν απεργαζειται, καλον εξ αναγκης εως αποτελειθαι παν. *Timæus*, p. 477.

† Θεοι θεων, ων εγω δημιουργῳ, πατηρ τε εργαω, α δι' εμε γενομενα. *Timæus*, p. 481.

Logos has only two acceptations, viz. those of *speech*, and of *reason*, such as is found in man. Having spoken of one *logos* as infirm, and standing in need of assistance, he says, “there is *another* *logos*, the natural brother of this, much better, and more powerful, viz. that which is written with knowledge in the mind of the learner, able to help itself, knowing with whom to speak, and with whom to be silent. *Phæd.* You mean the living and animated *logos* of an intelligent person, of which that which is written may be justly called the image.” *Phædrus*, p. 213. This is evidently a description of *reason*, as a faculty of the mind, and by no means of a person.

Plato makes the same distinction in his *Theætetes*. After defining one *logos* to mean *speech*, he says of another, “They who think rightly are said to think *with logos*, and there can be no right opinion without knowledge †.”— In this passage he is describing a property of the mind of man, but there can be no doubt of his having the same idea of the constitution of the divine mind, as he no where supposes that there is, in this respect, any difference between them, which the christian fathers very particularly point out. For, according to them, the divine *logos* be-

* Σω. Τι δε άλλον ορωμεν λογον τῆς ἀδελφῶν γνησιότητος τῷ τρωπῷ γιγνέσθαι, καὶ ὅσω ἀμεινον καὶ δυνατώτερον τὰς φωνάς — Ὅς μεί ἐπισήμως γράφεται ἐν τῇ τε μανθάνουσῃ ψυχῇ, δυνατῶ μὲν ἀμύται ἐαυτῷ, ἐπισήμων τε λέγειν τε καὶ σιγᾶν πρὸς ἑς δεῖ. Φαι. Τον τε εἰδούτον λογον λεγεις ζῶντα καὶ ἐμψυχον. *Phædrus*, p. 213.

† Ὅσοι τι ὀρθον δοξάζουσι πάντως αὐτο φανήσονται μετὰ λογος ἐχόντες, καὶ ἑδραμκ ἐτι ὀρθῇ δοξῇ χωρὶς ἐπισήμως γιγνησεται. *Theætetes*, p. 94.

came a permanent principle, or person, which the human *logos* could not be.

The term *νεϛ* is another denomination of the *logos*, signifying the *intelligence* or *wisdom* of God; but I find no personification of this principle in Plato. One of his definitions of it is the following, “*Νεϛ* is either the same thing with *truth*, or “exceedingly like to it*.” This is far from being an accurate definition; but there is by no means any *personification* in it, and Plato makes no difference between the mind of man, and that of God, in this respect.

The things to which there is the greatest appearance of Plato giving a permanent existence, as *original principles of things*, are the *ideas in the divine mind*, from which was formed the *exemplar*, or *pattern* of the visible world. But if all that he has advanced on this subject (with respect to which his own ideas were far from being clear) be attended to, it will be perceived, that by *ideas* he meant what we may call *the elements of real knowledge*, of which the minds of philosophers, as well as the divine mind, were possessed. But by *ideas* he did not mean what we now do by that term, viz. the image left in the mind by the impression of external objects.

“If *understanding*, and *right opinion*,” he says, “be two species of things, there must be things that are not perceived by our senses, but by the *understanding* only †.” Then, asserting that

* *Νεϛ δε η̄τοι ταῡτον κ̄ αληθειᾱ ε̄σιν, η̄ παντων ομοιοτατον κ̄ αληθεστατον.* Philebus, p. 175.

† *Ει μιν νεϛ κ̄ δοξᾱ αληθης̄ ε̄σιν δυο γενη, παντα πασιν ε̄ιναι καθ̄αυτᾱ ταυτᾱ αναϊθητᾱ ῡφ̄ η̄μων, ε̄ιδη, νοημενᾱ μονον.* Timæus, p. 485.

understanding

understanding and *right opinion* are two species of things, he says, that “of one of these (meaning “*right opinion*”) all men are capable; but of the “former, viz. *νῦν*, or *understanding*, only the “Gods, and a few men are capable.” Admitting this distinction, he says, “it will follow that there “must be a species of things” (meaning, no doubt, his *ideas*) “not subject to generation or destruction, “receiving nothing from without, nor ever leaving “their seat to go to any thing that is without, and “which the understanding alone can look into*.”

To this *system of ideas*, existing in the divine mind, he elsewhere gives the name of the *invisible and intelligible world*; and he is here contrasting it with *the visible world*, of which it was the *type*, or *pattern*; saying, “there is a second, similar to “this, and bearing the same name” (viz. that of *world*, *κοσμοῦ*, which means the whole visible system, and not this earth in particular) “that is perceived “by the senses, generated, always in motion, in “some place, subject also to destruction, and apprehended by *opinion* †” (which he makes to be a different thing from *understanding*) “and the *senses*. Then, after having spoken of these two principles, the visible and invisible worlds, he speaks of a

* Καὶ τὰ μὲν πάντα ἀνδρᾶ μετέχειν εἶπε, τὰ δὲ θεῶν, ἀνθρώπων δὲ γένεσθαι, βραχυτί. Τῶν δὲ κτὰ ἔχοντων, ομολογητέον μὲν εἶναι τὸ κατὰ αὐτὰ ἔχον εἶδῃ, ἀγενήτου καὶ ἀνώλεθρου, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ εἰσδεχόμενον ἄλλο ἄλλοθεν, καὶ αὐτὸ εἰς ἄλλοι ἴσθαι, ἀοράτου τε καὶ ἄλλως ἀντιλήπτου καὶ, ὁ φησὶ νοήσας εἰληχέει ἐπισκοπεῖν. *Timæus*, p. 485.

† Το δὲ ὁμανομοῦ, ὁμοίον τε ἐκεῖνω, δευτέρου ἀιδήτου, γενήτου, πεφορημένον αἰεὶ, γιγνομένου ἐν τινὶ τόπῳ, καὶ παλιν ἐκεῖθεν ἀπολλυμένου, δόξῃ μετ' ἀιδήσεως περιληπτῶν. *Ibid.*

third thing, “ which affords place for every thing, “ and is not subject to corruption ; a thing that is “ to be conceived without being felt, and not easily “ to be understood *.” By this he can mean nothing but *space*.

He distinguishes these three things more distinctly in the following manner : “ There are three “ things to be distinguished ; the thing produced, “ that in which it is produced, and that from “ which it was produced, and from which it took “ its likeness. To use a comparison, we may call “ that which receives the *mother*, that from which “ it was derived the *father*, and the *offspring* between them is nature †.”

If there be a proper *Platonic trinity*, and all the ancients seem to have been fond of the number *three*, the three things, or principles above-mentioned, seem to be more distinctly marked than any other *ternary* in the writings of Plato, viz. the divine intellect, or system of ideas, here called the father, the visible world the child, and space the mother. But this is far from being a trinity of persons in the Divine Being. Space he afterwards characterizes in a more diffuse and figurative manner, saying, that “ it is the receptacle of the universe, neither “ earth, nor fire, nor water, nor any thing made

* Τριτον δέ αυ γενθ, ον το γαρ χωρας αιι φδορας κ προσδεχομενον, εδραν δε παρεχον οσα εχει γενεσιν πασιν, αυτο δε μετ' αναιδησιας απον λογισμω τινη νοδω μογισ πεισον. Timæus, p. 485.

† Εν δε εν τω παροντι χρη γενη διανοηθηναι τριηα, το μεν γιγνομενον, το δε εν ω γιγνεται, το δε οθεν απομοικμενον, φεται το γιγνομενον. Και δε κη προσεικασαι πρεπει, το μεν δεχομενον μητρι, το δε οθεν πατρι, την δε μεταξυ τωτων φυσιν ενγοιω νοησαι τε. Ibid.

“ out of them, or of which they are made, but
 “ containing all things; which is, in an inexpli-
 “ cable manner, capable of an intelligible nature,
 “ not to be comprehended by itself*,” by which
 expreffion I fuppofe he meant that fpace compre-
 hends the divine ideas, as well as all other things.

But though Plato himfelf did not proceed fo
 far as to perfonify thefe ideas, or any thing elfe
 belonging to the divine mind; it may eafily be
 conceived how this might come to be done by his
 followers, efpecially from their calling thefe *ideas*,
 the *caufes*, as well as *principles* of things. Dio-
 genes Laertius, in his life of Plato, fays, that he
 made the terms *idea*, *form*, *kind*, *pattern*, *prin-*
ci-ple, and *caufe* (as, I think, his words are moft
 naturally rendered into Englifh) to be fynony-
 mous †. “ Ideas, he fuppofed to be *caufes*, and
 “ *principles*, of things being naturally what they
 “ are ‡.” It alfo appears from Aristotle, that *ideas*
 were ufually called the *caufes of things*; and the
 notion of a *caufe*, and that of a proper *author* or
perfon, are nearly allied. It being a favourite
 principle with the ancients, that the divine mind
 was immoveable, and therefore could not *go forth*
 to the work of creation, but that fomething elfe
 muft do this; this fecond principle feems to have

* Διο την τε γεγονοτος ορατε, κη παντως αισθητε μηηρα
 τι υποδοχην, μη τε γην, μη τε αερα, μη τε πυρ, μητε
 υδωρ λεγομεν, μητε οσα εκ τετων, μητε εξ ων ταυτα
 γεγονεν, αλλ' αορατον ειδος τι, κη αμορφον, πανδεχες-
 μεταλαμβανων δε απορωτατα πη τε νοητε, κη δυσαλωτό-
 τατον αυτο λεγοντες, ε ψευσομεθα. Timæus, p. 485.

† Την γε ουν ιδεαν, και ειδος ονομαζει κη γενοσ κη παρα-
 δειγμα, κη αρχην, κη αιτιον. Vita Platonis, p. 225.

‡ Τασ δε ιδεασ υφιστάται αιτιασ τινασ, κη αρχασ, τε
 τοιαυτ' ειναι τα φυσει συνεσώτα οιαπερ εσιν αυτα. Ib. p. 232.

been personified for this purpose. But this was not done by Plato; for he made ideas to be as immoveable as the divine mind itself. In the affected mysterious way of expressing himself, which he frequently adopted, he says, that "*idea*" (for he sometimes used this term in the singular, and sometimes in the plural number) "neither moves nor remains;" meaning, perhaps, that it had no relation to space, and that "it is both *one* and *many* *."

The christian fathers have called the second principle, or *logos*, the *Son*, and the Supreme Being himself the *Father*; but in the system of Plato, the *sun* has the appellation of *εκγονοῦ*, or the offspring of the Deity; and in one place the whole universe is called his *only begotten Son*. "The Sun," he says †, "he created analogous to himself; for that "he himself in the intellectual world bears the "same relation to the mind, and the things "perceived by the mind, that the sun in the visible world bears to the eye, and the objects perceived by the eye."

His explanation of this analogy discovers much confusion in his ideas on the subject. "As the "sun," he says, "gives the eye a power of seeing, "and the objects a power of being seen; so that "which gives truth to things that are known, and "power" (that is, of knowing) "to him that "knows, is the idea of the good" (or of God)

* Καὶ τὴν ἰδέαν, οὐτε κινούμενον, οὐτὲ μένον· καὶ ταῦτα, καὶ ἓν, καὶ πολλὰ. Ibid. p. 25.

† Τοῦτον τοῖνον, ἢν δ' ἐγὼ φαναι με λέγειν τὸν τε ἀγαθὸν ἐκγονόν, οὐ τ' ἀγαθὸν ἐγενήσεν ἀναλογον εαυτῶ, ο, τίπερ αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ τότῳ πρὸς τὸν καὶ τὰ νοούμενα, οὗτος οὗτον ἐν τῷ ὁρατῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄψιν καὶ τὰ ὁρώμενα. De Rep. lib. vi. p. 433.

“ being the cause of knowledge and of truth, as
 “ perceived by the mind *.”

He also says, that “ as light and vision re-
 “ semble the sun, but are not the sun, so know-
 “ ledge and truth resemble the good, but are not
 “ the good; the good himself being something
 “ more venerable †.” Here it is observable, that
 he makes *the good*, and *the idea of the good* to be
 synonymous. This, I hope, may serve as a spe-
 cimen of the metaphysical *acumen* of Plato, and
 indeed of the ancients in general.

This comparison of the divine Being, and
 his influence in the moral world, to the sun and
 his rays in the natural world, which Plato did
 not pursue to any great length, being taken up
 and carried on by Philo, and the christian Fa-
 thers, contributed greatly to the formation of
 the doctrine of the christian trinity. According
 to the philosophy of the ancients, *rays of light*
 were something emitted by the sun, but still
 belonging to him, and never properly separated
 from him; but after being emitted in the day,
 were drawn into their source at night. As by
 these rays objects become visible, so that they
 serve as a medium of communication between
 the eye and the visible object, in like manner

* Τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ τὴν ἀληθεῖαν παρέχον τοῖς γινωσκομένοι-
 οῖς, καὶ τὴν γινωσκόντι τὴν δυνάμιν ἀποδίδον, τὴν τε
 ἀγαθὴν ἰδέαν φασι εἶναι, αἰτίαν δ' ἐπιστήμης οὖσαν καὶ ἀληθείας,
 ὡς γινωσκόμενης μὲν δια νοῦ. De Rep. lib. vi. p. 433.

† Ὡς περ ἐκεῖ φῶς τε καὶ ὄψιν ἠλοειδῆ μὲν νομίζειν ὀρθόν,
 ἠλίον δὲ δεῖ ἠγείσθαι ἐκ ὀρθῶς εἶναι: καὶ τὴν καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἀγαθὴν
 εἶδη μὲν νομίζειν ταῦτ' ἀμφοτέρω ὀρθόν, ἀγαθὸν δὲ
 ἠγείσθαι ὁποτέρω αὐτῶν ἐκ ὀρθῶν. ἀλλ' ἐστὶ μείζωνως
 τιμητέον τὴν τε ἀγαθὴν εἶναι. Ibid.

Plato must have supposed that the medium by which the mind distinguishes intellectual objects was a *divine influence*, or something emitted from the Deity, and drawn into him again at pleasure; and by making the *mind*, or *understanding*, to be one thing, and the soul itself another, he gave a farther handle for the hypothesis of a divine efflux different from the divine Being himself. This *rus*, therefore, synonymous to *Logos*, was afterwards supposed to be that principle which was occasionally emitted from the divine being whenever any thing external to him was to be produced, himself being supposed to be immoveable.

This *rus*, or *Logos*, Philo supposed to be that principle by which the world was made, and also to have been the immediate cause of all the appearances of God to the patriarchs, whether in the form of a *bright cloud*, &c. or of a *person*, and this was farther supposed by the christian Fathers to have received a permanent personification at the creation of the world, and afterwards to have been united to Jesus Christ. But Philo supposed the emission of this power or principle to have been only occasional, keeping nearly to the original principles of Platonism; and this was also the opinion of some of the learned christians mentioned by Justin Martyr. It is also ascribed to Marcellus of Ancyra, and others, who were properly enough ranked amongst *Unitarians*; whereas the orthodox Fathers supposed that at the creation of the world, the *Logos* assumed a *permanent personality*, and commenced a proper *thinking being*, independent

pendent of the Father, so as to be a *second principle*, among the *three* which were afterwards established.

The christian doctrine of the trinity was, moreover, brought forward by another maxim, which I do not find in Plato himself, but which was understood to be his doctrine, since it appears in the works of Julian, who was a great admirer of Plato. It is that, with respect to the Deity, there is no difference between *powers*, or *properties*, and *essence*. “Whatever,” he says*, “has been said concerning the divine essence, must be understood of his powers; for the *essence* of God is not one thing, and his *power* another, nor indeed is his *energy* a third. For whatever he *wills*, that *is*, and also *has power*, and *energy*.” Again, he says†, “When we would explain the *essence* of God, we must be understood to say the same concerning his *power*, and *energy*, for they are synonymous. For whatever we say concerning his *power* and *energy*, they are not to be considered as *works*, but as *essence*.”

* Κοινως μεν δη τα προθεν εν ρηθηντα περι της υσιος αυτης, ταις δυναμεσιν προσηκειν υποληπτων. * γαρ αλλο μεν εστιν υσια θεου, δυναμις δε αλλο και η Δια, τριον παρα ταυτα ενεργεια. παντα γαρ απερ βυλλειαι, ταυτα εστι, και δυναμει, και ενεργει. Juliani Op. tom. i. Orat. iv. p. 142.

† Πρωτον εν οσαπερ εφραμεν, την υσιαν αυτης παρασησαι βουλομεναι, ταυθ' ημιν ερηθαι, και περι των δυναμεων και ενεργειων νομισεον, επι δε εν τοις τοιυτοις ο λογος εοικεν ανηλεφεθαι. οσα και περι των δυναμεων αυτης και ενεργειων εφεξης σκοπυμεν, ταυτα εκ εργα μονον, αλλα και υσιαν νομισεον. Ibid. 143.

Plato, therefore, having spoken of *υ̅ς* or Logos, as a thing distinct from the Divine Being himself, as a *power*, or *property*, belonging to him, and all divine powers and properties being *substance*, a *substantial person* was easily made of this divine power. So miserably have men bewildered themselves for want of proper distinctions, and a true use of words. Such metaphysics as these of the ancients, excite a smile of contempt in us, who have been better instructed by the happier sagacity of Locke, and others of the moderns. We think it wretched trifling; but, alas, *hæ nugæ seria ducunt*. Hence arose the doctrine of the Trinity; and from this doctrine infinite confusion in the christian system, and a fatal obstacle to its reception with men of understanding among ourselves, as well as with Jews and Mahometans.

As the *world*, meaning the *universe*, or the *soul of the world*, is commonly reckoned the *third principle* in the Platonic Trinity, I shall consider what Plato's own ideas of it were; that it may be seen whether it has any correspondence to the *holy spirit*, the third principle in the christian Trinity. According to Plato, the world was made by God, out of pre-existent matter, and as, according to his general system, every *body* has a *soul*, the universe was also provided with one. But as the visible body of the universe was modified by the supreme Being, it should seem that the soul of the universe did likewise receive some modification from him; but with respect to this circumstance, he has not been sufficiently explicit. The universe, however,
when

when completed, was by Plato stiled *a God*, and *the only begotten Son* of the supreme God.

Having spoken of God as essentially “good, “and the parent of nothing but what was good “and excellent; and as nothing could be excellent without intelligence, nor intelligent “without a soul; for this reason,” he says, “he gave a mind to the soul, and a soul to the “body, and so constituted the whole world “after these the most perfect and excellent in “nature. So that we may justly say, that the “world is, through the providence of God, a “living creature, that it has a soul, and reason*.” “That this living creature might “be like the most perfect living creature, he “did not make two, or more of them. But this “*one only begotten heaven*” (meaning, probably, the whole system, including the sun, moon, and stars) “which has been, is, and will be †.” Then speaking of the constituent parts of the world, earth, air, fire, and water, he says, “he left no-

* Θεμισ δε ουί' ην, κτ' εσι τω αριθω δραν αλλο πλην το καλλισον, λογισαμεν εν ευρισκεν, εκ των κατα ρυσιν ορατων, κδεν ανοητο, τε νεν εχοντ, ολον ολε καλλιον εσεδαι ποτ' εργον, νεν δε αυ χωρις ψυχης, αδυνατον παραγενεθαι τω. Δια δη τον λογισμον τονδε, νουν μεν δε ψυχη, ψυχην δε εν σωματι συνιστας, το παν ξυνεπεκλαινελο, οπως οτι καλλισον ειη καλα το παραδωγμα αριθον τε εργον απεργασμενος. ουτως εν δη καλα λογον τον εικοτα δει λεγειν, τονδε τον κοσμον ζων ενψυχον εννουν τε, τη αληθεια, δια την τε θεε γενεθαι φρονοιαν. Timæus, p. 477.

† Ινα ουν τοδε κατα την μορωσιν ομοιον η τω παντελει ζωω, δια ταυτα ουτε δυο, ουτ' απειρους εποιησεν ο ποιων κοσμους. αλλ' εις οδε μονογενης ουρανος γεγονως, εσι τε κ' εσελαι. Ibid.

“ thing

“ thing out of it, with this view, that it might be
 “ a whole and perfect living creature, consisting
 “ of perfect parts, and moreover *one*, there
 “ being nothing left out of which another could
 “ be made, and not subject to old age or
 “ disease*.” He then speaks of it as made in
 a perfectly spherical form. But his reasons for
 this are as little to the purpose as those which I
 have here given relating to its other properties.

From this it should seem that, according to
 Plato, the matter out of which the world was
 made, was not created by God, but found by
 him, having been from eternity, co-existent with
 himself: but as he elsewhere observes †, “ in a
 “ confused disorderly state.” However, he
 speaks of a soul being given to it. But as his
 proof of the heavenly bodies having souls is the
 regularity of their motions, it is possible that he
 might consider matter, before it was reduced
 into order, as having been without a soul; and
 though he speaks of the soul of the world as
 having existed before the body, it is possible,
 that by body, he might not mean *mere matter*,
 but matter reduced into order, and formed into
 a regular universe, “ He,” (viz. God) he

* Των δε δη τετάρων, εν ολον εκασον ειληφεν η τε κοσμη
 σις. εκ γαρ πυρρος παντος, υδατος τε κη αερος, κη γης
 συνεσησεν αυτον οξυρισιας. μερος ουδ' εν ουδενος κδε δυναμιν
 εξωθεν υπολειπων. ταδε διανοηθεις πρωτον μεν ινα ολον
 οσι μαλιστα ζων τελεων εκ τελεων των μερων ειη. προς δε
 τετοις εν, αλε ουχ υπολειμμενων εξων αλλο τοιουτ' αν
 γενοιτο. Timæus p. 478.

† Αταξιας, εις ταξιν αυτο ηγαγεν εκ της αταξιας. Ibid.
 P. 477.

says*,

says *, “ gave a soul, which by its origin
“ and power, is prior to, and older than the
“ body, as its governess and directrix.” He
then proceeds to give an account of the essential
parts and principles of this soul of the universe ;
but I have no occasion to follow him so far.

One reason, however, why it may be doubted
whether the soul of the world was supposed by
Plato to be given it by God; is that, in one
passage of his writings, he supposes that there
were more of these souls than one. Having de-
fined *soul* to be the *cause of self motion*, in answer
to the question, whether there was only *one soul* in
the universe, he answers, “ more than one, two at
“ least, one benevolent, and the other of a con-
“ trary disposition †.” Now, according to Plato,
nothing evil was made by the Supreme Being him-
self ; and therefore, it should seem that this male-
volent soul, or principle, in nature, must have had
some other origin ; and, perhaps, have been co-
existent with matter, though subject to the controul
of the supreme and good Being.

That God is good, and can only be the cause
of good, is most expressly asserted by Plato.—
“ For the evils of life,” he says, “ we must seek
“ for some other cause than God ‡.” According

* Ο δε κ' γενεσει κ' αρετη, προσηραν κ' πρεσβυτεραν
ψυχην σωματος, ως δεσποειν κ' αρχεσαν αρχομενου συν-
εσησατο. Timæus, p. 478.

† Δυσιν μεν γεγε, ελαπτον μηδεν τιθωμεν, γαρ τε ενεργ-
γετιδθ, κ' τε ταναντια δυναμενης εξεργασαθαι. De
Leg. lib. x. p. 608.

‡ Των δε κακων, αλλα τα δει ζητειν τα αιτια, αλλ' ου
τον θεον. De Rep. lib. ii. p. 390.

to Plato, the Supreme Being himself is not only not the author of evil, but even not of things that are imperfect, and subject to decay and death. However, since it was proper, in order to complete the whole system, that such things should be formed, having himself made the celestial and immortal beings, that is, the heavenly bodies (to each of which he assigns a soul) Plato introduces the Divine Being as solemnly addressing himself to them, and giving them directions for the production of such creatures as he could not make himself (since, then, they would necessarily have been immortal) viz. man and all terrestrial animals. Timæus, p. 481.

This universe, created as it was, Plato speaks of as *a divinity*, and in the highest stile; using the following remarkable expressions at the close of his Timæus. “ This universe, comprehending mortal and immortal beings, and complete, being a visible living creature, containing visible things, the image of the intelligible” (that is, the invisible world of ideas) “ is the greatest and best visible God, the fairest, and the most perfect; this one heaven” (viz. system) “ being the only begotten*.” On this principle it was, that Plato, and the other heathen philosophers, vindicated the system of Polytheism; supposing that one supreme God made a number of subordinate beings, each of them invested with a limited jurisdiction, so as to be considered as gods.

* Θνητα γαρ ἢ ἀθανατα ζωα λαβων, ἢ συμπληρωθεὶς οὗτος κόσμος, αὐτῶν ζων ὁρατοί, τὰ σρατα περιέχον εἰκὼν τὴν νοητῆς, θεὸς ἀίδητος μέγιστος καὶ ἀριστος, κάλλιστος τε ἢ τελευτάτος, εἰς οὐρανὸς οὐδὲ, μονογενὴς ὢν. Timæus, p. 501.

Thus I have given the best view that I have been able to collect of every thing that can be supposed to constitute *the trinity of Plato*, from his own writings, without finding in them any resemblance to the christian trinity, or indeed any proper personification of the divine *logos*, which has been made the second person in it.

I have particularly examined what the learned Cudworth, and others, have advanced on this dark subject, without seeing their conclusions properly supported. To shew on how slight foundations such writers as he (who certainly did not mean to deceive) can advance such things as he does, and how far their imagination and hypothesis can impose upon them, I shall lay before my readers two of his assertions on this subject.

He says *, “ In his second epistle to Dionysius, “ He” (Plato) “ does mention a trinity of divine “ hypostases all together.”—From this, one would expect at least something like the Athanasian doctrine of *three persons in one God*. But all that I can learn from Plato in this epistle is as follows: Sending his letter to a great distance, and apprehensive of the possibility of its not reaching the person to whom it was addressed, he says, that he had written so obscurely, that only Dionysius himself could understand it. “ All things are about the “ king of all, and all things are, for the sake of “ him, and he is the author of every thing that “ is fair and good ; but the second about the se- “ cond, and the third about the third. The mind “ of man may stretch itself to learn what these “ things are, looking at those which resemble them,

* Intellectual System, lib. I. cap. i. p. 407.

“ of which none do it sufficiently; but with respect to the king, and the things of which I speak, there is nothing like them *.”

This is Dr. Cudworth's *trinity of divine hypostases*, and it is certainly as obscure as any doctrine of the trinity needs to be. Plato himself, or Dionysius, can alone explain it to us. I imagine, however, that, in this dark manner, he might refer to one or other of the *ternaries* above mentioned, viz. the supreme Being, his ideas, and the visible world, or the supreme Being, the visible world, and space.

Again, the Doctor says, p. 406. “ in other places of his” (Plato's) “ writings, he frequently asserts above the self-moving *psyche*, “ an immoveable and standing *ves*, or intellect, “ which was properly the *Demiurgus*, or architectonic framer of the whole world.” But it has appeared, that according to Plato, the supreme Being himself, whom he stiles *the good*, was the *Demiurgus* with respect to every thing that is immortal and perfect, and that not his *ves*, but those other created immortal beings, were the makers of man, and all other mortal and imperfect creatures. As to the *many passages* in the writings of Plato, which he says, teach the contrary doctrine, I can only say, that I have not found any of them; and that if there be any

* Περὶ τῶν βασιλέων πάντων ἓστι, καὶ ἐκεῖνα ἐνεκα πάντων, καὶ ἐκεῖνο αἰτίον πάντων τῶν καλῶν. δευτέρον δὲ περὶ τὰ δευτέρω, καὶ τρίτον περὶ τὰ τρίτω. ἢ οὐκ ἀνθρώπινα ψυχῆ, περὶ αὐτὰ ἀρεγέται, μαθεῖν ποῖ' ἀπὸ ἐστί, βλέψασα εἰς τὰ αὐτῆς συγγενῆ, ὡν ἐδένικα ὡς ἐχει. τὸ δὲ βασιλεως περὶ, καὶ ὡν εἶποι, οὐδὲν ἐστὶ τοιοῦτο. Epist. ad Dionysium ii. p. 67c.

such, they must be contradicted by what I have already quoted from him.

If this account give satisfaction to your correspondent *Josephus*, or any of your readers, I shall think myself happy; and if this be inserted in the *Repository*, I shall send you an account of what looks most like the doctrine of the trinity in the writings of the later Platonists, and those of Philo.

E S S A Y II*.

Observations on the Prophets of the Old Testament.

I Do not propose to make many remarks on the prophets of the Old Testament, it being sufficiently evident with respect to them all, that their inspiration was limited, and that it had little connexion with their moral character. Balaam, a prophet amongst the Gentiles, is a striking instance of this; and so indeed are David, Solomon, and Jonah. It is likewise no difficult thing to distinguish with respect to them, how far their inspiration extended, and in what respects they spake and acted from themselves.

It is by no means probable that Solomon wrote any thing by inspiration. He gives no intimation of it himself, and his works contain

* See Numb. I. page 38.

only such observations on human nature and human life, as a man of his understanding, and attention to the subject, may well be supposed to have made without any supernatural assistance.

The only difficulty of any magnitude, relates to the book of *Psalms*, several of which are generally thought to be prophetic. But I own I cannot easily bring myself to think any thing to be a prophecy, which is not announced and delivered as such; and especially if every expression contained in it can be accounted for without the supposition of any inspiration whatever. Now all the psalms, without exception, appear to me to be such poetical compositions, as intelligent and pious men may well be supposed to have made, without any supernatural assistance; and all the allusions in them are to transactions prior to the time in which they were composed, without the least reference to any thing that passed in after ages. Least of all can it be said, that any of the psalms are delivered to us in the proper *form* of prophecies, with such *exordiums* as we find in the writings of Moses, Isaiah, and others, who are universally allowed to have been prophets.

There is hardly any of the psalms that have been more generally thought to be prophetic, and to have a reference to future times, than the *second*; and yet, besides that it is not delivered in the form of a prophecy, it appears only to be such a pious hymn, as David may well be supposed to have made, after the assurance which God had given him of the succession of the
crown

crowns in his posterity, of which we have the following account, 2 Sam. vii. 12. *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.* We have the same account, with very little variation, 1 Chron. xvii. 11. &c. which concludes as follows. *I will be his father, and he shall be my son, and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee. But I will settle him in my house, and in my kingdom for ever, and his throne shall be established for evermore.*

David, having this remarkable promise in his mind (a promise which must have given him, and appears to have given him, the greatest satisfaction) it would naturally occur to him on meeting with the opposition which we find he had from the Philistines, and other neighbouring nations, immediately on his succession to the kingdom; and he would be encouraged by it to face that opposition with the fullest assurance of success, since the kingdom was to be established not only in himself, but also in his seed after him. And it is observable, that some time after this promise was given him, we find (2 Sam. i. &c.) that David subdued the Philistines and the Moabites, together with the kings of Zobah, and Damascus. Immediately after this mention is made of his spoiling the Ammonites, and the Amalekites,

and also of his conquering the Edomites, and making them tributary to him. An account of the very same conquests also follows the same promise of God to David in the book of Chronicles.

Now, supposing David to have composed this second psalm presently after this assurance that God had given him, of the perpetuity of the kingdom in his family, and while he was threatened with an invasion from the nations above mentioned (which, it is observable, completely surrounded his country, excepting a very small corner of it to the North, occupied by the Zidonians, who seem always to have been in friendship with him) how natural are all the sentiments of the psalm to a person in his situation. That my readers may be the more sensible of it. I shall copy the psalm, and subjoin such remarks as appear necessary for my purpose.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take council together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord, shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion. It is observable, that David had conquered Jerusalem from the Jebusites, and had fixed his own residence on the hill of Sion, within the precincts of it, some time before the promise above-mentioned, concerning the perpetuity of his kingdom, had been

been made to him. See 2 Sam. v. 6. 1 Chron. xi. 4.

I will declare the decree. The Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. As the promise of God being a father to his son, had been made to him on his own account, it was natural for him to consider himself as the proper object of that promise, and that the state of favour which this near relation to God implies, was intended for himself, no less than for his posterity. The decree, or solemn promise, here mentioned, is evidently that which is contained in the passages from the books of Samuel and Chronicles above recited, in which God says, *I will be his father, and he shall be my son.* What follows both in the psalm, and in the promises, is a description of his triumphing over all the nations that should oppose him or his posterity. The difference of phraseology in the two accounts of this promise, is inconsiderable; and they both correspond sufficiently with what follows in the psalm.

Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. The words of the promise, 1 Chron. xvii. 10. are, *I will subdue all his enemies.* These enemies were the heathen nations, by whom he was then invaded, and their being made tributary sufficiently justifies his saying, that they were given to him for an inheritance. The *uttermost parts of the earth* is a poetical exaggeration,

tion, that is not at all extraordinary in the language of scripture. The psalm concludes with an address to the princes, with whom he was at war, to submit to him and his posterity, who should succeed him, and not to persist in a fruitless opposition.

Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, while his wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. As the promise extended to the family of David, and he was looking forwards to future times, it was not unnatural for him to consider his successors, as well as himself, in this case; and, therefore, he exhorts all these nations to do homage to his posterity.— I cannot, however, help suspecting, that our present reading of the Hebrew copy may be faulty, and that the ancient reading might have justified the rendering of the Chaldee paraphrase, the Septuagint, the Arabic, and the Ethiopic versions, which instead of *kiss the Son*, have *receive instruction*. That there must have been some ancient reading of the Hebrew copy, different from the present, may with certainty be concluded from these translations, which never could have been suggested by the present reading, and it would require no great alteration in the Hebrew copy to make it correspond to those versions.

Upon the whole, then, it sufficiently appears, that there is no circumstance alluded to in this psalm, but such as David must have been acquainted with. This, I cannot help thinking, is
so

so obvious, that if we had had nothing before us besides the Old Testament, we should have concluded without hesitation, that this *second psalm*, like many others, was a pious hymn composed by David, from a view of the circumstances in which he then was. And if this psalm was not a prophecy when it was originally composed, it could not become one afterwards.

The quotation of this psalm by Peter, Acts ii. 34. and by Paul, Acts xiii. 32. as if it had an original reference to Christ, and the spread of christianity, foretelling the establishment of it, in opposition to the civil powers which then opposed it, cannot alter the nature of the case. It is probable, that those apostles really thought that this psalm contained a prophecy concerning a greater son of David than Solomon, or any of his posterity, the kings of Judah; and it is possible, that even the Jews of that age might imagine that this psalm had a reference to their Messiah. But both the apostles and the Jews might be mistaken in their interpretation of the scriptures. This will be considered more at large in my next essay, relating to the inspiration of the apostles.

The 110th psalm is remarkably similar to the second, so that I cannot help concluding, that it was composed on the same, or some similar occasion. For though some of the expressions are more obscure, the purport of it is to assert the divine promise of David's victory over all his enemies, and the perpetuity of the kingdom in his family. It is, however, quoted by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, as undoubtedly referring to Christ, especially the expression concerning

cerning Melchizedek, from which he has raised an argument which makes no small figure in that epistle. But still, as the psalm is not delivered as a prophecy, and the author of it seems to have attended to his own case only, I own that I am unwilling to look any farther for its real meaning. The whole psalm is as follows: *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thy enemies. The people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies: he shall wound the heads over many countries, he shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.*

Perhaps there are few psalms, or, indeed, few passages in the scriptures, in which there is more evident obscurity than in this; so that it is impossible not to suspect, that the true reading has not come down to us, and that our present Hebrew copies are considerably vitiated. It is, however, exceedingly improbable, *a priori*, that this psalm should contain any prophecy concerning the Messiah, and this for more reasons than one.

Had this psalm been a prophecy concerning the Messiah, it might have been expected that it would not have been the only one in all the writings and history of David; whereas it does not appear, from
any

any other part of his history, that David knew any thing about the Messiah *personally considered*.

If David had known that there was to have arisen such a person as was afterwards distinguished by the title of the *Messiah*, and that this glorious person was to descend from him, it is probable that he would have expressed as much satisfaction in the idea of it, as in that of the kingdom being perpetuated in his family. But no trace of this can be perceived. It is, therefore, rather to be presumed, that he was ignorant of it.

Indeed, that there was to be any Messiah, or a *single person*, from whom the world should derive such advantages as were afterwards predicted, and accomplished by Jesus Christ, could not be known in the time of David from any evidence that is now remaining. Of what is supposed to be the first promise of the Messiah, viz. that which was made to Adam and Eve, *the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*, I make no account at all, for the reasons that have been given in the essay preceding this. But even allowing the truth, and the inspiration of that part of the book of Genesis, all that could fairly be inferred from the promise, would be, that *man* should have the advantage over the *serpent*, or, at most, some being represented by the serpent; but that this advantage would be gained by means of some single individual of the human race could by no means have been inferred from it.

The next prophecy concerning the Messiah, and which I admit to be a real prophecy, is that which was made to Abraham, *In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*; but from this it could not
have

have been inferred that the blessing was to be derived from any particular descendant of Abraham, but only from his posterity at large, which might have been accomplished in a great variety of ways, consistently enough with the words of the promise, though there should have been no such person as a Messiah at all.

The next prophecy relating to the Messiah, is that of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* But even in this prophecy there is much obscurity; so that before the event, little, very little, could have been inferred from it. Its connexion with the promise made to Abraham is far from being apparent. That this *Shiloh* was to be a *person* is not certain; to say nothing of the different reading which some of the ancient versions must have followed; and if he was a person, it is not here said of what tribe, or even of what nation he should be. As to the person to whom the people should be gathered, it may as naturally be referred to Judah himself, or the kings of Judah, as to this *Shiloh*, whoever he was. For nothing at all is said of his rank, office, or power.

Another supposed prophecy of the Messiah, between the time of Jacob and of David, is that of Moses, Deut. xviii. 15. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.* This, however, could not originally have suggested any other idea than that of a succession of prophets, such as Moses himself had
been,

been, and which was fulfilled in Samuel, and others. This is the most natural and probable interpretation of the passage, and it will more evidently appear to be so, if the connexion in which it stands, be attended to. For it alludes to the terror with which the people had been seized on hearing the voice of God in thunder and lightning from Mount Sinai, which had led them to request that God would not speak to them in that manner any more, but only by Moses, a man like themselves. Immediately after the prophecy above quoted, it is added, v. 16. *According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God; neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet*

phet hath spoken it presumptuously. Thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Here is most evidently an allusion to a number of prophets, some of whom would acquit themselves well, and others ill. This, therefore, must be the most natural interpretation of the promise, or prophecy, as it is generally called, concerning *the prophet*, which has been applied to Christ. John the Baptist, and our Saviour were, no doubt, of the number of those prophets, but this character in Moses does not appear to belong to Christ exclusively of others.

One of the prophecies of Balaam respects the future prosperous state of the Israelites, and of some prince of that nation who should subdue the Moabites and Edomites; but it has no reference, that I can see, to the Messiah. Numb. xxiv. 17, &c. *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth; and Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.*

This remarkable prophecy, recorded by Moses, was fully accomplished in David, who conquered the Moabites and Edomites, and also probably those who are intended by the children of Sheth, if they were at all different from the Moabites. And there is no expression contained in it that can be construed to have any farther

farther reference, except the phrase *he that shall have dominion*, be supposed to denote a different person from him that is characterized by *the star*, and *the sceptre*. But as *he that should have dominion was to destroy all that remained of the city*, it is most natural to interpret it of some of the successors of David, who should complete his conquests.

We do not find, in the history of the Israelites, that any of the prophets who were not writers, such as Elijah, Elisha, &c. any more than Samuel, delivered any prophecy at all concerning the Messiah. As the first that occurs of this kind is in the 11th chapter of Isaiah, in which mention is made of a glorious person, who should descend from Jesse, or David, and this was delivered after the captivity of the ten tribes, and in the declining state of the kingdom of Judah, it seems probable that these more distinct prophecies concerning the Messiah, and the flourishing state of the Jews in the latter days, were reserved for that period, in which they would be peculiarly necessary for the consolation of the pious Israelites, who saw one half of their country in the possession of strangers, and the other in danger of being swallowed up by the great and warlike empires which were then rising up in their neighbourhood. Whereas such prophecies as these were less wanted in the time of David, and therefore were less to be expected then.

I shall now proceed to consider the psalm itself; and I would observe, in the first place, that there is no term in it that is properly characteristic of the *Messiah*. The expression *my*

Lord, is certainly by no means so, as nothing can be more indefinite. And that the psalm should begin in this abrupt manner, as if *the Lord* here supposed to be spoken to by the supreme Being, had been a person well known under that title (whereas, if the Messiah was meant by it, it was the first time that he had been announced in that manner) is highly improbable. I therefore cannot help suspecting that there is some very ancient corruption in the reading of the Hebrew text in this place, which it may now be impossible to rectify. That there has been a various reading in this place, is, I think, evident from the Chaldee paraphrase; which has, "the Lord said" (במִמְרֵיהּ) "in his word, that he would appoint me Lord over all Israel." It is possible, therefore, that some words may have been lost, which expressed the sense that is now contained in this ancient version, the author of which evidently supposed that it related wholly to David, and not to the Messiah. If I might venture a conjectural emendation, without supposing that any words are now lost, I would suppose that instead of לְאֲדֹנָי, there might be originally the word לְאֲמֵר, and then it would be rendered *the Lord spake, saying*, which is very nearly the usual phraseology of the Old Testament.

If we could suppose this psalm not to be written by David, but by Afaph, or some other of his subjects, there might be no great difficulty in the construction of the first verse, admitting the genuineness of the present reading; but other difficulties will still remain.

Another

Another remarkable expression in this psalm is, *according to the order of Melchizedek*, which is an idea that I think, could never be intended by the writer, because there was no such order of priests as that of Melchizedek that we any where else read of. Melchizedek, according to the history of Moses, was probably such a king and priest as Abraham himself was, being simply an independent prince, venerable, perhaps, for his age and character, but no head of any particular order, or class of men; and least of all one under whom the Messiah was to be ranked, which the expression in our translation literally implies.

If we might suppose that nothing more was meant by the original phrase, whatever it was, than that David, or Solomon, should resemble Melchizedek, points of resemblance may easily be found sufficient for the purpose. David himself, besides being *a king in Jerusalem*, as Melchizedek himself had probably been, was likewise a prophet; and though neither he nor Solomon did themselves officiate as priests, yet in other respects they had much to do in matters relating to the public worship of God. David, besides making great preparations for building the temple, which was accomplished by Solomon, composed many psalms for the service of the tabernacle; and his chief pleasure seems to have been derived from his attendance upon it.

But *Melchizedek* is by no means the necessary rendering of the present Hebrew, for the words may as well be rendered *a righteous king*; and

there is nothing which can with certainty be rendered *according to the order of*, for the word בְּדַבְרֹתַי, with a very little alteration, signifies *according to my word*. The rendering in the Chaldee paraphrase, is as follows, "The Lord hath sworn that thou shalt be great for ever because thou shalt be an immaculate king."

But, in answer to all these observations, it will be said, that our Saviour himself has quoted this very psalm as referring to the Messiah, Matt. xxii. 43. *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?* With respect to this, I shall only observe at present, that this proves our present reading to have been as old as the times of our Saviour, and also that *the Lord*, supposed here to have been addressed by the supreme Being, was generally understood by the scribes of that time to be the Messiah. But with respect to our Saviour, it might be an argument *ad hominem*, proper to silence his enemies, which was evidently his object at that time.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, which I can readily suppose to be Paul, evidently argues from this psalm as applicable to Christ, Heb. i. 13. *But to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* But as to the apostles, there will perhaps be no great difficulty in admitting, that the great object of their mission did not require any particular illumination

lumination with respect to the knowledge of the scriptures ; and, therefore, that in this they would naturally be influenced by that mode of interpreting them, which was generally adopted by their countrymen. Time and reflection would afterwards easily correct any mistakes which they, or others, might fall into in this respect ; and we who have not the prejudices of Jews, and who are much better situated for taking an enlarged and just view of the subject in all its connexions, must judge for ourselves, as they did.

It is to be observed, that the promise of God to David, that the kingdom should continue in his family, is referred to in the 132d psalm, as well as in the 2d and 110th ; but I do not know that this has been supposed to relate to Christ, as the great *son of David* ; though, if it had been quoted in that light in the New Testament, the propriety of the quotation would, I doubt not, have been defended.

Part of the sixteenth psalm is quoted by Peter as referring to Christ, Acts ii. 25. *For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad : moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*

This quotation agrees very nearly with Pf. xvi. 8. &c. and I think it cannot be denied but that Peter really thought that David, in composing this

psalm, was directed to such language as was intended to be applicable to the Messiah. But, exclusive of this, all persons at this day would certainly have concluded that David was speaking of himself only, and intending to say that God would not suffer him to perish by the hand of his enemies, or at most that, if he should die, God would raise him from the dead, and admit him to a state of greater happiness in a future life. There is not in the whole psalm a single expression, but what David may well be supposed to have used concerning himself, and no second person is mentioned, or alluded to, in the course of it. If we can suppose that the Jews in general imagined that this psalm related to the Messiah, it will be the less surprizing that Peter should think so; and if it did, it would certainly much better suit the case of a Messiah who should die and rise again, than of one who should be merely a temporal prince.

The twenty-second psalm has been generally thought to have been prophetic of the sufferings of Christ. The Evangelists, and particularly John, certainly considered it in that light; and they might the more easily be led to this by our Saviour's repetition of the first verse of the psalm, as he hung upon the cross, viz. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* It must be acknowledged, that there is a striking coincidence between the circumstances of David when he wrote this psalm, and those of Christ in his state of humiliation and death; and it is particularly remarkable, that what David spoke of himself in figurative terms was literally accomplished in Christ. But we are not, therefore, authorized to conclude that David had a
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view to any thing beyond his own case, when he wrote this psalm; because the correspondence of the expressions to his case is sufficiently just; and least of all can I think, that while David was writing with a view to himself, the spirit of God was, unknown to him, dictating expressions which had a view to a more distant event. On this supposition, every thing may be a prophecy; and we shall have a field open to us, in which we may indulge our imaginations without bounds; as, in fact, the early christian writers did, and as some do at this day, finding what is called a *spiritual meaning*, in every literal narrative of the Old Testament. And if this wild and dangerous hypothesis be rejected, we are necessarily restricted to consider those passages only as prophecies, which are delivered as such.

It is true, that the Evangelist John supposes the high priest, in our Saviour's time, to have prophesied without knowing it, John ii. 49. *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation: and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad.* I see nothing, however, in the speech of the high priest, but what we may suppose he would naturally have said without any prophecy at all, either intended by the spirit of God, or known to himself; and I cannot think that the private opinion

of the Evangelist should oblige us to think otherwise. Indeed, this *double sense* of scripture expressions is, I believe, generally abandoned by judicious commentators.

There is one expression in the 69th psalm, viz. v. 25. *Let his habitation be desolate*; and another in the 109th psalm, which Peter, in the book of Acts, chap. i. v. 16. supposed to be prophetic of Judas Iscariot, and of another person succeeding to his office. *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas.—For it is written in the book of psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein, and his bishopric let another take.* The latter passage he refers to is ps. cix. 8. *Let his days be few, and let another take his office.* But if the whole of the two psalms be considered, it can never be thought that David was speaking of any other than his own personal enemies. The expressions were, however, applicable to the case of Judas, and the correspondence struck the mind of Peter so forcibly, that he concluded they were originally intended for him; insomuch that he, and all the apostles, even proceeded to act upon the idea, chusing another person to succeed to the office of Judas, to fill up the number of the twelve apostles. But persons often do things that are right in themselves, which was no doubt the case at present, for very indifferent reasons. The degree of knowledge possessed by the apostles will be considered more particularly in my next Essay.

The *seventy-second psalm* is thought by many to be a prophecy concerning Christ, and the successful

cessful propagation of his gospel; because a verse in it is represented by Luke as adopted by the angel in his salutation of the Virgin Mary, Luke i. 32. *And of his kingdom there shall be no end,* which nearly corresponds to Ps. lxxii. 7. But the angel does not quote the expression as any prophecy, and the psalm itself is entitled *a psalm for Solomon*, and is by no means delivered as a prophecy concerning Christ. The expression of kings *living and reigning for ever* is a common hyperbole in the language of the East, and is used elsewhere in the Old Testament. 1 Kings i. 3. *Let my lord king David live for ever.*

Excepting these psalms, there are no others, I believe, that are now thought to be prophetic; and had not these been quoted in the New Testament, as referring to the Messiah, and the times of the gospel, I am pretty confident they would no more have been suspected of having any such reference than any other of the psalms, or than any thing in the book of Proverbs. There would, no doubt, have appeared something peculiarly difficult and obscure in the phraseology of the 110th psalm; but with this we might have acquiesced, expecting the light which future researches might throw upon it, as we are obliged to do with respect to the phraseology of many passages in the Old Testament, and especially the poetical and prophetic parts of it. And this circumstance is not to be wondered at, if we consider the great antiquity of the writings, and how much they must necessarily have suffered by the negligence of transcribers, &c. in so long a course of time.

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The writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, are partly historical, and partly prophetic; but these are easily distinguished from each other, the prophecies being always solemnly announced as such. The writings of all the other prophets have little in them that is not properly of a prophetic nature, if we except some moral exhortations, which all the prophets occasionally delivered. Indeed, to give moral exhortations seems always to have been considered as the proper business of a prophet, as well as to announce future events. They are therefore sometimes called *watchmen*, appointed to warn the people in the name of God.

From these observations, as well as from an attention to the whole plan of the divine dispensations, as far as it has been unfolded to us, the truth of my leading maxim will have sufficiently appeared, viz. that no extraordinary illumination has ever been imparted to men, which their circumstances did not render necessary; and also, that when any supernatural light has been vouchsafed to them, there was still abundant room left for the exercise of human reason in the application of that light. The prophets themselves were not exempt from error in the interpretation of their own prophecies, but were liable to be misled by their imaginations, and especially by their passions, like other men.

It is also particularly worthy of observation that, with respect to all promises of distant happiness, the Divine Being has thought proper to exercise the patience of men, by deferring the accomplishment of them beyond the time which they had fondly
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fixed

fixed for it, so that their first conceptions concerning the *extent*, as well as the *nature* of the promised happiness, have been very generally, and perhaps unavoidably, wrong.

Abraham had the promise of his posterity becoming a great nation pretty early in the course of his life ; but he was an hundred years old before he saw that son in whom the promise was to be fulfilled ; and his faith was farther tried by an order to sacrifice that very son. Isaac was also a long time without having any child ; and Jacob, to whose line the promise entailed upon the family was to be confined, did not marry till he was about four score, so that his father could have had but little prospect of the encrease of his posterity in that line till very near the time of his death. Jacob himself, though he saw the prospect of a sufficiently numerous posterity, left them in a state of the most abject servitude ; and they continued in it so long, that it is probable they had quite lost sight of the promise of their release and future greatness.

In due time, however, God raised them up a deliverer. But, instead of marching to take immediate possession of the promised land, which they would naturally expect, not more than two persons of those who were twenty years old at the time of their leaving Egypt, lived to see it. After they were settled in the promised land, many years elapsed before they made any great figure in it ; and for about four hundred years they were generally in a low and oppressed condition, owing to their frequent relapses into idolatry ; and they did not obtain the complete possession of the whole country till the time of David.

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The faith and patience of David himself were likewise exercised in a manner similar to the case of his ancestors, and of the nation in general. He had the promise of being king of all Israel in an early period of his life, but he was a long time in a state of persecution by Saul, and seven years elapsed after his death, before he attained the sovereignty of the whole country. In his case, however, as well as in that of the nation in general, all the promises of God were fulfilled in their due time, and in their proper extent, as is observed, Joshua xxi. 45. *“There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel: all came to pass.*

After the establishment of David on the throne of Israel, the country did not continue in its glory quite one hundred years; and after this, through their own misbehaviour, their prosperity declined, till the prospect of all pious Israelites must have been sunk to the lowest ebb. There was nothing but utter ruin and desolation before them; when they were revived by prophecies of glorious times to come *in the latter days*. But little could they imagine at how great a distance those *latter days* really were, and what dismal scenes of calamity were to intervene. They are not even yet come to their period; though I have no doubt but that a distinguished state of happiness and glory is reserved for them, and that it will continue without interruption to the end of time.

The prophecies relating to the Messiah, and the future flourishing state of the Israelitish nation,

tion, were sufficient to revive, and keep up, the hopes of pious persons among them; but they were not sufficiently explicit to enable them to foresee any particular future event. They immediately formed wrong notions concerning the character of their *Messiah*, and they were much more mistaken with respect to the time when their *national prosperity* should commence.— And it appears from the history of our Saviour, that these mistakes were not only those of vicious and worldly minded persons, but were also common to the pious and upright. It is probable that even John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, lived and died in as great ignorance concerning his proper character and kingdom as the rest of the nation. The apostles themselves, who were greater than John the Baptist, were ignorant of them after our Saviour's resurrection, and the veil was not removed from their eyes till the day of Pentecost.

As, therefore, the ancient Israelites, and as far as appears, even the prophets also, were left to themselves with respect to the interpretation of prophecy, and they accordingly fell into great mistakes; it is natural to expect that the christian prophets, as the apostles may be called, should likewise be left to themselves in the same respects, and that they would fall into like mistakes. From this analogy we may conclude, that they would have knowledge enough for the purposes of their mission, but not more; and least of all can we suppose that they would have knowledge communicated to them for the purpose of gratifying their own curiosity only.

It

It is very possible that the faith and patience of christians will be farther tried, in the much longer duration of the world, and the present system of things, than is generally imagined. What we call the *Millenium*, will probably, also, be a very different thing in itself from what we expect it to be, as well as of much longer duration; and yet the same thing appears to have been described in all the prophecies, from Isaiah to the apostle John. The *future state* itself, after the resurrection, may, in perfect consistency with all the promises of God concerning it, be as different from any of our present ideas concerning it, as the Messiah which the Jews expected, was different from the Messiah of the gospel.

One obvious reason why prophecies should not be so clear as to be generally understood before their accomplishment, is, lest they should contribute to fulfil themselves, by exciting the friends of revelation to exert themselves to procure their accomplishment; in which case there would be no proof of any *divine foresight* at all. Can it be any just cause of surprize then, that the apostles should be ignorant of the true meaning of many prophecies, which are not even yet fulfilled, and which only future, and perhaps very distant events can explain? But the case of the apostles will be particularly considered in my next Essay.

PAMPHILUS.

To

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE ventured to send you a few cursory remarks upon the number of your work lately published. How far they may deserve your notice, or that of the authors, is submitted to your judgment. If leisure can be found, I shall be glad to transmit some communications more worthy of your acceptance. My heartiest wishes of success attend this and every other publication, which has truth, and especially religious truth, for its object.

NEPIODIDASCALOS.

PAGE 27. The proposition, with which the author sets out—the *divine mission of Moses*—is that which an unbeliever will immediately reject, as the main point to be authenticated upon reasonable premises. And, therefore, such a person cannot be expected to pay any attention to a series of reasoning, in which the main difficulty is admitted as an undoubted truth. In my judgment, what *Moses* relates upon his own authority
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and knowledge, and what he pretends to perform upon the strength of supernatural co-operation, contain as many and great difficulties to a rational enquirer, as any parts of the *pentateuch* whatever. I have never yet seen a collection of satisfactory evidence in behalf of the general authenticity of the *Mosaic* writings : and much remains to be done in this respect, for the credit of the christian dispensation too, which has associated itself with the *Jewish*, and must stand or fall with its companion. I have a work of this nature under contemplation, which, if I had time and ability to complete it, in a manner correspondent to my ideas, would essentially promote the interests of revelation.

Page 28, line 22. There seems to be no validity in this argument. It appears to me, that, if an author claims a communication from the Deity, and speaks and writes under that character, we ought to give an equal attention to *all* his assertions, unless we are expressly informed, when he asserts merely upon his own best opinion and knowledge. And this observation is illustrated by the conduct of *St. Paul*, who takes care to discriminate between his *own advice* and the suggestion of the Lord.

P. 29, line 24. To suppose *the days too short*, is to suppose the power of God not equal to the accomplishment of such great things within that compass of time ; i. e. excludes divine agency ; and sets aside, of course, the production of the world by the omnipotence of *Jehovah*.

P. 30. line 8. I cannot give up the propriety of *Moses's* relation of the *cosmogony*, persuaded, as I am, of its perfect correspondence, without any torture of words, or sophistry of reasoning,

reasoning to the principles of the *Newtonian philosophy*, and of the decisive argument, which such a correspondence would form, in support of his divine legation.

P. 30. l. 18. The term of human life was shortened *before* the flood; see Gen. vi. 3. and *Moses* himself, so long *after* it, lived one hundred and twenty years.

P. 31. l. 7. *Moses* seems to have provided against this objection from *a difference of sex*, by making no mention of *procreation* till after the *fall*.

Besides, our author's argument will be further weakened by a supposition, in no wise absurd, that a translation, like that of *Enoch*, might have been general amongst mankind.

The objections advanced in the 32d and 33d pages, suppose a *literal* acceptation of the narrative; whereas *Moses*, in my opinion, plainly intended it to be regarded as *allegorical*, as may be collected from *internal marks*, peculiar to this portion of the *Pentateuch*.

P. 56. l. 12. To assert, that the original will bear *ἑπροφητης*, John i. 21. to be rendered *a prophet*, is the greatest error imaginable, and absolutely inconsistent with the nature of the *Greek* language. It may as well be affirmed, that by *A king of England*, we must necessarily understand *William the Conqueror*: for that is the directly opposite absurdity.

P. 73. That conjecture of your correspondent *Biblicus*, is a most happy and undoubted emendation of the passage; which I rejoice in being

able to ascertain by a similar injunction in *Leviticus*. We there read chap. xix. ver. 15. ולא תהדר : פני גדול : *honour not the person of the great man.*

I once conjectured, that for תהדר we should read תהריר *do not intimidate the poor man* : but the emendation of your correspondent is infinitely preferable. But, with your permission, I will venture to assert, that the passage in question is defective, by the omission of an entire clause : an assertion, which will startle no man, who is conversant with the ancient versions of the Old Testament, particularly in the prophecies, and the greater part of the *Hagiographa* ; which in many places are mutilated and corrupted beyond all prospect of restitution, except from a diligent comparison of the present *Hebrew* text with MSS. and all the oriental translations that can be found.

Observe the order of the two preceding verses in this chapter :

- V. 1. Accept not a declaration without proof :
Nor confederate with a wicked man to give false testimony.
2. Do not wrong in conformity to the general opinion ;
Nor give sentence in a cause, according to the perverse will of the multitude.
3. Shew no honour to the great man in his cause.

It is evident, that the same subject of *honest testimony*, and *upright judgment*, is preserved in the *third* verse ; and as evident, that the sense is incomplete for want of a correspondent sentence

tence. Restore the deficiency, and see if the passage will not have a different aspect, and be coherent and complete in every respect.

Shew no respect to the great man in his cause:
And regard not the person of him of low degree.

that is,

לא תהדר גדל בריבו
ולא תשא פני דל:

It may not be amiss to observe, that I thought my first emendation, לא תחריד, countenanced by the *Samaritan* translator: for he deviates from his original in this place, and has לא תרדי, which would be properly rendered, *Deal not harshly with the men of low degree*: and would correspond very well with תחריד.

Thoughts on the Demoniack Possessions of the New Testament.

IT hath been lately observed in a Treatise on Demoniacs, that they alone addressed Jesus under the title of the Son of God. From this circumstance, it hath been inferred, that they were actually possessed by beings, who knew the real character and rank of our Lord; of which others appear to have been ignorant.

Now in order to shew, that this circumstance will not prove the reality of possessions, all that seems necessary to be done is, to produce instances of others besides Demoniacs having used the same, or equivalent expressions in speaking to, or of our Lord; or, if such cannot be found, to prove, from certain circumstances of time and place, that the Demoniacs did not discover, by the use of such language, any marks of peculiar discernment, or express any ideas different from those entertained by others in their right mind.

As to the former of the two ways proposed to set aside the force of the observation referred to, I think it will be sufficient to remark, that many ingenious critics have shewn, that, Son of God, Son of David, Messiah, Christ, were, in the opinion of our Lord's coteremporaries, or at least of the writers of his life, equipollent terms.

But not to insist on the sufficiency of that remark for our present purpose, let us proceed
to

to point out a way, by which the Demoniacs may be reasonably supposed to have discovered and employed the name used by them in addressing our Lord, without ascribing to them a knowledge, or conception of him, different from what was enjoyed by their fellow-countrymen.

We learn from John i. 34. that John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Son of God to the attention of his disciples, and probably others. This seems to have been done very soon after John had baptized him. A short time after we find Nathaniel addressing him as the Son of God, when he was probably attended by several of his disciples, John i. 47. 49*.— When Jesus walked on the sea, and was received into a ship, the people on board were so struck with the miracle, that they said to him, Truly, thou art the Son of God, Matt. xiv. 33. Again, when Jesus was deserted by many of his followers, and asked the twelve whether they also would go away, Peter answered for himself and the rest, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and known, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, John vi. 68, 69 †. Peter made the same declaration upon another occa-

* And here by the way, it may not be improper to remark, in confirmation of what hath been observed by many learned men, that several at least of the appellations given to Jesus, are synonymous; for Nathaniel seems to consider the terms Son of God, and King of Israel, as of the same import.

† Here too, we may observe, that the Christ, and the Son of the living God, seem to be used as expressions conveying the same ideas.

sion, Mat. xvi. 16. When Jesus met the man who had been blind from his birth, till he had given him sight, he asked him whether he believed on the Son of God? and upon being informed by him, that he was himself that person, the man answered, I believe. At the feast of dedication, Jesus declared himself the Son of God, John x. 36. When Jesus went to raise Lazarus, Martha declared her belief, that he was the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world, John xi. 27. At his trial the high-priest put this question to him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? Matt. xxiv. 63. Mark xiv. 61. And *all* on the same occasion asked him, Art thou the Son of God? Luke xxii. 70. The persons, who passed by him, when upon the cross, tauntingly said, Thou, who destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross: in which insulting language, the chief priests joined; Matt. xxvii, 41—43. The centurion, and those who were with him at the crucifixion, when they saw the earthquake, and the other things, which then happened, said, Truly this was the Son of God, Matt. xxvii. 54. Mark xv. 39.

Upon these passages, we may make the following observations:

1. From the testimony borne by John the Baptist, to the character and claims of Jesus, at the very commencement of our Lord's ministry, in the presence of his own disciples, and others who attended him, we may infer, that

that our Lord began from that time to be spoken of, and considered as the Son of God. For there is great probability, that this testimony was soon published far and wide, as there was, at that time, a general expectation of the Messiah, which would naturally lead the disciples of John to communicate their master's evidence, and others to enquire, concerning the person, of whom he declared himself to be the fore-runner. And there is nothing unnatural in supposing, that, when Jesus was the subject of conversation, as one who pretended to be the Messiah, the title given him by John the Baptist, was occasionally, at least, mentioned. Hence it seems very likely, that he was commonly spoken of, as the Son of God, among the Jews, as far as the knowledge of John the Baptist's testimony was spread among them, which might be as widely as the Baptist's office was known, i. e. among most, if not all, of the Jewish nation, residing in their own country, Matt. iii. 5.

2. It appears, that, in fact, several others, besides Demoniacs, addressed, and spoke of Jesus, under the title of the Son of God, during his ministry. So that, by some means or other, that appellation seems not to have been uncommon.

3. We may conclude from his having been asked at his trial, by the High-Priest, and all the rest who were present on that occasion, whether he was the Son of God, the claim of which character appears to have been the subject of the charge brought against him, that he had been frequently spoken of by that name previously to his arraignment.

4. We may infer, from the general concurrence of the multitudes (who attended his crucifixion, and passed by his cross, of whom we may fairly suppose some to have belonged to most, if not all parts of the Holy Land) in deriding him as one, who pretended to be the Son of God, that he had been represented under that description in most, if not all places, which had been the scenes of his public ministry. Nor is it sufficient to destroy this inference to observe, that the multitudes, who derided him, might have first heard of his pretensions to so exalted a title at his trial; because, if the multitudes were the same that had been there present, they evidently discovered by their question, whether he was the Son of God, and their manner of putting it, that they knew, with the High-Priest, it was a title, which had been before given him, and he had himself claimed.

5. According to the order of events laid down in Dr. Priestley's ingenious Harmony of the Gospels, what John the Baptist, Nathaniel, Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, and the inhabitants of the city, in which she dwelt, had said of Jesus, seems to have had sufficient time to have become generally known, before Demoniacs are said to have addressed our Lord as the Son of God. This at least is evidently the case with respect to the testimony of the two or three persons first-mentioned.

Now, from these observations, we may be allowed to conclude, that the term, Son of God, was, very soon after the commencement of our Lord's public ministry, known by great numbers
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in different parts of the Holy Land, to have been applied to Jesus,—that it was frequently used in divers parts, in speaking of him;—and, therefore, that it cannot be fairly thought singular and extraordinary, that it should have been adopted by Demoniacs, though they be denied to have received any information concerning his peculiar character, from demons supposed to possess their bodies.

Let us next consider, whether the particular times also, at which the Demoniacs addressed Jesus under the title of Son of God, will not point out a method of accounting for their use of that appellation, by shewing that they might have heard it employed by others upon some occasions, and probably at the times they used it, and from thence have been led to adopt it themselves.

And first, it is observable, that these Demoniacs appear to have resided in the neighbourhood of the sea of Galilee, near which stood Corazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, cities on which our Lord pronounced a particular woe, on account of their disregarding the evidence he had afforded them of his being the Messiah, by the many mighty works he had done in them. In the next place, it is observable, that two of the Demoniacs, who addressed Jesus under the fore-mentioned title, met him upon his landing in the country of the Gergesenes, immediately after he had excited the astonishment of the men who had been with him in the ship, by assuaging the winds and the sea, and who were as likely to mention that exertion of his miraculous power upon their landing, as they were to have exclaimed, as they did before.

fore, when they had just seen the effect of that exertion, Matt. viii. 27. 29. Mark iv. 41. 5. 7. Luke viii. 25. 28. Farther, all this happened in a country, where our Lord had before collected disciples, and through the whole of which he had passed and taught. These things considered, is it strange that our Lord should be accosted in the terms used by the Demoniacs, especially if we keep in remembrance what hath been already observed, that at the very commencement of his ministry, it was given out by his forerunner, whose preaching might also be well known in this country, that he was the Son of God, an appellation not unlikely to have been used by the men of the ship in speaking of him on their landing. But there is a remarkable circumstance mentioned by Luke, which will remove all difficulty arising from the supposed improbability of his being known to the Demoniacs, but by the information of indwelling demons, which is, that he makes our Lord to have commanded the demons to come out of the man (he speaks of one only) before he was addressed as Son of God, Luke viii. 29.

As to another instance similar to the foregoing, recorded Mark i. 24. Luke iv. 34. it appears from the preceding context, that our Lord had astonished the people of the place, where the Demoniac lived, with his doctrine, and that the Demoniac was in the synagogue at the very time when their astonishment was excited. The like observations may be made respecting another instance, mentioned Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 41. of which any one may be satisfied on barely inspecting the connexion. And just the same may be also

also made respecting the other instance (the only one besides that occurs to me in the Evangelists) recorded Mark iii. 11, 12.

Thus, I think, the particular occasions, on which the Demoniacs called our Lord the Son of God, will furnish us with an easy way of accounting, how they came to address him by that name, without having recourse to the supposition of actual possessions. For, besides that, the general information of John's testimony, spread at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, had probably reached the Demoniacs among others, the particular events, which seem to have happened immediately before the times, when they called Jesus the Son of God, might very naturally point him out to their notice, as the person whom they had heard called by that name, and themselves occasion his being spoken of by that name in their hearing. If we suppose (as there seems reason to do) that, in the opinion of many of the Jews, and particularly of his followers, that name imported no more than some others which were given him, we surely cannot think it strange, that Demoniacs, whose minds might be peculiarly impressed by the sight, or report, of the miracles he had just wrought, with very exalted ideas of his power, should select that title, among a number of like signification, even though they did not hear it used, at the time, in speaking of him.

If Demoniacs be supposed to have annexed ideas to the name they employed different from what were intended to be conveyed by others used by persons in their sound minds, how came it to pass, that

that they were not perfectly uniform in the language of their addresses? This, however, was plainly not the case, for we find the man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum, speaking to our Lord under the title of Jesus of Nazareth, and the *Holy One* of God, Mark i. 24. Luke iv. 34. If the language used by Demoniacs, must be supposed to have been suggested by spirits residing in their bodies, and to be the effect of a peculiar discernment, communicated in that way, we must allow *Son of God, and Holy One of God*, to be equivalent expressions. And, if the *Holy One of God* had been alone used by the Demoniacs, we should probably not have heard of an attempt to prove actual possessions from their language. The *Holy and Just One*, and *Jesus the Holy Servant of God*, we find to be expressions employed by Peter, Acts iii. 14. iv. 27. 30. when he plainly intended to mean the appointment of Jesus to his sacred office. It is, therefore, natural to suppose, that the Demoniacs, by expressions so very similar, meant the same thing as Peter. And, if we must suppose that their ideas were the same when they used the terms, *Holy One of God*, and *Son of God*, which appears to be a fair supposition, then the latter can imply no more than the former, and both must import the same as the *Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed*, or any other term used to signify the divine appointment and commission of Jesus; and, this being granted, Demoniacs will not appear to have possessed any peculiar discernment, not to be accounted for, without supposing them to have received

received their information from demons, such terms being employed by others, besides disordered persons.

If it be thought, that the words, *before the time*, plainly refer to the future punishment of evil spirits, and thereby prove actual possessions, it may be sufficient to reply, that it is unreasonable to expect an account of all the workings and apprehensions of disordered minds, in which it must often be impossible to trace out the particular associations, which prompt insane persons to make remarks, and use language, which occasionally come from them. At times perhaps those associations may be investigated, and possibly in the instances under consideration. For, if we suppose the Demoniacs to have conceived their bodies to be actually under the dominion of malicious spirits, it is not at all unnatural to conjecture, that, having seen, or been informed, of the wonderful works performed by Jesus, they were apprehensive of partaking themselves of the sufferings, which they thought due to the beings, who were so intimately connected with their frame, and about to be inflicted on them.

There are two other instances in sacred writ, which may be imagined to show a degree of discernment in Demoniacs, not to be accounted for, but upon the hypothesis of real possessions. They occur Acts xvi. 17. and xix. 15.

As to the damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, mentioned in the former passage, we find, that Paul, and his companions, were certain days at Philippi (it is not said how many) and that women resorted to them to the river-side on the Sabbath,

Sabbath, and listened to their instructions. It was, on this occasion, that the damsel spake of Paul, and his companions, in the terms recorded. She had, therefore, probably been listening with others, who appear to have entertained, though they are not said to have expressed, the same ideas of them with herself.

As to the latter instance, we should observe, that Paul had been a considerable time at Ephesus, and wrought many miracles, and in a variety of ways, viz. by aprons and handkerchiefs carried from him to the sick, of which we may reasonably suppose the man over whom the exorcists called the name of Jesus, to have been fully apprized. That, therefore, he should know Jesus, that is, the power of his name, and the person, who had performed cures by that name, is not at all to be wondered at. Nor is it, in the least strange, that he should say to the exorcists, who are ye? when it does not appear, that they had wrought any miracles at all, but rather that they had failed in their first attempt to work one.

Wishing myself to find, and to help others to find the truth, as it is in Jesus, I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

A CHRISTIAN.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

PLEASE to insert the following in your
useful *Repository*, and you will oblige,

Your most humble Servant,

SYMMACHUS.

THE writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (whether the apostle Paul or not) labours hard to convince them of a great resemblance between the Mosaic and christian dispensations. This is done, in order the better to reconcile the Jewish converts to the abolition of the ceremonial law; under the plea, that it was not so much *annulled* as *perfected*. And I make no doubt, such arguments were well adapted to the prejudices which he was anxious to remove. Nor is it at all impossible, nor even improbable, that the writer himself might think his illustrations of his subject, and his arguments in the course of it, contained something of real solidity. We must judge, however, for ourselves. Being professors of christianity, who need no evidence of any conformity of the Mosaic ritual to the christian dispensation, for
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the establishment of our faith, we may be allowed to think some of this writer's resemblances between them far fetched, or carried to too great a length.

This preliminary observation I thought necessary, in order to keep myself clear of any responsibility, for the reasoning or comparisons of our author, in the passage which I mean particularly to explain; and which is contained in chap. ix. 16, 17.

In the beginning of this chapter the writer observes, that "The first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread, which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all: which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot, that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. And over it the cherubims of glory, shadowing the mercy seat; of which," says he, "we cannot now speak particularly." i. e. which we want either time or inclination, at present, to bring *severally* into comparison with the ordinances of divine service, under the second or *new* covenant. The writer plainly intimates here, that had he been so disposed, or at full leisure to treat of them *κατὰ μέρος*, *article by article*, he could have done this. It would be well therefore, if we were a little slower than we usually are, in catching at
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the supposed resemblances, or *types* as they are often termed, which seem to be hinted at by the writers of the New Scriptures. For though there can be little doubt, that an author of a genius so fertile in allegory, could really have performed what he here suggests himself equal to, and found, under the christian dispensation, some things with which to compare the golden censer, the pot of manna, &c. to the satisfaction of those to whom he was writing; yet, I greatly doubt, whether any of us in *these* days, except those who are remarkably fond indeed of allegorical writing, would have been much pleased with him for attempting it.

Our author, however, without dwelling on the above particulars, proceeds to treat at large of a kind of resemblance between the Jewish high-priest and our Lord. With how much success, I shall not stop to enquire, as it would keep me too long from my immediate object. In the comparison, he gives a decided preference to the *priestly* character of Christ. The great point of resemblance, he makes to be this, That, as the high-priest, once a year, went into the Holy of Holies, with the blood of the victims sacrificed on the great day of expiation, for the redemption of the yearly errors of himself and the people, under the first covenant; so, under the second covenant, Christ, who was a high-priest, he says, of good or better things to come, entered once for all, into a still more holy place (heaven) not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but of his own blood; offering himself without spot to God, in order

to purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. An effect, he says, which the blood of the victims under the first covenant, and the ministrations of the Jewish high-priest, could not produce; as it only purged the worshipper from ceremonial impurities, but had no reference to those of a moral nature, or to conscience.

At the fifteenth verse, he observes, that it was on account of Christ's offering himself, or his blood, to purge the conscience from dead works (after the same manner as the death or blood of animal victims, was the means employed for the redemption of the ceremonial errors and impurities, under the old covenant) that he is become the mediator of the *new* covenant, in order that they who are called, might obtain the promise of an eternal inheritance, instead of a temporary one, like that of the Israelites in the land of Canaan*.

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* This I apprehend is the true meaning of what we render, *And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.* If the Greek had been properly divided and stopped, this rendering would not have been found in our translation. It should have been written thus, *Και δια τουτο διαθηκης καινης μεσιτης εστιν, οπως (θανατου γενομενου εις απολυτωσησιν των επι τη πρωτη διαθηκη παραβασεων) την επαγγελιαν λαβωσιν οι κεκλημενοι της αιωνιου κληρονομιας.* Which I should render thus " *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that (as death intervened for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant) they who are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.*

We are now come to the 16th and 17th verses, the explanation of which I had principally in view. They are thus rendered by our translators. Ver. 16. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.* Ver. 17. *For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth.*

Now, that *διαθηκη* in the New Scriptures, as well as *Berith* in the Old, always means a *covenant*, has been often observed. The only authority which our translators had, for rendering the Greek word *testament*, in any part of scripture, is derived from this passage; the meaning of which they have, I think, undeniably mistaken. Indeed, on account of the steady uniformity, with which it is used in every other case for *covenant*, some have thought it necessary to suppose, that there is here a play upon the word *διαθηκη*, and that the writer intended hereby, to convey the idea of a last will and testament, *together with* that of a covenant at the

ance. Though, as *δια τουτο*, refers to what immediately precedes, i. e. Christ's offering up himself to purge the conscience from dead works, it might perhaps be still better to translate as if the Greek had stood thus, *Και δια τουτο (θανάτου γενομένου εις απολυτρωσιν των επι τη πρωτη παραβασεων) διαθηκης καινης μεσιτης ειςιν, οπως την επαγγελιαν λαβωσιν οι κεκλημενοι της αιωνιου κληρονομιας.* *And for this cause (as death intervened for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant) he is the mediator of the new covenant, that they who are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance."* This is the order followed in the paraphrase above; and the order which I think, on the whole, the *clearest*.

same time.—To this purpose *Dr. Hammond*, “ Although it be evident that *διαθήκη*, Heb. ix. 16, 17, does signify *testament*, yet it is as clear, that in the verses antecedent and consequent to these, it signifies covenant also; and in *these* not *testament* exclusively of *covenant*; but *covenant* and *testament* superadded to it; *covenant* in the other verses, and then by extending the use of the word to its full latitude, *covenant* and *testament* together. Upon this consideration, and in reverence to the usage of the Latin and Western Churches, who generally have used *testamentum* in this place (though some have used *instrumentum*, to contain both, and others, *foedus*, *covenant*, only) and that by retaining the word *testament*, we may be sure also to retain that comfortable intimation, viz. That in the gospel unspeakable gifts are given or delegated to us antecedently to all conditions required of us (such are Christ’s giving himself for us, calling us, and giving us sufficient grace to come unto him) upon these grounds I say, it is not amiss to take in both words in the rendering of this title (*Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη*) that of *covenant*, as being most agreeable to the use of the word in the sacred dialect, and most agreeable to the nature of the gospel, which is (as all covenants made with inferiors are *laws*) *νόμος Χριστοῦ*, *the law of Christ*; *νόμος πίστεως*, *the law of faith*, a new law, requiring a condition of faith and obedience in us, without which the gospel is not a favour of life, a gospel of mercy to any; and withal that of *testament* also; wherein the christian inheritance is sealed to him as to a son
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and heir of God's, and wherein the death of Christ, as of a *testator*, is set down at large by way of story, and as it is applicable to our benefit." *Hammond's Annotations*, p. 2.

I think an observation of Dr. *Sykes* on the passage under consideration, much to the purpose, and since it will serve as a reply *in part* to the above quotation from Dr. Hammond, shall transcribe it. "One may be certain that no good writer," says he, "can pass from speaking of a *covenant*, to talk of a *last will or testament*, and a *testator*, when both what precedes, and what follows, concerns a *covenant* only. It would be so like a mere play upon a word (which sometimes signifies a will or testament, and sometimes a *covenant*) that one cannot conceive any man writing seriously, on a serious subject, could be guilty of such an absurdity." To this I add, that much less can one conceive, that such a writer, on such a subject, should intend by one word to connect together, and convey to others, two such different ideas, as those of a *covenant*, and last will and testament, at the same time.

What Dr. *Sykes* adds on this subject, is so clear and consonant with my own ideas, that to state it in other words, would be mere affectation: give me leave then to proceed in *his* words. "It is true that if the word *διαθήκη*, be rendered in this place a *will or testament*, and if no more were to be read of this epistle but what lies in this, and the next verse, what the apostle says, will be very true and just, concerning *testaments* and *testators*. But what is that to his purpose?"

purpose? There is not the least circumstance relative to any *will* made by Christ. Nor does the word *διαθικη* ever signify a *will* in the sacred writings. Nor can it signify any such thing in this place, because the apostle is treating all along in this epistle of *two covenants*; a *first*, which was to give way to a *second*; a *first* that was *faulty*, and *old*, and *imperfect*; a *second*, that was *new*, a *better* one, a *perfect* one, chap. vii. 22. viii. 6. 10. 13. In this chapter he tells us of a *first covenant*, which had certain ordinances of divine service; and then he mentions, in opposition to that *first covenant*, a *new covenant*, of which Christ was the Mediator. How then could he pass immediately from the subject he was upon, to speak of *wills*, or *testaments*, and *testators* (which is all foreign to his purpose) and then, after two short verses, return to his subject as he does?"

I think, Gentlemen, that neither you, nor your readers, will be tired, if I proceed still further in the words of one, who so clearly saw the absurdity of rendering *διαθικη* and *διαθεμενος* in this passage, *Testament* and *Testator*; I go on, therefore, in my quotation.—“But let us admit *διαθικη* to signify a *last will*, and *διαθεμενος* to signify a *Testator*, one may ask, Who was the *Testator* here?—Was Christ?—No. He came to do the will of his Father; and in his Father’s name, to declare and assure eternal life to such as should believe in him, and live as his disciples.—Was God the Father the *Testator*?—No. For he can never die; and, in consequence, his will can never be valid, for a *Testament is of no force at all while the Testator liveth*. So that here is neither *Testament*,

ment, nor Testator, as the Roman law required, or as the Jewish practice seems to have been in our Saviour's days. These verses, therefore, cannot be understood of a *last will*; for that is foreign to the subject the apostle is treating of. And supposing this difficulty surmounted, the apostle must be speaking of the *last will* of a *Testator* who *cannot die*; for it is the *will* of him who only hath immortality, i. e. a will that never can be *valid*, because the *Testator liveth for ever*; and, in course, it is a *will* of no use or significancy, because the *death* of the *Testator* is necessary to its having any validity."—Here I leave *Dr. Sykes*; who, by no means, removes the difficulty, though he clearly sees it.

Mr. Peirce, of Exeter, was aware, that a different translation of the word διαθεμενος in this passage, might leave διαθηκη in full possession of its true and proper sense, a *covenant*. Indeed, though διαθεμενος when a *will* is the subject, undoubtedly signifies a *Testator*; yet, it is plain, that it can have no such meaning, when the discourse relates to a *covenant*, but some other must then be sought for.

Mr. Peirce (having observed, that “ though διαθεμενος is often put for a *Testator*, yet, as it is a participle of διαθεσθαι, it may well be supposed to take its signification from it”) remarks, that “ As that word sometimes denotes to *appease* or *pacify*, διαθεμενος may here denote the *pacifier*, which will accord with the character of a *Mediator*. This sense is taken notice of by *Lexicographers*, who furnish us with an instance of it, which, I judge, very much to our purpose, and which I shall

therefore here present to my readers. It is in *Appian. Lib. ii. De Bello civili*, where he says, that Cæsar, having obtained the province of *Spain*, was detained by his creditors, whom he was not able to pay. *However*, says he, διαβεμενος δε τις ενοχλησιας ος εδυνατο, *He pacified his creditors who troubled him as well as he could.*" He, therefore, paraphrases the first verse of the passage we are treating of thus, "For, in every such covenant which God makes with sinful men, there must also, of necessity, be the death of the *pacifier*; and the next verse, "For the covenant is made upon the condition of Death, and is confirmed thereby, because the *pacificator* has no power at all whilst he lives." This is, to be sure, as strange a position as a man of sense could possibly lay down; and shows, that this worthy critic must have mistaken his author. For certainly a *Pacificator* ceases to sustain that character in the instant of his death, and all his power of *appeasing* depends upon the continuance of his life.

It has been already observed, that if διαθηκη be a Testament, διαβεμενος must be a Testator, as *referring* to a Testament; and if this be clear, it is no less so, that if the former means, in this place, a covenant (as, I think, cannot be disputed) then the latter must have a *relation* to a covenant. And what kind of relation it has thereto, our author himself sufficiently shows, not only in some preceding, but also in some following verses; in which he says, "Neither was the *first covenant* dedicated without *blood*. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the *blood of calves and goats,*
&c.

8cc. and sprinkled all the people, saying, This is the *blood of the covenant* which God has enjoined you." The calves and the goats were, then, the *διαθεμενοι* i. e. the *victims* of the Old Covenant; as *Christ* was the *διαθεμενος* or *victim* of the New.

With this key to the writers meaning, I think we need not hesitate to translate the 16th and 17th verses, under consideration thus: For where a covenant is, there must needs be the death of the victim of the covenant; for a covenant is of force (*επι νεκροῖς nempe διαθεμενοῖς*) after the victims are dead; but is of no force whilst (*διαθεμενος*) the victim is alive.

If I be questioned about a parallel use of the word *διαθεμενος*, I must own that I recollect none. But let us not be *too* nice about authorities. A writer's reasoning will frequently discover the sense in which he uses a particular word, better than any application of it by others. The language of scripture is, in many respects, peculiar; and every man almost has a style of his own. But, indeed, I cannot help thinking *διαθεμενος* a *fortunate* word for a *victim*, in this connection. The preposition *δια*, both singly, and in composition, has frequently the force of *inter*, *between*; and implies *separation*. Now when a covenant is to be contracted by the sacrifice of a living animal, the death of that animal is evidently *necessary* to the validity of the contract: whilst it lives, therefore, it may be justly considered as *separating* between the contracting parties, which *separation* is *destroyed* by the death of the victim, and the *contract* completed. Perhaps it is in allusion to the life of the Testator interfering with the validity, or
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full operation of a last will and testament, that the Testator is called *διαθεμενος*; as, whilst he lives, he *separates* between the legatee and the legacy itself: so that the *διαθνη*, in *both* senses of the word, receives its validity, and has its perfect operation and effect, by means of the *death* of the *διαθεμενος*. And, I hope, that this remark may be considered, as a sufficient vindication of our author's using this term for a *victim of a covenant*.

It is unnecessary, I apprehend, after the above interpretation of this passage, to say more than has been already advanced to elucidate our author's reasoning. But I must observe, That, whether there be a propriety or not, in his comparing *Christ* to a *victim*; yet he takes care to satisfy his readers, that he, by no means, considers the *effect* of his death, as similar to those of the animal sacrifices under the old covenant to which he compares it: which, he says, were used for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant, and only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; but that, on the contrary, the proper efficacy of the blood of Christ, was to purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God; i. e. to lead men to repentance and amendment of life. The *former* procured a discharge from the punishment due to legal errors and impurities, though committed or contracted every year; the latter discharged from no punishment at all; but, by inducing repentance, brought on a true sanctification of the heart, and that *lasting and steady* renovation of mind, which naturally and necessarily (without any other means) renders every man an object of
 God's

God's favour. If at any time, therefore, we think it convenient to compare our Lord to a victim, or sacrifice, let us keep in mind this writer's distinction between a *proper* sacrifice, and the death of Christ *as to their effects*, lest we be led to entertain opinions as scriptural, which have no foundation in the word of God.

I shall only add, that it is much to be wished, that in speaking of the sacred scriptures, we were to lay aside the common *titles* of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS, which are totally unauthorized; and, in fact, to the body of christians at large, convey no meaning. The absurdity of considering them as *last wills*, is so great, that I question if any can now be found, who annex such an idea to them. Let us, therefore, call them, as they are, *covenants*. The *title* of *The New Covenant*, will convey to christians, the idea of their having something to perform on their part, that they may obtain the advantages which the covenant holds forth, and will furnish the preacher with a very useful topic of frequent, earnest, and pathetic addresses. It is *at least* to be hoped, that when a new translation of the *christian* scriptures shall be made by authority, we shall see their proper title restored to these sacred books, that we may be thereby reminded of our christian duties, and the great and inconceivable advantages which we may derive from a strict observance of them.

P. S. Here I close my letter; and if it be a little abruptly, the reason follows:----When I had written all but the two last paragraphs of the above, a particular friend told me, that a
different

different interpretation of the passage I have treated of was *given* in the *Theological Repository*. I looked for it, and to my great astonishment, found it, on the contrary, to agree in all its leading features with my own. See Vol. I, p. 216, 217. Upon this I thought of suppressing mine altogether; but determined at length to leave it, Gentlemen, to your decision; whether as the subject is treated above more at large, and as an accidental agreement of this kind seems to give weight to a criticism, it will be proper for you to insert it in your Publication or not. With respect to myself, I am but in the case of many others, who having acquired ideas really original, as far as they themselves are concerned, yet discover in reading or conversation with their friends, that they are not the first who have entertained the same. If you should not use the paper (which cannot possibly give me any offence) please to return it.

To the DIRECTORS *of the* THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN;

WHILST the doctrine of the trinity has been vigorously attacked by the Socinians, and tenaciously defended by its advocates, it seems strange that no writer has appeared on the Arian side of the question; especially when it is considered, that persons of this description are no longer permitted to preserve that neutrality, which they appeared desirous of maintaining; for Trinitarians and Socinians, however widely they differ in other respects, agree in this, that the ground on which the Arian stands is no longer tenable. But his silence may be accounted for without supposing that he himself has any apprehension of the weakness of his cause: steering his course between the two extremes of the deity, and the simple humanity of Christ, his zeal is naturally more moderate; nor does he think the subject of that great importance which his opponents imagine. Regarding both Trinitarians and Socinians as brethren, he neither charges the former with tritheism and idolatry, when they will not allow that these are the consequences of their doctrine, nor the latter with disbelieving any essential truth of christianity: but

but the Athanasian does not readily acknowledge him to be a christian; and the Socinian calls him a corrupter of christianity. However, he gives him this invitation, Lay aside timidity and prejudice, come over to us and you will embrace a system free from any material difficulty, and arrayed in all the native charms of simplicity.

That the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ is attended with insuperable difficulties, while that of his simple humanity is free from them, is not perhaps so clear and decided a case; at least the writer of this paper wishes to have the subject further investigated; for things appear to him in so different a light, that he must either be unacquainted with some objections that have been brought against the Arian scheme, or does not fully enter into the force of those which have been suggested.

Before these objections are considered, it may not be improper for him to state his sentiments, some of which perhaps, are rather peculiar, viz. That Christ existed before he made his appearance in our world; that he possessed a nature superior to men and angels; that he was employed by the Father in the creation of our world, and this planetary system; and that there may be, and if we may judge from analogy, probably are, other beings of a similar nature, appointed to preside over the other systems of which the universe is composed. On this supposition, the Son of God is an *unique* only with respect to us. It may be objected by some, that this is too limited an interpretation of those passages

passages of scripture, by whom also he made the worlds, and who created all things by Jesus Christ; but, as the apostles had, probably, no ideas of any other worlds besides those which belong to our solar system, it cannot be imagined that they meant to predicate any thing respecting objects of which they had no conception.

The pre-existence of Christ, and his being the medium by which the Almighty created our world, is the doctrine for which I now profess myself an advocate. All objections which are not levelled against this general position, and all arguments which do not tend to its support, I must regard as equally foreign to my purpose. I premise this, because in the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, there are objections urged against the Arian doctrine in general, and others against what may be called the high and low Arian doctrines in particular.

It is, in the first place, said, that the Arian scheme favours of the doctrine of the pre-existence of all human souls, and that the latter served as a necessary foundation for the former. What connection a belief in the existence of an exalted being, prior to the creation of the world, has with the doctrine of the pre-existence of all human souls, I cannot comprehend. Whether that being remained in Heaven, or, for some years, inhabited a human body. In the present age, the supposed declarations of scripture are the foundation of a belief in the pre-existence of Christ, why then should any other foundation be necessary in former ages?

It is likewise thought extraordinary that there should be no traces of the apostles having ever regarded their master in this high light. It is certain that the miracles which he wrought, and the extensive empire to which they supposed he would be exalted, must impress them with a sense of his dignity; and, it may be thought strange, that, with these notions of him, Peter, and the other apostles, should ever treat him with unbecoming freedom. But I am not unwilling to allow, that they were ignorant of his pre-existence. Does it follow from hence that he did not inform them on this head? They disbelieved his sufferings and death, notwithstanding the plainest information. Their ignorance and prejudices remained till after the death of their Lord, when their understandings were enlightened, and their prejudices removed, by the spirit of truth which descended upon them. The prejudices of the Jewish nation were of a similar nature, though great stress is now laid on the opinions of the converted Jews, and they are regarded as competent judges in a case most intimately connected with those prejudices. Allowing that the greatest number of them were believers in the simple humanity of Christ, does this prove the truth of the doctrine? The apostles asserted the abolition of the ritual law; the converted Jews maintained its perpetuity. Why are we to regard them as competent judges in one case, and not in the other. They expected a temporal Prince, a mere man descended from David; finding their expectations disappointed, they rejected the Messiah; and, when convinced

convinced by evidence which they could not resist, of the divinity of his mission, it is no wonder that they continued to reject the doctrine of his pre-existence.

It is likewise objected, that if Christ, while upon earth, ceased to discharge the high office he held before, viz. supporting all things by the word of his power, there will be some difficulty in supposing how, and by whom, it was performed in that interval, since it would not have been delegated to Christ, if there had not been some impropriety in its being done immediately by God himself. If it were necessary to mention, that Christ was the governor of the world, in his pre-existent state, I would answer, that his Almighty Father, who entrusted him with this government, could easily resume it, when, and in what manner he thought fit. If, indeed, he placed his son in that high office, there is no doubt but it was proper; and, if he divested him of it, for a time, and employed him in a different manner, what proof have we that this was improper? Are we competent judges in this case? But since I can find no passage of scripture that asserts he was the medium of divine communications to the Patriarchs, I think myself at liberty either to receive, or reject, this supposition; and since his present exaltation and power are said to be the reward of his sufferings and death, it is plain that he did not possess so high a degree of authority previous to these.

There are some objections urged in Dr. Horsley's Letters*, which I thought grounded on a

* Against Arianism.

total ignorance of the Arian principles; but was not a little surpris'd to find that Dr. Priestley perfectly agreed with his antagonist, that there can be no proper medium between the Deity and simple humanity of Christ: this produced a further examination, yet still, through ignorance, prejudice, or the inconclusive nature of these objections, I continue to regard them in the same light.

Dr. Horsley says, "Having once admitted the pre-existence of Christ, I saw the necessity of placing him at the head of the creation." Here the premises and conclusion stand at rather too great a distance. He proceeds, "Being *thus* (he does not say how) convinced that our Lord Jesus Christ is, indeed, the maker of all things, I found that I could not rest satisfied with the notion of a *maker of the universe not God.*" The Arian believes, that the maker of the universe was God, the supreme Jehovah; and that whether he exerted his power immediately, or mediately, in the person of his Son, he is equally the Creator of all things.

He also observes, "Can any power, or wisdom, less than the Supreme, be a sufficient ground for the trust we are required to place in Divine Providence?" It is supreme power and wisdom in which the Arian trusts. He believes that a sufficient degree of these is communicated to the Son, for the safety and happiness of his followers. Our Lord himself has answered this objection, when he says, I give unto my sheep eternal life, &c. I have power and authority to bestow this life upon them, but if any should entertain fears,

or

or doubts, on account of my present state of humiliation, or because I am not the Supreme Being, let them consider, that my Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and none can pluck them out of my Father's hand."

He proceeds to observe, "Make the wisdom and power of our ruler what you please, still, upon the Arian principle, it is the wisdom and power of a creature. Where then will be the certainty, that the evil which we find in the world, has not crept in through some imperfection in the original contrivance, or in the present management, since every intellect, below the first, may be liable to error; and any power, short of the Supreme, may be inadequate to purposes of a certain magnitude?" The answer is obvious, since the formation of our world was originally contrived by a Being of unerring wisdom; and since that power was communicated to his Son, by which this plan was executed with the utmost exactness, it follows, that no evil has crept, or will creep into the world, which ought to have been prevented. Let us suppose, that the plan of a building is laid down by a skilful architect, and the plan exactly executed, by an inferior workman, shall I argue that the building may be defective, because the latter did not understand the principles of architecture? Or, if I see any appearance of defect, must I not ascribe it either to my own ignorance, or to the original contriver? "But, if evil may have crept in thus, what assurance have we that it will ever be extirpated?" I answer, no assurance, and but little hope. Let the premises be established, and the conclusion

will follow. But, notwithstanding this grand arrangement of words and sentences, is not the whole argument founded on this false supposition, that the Son of God contrived and executed the plan of this world, quite independently of the Supreme Being? An idea which, I believe, no Arian ever maintained.

It has been said, that the work of creation argues infinite power, which could not be communicated to a creature. I do not know what is meant by infinite, nor what proof we can have of any infinitude, for we see, and are acquainted, with none but finite effects: the creation of this world is evidently such; and, therefore, could require only a finite cause, a certain degree of power and wisdom, equal to the effect. To say that God could not communicate this degree, to a creature, is limiting his perfections.

Having taken notice of all the material objections urged against the pre-existence of Christ, which I at present recollect, it is proper to mention some argument in its favour. From reason and analogy I would argue thus: The Supreme Being, in that part of his government with which we are acquainted, renders some of his creatures instruments in communicating his blessings to others, and by this means the sum of happiness is much greater than if they were to flow immediately from himself. Since benevolence is the spring of action in the Deity, may we not argue, that superior beings are the instruments by which he communicates his numerous favours to inferior creatures. Let us suppose that Jesus Christ was employed in creating our world and system, and that

that beings of a similar nature were employed in creating other worlds, what unspeakable happiness must they have felt, and what happiness must they now feel, if they sustain the office of his vicegerents!

The generality of mankind would be more impressed by the declarations of a messenger sent from heaven, than by those of a mere man, though convinced of his divine commission; and the Father's sending his only Son into our world, for purposes so benevolent, affords a more affecting proof of his regard for the human race, than can be urged from the simple humanity of Christ:—surely it affords a stronger motive to gratitude and obedience.

After all, however, it is from the scriptures we learn that there was such a person as Jesus Christ; and it is from the same source that we must learn who he was.

But since it is not agreed how much of the sacred writings are inspired, I shall not quote many passages. The good sense and solid arguments of Pamphilus, will, I hope, throw some light on this difficult subject. It was with pleasure and satisfaction that I perused his papers; and wait with some degree of impatience for those that are to follow: but if he takes too large and hasty strides, perhaps I, and such other moderate men, who like to feel the ground as we go, may not be able to keep pace with him. In justice, however, to my subject, it must be observed, that the manner in which Christ is spoken of, and the manner in which he speaks of himself, appear to me quite irreconcilable

with the doctrine of his simple humanity. He is not called *a* Son of God, a name which is given to all good men, but *the* Son, his well beloved, his *only* begotten Son. Humility is regarded as one of the distinguishing features of our Saviour's character, but how faint does it appear if we consider him merely as a man like ourselves. He declares, *I came down from heaven, &c. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.* He ranks himself above angels when he says, *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. And if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up, where he was before.* If the evangelists have given us a true history of our Lord's declarations, What must we think of his humility, if he was not conscious of a prior existence? And if they have not given us a true history, where are we to find one?

I shall conclude with suggesting an objection against the hypothesis of the Socinians. They appear to me to form an *unique* more extraordinary than that of the high Arians. They, at least some of them, believe that a man, who had no existence eighteen hundred years ago, now manages the affairs of our world; is appointed the final judge of mankind, and will take cognizance of persons and characters which existed long before he was born.

Thus, Gentlemen, by advancing sentiments opposite to your's, without any reserve, and answering the Socinian objections with the utmost, though I hope not with unbecoming, freedom,

dom, I think I have given a more convincing proof of my reliance on your candour, and sense of your worth, than by the strongest expressions of esteem, which I could with sincerity make, though with respect to some points of divinity, I subscribe myself

M O D E R A T U S.

P. S. A correspondent of yours enquires, in what period Arianism took its rise. If he means the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, and his inferiority to the Father, I would answer, in the age of the apostles, as appears from their writings; and that it was the prevailing opinion, at least, of the writers of the first ages of christianity; in attestation of which, I refer to the quotations of Dr. Clarke. If he means the principles of Arius reduced to a system, the answer is, in the 4th century. And in this view, it is of a much more ancient date than Socinianism.—I wish for an answer to this query. What is the reason that the Socinians seem desirous of appropriating to themselves the appellation of Unitarians, and proper Unitarians?

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING already indulged me in your *Reposi-*
tory, with the insertion of a paper, the
leading object of which was, to shew that John
the Baptist did not know himself to be the
Elias; you will, I doubt not, give me leave to
pursue the subject a little farther in that useful
work; for which I shall consider myself under
an additional obligation.

I am,

Your very humble Servant,

CHRISTOPHILOS.

IN confirmation of my proposition, that
John the Baptist had no knowledge of his
being the Elias, or immediate forerunner of the
Messiah, it may not be amiss to observe, that
there is great reason to suppose the story of his
disclaiming that character, to be told with ac-
curacy and precision. It is indeed most pro-
bable, that John the Evangelist, who relates it,
was a disciple of the Baptist, and present when
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the conversation between him and the priests and Levites took place.

Little difficulty, I believe, will be made of admitting the first of these suppositions. As to the second, I will briefly state the probability of it. The next day but one after the Baptist's disclaiming the character of Elias, upon his noticing our Lord in a particular manner, two of his disciples followed Jesus, one of which was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, as John the Evangelist tells us, chap. i. 40. the other he does not name; and therefore it has been supposed, and I think, with the highest probability, that it was this Evangelist himself, who has modestly avoided once mentioning his own name throughout the whole of his gospel. Dr. Hammond has, in my opinion, *judiciously* observed upon this passage, that the anonymous disciple was "very probably *John*, the writer of this gospel; who, *therefore*, names the circumstances of the time of the day, and the very words that passed so punctually, but after his manner, in other places, conceals his name." And no better reason, I think, can be assigned for his not specifying the other disciple, than that it was *he himself*. Now, if John the Evangelist was attending upon the Baptist, the day but one after his disclaiming the character of Elias, it cannot be thought improbable, that he was also with him at that time. And if circumstantiality of narrative, and clear notes of time, have any weight in this argument, as Dr. Hammond intimates, and I think, must be allowed, then it is certainly *probable*, that the Evangelist
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was with John the Baptist, not only on the day above mentioned, but also on the two preceding ones; on the first of which he denied himself to be the Elias. To enter into the full force of this argument, read John i. 19—43.

But if the Evangelist was not present on the *first*, yet if he was on the spot on the *third* day, he would undoubtedly receive an accurate account of the transaction, from those who were; for no length of time had intervened, sufficient for its being forgotten, or misapprehended.

Lastly, Whether he was on the spot on any of these days or not, the circumstantiality with which he relates the story, shows that he wrote with a full and clear knowledge of the matter; so that there can be no proper ground for disputing the fact. I shall therefore consider it as established, and proceed.

It may be thought very unaccountable, that the Baptist, sensible as he must have been, that he was a prophet, and that no more than one prophet was by the learned expected to precede the Messiah (and indeed only one predicted) should not have been aware that he must of *necessity* be the Elias of Malachi. But let it be considered that the prophetic powers of the Baptist, by no means equalled those of many of his predecessors, as of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, who all wrought miracles; nor of Isaiah, Daniel, &c. whose prophecies were clear and perspicuous, and took in an amazing length of time, and many very particular circumstances; whereas the Baptist merely foretold, that there was one
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coming after him, and just ready to appear, who was greater than himself, who should baptize the people with the Holy Spirit, and with fire. He might therefore naturally think (and the rather, as distinguished piety is usually very humble) that he was too inconsiderable as a prophet, to be an object of prediction. Farther, he would be totally discouraged from indulging a thought of his being the Elias, in consequence of finding himself unable, in any tolerable degree, to fulfil the extravagant expectations which his countrymen indulged respecting that prophet; and as he had no intimation of his precise character from the Spirit of God, he would naturally remain fully satisfied that some other prophet was to precede the Messiah, whose office might render him more worthy to be the object of prophecy, and who would *avow* himself to be the Elias.

It may be said, that this inferiority of the Baptist which I have noticed, little comports with the declaration of Jesus, that John the Baptist was a prophet, and much more than a prophet. But the truth seems to be, that our Saviour speaks of him in this manner only on account of his being the *immediate* forerunner of the Messiah (which he himself did not know) whilst others had only prophesied of him at a distance; and that John had, by his preaching, actually prepared great numbers to listen favourably to our Lord's discourses, who would otherwise have turned a deaf ear to him.

Again, it may seem strange, that, since John well knew, that part of his office was to introduce a superior prophet to the notice of the people,
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he did not almost of necessity infer, that he was Elias, and his superior the Messiah. We find, however, that he did not draw these inferences. Neither, indeed, was he likely ; for, the prophecies relating to Elias, do not describe the announcing of the Messiah as any part of his office. If the former part of Mal. iii. 1. relates to him (Is. xl. 3. most evidently does not) that, together with Mal. iv. 5, 6. shows only, that he was to come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and that his office was to prepare the way before Jehovah, by turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers ; lest Jehovah should come and smite the land with a curse. So far then are the predictions concerning Elias, from representing his office to consist in pointing out the person of the Messiah, that they contain not even a hint, that these two should be cotemporaries. John, therefore, had no proper reason to suppose, that he was the Elias, merely from the circumstance of his coming to announce a superior prophet.

It is, however, I believe, the *universal* opinion, that the Baptist actually bore his testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus. But let not my readers be startled, nor displeased, if I deny, that there is any proper scriptural evidence of the fact. The texts which are supposed to countenance this opinion have been misunderstood, or ascribed to a wrong speaker. And this must be allowed, by all who admit (what, I think, is already incontrovertibly proved) that the Baptist, at the time when he was questioned by the Priests and Levites, did not know himself to be the Elias. For thus I argue, If John did not know his *own* character, he

he could not know that of *Jesus*; and, of course, could not testify to his being the *Messiah*: And if he had known the character of *Jesus*, he must have known his *own*; and, therefore, would not have denied it.

I think scarce any thing can be clearer, than that, if the Baptist had known the character of *Jesus*, he must have known his *own*. For as *Elias* was to appear *before* the *Messiah*, and no prophet had appeared, from the time when *Malachi* wrote the prediction concerning him, till *John the Baptist* himself came, if he saw, conversed with, knew, and testified of the *Messiah* in his own time, he must have been blind beyond all possible belief, not to have seen, that the title of *Elias* could apply to no one but himself. For *after* the appearance of the *Messiah*, there was no room for the coming of a prophet to whom that character *could* appertain; because *Elias* was to *precede* the *Messiah*. After much the same manner it may be shown, that if *John* did not know his *own* character, he could not know that of *Jesus*. For he indisputably knew, that the coming of *Elias* was to precede that of the *Messiah*; and as he did not believe himself to be *Elias*, he could not expect that the *Messiah* would make his appearance *immediately*, and of course could not suppose that character to belong to *Jesus*, his cotemporary.

If it be asked, In what light then did he consider *Jesus*? I answer, We have no direct information. But I should think it highly probable, that he secretly suspected *him* to be the *Elias*. Nay, I am of opinion, that he afterwards gives a hint of this kind. But I *assert* nothing concerning
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the *secret opinion* of the Baptist, nor do I think myself answerable for it. His not explicitly declaring his *private suspicion* on this head, proceeded, I doubt not, from the honest caution of this pious prophet, to say nothing more concerning Jesus, than what was suggested to him by the Holy Spirit.

But though I do not *assert* that the Baptist took Jesus for the Elias, yet it cannot be improper to produce the ground of my suspicion that he *did* so. I derive it from what *Matthew* has recorded, concerning his sending two of his disciples to Jesus, to ask him, Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another? *Matt. xi. 2, 3.*—But, before I apply this to my present purpose, it will be necessary for me to show, how groundless are the common interpretations of this passage of the Gospel History. For, as it seems to imply, that the Baptist did not, even after he was thrown into prison, know that Jesus was the Messiah, instead of having for a considerable time borne testimony to his Messiahship, different solutions of this supposed difficulty have been given.

The *first* solution is this: That John did not, and could not, send to obtain for *himself* an answer to this question; as he knew, and continually testified, that Jesus was the Christ. But that these two disciples of his, being obstinate in the disbelief of this great truth, he sent them with this message, in order to give them an opportunity of seeing the miracles, and hearing the discourses of Jesus; in hopes that they might be thereby convinced, that his own testimony to him was true.

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To this I reply, that it is altogether incredible, that John's own disciples should not believe their master in such a case. They thought him a good man, and a prophet; and, therefore, acknowledged him as their Master. Could they then, if John had told them, that he had been directed by God, to distinguish the MESSIAH by the descent of the spirit at his baptism; and that he had accordingly seen the spirit descend upon Jesus; and, at the same time, heard a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Could they, I ask, in this case, have had any room for doubting? Dr. Lightfoot has well observed, that they "were most unworthy of such a master, if they would not believe him, without further argument, when he taught them concerning him" (*Jesus.*) But the supposition is unnatural, and absolutely incredible. Moreover, had these men been so unreasonably obstinate, as to dispute and deny the veracity of the Baptist, in this very material point; nay, according to the belief of those whose opinion I am opposing, the one great end of his mission, I am unable to discern, what right they could have to the title of his *disciples* at all. And, lastly, had the Baptist only wished them to hear the discourses, and see the miracles of Jesus, in order to *their* conviction; what reason could he have for sending a *message* by them? Our Lord taught openly, and not in secret; nor was there any occasion for a formal introduction, to see his miracles; which were, for the most part, performed in public. Had John only wished them to see the works, and hear the discourses of Jesus, it would have been quite sufficient

sufficient to have told them where he was, and desired them to go and attend him a little while, and judge for themselves, whether he was not the Messiah, since they would not believe him.

A second solution of this difficulty is, That John meant merely to remind Jesus of the situation he was in; as a hint to him, that, amidst the many miraculous beneficent actions he was daily performing, he should not forget his kinsman and harbinger, but deliver him from his confinement.

Whatever seeming plausibility there may be in this solution, yet, upon examination it will, I apprehend, appear to be every whit as ill founded as the former. It must, I presume, be granted, that if John the Baptist knew, and bore witness to the Messiahship of Jesus, this was so much his proper office, that he could not in duty and conscience, suffer any of his disciples to be ignorant of a truth of such magnitude; but invariably instructed them that Jesus was the Messiah, and laid before them the extraordinary evidence which he had received of the fact. Of course, I think, it must be also granted, that he would be peculiarly careful not to say or do any thing which might tend to weaken his own testimony. Now, though John, no doubt, wished to be delivered from his prison, either by ordinary or extraordinary means, yet if a miraculous deliverance by Jesus was the object of his message, he certainly hit upon the very worst expedient he could have thought of to obtain his purpose; and at the same time inconsistent with his duty.

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He is supposed to have sent two disciples, whom of course he must have instructed that Jesus was the Messiah, to ask him, Whether he was the Messiah or not? Whether he was the Messiah, or some body else was to be the Messiah?—What would his disciples think of such a message as this? Were they not likely, on the road to converse about the strange and unaccountable errand they were going upon? and would they not naturally come to this conclusion, that there was no trust to be placed in their master; who after having instructed them in the Messiahship of Jesus, appeared evidently at last not to be sure of it himself? Perhaps it may be said, that to prevent so awkward a consequence, he let his two disciples into the secret meaning of the message; and it must be owned, that there is the same proof of this, as there is that the message contained any secret meaning at all: That is, *none*.—But should we grant, that these disciples of John were apprized of this supposed secret meaning, what would they, and what must we think of their master's manners, for conveying it in a form so disrespectful. "Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another?" The purport of which, upon the scheme I am examining is this, "Art thou, whom the Spirit of God informed me to be the Messiah, and to whose right to this title I have long borne my testimony. Art thou, *indeed* the Messiah, when thou sufferest thy harbinger and great witness to lie in prison, without any miraculous exertion for his deliverance? It cannot surely be! but after all, some other person will be found, to

whom this character will *in truth* appertain." Even Dr. Lightfoot, who adopts this solution of the grand difficulty, himself paraphrases the language of the message, "If thou art he, concerning whose triumphing the prophets declare so much, why am I so long detained in prison? Art thou he, or is another to be expected, from whom these things are to be looked for?" Strange it is, that the ill manners and insolence of such a message, from such a person, to one whose shoes he had declared himself unworthy to carry, have not been sufficient to prevent men of learning and sense from adopting this as conveying the true meaning of the Baptist. Could any man of common sense imagine, that, by affronting the Messiah, he could prevail on him to work a miracle in his behalf?

If John really wished Jesus to deliver him miraculously from his confinement (of which not the most distant hint is given in the scriptures) why did he not send him a respectful message, beseeching him to exert his power in his behalf? This would have been decent, and to the point. Should it be said, that he might think such a request too presumptuous, as having some appearance of dictating to the Messiah what he ought to do; I answer, that it would have been far less presumptuous than the above message, which many think him to have sent. But certainly there were other methods by which John might have contrived to have drawn the attention of Jesus to himself, besides that of affronting him, or directly *telling* him his wishes. Might he not have sent him word, that he had,

In his confinement, heard of, and exceedingly rejoiced at his success, and the distinguished and beneficent miracles which he was daily performing; so that his joy on his account was truly fulfilled? Such a message would have been no less effectual to remind Jesus of him, and much more respectful, than “Art thou he that should come? or do we look for *another*?” and would also have implied no *uncertainty* respecting the proper character of Jesus; which the real message most evidently does, in the obvious and natural sense of the words.

This *uncertainty* is so manifest, that many have thought, and I believe many do still think, that John, though he had long borne his testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, had really his doubts at this time, whether he was the Messiah or not. And in favour of this opinion, it must be allowed, that it is not, as the two former, *entirely* without foundation in the words of scripture; which do indeed express an *uncertainty*, but give not the least hint of the infidelity of John's disciples, or of *his* wishing that Jesus would set him free from his confinement by a miracle. These are mere ungrounded suppositions, made through fear of the evident consequence of allowing to the words their natural and obvious meaning, which is, that John was at this time in a state of great uncertainty respecting the true character of Jesus. But still, how it can be supposed that he should call in question the testimony of the Spirit of God; and after the Most High had assured him that Jesus was the Messiah, and that *he* was sent to

witness to him, as bearing that character, doubt whether it belonged to him or not, I must own I am incapable of conceiving. What had Jesus done to *sink* himself in the opinion of the Baptist? Surely, nothing. But if he had, *the word of God is sure*, and *Messiahship* must still have appertained to him: nor could John, without manifest impiety, have entertained a thought of his being *less* than the Messiah.

But the truth seems to have been, that John received no information from God concerning the precise character of Jesus, any more than concerning his own. For a declaration of the one would have been a discovery of the other; as hath been, I hope, already proved. So that the Baptist was left at liberty to form his own private sentiments concerning the character of Jesus as he pleased; and, according to the evidences which might present themselves, after Jesus had entered upon his office. That is, he was left to derive his information from the same sources as his countrymen were to derive theirs; namely, *from the discourses and the works of Jesus*. The consequence of this appears to have been, that he did not at first suppose him to have been the Messiah; but after he had been thrown into prison (being now freed from his own laborious occupation, which had employed almost all his time and thoughts) he found himself at leisure to attend more accurately to the works and discourses of Jesus, concerning which he received frequent accounts from his own disciples. Till at length he began to suspect, that he had estimated his character too low, and that he must needs be the
Messiah

Messiah himself. Upon which he sends two of his disciples to put the question directly to him, "Art thou he that should come? Or do we look for another?" That is, art *thou* the Messiah, or is he to *follow* thee?

To add the more weight to this state of the case, I beg leave to give the narrative of John's sending his disciples at length, Matt. xi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. "Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

Here are *four* things to be observed. First, the reason of the message. Secondly, the message itself. Thirdly, the answer. And fourthly, the person to whom this answer is given.

I. The *reason* of John's sending the message, "Now when John had heard in prison the **WORKS** of Christ, he sent two of his disciples." Most assuredly, the **WORKS** of Christ could not make him *doubt*, that he was *not* the Messiah; on the contrary, they afforded a natural evidence of his being so. John's astonishment at the mighty works, which did shew forth themselves in him, was the occasion of his sending. Which astonishment could never have seized him, had he known him to be the Messiah *before*. For they were no

greater works than the Messiah was expected to perform. He, therefore, did not before know, that Jesus was the Messiah; and even at *this* time had only a very strong *suspicion* of his being so. This representation, I think, receives abundant confirmation,

II. From the *message itself*, “Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another?” The plain meaning of which is, “Art thou the Messiah, or is another to follow thee, to whom that character shall appertain? Thy miracles are so many and so stupendous, that surely the Messiah is not to come after thee; but thou must be the Messiah himself! I conjure thee, satisfy me on this head.” It ought to be kept in mind, that if John had hitherto considered him as the Messiah, his works could not possibly have led his ideas to a *subsequent* Messiah. No; on the contrary, this enquiry must have originated in John’s *former* opinion, that the Messiah was to follow him. Which opinion, the stupendous works had now shaken and almost overthrown. I proceed,

III. To the *answer*. “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.” This answer is exactly such a one as our Lord was likely to give, not to a person who well knew his real character, but to one in a state of *uncertainty* respecting it, and whom he wished to inform of it, in the same indirect manner as he did others. It is the very same answer which he would have returned to any other person who had put to him the same question; and by no means implies, that

that our Lord thought the message rude or impertinent, or that it contained any secret meaning.

IV. The *person* to whom this answer was sent : “Go and show *John* again those things which ye do see and hear.” Hence it is clear, that Jesus supposed that John had sent the message for his *own* information ; which could not have been the case, had *John* all along known that he was the Messiah, and borne witness to his being so.

Having thus, as I think, fairly stated the meaning of this remarkable passage, I am to show how I come to ground upon it a *suspicion*, that John had hitherto looked upon Jesus as the *Elias*. Now, we are to consider, that John did not know himself to be the *Elias* ; but he knew the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and that *Elias* must precede the Messiah ; he regarded Jesus as his superior, whose shoes he was not worthy to carry ; and suggests (see the second head) that he once thought the Messiah was to follow *him*.—Let the Reader put all these circumstances together, and judge for himself, whether there does not arise from them a very high degree of probability, that John had, till this time, regarded Jesus as the *Elias*, the harbinger of the Messiah : and whether, therefore, the Baptist’s meaning might not be concisely, but with a strict regard to truth, expressed thus, Art thou the *Messiah himself*, or art thou *Elias* only, as I have hitherto thought thee ?

P. S. I shall beg the favour, ere long, of continuing my subject in the Theological Repository ; and dare say, if it appear interesting, you will not deny me room.—The principal texts of scripture which seem to make against my *hypothesis*, are to be noticed hereafter.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

AS your work is open to all lovers of truth, and friends of free enquiry, and you wish it to be the theatre of liberal controversy, I beg leave to attract the notice of your correspondents to the following extraordinary paragraph, in the preface to the new edition of the *Letters of Ben. Mordecai*, by the learned and Rev. Mr. Taylor, of Portsmouth.

After commending his own opinion (that Jesus Christ was the visible Jehovah who appeared to the patriarchs, and gave the law) as happily lying between the two extremes of Athanasianism and Socinianism; and as being the opinion of the ancients before the council of Nice, &c. &c. he goes on “ And when the
“ Athanasian and Socinian writers have effec-
“ tually exposed one anothers mistakes, with-
“ out getting rid of their own; and when they
“ shall have settled the various readings of an
“ *av* or an *ov*, in Justin’s Trypho, and agree
“ about the construction of his Greek; when
“ they have ransacked all antiquity for the
“ opinion of the Nazarenes, Mineans, and
“ Ebionites, with as much zeal as if their faith
“ depended

“ depended upon it, and all to no purpose,
“ their difficulties still remaining ; it is not im-
“ probable that the divines of the next gene-
“ ration, will consider the subject more coolly ;
“ and find the principles I am defending, will
“ supply the only key that is able to open and
“ discover the consistency between the Jewish
“ and christian revelations, &c.”

This passage, I think to be, on several accounts, unworthy of the learned writer ; and I cannot help wishing that, instead of endeavouring to turn into ridicule the labours of those who are exerting themselves to the utmost in researches after truth, he had taken some serious notice of what has been advanced by the candid and excellent Mr. Lindsey, in the *Sequel to his Apology*, in which he has given the fullest satisfaction to great numbers, that Mr. Taylor's notion, and that of the orthodox Fathers, of Christ being the person by whom God spake to the patriarchs, and gave the law to the Israelites, has no more foundation in the scriptures, than it has in reason. He should, at least, as a man pretending to have truth, and the information of mankind, for his objects, have said what, I doubt not, must be the case, viz. that he had read Mr. Lindsey's animadversions on his system, and (as he appears not to have changed his opinion in consequence of it) have given some reason or other why he saw no cause to change it. Had he not republished his work, this might not have been thought necessary ; but as he has, and written a new preface to it, a paragraph or two on this subject might reasonably

reasonably be expected; and many persons think unfavourably of him, in consequence of finding him maintain what looks like a contemptuous silence on this head; especially as Mr. Lindsey is not a person that Mr. Taylor can pretend to hold in contempt. I therefore take the liberty to call upon him, in this public manner, to make whatever declaration he may think proper on the subject, in your work, which, I doubt not, will be open to him on the occasion.

I am particularly sorry to observe, that Mr. Taylor, like too many others who deal in *wit* and *sarcastism*, has paid too little regard to the *truth* of his representations. The controversy that he alludes to, is evidently that between Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley; but, though I have read that controversy with some care, I did not perceive that it turned upon the various reading of an *av* or an *ov*. The great object of that controversy is to ascertain what was the faith of the generality of *unlearned christians* in the early ages, as a medium by which to discover what was the doctrine of the apostles with respect to the person of Christ, independent of the evidence of their writings, which are variously interpreted; and also, whether the Unitarians were originally considered as heretics.

To determine these questions is certainly a matter of great consequence; and it would better have become Mr. Taylor, either to have mentioned the *mistakes* that he says the parties concerned have not got rid of, and the *difficulties*, that he says, remain unsolved, or not to have

have said any thing at all on the subject. I call upon him to say, what are those *mistakes* and *difficulties*; that, at least, the attention of others may be drawn to them, though he should not himself deign to lend his assistance in clearing them up.

I also wish that he would consider the *query* that I have put in the former number of your work, relating to the earliest date of the Arian hypothesis. If he have read the Fathers at all, he must know, that they who first advanced the doctrine for which he contends, viz. that of Christ having been the *visible Jehovah* of the Old Testament, did likewise maintain that he was the *logos*, or *reason* of the Father personified, and not such a being as Mr. Taylor considers him, viz. one who was *made out of nothing*, or *as other creatures were made*; and that this opinion led to the doctrine of Christ being of *the same substance with the Father*, and in all respects equal to him, with every thing else that is most absurd and shocking in the Athanasian doctrine of the trinity, which he reprobates. This was the opinion of Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and Eusebius, who were thought to be the most favourable to the Arian hypothesis in early times.

So far were the original favourers of Mr. Taylor's opinion (of Christ having been the visible Jehovah of the Old Testament) from holding the Arian doctrine, that there is not, in the whole compass of ecclesiastical history, an instance of any such alarm being given as was occasioned by the introduction of it. They who continued to hold the doctrine of the personification of the *logos* of the Father, or *a god of God*, treated the doctrine
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of Christ being a *created pre-existent spirit*, and yet the maker of the world, as *polytheism* and *idolatry*; whereas they had long treated the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ with the greatest tenderness; a circumstance which, to those who know any thing of human nature, clearly shews which had been the opinion of the great bulk of common christians. The Unitarian doctrine was first thought meanly of, and in time came to be reprobated; but the Arian doctrine was condemned as soon as it appeared; so that there are no events in history more clearly ascertained than the rise and progress of Arianism.

Mr. Taylor cannot need to be informed, that, though *Athanasianism* and *Socinianism* be two extremes, widely distant from each other, it does not, therefore, follow that there is any proper medium between them. Otherwise there must be a medium between the *Creator* and his *creatures*; and, indeed, such a medium several of the Fathers represented Christ to be.

If Mr. Taylor be a candid man, and a lover of truth, he will favour me, and the public, with his opinion, at least, on the subject. He may, for want of leisure or health, or for various other good reasons, decline a long discussion; but he may, in the compass of a single letter, and that of no great length, inform the world where he imagines the evidence for the existence of his opinion in the ages prior to Arius, and subsequent to the time of the apostles, lies, that others may be directed where to look for it.

I will farther add, that if Mr. Taylor has any value for the opinion for which he has so largely contended,

contended, he will not chuse that the opposers of it should be able to say, uncontradicted, that, notwithstanding the numerous writings of learned christians, in the interval between the age of the apostles and that of Arius (in which their own opinions concerning the person of Christ are so largely discussed, and those of the unlearned christians so particularly mentioned, or alluded to) no trace should be found of its having any favourers at all. Had the genuine doctrine of the scriptures been so suddenly, and so long lost; and did it remain absolutely unknown, both to the learned and the unlearned, for more than two hundred years?

There are so many persons who will be impressed by this consideration (though some may pay no attention to it) that if Mr. Taylor have any value for his opinion (being now looked up to as the most learned Arian of the present age) he will step forth to remove the weight of it. I can assure him, that his silence on this occasion will be construed by many into an inability of giving the public any satisfaction with respect to the question.

I am, with the most sincere respect for Mr. Taylor, but, I hope, with a superior regard to truth,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

J O S E P H U S.

P. S. As you have been pleased to indulge me with the insertion of a *Query* which I sent you for the first number of your useful work, I hope
you

you will favour me again, by giving a place to the following:

Dr. Cudworth, in his *Intellectual System*, Book I. chap. iv. p. 404. of the first edition, says that, in the writings of Plato, God is called *ὁ πάντων τὰς ἀλλὰ ἐργαζέται καὶ εαυτὸν*. *He that causeth, or produceth all other things, and even himself.* He quotes similar expressions from Plotinus and Lactantius, and supposes that by this *unusual and bold strain of theology*, as he calls it, was meant that *God is a self-originated being, and from no other cause besides himself, but the cause of all other things.*

If this be the case, as I doubt not it is, it will take off much of the censure which has been thrown upon Lactantius, as a writer unworthy of any notice, on account of his egregious blunder, as he only copied Plato and his followers, which most of the christian writers of that age did. But though I have perused the writings of Plato, the passage above-mentioned has escaped me, and Dr. Cudworth does not say where it is to be found. I shall therefore be obliged to any of your learned correspondents, who may recollect the passage, if they will point it out to me.

A Proposal

*A Proposal for correcting the English Translation
of the Scriptures.*

AS the attention that has been given to the Scriptures, especially of late years, has discovered many errors and imperfections in the present English translation of both the Old and New Testaments, and it does not appear that any steps are taken by authority to correct it, or to make a new one, it cannot but be a desirable object to all the friends of revealed religion, to procure, without farther delay, the best translation that can be made. And perhaps no better method can be taken to succeed in a work of this kind; than by engaging the assistance of the learned friends of free enquiry, and requesting them to transmit to this work, whatever corrections of the present version of the Scriptures, may have occurred to them; that other learned men may have an opportunity of seeing, and considering them. We shall therefore reserve a part of this work for this purpose; and we hope that every future Number of it, for some years to come, will contain some useful materials for it.

Most persons, we doubt not, will agree with us in thinking it more adviseable to correct the present translation, than to make an entirely *new one*; and whenever it shall appear that a sufficient number of corrections are procured, a
new

new edition will be published. But, as it will be an easier task to correct the translation of the New Testament, than that of the Old, it will probably be accomplished some time before the other.

It is not expected that our correspondents should confine themselves to such improvements as have occurred to themselves. We shall be thankful to any person who shall take the trouble to collect from other versions, and other works, whatever of this kind they shall find to be useful.

We would also take this opportunity of observing, that though one object of this work is to procure *original illustrations of the scriptures*, we shall think ourselves obliged to any persons who shall transmit to us any observations, of real value, from *foreign publications*, and even though they should not confine themselves to works of recent date; because to our English readers, they will give as much satisfaction as communications that are properly original.

Essays on Inspiration, continued from p. 122.

E S S A Y III.

Observations on the Inspiration of the Apostles.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING laid before your readers some observations relating to the inspiration of *Moses*, and the other *prophets of the Old Testament*, I proceed to consider the extent to which *the apostles* may be supposed to have been inspired, how far their minds were enlightened, and what knowledge they had to communicate. In order to judge rightly of this, we must carefully attend to two circumstances; in the first place, the object of their mission, and the degree of knowledge that was really requisite for it; and, in the next place, the knowledge that, from the circumstances in their history, and from the tenor of their writings, they appear to have been actually possessed of.

It cannot but be thought improbable, *a priori*, that more knowledge would be communicated to them than the purpose of their mission required, that not being agreeable to the usual dispensations of God, as it could only have served to gratify an improper curiosity, which

we always find to have been repressed. Much more evidently necessary is it that the knowledge they were possessed of should be estimated by the degree of it that actually appears in their writings; and least of all should we suppose that they knew more than by their manner of writing, they appear to have pretended to themselves. In whatever general manner, therefore, the degree of their knowledge be any where expressed; it must be interpreted by *facts* in their history, and in their writings, though by this means we should be obliged to restrict their meaning very much.

There is no person so ignorant of the language of scripture, and especially the figurative hyperbolical turn of it, as not to acknowledge that many general expressions in them must be greatly limited in their interpretation. *All the world*, for instance, sometimes means only a small part of it, and *all men*, only a small part of the human race. When our Saviour said, Matt. xxviii. 18. that *all power was given to him in heaven and in earth*, it would hardly be imagined that he had a power of altering the course of the sun, and the arrangement of the stars in heaven, or even that the fates of empires on earth were at his disposal. We all suppose that this power was confined to the purposes of the christian church, and that it probably related only to Christ's imparting to his disciples those miraculous powers with which they were endued after the descent of the Holy Spirit; those powers being communicated by him, or in consequence of his prayers, as he says, John xiv. 16.

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I will pray the Father, and he will send you another comforter. These powers might be called *his*, in the same sense in which he said, John xvi. 15. *All that the Father had was his*; and by this it could not be meant that all divine power would be communicated to him. Whatever, therefore, is said in a general way, of the knowledge or power of the apostles, we must interpret it by a regard to the object of their mission, and especially by facts in their history, and the tenor of their writings.

Our Saviour promised, John xvi. 13. that they should be *led into all truth*. But no person ever imagined that by this truths of a philosophical, or scientific nature were intended (for of them he himself was probably ignorant) but only truths relating to christianity. And even many things which might be said to have a relation to christianity were no more necessary to the purpose of their mission, than truths of a philosophical or scientific nature. We must therefore farther restrict the meaning of this promise by an attention to the occasions of their mission, and other circumstances.

We may find some light upon this subject by considering that this leading of the apostles into all truth was to be effected by the *Holy Spirit*, for it is said *the spirit of truth shall guide you into all truth*. Let us, therefore, consider what change took place in their minds in consequence of the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, for we read of no other general descent of the Spirit but at that time; and all

the subsequent *gifts of the Spirit* probably operated in the same manner, and produced only similar effects; being indeed intended to answer the same purpose, which was that of being an evidence of the presence and power of God accompanying the preaching of the gospel.

Now all that we can learn from the history of what passed on the day of Pentecost in the the book of Acts, was, that in consequence of this descent of the Spirit on that day, the apostles, and all the disciples who were present, were endued with extraordinary powers. But we do not find that their minds were enlightened in a direct manner at all; that is, they had no new knowledge communicated to them; all the illumination which they had in consequence of it being that which they derived from their own reflections on that remarkable event, and on the powers which they had in consequence of it. That they were not led into *all truth* at this time, is evident from their being ignorant of some very important things relating even to their own mission many years after this, especially of the admission of the uncircumcised Gentiles to the privileges of christians, without any obligation to conform to the law of Moses. Of many other things also, they certainly remained ignorant till their death, as our Saviour himself was with respect to the time of the day of judgment. *All truth*, therefore, must of necessity be restricted in its meaning, and *how far*, it may not be very easy to determine.

Perhaps the true meaning was, that in consequence of this descent of the Spirit, by which

they would find themselves enabled to work miracles, as Christ himself had been, they would obtain the fullest satisfaction with respect to the great articles of the *messiahship of Jesus*, and the *spiritual nature of his kingdom*; with respect to which they would be in possession of *the whole truth*. This, however, would not be by any direct and proper communication of truth to their minds; for that was unnecessary, as they could not help drawing the proper conclusions from the facts when they came to reflect upon them, and upon the circumstances in which this great completion of our Saviour's promises as to this world left them, together with what he had often said, though in a more obscure manner, on the subject. Immediately after our Lord's resurrection, they could not tell but he might still assume a kingly character; and though his visible ascension into heaven would in some measure destroy that expectation, it might not do it entirely. However, as his second coming was not only to be with *power and great glory*, which might suit with an idea of an earthly kingdom, but likewise to *raise the dead*, and *judge the world*, as it is expressed in several of his discourses; and as this descent of the Spirit was not attended with any intermediate return of their Lord, they must soon have abandoned all expectations of that kind; and finding themselves endued with a power of working miracles, they would presently assume courage, and adapt themselves to their new and extraordinary situation.

It does not appear that the apostles were ever made acquainted with any *truths of a general nature* by a direct communication from God, either at, or at any time after this descent of the Spirit. That the Gentiles would be admitted, in their uncircumcised state, into the church of Christ, was a *conclusion* which they made from *appearances*; i. e. from the facts of which they were witnesses, namely, the descent of the Spirit upon Cornelius and his friends before they were baptized. And as no mere appearance teaches so plainly, as not to admit of different constructions, there was, we find, room for difference of opinion, and for much debate upon the subject, even among the apostles themselves. It appears that Peter did not, without some difficulty, justify himself to his brethren, for baptizing Cornelius and his friends; and it is evident that they did not proceed to act upon it, so as to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, which they would naturally have done, if they had been expressly taught by the Spirit of God that it was proper to be done.

The gospel was first preached to the uncircumcised Gentiles by Paul in Syria and Cilicia, subsequent to the conversion of Cornelius. This he seems to have done by a special commission from Christ himself, but when it was given does not appear.

This conduct of the apostle Paul excited much speculation, brought spies upon his conduct, and occasioned the journey of some zealous christians from Jerusalem, sent, perhaps, by James himself; as may in some measure be inferred from comparing

paring Acts xv. 1; &c. with Gal. ii. 12. So slowly did this great truth make its way into their minds; whereas they could not have had any doubt on the subject, if the Holy Spirit had informed any of the apostles distinctly, as a certain truth, which they ought to believe and act upon, that Gentile converts might be admitted into the christian church in their uncircumcised state.

The conversion of great numbers of Gentiles by Paul and Barnabas, in their first progress through Asia Minor, occasioning much speculation, and giving great offence, a solemn deputation was sent from Antioch (from which Paul had proceeded to preach the gospel to the Gentiles) to the apostles at Jerusalem, ten years after the conversion of Cornelius; and after much debate on the subject, which evidently implies a difference of opinion among them at the beginning, they agreed at length that it would be right not to circumcise any of the new converts, but only to impose upon them the observance of certain things, by which we may suppose they would become less obnoxious to the Jewish christians. And still all the original apostles seem to have agreed to confine their labours to the Jews, while Paul and Barnabas should be at the head of those who preached to the Gentile world.

Our Saviour likewise said, John xiv. 26. that *the Spirit would bring all things to remembrance, whatever he had said unto them*; but as we do not find that they remembered more of his discourses than other men, without any particular assistance, might have done, and they actually report them with considerable variations, this pro-

mise of our Lord's is not, perhaps, to be interpreted literally, any more than many others of his sayings; and might allude to this same great event, viz. the descent of the Spirit leading them to reflect upon what he had said, and especially on the subject of his kingdom, and on the nature and the extent of it; so that by comparing these things together, they would of course find their minds enlightened, without any proper communication of knowledge to them,

The same interpretation may be given to our Saviour's promise, Matt. xxii, 4. that the Spirit would dictate to them what they were to say, when they should be brought before magistrates; so that they need not give themselves the trouble of pre-meditating before hand what they should say on those occasions; the prospect of which would naturally fill them with alarm, . Matt. x. 19, 20. *But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.* Even in language so definite as this, he might not refer to any proper suggestion of words, or even of ideas, at the time, but only to such a general preparation for that, and all other similar occasions, as they would necessarily derive from the descent of the Spirit upon them, which would produce such a full conviction of mind with respect to the kingdom of Christ, and their interest in it, and which gave them such powers as must have convinced them that they were so much under the immediate protection of providence, that they had nothing finally to fear from man.
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This would naturally give any men such a confidence in the cause in which they were engaged, as would render all immediate communications of knowledge, or of courage, unnecessary; and we may conclude from the whole plan of providence, that supernatural communications are never imparted unnecessarily; there being infinitely more wisdom in acting by general laws, than by particular interpositions.

If we consider the behaviour of the apostles when they were brought before magistrates, and what they actually did say upon those occasions, we shall not find that it required any particular suggestion. They behaved on those occasions as men in their circumstances would easily do, and they shewed no more courage than thousands in similar situations (and many of them persons more illiterate than they were, and in less conspicuous stations in the former part of their lives) have shewn since their time, as the history of all persecutions will evidence.

This preparation for appearing before magistrates, if it was promised to all the disciples, or even to the apostles only, must have extended to Paul. But can it be supposed that, if the Spirit of God had dictated to him every thing that he said before the High Priest, he could have seen reason to retract what he had said, and to make an apology for it, on account of his not knowing that it was the High Priest? Acts xxiii. 5. His conduct was certainly very natural and excusable, considering the provocation that was given him, and that he felt as an injured and an insulted man. But there is no appearance of his being directed in what he
said

said by a more than human knowledge of the circumstances in which he was.

It may be asked, what is meant by the *word of wisdom*, and the *word of knowledge*, which Paul enumerates, 1 Cor. xii. 8. among the gifts of the Spirit; I frankly answer, that I cannot certainly say. But I will observe in general, that *wisdom*, may, perhaps, relate to the conduct of life; and though *knowledge* signifies the knowledge of truth, or general propositions, it may likewise mean the knowledge of other things, which might be sufficiently interesting to christians, and of more consequence to them in their circumstances. The best critics are not agreed about the difference between the *word of wisdom*, and the *word of knowledge*. It might be very inconsiderable.

Whatever this knowledge was, it is evident, from the low and disorderly state of the church of Corinth, when this epistle was written, that it could not be the knowledge of any truths of a general nature. In the third chapter the apostle says, He could only speak to them as to *babes in Christ*, that he had *fed them with milk, and not with meat*, because *they had not been able to bear it, nor were they then able*. Notwithstanding this gift of knowledge, it appears, that the members of this church were easily led aside by those who perverted the doctrines of christianity, and denied even the resurrection; so that the apostle had occasion to give them farther information with respect to that most fundamental doctrine of christianity, as well as to a variety of other subjects, of very great importance. It can never be supposed that christians, so grossly ignorant as these were, had their

their minds much enlightened by the gift of knowledge, of which they, nevertheless, were possessed.

It may be said, that only some of the members of this church were so grossly ignorant, while others of them derived the greatest advantage from these divine communications. But whatever were these gifts of the Spirit, the use of them was not confined to those who were immediately possessed of them, but was subservient to the edification of the whole church; and it is pretty evident also, that there was no uncertainty with respect to these gifts, or the persons who were possessed of them. Indeed, being given for the confirmation of the gospel, they could not have answered their original and proper end, if even strangers might not have been sensible of there being something extraordinary in the case. Consequently, any supernatural illumination imparted to any one member of the church, would soon have been communicated to all the rest; and they, knowing that it came from the Spirit of God, would have received it without hesitation.

At the first descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the strangers who were then in it, were struck with the appearance of something which they could not account for in a natural way, and great numbers of them were by that means made converts to christianity. If we consider the original and proper use of these gifts of the Spirit, viz. as an evidence of the truth of christianity, we may easily perceive that the communication of *general truths* would not have been proper for the purpose, but rather
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the knowledge of some things which unbelievers might have been acquainted with, but which they were sensible that these christians had no natural means of knowing. An example of this we have in our Saviour's informing Nathaniel that he had seen him, or known what he was doing, when he was under the fig-tree. John i. 48. Such a knowledge as this Elifha discovered with respect to his servant Gehazi, who had told him a lie, and had thought that he could have deceived him. 2-Kings v. 25. Such knowledge as this was adapted to have an effect similar to that of the gift of tongues, being an evidence to unbelievers of miraculous interposition; and therefore is much more likely to have been the knowledge alluded to by the apostle, than the revelation of general truth, which was a thing of a very different nature from any thing which is called the *gift of the Spirit*, and was likewise unnecessary in their circumstances, who had sufficient natural means of information with respect to *truths* properly so called.

The word *revelation* is used in the scriptures with very great latitude, and sometimes can only be interpreted of just inferences made by persons themselves. Our Saviour, upon Peter's acknowledging him to be the Messiah, says to him, Matt. xvi. 17. *Blessed art thou Simon Berjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.* I do not believe, however, that it has been supposed by any, except some of the primitive Fathers, that Peter had any particular revelation from God

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on this subject, any more than the other apostles ; and while Christ himself was with them, he was their sole teacher, and a sufficient one. The meaning, therefore, though contrary to the literal sense of the words, must be, that in forming this conclusion, Peter had been influenced by better principles and motives than those of the Scribes and Pharisees ; *flesh and blood* meaning something carnal and worldly-minded, whereas Peter had discovered a better disposition of mind, which might be said to have been heavenly, or worthy of God, and to come ultimately from God who is in heaven. This has certainly the appearance of being a very far fetched interpretation of our Saviour's language, and yet, from the circumstances of the case, it must, I should think, be acknowledged to be the only true one. It should, therefore, lead us to allow for, and to expect, very strong figures of speech on other similar occasions.

This interpretation of the revelation to Peter, may be farther confirmed by another saying of our Saviour's, of a similar nature, and no doubt of a similar import. He says, John vi. 44. *No man can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him.* This is understood by few persons, I believe, of a miraculous interposition, as the words literally interpreted import, but as either referring to the general providence of God, without which nothing can come to pass, or to that good disposition of mind, and especially that piety towards God, which would incline men to become the disciples of Christ.

Also

Also, the phrase *ye shall be all taught of God*, used John vi. 45. can hardly be supposed to refer to a direct inspiration, but only to such a *divine teaching*, as all christians who enjoyed the benefit of revelations made to other persons partook of.

Paul says, 2 Tim. iii. 16. that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*; but this might be nothing more than such an inspiration as Peter had with respect to Christ, and signify nothing more than that the books were written by good men, or with the best views and designs, and therefore were proper for instruction, &c. for they might answer all the purposes that he has there mentioned, without their being *inspired of God* in the usual sense of the phrase; and therefore, there is no reason why it should be supposed to have that sense in this place. Strictly speaking, only the prophecies, and other messages from heaven were given by inspiration.

That the primitive Christians did not suppose that the evangelists wrote from immediate inspiration, is evident from the reasons which they gave for the credit which is due to the gospels of Mark and Luke. For they alledge that Mark had his knowledge of the history of our Saviour from the apostle Peter, and Luke his from Paul; Matthew and John being supposed by them to be sufficiently qualified to write their accounts from their own personal knowledge. Had they been supposed to write from immediate inspiration, the evidence of them all could not but have been supposed to have been originally the same.

From

From the manner in which men write we may easily judge whether they conceive themselves to be writing from direct inspiration or not. A man, knowing that he has an express revelation from God, on any particular subject, would never conceal that important circumstance, but would openly and distinctly alledge it, and lay the chief stress upon it. Otherwise he would be very much to blame, as having misled his readers, and having neglected to make use of his strongest arguments to enforce what he was urging. It cannot, therefore, be supposed that Paul had any express revelation with respect to those subjects on which he contents himself with *reasoning only*, without alledging any other authority for what he advanced. For when he reasons only, he evidently appeals to nothing but the reason of those to whom he addresses himself, resting his cause on the arguments which he produces.

When this apostle writes on the subject of the resurrection, besides his reasons and explanations, he never fails to subjoin the express information that he had received from Christ on the subject. He does the same with respect to his account of the institution of the Lord's supper. In all other cases, therefore, in which he contents himself with *reasoning only*, without alledging any express authority, we may conclude that he had none to produce, but that he himself formed his own judgment on such considerations and arguments as he proposed to others, and which he thereby submits to their judgment. He expressly says, 2 Cor. i. 24, that the apostles had *no dominion over the faith of christians*; by which he could only mean, that

that their authority, independent of that of Christ and of God, was not sufficient to make any article of christian faith. It behoves us, therefore, to distinguish in what cases the apostles had superior authority, and in what they had no other than their own; and by means of the *criteria* just now laid down, it does not seem difficult to do this.

The case of the apostle Paul was, in several respects, different from that of the other apostles. He had not conversed with Christ originally, he had not derived any benefit from his instructions in the course of his ministry, and he was not a disciple at the time of the first descent of the spirit. But as the divine wisdom thought him to be a proper person to have the office and rank of an apostle, it was necessary that he should be a witness of the resurrection of Christ (whose person he might very probably have known) as well as the other apostles, and also that he should have his instructions from Christ himself, to which he frequently alludes. But though Paul was instructed in the knowledge of the gospel by our Lord himself in person, it is not probable that he was taught more than the other apostles knew. He does not even pretend to this. All he says, 2 Cor. xi. 5. is, that *he was not behind the chiefest of the apostles.*

As Paul was designed to be *the apostle to the Gentiles* in particular, it is possible that he might receive from Christ some special commission for that purpose. But this might not be delivered to him in a plain and explicit manner at first, and for any thing that appears, it might have been the descent of the Spirit upon Cornelius that enabled him

him fully to understand his commission, and led him to act upon it. For immediately after his own conversion, Paul, like the other apostles, seems to have confined his preaching to the Jews only; and it was not till after the conversion of Cornelius that we have any account of his preaching to the Gentiles, which he first did in the neighbourhood of Antioch, but without the previous knowledge or concurrence of any of the other apostles; so that when he went to Jerusalem, two years after this, he communicated to them the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles, but *privately only, and to them who were of reputation.* Gal. ii. 2.

If we consult the writings of the apostle Paul, we shall perceive no trace of his knowing any more than such general truths as we ourselves are able to deduce from our Lord's discourses, from the descent of the holy Spirit on the Jewish believers on the day of Pentecost, and on Cornelius and his Gentile friends afterwards; except the single circumstance relating to the change that shall take place in those who shall be found alive at our Lord's second coming, and the prophecies concerning the *man of sin, &c.* If we judge from *fact*, we can by no means conclude that he had any supernatural illumination with respect to the interpretation of scripture. For many of his applications of passages from the Old Testament, and his arguments drawn from them, are such as we find in Philo, and were probably customary among the learned Jews of his age, but which strict reasoning will not warrant. For this I appeal to the epistle to the Romans, that to the Galatians, and especially

cially that to the Hebrews, if it be Paul's. The particulars I shall not enlarge upon at present.

Paul had also a vision, or trance, in which he seemed to be taken up into the third heaven, and heard things that he says, 2 Cor. xii. 4. it was not lawful, or possible, for a man to utter. But whatever was the nature, or use of this revelation, concerning which we can only make conjectures, we perceive no trace of his knowing more in consequence of it than the other apostles, who had no such divine raptures. What he saw in this trance might perhaps be such a prophetic view of the progress of the christian church, as was exhibited to John in the isle of Patmos, of which we have an account in the book of Revelation. But that book contains no *new truth* that can be said to be *of a general nature*, no propositions relating to christianity, or to any of the peculiar tenets of it.

Upon the whole, and from the most attentive consideration that I have been able to give to the subject, I see no reason to conclude that the descent of the Spirit was attended with any communication of truth, properly so called; or that, exclusive of what comes under the description of prophecies, the apostles acquired any more knowledge afterwards; except such as they might derive from their own recollection of our Saviour's discourses, or from the events to which they were witnesses; nor do I see that they had any occasion for more knowledge than they might easily derive from these sources.

That they were ignorant of the nature of maniacal disorders, is as evident from the language in which they speak of them, as any thing can well

well be. They evidently conceived those cases to be real possessions by evil spirits, and it was of no consequence to their divine mission that they should know any more concerning this than was generally known by their unbelieving countrymen. For whatever was the nature of that disorder, they were enabled to cure it, and in a manner that plainly shewed it was not by any natural means, but by supernatural agency. Indeed their ignorance of the nature of the disorder is itself an evidence that the cure of it was not effected by them, but by God alone, in a miraculous way; and all that was of any consequence to their purpose was to shew that God was with them, and that it was *he*, and not *they*, who did these works; which is the very thing that our Saviour said with respect to himself, viz. that it was *the Father within him*, or acting by him, *who did the works*, John xiv. 10. God has sufficiently provided, in the general plan of his providence, that men should be able, at a proper time, to discover the real nature of maniacal disorders, and hereafter we may perhaps know, and be able to apply a certain remedy for them. But in the age of the apostles, and in the manner in which the cures were then performed, the power by which it was effected was evidently miraculous. A knowledge of the true nature of that disorder, in that early age, must have been miraculous also; and the apostles not mentioning their having had such knowledge supernaturally communicated to them, is one reason why I think they were not possessed of it.

For the same reason, as well as from its being unnecessary in itself, but especially from a careful

comparison of the passages which they have quoted from the Old Testament, with the use that they have made of them, I am persuaded that they had no supernatural illumination to assist them to understand the scriptures. I should make an article too large for the purpose of your work, if I should note all the passages which appear to me to have been misapplied by them; and what I observed in my last Essay, concerning their quotations from the book of Psalms only, may serve for a specimen of their mistakes of this kind, and not only of their reasoning, but also of their acting upon them, as in their choice of a successor to Judas.

I am also persuaded that the apostles mistook the meaning of the prophecies which were properly their own, or the revelations made by themselves, as the old prophets also did with respect to theirs. And this circumstance is so far from being an objection to their divine illumination, that it is a striking confirmation of it; as it is a most satisfactory evidence that those prophecies were no dreams or imaginations of their own, but that they were imparted to them from a higher source, coming from that great being who alone can look into futurity, and who sees the future as he does the present.

There are in the New Testament many prophecies concerning *the apostacy of the latter times*, when the genuine principles of christianity would be abandoned, and the moral precepts of it greatly neglected. We do not know at what particular time, nor to which of the apostles, those prophetic intimations were communicated; but we have the most distinct informations concerning them in the
epistles

epistles of Paul, the second of Peter, that of Jude, and those of John, besides the book of Revelation. These prophecies the apostles certainly imagined to have been fulfilled in the Gnostics, whose appearance they lived to see, and at which they were very much disturbed; and therefore, John concluded that *antichrist* was already come, and that it was the *last time*, or the concluding period of things. And it seems to have been the general opinion among christians, that on this account, those *latter times*, in which the corruption was to come to its full height, and the *man of sin* revealed, were near at hand, and therefore, that the second coming of our Saviour was not very far off. But it is now pretty evident that the prophecies above mentioned relate to an age much later than that in which the apostles lived, and that the corruptions which they have described, were properly those of the church of Rome.

All that can be said in favour of the apostles understanding their own prophecies, is that the errors of the Gnostics, which they lived to see, did in several respects resemble those of the church of Rome, and that the same general principles laid the foundation of both. But notwithstanding this, they were so opposite to each other, that all the denominations of the Gnostics were in a manner extinguished before the principles and power of the church of Rome had made much progress. The apostles saw something *similar* to what we now call the corruptions of the church of Rome, but they saw none of the

things themselves. I think it is not possible to read with any attention, the epistles above-mentioned, without being sensible of this; and the fact would, I doubt not, have been allowed much sooner, if it had not been for the opinion, that the apostles could not mistake the meaning of their own predictions. But this is so far from being an argument against their inspiration, that it is, in my opinion, one of the clearest proofs of it.

Submitting these considerations to the judgment of your readers, I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

P A M P H I L U S,

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I THANK you for inserting my remarks, and am particularly pleased with your ideas respecting an improved translation of the scriptures. As I have paid a long and very minute attention to this subject, I hope to communicate some observations worthy of your acceptance. I will begin with the *Epistle to the Romans*, and go through with it in due time, if you approve of my method of conducting this business. Our vulgar translation is much more erroneous than, I believe, any one supposes; and in some places the sense is so perverted, as scarcely to be rectified, but by a continued new translation. I should be glad to know, therefore, whether an entire new translation of particular portions of importance, accompanied by small notes, explanatory both of the phraseology and sense, would be acceptable. I am, Gentlemen,

The sincere well-wisher
Of your Undertaking,

NEPIODIDASCATOS.

R O M A N S. C H A P. I.

Ver. 1. ἀρῳρισμεν⊕, *set apart*. And, though I shall not venture to alter our translation of the words εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεῶν, and shall in general forbear to make such remarks as will appear more subtil than important; he, who does not perceive the difference between this expression, and το εὐαγγέλιον τῶν θεῶν, is certainly no great proficient in *oriental* phraseology, nor endued with an experienced discrimination of the powers of the *Greek* tongue. The proper sense of the apostles phrase, transferred into our language, would be *set apart to proclaim glad tidings about religion*.

V. 2. ὁ πρότερον κηρύχθη, *which he formerly announced*.

V 3. τῶν γενομένων, not *who was made*, but simply τῶν οἰτ⊕, *who was*. Ἐπέλετο, ἐγένετο, *Hesych*. This propriety is preserved by none of the ancient versions, but that excellent one the *Coptic*: where *Wilkins*, however, in his *Coptic Testament*, translates his original very erroneously by *facto*.

V. 4. τῶν ὁρισθέντων⊕, *who was determined, clearly proved, or defined*; and the only just rendering of the words ὁ θεὸς ἐν δυνάμει, would be *a divine character with power*. See Acts x. 38. and many other passages to the same purpose. For that ἐν δυνάμει belongs to *Jesus*, and not to the following words, is manifest from the structure and regularity of the sentences, κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγίου respecting κατὰ σὰρκα, and the remainder of the parenthesis in ver. 3, to the remainder in ver 4.

Ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, *by a resurrection from among the dead*. I know no other words in our language

guage

guage, that will give with simplicity, the full and precise meaning of the phrase *εκ νεκρων*. The *Coptic* usually employs an expression, which is exactly represented by the Latin *ab inter mortuos*.

V. 5. Render this verse *through whom we received the favour of an apostleship, for the purpose of an obedience to faith among all the Gentiles, in behalf of his name*; that is, in modern phraseology, "On whose account I was made an apostle to preach a belief in his name to the world in general." The authorities from the S. S. and classic writers in defence of the *Hendiadis* in this verse, would swell this paper beyond its just dimensions.

V. 7. *κλητοις, αγιοις, called, holy*. These words should be kept distinct, as *κλητοι* is in the preceding verse.

χαρις, favour: and so always.

V. 8. *υπερ, in behalf of, with respect to*.

V. 9, and 10. The better order is, *For God, whom I serve with my spirit, in the gospel of his Son, is my witness, how I make mention of you without ceasing; entreating him at all times in my prayers, if at length by any means I may be kindly indulged by the will of God with a journey unto you*. This comprehends, I believe, the full sense of the original, and, perhaps, in terms sufficiently simple.

V. 11. *ινα μεταδω, that I may communicate*: *εις το επιχθιναι υμιν, for your confirmation*.

V. 13. *υ εκωλυθη, but have been hindered to this present time, or, until now*: *σχω, may have*: *τοις λοιποις, the other*.

V. 14.

V. 14. 15. *Both to Greeks and Barbarians, to wise and unwise men, I am a debtor : therefore, as far as lieth in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also, who are at Rome.* That admirable expression of the original το κατ' εμε προθυμον, cannot possibly be transferred with the same strength and brevity into any other language.

V. 16. δυναμις γαρ κ. τ. λ. *for it is a divine power unto salvation to every believer : ὁ Ἕλλησι, and to the Greek.* A single person is here put as the representative of a whole nation ; and the idiom of our language will not admit the omission of the *article*.

V. 17. Δικαιοσύνη, *for a justification from God.*

V. 18. ὀργή θεοῦ, *a divine vengeance ; ἐπι πάσαν, upon all.*

V. 19. *Because the knowledge of God is manifest in them : for God hath displayed it to them.* Το γνωσεν is exactly the same as ἡ γνωσις : and so the Syriac translator ܬܝܥܬܝܢ : and the Coptic Πιεμι : who also expresses the *pronoun* in the second clause, as if he read τὸ εἶδεν ἐφανερωσε : which is much more perspicuous.

V. 20. *For his invisible properties, contemplated in the creation, are clearly discovered from the fabric of the world.* This is the only arrangement of the words, that gives sense without tautology. All the old translators have a *preposition* before ποιμασι. and I should conclude both upon this ground and the structure of the passage, that *εἰ* has been lost from the text.

V. 21. *Because when they knew God, they neither glorified him, nor gave him thanks as God (i. e. offered him no homage of praise and gratitude)*

but shewed their folly in their reasonings concerning him; and their senseless heart became darkened.

V. 22. *Calling themselves wise, they acted like fools.*

V. 24. *Wherefore, with these dispositions of their heart, God also gave them over to impurity, in dishonouring their own bodies with each other. The apostle here uses the middle verb ατιμαζουσας with the utmost propriety and elegance of composition.*

V. 25. *The common translation of this verse is both inaccurate and wrong. I render thus: who transferred the true into a false God, and paid religious worship and service to the creature instead of the creator; who is blessed for evermore! Amen!*

As αληθειαν was rendered by an adjective, in conformity to our idiom, so ψευδεις too should be rendered: and εσεβασθησαν means the veneration of the mind; ελατρευσαν outward service, by sacrifice or other ceremonies.

Παρα τον κτισαντα is to the neglect of the Creator: but, perhaps, that expression will not be thought sufficiently simple. The Jews, indeed, associated idolatry with true religion; but the Gentiles, of whom the apostle is speaking, had lost sight of the true God in their daemon and idol worship. But some authority will be required for this meaning of the preposition. I will select one or two pertinent passages, out of a multiplicity at hand. Επτα παρ' αυτον παιδας, seven sons exclusive of him. Herod. Παρα ταυτα εδεν πως: Nothing at all exclusive of these: Aristot. Μουσης μονον ηγισσε περι τον Θεον παρα της λοιπης: Orig. cont. Cels. L. ii. and he seems to allude to the passage before us, when
he

he says: *δελουεν τοις κτισθεσι ANTI Θεο*: Ib. L. iii. *Eusebius* is still more explicit: *την κτισιν παρα του κτισαντα, η την δημιουργιαν τε παλιω, αλλ' ΟΥ του δημιουργου*: Præp. Ev. iii. The *Æthiopic* version also though the *epistles* are executed in a very heedless and random manner, preserves this meaning: *כל לדגו לפסב כל*, and FORSOOK the Creator of all. Besides, this meaning may be inferred from the word *μήτηλαξαν*, which implies the *disappearance* of the former figure.

B. 26. *παρεδωκεν gave them over.*

παρα φυσιν, here the *preposition* has the same power as in the preceding verse.

V. 27. *αφετες, giving up, εξαυθησαν, burnt violently. Burned is the participle.*

V. 28. *And, as they did not so far use their judgment, as to acknowledge God: God gave them over to an undistinguishing mind, to do things that are not proper.* It may be observed here, that *γνωσις* is always applied to something *unknown before*; and *επιγνωσις* uniformly to *former knowledge*, whether *obliterated* or *interrupted*. And this observation is equally true of *cognosco* and *agnosco*, in the *Latin* language.

V. 29 *πλεονεξια, immoderate desire*; the word never signifies *covetousness* simply, but as it is a branch of *intemperance*, *κακηθειας, evil habits, or manners*

V. 30. *δβριτας, injurious, εφευρητας κακων, devisers of mischief.*

V. 32. *το δικαιωμα, the righteous appointment, or the just determination or decree*; *τα τοιαυτα πρασσοντες, they who do such things*; *συνευδοκασι, give their approbation to those who do them.* He-
sychius,

fychius, referring, probably, to this passage, interprets *συευδοκῆσι* by *συγκοινωνῆσιν*; but, in my opinion, erroneously; for that sense has been already expressed by *αὐτὰ ποιεῖν*. The word signifies that *approbation* and *encouragement* of sin, which is the utmost excess of depravity. It is seldom, indeed, that men do not condemn those vices, which, yet, they will not relinquish; according to that well known declaration, *video meliora proboque deteriora sequor*.

At the conclusion of the *first chapter*, it may be proper to pause, that any farther pains may be spared, if this specimen should not prove agreeable to your views. Yet I beg leave to take up a little more room in subjoining two passages in further corroboration of my remarks on the 25th verse.

“ ANTI Τῆ ΚΤΙΣΑΥΤῶ, explicat scriptor constitutionem Clementis : et, PRÆTERITO creatore, *Hilarius*.” Grot.

“ Yet couldst thou say for thyself, church of *Israel*, thou never forsookest the true God altogether, only thou wouldst fain worship him in *calves* and *images*, as other nations did their Gods.—Thou never meantest to cast off thy *Jehovah* altogether, &c.” Mede’s works, p. 645. Besides, the *Gentiles* are represented in the New Testament as *ὡκ εἰδότες τοῦ Θεοῦ*—*unacquainted with God*.

And here I should conclude: but in looking over your last number, I perceive some mistakes of so gross a nature, that I persuade myself, that both you and the authors of them will thank me for noting and correcting them.

Your

Your correspondent, *A Christian*, seems a very intelligent, and what is infinitely more valuable, a very candid and well intentioned writer; and therefore I feel a particular uneasiness, which a love of truth only could lead me to incur, when I charge him with an insufficient apprehension of the scripture phraseology. Without an accurate and extensive knowledge of the *Greek* language in general, and some acquaintance with the *oriental* stile, *Biblical Criticism* is a hazardous undertaking—*periculose plenum opus aleæ*. I say then, that *Jesus* is not acknowledged to be the *Messiah*, or the *Christ*, or *THE Son of God*, in Matt. xiv. 33. John x. 36. Matt. xxvii. 40—44, 54. Mark xv. 39. nor Matt. viii. 29. Mark v. 7. Luke viii. 28. Mark i. 24. Luke iv. 34. and, in short, in all those passages where the expression is $\acute{\upsilon}\iota\ \theta\epsilon\upsilon$, or $\tau\epsilon\ \theta\epsilon\upsilon$, and not $\acute{\iota}\ \acute{\upsilon}\iota\ \theta\ \tau\epsilon\ \theta\epsilon\upsilon$. On this occasion, I shall content myself with desiring your correspondent to compare Matt. xxvii. 54. Mark xv. 39. with Luke xxiii. 47. as I have considered this point under several of the texts here quoted, in two different works lately published. And in one of the same works another correspondent, *Christophilos*, will find, if I do not greatly deceive myself, a much more plain and satisfactory account of *John's* message to *Jesus* (Matt. xi. 1—6.) than that which he himself proposes; an account which seems to clear up all the difficulties of that celebrated and perplexing passage.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

IN my last, I inadvertently neglected to notice a *fourth* solution of the difficulty *apprehended* in John's message to Jesus ; and beg leave to examine it now, though not quite in its proper place. I am the more particular respecting this matter, because I think the consistency of the gospel history, from the baptism of Jesus, deeply concerned in the true interpretation of this remarkable passage ; or, which is the same thing in my opinion, in our understanding it according to the *plain* and *obvious* sense of the words.

The solution I would now examine, is that which supposes, that " John merely intended by this message, to represent to Jesus his *earnest wish*, that he would no longer delay to assume his proper title of Messiah, and openly to act with the authority of that character."

As to this solution, I would ask, Is there any thing in the words of the message, in the connexion, in the structure, or turn of the story, or in its conclusion, to authorise such an interpretation?—*Far from it.*—Is there any thing in the words, " Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" which has the most distant appearance of any other kind of wish than that of
receiving

receiving a plain answer to a plain question? Let any one determine who is capable of reading or hearing the words.

“Art thou he that should come,” i. e. Art thou the Messiah? is simply the question of one who desires to receive information concerning a matter of fact; and would never have been otherwise interpreted, but through fear of some inconvenient consequences; which, I think, a very needless fear; and hope to show in the sequel, that inconvenient consequences, not to say insurmountable difficulties, must arise from the prevailing opinion, that John knew and bore witness to the messiahship of Jesus*.—If the question be supposed an *indirect* call upon Jesus, as the Messiah, to assume his proper character and office, it is converted into an insult; a rude unmannerly *taunt*; implying, “Thou art indeed the Messiah, but it does not appear by thy conduct. How long wilt thou continue to trifle? Why dost thou not declare thyself? It is high time.”—But would the humble Baptist have assumed such a dictatorial authority over the man “whose shoes he was unworthy to carry?” Would he have treated the great Messiah, the expected delight and glory of their nation *thus*?—It cannot be.—Or admitting for a moment that it might be, What shall we do with the remainder of the message, “or do we look for another?” In the natural sense of these words, they simply ask, “Or is the Messiah to follow thee?” A very innocent question in the

* One I have already brought forward, namely, That John should know Jesus to be the *Messiah*, and yet believe, that he himself was not the *Elias* predicted as his forerunner.

mouth

mouth of a man expecting the Messiah, yet uncertain whether Jesus was himself that personage, or only his harbinger: but considered as a call upon him to avow and publicly to assert his messiahship, from one to whom the Spirit of God had before pointed him out as the Messiah, equal to the most abusive reproach which could be uttered: implying, that "it was hardly credible that he could be the Messiah, since he so long neglected his duty." And to add to the incredibility of this interpretation, the message is in scripture represented to have been sent in consequence of the stupendous and repeated miracles which Jesus was then performing! "Now when John had heard the works of Christ, he sent, &c."

This interpretation is also (like one which has been already considered) liable to the objection of John's commissioning his disciples to propose a question to Jesus, in words implying *uncertainty*, on a matter respecting which, he is himself supposed to have been *in the habit* of deciding *authoritatively* from *divine information*.

I beg leave to remark further, that so many different interpretations of a passage seemingly plain, and which can have but *one only* meaning, all of which interpretations, it must needs be allowed, are equally founded in mere unsupported conjecture, naturally lead us to mistrust the interpreters. The passage hath been indeed esteemed *difficult*; but *why*? "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another," is as intelligible an enquiry as any whatsoever in the whole New Testament.—The *difficulty* arises not from the enquiry itself, but from the unwillingness of the

interpreter to understand it agreeably to its obvious meaning; an unwillingness which originates in a pre-conceived opinion, by which he has been persuaded, that John *could not* mean, what he evidently *did* mean. If the passage had been figurative, or had any *apparent* allusion to something beyond what the words themselves express, there would have been nothing wonderful in all this; but the passage is not figurative, nor does it apparently allude to any thing else than the *uncertainty* of John respecting the *Messiahship* of *Jesus*, which the words do incontrovertibly express.

I presume that, whatever *difficulty* may *now* be supposed to attend the interpretation of John's message, *Jesus* well understood his intention; and therefore, that *his answer* must be the best key to the Baptist's meaning. Had John sent his two *unbelieving* disciples (to use the word *disciples* in a sense which would not be allowed in any *other* case) that *they* might be convinced by his discourses and miracles, that he was the Messiah, our Lord would have told them, *Blessed are your eyes, for ye have seen, and your ears for ye have heard.* Had he sent to have been miraculously released out of prison, he would have answered, *The works are not mine, but his who sent me.* Had he sent, doubting whether he was the Messiah, *after direct information from God*, he would have answered, *What saith the Spirit?* Had he sent to urge him to an open declaration of his pretensions, and a correspondent assumption of authority, he would have replied, *What have I to do with thee? My*

hour is not yet come. — These are, perhaps, the most suitable answers which probability can frame for the several *imaginary* objects of the message in question; except that they are not *severe* enough. For it is not unlikely, that such a *dictatorial* spirit as *two* of them imply, and such *incredulity* as the *other two* suppose (either in John or his *nominal* disciples) would have extorted from Jesus very keen reproaches, of which our Lord was not sparing when just occasion was given. But what was his real answer? *That* which applies to the obvious meaning of the message, and *can suit no other whatsoever.*

JOHN'S message. " I have sent my disciples
" to enquire of thee, Whether thou be the
" Messiah; or whether he be to follow
" thee?"

The answer of JESUS to the messengers. " Go
" and tell JOHN, the blind receive their
" sight, and the lame walk, &c. and happy
" is the man that is not prejudiced against
" me."

If I have been successful thus far, I have *proved* from *direct scriptural evidence*, that, after the *baptism* of Jesus, John did not know himself to be the Elias; from *consequential reasoning*, that he *could not*, therefore, know Jesus to be the Messiah, and of course *did not* bear his testimony to the *messiahship* of our Lord; and this *reasoning* I have established by a *direct scriptural evidence*, that *in fact* he *did not* know Jesus under the character of the Messiah, at the time when he was cast into *prison*; if he ever did after that

event. But of this the scripture gives us no information.

In my next, I intend to enter upon an examination of the principal texts, which may seem inimical to my hypothesis.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obliged humble servant,

CHRISTOPHILOS.

A POSTSCRIPT in Reply to NEPIODIDASCALOS.

YOU will, Gentlemen, allow me to say, that your correspondent, *Nepiodidasalos*, must be aware, on a very slight degree of reflection, that I have not been guilty of the *absurdity* which he ascribes to me. Had I asserted, that *οωροφνις* must *necessarily* mean a prophet, I must have been totally ignorant of *Greek*. But what I have said, as he himself states it, amounts only to this, that “it *will bear* to be so rendered.” Notwithstanding which, he remarks, “It may as well be affirmed, that by a *King of England*, we must NECESSARILY understand *William the Conqueror*, for that is the directly opposite absurdity.”—But surely, the *directly opposite* affirmation (admitting his opinion concerning the Greek article to be just) would be, that a *King*
of

of *England* is an expression by which MAY BE intended *William the Conqueror*; and this is no *absurdity* at all; for *William the Conqueror was A King of England*.

So far was I from asserting, that ο προφητης must necessarily mean A prophet, that I strongly reprobated such a rendering in the passage I was considering; and for reasons which appeared to me very substantial. First, for that which I assigned, and think *conclusive*; namely, that it would involve an insurmountable difficulty, by exposing John the Baptist to the charge of uttering a wilful falshood.—Secondly, that it would overthrow my own hypothesis, that Elias and ο προφητης denote the same person.—And, thirdly, that there seemed to be a great weight of *learned opinion* against me; and in favour of translating ο προφητης A prophet, in this very place. There is the *marginal reading* of our own bibles, which was intended to be an *improvement* of the *text*. There is this additional circumstance, that the *Syriac* and *vulgar Latin* take no notice of the article at all, but read as if it were without, Art thou a prophet? As Dr. Lightfoot has observed: and there is this *very learned* writer's *own* opinion, who says (vol. I. p. 525. of his *works*) "I cannot but apprehend, that their questioning of the Baptist in these words, ο προφητης ει ου, is indefinitely meant, Art thou a prophet? Not this or that prophet, but, Art thou a prophet *at all*?"—After which he says, that "the article ο is not always to be construed as pointing out a particular thing or person, but is very commonly,

commonly, nay, most commonly, of a more large and general signification.

That the Greek article is ALWAYS *definite*, I think very difficult to be proved; and believe, that this is the opinion of a large majority of Greek scholars. But I am quite ready to attend, dispassionately and without prejudice, to what *Nepiodidasalos* may chuse to advance on the subject. If he convince me, that *his* idea is right, I shall beg leave, Gentlemen, by way of *erratum*, to alter the mode of my expression in the passage excepted against; if not, it must remain as it is. But I shall carefully decline any *controversy* respecting the article, as I have more reason to wish success to *Nepiodidasalos*, than to those who may oppose him: for he and I are *already* of the same opinion *thus far*, that in the passage concerning which I expressed my sentiments, ο προφητης, *cannot* mean a prophet, but *must* be rendered THE prophet.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE sent you an explanation of some passages in *Mark's* gospel; either difficult in themselves, or made difficult by the subtilty and unskilfulness of interpreters. You will judge whether they deserve admission into your useful work.

NEPIODIDASCALOS.

I.

C. iii. V. 21. Και ακουσαντες δι παρ' αυτου, εξηλθον κραλησαι αυτον· ελεγον γαρ, οτι εξεστη.

And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, " he is beside himself." Engl. Verf.

The true difficulty of this verse, consists in determining the *nominative* to εξεστη. According to the rules of composition, it is οχλῳ, *the multitude*, which occurs in the preceding verse: and for any other word, we must go back to verse 17th. Nor would the sense, arising from a strict adherence to the *grammatical* construction, be at all singular, or unsuitable to the purport of the context. The passage would then run thus:

And they come to the house: and again a multitude assembles, so that they were not able even to eat bread.

Q 4

And

And they, who were with him, hearing of it, went out to restrain it (i. e. the multitude) for they said: It is in a ferment.

This interpretation, as far as I know, is entirely new, and I should suppose, will be approved by many. I must confess myself, however, disposed to reject it upon consideration, and that for various reasons: first, the difficulty about the *nomina-tive* recurs in the next verse: for no *substantive* is yet produced; and there we meet with $\beta\epsilon\epsilon\lambda\zeta\epsilon\beta\epsilon\alpha\lambda\ \epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota$ *he hath Beelzebub*: which no one will suppose to be predicated here of *the multitude*. It is possible, however, that some may choose to render this phrase by *Beelzebub possesses him*, which the words will admit better than the context: for it immediately follows, *He casteth out dæmons through the ruler of the dæmons*: which proves *Jesus* to be the *agent*, and *Beelzebub* only an *instrument* in his hands. Secondly, other parts of scripture lead us to conclude, that our Lord's friends would not be so eager on this occasion of danger to rescue *him*, as to secure *themselves*.

I prefer, therefore, the common acceptance of the passage, but propose to render $\epsilon\zeta\epsilon\sigma\eta$ by *he is off his guard*; "his zeal hurries him too far, and leads him to expose his person too much in the midst of so tumultuous a concourse." For it seems from the context, that they were but just returned from *the mount*, and that *Jesus* probably had not gone into the house at all. The texture of the word evidently shews it at first sight to be capable of this meaning; and to signify any *effect* of *extravagant emotion*. Accordingly, it is frequently

quently employed in the New Testament to express amazement; and, by Paul, enthusiastic warmth: 2 Cor. v. 13. In Acts viii. 9. it is used for the bewitching imposition of Simon on the populace: an effect, which the Greek writers would represent by the word ἐπιοημενῶς, and the Romans by *attonitus*. Xenophon has a passage very much to my purpose: speaking of some species of birds, he says: Πρῶτον τὴν θηλειᾶς φωνὴν τῆ ἐπιθυμιαίων ἀφροδισίων φερομένοι, καὶ ἐξίσταμενοι (put off their guard) τε τὰ θεία ἀναλογίζεσθαι, τοῖς θηράροισ ἐμπιπίουσι. Mem. ii. 1. 4. To the same purpose Arian: Τίνα ἐν εἰσι τὰ βαρύντα καὶ ἐξίσταντα ἡμᾶς, i. e. *Nos extra nosmetipsos rapientia*. Epict. i. 16.

The Syriac version has: כּפּוּת דּוּנָה גּפּוּ, which would be well expressed by ἐξω αὐτοῦ σερραῖ extra mentem rapitur. The Arabic has: ساء له قلب, which cannot be better rendered than by, *his mind is off its guard*. The Persian: عقل بدر آمد, which imply an absence of the sober senses.

And here I cannot avoid censuring the temerity of Mr. Toup, though I am as sensible as any man of his critical sagacity, and his profound acquaintance with the Greek language. He proposes to read the passage thus: Καὶ ἀκκοσαντες δι Φαρισαῖοι περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἐξήλθον κρατῆσαι αὐτοῦ. In Suid. part i. p. 143. which is, indeed, extremely ingenious; but, to turn his own censure upon himself, *non unius assis*. We should recollect, that the SS. have been preserved with greater care than any other ancient writings whatsoever, and are fenced, moreover, by the authority of the ancient versions: when these and the MSS. are harmonious, it must be a singular occasion indeed, that will

will justify a conjectural alteration. I shall take an opportunity hereafter (εαν δελη δ θεου, as the *apostle* advises us to say) of refuting some more of his criticisms on the N. T. In the mean time, I can supply him with another instance of the use of εξεσιν, in addition to his own.

Οι μοι, γνωμας ΕΞΕΣΤΑΝ. Eurip. Ipp. Aul. 136.

II.

C. vii. V. 9. Καλως αθερειτε την ενβολην τε Θεου. *Full well ye reject the commandment of God.* Eng. Verf.

It is curious to observe, how Commentators acquit themselves on this occasion. Some, forsooth, understand it *ironically*: than which nothing can be more contemptible in itself, or more unsuitable to the gravity of the speaker. Καλως is merely used for πανηλωσ, *valde*, or *penitus*: and this acceptation of the corresponding word is common to many languages. So the *Syrians* use כט and שפר: the *Samaritans* שרר: the best *Greek* authors the word in question:

Τισυρ' εμιν το ΚΑΛΟΝ περιλαμενε, βοσκει τας αιγας. Theoc. iii. 3.

The *Latins bene*: BENE *sanæ*, BENE *fidum*: Hor. PULCHRE *negas*: Phæd. BENE *multa*: Lucret. BENE *cautus*: Ovid. *Manilius*, the *comparative degree*.

Damnatusque suas melius damnavit Athenas.

So its opposite *male*. *Male formido*: Plautus. So the *French bien*: and we in common language *good*. Render therefore: *Ye entirely set aside, or evacuate, the commandment of God.*

Some

Some of the old Translators endeavour to evade the difficulty by an *interrogation*: *Do ye well reject?*

III.

C. xi. V. 13. *καὶ γὰρ οὐ καὶρὸς συκῶν.* *For the time of figs was not yet.* Eng. V.

Criticism has exercised herself abundantly upon these few words, and generally to no purpose, from searching deep for the truth, when it lay upon the surface, *καὶρὸς συκῶν* is simply *a season of figs* (for there seems to have been more than *one* in succession, as with *grapes*, Num. xiii. 20.) *a time of fig-gathering*: and, therefore, *Jesus* might reasonably expect to find some fruit at the time specified. Thus is the whole difficulty removed at once. So is the phrase employed, Matt. xxi. 34. 41. Acts xiv. 17. Gal. vi. 9. Rev. xi. 18.

Toup in Suid. part ii. p. 86. thinks these words an interpolation. No man, I presume, will expect any confutation of such a strange assertion.

IV.

C. xiv. V. 3. *συντριψασα το αλαβασρον.* *She brake the box.* Eng. Verf.

BLACKWALL, in his *Sacred Classics*, very well observes, that by *συντριψασα* is only meant, that “she *shook* the vessel, to *separate* the parts of the ointment, and make it more fragrant.” He produces some pertinent passages, in support of his assertion, to which I beg leave to add *two* others.

Herodotus, in his account of the *Ægyptian* method of *embalming*, says, that they made use of

δουμημασι

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δνμημασι ΠΕΡΙΤΕΤΡΙΜΜΕΝΟΙΣΙ: and of σμυρνης ακηραλι ΤΕΤΡΙΜΜΕΝΗΣ. Eut. 86.

Μυρον διατριπτικον, says *Suidas*: οτι ΕΠΙΤΡΙΒΟΜΕΝΑ ενια των μυρων, ηδτω γινεσται.

But, after all, a further propriety in this custom of *shaking the box* still remains to be pointed out, which *Blackwall* could not discover. *Aromatic unguents* of various sorts; and, therefore, of different *specific gravities*, were kept in these *alabaster boxes*; so that *this shaking of the box* blended the component parts together, which, when at rest, would be of course in a state of *separation*. *Simple unguent*, I apprehend, would have received no additional fragrance by these means. The following passages are a clear proof of this account, and a curious illustration of this part of scripture.

Μη μυραλω τροχοι τα Παλλαδι, μη δ' ΑΛΑΒΑΣΤΡΩΣ,
(Ου γαρ Αθαναια χριματα ΜΙΚΤΑ φιλει)

Οισετε—

Αδε—εμπεραμωσ εριψαλο, ΛΙΤΑ λαβοισα
χριμαα, τασ ιδιασ εκγονα φυαλιασ.

Callim. Lav. Pall.

V.

C. xix. V. 19. εις καθ' εις. *One by one.*

Our Evangelist is commonly thought to have committed a most gross *grammatical* error in this passage, by joining a *nominative* with the *preposition* καθα. But the opinion is ill-founded. The words should be thus written: εις καθ' εις. i. e. εις η ετα εις *unus et item unus*; as *Horace* exactly expresses this *Greek* phrase. So καθ' υποσρεφασ. Eurip. Iph. Aul. καθ' ο βρομι. Bacch. καθ' ο ται. Cycl.
et

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et alibi. Aristoph. Nub. καθ' ἑτῶ. Ibid. καθ' ὧδ'.
Soph. Æd. Tyr. et Col. καθ' οἱ. Ibid. καθ' ο.
καθ' ἑτῶ. Apud Athen.

Supposing, that none of the Commentators had thought of this solution. I was greatly surprized to find it mentioned and rejected by *Grotius* and *Casaubon*, upon the authority of Rom. xii. 5. But they were both doubly mistaken; for this latter instance is undoubtedly the same as the former, and resolvable in the same manner. The complete construction of that verse is as follows: Οὕτως (ἡμεῖς) οἱ πολλοί, ἐσμεν ἐν σώμα ἐν χριστῷ ὁ δὲ καθ' (ἡμεῖς) εἷς (ἐσμεν) ἀλλήλων μέλη. Nothing can be more indisputable. See John viii. 9.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE taken the liberty of sending you, what I am afraid will not be worth your time in looking over—a few illustrations of certain passages of scripture, by a late worthy friend. Whether there is *now* any thing new in them, I submit to your better judgment, and shall be happy if you should find any thing worthy to be noticed in your very excellent publication, the Theological Repository.

I am, Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

PHILALETHERS.

Gen. chap. i. v. 20. Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth, &c. We are not to imagine from hence, that fowls were created out of the water; because chap. ii. ver. 19. they are said to be formed, as the beasts were out of the ground; and therefore some learned men say, that chap. i. v. 20. should have been translated thus---And let the fowl fly above the earth. See Jackson's chronolog. vol. I. p. 11.

Matt.

Matt. xxvi. v. 45. *Sleep on now, and take your rest.* Græc. καθύστερει τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε which, I think, should rather be rendered thus; *sleep afterwards, or hereafter*, because of ἐγείρεσθε and ἄγωμεν, which follow in the next verse. For our Lord would hardly say, *sleep on now*; and then, in the same breath, as it were, bid them *rise or rouse up*, and act with firmness and constancy; for that I take to be the meaning of Ἀγωμεν; as if he had said, “There is no time for sleeping now: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners; rouse up, and let us behave with fortitude and resolution; for he that betrayeth me is just at hand.” But, perhaps, the words should be read with an interrogation, thus, *Do ye still sleep?* &c.

John xix. 29. ὑσσώπῳ περιθέντες, having put it upon hyssop. Why upon hyssop? Unless they had in Judæa a hyssop of a taller and stronger growth, than any we know of, I cannot but think this a mistake. St. Matthew and St. Mark both read καλάμδος, which we translate a REED, but it signifies also a cane: and, probably, it was here καλάμῳ ὑσσώπῳ, i. e. a light spear, made of cane, and pointed like a spit; or, ὑσσώπῳ alone, that is, something with a point to fix the sponge upon: but the transcriber, through ignorance or carelessness, or both, might drop the first word, and change ὑσσώπῳ into ὑσσώπῳ, from a similitude of the letters.

Luke, Chap. vi. 30. Though, at first sight, there may seem to be a sort of antithesis between the τῷ ἐπιβλήῃ, and the τῷ ἀερόνῳ in this verse; yet, that

that the words, *μὴ ἀπαίτει*, cannot belong to one that robs us, or takes away our goods by violence or injustice, appears to be unquestionable; because a command not to ask, or demand our goods of *such a one*, would really be an encouragement and sanction to such practices. Therefore, though the word *ἄριστος* does indeed, in the preceding verse, signify one that takes by force and injustice; yet here, if we compare it with Matt. v. 42. it may signify no more, than barely one that takes your goods, by way of loan, into his possession and use. So that, as in St. Matthew, we are commanded not to turn away from, or refuse, a person, that would borrow of us (though we know him to be poor) so here, we seem to be enjoined, not to demand back, or insist upon, what we have lent to such a person, if we can spare it, and the repaying it would reduce the poor man to the last distress. But, take the word *ἄριστος* in the other sense, for one that takes away our goods wrongfully, and without asking; yet, surely, the *μὴ ἀπαίτει*, cannot mean, to oblige us to let such a one go entirely free; but only, that we should not urge the restoring what he hath taken, to the detriment of charity or mercy; or, that we should not be too rigorous and severe in the execution of that punishment, which, by the laws, and for the good of the society, he ought to suffer. But I prefer the first explanation; which seems also to be confirmed by the 34th and 35th verses; where our Lord, to enforce what he had recommended, says, *If ye lend [δανείζετε, the same word that is used by St. Matt.] to those only of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? But do good*

and lend, hoping for nothing again. Which words, if they do not refer to and explain this 30th verse, I do not see to what passage in the whole context they can be referred.

Antiquissimis certe scriptoribus Δανεῖζειν non est fœnori locare, sed mutuum dare sine usuris. Græv. Not. ad Hesioid. Op. et dies. Lin. 349.

John xix. 7. The Jews answered, we have a law; and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.—Query, Where is this law of the Jews to be found? Deut. xviii. 20. seems to be the place, and is accordingly referred to in the parallel places given in some editions. “But the prophet, “which shall presume to speak a word in my “name, which, &c.” whence note, first, that our translation should be, not *the* Son, but *A* Son of God: second, that a Son of God signifies a prophet, that is, one appointed to instruct mankind by the command, or a revelation from God. See Dr. Clarke’s Reply to Nelson, p. 150. 8vo.

Acts ii. 3. Cloven tongues. Why cloven? Was it to signify the diversity of languages? That, I think, was sufficiently done by the symbol of a tongue. I, therefore, translate it thus, And there appeared divided, or distributed to them, tongues, as it were, of fire.

Chap. ii. 17. *To make reconciliation for the sins of the people*, does by no means answer the original Greek, εἰς τὸ ἰλδοκεῖν τὰς ἀμαρτίας τῆ λαοῦ, which literally signifies, To appease the sins of the people. And I don’t see, why it might not stand so in our translation; taking it, as if the

finns of the people were so many persons, able and ready to hurt them; but that Christ pacified and appeased them, i. e. prevented their mischievous effects. This is only considering *sin* as a person, which St. Paul hath done in several places of his epistles. Rom. vi. &c.

Rom. chap. ix. Ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ χριστοῦ — The word Ἀνάθεμα is used by prophane writers, either for *something dedicated to the Gods*, and so set, or hung up in their temples (though it is then more commonly written Ἀναθημα) or for *a thing, or person devoted to destruction*. And it is evident, that the word is used here, as well as elsewhere, in the latter sense; and, therefore, is not ill rendered by our translators *accursed*.--- But then the difficulty is, how to understand *St. Paul's wish*: for, sure, he could not be so desperate or fearless of destruction, or so indifferent to the happiness of heaven, as to wish himself *accursed from Christ*, i. e. deprived of all the glorious hopes and advantages of the gospel, and devoted to eternal misery, for the sake of *others*, however dear to him: this is a strain of language and a stretch of love, as little required by the gospel, as it is agreeable to the first and great principle of *human nature*, self-preservation. Some of the *ancients*, therefore, and of the *moderns* after them, have endeavoured to solve the difficulty, by putting in—"if it were lawful—" or, if it would avail any thing, I could even "wish"—which is plainly owning, that he does not wish it, but means something else. What then is his meaning? Why, the apostle, it is

* Vide Dr. Benson's Note on 1 epist. John iii. 16.

plain,

plain, designed to express his great love and concern for *his brethren*, the *unbelieving Jews*; for *their* sakes, and that *they* might be brought to embrace the gospel, he could wish *ἀνάθεμα εἶναι*, to devote himself to suffer any, the greatest, evils in *this* life, ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, after; or according to the example of Christ. This is undoubtedly the meaning of the apostle: and though this sense of Ἀπὸ seems somewhat uncommon, yet I take it to be so used by this same apostle, 2 Tim. i. 3: χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ, ᾧ λατρεύω ἀπὸ προγόνων—whom I serve (not from, but) after my forefathers—If it be objected, that St. Paul could not say, that he served God after, or according to the example of his forefathers, because they were Jews, and he was a Christian; I answer, that notwithstanding the difference of the Jewish and Christian services, St. Paul might justly say, that he served God after, or according to the example of his ancestors, with a pure conscience, i. e. with the same honesty and sincerity, that they did; which is all I apprehend him to mean. In this only it was, that he followed their example; After the way, which they (the Jews) call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, says he. Acts xxiv. 14.

1 Cor. xi. 33. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε, not, tarry one for another, but, receive or admit one another, i. e. the poor, as well as the rich. ἐκδέχομαι excipio; from the simple verb δέχομαι; comes Δοχείον, receptaculum: Δοχεύς, acceptor: Δοχή, epulum, convivium; as, Luk. xiv. 13. ὅταν ποιῆς δεχήν, i. e. ἄριστον, or δῆιπνον, as in the 12th

verse, we render it, a feast. And St. Paul's argument plainly requires this translation; he having reprov'd *the rich* for excluding *the poor*, and suffering them to go hungry and *empty away*. And though it is said, verse 21. *every one*, προλαμβάνει, *taketh before other his own supper* (which may seem to favour our translation of ἐκδεχέσθε) yet it is to be observed, that, besides that, there is no word in the original for the English word *other*, some copies read it προσλαμβάνει, and Erasmus has it so printed in his first edition; though *Dr. Mill* says, *depravatè*, and appeals to this 33d verse, as confirming the other reading, as if the fault of the Corinthians lay in their anticipating the feast, and eating it up before the poor were come together, rather than in eating τὸ ἴδιον δείπνον, what he brought towards a common table, by himself, and amongst his particular acquaintance, without admitting the poor (though present) to partake of it.

2 Cor. ch. viii. ver. 10. It seems to be an absurdity to say, that they had begun not only *to do*, but also τὸ θελεῖν, *to be willing*, a year ago: because, in the nature of the thing, *the will* precedes the *action*: And, plus est facere, quàm nudè velle. The τὸ ποιῆσαι; therefore, cannot mean, that the Corinthians had so long ago actually sent any relief to the Macedonians, but only that they had *designed* it, *talked* of it, and probably made some collection for that purpose; and that too, with great readiness and alacrity, which is the τὸ θελεῖν here; but had never compleated it. This seems to be confirmed by the following words, v. 11. Now, therefore (saith he) τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτέλεσατε;

finish and compleat what you had begun to do ; that, as there was a readiness to will, *προθυμία τῷ θελεῖν* (explaining τὸ θελεῖν before) so there may be also a (real) performance out of what you have.

Phil. i. v. 28. It is a hard matter, according to our present translation, to understand, what it is, *which is an evident token*, or, what the Greek word ἥτις relates to. But as there is mention, in the 27th verse, of *the faith of the gospel* ; I would render the 28th ver. thus : *And in nothing terrified by those that oppose it* (i. e. the faith of the gospel) *which to them, indeed, is a declaration of perdition, &c.* making the relative ἥτις to refer to Πίσει, or the pronoun αὐτῆ, which seems to be understood after ἀντικειμένων ; and which, I think, makes the construction and sense natural and clear.

Philippians, chap. i. v. 30. One, that is acquainted with St. Paul's manner of thinking and writing, will perceive, that he is frequently carried off from his subject by some fresh thought that occurs to him, which he pursues and finishes, before he returns to his first subject, which creates an interruption of the discourse, and consequently a difficulty to unattentive readers. And this seems to have been the case here ; for this 30th verse manifestly belongs to what went before, where he exhorts them to behave *worthily of the gospel of Christ*, that he might have a good account of their stedfast, unanimous, and intrepid adherence to the faith, under all their trials ; to this purpose obliquely, putting them in mind of his own behaviour, under the like circumstances, v. 30. but another thought intervened, and so *this* was put off till *that* was finished. Or, if this be not

approved of, we may suppose this 30th verse some how or other to have slipped out of its place; as, indeed, it will very naturally come in after *πολιτεύεσθε* v. 27. Thus: "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me; that, whether I come, &c."

Heb. ix, 28. Without sin, *χωρίς αμαρτίας*. In the former part of this verse, Christ being said to have *once suffered to bear the sins of many*, some have thought the latter part of the verse to be a kind of antithesis, and to signify, that, at his second coming, he shall appear *χωρίς αμαρτίας*, without a sacrifice for sin; that is, not as a mediator to offer himself for the sins of many: making *αμαρτίας* to signify a sacrifice for sin. But there is no need of such a forced interpretation, if we only suppose a transposition in the words. For the intention of the apostle seems to be, not to say that Christ shall come again without sin (taking *αμαρτίας* literally) which is nothing remarkable; but that having once suffered to take away men's sins, he should, the second time, to them that looked for him (*χωρίς αμαρτίας*) without sin, i. e. to them who returned not to the sins, from which they were once redeemed by him, appear again unto salvation.

V. 17. For a covenant is [*βεβαια*] in force, or confirmed, *ἐπι νεκροῖς*, by dead things; i. e. by sacrifice; otherwise it is of no force, whilst the sacrifice liveth.

St. Jam. chap. iv. v. 11. How the speaking evil of a brother, and judging a brother, is speaking evil of the law; and judging the law, is not
so

so easy to be understood, unless we suppose the apostle here to address himself to the Jewish converts, who, being still fond of the Jewish ordinances, and thinking them necessary under the gospel, were apt to censure and condemn the Gentile converts, for not complying with them; whereby, therefore, they did in effect censure and condemn the christian law, as deficient, in not enjoining the use of those Mosaic institutions, which they thought necessary under the gospel. So that a man may be said to speak evil of, and judge the law, when he condemns any person for doing things not prohibited, or for not doing things not enjoined by it; because, in either case, he seems to charge the law with defect.

First Epist. John, chap. iii. v. 20. ὅτι ἐὰν καταγνώσκῃ ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, &c. — Though ὅτι is often redundant, yet, probably, in this place, the second ὅτι is the mistake of some careless copyist; for ἔτι, which differs but in a single letter, and makes the sense more full and strong, q. d. God is *still* greater, &c.

Third Epist. John, v. 6. ἀξίως τῷ θεῷ, ought not to be rendered, after a godly sort; but, as in the margin of some of our bibles, literally after the Greek, worthily of God: for, otherwise, the reference of αὐτῷ, or, his, in the following verse, to θεῷ in this (to which only it can relate) is, in our translation, less plain and obvious. And the latter part of the 7th verse, taking nothing of the Gentiles, evidently shews the meaning of (προπεμφθεὶς in this verse) bringing them forward on their journey, to be, not literally accompanying them any part of the way; but, forasmuch as they took

nothing of the Gentiles, to furnish them with what was needful in their journey; and that, ἀξίως τῷ θεῷ, i. e. worthily of God, in such a manner as to testify their love to God, whose errand and business these brethren were employed about, for whose sake they went forth to preach the gospel, v. 7.

Thus, likewise, the word Προπέμπω is used and explained in the Epist. to Titus, chap. iii. v. 13. bring, ἀρόπαιμον, Zenas, the lawyer, and Apollos, on their journey, σπουδαιως, diligently, i. e. ἀξίως τῷ θεῷ, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Jude, v. 14. Ἴδὲ ἦλθε Κύριος ἐν ταῖς ἁγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτῶν; behold the Lord cometh with his holy myriads, or ten thousands of angels. Not as our translation, with ten thousands of his saints. Vid. Mede, p. 437.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING no doubt of your sincerity, in the invitation you hold out to the Public, for all *lovers of truth* to send you their free thoughts on any subject relating to religion; I make no apology for submitting to the censure of your learned readers, the following observations relating the doctrine of the *miraculous conception*. I shall suspend my own judgment till I hear the remarks of others, and therefore, I wish to have it criticised with the same freedom with which it is written, and am,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

E B I O N I T A.

Before I enter upon the *arguments* for and against the miraculous conception of Jesus, I shall only premise, that the *importance* of the question has been unreasonably magnified in modern times.—It is one on which the ancient Unitarians held opposite opinions, without, as far as appears, having ever thought the worse of one another on that account; and therefore, there can be no reason why we should not exercise the same mutual candour
at

at this day. The value of the gospel depends not at all upon any idea that we may have concerning *the person of Christ*. All that we ought to regard is the *object of his mission*, and the *authority* with which his doctrine was promulgated. The doctrine of immortality, which is the great object of the whole revealed will of God, is just as acceptable to me, from the mouth of the son of Joseph and Mary, as from the mouth of any man created for the purpose, from that of an angel, or from the voice of God himself speaking from heaven.

I would farther observe, that the doctrine of the miraculous conception itself is not, in fact, of any more consequence to the Socinian, than it is to the Arian, or even the Athanasian hypothesis. For it is no impediment to the union of the Arian or the Athanasian *logos* to the human nature of Christ, that his body was derived from Joseph. For any thing that we can judge, a body produced in the natural way, was just as proper for the residence of this heavenly inhabitant, as one made on purpose. And if, on any scheme, it was fit that Christ should have had human nature at all, it may be supposed to have been equally fit that he should have a *proper human nature*, differing as little as possible from that of his brethren. There is, therefore, no more reason why the Arian, or the Athanasian should be more attached to the belief of the miraculous conception than the Socinian. The doctrine itself connects equally well, or equally ill, with any particular hypothesis concerning the nature of Christ.

It may be imagined to be more *honourable* to Christ to have come into the world without the help

help of a man, than with it; but this is an affair of *imagination* only. And, for the very same reason, it might have been imagined to be still more honourable to him, to have come into world without the instrumentality of either woman or man, and that the second Adam should have come from the hands of God as immediately as the first. Ideas no better than these gave rise to the doctrine of the Gnostics. For they meant to do honour to Christ; and therefore we should be on our guard against them. But even admitting ideas of this kind to have some weight; is it not, in fact, just as humiliating to have a *mother*, as it is to have a *father*; for it is nothing more than the *body* that is concerned in the question.

We should, likewise, attend a little to the ideas of the Jews, as well as to our own, on this subject. Now, the doctrine of the Messiah being the proper son of Joseph, a lineal descendant from David, will certainly be more acceptable to them, than that of his having had a miraculous conception. For, though we may fancy that this circumstance reflects more honour upon him; yet, in the eye of a Jew, he must, on that very account, appear to be less accurately described by their ancient prophets; though any doctrine of Christ being properly and simply *a man*, in whatever manner he was made so, must be infinitely more acceptable to them than the opinion of his having had a nature entirely different from that of man. I own, however, that the expectations of the Jews (any farther than they have a real foundation in the prophecies) ought not by any means to determine our judgment

ment in the case, so as to weigh against any proper argument that may be alledged on the other side.

Should I have any controversy with a Jew, I should not feel myself at all embarrassed with this circumstance of the miraculous conception; as I should not hesitate to follow the example of the candid Justin Martyr with respect to it; telling him that he was at full liberty to think as he should see reason to do on that subject; and that he might be as good a christian as the Ebionites were before him, though he should believe no more of the miraculous conception than they had done.

Indeed, with respect to the importance of the question in itself, there are few, I imagine, but would be ready enough to agree with me, if they did not imagine that a disbelief of this article would affect the credibility of the rest of the gospel history. But there is an argument of *fact* (which is the strongest of all arguments) directly against them. For the Ebionites, who did disbelieve the miraculous conception, were as firm believers in the rest of the gospel history as other christians. And, besides, if we consider the nature of this apprehension, it will appear to be founded on a mistake; because the evidence for the miraculous conception, and that for the public life, miracles, death, and resurrection of Christ, are exceedingly different; so that a total failure in the evidence for the one, will not affect the credibility of the other.

With the miraculous conception a few persons only could be acquainted; and we have not the testimony of any of those few, much less is it in our
power

power to compare the evidence of one with that of others of them. Who were the persons that informed Matthew and Luke concerning it, we cannot tell, nor through how many hands the story was transmitted before it came to them; admitting, for the present, that the introductions to their gospels were written by themselves. Whereas the great events subsequent to the preaching of John the Baptist, have not only the testimony of the writers themselves, but that of all the inhabitants of Judea, and of the strangers residing in it. For, as Paul says, "These things were not done in a corner." And to give the gospel history its just degree of credibility, we must simply consider the writers as *credible witnesses* of what came to their knowledge, without any regard to their supposed inspiration, which will never make any impression on unbelievers. On no other ground shall we ever produce a just and rational defence of this most important history. Making myself, therefore, perfectly easy as to all the possible consequences of this discussion, I shall with perfect freedom, consider the evidence for the miraculous conception as an *article of history*, and shall, with as much care as I can, state the arguments for and against it.

Before I consider the *direct evidence*, I shall attend to that which is of the *presumptive* kind. For it is universally acknowledged, that the less reason there is to expect any particular event, the stronger evidence it requires. A slight evidence is sufficient to certify us of such facts as happen every day, or very frequently. Miracles require much stronger evidence; and,
accord-

accordingly, such evidence has always been provided. Again, in miracles there is a gradation, and some of them being more extraordinary, and less probable, *a priori*, than others, require evidence proportionably more circumstantial; and less liable to exception. Thus the resurrection of our Saviour, the most extraordinary, and, *a priori*, the most improbable of all events, approaching the nearest to an impossibility, the evidence of it is remarkably circumstantial; in consequence of which there is not, perhaps, any fact in all ancient history so perfectly credible, according to the most established rules of evidence, as it is. And the arguments, *a priori*, in this case, are as striking as those which may be called the arguments *a posteriori*, or the proper historical proof. Because, we are able to see the importance of the fact, the evidence of which required to be so exceedingly clear. Christ, coming to give mankind the fullest assurance of an universal resurrection, it was obviously necessary, at least highly desirable; that, besides solemnly announcing the doctrine; and confirming it by miracles, he should himself actually die and rise again, as a proof of it. Accordingly, we find, that Christ did rest the evidence of his divine mission in a particular manner on the event of his resurrection. We, therefore, see clearly, *why it behoved Christ both to die, and to rise again from the dead.*

Now are we able to discover any reason why Christ should be born of a virgin, rather than in the usual way? Can we conceive it to have been at all necessary, or advantageous to the

great object of his mission, or to qualify him for fulfilling it? I think I may answer for all Unitarians, that, *a priori*, we should rather have thought otherwise, viz. that there would have been a greater propriety in his being, in this, as well as in all other respects, what other men are. For then, having had no natural advantage over us, his resurrection would have been calculated to give us the greater assurance of our own. Whereas, his coming into the world in a manner so very different from that of other men, might create a suspicion that there was some other essential difference between him and other men; and, therefore, that his nature might be subject to other laws than those of ours.

On this account, I am confident, that, had mankind been desired to name a proper *representative* of themselves, in whom they should see exhibited what was to befall themselves, they would have chosen a man born as themselves had been. *A priori*, therefore, it must have appeared less probable, that Christ, being sent on such a mission as his was, should be born of a virgin, than that he should be born like other men; as it might have been suspected, that he would not have been produced in this manner, if it had not been for the sake of giving him such advantages in point of constitution, as men born in the usual way cannot naturally have. His example, therefore, is in all respects less properly proposed to us, and his resurrection affords less ground for our expectation that we also shall be raised to immortal life; since any
peculiar

peculiar constitution of nature may have unknown peculiar privileges.

In the scriptures, mankind are generally apprized of the reasons of all the great measures that God has been pleased to take with respect to them. Our Saviour informs his disciples very particularly why it was expedient that he should die, and leave them for a time; assuring them, that it was for their own advantage, &c. and with respect to those reasons which they were not at that time qualified to enter into, he plainly told them, that they were not; and that, for that reason, the communication of more knowledge to them was deferred.

Now, are any reasons given us in the scriptures, to show us that it was more proper that Christ was to be born of a virgin, than in the usual way? Or, is it there said, that there *was* a reason for it, but that men were not qualified to understand it. Neither of these is the case; and what is particularly remarkable, a thing of this extraordinary kind is not so much as mentioned, or in the most distant manner alluded to, by Christ himself, or by any writer in the New Testament; so that, if the doctrine be true, it does not appear to have answered any end whatever. And it is by no means analogous to the usual conduct of Divine Providence, to take extraordinary measures, without a proportionable object and use. It is nowhere said, that God honoured mankind so far, as either to send a person of a higher rank than man, to be his messenger to them, or to make a man, in an extraordinary way, for that purpose; that

that more dignity might be given to his character, and greater attention secured to him. There is only one expression in the whole New Testament, that is capable of being laid hold of, as, in the most distant manner, alluding to the miraculous conception, which is, Paul, speaking of Christ, Gal. iv. 4. as *made of a woman*, as well as *made under the law*. But the slightest knowledge of the scripture phraseology may satisfy us, that this is only synonymous to the term *man*. Job says, ch. xiv. 1. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, &c.* and again, ch. xxv. 4. *How can he be clean that is born of a woman.* Our saviour also says, Matt. xi. 11. *Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John the Baptist.* To be *born of women*, therefore, or *made of a woman*, and to be *a man*, or a *human being*, is the same thing.

According to all appearance, therefore, if the doctrine of the miraculous conception be true, God wrought a most extraordinary miracle without any proper object, or use. Nay, as far as we can judge, such a *pretension* as that of a miraculous birth, unless it had been much more particularly authenticated than the gospel history represents this to have been, must have operated greatly to the prejudice of our saviour's character, and consequently must have obstructed the end of his mission. For without the most circumstantial evidence, for which no provision was made, the story of the miraculous conception would never have been believed by the Jews; and does not this circumstance render the *wisdom* of the scheme very questionable? For, though it must always be acknowledged, that the ways of God, even with respect to men, may be inscrutable to man; yet, when nothing is said

of such wisdom, and no such submission of our judgments is required of us, the facts from which such mysterious conduct is inferred, ought not to be admitted without proportionably clear evidence.

As the *scriptures* say nothing at all on this subject, and *reason* is equally silent, let us hear what the *Fathers* have said; and we shall find that they were far from being at any loss for good reasons, as they thought them, for Christ's coming into the world in that extraordinary manner; and certainly a natural birth would by no means have so well suited *their* hypotheses. But, unhappily, all their schemes are such as unitarians would reject, and therefore they will not tend to make the thing more credible to *them*.

Justin Martyr says that, "Christ was born of
 " a virgin, that by the same means that disobedience came by the serpent, by the same means
 " it should be terminated. For Eve being a
 " virgin, and uncorrupt, conceiving the logos
 " [word] of the serpent, brought forth disobedience
 " and death; but the virgin Mary, receiving faith
 " and favour, when the angel Gabriel said that
 " the spirit of the Lord should come upon her,
 " and the power of the highest overshadow her,
 " wherefore that holy thing that shall be born of
 " thee is the Son of God, answered, Be it unto
 " me according to thy word. And of her was
 " born he, concerning whom we have shown that
 " so many scriptures have spoken, by whom God
 " destroys the serpent, and angels, and men, who
 " resemble him, and produces a deliverance from
 " death for those who repent of their evil deeds,
 " and believe in him." Dial. pars. ii. p. 354.
 Thus, as Cyril of Jerusalem says, "As death came
 " by the virgin Eve, so it was necessary that life
 " should

“ should be brought by a virgin ; or rather, out
“ of a virgin ” Cat. xii. p. 155. It was, how-
ever, another analogy in this history that struck
Ambrose. He says, “ Adam was made of the
“ virgin earth, and Christ was from a virgin.”
In Luc. C. 4. Opera vol. ii. p. 59. All that we
need say to these ingenious analogies, is that the
scriptures say nothing about them ; and I suppose
that those who are now advocates for the miraculous
conception, will have little to say in their defence.

A reason quite different from the former, and
no less ingenious, is given by Lactantius. “ God
“ the father himself,” says he, “ being both the
“ origin and principle of things, because he has no
“ parents, is truly called *απαλωρ* [without father]
“ and *αμηλωρ* [without mother] by Trismegistus.
“ Wherefore his son ought also to be born twice,
“ that he might be without father and without
“ mother. In his first spiritual birth he was
“ without mother, because he was generated by
“ God the Father only, without the assistance of a
“ mother. In his second carnal birth, he was
“ without father, because he was generated in the
“ virgin’s womb, without the assistance of a fa-
“ ther ; that, having a middle substance between
“ God and man, he might lead our frail and weak
“ nature, as it were by the hand, to immortality.”
Instit. L. 4. S. 13. p. 388. With respect to
the latter part of this reasoning, it might be re-
torted, that if it was necessary that Christ should
be both God and man, he should have been both
proper God, and proper man, i. e. a man born
and constituted like other men.

Austin, whose genius seldom fails him, is not
so happy in his solution of this difficulty as he is
in that of some others : He says, “ The salvation

of the female sex was intended, because Christ was a man, born of a woman only." *Questiones, Opera, Vol. iv. p. 536.* I suppose, however, he must have meant, that Christ would take care of the men for his own sake, and of the women for the sake of his mother: Had he had a father as well as a mother, he might have taken more than an equal care of the male sex.

A much more plausible reason than any of the preceding is, that which supposes that the greatness and sanctity of Christ's character, so much superior to that of other men, required that he should not be born as other men are. Of this nature is that of Irenæus, who says, "If Christ had been born of Joseph, what could he have done more than Solomon, or Joseph, or David, when he was produced in the same manner, and their proper offspring." He adds, that he could not have been the proper son of God, and therefore not a king, if he had been the son of Joseph, nor heir, according to Jeremiah." *L. 3. C. 29. p. 258.*

Lactantius, not contenting himself with his former reason, says, "that it might be certain that he was sent of God, it behoved him not to be born as men are born, from two human parents; but that it might appear that he was a heavenly person in man, he was created without the assistance of a father." *Instit. L. 4. S. 20. p. 430.* He ought," says Cyril of Alexandria, "to have such a birth, I mean his earthly birth, of a woman, that his presence and manifestation to the world might have something in it worthy of a God." *Contra Julianum, L. 8. Juliani Opera. Vol. ii. p. 279.*

"For the very reason that you doubt," says Chrysostom, "for that reason believe. It is not because

“ because marriage is a bad thing, but because
 “ virginity is a better ; and it behoved the Lord
 “ of all to have a more splendid entrance into the
 “ world than ours ; for it was the entrance of a
 “ king. He ought both to agree, and to differ,
 “ with us in our birth ; and both these things
 “ have taken place. He ought to be born of
 “ a woman, in common with us ; but to be born
 “ without marriage is greater than us.” In Gen.
 25. Opera Vol. ii. p. 685.

All this might do tolerably well, if Christ was to have been any thing more than a man, and to have done something more than man could do, or than it was proper that man should be the instrument of doing. But what is this to those who think that there was a greater propriety in Christ being *precisely a man*, and his office such as that there would have been the greatest propriety in its being filled by a man.

No more will an unitarian acquiesce in the following reason of M. Caleca. “ Christ was born
 “ of a virgin that he might live without sin.” Combesis. Vol. ii. p. 264, because they think it is rather desirable that Christ should be of a nature as *liable to sin* as other men ; that in all things he might be like his brethren, and be *tempted as they were*, though he did not yield to any temptation. Austin thought it was proper that Christ should be exempt from original sin, and accordingly he believed that he was so ; and that his being born of a virgin, was the cause of that singular exemption. If any wish to know the principle on which he argued, he will find it in the following sentence. Nulla igitur voluptate carnalis concupiscentiæ fe-

minatus, sine conceptus est, et ideo nullum peccatum originaliter trahens, &c. Enchyridion. C. 41. Opera Vol. iii. p. 167. 214.

Hilary imagined that the body of Christ was exempt from the sensation of pain; and this he ascribed to his miraculous conception. *De Trinitate*, L. 16. p. 256. How this circumstance gave him that privilege, he does not say. But what is all this curious reasoning to those who think that all men are born free from original sin, and that the body of Christ was no more exempt from the feeling of pain, than ours are!

Such are the reasonings that I have found advanced by the Fathers concerning the miraculous conception, and the final cause of it; and it was a circumstance of which they made no small boast. "What righteous person," says the great Athanasius, "what holy prophet, or patriarch, in all the sacred writings, was born of a virgin only; or what woman was sufficient for the conception of a man, without a man?" *De Incarnatione*, Opera, vol. i. p. 88. "When Christ," says Constantine, in his oration before the fathers of the council of Nice, "was to live among men, he invented a new way of being born; for there was a conception without marriage, a delivery of a pure virgin, and a young woman was the mother of God." C. 11. p. 689. It is remarkable, that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews makes no such boasts as these, though he seems to have been intent on bringing together every circumstance that he could think would reflect honour on Christ.

My

My readers having heard a variety of ingenious conjectures concerning the reasons for this extraordinary measure of divine providence, may, perhaps, be able to suggest one for himself; but I own that, unsatisfactory as they appear to me, I am not able to assign any better.

That the circumstance of Christ *pretending* to a miraculous birth would have had an unfavourable effect on his character and credit in his life-time, all the Fathers, who speak of it, readily acknowledge; and the character of his mother, they say, would have sustained an irreparable injury. They also acknowledge that, even had the fact been known and proved, the great object of his mission would have been in great danger of being defeated; as it was of the greatest importance to the success of the scheme, that Christ should not be known to be the Messiah at so early a period; for they imagined, that it was quite necessary that the devil should be kept in ignorance of his rank and true character. This is the reason which they give, why Mary, though designed to bring forth Jesus while she was a virgin, should have a nominal husband. For they say that, as the devil knew that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, he would, if she had not been married, have suspected that her child had been the person, and would have exerted himself to defeat the object of his mission. This hypothesis implies a high idea of the power of the devil; but, withal, a very low one of his penetration and sagacity, or that he was ill served by his spies. Such is not, at present, the idea of the devil with those who believe his real existence.

As the notions of the Fathers are a matter of some curiosity, at least, I shall lay before my readers some of their thoughts and reasonings on this subject. Origen, who says, that “the Jews thought Christ to be the Son of Joseph and Mary,” Comment. vol. i. p. 223. says, that “they would not have believed Jesus, if he had said that he was the son of Mary only.” Opera, vol. ii. p. 13. “Our Lord,” says Ambrose, “rather chose that his origin should be unknown, than that his mother’s chastity should be questioned.” In Luc. L. 2, Opera, vol. ii. p. 17.

But the person who has written the most largely on this subject is Chrysostom, and the following extract from him will shew in a very clear light, of what importance it was imagined to be, that the miraculous conception should be concealed from the Jews. But it does not seem to have occurred to any of these Fathers, that every reason for this *concealment* is an argument against the *propriety* and *wisdom* of the measure itself; and, therefore, an argument against the truth of the fact: for, certainly, a circumstance which they acknowledge to have been so highly improbable, and of apparent disservice to the scheme of christianity, requires very clear and strong evidence of its truth.

“Why is there an account of the genealogy of Joseph, who had nothing to do with the generation of Christ? I have mentioned one reason, but I must mention another more mysterious. What then is it? He would not have it known to the Jews, after the birth, that Christ was born of a virgin. Be not alarmed

“ alarmed at this extraordinary circumstance,
“ The reason is not mine, but that of our fa-
“ thers, eminent and distinguished men. For
“ if Christ from the beginning concealed many
“ things, calling himself *the son of man*, and did
“ not always discover his equality with the Fa-
“ ther, why should you wonder that he con-
“ cealed this, managing it as a great and won-
“ derful thing, to preserve the virgin, and cover
“ her from wicked suspicion. For if this had
“ been known to the Jews from the beginning,
“ they would have stoned the virgin, abusing
“ her for what would be said, and have con-
“ demned her for adultery. If they impu-
“ dently abused him for works of which they
“ had many examples in the Old Testament (for
“ when he cast out demons they called him a
“ demoniac, and when he healed on the sab-
“ bath-day they thought him an enemy of God,
“ though the sabbath had often been broken
“ before) what would they have said, if this
“ had been reported! For they had seen no-
“ thing of the kind in all preceding time. For
“ if, after so many miracles, they called him the
“ son of Joseph, how could they have believed,
“ before his miracles, that he was the son of a
“ virgin?”

“ On this account, Joseph has his genealogy
“ inserted, and he married the virgin. For when
“ Joseph, who was a good man, stood in need of
“ many things, as of an angel, a vision, and the
“ testimony of prophecy, in order to believe
“ the fact, how would the Jews, who were so
“ corrupt, and so hostilely disposed towards him,
“ have received the suspicion? They would
“ have

“ have been very much disturbed at a thing so
 “ strange and new, the like of which they never
 “ heard of in the time of their ancestors. He
 “ who is once persuaded that Christ is the Son
 “ of God, has no doubt on this subject; but he
 “ who considers him as a deceiver, and an enemy
 “ of God, how would he not be more scanda-
 “ lized on this account, and have been led to
 “ this suspicion (viz. of adultery). On this
 “ account, neither did the apostles at first speak
 “ of this, but rather discoursed largely concern-
 “ ing his resurrection. For of this there were
 “ examples in former times, though not in all
 “ respects the same; but they had never heard
 “ of a person being born of a virgin. Nor did
 “ his mother dare to mention this: for observe
 “ how she says, *Behold, thy father and I have*
 “ *sought thee.* For if this had been suspected,
 “ he would not have been thought to be the
 “ son of David; and this not being admitted,
 “ many mischiefs would have arisen. On this
 “ account, neither did the angels mention this,
 “ except to Mary and Joseph only, but not to
 “ the shepherds, though they acquainted them
 “ with his being born.” In Matt. Hom. 1.
 Opera, vol. vii. p. 20, &c.

Jerom reasons very much in the same man-
 ner on this subject, giving three reasons why
 Mary was married to Joseph. First, “ that by
 “ means of the genealogy of Joseph, to whom
 “ Mary was related, it might appear that he was
 “ descended from David. Secondly, lest, ac-
 “ cording to the law of Moses, she should have
 “ been stoned as an adulteress. Thirdly, that,
 “ in their journey to Egypt, she might have the
 “ comfort

“ comfort of a guardian, rather than that of a
“ husband.” “ Who,” says he, “ at that time
“ would have believed the virgin, if she had
“ told them that the angel Gabriel came to her,
“ and that she had conceived by the Holy Spi-
“ rit, and would not rather have condemned
“ her after the example of Susannah ; when, at
“ this very day, when all the world believes it,
“ the Jews still cavil ?” He afterwards says,
that, “ except Joseph the husband, Mary her-
“ self, and a very few others, who might hear
“ it from them, all persons considered Jesus as
“ the son of Joseph ; so that the evangelists, ex-
“ pressing the common opinion, called Joseph
“ the father of our Saviour.” *Ad Helvidium,*
Opera. vol. ii. p. 310.

I think it is hardly possible to read these pas-
sages, in which the inconvenience that would
have attended the discovery of the miraculous
conception are very strongly and naturally de-
scribed, without feeling that the story itself is
an incumbrance on the christian scheme, and
that it would at least have appeared to more
advantage without it.

That it was necessary that the miraculous
conception of Jesus should be concealed from
the devil, is a thought that is always ascribed
to Ignatius, and it appears in the epistles that
go by his name ; but it continued to be the se-
rious belief of all the Fathers who have men-
tioned the subject. Basil says, “ Mary was
“ married to Joseph, that the devil might not
“ suspect that she was a virgin. For he knew
“ that Christ was to be born of one, and that he
“ was to put an end to his power.” *Hom.* 25
Opera,

Opera. vol. i. p. 507.—Ambrose says, that “Mary conceived by a miracle, lest the princes of this world should not have crucified Christ for our salvation.” De Purificatione S. Mariæ, Opera, vol. v. p. 638. His idea, probably, was, that the devil would not then have instigated Judas to betray him, or his enemies to crucify him. “The virginity of Mary,” says Damascenus, “her delivery, and the death of Christ, were all concealed from the devil,” quoted from Ignatius De Mariæ Nativitate. Or. 3 Opera, p. 576. “Mary,” says Theophylact, “was married, that by this means she might deceive the devil. For the devil having heard that a virgin would be with child, observed the virgins. She, therefore, married Joseph, to deceive the deceiver.” In Matt. C. i. Opera. vol. i. p. 8.

Having thus stated the nature of the fact, the credibility of which I propose to discuss, and shewn the appearance that it has *à priori*, which is of considerable moment with respect to the evidence that is necessary to establish its authenticity; I shall proceed to state the evidence *for* and *against* it, with as much impartiality as I can. This is all that is of any consequence to the reader. He must then, and he certainly *will*, judge for himself.

The whole strength of the evidence in favour of the miraculous conception is expressed in a few words. The thing itself appears *a priori* to be highly improbable, and the *report* of it must have operated unfavourably with respect to the credit of christianity, and it is never argued from, or so much as alluded to, as of any use in the scheme, or as a part of it, in all the New Testament. But

the testimony of the evangelists Matthew and Luke, is expressly in its favour. Their histories are likewise supposed to be the earliest accounts of our Saviour's life; and Luke says that he took particular pains to trace the history to its source, from those who were best qualified to give him information.

This positive testimony, very circumstantially related, by persons of such respectable characters, to say nothing of their supposed *inspiration*, is certainly intitled to the greatest credit. It may be said, What evidence can be stronger in favour of any event, than its being recorded by cotemporary historians, whose writings were published in their own life time? If this part of the gospel history be fabulous, why may not the whole be so, since it is all related by the same evangelists? Is it not, therefore, to undermine the credit of the whole gospel history, to endeavour to weaken that of so considerable part of it?

This, I think, is all that can be advanced in favour of the miraculous conception, setting aside all idea of the inspiration of the writers, to which, I own, I should pay no attention. I consider Matthew and Luke as simply *historians*, whose credit must be determined by the circumstances in which they wrote, and the nature of the facts which they relate. And before I consider the evidence that may be alledged against the fact which they have recorded, or are supposed to have recorded, I shall make one observation, which is of the greatest importance with respect to historical evidence, and which is always allowed its full weight with regard to all other histories. And it appears to me, that it is our backwardness to consider the gospel historians in the same light
as

as we do other historians (notwithstanding the doctrine of their inspiration is nominally given up) that prevents our forming a right estimate in this particular case. In any other similar case, I apprehend, we should decide much more readily than the boldest of us feel ourselves disposed to do here.

The observation which I would now make, and which I wish to impress upon my reader, is this; that fully to establish the credibility of any fact, it must not only be recorded by cotemporary historians, but it must also appear not to have been contradicted by those who were cotemporary with the historians, and who may be supposed to have been as good judges as the historians themselves. Still less will the single circumstance of an event being recorded by cotemporary historians, avail to establish the credit of it, if it appear not to have been believed by those who may be supposed to have been favourably inclined to the belief of it, and to have wished it to be true.

Let us suppose that we should now recover a copy of the history of Livy, containing an account of the transactions of his own time, or so near to it, that it could not be doubted, but that it was in his power to have procured good information concerning what he wrote; and that we should find in this copy of his history, that Cleopatra, instead of dying by the bite of an asp in Egypt, was brought by Augustus to Rome, and publicly married to him. The story would not, at this day, gain any credit. We might not be able to deny that Livy wrote the account, but we should immediately say; if it was true, why does it not appear to have been believed at the time. Supposing, farther, that we should discover another
I Roman

Roman history, viz. that of Sallust, which should contain the same account; still, if we saw no reason to think that it was believed at Rome, where the scene of the transaction was laid, we certainly should not believe it now; nor would even ten or twelve historians, agreeing ever so well in their accounts, make us believe it; unless it should appear to us, that it was generally believed at the time. We might not be able to account for the misapprehensions and mistakes of the historians; but, in fact, their evidence would only be considered as that of ten or twelve men, opposed to the evidence of more than ten or twelve millions.

However, if the credit of Livy and Sallust was so well established, that we could not believe that they would assert as a fact, what they might easily have known not to be so; we should say that, though we had no method of accounting for such a narration being found in the copies of their works, which have come down to us, we were satisfied that it was not of their composition. Passages, we might say, like that in Josephus concerning Christ, may have got into the works of more respectable writers (as a comparison of circumstances sufficiently proves) without our being able to say *when*, or *by whom*, the books were corrupted. And if we had any evidence that there were, in early times, copies of the intire histories of Livy and Sallust, in which nothing was said of the marriage of Augustus to Cleopatra, nothing farther, I imagine, would be wanting to our intire satisfaction on the subject.

Now these very material observations, and many others, apply to the case before us. It is true

true that we do find the story of the miraculous conception in the received gospels of Matthew and Luke; and it is almost certain that they were there in the time of Justin Martyr. But it is no less certain, that there were in early times gospels of Matthew, and of Luke too, which did not contain that story; and there is sufficient reason to think, that the great body of Jewish christians, who were cotemporary with the apostles, did not believe it. It was probably a long time before it gained any credit at all with any of their posterity, and it is probable that it never did so with the generality of them. It is certain that some very learned persons, and, therefore, probably, the most inquisitive among them, and who wrote expressly on the subject, never believed it; and yet no good reason can be given why a history that has the appearance of being greatly to the credit of the founder of their religion, should not have been believed by them, as well as by other christians.

A circumstance of greater weight than even this is, that the Gnostics of that age, to whose peculiar systems the doctrine of the miraculous conception could not but have appeared exceedingly favourable, did likewise reject it as fabulous. If these particulars can be well supported, it must appear that something is wanting to the full credibility of this part of the gospel history; and it will be farther weakened, if any circumstances can be pointed out that affect the *authenticity* of the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Such facts of this kind, and such observations as have occurred to me on the subject, I shall lay before my readers, with all the fairness of which I am capable.

[*To be continued.*]

Observations relating to the Miraculous Conception, continued from page 268.

THAT the miraculous conception of our Saviour was *not known*, and of course *not believed*, during the time of his public ministry, will, I imagine, be allowed by all persons; and this of itself is a circumstance not very favourable to its truth. For though there might be reasons why it should be concealed from the enemies of Jesus (as it might be supposed to amount to a declaration of his being the Messiah) there does not seem to have been any reason why it should have been concealed from his friends, as it would have tended to strengthen their faith in his divine mission. Besides, as Joseph and Mary were not enjoined secrecy on this head, they would naturally speak of so wonderful a thing as that of a virgin being with child, at least to their pious friends, who would give them credit for it; and if it had been believed by them, is it not probable that more respect would have been paid to Jesus during his infancy and childhood?

If there had been any persons of property among them, they would hardly have suffered so extraordinary a child as this to have followed the occupation of a common carpenter, which Jesus is

thought to have done till he was thirty years of age. If the account of Luke be true, the story of this miraculous conception could not well have been a secret. According to him it must have been known not only to Joseph and Mary, but also to Zacharias and Elizabeth, if not to Simeon and Anna; the latter of whom is said to have *spoken of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.* Luke ii. 38. Now, as none of these persons are said to have made any secret of what they knew, we may safely conclude, that, by some means or other, it would certainly get abroad; and a fact of this extraordinary kind, or even a pretension to it, would never have been forgotten. All the country would have had their eyes upon any child that had been said to have been produced in this manner, and would never have lost sight of him.

Supposing, however, that this fact had been a secret between Joseph and Mary only, and that they had agreed to keep it to themselves, so that upon the death of Joseph, it would have remained in the breast of Mary alone, it cannot have been supposed to have been unknown to Jesus himself, after he was fully illuminated with respect to every thing that related to his character and office; and it must at some time or other have been communicated by her, or by him, to his disciples. But if we attend to the history, we shall find it extremely difficult to fix upon any particular time when the great secret was made known to them. For we perceive no trace of their ever having known it at all; there not being, as I have observed before, the least mention of it, or the most
obscure

brothers, and sisters, were all known to them. This was about thirty years after his birth. Now had Mary been with child when she came to live with her husband, and Jesus had consequently been born too soon after their cohabitation, it could hardly have failed to be noticed, and would probably have been recollected when he began to distinguish himself; so that we may be said to have the evidence of the inhabitants of the place in which he lived, that he was the proper and legitimate son of Joseph and Mary. Origen, indeed, supposes that the Jews meant to reproach Christ with his pretensions to being born of a virgin, when they told him that *they were not born of fornication*. Comment. vol. ii. p. 303; but I believe he is singular in this supposition.

But the principal objection to the story is that, at whatever time it was communicated, by Jesus or Mary, to the apostles, or by them to the rest of the disciples, concerning which nothing can be collected from the history, it does not appear to have gained any credit in that age. For it is certain that it was not believed by the great body, and probably the whole number of the Jewish christians in the age subsequent to that of the apostles; so that they either had not been taught any such doctrine by them, or if they had heard of it, they did not think the account sufficiently authenticated.

The miraculous conception was a thing that none of the apostles could have asserted of their own knowledge; and if they had no particular *evidence, or revelation*, concerning it (of which nothing is said) many of the early Jewish christians

were as good judges in the case as themselves. Had the subject been then much talked of, or had it been mentioned at all in the life time of Mary, care would, no doubt, have been taken to interrogate her with respect to it; and her testimony, solemnly given, would hardly have been disputed. That this, therefore, was not done, and the credibility of the fact established in that age, affords the strongest presumption that the story of the miraculous conception had not been heard of in the life-time of Mary, or indeed in that of the apostles. If it had, we can hardly suppose but that all doubt with respect to it would have been precluded. Had this remarkable history been imparted to the early Jewish christians with such circumstances as would have rendered it credible, we can imagine no reason why it should not have been universally received in that age, and have been transmitted as an unquestionable truth to all posterity. For, being the disciples of Christ, it may be supposed that they would have been pleased with a circumstance so much to his honour; the very principle on which, I doubt not, the belief of it did gain ground at length. Had it been thought credible at that time, the same causes which established the belief of it afterwards, would have effected it in a more early period.

That very many of the Jewish christians, who were generally called Ebionites, did not believe the miraculous conception has the unanimous testimony of all who speak of them, even in the latest periods. It may, therefore, be presumed that this disbelief was more general, and probably universal, in an earlier age. Justin Martyr, who is the first

christian writer that mentions them at all, gives no hint of there being any among them who did believe it; nor indeed does Irenæus, who mentions them several times, and who wrote near the close of the second century. He speaks of the Ebionites in general, as “vain, not admitting the union of God and man by faith, as persevering in the old leaven of generation, and not understanding that the spirit came upon Mary, and that the power of the highest overshadowed her.” L. v. c. i. p. 394.

So far, therefore, we have no evidence of any of the Jewish christians believing the miraculous conception. Also, till this time, and long after, they do not appear to have been known to the Greeks by any other name than that of Ebionites. Origen expressly informs us, that in his time *all* the Jewish christians went by that name; and he is the first writer from whom we learn that *any* of them believed the miraculous conception; and he wrote about the middle of the third century. “When you see,” says he, “the faith of the Jewish believers in our Saviour, some of whom think him to have been the son of Joseph and Mary, and others of Mary and the holy spirit, but without acknowledging his divinity, &c.” In. Matt. Comment. vol. i. p. 427.

Eusebius, who speaks of no Jewish christians, but such as were called Ebionites, makes the same distinction among them that Origen does; so that in his time, that is about a hundred years after Origen, a great proportion of them, probably a majority of them, continued unbelievers in the miraculous conception, notwithstanding they must have

have had before them all the evidence in favour of it that we can pretend to have. And as, in after ages, when it was imagined that there was some distinction between the Ebionites and Nazarenes, the Ebionites were always described as believing Christ to be the son of Joseph, and the Nazarenes are no where said to believe the contrary, we seem to be authorised to conclude, that the great majority of Jewish christians *always* continued unbelievers in this doctrine. Tertullian considered it as an answer to the Ebionites, that Christ is said to be born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God. *De Carne Christi.* f. xxiv. *Opera.* p. 325. He must, therefore, have considered them as denying the miraculous conception. Austin, describing the Ebionites, says expressly, that they denied it; and though he makes another sect of the Nazarenes, he does not say that they believed it. *De Definitionibus.* C. ii. *Opera.* vol. iii. p. 195.

That there was any real difference between the Ebionites and Nazarenes seems to be an opinion void of all foundation. But if there was any difference between them, Epiphanius says that he did not know that it consisted in this. And if, as he says, *H.* xxix. *Opera,* vol. i. p. 117. "the Nazarenes held doctrines similar to those of the Cerinthians," he could not suppose that they believed the miraculous conception; because the Cerinthians, being Gnostics, had no other opinion that Epiphanius would call heretical, in which they could agree with the Nazarenes. For the Cerinthians, like all the other early Gnostics, were unbelievers in the miraculous conception.

The Ebionites were not without men of learning and enquiry among them ; and of these Symmachus (whose translation of the Old Testament into Greek, is quoted with the highest respect by Origen, Eusebius, and all the ancients) defended this particular opinion of the Ebionites. We have no account of any of his arguments : but that a man of his learning, and respectable character, about the end of the second century, with all the evidence before him that we can have in favour of it, and probably much more than we now have against it, should write in defence of his opinion, is, of itself, *a fact* of considerable consequence. That his opinion was overborne, notwithstanding his defence of it, will not make an unitarian think the worse of it ; as the unitarian doctrine itself was overborne ; and it was probably the operation of the same general causes that was fatal to both the simple and the proper humanity ; meaning by *proper humanity*, that Jesus had a human father, as well as a mother.

This work of Symmachus does not appear to have been seen by Eusebius ; but he mentions it as having been in the possession of Origen. “ Symmachus,” he says, “ one of the interpreters of the scriptures, was an Ebionite ; and the Ebionite heresy is that of those who say that Christ was born of Joseph and Mary, supposing him to be a mere man. There are now commentaries of this Symmachus, in which it is said that, eagerly disputing about the gospel of Matthew (*προς το κατά Ματθαίον ευαγγέλιον*) he defends that heresy. And these commentaries of Symmachus, Origen, together with other interpretations of scripture
“ by

“ by the same author, said he received of one Juliana, to whom they came by succession.” Hist. L. vi. c. xvii. p. 278. Nicephorus calls this work of Symmachus, a Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. It is well known that the Ebionites maintained that their copies of this gospel, which wanted the introduction, was the genuine work of the apostle. And why should not the Jewish christians be as good judges of this, as the Jews in general are allowed to have been with respect to the writings of Moses. The general opinion is, that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew for their use, as Moses did his books.

Jerom says, that the gospel used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, was “ by *most* [plerisque] “ called the authentic gospel of Matthew.” In Matt. c. xii. Opera, vol. vi. p. 21. Now, as there can be no doubt of the Nazarenes and Ebionites themselves considering this gospel as the authentic gospel of Matthew, it may be supposed, that many of the *Gentiles* also had the same opinion. And though the copy that Jerom translated had part of the two first chapters, and therefore probably the whole; yet, as we learn from Epiphanius that that gospel began at the third chapter, and we know from Origen that *all* the Gentile christians did not believe the miraculous conception; it is probable that the Hebrew gospel, used by the Ebionites, even without the introduction, was thought by many of the Gentiles to be the whole of the genuine work of Matthew. Indeed, they could hardly be unbelievers in the miraculous conception and admit it to be authentic.

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The disbelief of the miraculous conception was by no means confined to the Jewish christians. It extended likewise to the Gentile converts, probably the majority of them, even in the time of Justin Martyr. For all the Gentile christians that he speaks of, as being unitarians at all, he considered as holding the same opinion on this subject, that is ascribed to the Jewish christians, viz. that Jesus was *a man born of man*, or the son of Joseph as well as of Mary; and independently of any rigorous construction of his language, the respect with which he speaks of them sufficiently proves that their numbers must have been considerable.

However, as, in this part of his work, Justin is defending his peculiar opinion of the *pre-existence of Christ*, we cannot conclude that he considered *all* those who denied his doctrine on this subject, as agreeing among themselves with respect to the circumstances of the birth of Christ. That was a thing which he had no occasion to attend to at that time; but as, in describing the unitarians in general, Jews and Gentiles, he mentions it as their opinion, that Jesus was the son of Joseph, it is natural to conclude that, in his time, it was the opinion of the majority of them.

Nor will this be thought improbable, when it is considered that, though the belief of the miraculous conception certainly kept gaining ground, as well as that of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, some, and probably a considerable number (or they would hardly have been mentioned at all) remained to the time of Origen, who wrote near a hundred years after Justin Martyr. Origen,
comparing

comparing the blind beggar near Jericho to the poor beggarly Jewish christians, who believed Christ to be the son of Joseph and Mary, says, that "those who rebuked him, represented the "Gentiles, who, excepting a few, believed that he "was born of a virgin." In *Matt. Comment.* vol. i. p. 426. Had he himself been of this opinion, he might, perhaps, have spoken of them with more respect in point of numbers, as well as on other accounts.

In another passage, he also speaks of some christians who denied the miraculous conception, but he does not say whether they were Jews or Gentiles, though I think it is most probable that he meant the latter. "Persons," he says, "may believe, and not believe, at the same time;" and he instances in "those who believe in Jesus crucified by Pilate in Judea, but do not believe that "he was born of a virgin; and also in those who "believed in his miracles, but did not believe that "he made the heavens and the earth." *Comment.* vol. ii. p. 322.

According to Epiphanius, the followers of Theodotus believed that "Christ was a mere man, "born of the seed of man." H. 54. *Opera*, vol. i. p. 463. This is not improbable, as Theodotus was prior to Origen, though I own Epiphanius is not the best authority, and it is contradicted by other accounts. But some of the followers of Theodotus might believe the miraculous conception, and others might not.

It should seem that there were some in the time of Cyril of Jerusalem, who believed that Christ
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was the son of Joseph ; and as they are opposed to the *heretics*, it is most probable that they were not Gnostics, but proper Gentile unitarians. “ Let us not,” says he, “ bear with the heretics, who teach the appearance by phantasm only. Let us likewise despise those who say that the birth was from man and woman, and dare to say that he was the son of Joseph and Mary.” Cat. xii. Opera, p. 164.

That any of the Gnostics should disbelieve the miraculous conception, is a fact more extraordinary, and more unfavourable to the credibility of it, than the disbelief of it by any of the catholic christians, Jews or Gentiles ; because this doctrine would have suited remarkably well with their other principles. In reality, the belief of the miraculous conception might have been more naturally expected of them, than of any persons of that age. They did not, indeed, with Justin Martyr and the orthodox, believe that Christ was the maker of the world ; but they thought him to have been a pre-existent intelligent being, equal in power, and superior in goodness, to him that made the world ; and one who was sent to rectify the evils that had been introduced by the being that made it ; and therefore they would as naturally incline to believe that he had a birth suited to his high rank as the orthodox themselves. That they did not embrace this opinion, therefore, could be owing to nothing but their not finding sufficient historical evidence for it.

That all the more early Gnostics did believe Jesus to have been the son of Joseph, is asserted
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by all who make any mention of their opinions. The earliest of them were the Cerinthians, and the earliest writer who mentions them by name, is Irenæus: I shall, therefore, begin with his testimony concerning them. "Cerinthus," says he, "who was of Asia, held that the world was "not made by the principal God, but by a "power very distant from him, and who was "ignorant of the true God; that Jesus was not "born of a virgin, for that he held to be impossible, but was the son of Joseph and Mary; "that he was like other men, but excelled them "in virtue; that after his baptism, the Christ "descended into him, in the form of a dove; "that he then announced the unknown Father, "and wrought miracles; that at length Christ "left Jesus, who suffered and rose again, but "the Christ was impassible." L. i. c. xxv. p. 102.

What Irenæus says concerning Cerinthus, the first of the Gnostics, Theodoret and others say concerning Simon, Menander, Cerdon, and Marcion, the next in order of time, except that Simon, who was improperly ranked among Christians, preceded him. "Simon," says Theodoret, "Menander, Cerdon, and Marcion, deny "the incarnation, and call the miraculous conception a fable: but Valentinus, Basilides, "Bardefanes, Armonius, and those of that class, "admit the miraculous conception, and the "birth; but they say that the God logos received nothing from the virgin, but passed "through her as through a pipe; and that he "appeared

“ appeared to men as a phantasm, seeming only
 “ to be a man, as he had appeared to Abraham
 “ and to others of the ancients.” Ep. 145.
 Opera, vol. iii. p. 1023.

Theodoret here says, that Valentinus and Basilides, who preceded him, admitted the miraculous conception; but an earlier, and, therefore, a better authority, says the contrary. For the Valentinians, as well as the Ebionites, are ranked among those who disbelieved the miraculous conception by Pamphilus the martyr. Originis Opera, vol. i. p. 760. Hieronymi Opera, vol. ix. p. 117. And if Valentinus did not believe the miraculous conception, it is probable that Basilides did not, as he is sometimes called the master of Valentinus.

That Carpocrates disbelieved the miraculous conception is universally admitted. “ Carpocrates,” says Irenæus, “ held that the world
 “ was made by inferior angels; that Jesus was
 “ the son of Joseph, but that his soul was firm
 “ and holy.” L. i. c. xxiv. p. 99. “ Cerinthus
 “ and Carpocrates,” says Epiphanius, “ used
 “ the same gospel with the Ebionites, and, like
 “ them, denied the miraculous conception.”
 H. 30. Opera, vol. i. p. 138. Theodoret also
 says, that “ Carpocrates believed that Jesus was
 “ born of Joseph and Mary, like other men.”
 Hær. Fab. L. i. c. v. Opera, vol. iv. p. 196.

Thus it appears, that the earliest and most distinguished of the Gnostics agreed with the ancient unitarians, in disbelieving the miraculous conception. Now, what could bring persons

sons so opposite to each other, as the Unitarians and Gnostics are always represented to have been, to agree in this one thing, but such historical evidence as was independent of any particular system of christian faith; and which, in the case of the Gnostics, must have been so strong, as to overbear the natural influence of their system. With respect to the unitarians, it may be said, that many of them, having been Jews, who had expected that their Messiah would be a mere man, born as other men are, and especially a proper descendant from David, would not, without particular evidence, admit that he had any other kind of birth; and that the gentile unitarians, having learned christianity of them, would naturally adopt their opinion; though, I doubt not, but that the idea of aggrandizing the founder of their religion, which was so eagerly caught at in those times, would soon overbear the influence of that Jewish prejudice. But the Gnostics, who did not believe that Christ had any proper birth at all, but merely passed through his mother, to use their own favourite comparison, as water through a pipe, would naturally wish that it might be done in such a manner, as might be imagined (and the whole was an affair of imagination) to be in the least degrading manner. And that, in that age, it *was* supposed to be less degrading to be born of a virgin, than in the common way, is evident from what I have already quoted concerning their sentiments and ideas.

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On what grounds or principles, or from what authority, the ancient Jewish christians, and many of the Gentiles, as well as the Gnostics, disbelieved the miraculous conception, we can only conjecture, as their writings on this, as well as on all other subjects, are long since buried in oblivion. But *the fact* of so general disbelief, both of the unitarian Christians and the Gnostics, at first universal, and giving way to the present popular opinion (which may easily be accounted for from the very general disposition to magnify the personal dignity of Christ, whose meanness was continually objected to them) very slowly, cannot be accounted for without supposing some considerable defect in the original evidence. Otherwise, it could not but, in the circumstances of the primitive christians, have very soon and universally established itself. And the question now before us is simply this, viz. whether it be easier to account for the existence of this fact, viz. the general, and, to appearance, universal disbelief of it, at the only period in which it was possible fully to authenticate it, or the existence of the present records of the miraculous conception, viz. the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke, at so early a period as that to which they may certainly be traced, without supposing the history they contain to be authentic. In order to throw some farther light upon the subject, I shall now freely consider the circumstances of this story, which has been so differently received; appearing to have gained no credit at first, but by a slow process

process to have come at length to be held absolutely sacred.

In comparing the four gospels, we cannot but be struck with the remarkable difference between those of Matthew and Luke, and those of Mark and John, in this respect; neither of the latter giving the least hint of a miraculous conception. And yet it might well be thought that, if any part of the history required to be particularly authenticated, by the testimony of different historians, it was this; and many things of far less consequence are recorded by them all, and very circumstantially. With respect to John, it may, indeed, be said, that as he knew that Matthew and Luke had recorded the circumstances of the miraculous conception, he had no occasion to do it. But what shall we say with respect to Mark? If he was an epitomizer of Matthew, as some have supposed, but of which I own I have seen no sufficient evidence, how came he to leave out the whole of the two first chapters? And if he was, as I think most probable, an original writer, how came he to give no account at all of the miraculous conception, on the supposition that he really knew of it? He could not tell that any other person of equal credit would write the history; and, therefore, as he did undertake it, he would certainly insert in it whatever he thought to be of principal importance. Consequently, he must either have never have heard of the story, or have thought it of no importance. But it is of such a nature, that no person, believing it to be true, ever did, or ever could, consider it as of no im-

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portance. It was a singular and most extraordinary measure in divine providence, and could not but be considered as having some great object and end, whether we should be able to discover it or not. It was, therefore, such a fact as no historian could overlook; and it may, therefore, be presumed, that Mark had either never heard of it, or that he did not believe it.

If we only take away the two first chapters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and change a very few words in the verses that follow them, we shall find very proper beginnings for them both, and exactly corresponding to that natural and simple one of Mark; for they will then begin with an account of the preaching of John the Baptist; as, in fact, the gospel of John likewise does, after a short introduction concerning the meaning of the word *logos*, which was, probably, much talked of at that time.

Does not this circumstance give us some suspicion that both these gospels of Matthew and Luke might originally have been published without those introductions; that the Hebrew copy of the gospel of the Ebionites, which was that of Matthew without the two first chapters, (and which they maintained to be the genuine gospel of Matthew) might be all that Matthew himself ever wrote; that the copy of Luke's gospel, which Marcion had, and which began, as Epiphanius says, *Ib.* 42. *Opera*, vol. i. p. 312. at the third chapter, was all that Luke wrote; that the *introductions* were written afterwards by other persons; and that they were first annexed to the gospels by those who admired them, and
were

were afterwards copied, as proper parts of them. Supposing this to have been done, though it should not have been before the ancient versions were made, they would naturally be translated afterwards, and be annexed to the versions, as they had been to the originals.

How improbable soever this hypothesis may appear at first sight, no person can well doubt of something of the same nature having taken place with respect to several passages in the books of scripture, even where we have no evidence whatever, from history, from manuscripts, or from ancient versions, of the passages having ever been what we now take it for granted they originally were. This, I think, to have been the case with respect to the word *αγα*, John vi. 4. Bishop Pearce supposes the whole verse, and many others, to have been interpolations; and the famous verse, 1 John v. 7. concerning the *three that bear record in heaven*, has been sufficiently proved to have come into the epistle in this unauthorized manner; and had it been done in an early period, there would have appeared no more reason to have suspected the genuineness of it, than there now does that of the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke. This was indisputably the case with the gospel of the Ebionites itself; for, according to the most unsuspected evidence, it was the gospel of Matthew beginning at the third chapter; but that copy of the Ebionites gospel, which Jerom saw, had, at least, the second chapter; for he quotes a passage from it. It is very possible, therefore, that there might have been copies of the Greek gospel

of Matthew, without the two first chapters, as well as some of the Hebrew copies with them.

As the Ebionites were not wanting in their respect for Matthew, or his gospel, it is not to be supposed that they would have rejected the introduction, if they had really thought it to be *his*, even if they had not thought the history contained in it intitled to full credit. I, therefore, see no reason why they should leave it out intirely, but that they did not admit its authenticity: and, certainly, as I have said before, they for whose use that gospel was particularly written, and in whose language it was, probably, first published, must be allowed to have been the best judges of it.

It favours the idea of the two first chapters of Matthew's gospel not properly belonging to the rest, that they have a kind of *separate title*, viz. the *book of the generation, or the genealogy of Jesus Christ*, to which the history of the miraculous conception, and the circumstances connected with it, are an appendage, and together with it make a kind of *preamble* to the proper history of the gospel, which begins with the account of the baptism of John.

As to the gospel of Luke, though it should not be supposed that the copy which Marcion made use of (which wanted the two first chapters) affords any presumption that the original was without them, yet the authority of this writer is certainly less than that of an apostle; and careful as he was to collect the particulars of the history from the very beginning, he might possibly have been misinformed with respect to

the early part of it, and have taken up that splendid part of his narrative too hastily. Had the work of Symmachus been extant, we should, no doubt, have known much more concerning this subject. Between the time of the publication of the gospels, and that of Justin Martyr, who is the first writer that mentions the miraculous conception, there was an interval of about eighty years; and in this space of time it is possible that additions to the gospel history of this kind (which did not affect the great and public transactions) might have been made, and have been annexed to some of the copies, though not to them all.

Some doubt with respect to the authenticity of the introduction to Matthew's gospel arises from the genealogy being omitted in the *Harmony of Tatian*. He was a disciple of Justin Martyr, in whose writings, as I have observed, we have the first certain mention of the miraculous conception; but after the death of his master he became a founder of a sect much resembling those of the Gnostics. His Harmony is not now extant; but we have the following account of it in Theodoret; "He composed a
" gospel called *δια τεσσαρων*," or *of the four*,
" having cut off the genealogies, and every
" thing that shews that our Lord was of the seed
" of David according to the flesh. This gospel
" was used not only by those of his sect, but
" also by those who followed the doctrine of the
" apostles; not perceiving the artifice of the
" composition, but using it, through simplicity,
" as a compendious work. I found more than
" two hundred of these books, much respected
" in

“ in the churches ; but, having collected them
 “ all, I removed them, and introduced the gos-
 “ pels of the four evangelists.” Hær. Fab. L. i,
 c. xx. Opera, vol. iv. p. 208.

All that we can fairly infer from this account of Theodoret is, that Tatian did not insert any genealogy of Christ in his Harmony, and I believe no other harmonist ever omitted so important an article in the gospel history. This is a circumstance that affects the authenticity of the *genealogy* only, directly, and the rest of the *introduction*, containing the history of the miraculous conception, indirectly, as supposed to be connected with the genealogy. As Epiphanius says, that Tatian’s gospel was sometimes called *the gospel according to the Hebrews*, and he was a Syrian, it is not improbable, as Mr. Jones observes, that he might have been one of the sect of the Hebrew Christians ; and, therefore, it will be more probable that he omitted both the genealogy and the account of the miraculous conception, because he thought them not to be depended upon.

As Tatian had no genealogy of Christ in his gospel, he must have omitted that of Luke, as well as that of Matthew ; and though that of Luke is not in the two first chapters, it is inserted in a place where it is not at all wanted ; but has much the appearance of an interpolation, and therefore might have been written by the author of the *introduction*, supposing neither of them to have been written by Luke.

If we read the gospels of Matthew and Luke without the two first chapters, we shall not find the want of them ; as in the subsequent history

there is no reference to them, and some things that are rather inconsistent with them. Thus, whenever either of these two writers speak of Jesus being called *the son of Joseph*, as well as of Mary, after he came into public life, they never make any remark upon it, or objection to it. Mary herself is represented by Luke, chap. ii. 53. as saying to Jesus, *Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing*; and from this passage Cyril of Jerusalem says, that "some heretics endeavoured to prove that Christ had a father as well as a mother." *Cat. vii. Opera*, p. 106. But it may be replied, that having related the history of the miraculous conception so much at large before, he had no occasion to introduce any explanation afterwards; and as to Mary, she, perhaps, spoke what Luke mentions in a mixed company, and might not chuse to inform them that Jesus had no father. Still, however, I think it would not have been unnatural for both Matthew and Luke to have referred to the history of the miraculous conception on some particular occasions, as when they gave an account of his being despised for being the son of a carpenter. This, at least, might have been expected of Mark and John, who had given no history of the miraculous conception at all.

The very genealogies in the gospels of Matthew and Luke amount also to a confutation of the hypothesis adopted by those writers; and, therefore, should seem to be the work of other hands than those who wrote the gospels. And that of Matthew may well be supposed to have been written by one person, and the rest of the

two chapters by another. For, of what consequence was it to give the genealogy of Joseph for that of Jesus, when, according to them, Jesus was no more descended from Joseph, than he was from Herod.

The genealogy of Luke has by some moderns been supposed to be that of Mary, because some Jewish rabbi has called her the daughter of Heli. But that rabbi was probably too late to know any thing of the matter; and he might call her so as the wife of Joseph, who was said to be the son of Heli; and the genealogy in Matthew has always been supposed, to be that of Joseph himself. However, the hypothesis of the ancients was quite different from that of the moderns; for, according to them, both the genealogies are those of Joseph, that in Matthew by *natural descent*, he being the proper son of Jacob, and that in Luke by *law*; Heli, the supposed brother of Jacob, having adopted his son Joseph. Thus Eusebius, on the authority of Africanus, whose authority is quite uncertain, says that "Joseph was the son of Heli by law, and of Jacob by nature." Hist. L. i. c. vii. p. 23. "Jacob and Heli being brothers." Ib. 25. Jerom says, that "Joseph's genealogy is mentioned, because it was not the custom of the scriptures to reckon genealogies according to women." In Matt. c. i. opera, vol. vi. p. 1. But on this principle the genealogy was a mere deception; and had the Jews known how the case stood, it would have given them no sort of satisfaction. It could not, therefore, have answered the end for which it was inserted.

For,

For, no doubt, the Jews understood the prophecies concerning the descent of the Messiah from David, to mean that he should be the son of some man who should be lineally descended from David. The insertion of any *daughter of David* would, in their opinion, have vitiated the whole genealogy. They must, therefore, have considered one of these genealogies as directly contradicting the other.

The two histories of the miraculous conception are themselves remarkably different from each other; and though it may be possible to contrive a scheme, by which they may be reconciled, yet there are such capital circumstances in each of the accounts omitted by the other, as it can hardly be supposed would have been omitted, if the writers had been acquainted with them. Would Luke, for instance, whose account is so very circumstantial in other respects, have omitted all the three remarkable stories of the visit of the wise men of the east, the massacre of the children, and the journey into Egypt? Or would Matthew, who has mentioned these things, have omitted all the particulars of the speeches of the angels, the story of the shepherds, and the prophecies of Simeon and Anna; to say nothing of the whole history of the birth of John the Baptist.

The narrative of Luke is so far from coinciding with that of Matthew, that it is hardly possible to find in it any room for the journey into Egypt. According to Luke, Jesus was presented at Jerusalem as soon as the days of Mary's purification were expired, and then returned directly to Nazareth, without going any more to Bethlehem; where

where, indeed, it does not appear that Joseph had any habitation, or friends; so that the wise men of Matthew, who are supposed to have found the child at Bethlehem, must have arrived in the country long after Mary had left that place. On the contrary, Matthew must have supposed that Jesus was kept at Bethlehem near two years after his birth, and was carried from thence into Egypt. Indeed, one cannot help inferring from the account of Matthew, that Joseph and Mary were properly of Bethlehem, that they did not settle in Nazareth till after their return from Egypt; and that they then made choice of this place, as being out of the territory of Archelaus, the son of Herod. Had Matthew supposed Jesus to have been at Nazareth, in Galilee, at the time of his persecution by Herod, he would hardly have thought of sending him to Egypt as a place of safety, when, in order to come thither, he must have passed through the whole extent of Herod's dominion, but would rather have sent him to Tyre, or some part of Syria, bordering upon Galilee. On the whole, I cannot help concluding that, had the compilers of these two very different accounts, been both of them well informed concerning the subject, it would have been much more easy to harmonize them than it is at present. They are now so wholly different from each other, that they might have been the histories of different persons.

If we examine each of the accounts separately, passing over the striking incoherence between them, a rational christian must see many things in them that he will find some difficulty in reconciling to himself. They have both too much the air of
fable,

fable, and the application of scripture in the account ascribed to Matthew is very far from being such as can recommend it. Jesus going into Egypt, and returning from it, is made to be the fulfilment of a prophecy of Hosea, which is no prophecy at all; but simply the mention of God having called his son, the Israelites, as a nation, out of that country. And Jesus is to settle at Nazareth, because the Messiah was to be a Nazarene; whereas all that can be imagined to give any countenance to this, in the Old Testament, is that he was to be despised and rejected of men; and Nazareth was a despicable place. If the writer had any other idea, it must have been more far-fetched, and improbable than this. I say nothing here of the prophecy of Isaiah, concerning a *virgin bearing a son*, as an account will be given of it hereafter.

As to the story of Luke, to say nothing of the long and improbable speeches it contains, and which could never have been transmitted with exactness, and the vision of angels to the shepherds, which has so much the air of fable, it implies such an early declaration of Jesus being the Messiah, as is incompatible with the whole plan of the gospel history. Jesus carefully concealed his being the Messiah from the Jews in general; and it was only at a late period in his history that he revealed it to the apostles; and yet, in this introduction to the gospel of Luke, it is supposed to have been known with certainty to the parents of John, to those of Jesus himself, to the shepherds, and to the prophets Simeon and Anna, none of whom are said to have made any
secret

secret of it, and the last is said (ch. ii. 28.) *to have spoken of him to all who looked for redemption in Israel.* Had this been the case, the eyes of all the country must have been fixed on Jesus as the promised Messiah, and all attempts to conceal it, after his public appearance, would have come too late.

I shall conclude this part of my remarks with observing, that there *is* a way of accounting for the ignorance of the Jewish christians with respect to the miraculous conception, in the life-time of the apostles, and consequently of their continuing in the disbelief of it afterwards, without supposing it to have been unknown to the apostles themselves; but not without supposing it to have been of much less consequence in itself, that, from the nature of the thing, it must have been. It is, that Mary and the apostles, knowing the thing, kept it as a secret to themselves, and their select friends, and never divulged it to the whole body of christians. It might then be supposed to have transpired by degrees, and to have gained credit, as it did, afterwards.

But to this it may be objected, that if the doctrine was true, the apostles could not but have seen it in a light of great importance, and therefore would have laid proportionable stress upon it; and consequently would have divulged it in an early period of their ministry. At least they would have taken sufficient care to establish the credibility of this fact, as well as that of the resurrection of Jesus. For they must have thought that providence would never have gone so far, as it were, out of its usual course, but for some very important,

portant reason, an importance, of which they must have been apprized. But this idea of the apostles *concealing* any thing that they knew concerning the history of their master, is altogether unsuitable to their character and conduct. They were men of too great simplicity for a scheme of this kind; and indeed it seems to have been contrary to their express instructions, as they were ordered to publish, in the most open manner, all that they knew concerning Christ, without any reserve whatever. Matt. x. 26. *There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and nothing hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops.*

When once it is taken for granted that any religious tenet is true, it is remarkable how readily the proof of it is found in the scriptures. Examples of this must have occurred to every person of reflection; and as they are not without their use, in teaching us caution, I shall shew in what manner the Fathers proved the doctrine of the miraculous conception from the Old Testament; where it is, however, certain, that no Jew ever learned to expect such a thing. When *reason* fails, *imagination* has often been able to discover *a type*, and this has often given as much satisfaction as any reason whatever. I shall take the passages in which this doctrine has been alluded to, nearly in their order.

Irenæus says, that “Moses’s rod, being incarnate in a serpent, was a type of Christ being produced by the aid of the spirit only, and that he was not the son of Joseph.” L. iii. c. xxix. p. 258.

The

The passage in the prophecy of Jacob, concerning Judah, Gen. lxix. 9. which we render *from the prey, my son, thou art gone up*, is in the Seventy, *ἐκ βλαστῶν* *from the bud*. This Epiphanius applies to Christ, and says that it is a reference to the miraculous conception, because it is not *ἐκ σπέρματος*, *from the seed*. Ib. xxx. Opera, vol. i. p. 156.

“Christ,” says Jerom, “is called both a worm and a man; a worm, as the prophet says, Fear not thou worm Jacob; and a man because he is born of Mary. His nativity resembles a worm that is bred in wood, which has no father, but only a mother.” In Ps. xxi. Opera, vol. vii. p. 24. Jerom is not the only writer in whom I have found this observation. A ray of good sense, however, appears in Theodoret, on this subject, as well as on many others. He says, that “by a worm and no man, nothing was meant but the meanness of David.” In Ps. xxi. Opera, vol. i. p. 477.

Thou bidest me in my mother's womb. Ps. cxxxix. 13. is, by Eusebius, applied to Christ, “whose miraculous conception was hid from the world.” Demonstratio L. xx p. 499.

“The *bridegroom proceeding from his chamber*,” says Jerom, “means from the virgin's womb.” In Marc. c. i. Opera, vol. vi. p. 69.

David says, Ps. cxxxix. 16. *In thy book all my members were written*. This book, says Epiphanius, is the virgin's womb. Ib. xxx. Opera, vol. i. p. 156.

In the song of Solomon, mention is made of *a garden that was closed*, ch. iv. 12. This many of the Fathers say must mean the virgin's womb, particularly

particularly Ambrose, De Institut. Virginis, c. ix. Opera, vol. iv. p. 424.

But the capital argument in proof of the miraculous conception, from the Old Testament, is drawn from Is. vii. 14. in which it is said *a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, &c.* but if the prophecy be more narrowly inspected, it will be found to teach no such doctrine. The country of Judea having been threatened with an invasion from the Kings of Israel and Syria, Isaiah assures Ahaz, that in a short time he shall be delivered from all apprehension of danger from that quarter, even before a child then conceived should be of age, to distinguish good from evil. *Behold a virgin conceiveth, and beareth a son, and she shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall be eat, when he shall know to refuse the evil, and to chuse the good. For before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and to chuse the good, the land shall become desolate by whose two kings thou art distressed.* Bp. Lowth's Translation.

It is evident from the circumstances of the history, that the prophecy related to an event near at hand, and that it had its complete accomplishment when the country was delivered from the two kings who threatened it with an invasion; and it is not pretended that any woman at that time had a child without a man. It is the quotation of this prophecy, and the application of it to the miraculous conception of Christ in the introduction to the gospel of Matthew, ch. i. 22. that has made christian divines imagine that they were under a necessity of defending the common interpretation. But the difficulty of defending it
makes

makes a very strong objection to the authenticity of that introduction.

All the orthodox Fathers maintained that the word in the Hebrew *עלמה*, signifies a proper virgin, and among the rest Origen contends for this. In Celsus. L. i. p. 27. but the Jews, and Symmachus, the Ebionite, who were certainly better judges than either the Greek or the Latin Fathers, say that it often signifies a *young woman only*. Irenæus says that “Theodotion of Ephesus, and Aquila of Pontus, both Jewish profelites, translate it *a young woman shall bear a child*; and that the Ebionites followed them, believing Jesus to be the son of Joseph.” L. iii. c. xxiv. p. 253.

But this is not the only passage in Isaiah that has been thought to refer to the miraculous conception. Epiphanius imagined, that when an order was given to the prophet, ch. viii. 1. to take *a great roll*, as we render it, and which he supposed to be a sheet of blank paper, on which nothing was written, it was a type of the virgin’s womb. Ib. xxx. Opera, vol. i. p. 156

Isaiah, in a remarkable prophecy concerning Christ, c. liii. 8, says, *Who shall declare his generation*; the true meaning of which it is not easy to understand, and the best critics are by no means agreed about it. But Justin Martyr thought that it signified that “Christ should not be of the seed of man.” Dial. p. 284.

There is one more passage in Isaiah, which Epiphanius imagined to refer to the miraculous birth of Christ, and that is chap. lxvi. 7. *Before she*

She travelled she brought forth; before her pains came, she was delivered of a man child. Ib. xxx. Opera, vol. i. p. 144. For all the ancients believed that Mary was delivered without pain; the delivery itself having been properly miraculous. They always compared it to Christ's coming into a room after his resurrection, when the door was shut. See Joannis Geometrae Hymnum in Virginem Deiparam Bib. Pat. vol. viii. p. 437. Austin calls Mary "a virgin before the birth, in the birth, and after the birth." Serm. xiv. Opera, vol. x. p. 598. Theodoret says, *την παρθερικὴν ζωὴν ἔτι συλλαμβέλουσα, ἔτι γεννᾷ διαρηξασέ.* Opera, vol. v. p. 20.

Of this Ambrose interprets what Ezekiel says, ch. xlv. 2. of *a gate* in the temple, which he saw in vision, concerning which it is said, *It shall be shut because the Lord God of Israel has entered in by it.* De Institutione Virgins, c. vii. Opera, vol. iv. p. 423.

Irenæus says, that "it was with a view to the virgin's conception, that Daniel spake of Christ, as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, or the hands of man; not Joseph, but Mary only being concerned in it." L. iii. c. xxviii. p. 258.

With respect to the New Testament, the only argument for the miraculous conception brought from it, is the history of it by Matthew and Luke; except that Paul's saying that Christ came *made of a woman*, was interpreted by Cyril of Jerusalem, of Christ "not coming by man, but by woman only." Cat. xii. Opera, p. 165. This I have explained before.

It may well be imagined, that such a history as that of the miraculous conception would not escape the ridicule of unbelievers. It is a miracle of such a nature, as was not likely to gain credit without very circumstantial evidence, which is not pretended to in the case; and, therefore, it was less in the power of christians to make out a defence of it. The doctrine of the *resurrection* was also exposed to ridicule; but then the christian had to reply, that the evidence of a thing of so extraordinary a nature was proportionably full and clear. Our Saviour's own death and resurrection were so circumstanced with respect to the notoriety of the facts, in the one case, and the number and choice of witnesses in the other, that the history may defy all ridicule, and the importance of the *object* made all the precautions proper. But the pretended circumstances of the birth of Christ, though no less extraordinary, and naturally as incredible as those of his resurrection, are totally destitute of all similar evidence; not one person who is said to have been a witness of the fact, having borne his testimony to it. A miraculous birth is, indeed, a fact of such a kind, as must be peculiarly difficult to prove; and on this account it was a kind of miracle that was not likely to be chosen by infinite wisdom.

We hear of no objection being made to the miraculous conception in the book of Acts, which, as I have observed, is almost a proof that the pretension to it had not been made in the age of the apostles; for we find that, as soon as it was believed by any christians, it was ob-

jected to by unbelievers, and that christianity suffered not a little on this account, both from Jews and heathens. Trypho, in Justin Martyr's dialogue, was much offended at this doctrine, and thought it would be extremely unacceptable to his countrymen. Had the dialogue been written by a Jew, and not by a christian, the censure would probably have been expressed in still stronger terms.

According to Origen, Celsus introduced a Jew "discouraging with Jesus, and reproaching him on many accounts, but especially as pretending to be born of a virgin." *Con. Celsum*, L. i. p. 22. He makes the Jew say that "the mother of Jesus was dismissed by her husband, the carpenter, on account of adultery, and being with child by a soldier, called Panthera." *Ib.* L. i. p. 25. an idle story, which is told at full length in a Jewish tract, entitled *Toldos Jeschu*. Accounts of the objections of the Jews to the miraculous conception are without end. See Chrysostom in *Gen.* c. xxv. *Opera*, vol. ii. p. 684. "Tell the Jew," says Isidore Pelusiota, "who disputes about the divine incarnation, and says it is impossible in human nature to bring forth without marriage, &c." *Epist.* L. vi. *Opera*, p. 141. "The Greeks and Jews," says Cyril of Jerusalem, "insist upon it, that it is impossible that Christ should be born of a virgin." *Cat.* xii. p. 162.— "Many," says he, "contradict, and say, what so great cause was there that God should descend and become man; if it be possible for

“ the nature of God to become man, and for a
 “ virgin to have a child without a man.” Ib.
 p. 150.

This was a circumstance relating to christi-
 anity that did not escape the vigilance of Ju-
 lian. Speaking of the prophecy of Jacob con-
 cerning Shiloh, he says, “ This has nothing to
 “ do with Jesus ; for he is not of Judah : for,
 “ according to you, he was not descended from
 “ Joseph, but was of the Holy Spirit ; and it is
 “ the genealogy of Joseph that you carry up to
 “ Judah ; and even this you do not make out
 “ well : for Matthew and Luke contradict one
 “ another.” Cyril, contra Jul. L. viii. Juliani
 Opera, vol. ii. p. 253.

Let us now see what the christian Fathers
 have said in order to lessen the difficulty attend-
 ing the doctrine of the miraculous conception.
 Ruffinus, to make it appear less incredible, says,
 “ the Phoenix is reproduced without a male,
 “ and without the conjunction of the sexes.”
 In Symb. Opera, p. 176. “ If some animals,”
 says Lactantius, “ as is well known to all, con-
 “ ceive by the wind, why should any person
 “ think it wonderful that the virgin should be
 “ with child by the breath of God, to whom it
 “ is easy to do whatever he pleases ?” Instit.
 L. iv. f. xii. Opera, p. 383. “ That the mira-
 “ culous conception should not appear alto-
 “ gether incredible,” says Basil, “ even to those
 “ who do not readily apprehend what relates to
 “ the divine œconomy, God has made some
 “ animals produce their young by the help of
 “ the

“ the female only, without the use of the male,
“ which naturalists say is the case with the vul-
“ ture.” In *If. vii. Opera*, vol. ii. p. 186.

But the best answer of all, is that which is given by Cyril of Jerusalem. “ But the Jews
“ contradict, and will not be persuaded by what
“ we say concerning *the rod*” [*If. vii. 3.*] “ unless
“ examples be brought to them of births equally
“ strange, and contrary to nature. I, therefore,
“ question them in this manner, Of whom was
“ Eve generated from the beginning? What
“ mother conceived her, who had no mother;
“ for the scripture says, that she was produced
“ from the side of Adam? Was Eve, therefore,
“ produced from the side of a male without a
“ mother, and cannot a child be generated from
“ a virgin’s womb without a man?” *Cat. xii. Opera*, p. 163.

The conception of Christ by a virgin, is, no doubt, within the power of God, who made man originally; but as miracles are never wrought without a reason, and where a great and good end is to be answered by them; we ought not lightly to give credit to accounts of miracles for which we cannot imagine any good reason, and the very report of which is calculated to expose christianity to ridicule, without any necessity, or conceivable advantage. Whether the history of the miraculous conception of Christ be so circumstanced, as that the evidence in favour of it is able to overbear the force of this objection, let the reader now judge.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

NOT having had the satisfaction of hearing from any of your correspondents on the subject of my query, relating to the *rise of the Arian doctrine*, I shall, with your leave, lay before your readers the result of my own inquiries more at large; as this will make it easier to those who see the subject in a different light to detect any mistakes I may have fallen into. If any query be proposed to me relating to it, I shall with great readiness answer it, according to the best of my knowledge, and I shall be particularly thankful if any person will supply me with better information than I have been able to procure for myself. If I do wander in darkness, it is not for want of having taken a good deal of pains to find the light.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

B E R Y L L U S.

Of

Of the Arian Controversy.

WE have no account of any thing, in the whole compass of ecclesiastical history, that ever occasioned a greater revolution in the theological state of the world, than the doctrine of Arius. And the revolution was equally sudden, and lasting. Within much less than the life of man, this doctrine, from being wholly unknown, overspread perhaps one half of the christian world, and more than once bid fair for having the seal of *orthodoxy* stamped upon it. In two pretty long reigns it was the religion of the Roman court, and it had the sanction of several numerous councils; and this not long after its condemnation by the famous council of Nice, in the reign of the emperor Constantine. An event of such magnitude requires to be carefully investigated.

Before the time of Arius only three systems of christianity, or rather three opinions concerning the person of Christ, had been the subject of discussion. The first was that of the *unitarians*, who believed Christ to be a mere man, and to have had no existence prior to his birth, in the reign of Augustus. The second was that of the *Gnostics*, who thought that to this man, or something that had the appearance of a man, was super-added a pre-existent super-angelic spirit, called the Christ. The third was the doctrine of the *personification of the logos*, according to which Jesus Christ, who

had a body and a soul like other men, had also a superior principle intimately united to him. But this principle was nothing that had ever been *created*; for it was nothing less than the *logos*, or the wisdom and power of God the Father, and which, in a state of personification, had been the immediate cause of the formation of the universe, and of all the appearances of God in the Old Testament.

Now we find all at once a doctrine totally different from any of the preceding schemes, viz. that the intelligent principle which animated the body of Christ (for it was not thought that he had any other soul) was a great pre-existent spirit, and *created*, like other beings, *out of nothing*; that this pre-existent spirit, to which they still gave the name of *logos*, had been employed by God in making the universe, and in all the appearances under the Old Testament, and then became the proper soul of Jesus Christ. Such is the outline of that doctrine which, from Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, obtained the name of *Arianism*, and which, with some variations, has continued to be held by great numbers of very intelligent christians, to this day.

Of the three schemes which were prior to Arianism, it has the greatest resemblance to that of the Gnostics, but differs from it chiefly in two respects. First, the Gnostics supposed the pre-existent spirit which was in Jesus, to have been an emanation from the supreme being, according to the principles of the philosophy of that age, which made *creation out of nothing* to be an impossibility; whereas the Arians supposed this pre-existent spirit

to have been created out of nothing. But this difference is rather philosophical than theological; because they both agreed in supposing that this pre-existent spirit had the same origin with that of angels, and other beings of a spiritual nature, superior to man. Secondly, the Gnostics supposed that this pre-existent spirit was not the maker of the world, but was sent to rectify the evils which had been introduced by the being who made it; whereas the Arians supposed that their logos was the being that had been employed by God in the making of the universe, as well as in all his communications with mankind.

But even this difference, respecting the nature and office of Christ, is not of such a nature as to make any material difference in the *respect* that is had for Christ; both the Gnostics and the Arians agreeing in this, that Christ was a great pre-existent spirit, and that we owe him the greatest obligations for his condescension in coming into the world, and undertaking to rectify the abuses that he found in it. In fact, therefore, the influence of the two systems on the mind must have been nearly the same. The Gnostics and the Arians must also have agreed in some measure with respect to the idea of the nature of matter, and its tendency to contaminate the mind, and to impede its operations. But in this respect all the systems which suppose that there is an immaterial principle in man, the cause of all sensation and thought, must be nearly alike.

Though the appearance of the Arian doctrine was sudden, and the alarm which it gave to the christian world was proportionably great (which
is

is a proof that it was imagined to be quite a *new* thing, and of a very extraordinary and dangerous nature) there were several pre-existent causes, which had gradually prepared the way for it; and these I shall endeavour to explain.

The controversy with the unitarians had led those who were called orthodox (by which I mean those who held the doctrine of the personification of the *logos*) to speak of Christ as greatly inferior to the Father; of which examples enow might easily be produced. So willing had they been to make concessions to the great body of zealous unitarians, or such were the remains of their own unitarian principles, that had they considered Christ as, in all respects, a mere creature, they could not have spoken of him otherwise than they did. They were evidently afraid of incurring so much odium as they were sensible they must have done, by setting up their *second God* as a rival to the first and supreme God. Their principle of Christ having been the *logos* of the Father certainly led them to consider him as being of *the same nature* with the Father, and in all respects equal to him; and it did produce this effect afterwards, when the obstacle to its operations, in the general opinion of the christian world, was removed. But during the great prevalence of the doctrines of the unity of God, and the inferiority of Christ to the Father, it had been the custom of the orthodox to speak of their *second God* as the mere *servant* of the first.

Farther, in opposition to the Patripassians, or the philosophical unitarians, who said that the
Father

Father and the Son (meaning the divinity of the Father and Son) were the same, the orthodox had been led to speak of them as being *entirely different*, so as sometimes to say that they were of different *natures*; though the language must have been improperly used by those who considered Christ as being derived from the very *substance* of the Father, and having been his proper *wisdom and power*.

In consistency, however, with this language, suggested by controversy, it had been the custom of the orthodox to speak of the *generation* of the Son from the Father, as if it had been a proper *creation*, and as if the Son had stood in the very same relation to the Father, in which other creatures stood to him; which corresponded very well with the ideas of the Platonists, in whose scale of principles, or causes, the *nous*, or *logos*, held the second place; the first principle being stiled a *cause* with respect to the second, as the second was with respect to the visible world.

Another circumstance which contributed to the rise of Arianism was the gradual influence of the doctrine of revelation, concerning *creation out of nothing*, which had been unknown to all the philosophers, who had thought that the material world had been created out of pre-existent matter, and that *souls* were either emanations from the supreme mind, or parts detached from the soul of the universe. But the apostle having said, Heb. xi. 3. that the world was made *ἐκ τῶν μὴ φαινόμενων* *from things that do not appear* (supposed to be equivalent to *ἐκ τῶν*

or *οὐθέν*, things that are not, or out of nothing) the term *creation*, on whatever account it had been used, would at length suggest the idea of a creation out of nothing. In this manner would the minds of many be prepared to pass from the idea of the personification of the *logos*, or the generation of the Son from the Father, to that of a proper creation.

Things being in this state, the warmth of controversy was sufficient to lead persons, whose real opinions were the very same, to differ, first in words only, and afterwards in reality. And a real difference being once formed, it would easily extend itself, by analogies and consequences, on both sides. I shall now enter upon the proof of these particulars, and then shew their actual operation in the rise and progress of the Arian controversy.

That it had been the custom of all the Fathers before the council of Nice to speak of Christ, though they considered him as the *logos*, or the wisdom of the supreme God, as nevertheless greatly inferior to him, has been abundantly proved by many writers. I shall, therefore, proceed to give instances in which those of the Fathers, who undoubtedly considered Christ as having been the *logos* or wisdom of the Father, and therefore properly *uncreated*, yet described his *generation* in language equivalent to that of a proper creation.

The very term *γεννητός*, by which the Fathers generally expressed the *logos* becoming a Son, was the same that the Platonists had always used to distinguish a creature from the creator, or the thing

thing *caused*, and the *cause*; so that the terms $\delta\epsilon\delta$ and $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\nu\eta\delta$ had always been opposed to each other. Thus Philo says, "There is no $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\nu\eta\delta$ $\delta\epsilon\delta$, *created God*; for he would want "the necessary attribute of *eternity*." De Charitate, Opera, p. 699. And Origen makes $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\nu\eta\delta$ and $\kappa\lambda\iota\sigma\alpha$ *generated*, and *created*, to be synonymous. Contra Marcionitas, p. 72. In later times, there was a distinction made between $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\nu\eta\delta$ and $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\nu\eta\delta$, as if the former signified *created*, and the latter *generated*; but the distinction was not very ancient. Tatian makes no difference between $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\nu\eta\delta$ as applied to the production of the Son from the Father, and the creation of other things by the Son; but says that, "the logos being generated in the beginning, again generated our world, fashioning the matter of it for himself. "Matter," he says, "is not $\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\rho\chi\delta$, *without origin*, like God, but $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\nu\eta\delta$, *generated*, being "produced by the Maker of all things." Ad Græcos, f. viii. p. 23. Also the same word $\tau\iota\theta\eta\sigma\kappa\omega$, *to bring forth*, is used by Synesius of the generation of the Son, and the creation of other things by the Son. Hymn. vi. Opera, p. 343.

The term corresponding to *cause* was likewise used promiscuously with respect to the generation of the Son, and the production of the creatures. Thus Gregory Nyssen makes the terms *unbegotten* and *without cause* to be synonymous. Contra Eunomium Or. xii. Opera, vol. ii. p. 302. Indeed, it was always allowed that the Son, though generated, had a proper *cause*; and, accordingly, the word $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$, *origin*, by which the
logos

logos was distinguished from the creation, was, without scruple, applied to the Father with respect to Christ; and the term ἀπαρχῆ, *uncaused*, was always considered as the incommunicable attribute of the Father, he being the sole *fountain of deity*; and whenever the same term is applied to the Son, or the Spirit, it was only meant to signify that they had no beginning, not that they had no cause. Thus a writer, whose work has been ascribed to Athanasius, says, “the Son is not a *cause*, but *caused*; so that the Father is the only cause, and there are two that are *caused*, the Son and the Spirit. But they are all ἀπαρχοί, because they are all without beginning.” Opera, vol. ii. p. 443. Nicephorus, in his epistle to Leo, says, “Christ is not without origin with respect to the Father, who is his origin, as being his cause; but with respect to his generation, he is without origin, being before all ages.” Zonaras, p. 769. Constantine also, in his oration, says, “the Father is the *cause*, the Son *caused*.” C. xi. p. 688. This language, being once established, continued to the latest period. Thus M. Caleca called the Son ἀρχὴ, γεννητός, and γεννημα. Combefis Auctuarium, vol. ii. p. 222.

Another circumstance which made way for the introduction of Arianism, and which greatly contributed to embarrass the orthodox in the controversy was, that in order to oppose the Sabellians, they had represented the Father and the Son as differing *essentially* from each other. Because they thought that the Sabellians had confounded the three persons, they, as was natural,

tural, made a point of separating them; and they did it to a greater degree than their principles really admitted. For they maintained that their very *ουσια*, *essence*, or *nature*, was different; whereas they should have contented themselves with saying that they differed in *rank*, or *dignity*. But, whereas the Sabellians maintained that the three persons were of the same *ουσια*, *essence*, and and were therefore *ομοουσιον*, *consubstantial* to each other, this was positively denied by the orthodox; and what was particularly unfortunate for them, they had passed a censure on this very term in the condemnation of Paulus Samosatensis. Thus Athanasius says, that “they who condemned Paulus Samosatensis, said that the Son was not consubstantial with the Father.” De Syn. Arm. Opera, vol. i. p. 919.

The effect of this circumstance remained a long time with the orthodox; many of whom were with great difficulty reconciled to this term, especially as it was not a scriptural one, which is acknowledged by Athanasius. De Sententia, Opera, vol. i. p. 561. Ambrose speaks of some who, without being Arians, yet scrupled to say that the Son was of the same substance with the Father, because it was not a scriptural expression. But, he says, “they ought to be deemed heretics if they did not expressly acknowledge it, and that for the same reason they might object to the phrases *God of God*, and *Light of Light*.” De Filii Divinitate, L. i. c. iiii. Opera, vol. iv. p. 278, 279.

Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in whose neighbourhood there were many Sabellians, and who opposed them with great vigour, as he also did

did Paulus Samofatenfis, made no scruple, as Basil says, to assert, in this controversy, that “ the Son “ was of a different essence, as well as hypostasis, “ from the father, that he was inferior in power, “ and less in glory.” Epist. 41. Opera, vol. iii. p. 60. Though this was nothing more than had been said by others, and especially in the same controversy; yet, when, afterwards, things had taken a different turn, and advantage was taken of this language, this Dionysius came to be considered as *the fountain of Arianism*, as he is called by Austin. De Definitionibus. Opera, vol. iii. p. 196. Athanasius, however, apologized for him, and the inaccuracy of his expressions, from the nature of the controversy in which he was engaged.

For the same reasons for which the memory of Dionysius was reflected upon, similar reproaches fell upon that of Clemens Alexandrinus, and that of Origen. But indeed none of the ancient writers ought to have escaped, since, for the reasons that I have given, they all use similar language. But as these two writers have been the most censured, I shall give a more particular account of the ground of those censures.

Pamphilus the Martyr, in his apology for Origen, says, that “ Clemens Alexandrinus called “ Christ a creature.” Hieronymi opera, vol. ix. p. 130. Photius says, that “ Clemens Alexandri- “ nus, in his Hypotyposes,” a work now lost, “ has many right things, but some things impious “ and fabulous. He makes the son a creature, “ says that the logos was not made flesh, but only “ seemed to be so. He says that the logos the “ son has the same name, but that it was not made “ flesh;

“flesh; for it is not the paternal logos, but a divine power, or efflux from the logos itself; being the *nous* which pervades the hearts of men.”

Bib. S. 109. p. 286. “His Stromata,” he says, “have many things not found, but not so many as the Hypotyposes, and in them he refutes what he had advanced in these. His Pedagogue is quite free from them.” Ib. p. 287.

As Clemens Alexandrinus had once been inclined to the Gnostic opinions, it is very possible that when he wrote the Hypotyposes he might retain something of them, as the quotation seems to indicate. As to the sense in which Clemens might call Christ *a creature*, it has been explained already, and shewn to be sufficiently consistent with all the orthodoxy of his age; and as to his error about the *logos*, it is very possible that he might speak favourably, as Justin Martyr did, of the doctrine of philosophical unitarianism; or he might have said what Origen did, about the *logos* being in all men. However, he certainly considered the *logos* that was in Christ, as the proper wisdom of the Father, which was all the orthodoxy that was known before the council of Nice.

Origen, being a person of more reputation, and whose writings were more numerous than those of Clemens Alexandrinus, suffered more from this kind of censure than he has done. He certainly called Christ *a creature*. “The sacred oracles,” he says, “speak of Christ as the oldest of all the creatures, *ἀντισυνπαλαιός*, and by him it was that God spake, when he said, Let us make man.” Ad Celsum, L. v. p. 257. But whatever expressions

sions he might use, he certainly could not differ in idea from the most orthodox of his age, so long as he maintained, as he unquestionably did, that Christ was the proper wisdom of the Father. For then he must have supposed him to have been *eternal*, and *uncreated*, though personified in time.

On this account, however, he was severely censured after the rise of the Arian controversy. Epiphanius says, "Origen was blamed for calling Christ a creature, though he allowed him to be produced from the substance of the Father." Ibid. 64. Opera, vol. i. p. 527. To this he adds, that "he had said that the Son could not see the Father," a phrase much used in that age, to express great inferiority, either in rank or nature. But no language can express that inferiority more strongly than Justin Martyr, and others, whose orthodoxy was never called in question, have repeatedly done. What was meant by the phrase, "*not being able to see*," may be clearly understood from another passage of Epiphanius, in which he states the accusation of Origen more distinctly. "Origen," he says, "is charged with saying that, as the Son could not see the Father, so the Holy Spirit could not see the Son; also the angels cannot see the Holy Spirit, nor can men see angels." Ancoratus, f. lxiii. Opera, vol. ii. p. 66. 314. That in this manner Origen might only mean to express inferiority, or a difference in rank, and not in nature, is evident. For, as both men and angels are creatures, though of different ranks, so the Father, Son, and Spirit might each be God, though they differed in rank and

dignity; which was the universal opinion in the time of Origen. Jerom also says, that "the heresy of Origen was, that the Son was not generated, but made, and that he could not see the Father." Opera, vol. i. p. 439.

Origen was likewise said to be heretical with respect to the Holy Spirit. Jerom says, that "Origen's heresy consisted in part in placing the Spirit the third in dignity and honour, after the Father and Son; and in his saying that he did not know whether he was made or not made." Ib. p. 440. But in this he was very far indeed from being singular. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and other writers before the council of Nice, having expressed themselves in the very same manner with respect to the Holy Spirit.

Origen, however, though condemned by many, did not want able defenders. Athanasius, who wrote in defence of Dionysius, likewise declared himself the advocate of Origen. Syn. Nic. Decretum. Opera, vol. i. p. 277. Socrates observes this with respect to Athanasius. Hist. L. vi. c. xiii. p. 329. That Eusebius should defend Origen, is not to be wondered at, as he himself lay under the same suspicion. As Jerom says, "Eusebius defends Origen, that is, he proves him to have been an Arian." Opera, vol. i. p. 492.

I shall now consider what were the tenets which the ancient Arians avowed, or with which they were charged. The principal article, for which no particular authority can be necessary, was that Arius said the Son, logos, or Christ, was created *ἐκ τῶν οὐκ οὐθέν*, or, *out of nothing*, like other creatures; and this was certainly very different from

the received doctrine. For all those who had the character of orthodox before him, even including Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen, held that the logos had always been in the Father, as his proper attribute.

The second article in the Arian creed was, that there had been a time when the Son was not. This had frequently been asserted by the orthodox, and at first was, I doubt not, the universal opinion, if by the existence of the son be meant his *personal existence*, which was supposed to have commenced in time; but, as an attribute of the Father, they maintained that he had always existed.

In the third place, the Arians denied that Christ had any human soul. This is asserted concerning the Arians in general by Epiphanius, *Ib.* lxi. Opera, vol. i. p. 743, 771. It does not appear, however, that Arius himself asserted this; though it is the necessary consequence of his principles, and was universally adopted by his followers. Indeed, it would have been exceedingly absurd to suppose that there were two intelligent principles, both created beings, inhabiting the same body. This, however, is a decisive proof of the novelty of the Arian doctrine. For, as I have observed, all the ancients, Origen himself included, supposed that there was a proper human soul in Christ besides the logos.

In after times, some Arians made concessions to the orthodox, and on that account were called *Semiarians*. Thus Austin says, that "some of the later Arians acknowledged that Christ had no beginning." *De Trinitate*, L. vi. c. i. Opera, vol. iii. p. 326. The Semiarians in general said, that

that "though Christ was not of the *same substance* with the father, he was of a *like substance*." Epiphanius, Ib. lxxiii. Opera, vol. i. p. 845. "This term, *ὁμοουσιος*, of *like substance*, says Sozomen, was introduced by Eusebius, and others of the most celebrated bishops of the east, as preferable to *consubstantial*, which they said was rather applicable to corporeal things, as animals and plants; whereas the term of *like substance* was more applicable to incorporeal things, as God and angels." Hist. L. iii. c. xviii. p. 123.

But these concessions were disliked by others; and Actius, the master of Eunomius, maintained "that the son was dissimilar to the Father." Ib. L. iv. c. xiii. p. 147. Basil says, that "he was the first who dared to teach this doctrine." Ad. Eunomium, L. i. Opera, vol. i p. 695.

We shall be assisted in forming a just idea of the nature of the Arian controversy, by considering the *arguments* which the ancient Arians used in defending their doctrine.

It was probably some impropriety in the language of Alexander, in his dispute with Arius, that gave the latter some advantage. Alexander was thought by Arius to advance something too favourable to the Sabellians, as he laid great stress on the necessity of maintaining the unity of the three persons in the trinity; and it was always said by the ancients, that this circumstance drove Arius into the opposite extreme. For the orthodox considered themselves as holding a middle opinion between the Sabellians and the Arians, the former confounding the three persons,

and the latter separating them too far; the former making too much of the divinity of Christ, and the latter too little. Thus, at least, things stood at the beginning of the controversy.

It is very probable that Alexander had represented the son as ἀγεννητός, *unbegotten*, as well as the Father. This, at least, is what Arius laid to his charge. Theodoret Hist. L. i. c. v. p. 22. And considering Christ as being the original logos of the Father, or his necessary attribute, which was certainly the orthodox doctrine of the times, he was justifiable; but considering him as an *actual person*, the language was evidently improper. For the commencement of personality in the son had always been called a *generation*; and therefore the Father and son had been distinguished from each other, by the former being said to be ἀγεννητός, *unbegotten*, and the latter γεννητός *begotten*, sometimes γεννητός, and other words of a similar import. And, therefore, Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, being informed of the controversy, says he had never heard of two that were ἀγεννητοί, *unbegotten*. Ib. p. 24.

But according to more ancient usage the terms ἀγεννητός and γεννητός had been used to distinguish the *Creator* and the *creature*; and the distinction between γεννητός and ἀγεννητός (as if the former signified *created*, and the latter *generated*) was peculiar to christian theology, and, as I have shown, was not universally observed by them. This gave Arius an advantage. For if Christ was properly γεννητός, he must have been a creature; and if a creature, he must have been made as other creatures were. Arius says, “ I am persecuted, be-
“ cause

“ cause I said that the son is made out of nothing,
“ since he is not a part of God, nor made out of
“ other matter.” Theodoriti Hist. L. i. c. v.
p. 23.

Here we see the proper ground of Arius's opinion, and that it was evidently a departure from the fundamental principle of established orthodoxy, being a virtual denial of the son being an attribute of the Father. Arius, no doubt, saw the absurdity of the received doctrine concerning the generation of the son from the Father, and thought it must imply the taking from him part of his substance. He, therefore, argued, that since Christ was not taken out of the substance of the Father, and it was acknowledged that he was not made of other matter, he must necessarily have been made out of nothing, which was the christian doctrine that had taken place of the great maxim of heathen philosophy, which supposed that such creation was impossible. It appears that the Arians ridiculed, and very justly, the distinction which the orthodox made between *creation* and *generation*; and therefore Chrysostom, in reply to them, says, “ how
“ do you know that to *generate*, and to *create*, is
“ the same thing with God?” Sec. iv. Opera, vol. vi. p. 43. In that age, however, it was thought necessary to lay the greatest stress on the difference between these two things, as every thing in orthodoxy depended upon it. But though the orthodox always said that the Father could generate, and that the son was *generated*, γεννηθη, they would not allow that he could not be called γεννητα. Basil says “ that the Father has generated, we
“ learn every where, but that the son is γεννητα,

we learn no where." Ad. Eunomium, L. ii. Opera, vol. i, p. 731. This, they thought, was putting Christ upon a level with *creatures*, properly so called.

The doctrine of the derivation of the son from the father, without diminishing his substance, had certainly been very ill defended by the orthodox of the age before Arius; but nevertheless it *was* the orthodoxy of the age, and of this Arius took a very proper advantage. "The Arians," says Hilary, "derived the son from nothing, lest the Father should be diminished by the generation of the son, so that he would remain less perfect." L. ii. p. 23.

Arius had a still more plausible handle against the orthodox, with respect to their doctrine concerning the Son being of the same substance with the Father; because in the controversy with the Sabellians, this language had been constantly reprobated. The Arians, therefore, had a very good pretence for calling the orthodox Sabellians; because they adopted their peculiar language. "The Arians," says Austin, "call us Sabellians, though we do not say that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one, which the Sabellians did; but we say that they are of one nature." De Nuptiis, Opera, vol. vii. p. 849. "They who dislike the word *consubstantial*," says Socrates, "charged those who introduced it as favouring the opinion of Sabellius and Montanus, and therefore called them blasphemers, as taking away the substance of the Son of God; while they who were attached to the word *consubstantial*, charged the others with polytheism, and as introducing

“introducing heathenism.” Hist. L. i. c. xxiii. p. 57. But, as I have observed, it was contrary to their proper principles, that the orthodox ever disclaimed the term *consubstantial*. For if the Son was the proper reason of the Father, it must have been right to say, that he was *of the same substance* with him.

The Arians had no less advantage with respect to their other position, viz. that *there was a time when the Son was not*; because, with respect to his personality, this had been the declared opinion of the orthodox before his time, and he had never been considered as having existed from eternity, except as the proper *logos*, or *reason* of the Father, without which he would not have been λογικόν, *a rational being*. The Arians, however, rejecting the difference between generation and creation, said, according to Athanasius, “God was not always a Father, and afterwards became so. The Son was not always. ———. The Son of God was made out of nothing, and there was a time when he was not; that he was not before he was generated.” Contra Arianos Or. i. Opera, vol. i p. 310. Hilary also says, “the Arians take advantage of the expression, *he was not before he was generated*, as if the nature of his subsisting origin was denied.” L. vi. p. 106. i. e. the principle from which he sprung, which existed in the Father.

The Arians derived the same advantage from the doctrine of the primitive fathers, that the Father generated the son *voluntarily*. “The Arians,” says Epiphanius, “say, did God generate the
“ Son

“ Son voluntarily, or involuntarily? If we say
 “ involuntarily, then we subject God to neces-
 “ sity. If voluntarily, we allow that a volition
 “ preceded the Son.—But these things, he says,
 “ bear no relation to God. He neither generates
 “ the Son voluntarily nor involuntarily; for the
 “ divine nature is above all will, and is not
 “ subject to time, or necessity.” Ancoratus,
 S. li. Opera, vol. ii. p. 55.

Such were the metaphysical arguments of the ancient Arians. They likewise proved from the scriptures, that Christ was a creature; and as they supposed that the *wisdom* in the book of Proverbs referred to Christ, they laid great stress on its being there said that God *created* this wisdom. The Arian, in Athanasius's disputation, says, “ but
 “ do thou answer me with respect to *the Lord*
 “ *created me.* The Lord acknowledged that he
 “ was created by his Father.” Opera, vol. i. p.
 120. They likewise alledged Christ being called
the first-born of all the creation. Coll. i. 15. Cyrilli
 Alex. Thesaurus, L. x. c. iii.

Having seen on what principles the ancient Arians defended their tenets, and particularly what advantage they took of the received language of the orthodox, I shall likewise give a view of the light in which the orthodox of that age considered the principles of Arianism; by which means we shall have a pretty clear idea of the nature of the controversy.

The capital argument of the orthodox was, that the Son being the *logos* of God, was the proper reason of the Father, and therefore could not have been made out of nothing, but must have

have been from eternity in him, and consubstantial with him. Eusebius says, "the Father produced the Son from himself." *De Laudibus Con.* p. 746. "God the Father," says Ruffinus, "is, therefore, the true God, and the Father of truth, not creating from within, but generating the Son from what he himself is, as a wise man generates wisdom, a righteous man righteousness, &c. as light generates splendor, and as a man generates a word [or thought]." *In Symbol. Opera*, p. 172.

It was acknowledged by the orthodox, that many of the ancient writers had expressed themselves as if they had considered Christ as being a proper creature; but it was observed, that what was innocent in them, was not so afterwards. Basil says, that "many words were innocently used in former times, of which the heretics now take advantage; as the words *creature*, and *a work*." *Epist. lxiv. Opera*, vol. iii. p. 101.

The greatest advantage which the orthodox had over the Arians arose from the latter considering Christ, though a creature, as having been the creator of the world, and entitled to be called God, and to be worshipped. This arose from their ascribing to their *created logos* all that had been ascribed to the *uncreated one*, which all the ancient Arians, without exception, did. This, the orthodox said, was setting up another God, and incurring the guilt of polytheism; whereas their *logos*, they said, was uncreated, and being the *logos* of the Father, was *one with him*, so that they did not make two

two different Gods. This charge we find from the earliest stage of this controversy to the last.

Athanasius says, "they, calling the Logos, which is from the Father, a creature, do not differ from the heathens, who worship the creature instead of the creator." *Vita Antonii, Opera, vol. ii. p. 491.* Hilary says, "Let the heretics blot out from the gospel, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and I and the Father are one*; that they may either preach two Gods, or one God." *L. vii. p. 151.* In this he has a view to both the Arians and the Sabellians. Basil says, "they who say that the only begotten is a creature, and then make a god of him, and worship him; by worshipping the creature rather than the creator, evidently introduce heathenism; but," alluding to the unitarians, "they who deny the Logos to be God of God, while they confess the Son to be a man in word and deed, deny his existence, and renew Judaism." *Hom. xxvii. Opera, vol. i. p. 519.* "He is not a God," says Gregory Nazianzen, "who is created, nor is he a lord who is a servant." *Or. xiii. Opera, p. 210.* "To make a created God," says Gregory Nyssen, "is an agreement with the error of the heathens." *Contra Eunomium, Or. xii. Opera, vol. ii. p. 300.* "The Arians," says Epiphanius, "are the most impious of all heretics, who divide the Son from the Father's substance, and therefore make him another principle." *Ancoratus, f. cxviii. Opera, vol. ii. p. 120.* "We," says Ambrose, "say there is
" one

“ one God, not two, or three, like the impious
“ heresy of the Arians, which falls into the very
“ guilt with which it charges others. For he
“ says there are three Gods, who separates the
“ divinity of the Trinity.” *De Fide, c. i. Opera, vol. iv. p. 114.* Agreeably to this, Au-
stin, writing against the Arians, quotes, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord*, and then
says, “ Why will you make us two Gods, and
“ two Lords? You say that the Father is Lord
“ and God, and you say that Christ is Lord and
“ God. I ask, whether these two are one? You
“ answer, they are two Gods. It remains, then,
“ that you erect temples and altars to them.”
Contra Max. Opera, vol. vi. p. 683.

It is also with great justice that the orthodox
exposed the doctrine of the Arians on the idea
of a creature being capable of *creating*. “ If the
“ power of God,” says Cyril of Alexandria,
“ cannot be received by the nature of a crea-
“ ture, how can a Son created out of nothing
“ be capable of this, according to you?” *The-
saurus, L. iv. c. ii. Opera, vol. ii. p. 265.*

Athanasius charges the Arians with divesting
the Father himself of his divinity, by depriving
him of his *logos*, and denying that he is pro-
perly a Father. After speaking of Arianism
as the worst of heresies, he says, “ some err in
“ one respect, and others in another. Some,
“ like the Jews, say that the Lord was never
“ incarnate. This alone, with greater madness,
“ attacks the divinity itself; saying, that there
“ is no *logos*, and that God is no Father.” *Con-
tra Arianos, Or. i. Opera, vol. i. p. 300.* But

this argument seems to affect the Unitarians as much as the Arians.

It was on the idea of the Arians setting up *two principles of divinity*, and thereby making more Gods than one, and of the Sabellians making no difference between the persons of the trinity, that the orthodox always represented themselves, as I have observed, as holding the middle between two extremes. The idea occurs a thousand times in their writings. They are constantly guarding their hearers against *confounding* the persons with Sabellius, or *separating* them with Arius. Thus Gregory Nazianzen speaks of the orthodox, as “in a middle way between Sabellianism on the one hand, and Arianism on the other, the former confounding the persons, and the latter dividing them.” Or. xxix. Opera, p. 489. On this principle, he, as well as many others, compares the Sabellians to Jews, and the Arians to Gentiles. Isidore Pelusiota also says, “Let this be said, that Sabellius and the Jews may be silenced, and those that Arius, Eunomius, and the Gentiles, may be demolished.” Epist. L. iii. Opera, p. 267.

Arianism was likewise always considered as a *new heresy*, and Unitarianism as an old one. Theodoret having distributed his work on *heretical fables* into five parts, and having mentioned his treating first of the sect of the Gnostics, then that of the Unitarians, from Ebion to Photinus, as holding opposite opinions; then those who held middle opinions between them, says, “In the fourth place I shall explain the *later heresies*,

“ *heresies, viz. those of Arius and Eunomius.*”
Opera, vol. iv. p. 188.

I do not, indeed, find any such pretences to high antiquity made by the Arians, as the Unitarians laid claim to. They only appeal to the language of the scriptures, which all persons interpret so as to favour their opinions, and such expressions of the orthodox fathers, especially Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen, as have been already mentioned, and which I have shewn to be sufficiently agreeable to the orthodoxy of the age in which they lived; the principles of which were very remote from those of Arianism.

One of the weak sides of the orthodox hypothesis, was the stress that was laid upon the difference between *generation* and *creation*. From this the Arians had derived considerable advantage, especially with respect to what is said concerning *wisdom* in the book of Proverbs. In the translation of the septuagint we read *the Lord CREATED me in the beginning of his ways*, which certainly had the appearance of making this *wisdom* (or *Christ*, supposed to be intended by it) a *creature*. In what manner the orthodox interpreted this passage, so as to evade the force of the argument without rejecting the translation of the septuagint, I shall not consider here; but only observe, that, notwithstanding the dislike which the orthodox had for the translations of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, as being unitarians; they were glad to avail themselves of their interpretation of
this

this passage. For they rendered it, *the Lord POSSESSED me in the beginning of his ways*, a rendering which is much approved by Eusebius. Ec. Theol. L. iii. c. ii. p. 152.

That the word *made* does not always imply a proper *creation*, the orthodox attempted to prove from other passages of scripture; and the extreme weakness of their reasoning may serve to shew how much they felt themselves pressed by this argument. Cyril of Alexandria says, "We read that God is *made* a refuge, but this "does not imply that God was *created*." De Trinitate, L. iv. Opera, vol. ii. p. 422. That Christ was only *generated*, and not *made*, Austin proves from its being said, "*This day is born unto us a Saviour, not made*." Questiones ex N. T. 50. Opera, vol. iv. p. 735. Hilary also proves that "Christ was not made out of "nothing, but was derived from the substance "of the Father, because he said, *I came forth from the Father*." L. vi. p. 108.

That Christ had a proper *human soul*, having the same affections with the souls of other men, the orthodox proved from our Saviour being said to *grieve*, and to be *in an agony*, &c. Thus Athanasius, in answer to the Apollinarians, alledges Christ being *disturbed in spirit*. De Incarnatione, Opera, vol. i. p. 628. Epiphanius also, in the same controversy, alledges, but with much less propriety, 1 Cor. ii. 6. *We have the mind of Christ*. Ancoratus, S. lxxvi. Opera, vol. ii. p. 81. That all the orthodox fathers held that Christ had a proper human soul, as well as
a hu-

a human body, there is the most abundant evidence.

Thus have I given the best view that I have been able to collect (not to be unnecessarily tedious) of the principles on which the Arian controversy was conducted in early times; and the following circumstances clearly prove, that, notwithstanding the advantage which the Arians derived from the concessions and absurdities of their antagonists, their doctrine was really a *novel one*. All the orthodox Fathers before the age of Arius, considered the *logos* which made the world, and which was the medium of all the divine communications to the patriarchs, as having been the proper attribute of the Father, and therefore *uncreated*. They also all supposed that Christ had a human soul, as well as a human body, and that the *logos* was united to *the man*, and not to the *body* only. The Arian doctrine, therefore, that Christ, or the *logos*, was a created super-angelic spirit, the creator of the world, and the medium of the divine communications to the patriarchs, &c. (which all the Arians of that age believed; for they all transferred to their *created logos*, whatever had been supposed to have been the office of the *uncreated one*) and that this great spirit animated the body of Jesus in the place of a human soul, was altogether a novel doctrine, and not older than the age of Arius himself.

As to the doctrine of Christ being a pre-existent super-angelic spirit, and not the creator of the world, or not the medium of the divine communications to the patriarchs, it is

much more novel; probably not older than a single century. In the same predicament also is the notion that the great powers of this super-angelic spirit were in a state of suspension, so that while upon earth he was reduced to the condition of a mere human soul; a strange notion, which nothing but the most insuperable difficulties attending the original Arian hypothesis, could have led any man to adopt.

That the Arian doctrine, in any form, was not older than the age of Arius, is an insuperable objection to its truth, or to its being the doctrine of the scriptures. For they were always admitted to be the rule of faith by all christians, and certainly those who lived nearest to the age of the apostles, and for whose use the books of the New Testament were written, and who had not the difficulties that we labour under, of learning foreign languages, and investigating ancient customs and ancient idioms, to embarrass and mislead them, must have been better qualified to understand the true sense of scripture than we are. Can that, then, be the true sense of scripture (how much soever we, with all the prejudices of education about us, may fancy it to favour any particular hypothesis) which, it is evident, no person in the three first centuries put upon it? This consideration ought certainly to check the confidence of those who are ever so well satisfied that their doctrine is taught in the scriptures. Much more ought it to stagger those whose opinions had no existence before the reformation, which is the case with many of the modern Arians.

On

On the contrary, it cannot be denied that the great body of the common people in early times were properly *unitarians*, that their doctrine existed and prevailed in the time of the apostles, and that they had as great a veneration for the books of the New Testament, as we can have at this day; and yet never found in them that doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, which many now think to be clearly and repeatedly taught in them. This is certainly an argument of great weight in favour of the unitarian interpretation of those particular texts, which, according to their literal meaning, seem to favour the doctrine of pre-existence, and ought to lead us to suspect, that it is owing to nothing but our early prejudices, that such interpretations, on the first proposal of them, appear unnatural.

It is pretty remarkable that the *common people* seem to have taken little or no part in the Arian controversy. For a long time at least, it was confined to the bishops and clergy. Indeed, the Arian doctrine was of such a nature, as that it was not likely to interest the common people, who were then generally unitarians. They who had been accustomed to consider the *logos* as nothing more than *the wisdom and power of God* (which was the case with all the ancient unitarians) could not be supposed to take any part in a debate, in which the disputants on both sides agreed that the *logos* was *a person*, and the difference between them was, whether he was *created*, or *uncreated*.

Neither does it appear that the Arian doctrine served as an intermediate stage, by which the common people, who were unitarians, were

brought to the trinitarian doctrine, which was universally prevalent in after ages; though this would not seem to be improbable, as it is very common at this day for persons to pass from Athanasianism to Arianism, and then from Arianism to proper Unitarianism. It is evident, from the writings of Basil, and especially from his letters, that the odium he lay under was chiefly with the common people, and that they were unitarians; and there are many other marks of the more ignorant of the common people being unitarians in a very late period, but none that I have found of their being generally Arians. Indeed, there was too much of *philosophy* in the Arian doctrine for the common people to enter into it. What a *prophet* was, a *prophet mighty in word and deed*, they could understand; but the doctrine of a *created logos*, a *created creator*, must have appeared strange to them; though, perhaps, not quite so much so as that of a *personified attribute*.

That the Arian doctrine gave no more satisfaction to the learned unitarians than that of the orthodox, may be concluded from the peculiar animosity with which the Arians always pursued the unitarians, as we see in the writings of Eusebius against Marcellus, and in the persecution of Photinus, which was carried on chiefly by Arians. The same may also be inferred from the orthodox of that age speaking more favourably of the unitarians than they do of the Arians.

Nor is this so much to be wondered at; for, besides the respect with which unitarianism would be treated as an *ancient doctrine*, and still held

held by the generality of the common people, the Athanasians thought at least that they were agreed with the unitarians in an article which was deemed to be of much more consequence in that age than it was afterwards, which was the preserving of the *unity of God*. This the Athanasians maintained that they did, by supposing the *logos* to be what the unitarians said it was, viz. *the wisdom and power of God the Father*, differing only about its *personification*. On the other hand, it has been seen that they considered the Arians as absolutely *polytheists*, holding the doctrine of *two Gods*; from which charge, while the Arians considered Christ as the *maker of the world*, and the *object of prayer*, I do not see how they could exculpate themselves. No doubt, however, a great part of the animosity of the orthodox against the Arians arose from the opposition they met with from them; there being more men of learning among the Arians than among the Unitarians.

It is much to be lamented that there are no remains of any controversy between the ancient Arians and Unitarians. This would, no doubt, have thrown much more light than we now have on the subject of these differences, and on the state of ancient opinions in general.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

WITHOUT undertaking to write a reply to all the arguments of MODERATUS, in defence of the Arian hypothesis, which, I hope, will be done by some other hand, I shall endeavour to give him all the satisfaction I can with respect to his *Postscript*, p. 163. and especially to his *query*, viz. “Why those who are called Socinians seem desirous to appropriate to themselves the appellation of *unitarians*, or *proper unitarians*?” And I think that, if he attend either to *reason* or the *scriptures*, he will find that the Arians are by no means justly entitled to that appellation.

1. If *greatness of power* be a foundation on which to apply the title of God, they who believe that Christ made the world, and that he constantly preserves and governs it, must certainly consider him as enjoying a very high rank in the scale of divinity, whatever reason they may have to decline giving him the title of God. They must allow that he is a much greater God than Apollo, or even Jupiter, was ever supposed to be. His derivation from another, and a greater God, is no reason why he should not likewise be considered as *a God*. The polytheism of the heathens did not consist in making two, or more,
equal

equal and independent Gods, but in having one supreme God, and the rest subordinate, which is the very thing that the Arians hold.

We have no idea of any power greater than that of *creation*, which the Arians ascribe to Christ, especially if by creation be meant *creation out of nothing*; and the Arians do not say that the Father first produced matter, and that then the Son formed it into worlds, &c. a notion, indeed, too ridiculous to be adopted by any person; so that whatever he meant by *creation*, the Arians ascribe it to Christ.

2. Upon the principle which is adopted by many Arians, we must acknowledge not only two Gods, but gods without number. According to Moderatus, Christ made this solar system only. There must, therefore, have been other beings, of equal rank, to which the creation, or formation, of the other systems was assigned; and observation shows, that there are millions and millions of systems. The probability is, that they fill the whole extent of infinite space. Here, then, are infinitely more, as well as infinitely greater gods, than the heathens ever thought of.

But I would observe, that Moderatus, in ascribing to Christ the formation of the whole solar system, ascribes more to him than the ancient Arians did; for they did not suppose that the apostles ascribed to him the making of any thing more than *this world*, because they had no knowledge of any other. Had the ancients had any proper idea of the extent of the solar system; had they believed that it contained as many worlds as there are primary and secondary

planets belonging to it, all of which might stand in as much need of the interposition of their Maker as that which we inhabit, they would, probably, have been staggered at the thought of giving such an extensive power and agency to any one *created being*; much less is it probable that they would *at once* have gone so far as the generality of modern Arians (though Moderatus is not one of them) who suppose that Christ made the whole universe. That would have been to give him so much power, and so extensive an agency, that the Supreme Father would not have been missed, if, after the production of such a Son, he had himself either remained an inactive spectator in the universe, or even retired out of existence. For why might not the power of *self-subsistence* be imparted to another, as well as that of *creating out of nothing*.

3. If we consider the train of reasoning by which we infer that there is only *one God*, it will be found, that, according to the Arian hypothesis, Christ himself may be that one God. We are led to the idea of God by enquiring into the cause of what we see; and the being which is able to produce all that we see, or know, we call *God*. We cannot, by the light of nature, go any farther; and the reason why we say that there is only *one God*, is, that we see such marks of uniformity in the whole system, and such a mutual relation of all the parts to each other, that we cannot think that one part was contrived or executed by one being, and another part by another being. Whoever it was that made the *plants*, for instance, must also have
made

made the *animals* that feed upon them. Whatever being made, and superintends, the *land*, must also have made, and must superintend the *water*, &c. We also cannot suppose that the *earth* had one author, and the *moon* another, or indeed any part of the solar system. And for the same reason that the whole solar system had one author, all the other systems, which have any relation to it (and the probability is that the whole universe is one connected system) had the same author. There can be no reason, therefore, why Moderatus should stop at supposing that Christ made the solar system only, in which I believe he is quite singular. For the same reason that his province includes this system, it ought to include all the universe, which is giving him an absolute *omnipresence*, as well as *omnipotence*; and I shall then leave him to distinguish between this being, and that God whom he would place above him. For my own part, I see no room for any thing above him. Imagination itself cannot make any difference between them. If, therefore, the Arian principle be pursued to its proper extent, we must either say that there are two infinite beings, or Gods, or else that Christ is the one God.

4. If any being become the object of our worship in consequence of our dependence upon him, and receiving all our blessings from him; and also in consequence of his being invisibly present with us, so that we may be sure both that he always hears us, and that he is able to assist us; Christ, upon the hypothesis of Moderatus, coming under this description, must be the proper object of all that we ever call *worship*, and therefore must be God. For he who *made all things*, and who
upholds

upholds all things by the word of his power, must necessarily be present every where, and know all things, as well as be able to do all things. If he only made and takes care of this earth, he must be present in all parts of the earth. There must, therefore, be the greatest *natural propriety* in our praying to such a being. A being to whom these characters belong has always been considered as the object of the highest worship that man can pay. The Psalmist says, Ps. xciv. 6. *O come, let us worship, and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.* If, therefore, Christ be the Lord our maker, as Moderatus supposes, we are fully authorized to worship and bow down before him.

5. If the *logos* be Christ, Arians cannot refuse to give him the appellation of God. For John says, ch. i. 1. *and the word was God.* Thus I believe all Arians interpret the passage. It is, therefore, not a little extraordinary, that they should pretend that they do not acknowledge *two Gods*. They will say that Christ is God in an inferior sense, as Moses is called a God with respect to Pharoah. But according to the Arian hypothesis, Christ is God in a very different sense from that in which Moses could ever be so. He is a God not in *name* only, but in *power*. They do not even acknowledge a great God, and a little one; but a very great God, and another greater than he. On this account, the Arians were always considered as *polytheists* by the ancient trinitarians; while the unitarians were regarded as Jews, holding the unity of God in too strict a sense. For these reasons I own that, in my opinion, those who are usually called *Socinians* (who consider Christ as being *a mere man*) are the only body of christians

who are properly intitled to the appellation of unitarians; and that the Arians are even less intitled to it than the Athanasians, who also lay claim to it. The Athanasian system, according to one explanation of it, is certainly *tritheism*, but according to another it is mere *nonsense*.

Some may possibly say, "It is not necessary that Christ should of himself have wisdom and power sufficient for the work of creation; but that, nevertheless, God might work by him in that business, as he did in his miracles on earth; Christ speaking the word, or using some indifferent action (such as anointing the eyes of the blind man) and God producing the effect."

The two cases, however, are essentially different. That Christ, or any other prophet, should be able to foretel what God would do, which, in fact, is all that they pretended to, was necessary, as a proof of their divine mission; whenever there was a propriety in God's having intercourse with men, by means of a man like themselves. But what reason can there even be imagined why God, intending to make a world *by his own immediate power*, should first create an angel, or a man, merely to give the word of command, whenever he should bid him to do so; when, by the supposition, there was no other being existing to learn any thing from it?

A being *naturally incapable* of doing any thing cannot properly be said to be an *instrument* by which it is done. I use a *pen* as an instrument in writing, because a pen is naturally fitted for the purpose, and I could not write without one. But if, besides a pen, without which I could not write,

I should

I should take a *whistle*, and blow on it every time that I took my pen in hand in order to write, and should say that I chose to write with such an instrument, I should lay myself open to ridicule. And yet such an instrument of creation would this hypothesis make Christ to have been.

I must take it for granted, therefore, that Christ would never have been employed in the work of creation, if he had not been *originally endued* with power sufficient for the work. In that case, without the communication of any new powers, or any more immediate agency of God, he would be able to execute whatever was appointed him. Thus, Abraham, having a natural power of *walking* could go wherever God ordered him; and a prophet, having the power of *speech*, could deliver to others whatever God should give him in charge to say. Any other hypothesis appears to me to be inadmissible. On other principles a log of wood might have been a prophet.

Such being the hypothesis that the Arians have to defend, they ought certainly to look well to the arguments they produce for it. The greater and the more alarming any doctrine is, the clearer ought to be the evidence by which it is to be supported. If no other person should attempt it, I may perhaps endeavour to shew Moderatus, that his arguments by no means correspond to the magnitude of his proposition.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

P H O T I N U S.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

IF the following criticisms merit, in your esteem, the attention of the public, you may insert them in your Repository; if they do not, you will please to suppress them. Whatever be the treatment they shall receive from you, no offence will be given to,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

D I S C I P U L U S.

I have thought, on reading the 26th and 27th verses of the 16th chapter of John's gospel, that there is some difficulty to discover the force of the reason assigned in the beginning of the latter verse for the declaration made in the latter clause of the former. The words to which I refer, are, "And I do not say unto you, that I will ask the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you." Do these last words contain a reason for our Lord's not saying that he would ask the Father, or for his actually not asking him, for his disciples? For the latter
they

they would contain a very good and sufficient reason; because they would, in that case, represent our Lord's asking as unnecessary and superfluous, on account of the Father's own benevolence, which did not need to be excited by the importunities of an intercessor. But what reason do they afford for his not saying that he would ask the Father? Is it not most obvious to suppose, that the reason natural to have been given for his not saying, &c. would have been some such one as this, viz. For, from the love I have manifested towards you, you may securely rely on my performing this friendly office for you, though I give you no express assurance of my intention to do it? This, or some such reason, seems to be the natural one to have been assigned for his not saying that he would ask the Father. I have, therefore, suspected, that the words, "For the Father himself loveth you," were intended to convey a reason for his not asking the Father. But I do not find that there is any MS. to justify the transposition of the negative standing before $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\omega$ to the place where one would expect to find it, viz. before $\epsilon\pi\omega\tau\eta\sigma\omega$, had our Lord intended to declare, that he would not ask the Father.

The question, then, is, whether any passages can be found, in which the negative joined with the former of two verbs in a sentence, affects the sense of the subsequent one in the same sentence? And several such may, I think, be produced. The following have occurred to me. Ουκ εφη δεδαι . He said he did

not

not want it. Xenoph. Cyrop. Hutch. 1747, p. 300. Ουκ εφη κωλυειν, He said he did *not* forbid, *ibid.* p. 326. Και εκ εφασαν ιεναι, And they said they would *not* go, Cyri Exped. Oxon. 1772. lib. i. Και εκ αν εφη σπεισεσθαι, And he said he would *not* enter into an alliance with them, *ibid.* Ed. Hutch. 1745, p. 538. Οτι κ φαιη παρα βασιλεα πορευεσθαι, *ibid.* p. 23. See also p. 24, 40, 257, 258, 288, 295, 459, 478, 483, *ibid.* Οι μεν φασιν αδικειν αλληλους, οι δε κ φασιν. Forster's Sel. Dial. of Plato 1752, p. 37. Ου γαρ εγω σεο φημι χειριωτερον βροτον αλλον εμμεναι, Hom. Il. l. ii. v. 248, Clarke. Ου μεν δε ποτε φημι Σεον περικαλλεα βωμον, Νηι πολυκληιδι παρελθεμεν ειθαδε ερων, *ibid.* l. viii. v. 238. Probably many others might be produced from the same or other writers. These just mentioned are sufficient to prove that the negative, both in prose and verse, is sometimes at least, if not frequently, placed at a distance from the verb, the sense of which it affects, and before a preceding one in the same sentence. And, perhaps, it may not be altogether unworthy of notice, that this situation of the negative seems to be frequently, if not generally, used, when the person *speaking*, or *spoken of*, is represented as *declaring* that he will *not* do, or hath *not* done, the action signified by the verb, with which the negative must be construed.

If, after all, a clear and just connexion can be pointed out between the two branches of the sentence under consideration, without referring the negative κ to ερασησω, and without introducing any ideas not suggested by the passage, I shall be glad to see it done. But if that cannot
be

be done, it may not be thought an unacceptable service to have shewn that there is nothing peculiar in the structure of the passage, if the κ must be connected in the sense with $\epsilon\rho\omega\lambda\iota\sigma\omega$.

JOHN viii. 58.

The modern unitarians appear to me to have needlessly departed from the interpretation of this text given by Slichtingius, Enejedinus, and other old Socinians, and to have adopted another in its stead, which is not to be supported by any just grammatical construction. Perhaps the old Socinians did not offer some remarks in defence of their interpretation, which may have occurred to others since their day. If there be either novelty or superior force in any thing I am going to suggest, you are at liberty to impart it to the world.

1. I am not aware that $\omega\rho\iota\nu$ is ever used but of time.

2. $\Gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\delta\alpha\iota$ is used both of past and future time. The following are all the places in the New Testament in which I find it: Matt. xx. 26. xxiv. 6. xxvi. 54. Mark i. 17. x. 43, 44. xiii. 7. Luke iii. 22. ix. 36. xxi. 9. xxiii. 24. John i. 12. iii. 9. v. 6. viii. 58. ix. 27. xiii. 19. xiv. 29. Acts i. 22. iv. 28. vii. 39. x. 40. xix. 21. xx. 16. xxii. 17. xxvi. 28, 29. xxvii. 16, 29. Rom. iv. 18. vii. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 21. Phil. i. 13. iii. 21. 1 Theff. i. 7. Rev. i. 1. iv. 1. xxii. 6. Of these thirty-eight verses in which it occurs, I find but five (Luke iii. 22. ix. 36. Acts xxii. 17. Phil. i. 13. 1 Theff. i. 7.) where it signifies past time. In John xiii. 19. we have a phrase very similar

το that in the verse before us (the difference being only *προ τε* instead of *πρι γενεθαι*) which is very properly rendered before it *shall* come to pass. In ch. xiv. 29. we have the very same words, *πρι γενεθαι*, which also will admit of no other than the common translation, before it *shall* come to pass. In Acts xix. 21. occur the words *μετα το γενεθαι με εκει*, after I *shall* have been there. Hence it is manifest, that *γενεθαι* generally signifies, in scripture, future time; that joined with other prepositions, it must be rendered by that time; and that in the only passage besides, where it is joined with *πρι*, it cannot be rendered of any other time.

3. The phrase *εγω ειμι*, when used by, or of Jesus, is evidently elliptical, *ο Χριστος* or *ο Μεσσιανς* being to be supplied. Of this any one may be satisfied, who will take the trouble to consult Mark xiii. 16. xiv. 62. Luke xxi. 8. John iv. 26. viii. 24. 28. (These two last verses occur in the same conversation as the text under consideration) xiii. 19.

4. The phrase *εγω ειμι* being proved to be elliptical, it is natural to suppose that the phrase *πρι γενεθαι* is so too; for then the antithesis will be clear.

Now what but absolute necessity will justify a departure from the most natural and obvious sense of this verse? Why should *πρι γενεθαι* here be made to signify past time, when in thirty-three out of thirty-eight places, *γενεθαι* signifies future time, and when the very same words used by the same author, ch. xiv. 29. must refer to future time? And why should the words *εγω*

εἰμι here be translated, as if they meant *mere existence*, when in *other places* they are owned to contain a proposition declarative of a particular character? Besides, What sense is there in the expression, *Before Abraham was, I am*? If it be said, that *εγω εἰμι* may be translated, *I was*; this appears to me to be more easily asserted than proved. Indeed, the present tense of *εἰμι* in Greek, and of *sum* in Latin, may in some instance be translated *have been*; but, I imagine, in those only, where the present time is taken in with the past, and a continuance of being is implied. But, suppose *εγω εἰμι* might be translated, *I have been*, how are the two parts to be made coherent? Would not the expression, *Before Abraham was, I have been*, be quite unnatural, and unsupported by any authority from any other writer?

What, then, can have made commentators depart from the obvious meaning of the words according to the most just and literal translation? One reason may be assigned; but, I think, of very little force. It may be said, that our Lord's words are an answer to the question of the Jews, *Hast thou seen Abraham*? and that their conduct is not to be accounted for, but on that supposition. I would remark, by way of answer, that our Lord may well be supposed to continue his observations in this verse, without making a direct reply to the question just put to him, as he is known to do in many other instances; and that the 56th and 58th verses may be immediately connected and explained thus; *Abraham rejoiced to see my day*, i. e. to foresee the
time,

time, when he should become the father of many nations by means of the universal extension of the Messiah's kingdom, who was to descend from him; and *he did see* (i. e. foresee) *it, and was glad.* *And verily I say unto you,* however strange it may appear to you, and how much soever you may be disposed to resent it as an insult offered to that illustrious personage, in your descent from whom you so much glory, that the time for the accomplishment of what he foresaw is not yet arrived; for *before Abram shall be Abraham*, i. e. become the father of many nations, according to the import of his name, *I am the Christ*, your Messiah.

As to the treatment he received upon making this assertion, it is certainly as probable, that the Jews would offer violence to his person upon his asserting that he was the Christ before Abram should become Abraham, as upon his saying that he had existed before Abraham. Indeed, their conduct appears much more natural upon the former than upon the latter supposition. If they had conceived him to have claimed a priority of existence, it is likely they would have regarded him as insane, or have made that claim a ground for ridiculing him themselves, and exposing him to the ridicule of their fellow-countrymen, instead of attempting to stone him for it: whereas, if they thought him to arrogate to himself a superiority to Abraham, by assuming the character of their Messiah, and to represent him as not being yet that great personage, which the signification of his name implied he should one day become, nothing is more natural than to

expect that they should immediately take fire at the supposed degradation and abuse of the great founder of their nation, on their relation to whom they valued themselves so highly.

A P R O P O S A L.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
R E P O S I T O R Y,

GENTLEMEN,

B E I N G one of those, who think that man hath no reasonable prospect of happiness after death, till the resurrection, I shall be very glad (as will be, no doubt, many others holding the same opinion with myself) to see the language of prophecy relating to the *time* of that glorious event fully examined. If the Millennium be to be *introduced* (as some suppose) by the resurrection, and this event be to follow either immediately, or very soon after the destruction of the papal power, the good, who are now living, may, perhaps, have but a comparatively short period of insensibility to expect between death and the commencement of their future happiness. If it be to *precede* the resurrection (as others suppose) and to last as long

as some ingenious writers seem to conjecture, though a thousand years are with the Lord but as one day, and he is not slack concerning his promise, but will, in due time, certainly fulfil it ; yet the mind had need to possess no small portion of vigour, not to feel the pleasure arising from meditation on future blifs, somewhat diminished by the prospect of finding its hope so long delayed. However, I trust, that myself and other believers in the same general sentiment with me, are prepared to attend with impartiality to any thing, which may be offered in favour of either of the fore-mentioned hypotheses. And as I cannot help considering the discussion of the subject now proposed as of real importance, if to serve no other end, yet to remove a painful suspence from the minds, it may be, of many worthy people, I heartily wish to see it brought forward, and thoroughly investigated in your Theological Repository. If any of you, Gentlemen, or of your correspondents, will vouchsafe to gratify my wishes, and those, probably, of many others, they will much oblige,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

PHILANDER.

P. S. Permit me to hint that there are some observations in favour of the Millenium being subsequent to the resurrection in a late publication, entitled, *The Mystery hid from ages, &c.* that may be worthy of notice,

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

THE method which I think most natural, and mean to pursue, in considering the passages which may appear to militate most strongly against my *hypothesis*, is this; I. To state and examine the prediction of John the Baptist respecting his successor, before he knew who his successor was to be. II. His real testimony after the baptism of Jesus, when he had been informed that *he* was the person. And, III. A few other passages which have a reference to that testimony.

I. To state and examine the prediction of John respecting his successor before the baptism of Jesus, that is, *before he knew who his successor was to be*. For that John did not, till the baptism, know Jesus to be his *successor*, is, I think, most plainly and explicitly asserted by himself after that event, when he declared, John i. 30, 31. "This is he of whom I said, after me
" cometh a man, who is preferred before me;
" for he was before me, and I knew him not;
" but that he should be made manifest to Is-
" rael, therefore am I come baptizing with
" water."—I am aware, that this has been thought a very difficult passage; but this, I apprehend, has been owing merely to the in-
trusion

trusion of ideas into the mind, which are quite foreign from the object of the Baptist. He appears to be simply pointing out Jesus to his disciples, as the person, concerning whom they had heard him declare, that ‘after him a man was to come, who was the object of his expectation, and his superior*.’ He tells them, ‘that at the time when he made such declarations, he did not know who the person was, though to call the attention of his countrymen to him was the great end for which he had been commissioned to baptize;’ and then proceeds to inform them, ‘that from the miraculous circumstances attending his baptism, he had discovered *Jesus* to be that very person, his superior, whom he had been in expectation of.’

This is all, I think, which the words in their plain import imply; and whatever be added to this, I therefore suppose to be merely conjectural and unfounded. I shall probably take further notice of this passage hereafter; what I have just observed concerning it, being intended to account for the terms in which my first head is stated.—To proceed, therefore,

John’s prediction concerning his *successor*, before he knew who he was, according to Matthew iii. 11, 12. (and Luke’s account is almost *verbatim* the same) is this; “I, indeed, baptize
“ you with water unto repentance; but he that
“ cometh after me is mightier than I, whose
“ shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall bap-

* For this interpretation of *ος εμπροσθεν μου γεγομεν, ος πρωτος μου ην*, I am indebted to that excellent man and able critic, Vigilius.—Th. Rep. vol. I. p. 54 and 297.

“tize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire,
 “Whose winnowing shovel is in his hand, and
 “he will thoroughly cleanse his floor, and ga-
 “ther his wheat into the granary; but he will
 “burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

As to the expression, “He shall baptize you
 “with the Holy Spirit, and with fire,” in this
 prediction, it is almost universally believed, that
 it refers to the effusion of the Spirit on the day
 of Pentecost; as the apostles were then bap-
 tized with the *Spirit*; and the flame like tongues
 resting upon each of them at the time, are sup-
 posed to correspond with the *fire* mentioned in
 the prediction. How long this interpretation
 of the passage has been adopted by divines, I
 am at present unable to say; but, I think, that
 it is not very *ancient*. Chrysostom, though he
 does not seem to have been aware of its true
 meaning, yet neither does he adopt the present
 popular explanation (See Chryf. Hom. xi. in
 Matt. iii. p. 105). And from the Latin homi-
 lies, in the same volume (*incerto auctore*) by an
 unknown writer, it should seem, that the notion
 of its referring to the day of Pentecost was not
 yet known; or, at least, was not yet universally
 believed, as it is very nearly, at present. This
 author considers the baptism by *fire* as something
 of a very different nature, and quite distinct from
 the baptism of the Spirit. He understands by
 it, the being subjected to trials and tribulation
 of mind. “Ut breviter dicamus, omnis ad-
 “versitas, quæ nos sine nostra occasione, tri-
 “bulat in hoc mundo, *baptismum ignis* est: quam
 “si magnanimiter, sustinueris, nihil murmu-
 “rans

“rans contra Deum, imputatur tibi illa carna-
“lis afflictio pro peccato quod commisisti. Si
“autem non peccasti, quod est difficile, et ignis
“ille tentationis circa animam tuam non in-
“venit fordes peccatorum quas commedit, ip-
“sam animam tuam facit splendidiorē : et
“quanto gravior fuerit tentatio, tanto magis
“facit clarescere animam. Et in aqua quidem
“semel baptizamur, in igne autem poenæ dum
“vivimus.”—Our own countryman, the learned
Dr. Hammond, saw indistinctly the real mean-
ing of *fire* in this passage, though he was too
much entangled in the prejudices of his time,
to give it free from foreign mixture. But
having interpreted it according to the prevail-
ing opinion, he adds, “and this *fire*, perhaps an
“emblem of something else ; for immediately
“after that, by that time they (our Lord’s
“chosen disciples) have preached through all
“the cities of Jentry, he shall also come down
“with fire, or *flaming judgments*, on the obdu-
“rate unbelievers, &c.”—Your correspondent,
G. H. (Th. Repos. vol. I. p. 396, &c.) very
properly, in my opinion, observes upon this
“passage, that *that* which bringeth calamity or
“destruction is in scripture frequently called a
“*fire*. See James iii. 6. *The tongue is a fire* :
“and Heb. xii. 29. *For our God is a consuming*
“*fire*.” He might have added, that it is the
common prophetic term for affliction and great
calamity. In proof of this, I refer to Isaiah,
Jeremiah, Ezekiel, almost *passim* ; besides a va-
riety of passages in the smaller prophets. After
all, it may, however, be said, that here is no
proof,

proof, that this is the meaning of the term *fire* in the above prediction. I grant it. To come, therefore, more directly to the point,

In verse 10th of this chapter, John says, "And
 " now also the axe is laid to the root of the
 " trees; therefore every tree which bringeth
 " not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast
 " into the *fire*." There can be little doubt, I apprehend, that hereby is meant, that such persons as bore bad fruit, or were of a vicious character, should suffer great calamity. The very next verse, i. e. the 11th, is the peculiar subject of our remarks, and says, "He shall
 " baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with
 " *fire*." The connexion, I think, clearly shews, that *fire*, in this verse, must mean the same as *fire* in the preceding one, i. e. *calamity*; and this is rendered almost indisputable by verse 12th, which says, "Whose fan (or winnowing shovel)
 " is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse
 " his floor, and gather his wheat into the granary;
 " but he will burn up the chaff with
 " *unquenchable fire*;" i. e. with *calamity in the extreme*. Thus we see, that the great object of John was, to impress upon the minds of his audience, that if they did not attend to him *who was to come after him*, they would certainly be subjected to dire calamity: and no sufficient reason can, I think, be assigned for supposing, that *fire*, in the *eleventh* verse, should be interpreted differently from *fire* in the tenth, and *fire* in the twelfth verses.

As to the appearance of fiery tongues, at the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost,
 I think

I think, with G. H. that "it was a mere circumstance accompanying the baptism," and too unimportant in itself, to have been mentioned to people, who could not have the least possible idea of affixing such a meaning to the words, in which it is supposed to have been foretold. What may contribute still more to confute the prevailing interpretation of this prophecy is, that when our Saviour, before his ascension, quotes it, and applies it to the apostles, he drops the latter clause, *and with fire*, and simply says, "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." *They* were not the persons to be baptized with *fire*, in the prophetic sense; and if our Lord had added this latter clause, I doubt not, but the apostles would have been inspired with terror at the declaration, instead of a joyful hope of some great favour about to be conferred upon them.

If your readers will take the trouble of examining all the references made to this prophecy, on account of the communication of the Holy Spirit, they will find, that in none of them is any notice taken of the latter words, "and with fire." Moreover, it is worthy of particular observation, that, when on the day of Pentecost, the people were amazed to hear the apostles speaking languages which they had never learned, Peter does not account for it by a reference to this prediction of John's, but to one of the prophet Joel's, which no doubt therefore, he thought equivalent to it. "This is that," says he, "which was spoken by the prophet Joel, *And it shall come to pass in the*
"last

“last days (saith God) I will pour out of my Spirit
 “upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters
 “shall prophecy, and your young men shall see vi-
 “sions, and your old men dream dreams: and on my
 “servants, and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out
 “in those days of my Spirit, and they shall pro-
 “phesy.” This Peter considered as tantamount
 to John’s declaration, “He shall baptize you
 “with the Holy Spirit,” but he does not stop
 here; but continues his quotation from Joel as
 follows, *And I will shew wonders in heaven above,*
 “and signs in the earth beneath: blood and FIRE,
 “and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned
 “into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that
 “great and notable day of the Lord come.” Which
 I think plainly corresponds with John’s prediction,
 “And he shall baptize you with FIRE:” and that
 it was so understood by Peter, can hardly, I should
 imagine, be doubted. Much more might be of-
 fered in support of my interpretation of John’s
 prophecy against the prevailing one; but I hope
 enough has been already said, to authorize my con-
 cluding that the *baptism with fire* was distinct from
 the *baptism with the Holy Spirit*, and meant a *visi-*
tation with calamity; or that the same thing was
 intended by *fire* in the eleventh verse of Matt. iii.
 now under consideration, as by *fire* in the tenth and
 twelfth verses.

CHRISTOPHILOS,

(To be continued.)

As

An Illustration of the Promise made to Abraham.

IT seems to be taken for granted by all christians, and even by Pamphilus (see p. 105) that in the promise which God made to Abraham, there is an intimation that all mankind should receive great blessings by means of his posterity; and this is always interpreted of Christ. This promise is therefore constantly enumerated among the prophecies concerning the Messiah. Having been led to consider this promise with some attention, I own that I do not see in it any intimation of blessings that were to extend beyond the proper posterity of Abraham; and if the Messiah be alluded to at all, it is in the most obscure and indirect manner, as one of the blessings reserved for the descendants of Abraham.

Before I make any remark on the subject, I shall recite the promise, from the passage in which it first occurs, which is Gen. xii. 1. &c. *Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee (בך) shall all the families of the earth be blessed (נברכו).* The same promise is repeated Gen. xv. 5, &c. with more particulars, but without the circumstance of others being blessed in him. It is also repeated Gen. xvii. 4, &c. and Gen. xxii. 16, &c. in which
it

it concludes as follows, v. 18. *and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

On this I would now observe that the Hebrew word here used, viz. בָּרַךְ, never signifies to *convey a blessing*, but only to *wish*, or *pray* for it. Accordingly in the seventy it is rendered εὐλογηθῆσονται, and so it is when quoted in the New Testament, viz. by Peter, Acts iii. 25. and by Paul, Gal. iii. 8. The same word is used of our Saviour's blessing, or *giving thanks*, before meat. The word בָּרַךְ is, indeed, used when God is said to bless men, or other things, as Gen. i. 28. *And God blessed them, and said be fruitful, and multiply, &c. God blessed the seventh day, &c.* but this is in a sense similar to that mentioned above, and means the promise of happiness, rather than the actual imparting of it. The Hebrew word to denote being actually happy, is אָשַׁר, as Ps. xli. 2. *He shall be blessed upon the earth.*

I therefore think that the expression which I am considering, admits of an illustration from Gen. xlviii. 20. in which Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph in the following terms, *And he blessed them, in that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless; saying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh.* The phraseology in the two passages is exactly similar, the only difference being, that in the former the word is in the passive, and in the latter in the active voice; the one respecting the persons for whom a blessing was prayed, and the other the person who prayed for it. The meaning, therefore, of this clause in the promise made to Abraham, is simply this, "Thy name shall be used when prosperity is prayed for to other nations.
" They

“ They shall wish that they may be as flourishing
“ and happy as the posterity of Abraham.” That
the Messiah being descended from Abraham would
be *one* of the means of making them so happy
(though, no doubt, in the divine mind) is by no
means intimated here ; and very far is this pre-
diction from containing any promise of happiness,
temporal or spiritual, to the rest of mankind,
through, or by means of, Christ, as a descendant
of Abraham.

The apostle Paul indeed supposed the blessing
here promised to belong to christians, but then it
was because he considered them as the proper seed
of Abraham, to whom the promise was made, *viz.*
those who, imitating the faith of Abraham, might
call him their father; and consequently, that the na-
tural posterity of this patriarch, as such, could lay no
claim to those blessings. But this appears to me to
give too much countenance to that allegorical mode
of interpreting the scriptures which was carried to
such a blameable extent in the age subsequent to
that of the apostles, and ought to serve as a caution
to us, not to adopt or imitate such interpretations.

That the Jews in general understood the pro-
mise made to Abraham, in the sense in which I
have explained it (admitting that they thought it to
contain a prophecy concerning the Messiah) is
pretty certain from their well known opinion, that
all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom were
to be confined to themselves.

*An Argument against the Reasoning found in the
Scriptures being inspired.*

I Do not know that more than the two following purposes can be answered by inspiration, viz. 1. To give new and effectual confirmation to what human reason hath of itself discovered, or may be able to discover; or, 2. To convey information, which men did not enjoy before, and could not have obtained by any other means.

Were an inspired person to impart new light, not discoverable without a revelation, it is natural to suppose, that he would do it in the way of *direct and positive assertion*, challenging belief on the authority he enjoyed by virtue of that divine commission, of which he proved, or could prove himself possessed, by the exhibition of clear and indubitable evidence of his having it. If, instead of adopting such a mode of conduct, he should first lay down general axioms, or some particular principles, which he foresaw would be granted him by those whom he was about to address, and then proceed to attempt the proof of what he advanced by reasoning from those axioms or principles, would he not appear to act a preposterous part? instead of confidently relying on the infallible guidance he was under, and on the evidence he could produce if required, of his enjoying such, and thus endeavouring to secure credit or obedience to the doctrine or laws he taught, by a short appeal

appeal to a circumstance, which above all others, must be calculated to carry with it the fullest conviction, and command the highest respect, he would seem to depend for obtaining the end he had in view on a chain of reasoning, by which illiterate and weak minds would not be likely to be much affected, and of which the learned and discerning might think themselves warranted (because it was *reasoning*, and therefore looked like an appeal to their understandings) to scrutinize with the utmost rigour both the principles and management. He would neglect the shortest and easiest way of reaching the heart and understanding, and adopt another that was long and troublesome, and the success of which, from the very nature of it, would be much more precarious and uncertain. Every understanding might be justly expected to perceive at once the truth, and every heart to feel at once the reasonableness and propriety of what was known to come from the God of truth and righteousness. Nothing more could be thought needful to enforce the belief or observance of what was enjoined by the Deity, than for the inspired person, in case any doubt should arise about his right to be believed or obeyed, to give proof of his acting by divine authority, or to appeal to it if already given. Whereas what should be proposed as a deduction from premises, could appear to claim regard on the mere foot of human reasoning alone; and a suspicion of either of the premises being inadmissible, or of any flaw in the conduct of the argument, would render farther reasoning necessary to remove that suspicion; and thus a double labour might be required to effect

what might be done at once in a manner the most satisfactory to every mind. Besides, after all, some room might perhaps be left for the existence of difficulties and doubts in weaker understandings, which could not happen from the other method of proceeding. I cannot, therefore, but think it highly probable at least, that a person really inspired, would not adopt a tedious and troublesome method of conveying instruction, which might also prove very ineffectual, when a most concise one, which also from its nature could not but appear to be incomparably better fitted to answer the purpose, would most obviously present itself. Accordingly, I am of opinion, that, when such a person reasons, he speaks as a man under no guidance superior to that of his own understanding.

If it be said, that an inspired person may join to an authoritative declaration of the divine will, reasoning suggested by the Spirit, to strengthen what he proposed; I answer, 1. That this seems to be to ascribe an unnecessary employment to the Spirit, it not being conceivable, that what comes from an intallible being should require any thing more than a clear proof of its origin, to give it the highest possible degree of authority and force. 2. That by calling in the aid of argument to recommend what was proposed under the sanction of a divine authority, the inspired person would seem to betray a mistrust of the sufficiency of that authority. 3. That, if he reasoned, it would be natural to expect, that the principles he employed would be *infallibly certain*, and such as would command the assent of all, before whom they should be laid, and moreover, that the arguments
founded

founded on them would be free from every perceptible flaw and defect. Both these circumstances would be looked for if the reasoning were dictated by an infallible being; and, therefore, if either of them were found wanting in such reasoning, a suspicion would naturally arise respecting its being inspired. 4. That, after all, the use of it might naturally occasion this query—What need was there of it, when the very thing designed to be enforced by it, would have rested on the firmest basis, in the veracity and goodness of the being who ordered it to be published. 5. That, therefore, it might be farther said, that it looked like attempting to support a firm and beautiful building, which would have stood on its own foundation, secure from all danger, by adding buttresses that served only to encumber and disfigure it. 6. That, on the foregoing accounts, if reasoning be found connected with authoritative declarations of the divine will, it is reasonable to conclude, that it was not inspired, but merely human.

If it be asked, to what purpose, then, is reasoning employed at all, and what authority or weight does it carry with it? I answer, 1. That the apostles and first propagators of christianity, were doubtless fully instructed with respect to its doctrines and precepts, either by the personal teachings of Christ, or by the Spirit, or both. 2. That when they delivered to others what they had thus received, they probably did it in an *authoritative* not *argumentative* manner, enforcing what they said, not by reasoning, but by alledging and proving, if required, their divine commission. 3. That enjoying a comprehensive view of the scheme of

B b 2

christianity,

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christianity, they were better qualified by that means than any others to give useful advices and directions, when the exigencies of particular churches and persons called for them. 4. That accordingly, when they were applied to for such, or saw them, without application, to be expedient, they reasoned on the case in the best manner they were able, and in such as they judged would be most subservient to the interests of their religion, but at the same time as men, who were not wholly free from the influence of associations and habits of thinking that were naturally generated by education, and by opinions prevailing in the age and country in which they lived. 5. That though imperfections, owing to those causes, should be discovered in their reasonings, it cannot be justly inferred, that the reasonings themselves were not calculated to answer their purposes with respect to persons under similar influence; but, 6. That, on the contrary, they might be better adapted than any others to enforce the advice or direction given on persons, whose minds were pre-disposed to yield assent to the principles on which the reasonings were founded. 7. That the ends to be answered by those reasonings being of importance, and the reasonings employed being of a kind the most likely to effect them, the apostles were not only justified, but discovered wisdom in chusing such; and, provided a supposed infallible guide be not brought in to bear the charge of imperfections, ascribable only in justice to fallible men, and christianity be not burthened with the difficulty of accounting for the existence of such imperfections by representing those parts of SS. in which they exist

assertion, to distinguish from what might be merely human.

I do not know what Pamphilus may think of the preceding observations; but they strike me as going *some way at least* to prove that the reasoning parts of the apostolic writings were the result of the unassisted reflections and judgments of the writers.

A CHRISTIAN.

To the DIRECTORS *of the* THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I Should be glad to know for what reasons Unitarians are opposed to, or distinguished from, "Protestants, Arminians, Arians," by Pamphilus, in the first number of vol. IV. of your Repository, p. 20. He saith too (p. 24) "I know of no firmer believers in christianity than Unitarians." I perfectly agree with Pamphilus in this. But then, in my notion of the word, I include those called Arians, as well as those called Socinians. Pamphilus adds, "I never knew a single instance of any person who was once well grounded in unitarian principles,

“principles, becoming an unbeliever.” What now is meant here by “unitarian principles?” Is it the opinion of the mere humanity of Christ? If so, will not all unbelievers allow this much? None of them, I suppose, will deny that there once existed such a man as Christ. Will it be said, that they were “never well grounded in “unitarian principles;” that besides the belief of the mere humanity of Christ, there must be a belief that he delivered such doctrines, wrought such miracles, &c. as are recorded in the gospels? If this be the meaning, Who doth not see that the assertion amounts to no more than “there never was a single instance of any person, who was once well grounded” in the principles and evidences of christianity, “becoming “an unbeliever.” Now whatever truth there may be in this assertion, Who doth not see that it is a truth of a general nature, and doth not apply in particular to the believer in the mere humanity? Beryllus is more explicit as to his sense of the term unitarian; for in p. 71, he calls it the “Socinian or proper unitarian hypothesis;” and restrains it, as appears from the preceding paragraph, to the “opinion of Christ “having been simply a man, who had no existence before his birth.” But, surely, in this sense the word is used very improperly. In itself considered, it hath no relation to any such opinion, nor is it fitted to convey any such idea to the mind. Unitarians may, indeed, be distinguished from trinitarians; as the former do not admit that division or distinction in the Di-

vine Essence, that plurality of persons in the Godhead, which the latter maintain. The usual and proper sense, then, of unitarian, is when it stands opposed to trinitarian, and to that only. It cannot now well be opposed to the Polytheists, as there are now no Polytheists, in our part of the world at least: and let me observe farther, that were it ever to be used in this sense, it must comprehend within its meaning, (unless we would be guilty of a breach, not only of propriety, but of charity too) all the most orthodox and rigid trinitarians whatever. They all profess to believe in the unity of God; and however inconsistent Pamphilus, Beryllus, or myself may think their opinion to be with that fundamental principle; yet, as they profess to see no such inconsistency, what right can any man have to charge consequences upon them, which they expressly disavow? To appropriate, then, the term unitarians to believers in the mere humanity of Christ, as Pamphilus seems to do, and Beryllus doth explicitly, and so to insinuate that they only, and none else, are proper believers in the unity; may it not be deemed on one hand arrogant, presumptuous, conceited; and on another, illiberal, invidious, uncharitable? For your own sake, therefore, and to avoid such imputations, desist from denoting a peculiar hypothesis by a word that hath not the most distant relation to, or connexion with it; and if a single word proper for expressing the notion doth not occur, it may always be done by a periphrasis.

Biblicus

Biblicus may possibly be right in his "critical emendation" of Exod. xxiii. 3. but were I inclined to adopt it, it would be on account of the verb—rendered, *countenance*—which signifies, to honour, to pay respect, &c. such respect as is usually paid to superiors, the rich and mighty; and cannot be applied to inferior and poor persons with equal propriety. If Biblicus will refer to Grotius, or Le Clerc, on the passage, and especially to Levit. xix. 15. he will be convinced, I think, that the reasons assigned by him for the emendation have no weight. I rather wonder that Biblicus, who seems to have consulted MSS. and ancient versions, should have overlooked the text in Leviticus, But I recollect, *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*

M. N.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

FROM some observations which I have lately made on the course of theological debates, I think I perceive a tendency to revive the *old* disputes concerning the use of the *Greek article*. For my own part, I almost despair of their proving of any material service, after the labours of so many men of first-rate learning, who have gone before us, and *toiled* on this subject *in vain*. A short *specimen* of their labours on the *article*, I venture to send you, in a few *extracts* from those great *verbal* critics *Glassius* and *Noldius*: which, however, I don't wish you to insert, if you think them not sufficiently important for so *interesting* a work as the *Theological Repository*.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

E R A S M U S.

Glassius, in his *Philologia Sacra*, *Lib. 3. Tractat. ii.* makes the following his THIRD CANON. *False hypotheses and errors may easily arise, and be introduced by a nice and needless attention to the ARTICLE.*

In

In his enlargement upon this *canon*, he observes, that the *article* very frequently, nay, *most usually*, is destitute of *emphasis*; that no stress can or ought to be laid upon the presence or absence of it, for the proof of any doctrine; and that, therefore, certain *rules* respecting it, which he mentions afterwards (*and which follow*) rest on a very slippery foundation.

He says, I. *Didymus Alexandrius*, we are informed, laid down this *rule*, concerning that expression the *Holy Spirit*, "That the apostles, when they meant the *Person* of the Holy Spirit, prefixed the article, ΤΟ πνευμα; but omitted the *article* when they meant the *gifts* of the Holy Spirit." But this *rule* fails; because ΤΟ πνευμα sometimes signifies the *gifts* of the Holy Spirit. Eph. iv. 23. 1 Thess. v. 19. 1 John iv. 1. And on the other hand, πνευμα, without the *article*, signifies the *Person* of the Holy Spirit. John iii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 11. Jude, verse 19.

II. *Origen* says, that "νομον the *law* in the first clause of Rom. iii. 21. means the *law of nature*; but in the next, the *law of Moses*;" merely because the *article* is prefixed to the latter, but not to the former. But it is not true, that the *article* is always added to νομος when the law of Moses is intended. See chap. iii. 20, 31. vii. 7. And again, if νομος means the law of nature, the *article* is added to it, Rom. ii. 14, 15.

III. *Asterius*, the friend of *Arius*, could not find the emphatic *article* in 1 Cor. i. 24. Where *Christ* is said to be θεος δυναμις. Thus *Athanasius* quotes him, *Orat. iii. Contra Arianos* p. 193. "The blessed apostle does not say, that he preached
" Christ

“Christ *the* power of God; but without either
 “pronoun or emphatic *article*, a power of God:
 “but *a* power of God is a different thing from
 “*that* power which is peculiar to, inherent in,
 “existing with him, which is itself unbegotten,
 “but yet capable of generation, as having actually
 “begotten Christ, the Creator of the whole
 “world; according to Rom. i. 20, &c.”—A
 wretched unstable prop to the *Arian faith*. For
 the *article*, in such forms of expression, is used or
 omitted *indifferently*.

IV. The *Photinians*, as well as some of the old
 Fathers (whom *Socinus* quotes against *Bellarmin*,
 and *Wick. chap. vi. class 4. p. 388*) lay down this
 rule, “That *θεος* with the *article*, means the only
 “true God; but *without* the *article* does not
 “mean him.” But this rule fails—For the *article*
 is sometime used when those are meant who are
 only called Gods. Acts vii. 43. xiv. 11. 2 Cor. iv.
 4. Gal. iv. 8. Phil. iii. 19.—And again, *θεος* with-
 out the *article* is applied to the *one true God*. Matt.
 iv. 4. v. 9. vi. 24. xii. 28. John i. 6, 12, 13, 18.
 1 Theff. i. 9. and frequently in other places.

The *Photinians* also, with regard to the expres-
 sion *θεος ην ο λογος*. John i. 1. tell us, “that the
 “*article* was omitted by the evangelist, that we
 “might not suppose the same being to be meant
 “as by *ο θεος*, in the former clauses of the verse”
 (*Socin. ibid. c. v. class 3. arg. 13. p. 33*). But it is
 worthy of observation, that *Socinus* himself replies
 to his antagonists, with respect to *a certain rule*,
 relative to the *Greek article*, “I answer, that *that*
 “*rule* is not perpetually observed; and we may
 “easily discover when it is *not*, from the circum-
 “stances

“ stance of the passage.” Surely this remark of his ought to have its full force against his *own* trifling observations, respecting the article.

V. Bellarmine infers from the *article* prefixed to *ανθρωπος*, 2 Theff. ii. 3. That some *particular* man, some *single* person, is intended by *antichrist*. “ The apostle (says he, *Lib. 3. De Pont. Rom. chap. ii.*) speaks of some individual, some particular person, as is plain from the *Greek article*, *αποκαλυθη Ο ανθρωπος αμαρτιας, Ο υιος της απωλειας* — and afterwards, verse 8. *και τοτε αποκαλυφθησεται Ο ανομος.*” — Soon after, he adds, “ The *Greek article* limits the signification to one single thing, so that *ανθρωπος* means *a* man *indefinitely*, but *Ο ανθρωπος* some *particular* man.” With which argument for the *individuality* of *antichrist*, he is so much elated, that, he exclaims, “ It is wonderful, none of our antagonists, who boast so much of their skill in the languages, have been aware of this!” But it is still *more* wonderful, that a *Jesuit* was not aware, how weak a foundation he had provided for a fabric of such magnitude, when he erected it upon a *mere Greek article*! It is *idle*, to say, that *Ο ανθρωπος*, with the *article*, means a particular *individual*; the contrary is clear from Matt. xii. 35. Mark ii. 27. Luke iv. 4. (compare Matt. iv. 4.) 2 Tim. iii. 17. And when the *article* is prefixed to *other* words, it *seldom* denotes a *single individual*, as is evident from a variety of passages. See Rom. i. 17. *Ο δικαιος*. Eph. vi. 16. *Ο πονηρος*. Tit. i. 7. *Ο επισκοπος*. 1 Pet. iv. 18. *Ο δικαιος, Ο ασβηης*. 2 John 7. *Ο πλανος και Ο αληθρινος*, preceded by *οτι πολλοι πλανοι εισηλθον εις τον κοσμον*, &c.

&c. See also, 1 John ii. 18. Rev. xxi. 11. Ο αδικων, Ο ρυταν, Ο δικαιος, Ο αγιος, &c. In short, as to *the* man of sin, *the* son of perdition, Ο ανθρωπος της αμαρτίας, Ο υιος της απωλειας, we acknowledge the *article* to be *emphatic*; for the passage does not relate to *every* man of sin or *every* sinner, to *every* son of perdition or lost wretch, but *super-eminently*, και' εξοχην, to the author of the universal apostacy from the true faith against *Christ*; to him (as *Luther* expresses it, *Tom. I. Jen. Garm. f. 513*) "that through the whole
 " world *amasseth* sins and perdition in opposition
 " to *Christ*, who was *the* man of *grace*, *the* son of
 " *salvation*; and through the whole world has
 " manifested *grace* and *salvation*; whence *he* is
 " called *Christ*, and the *Pope Anti-Christ*, &c." We allow, I say, in this place *such* an emphasis; but there is no occasion to suppose, that *one individual man* is intended.

VI. The very discerning *Joseph Scaliger* (if the *notes* on the New Testament be *his*) in explaining that passage, 1 Cor. xv. 29. *What shall they do that are baptized for the dead?* lays a remarkable emphasis on the *article* ΤΩΝ νεκρων, and rests his interpretation upon it. "It is *one* thing
 " (says he) to be baptized υπερ νεκρων, but *another*
 " to be baptized υπερ ΤΩΝ νεκρων: as ανασασις ΤΩΝ
 " νεκρων is *one* thing and ανασασις νεκρων *another*.
 " The addition of the *article* ΤΩΝ makes the
 " expression *emphatic* and *definite*, its absence *in-*
 " *definite*. Νεκροι without the *article* means *all*
 " the dead; *with* it, *such* and *such individuals*
 " only." After this, he adds, "This distinction is a matter of *great consequence*, and they
 " who

“ who have not adverted to it, have little know-
 “ ledge of *Greek*; but they who are well skilled
 “ therein, will comprehend the reason, and think
 “ that the apostles words υπερ των νεκρων properly
 “ refer to some *particular* dead persons.” But
 this is a weak distinction, as is clear from what
 has been already advanced. *In this very chapter,*
 νεκροι and ΟΙ νεκροι are used *indifferently* (with or
 without the *article*) *without*, in verses 12, 13, 15,
 20, 21, 29, 32.—*with*, in verses 29, 35, 42, 52.
 Compare also, Matt. xiv. 2. Mark xii. 26. John
 v. 25. 1 Theff. iv. 16.

Casaubon, in his notes upon the words προσεχετε
 $\text{δ: απο των ανθρωπων}$, *Beware of men*, Matt. x. 17.
 makes an observation respecting the *article*, *di-*
rectly opposite. “ That is (says he) *all* men; for
 “ we must attend to the force of the *article*.
 “ ΟΙ ανθρωποι means *men*; but when ανθρωποι is
 “ used, we understand some *particular men*.”
 yet he justly adds, “ *But these distinctions are too*
 “ *minute and refined.*”

Noldius, in his *Concord. Particul. Heb. Chald.* p.
 947, 948. says, The *Greek article* is sometimes
simply demonstrative, as Matt. ii. 5, 11. iv. 20.
 xvi. 23. Mark ix. 23. Luke vi. 8. John vi. 10.
 Rev. xvii. 15, 16. Sometimes it is *emphatically*
demonstrative, as Matt. i. 17, 23, 25. ii. 2, 6.
 xvi. 16. Luke i. 34. ii. 26. John iv. 24. vi. 32.
 x. 11. xx. 28. Acts iii. 14. ix. 17. xviii. 28.
 1 Cor. iii. 11, 13. 1 Tim. vi. 15. Heb. ix. 7.
 1 John v. 17. Rev. xvii. 14. (It sometimes even
 implies *contempt*. 2 Theff. ii. 3. 2 John verse 7.
 or is used by way of *antiphrasis*, as when *false*
Gods have the *article* prefixed to them. Acts vii.

43. xiv. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Gal. iv. 8. Phil. iii. 9.) Sometimes the *article* is omitted before what is highly respectable, as Θεός, *without the article*, Matt. iv. 4. v. 9. vi. 24. xii. 28. John i. 1. 6, 12, 13, 18. iii. 2, 21. viii. 54. xvi. 30. xix. 7. 2 Cor. i. 21. v. 5. Rom. i. 7. 1 Theff. i. 9. Hunnius (*Exam. Photin. c. 3. p. 27.*) has taken notice of above two hundred such instances, *instead of* ο θεός. See John iv. 24. Rom. vi. 23. 2 Cor. i. 19, 23. 1 Theff. v. 23. Tit. i. 7. Πνεύμα, John iii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 11. Jude ver. 11. for το πνεύμα, Matt. xviii. 19. 2 Cor. iii. 17. 1 John v. 6, 8. κύριος, Luke i. 76. for ο κύριος Luke i. 6, 9.—Ρημα, Rom. x. 17.—for το ρημα, Rom. x. 8, &c.— Sometimes it is useless, or at least it is impossible to say what it means; το εργον 1 Cor. iii. 13. οι νεκροι. Matt. xiv. 2. Mar. xii. 26. John v. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 29, 35, 42. 52. 1 Theff. iv. 16. instead of which, νεκροι, without the *article* is used, Luke xvi. 30. 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13, 15, 20, 29, 32 — Scaliger (not indeed with respect to the *sacred* but *prophane* writers) has properly called the *article*, “the plaything of a prattling nation:” so says Frischlin, *Gramm. p. m. 89.* And Tarnovius, *Exercit. p. m. 675.* has justly remarked, concerning these, and various other passages, “That the *subject matter*, what goes *before*, and what *follows*, will sufficiently indicate, whether the *article* be *definite* or *indefinite.*”

A View of the Principles of the later Platonists.

THOSE who are usually called the *later Platonists*, were those philosophers, chiefly of Alexandria, who, a little before and after the commencement of the christian æra, adopted the general principles of Plato, but not without incorporating with them those of other philosophers, so that theirs was not an absolutely pure and unmixed platonism. However, in their notions concerning *God*, and the *general system of things*, they aimed at this, pretending only to interpret the meaning of Plato, and to reason from his principles; though their refinements have only served to make the system more mysterious and absurd.

We see, in the writings of these later Platonists, or may better conjecture from them, what was meant by the *ideal* or *intelligible world*, which makes so great a figure in this system, and which is sometimes confounded with *nous* or *logos*, the seat, receptacle, or place of this ideal world. But in their writings, the term *logos*, of which so much account is made in the works of Philo, and the philosophizing christians, does not much occur; though there can be no difficulty in admitting that it was synonymous to *nous*, or *mind*, each of them

signifying the principle of reason, or that from which *logos* in its usual acceptation, viz. that of *speech*, proceeds; every thing that is *uttered*, being first *conceived* in the mind, and existing there.

Besides the *visible world*, which is perceived by the organs of sight, these philosophers supposed that there was also an *invisible world*, exactly corresponding to it, capable of being perceived and contemplated by the mind only. And the only probable key to their meaning is to suppose, that this invisible world of ideas, which furnished a pattern for the visible world, always existing in the divine mind, and sometimes confounded with it, was at other times considered as a thing different from the divine being himself, whose mind it was.

When they consider this *intelligible world* as the source and cause from which the visible world was derived, they sometimes speak of it as a *person*, the maker, or *demiurgus* of the world; but though they supposed that there was another principle higher than this *nous*, or *demiurgus*, they seldom or never speak of that as of a person also, so as to have the idea of two intelligent persons at the same time; or if they do, it may be presumed to be only in a mystical or figurative way of speaking. For as, on some occasions, they speak of their *nous*, as a mere *repository of ideas*, the *place of the intelligible world*, or the intelligible world itself, and no proper person; so, on other occasions, they speak of the higher principle of all, what they call the *good*, not as a *person*, but a *property* only,

only, something belonging to every thing that is divine, to the terrestrial as well as the celestial Gods, and even to the soul of man itself. There was, however, enough of personification in what the Platonists say of the divine *nous*, or *logos*, to give a handle to Philo, and the christian Fathers, to make a little more of it, as it was very convenient to their purpose to do.

That the real conceptions of the Platonists were not favourable to the doctrine of *two proper divine persons*, may be inferred from its being so generally said, that Plato made no more than *two* principles of things. Thus Diogenes Laertius, in his life of Plato, says that “ he made “ two principles of all things, God and matter, “ calling the former *mind* and *cause* *.” In the dissertation of Maximus Tyrius, one of the most sensible and pleasing of all the Platonists, the title of which is, *What is God according to Plato*, there is no account of any distinction between *the good*, and the *nous*, but only the doctrine of one God the king and father of all, and many other inferior gods, the children of the supreme, reigning with him †. The divine intellect, or *nous*, he considers as a *power* of the divine mind; and he compares the quickness of its operations to those of *sight*, while those of the human intellect resembles *speech* only ‡;

* Δυο δε των παντων απεφηνεν αρχας, θεον κ̄ υλην, ου κ̄ νεν προσαγορευσι, κ̄ αῑιον. L. III. p. 228.

† Οτι θε̄ς εις, παντων βασιλευς, κ̄ πᾱτηρ, κ̄ θεοι πολλοι, θε̄ς παιδες, συναρχοντες θε̄ω. Diff. I. p. 6.

‡ Τον μεν θε̄ιον νεν τω οραν, τον δε ανθρωπινον τω λεγειν. Ib. p. 12.

or the former, he says, may be compared to the darting of the light of the sun, and the latter to the motion of the sun. "Such," says he, "does the academic angel (i. e. Plato) exhibit to us the father, and the author of all things*." Here is no personification of the *nous*, or *logos*, at all; and yet I doubt not, he delivered the genuine principles of platonism, divested of mystery and figure.

According to Proclus, the *nous*, or reason, of man, is a principle exactly similar to that of God. "Our *nous*," he says, "is separate from the good, and wants something, and therefore desires pleasure, for the perfection of the man, but the divine *nous* always partakes of the good, and is united to it, and therefore is divine †."

As to the term *second God*, it is generally applied to *nature* by the later Platonists, as well as by Plato himself. Thus Plotinus says, "Nature itself is a god, and a second god, shewing himself before the other God is seen †." Yet Numenius called the first of the three principles, or gods, the "Father, the second of them the ma-

* Ο μὲν θεὸς νῦν κατὰ τὴν παραβολὴν τῆς ἡλίου πᾶσι εἶδη ἐξέρχεται ἐν τῇ γῆ τοπὸν ἀφροῦς, ὁ δὲ ἀνθρώπινος κατὰ τὴν πορείαν αὐτῆς ἀλλοίε ἀλλὰ τὰ μέρη τῆς οὐρα ἐπιπορευόμενα. Τέτον μὲν δὴ ὁ ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας ἡμῖν ἀγγελοῦ δίδωσι πάλαι ἰσχυρῶς γενήσῃν τῆς συμπαντικῆς. Ib. p. 12.

† Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἡμετέρος νοῦς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ διεζευχταί καὶ εἶναι ἐνδεής, καὶ διὰ τούτου δὴ πῶς καὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς δεῖται πρὸς τὴν τελειότητα τὴν ἀνθρώπινον. ὁ δὲ γὰρ θεὸς νοῦς αἰετῶς ἀγαθῷ μετεχει, καὶ συνήνωται πρὸς αὐτὸ, καὶ διὰ τούτου θεὸς εἶναι. In Platonem, L. II. c. iv. p. 92.

‡ Καὶ θεὸς αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις. καὶ θεὸς δευτέρως προφαίνων ἑαυτὸν, πρὶν ὄραν ἐκείνον. En. V. l. v. c. iii. p. 522.

"ker,

“ker, and the third the work, or the thing
“made.” Cudworth, B. I. c. 4. p. 552.

In Plato we find that the supreme God, *the good*, stiled himself the *Demiurgus* with respect to the celestial and eternal beings, and appointed them to be the makers of all things that were subject to destruction and death. But as the supreme being must have produced every thing by the exertion of his mind, or *nous*, and as it were from his *storehouse of his ideas*, it was natural enough for the later Platonists to fall into the habit of calling this *nous*, the *Demiurgus*, as it is done by Plotinus, who says, “The *nous* is the *Demiurgus*, who
“makes the soul, and the *nous* being a *cause*, he
“(Plato) calls the Father, *the good*, being some-
“thing above the *nous*, and above *essence*. He also
“often calls *being* and *nous*, *idea*; so that Plato
“acknowledged that *nous* or *idea* was from *the*
“*good*, and the *soul* from the *nous*, and that this
“account of things is not new, but though
“formerly given, was not well unfolded; but
“that the modern accounts are explanatory of
“them*.”

By *soul* in this place, Plotinus probably understood the soul of the universe, or perhaps

* Δημιουργος γὰρ οὖν ἐς αὐτῶν. τὸν δὲ φησὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ποιεῖν ἐν τῷ κρατῆρι ἐκείνῳ. τὴν αἰτίαν δὲ οὗτος πατέρα φησὶ ταγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἐπέκεινα οὗ, καὶ ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας. πολλαχῶς δὲ τὸ οὐ καὶ τὸν νοῦν, τὴν ἰδέαν λέγει. ὡς πλατωνία εἰδέναι ἐκ μὲν ταγαθὸν τὸν νοῦν, τὴν ἰδέαν· ἐκ δὲ τῆς οὐσίας τὴν ψυχὴν. καὶ εἶναι τὴν λογὴν τῆς οὐσίας, μὴ καὶ οὐσίας. μὴ δὲ οὐσίας. ἀλλὰ παλαιὰ μὲν εἰρηθῆαι μὴ ἀναπεπλάμενως τὴν δὲ οὐσίας λογὴν ἐξηγήσας ἐκείνων γεγονέναι. En. V. l. i. c. viii. p. 489.

soul in general, which he supposed to be of the same nature; and with the Platonists this was always considered as a principle inferior to *nous*. Thus Jamblichus says, “*Nous* is the governor and king of all, being the Demiurgic art of the whole. It is always with the gods, without imperfection, and without defect, consisting of itself in one single operation; whereas the *soul* partakes of *nous* but only in part, and multiform, looking to the director of the whole*.” In this passage, however, it is pretty evident, that the writer did not consider *nous* as an intelligent person, distinct from the supreme being, but his own proper wisdom and power, and very different from what the christian *logos* came to be.

As the Platonists confounded the *nous* with the supreme being, whose *nous* it was, so they likewise confounded this *nous* with the *ideas* belonging to it. Plotinus, after observing that the mind, or *nous*, perceives the *ideas* that are in it, considers whether these *ideas* be the *nous* itself, or something different from it; and concludes with saying that “they may be considered in both lights, distinguishable only in the conception of them; so that the *nous* and the things perceived by it, may be the same, as really existing, for it does not per-

* Νους τοιουν ηγεμων και βασιλευς των οντων, τεχνη δημιουργικη το παντος, τοις μεν θεοις ωσαυτως αι παρει, τελειως και ανεκδωως, κατα μιαν ενεργειαν εωσαν εν εαυτη καθαρωσ. η δε ψυχη ου τε μετεχει μεριση και πολυειδωσ, εις την τε ολη τε προσασιαν αναποβλεποντι. S. i. c. viii. p. 12.

“ceive altogether in another but in itself, on
 “account of its having the thing perceived in
 “itself. Or there is no reason why the thing
 “perceived may not be the *nous*, considered in
 “a state of fixity, unity, and quiet.*” In
 another place, speaking of the mind and its
 conceptions, he says, “The *nous* is at the same
 “time *all things*, but not altogether; but each
 “has its separate power; for all *nous* compre-
 “hends *ideas* as a genus, and as the whole com-
 “prehends the parts †.” According to this
 view of things, it should seem that the *nous* was
 considered as the same thing with the whole
 stock of its conceptions or ideas, and had no
 proper intellectual power belonging to it.

When the Platonists speak of the inferiority
 of the *nous* to God, they seem to do it as if they
 were merely fixing a scale of metaphysical prin-
 ciples, and not to have had an idea of there
 being two intelligent persons. And though
 they occasionally personify each of them, yet it is
 separately, and never, as far as I have observed,
 both together. This was reserved for the chris-
 tian Platonists. To make this more evident, I

* Ἐπειτα κεν κωλυει, οσαν τω λεγομενω εν ειναι αμρα,
 διαιραμενα δε τη νοησει: ειπερ μονον ως ον, το μεν νοητον,
 το δε νουν. Ο γαρ καθορα κ φησιν εν ελερω παντως αλλ' εν
 αυτω, τω εν αυτω το νοητον εχειν. η το μεν νοητω κεν κωλυει
 κ' εν ειναι εν σασει, κ' ενόησι, κ' ησυχια. En. IV. l. ix.
 c. i. p. 356.

† Ουτως εν και πολυ μαλλον, ο νες εσιν ομκ παντα. και αυ
 κχ ομκ οτι εκασον δυναμις ιδια. ο δε πας νος, περιεχει
 ωσπερ γενος ειδη. και ωσπερ ολην μερη. En. V. l. ix. c. vi.
 p. 560.

shall.

shall make a few extracts from Proclus respecting the inferiority of the *nous*.

“The nous,” says he, “is God, on account of the intellectual and intelligible light, which is more ancient than nous*.” Here *nous* is personified; but then the *light*, which is represented as superior to it, is not so. In the following passages the first principle is personified, but not the subordinate one. “What ever is God,” he says, “is above *essence*, and *life*, and *nous* †.” “*Nous* is the work and the first production of the gods ‡.” “*Unity* is God of itself, *nous* most godlike, *soul* divine, *body* like God ||.”

The passage which looks the most like the personification of both the first and second principles, is the following; but then the whole has the air of figure, so that the literal meaning is

* Και ο νους αρα Θεος, δια το φως το νοερον, και το νοητον, το και αυτε του νου πρεσβυτερον. In Platonem L. II. c. iv. p. 91.

Both the terms νοερος and νοητον occur in the writings of the Platonists, and, in some cases, it is not easy to make any difference in translating them, though the former should be rendered *intellectual*, and the latter *perceived by the mind*. However, Proclus says, “they may be considered as the same, on account of the fullness of the light which belongs to the latter.” Και το νοητον αμα η νοερον δια την εις αυτο καθηκουσαν τε φωτος αποπληρωσιν. In Platonem L. ii. c. i. p. 91.

† Δηλον δη οτι παντων εστιν επεκεινα των ειρημεων, απας Θεος, ουσιας, και ζωης, και νου. Instit. c. cxv. p. 463.

‡ Και γαρ ο νους δημιουργημα, και γεννημα των Θεων εστι το πρωτισον. In Platonem L. I. c. xxi. p. 55.

|| Και η μεν ενας, αυτοθεν Θεος: ο δε νους, θεοτατον η δε ψυχη, θεια: το δε σωμα, θεοειδες. Instit. c. cxxix. p. 470.

by

by no means clear. “ The Demiurgus, and
 “ Father of the universe, has the third place
 “ among the intellectual kings*.”

When we find such confusion in the ideas of these Platonists about their *nous*, and the *ideas* belonging to it, we cannot be surprized at their likewise confounding the *nous* with the Supreme Being, whose *nous* it was, sometimes calling the world the offspring of God, and sometimes the offspring of the idea of God, as in the following passage of Julian: “ This universe being the
 “ offspring of the idea of the first and the
 “ greatest good, being in its stable essence from
 “ eternity, received also power among the in-
 “ tellectual gods.” Or. IV. Opera, vol. i. p. 133.

I consider Julian as a Platonist from the admiration which he expresses of Plato's principles, and his frequent quoting of him; and he is as distinguished a Platonist as the rest by the inextricable confusion of his ideas on these subjects, as may be perceived in the following passage, in which it is not easy to say in what light he considered the *intelligible world*; but he seems to have thought it to be a kind of *magazine of ideas*, or patterns of things. And yet he represents *the good* as producing the world, as well as those ideas; and as making the world an image, not of them, but of himself. Speaking of the visible world, he says, that “ it is preserved by nothing
 “ immediately but a fifth body, the head of

* Ο μεν τοιγουν δημιουργος, και πατηρ τουδε του παντος, την τριτην ταξιν λαχων εν τοις νοεροις βασιλευσι. Proclus in Platonem, L. VI. c. vi. p. 355.

“ which is the solar ray, but as it were in the
 “ second gradation by the intelligible world,
 “ and in the highest place by the king of all,
 “ about whom all things are; he whom, whe-
 “ ther it be lawful to call one that is above *nous*,
 “ or the idea of things that exist, which I call
 “ the *whole intelligible*, or *the one*, because *the*
 “ *one* seems to be oldest of all, or what Plato was
 “ used to call *the good*: for this is the simple
 “ cause to all things that are, of beauty, per-
 “ fection, unity, and immense power. Remain-
 “ ing in itself according to its primary operative
 “ essence, he produced the sun the greatest God
 “ from himself, out of the middle of intellectual
 “ things and demiurgic causes, in all respects
 “ like to himself*.”

As the visible world is sometimes considered as *the child of God*, so the *intelligible world*, which supplied a pattern for it, is also sometimes considered in the same light, and called a child of the Supreme Being; and the following description of this child, and its properties, by Ploti-

* Οκ υπ αλλα μεν φρεμεν^Θ η προσεχως μεν υπο τε πεμπη σωμα^Θ & το κεφαλιον ειν ακηις ηλιε βαδμω δε ωσπερ δευτερω τω νοηω κοσμω· πρεσβυτερως δε ετι δια των παντων βασιλεα, περι ον παντα ειν. Ου^Θ τοιουν, ειε το επικεινα τε νε καλειν αυτον θεμις, ειε ιδεαν των οηων ο δη φημι το νοηον συμπαν, ειε εν· επειδη παντων το εν δοκει ως πρεσβυβαλον· ειτε ο Πλατων ειωθεν ονομαζειν το αγαθον· αυτη δη εν η μονοειδης των ολων αιτια πασι τοκ εσιν εξηγεμενη, καλλεα τε, κη τελειδτη^Θ, ενωσσεα τε, κη δυναμεωα αμηχανα· κατα την εν αυτη μενεα πρωτεργον εσιν, μεσον εκ μεσων των νοερων κη δημιουργικων αιτιων ηλιον θεον μεγαλον ανεφηνεν εξ εαυτε, παντα ομοιον εαυτω. Ορ. IV. Opera, vol. i. p. 132.

nus,

nus, who certainly thought himself well acquainted with it, is mysterious enough; “As a
 “ person looking up to the heavens, and seeing
 “ the brightness of the stars, enquires who is
 “ their maker, so a person who looks into the
 “ intelligible world will admire the maker of it,
 “ and enquire who established it, who generated
 “ such a child, this beautiful child, the *nous*, a
 “ child produced from himself. This cannot
 “ be the *nous* itself, or the *child*, but before the
 “ *nous* and the child. The *nous* and the *child*
 “ must be after him, requiring to be understood,
 “ and nourished, which is nearest to that which
 “ wants nothing, not even to be understood.
 “ It has perfect truth and intelligence, for it
 “ has them in the first place, being before all,
 “ neither wanting any thing, nor having any
 “ thing; for otherwise it would not be *the good**.

The latter part of this description would more naturally lead the mind to the idea of a *principle*, or *property*, than to that of a person; but this is still more the case in the following passage from Jamblichus, who, in an account of the principles of Hermes, or those Egyptian doctrines

* Ως δε αναβλεψας εις τον κρανον και το των ασρων
 φεγγος ιδων, τον ποιησαντα ενθυμειται και ζητει: ετω χρη
 και τον νοητον κοσμον ος εθεασατο και ενειδε και εθαυματε
 τον κακειν ποιητην. Τις αρα ο τοιαυτον υποσησας ζητειν,
 η που η πως, ο τοιαυτον παιδα γενησας, νεν, κορον καλον,
 και παρ αυτου γενομενον κορον; παντως τοιαυτε νες εκεινος
 ετε κορος, αλλα και προ νου και κορη. μετα γαρ αυτον, νες,
 και κορος, δεηθεντα και κεκορεσαι, και νανοηκεναι. α πλησιον
 μεν εστι τε ανενδεους, και τον νοειν εδεν δεομενυ: πληρωσιν
 δε αληθινην και νοησιν εχει, οτι πρωτως εχει. το δε προ
 αυτων, ετε δειται, ετε εχει: η, ε κ' αν το αγαθο ην. En.
 III. L. v. c. x. p. 353.

which were probably the source of all the knowledge (or to speak more properly, of all the mistakes) of Plato, describes the Supreme Being, or *the good*; and yet the greater part of the passage gives us the idea of two different gods, one of which was derived from the other. But then the *god* and *king* that he speaks of as the inferior, was, perhaps, no other than the sun, as his Latin translator has supposed, and therefore it gives us no distinct idea of the personification of the divine *nous*, or *logos*. “ Before all things that
 “ really are, and the principles of all things,
 “ there is one God, prior to the first God and
 “ king, immoveable, remaining in his own im-
 “ moveable unity, not mixed with any thing
 “ intelligible, or any thing else, but the pattern
 “ of that God who is his own father, his own
 “ child, and the only father of the essentially
 “ good. For it is prior and greater, and the
 “ fountain of all, and the source of all the first
 “ intellectual ideas. From this one God shone
 “ for the God who is self-sufficient, for he is
 “ the principal, and the God of Gods, unity
 “ from one, before all essence, and the principle
 “ of essence, for from him comes essence and
 “ entity. He is therefore called the principle
 “ of what is intelligible. These are the oldest
 “ principles of all things, which Hermes places
 “ before the ethereal, the empyreal, and ce-
 “ lestial gods *.”

* Προ των οντως οντων, και των ολων αρχων εσι θεος εις, πρωτος, και τε πρωτε θες και βασιλευς, ακινητος εν μονοτητι τε εαυτε ενσητη μενων. ελε γαρ νοητον αυτω επιπλεκεται, ετε αλλο τι. παραδειγμα δε ιδρυσαι τε αυλοπαροου, αυλογουα,

We shall the less wonder at this confusion of ideas, if we attend to another of the Platonic maxims, viz. That *being* and *energy* are the same things. This was before cited from Julian, and I now find the same in Plotinus, who says expressly, that “*energy* is the same thing with “*being**.” Accordingly, he calls the soul “one “simple energy, and as its nature is *to live*, it “therefore cannot perish †.” This is evidently making the soul to be nothing more than the principle, or property, of *life*; but then this is an extraordinary argument for its immortality, as it comes to nothing more than saying that *life* and *death* are opposite things. But it is not my business in this place to attend to the many absurdities of the Platonists about the soul, and therefore I shall return to my proper subject.

In most of the preceding passages *the good* is described as synonymous to the Supreme Being, and of course a proper person; but it is generally mentioned in the neuter gender, and is described in such a manner as gives us the idea of a principle, property, or power, capable of being communicated to other beings, and even

αυτογονου, και μονοπατωθε θεου, τε ούτως αγαθε. μειζον γαρ τι και πρωτον, και πηγη των παντων, και πυθμην των νοουμενων πρωτων ειδων ουτων. απο δε τε ενος, τελει, ο αυταρκης θεος εαυτον εξελαμψε, διο και αυτοπατω, και αυταρκης. αρχη γαρ ουτος, και θεος θεων. μονος εκ τε ενος, προουσιθε και αρχη της υσιας. απ' αυτε γαρ υσιοτης και η υσια. διο και νοηταρκης προσαγορευεται. Αυται μεν ουν εισιν αρχαι πρεσβυλαι παντων, ας Ερμης πρωτων αιθεριων και εμπυριων θεων προταπει, και των επερανιων. S. VII. c. ii. p. 158.

* Εσι δε η το ον ενεργεια. En. V. l. ix. c. viii. p. 561.

† Ψυχη δε μια η απλη ενεργεια υσα, εν τω ζην ουσις ε τωινυ ταυτη φθαρησεται. En. IV. l. vii. c. xii. p. 466.

to the soul. "There is," says Jamblichus, "a good which transcends essence, that which is essentially good, I mean the most ancient and valuable essence, and in itself incorporeal, the peculiar property of the gods, which, in all kinds of them, preserves their peculiar distribution and order, which is never separated from them, and is the same in them all." He also says that "souls which govern bodies have not the essence of the good, nor the first cause of good, which is prior to essence, but a certain portion, and acquisition from it*.

Proclus generally speaks of *the good* in the neuter gender, as if it was a *principle*, and no *person*, and that they were mere metaphysical considerations which led him to place this *good* at the head of the universe, is evident from his reasoning on the subject. "The good," he says, "is above every thing, because all desire good †." But from the idea of a metaphysical principle, we easily pass to that of a *cause*, and from a *cause* to a *being*, or *person*. "The good, (*αγαθόν*)" he says, "is the principle and first

* Εσι δὴ ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ, τὸ τὲ ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, καὶ κατ' οὐσίαν ὑπαρχόν· ἐκείνην λέγω τὴν οὐσίαν τὴν πρεσβυτάτην καὶ τίμιωτάτην, καὶ καθ' αὐτὴν οὐσίαν ἀσωμάτου· Θέων ἰδιώμα ἐξαιρέτου, καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὰ γένη τὰ περὶ αὐτὸς ὄντα, τήρην μὲν ἐν αὐτῶν τὴν οἰκείαν διανομὴν καὶ τάξιν, καὶ ἐκ ἀποσπώμενον ταύτης, τὸ αὐτὸ δ' ὁμῶς ἐν ὅλοις ἄσωτως ὑπαρχόν. Ψυχῆς δὲ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ἀσωμάτων, οὐσία μὲν ἀγαθῆ ἐκ ἐπιπαρεσῆν, ἐδ' αἰτία τῆ ἀγαθῆ προτέρα οὐσα καὶ τῆς οὐσίας. ἐποχὴ δὲ τις ἀπ' αὐτῆ καὶ ἐξίς παραγίνεται. S. I. c. v. p. 8.

† Ἐι γὰρ πάντα τὰ ὄντα τῆ ἀγαθῆ ἐφίεται δὴλον ὅτι τὸ πρῶτως ἀγαθόν ἐπέκεινα ἐσι τῶν ὄντων. Instit. c. viii. p. 418.

"cause."

“ cause *,” and the first cause he makes synonymous to God. “ God and the good (*αγαθον*) are the same. For that beyond which nothing is, and which all desire, is God †.”

It was by metaphysical reasoning that the Platonists made *the good* to be synonymous to *the one*, all numbers consisting of unity repeated, and therefore proceeding from it, and being resolvable into it, as they said that all things proceed from, and return to, their respective causes; a maxim which occurs perpetually in Proclus. “ The one and the good (*αγαθον*)” he says, “ are the same ‡.”

Though every thing was by the Platonists called *αρχη*, or *principle*, with respect to that which immediately followed it, yet in the strict sense they applied this term to the first and highest principle only. “ Nothing,” says Proclus, “ is superior to the *αρχη*; for if *essence* was before *the one*, *essence* must be *the one*, but it is not so ||.” He also makes *life* synonymous to the first principle, for he arranges all kinds of beings in the following order, *life, nous, soul,* and *body* §.

* Παντων των οντων αρχη η αιτια πρωτιση το αγαθον εστι. Opera, vol. I. c. xiii. p. 420.

† Και γαρ τ' αγαθον η δεσ ταυτον. κ γαρ μηδεν εστιν επικεινα, η κ παντα εφιεται δεσ τωτο. Ib. c. cxiii. p. 462.

‡ Ταυτον γαρ εν η τ' αγαθον. Ib. c. xx. p. 425.

|| Της γαρ αρχης κδεν ειναι κρειηον εστιν αναγκαιον. εσ δε η εστια προ τε ενος, απρονδος εσαι την εστιαν το εν, αλλ' αρχη εστια το εν. In Platonem L. II. c. iv. p. 84.

§ Η μεν εκ προοδος των οντων, αυτη, δια ζωης, και νο, η ψυχης, εις την ζωματικην τελευτησασα φυσιν. Ib. L. III. c. vi. p. 131.

As the supreme being, or cause, must, according to these sublime Platonists, be superior to every thing, it is amusing enough to see how they were puzzled in making him superior to *essence*, which also they strangely enough make synonymous to *nous**. If God must be superior to *essence*, and be the *cause* of *essence*, they were well aware that he must then have made himself, since he must have *essence* as the foundation of his other properties. This, therefore, seems to have been admitted by the Platonists, and their reasoning on this subject is truly not a little curious. Plotinus says that “essence is not a cause with respect to God, but God with respect to essence, for he made it for himself, and having made it, placed it without himself, he not wanting essence, since he made it; for, considered as *being*, he did not make being. But it will be said, he must then have been before he was, if he made himself, being his own maker; but we must say, that he is not to be considered as a thing made, but as a maker †.” On this a question is started, whether God could have made himself otherwise than he did.

* Και γαρ ο υς οσια. Proclus in Platonem, L. II. c. iv. p. 93.

† Ουδε εστιν αυτω αρχη η οσια αυτε. αλλ' αυτος αρχη της οσιας αυ, εχ αυτω εποισε την οσιαν. αλλα ποιησας ταυτην εξω ελασεν εαυτε. ατε κθεν τε ειναι διομενος, ος εποισεν αυτο. ε τινυν κδε καθ ο εσι ποιει το εσι. Τι εν ε συμβαινει ειποι τις αν πριν η γενεσθαι γεγονεναι. ει γαρ ποιει εαυτον, το μεν εαυτε κπω εσι. Το δ' αυ ποιειν, εστι η δη προ εαυτε, τε ποιημενε οντος αυτε. προς ο δη λεκτεον, ως ολωσ ε τακτεον κατα τον ποιημενον, αλλα κατα τον ποιητηντα. En. VI. L. viii. c. xix. xx. p. 754.

But it is answered, that "God being *will itself*,
 " there could be no will prior to his existence*."
 Proclus says, that "What subsists of itself, be-
 " ing one, is at the same time the *cause* and the
 " *caused* †.

This notion of the superiority of the divine
 essence to every thing else, led these Platonists
 to some curious distinctions with respect to *the*
place of God; and as they imagined that his
 being *contained* in any thing would imply some
 kind of inferiority, they therefore made him the
container. "The Gods," says Jamblichus, "are
 " not subject to any part of the universe, nor is
 " any part free from them; but, being supe-
 " rior, they are not so *in it* as to be contained by
 " it, but they contain all things, and terrestrial
 " things have their essence in the divine full-
 " nefs ‡." To illustrate this, he says that
 " as light contains the things which are en-
 " lightened by it, so the power of the gods
 " contains the things which partake of it §."

* ΕΔΥΝΑΤΟ εν αλλοτι πάειν εαυτον η ο εποίησε; κδε το
 προ βελήσεως αρα. παρτων αρα η βελήσις αυτης. Plotinus,
 En. VI. L. viii. c. xix. xx. p. 755.

† Εν γαρ εν αμα κη αιλιον εσι κη αιτιατον. Inffit. xlvii.
 p. 436.

‡ Ουτε γαρ οι θεοι κραβονται εν τισι τε κοσμη μερεσιν,
 κτε τα περι γην αμοιρα αυτων καθεσηκεν. αλλ' οι μεν
 κρειπλονες εν αυτω ως υπο μηδεν περιεχονται, κη περιεχουσι
 παντα εν αυσις τα δ' επι γης εν τοις πληρωμασι των θεων
 εχουσα το ειναι. C. viii. sec. i. p. 15.

§ Ωσπερ εν το φως περιεχει τα φωτιζομενα, ελωσι κη
 των θεων η δυναμις τα μεταλαμβανοντα αυτης εξωθεν περι-
 ειληφε. lb. c. ix. f. i. p. 17.

Agreeable to this, Plotinus says, that “intelligible place is in God, and not God in it*.”

The soul likewise having the same superiority to the body, that God has to the intelligible world, it follows from the same principle, that the soul of the world is not contained in the world, but the world in its soul. Accordingly, Plotinus says, “The soul is not in it, but it is in the soul; for the body is not the place for the soul, but the soul is in the *nous* †.” Pursuing the same idea, he would have said that the *nous* was in *the good*.

Again, as the soul of man bears the same relation to the body of man, that the soul of the world bears to the world, Plotinus says, that “Plato, giving a soul to the body, did well in saying that the body was in the soul.” He illustrates this by saying, in the same connexion, that it is more proper to say that “air is in light, than that light is in air ‡.” From this specimen of the *physics* of Plato, some idea may be formed of his *metaphysics*; for he is just as *great* in the one as he is in the other. If we may reduce to some general maxim all his observations concerning *the place of things*, we

* Ο δε νοητος τοπος εν αιτω, αυτος δε εκ εν αλλω. En. VI. L. vii. c. xxxv. p. 727.

† Ψυχη δε εκ εν εκεινω αλλ' εκεινος εν αυτη. εδε γαρ τοπος το σωμα τη ψυχη αλλα ψυχη μεν εν νω. En. V. l. v. c. ix. p. 528.

‡ Ωσε ορθως εχειν η ενταυθα λεγειν, ως ο ανρ εν τω φωτι: ηπερ το φως, εν τω αερι. διο η πλατων καλως την ψυχην εθεσ εν τω σωματι επι παντος, αλλα το σωμα εν τη ψυχη. En IV. l. iii. c. xxii. p. 388.

should

should perhaps say, that when two things, which have mutual action, exist together, that which is the more refined, and the more excellent of the two, is to be considered as the *container*, and the other as the *contained*.

Having seen this strange confusion of ideas respecting the divine nature, its operations, and influences, we shall the less wonder at the mysticism of these Platonists with respect to the exaltation of the mind of man by a supposed union with the divine nature, so as to be *supported* and *nourished* by it; for it was a maxim with them, that every thing is perfected and nourished by its proper *cause*, as Jamblichus says, “the soul is perfected by the *nous*, and nature “by the soul; and in like manner other things “are nourished by their causes*.” One would think, however, that, admitting this principle, it might be sufficient to suppose every thing to be perfected by its proper and *immediate cause*; and, therefore, that the mind of man should be perfected by its union to the *celestial gods*, or at farthest to the divine *nous*, without having any communication with the highest principle of all, or *the good*; and indeed, upon this idea, Plotinus speaks of “the soul being attached to the *nous*, “and the *nous* to the *good* †.” Agreeably to this also, Jamblichus speaks of the soul as “raised

* Ψυχη μὲν γὰρ ἀπο τοῦ τέλειαι, φύσις δὲ, ἀπο ψυχῆς. τὰ δὲ ἀλλὰ ὡσαύτως ἀπο τῶν αἰτιῶν τρέφεται. C. x. sec. v. p. 126.

† Ἀνηρημενῆς δὲ ψυχῆς εἰς τὸν, καὶ ἴσ' εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. En. VI. l. vii. c. xxxiii. p. 734.

“ by *Theurgy*” (or certain magical operations)
 “ above all matter, and united to the eternal
 “ *logos**.”

But this was not sufficient for the souls of these philosophers, which aspired higher than those of ordinary men. They thought that they might pass through the *intelligible world*, to the highest principle of all, and be united to *the good* itself. Thus Porphyry says concerning Plotinus, that “ he was wakeful, and had a
 “ pure soul, always aspiring to the Deity, whom
 “ he entirely loved; that he did his utmost to
 “ deliver himself from the bitter waves of this
 “ cruel life, and that thus, as this divine person
 “ was raising himself in his thoughts to the first
 “ and supreme God, in the method described
 “ in the *banquet of Plato*; this God, without
 “ form or idea, and placed above the *nous*, and
 “ every thing intelligible, appeared to him; to
 “ which God,” he adds, “ I, Porphyry, once
 “ approached, and was united, in the 68th year
 “ of my age †.”

The means by which this union with the Deity is effected, is explained by Proclus, as far

* Εκλήθη πάσης υλης αὐτὴν ποιεῖ, μόνῳ τῷ αἰδίῳ λόγῳ συνένωμένην. S. X. c. vi. p. 177.

† Εἰρήλαι δ' οἷσι ἀγρυπνοῦσιν, καὶ καθάραν τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχον, καὶ αἰεὶ σπευδῶν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον καὶ διὰ πάσης τῆς ψυχῆς ἡρώ, ὅτι τὴν πάντ' ἐποιεῖ, ἀπαλλαγῆναι πικρὸν κύμα, ἐξυπαλυξά, τὰ αἰμασθῆσθε τὰδε εἶε. εἰὼς δὲ μαλιστα τείω τῷ δαιμονίῳ φῶσιν πολλακίς ἐναγοῦσι ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν πρῶτον καὶ ἐπέκεινα θεῶν ταῖς ἐννοίαις, καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐν τῷ συμποσίῳ ἐφηγημένας ὁδοὺς τῷ πλατωνί, ἐφανηκεῖνος ὁ μήτε μορφοῦν μη τετινα ἰδέαν ἔχων, ὑπὲρ δὲ νοῦν, καὶ πάντων νοήτων ἰδρυμένος. ὡ δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ ὁ πορφυρίου ἀπαξ λέγω πησιῖσθαι καὶ ἐνοθῆναι, εἶτος ἀγῶν ἐξηκοσὸν τε καὶ οὐδ' ὀσον. Plotini vita, ad finem.

as mere words can do it; but the meaning is, I own, above my comprehension. "The soul," he says, "entering into its own unity, beholds every thing, and God*." "Again," he says, "It is the faith of the gods that unites, in an unspeakable manner, all the kinds of gods, and demons, and happy souls to the good †." Those who can admire these things, should not complain of Jacob Behmen.

This wild enthusiastic notion of an union to God, to be obtained by contemplation, austericy, and a particular discipline, was eagerly embraced by many speculating christians, and contributed greatly to that turn for mysticism, which infected such great numbers in former times, and many even to this day. It likewise contributed to that fondness for solitude, and abstraction from the world, which gave rise to the establishment of hermits and monks. The language of many christians has been much the same with the following of Jamblichus, who describes "a two-fold state of man, one in which we are all soul, and being out of the body, are raised aloft, and dwell with the universal and immaterial gods; and another state in which we are bound by the shell of the body, so as to be confined by matter, and, as it were, wholly corporeal ‡."

* Εἰς εαυτὴν εἰσεσαν τὴν ψυχὴν, τὰ τε ἀλλὰ πάντα κάλοφθαί, καὶ Θεόν. In Platonem, L. I. c. iii. p. 7.

† Ὡς μὲν τὸ ὅλον εἶπεν, τῶν Θεῶν πῶς εἰν ἢ πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀρρητῶς ἐπιζούσα τὰ Θεῶν γένη συμπάντα, καὶ δαιμονῶν, καὶ ψυχῶν τὰς εὐδαιμονίας. Ib. l. I. c. xxv. p. 61.

‡ ΣΚΕΨΟΜΕΘΑ δὴ τὸ μέγα τὸτο συμφωνῶς τοῖς προειρημένοις, καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν διπλὴν κατάστασιν. ὅτε μὲν γὰρ
ολη

The word *Trinity* does not much occur in the writings of the Platonists, till we come to Proclus, who has a *Trinity of Trinities*, and pretends to find them all in Plato. I am far from being able to develop the ideas of Proclus on this subject, and shall only extract from him so much as may serve to shew, that he did not mean a trinity of *persons*, but only of *principles*. “Unity,” he says, “must precede the Trinity*.” He speaks of a “Demiurgus, as placed before the “Trinity †.” “All Trinity is *wholeness* ‡.” “In every Trinity there is an end, an infinite, “and a mixed §.” “Every thing divine is fair, “wise, and powerful. This Trinity belongs to “all the gods ||.” “For the three Trinities “themselves declare mystically the unknown “cause of the first, and altogether incommuni- “cable God ¶.”

ολη ψυχὴ γινόμεθα, καὶ ἐσμὲν ἐξω τῆ σωματικῆ, μετεωροὶ τε τῶν μετ’ ὀλῶν τῶν αἰλῶν θεῶν μέτεωροπολεμεν. ὅτι δ’ αὐ δεδμεθα ἐν τῷ σφραῶδει σωματι, καὶ ἀπο τῆς υλῆς καλέχομεθα, καὶ ἐσμὲν σωμαλοειδεις, S. V. c. xv. p. 130.

* Δεὶ δὲ αὐ πρὸ τῆς τριάδος, καὶ πρὸ παντὸς ἀληθες ἐν ἐκαστῷ διακοσμῷ τὴν μονοδα πρὸςπαρχειν. Πασαὶ γὰρ ταξεῖς θεῶν ἀπο μονοδῶ ἀρχονταί. In Platonem, L. V. c. xiv. p. 281.

† Καὶ ὁ μὲν εἰς δὴμιουργὸς πρὸ τῆς τριάδος τεταγμένῳ. Ib. L. VI. c. vi. p. 356.

‡ Καὶ ἔτως ἡ μὲν συμπασα τριάς, ὀλοτῆς ἐσιν. Ib. L. III. c. xx. p. 186.

§ Ἐν ἐκαστῇ γὰρ ἐστὶ πῆρας, ἀπειρον, μικτον. Ib. L. III. c. xiii p. 142.

|| Λεγει τοίνῳ ὁ Σωκράτης ὡς ἀρα πᾶν ἐστὶ τὸ θεῖον καλον, σοφον, δυνατον, καὶ τὴν τριάδα ταυτην διηκειν ἐπὶ πᾶσας ἐνδεικνυται τὰς τῶν θεῶν πρὸςδῆς. Ib. L. I. c. xxi. p. 56.

¶ Καὶ γὰρ αἱ τρεῖς αὐταὶ τριχῆς μουσικῶς ἐπαγγέλλουσι τὴν τε πρῶτη θεα, καὶ ἀμεθεκτε παντελῶς ἀγνωσον αἰτιαν. Ib. L. III. c. xiv. p. 143.

With

With respect to these different Trinities, he says, "the first Trinity is called one being*." He also speaks of the first Trinity as establishing all things, the second as giving them motion, and the third as reducing things to their first principles †. But the whole is most obscurely expressed. "The second Trinity," he says, "is called *wholeness*, perceived by the mind ‡." "Its parts," he says, "are *the one*, and *the being*, which are the extreme, and the middle power joins them, but does not perfectly unite them, as in the former Trinity." Ib. "This second Trinity," he says, "is in the *Timæus*, called *αιων* §." "After this," he says, "we see the third Trinity advanced, in which all intelligible multitude appears, in which we also see *wholeness*, but consisting of many parts ||."

* Καλεῖται δ' ἐν ἡ πρώτῃ τριάδι, ἐν ὄν. In *Platonem*, L. III. c. xx. p. 164.

† Ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν ὄντων ἡ μὲν πρώτη τριάς ἐδραζέειν ἐλεγχοῦτο τὰ πάντα, καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων τὴν δευτέραν τριάδα. μένει γὰρ ὁ αἰὼν ἐν αὐτῇ σταθερῶς. ἡ δὲ μετὰ ταύτην, προοδὸς, καὶ κίνησις, καὶ τῆς κατ' ἐνεργεῖαν ζῶης τοῖς ὅλοις χορηγός. ἡ δὲ τρίτη, τῆς ἐπιτοῦ ἐν ἐπιστροφῆς, καὶ τῆς τελειότητος συνελίσσεως τὰ δευτέρῃ πάντα πρὸς τὰς ἐαυτῶν ἀρχάς. Ib. L. IV. c. iii. p. 184.

‡ Καλεῖται τοίνυν ἡ δευτέρα τριάς, ὁλοῦς νοητῆ. μέρη δὲ αὐτῆς, τὸ ἐν, καὶ τὸ ὄν ἀκρὰ λέγω. μέση δὲ ἡ δύναμις ἕκαστα κἀνταυτὰ συναπτῆ, καὶ ἕχ' ἐνοὶ (κἀθάπερ ἐν τῇ πρὸ αὐτῆς) τὸ ἐν, καὶ τὸ ὄν. Ib. L. III. c. xx. p. 165.

§ Τὴν γὰρ μὲν δευτέραν μετὰ ταύτην ἐν *Τιμαίῳ* μὲν αἰῶνα προσειρήκεν. Ib. p. 169.

|| Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, τὴν τριάδα νοησάμεν ἐφέξις, ἀλλήν προείσαν, ἐν ἡ τὸ νοητὸν πληθὸς ἐκφαίνεται πάν, ἢν καὶ αὐτὴν, ὁλοῦτα μὲν, ἀλλ' ἐκ μερῶν πολλῶν υφίστησι ὁ Πάριδος. Ib. L. III. c. xx. p. 166.

When

In passing this censure on the writings of these Platonists, I am far from wishing to suggest a low opinion of the understandings of the *men*. I believe, that with respect to their intellectual powers, they were equal to any metaphysicians of the present age, or of any other; and so certainly was Thomas Aquinas, and many of the schoolmen. But mankind had not then attained to the first elements of metaphysical knowledge, which is now indeed in a very imperfect state, much behind many other branches of knowledge; and what poor work would Newton himself have made, if he had been set to read before he had learned half his letters. As the mere art of reading is perhaps attained with more difficulty than any thing that we learn subsequent to it, so we may say that it cost the world more pains and thought to acquire the very elements of philosophical and metaphysical knowledge, than it did to make the most shining discoveries afterwards. I am far, therefore, from despising the men who laboured under such great disadvantages; but I own that I do despise those who, neglecting, and affecting to despise, the greater light of the present day, involve themselves, and endeavour to involve others, in the darkness which overspread the world two thousand years ago.

Having thus represented what I apprehend Platonism to have been, I shall in the next place, endeavour to shew how thick a shade from this mass of darkness was thrown upon the Jewish religion in Philo, and the christian in the writings

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of the early Fathers. In the mean time, this idea of that system of philosophy which was most admired at the time of the promulgation of christianity, a system made use of to support a religion still more absurd than itself, debasing the faculties, and corrupting the morals of men, may serve to make us more thankful for the pure light of the gospel, which *the Father of lights* was pleased, in the fullness of time, to send, in order to disperse that gross and baneful darkness. A fuller display of Platonism, in a translation of the writings of Plotinus, Jamblichus, and Proclus (if it was possible to exhibit such wretched nonsense in any modern language) would contribute still more to make christianity appear to its proper advantage. And indeed to do it justice, it ought to be compared with that system of knowledge which human reason had actually produced at the time of its promulgation, and not with that which the reason of man (first put into a right track by itself) has, in the course of two thousand years, been able to produce.

P. S. In Plato's epistle to Hermias, Erastus, and Coriscus, mention is made of "God the governor of all things," and also of his father; but as no explanation is added, his meaning is not easily discovered. Writing to the three persons above mentioned, and wishing that their friendship might remain unalterable; he advises them, among other methods, to take a joint oath "by God the governor of all things, that are, and that are to come, and the Lord, the father of the governor and of the cause, whom if we truly philo-
"sophize

“sophize, we shall all know, as far as happy men
 “can attain to*.” If the construction of the
 Greek be attended to, we shall see that such a
 distinction is not made between the *governor*
 and *the father*, as we should have expected if
 they had been distinct persons. It will be seen
 that a person being *his own father* occurs in
 Jamblichus, and the conclusion speaks of no
 more than one person.

I shall close this Postscript with observing that,
 in what Plato says of the *father*, the *mother*, and
 the *child*, I supposed, p. 84. that by the *mother*
 he meant *space*. But I find that Proclus under-
 stood him to mean *matter*. Και γαρ εκει τι μεν ον
 πατερα, την δε υλην μητερα, κ' τιθηνην επονομαζει της
 γενεσεως. In Platonem, L. I. c. xx. p. 69.

* Επομνυτας ——— κ' των πατων δεων ηγεμονα
 των τε οντων κ' των μελλοντων, τε τε ηγεμονο κ' αιτια
 πατερα, κυριον, επομνυτας, ον, αν οντως φιλοσοφωμεν, εισο-
 μεν παντες σαφως, εις δυναμιν ανδραπων ευδαιμονων.

Of the Platonism of Philo.

IT has been seen that among the heathen Platonists, we have found no uniform and serious personification of the divine *nous*, or *logos*; so that it could be considered as a *distinct intelligent person*, but only strong figures, and a dark enigmatical description of the *ideas*, or the supposed *place of ideas* in the divine mind, constituting what they called the *intelligible world*, or the world to be perceived by the mind, and not by the senses; and which was an exemplar, or pattern, to the visible world. Upon the whole, it may be thought that the Platonists themselves proceeded no farther than to what may be called a strongly figurative personification of the divine intellect, considered as distinct either from the Divine Being himself, or those more excellent qualities from which he was denominated *the good*; so that it cannot be said that, if a Platonist had been seriously interrogated concerning his real opinion, he would have answered, that *the good*, and his *nous*, or *logos*, were two distinct intelligent persons, each having ideas, and being capable of reasoning and acting, though their language, literally interpreted, will occasionally bear that construction.

In Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, who was contemporary with the apostles, we find something
more

more nearly approaching to a real personification of the *logos*, a term which is much more frequent with him than with the Platonists themselves; and indeed it was observed by them, that what they called *nous*, the barbarians called *logos*, which is a literal translation of the Chaldee מלך. Philo says so much concerning *ideas*, and *the intelligible world*, and was withal so eloquent, that it has been justly observed, “either that Plato philonized, or that Philo platonized*,” but he was far from advancing so far as the platonizing christians. However, though he did not, like them, make a *permanent intelligent person* of the divine *logos*, he made an *occasional* one of it, making it the visible medium of all the communications of God to man, that by which he both made the world, and also conversed with the patriarchs of the Old Testament.

It will be seen that Philo's own ideas were far from being clear, or consistent, but he is much less confused than the proper heathen Platonists, and he sometimes exhibits a platonism of a simple, and less figurative kind. Thus, after observing that “an architect constructs a building after an idea which he has previously formed of it in his mind,” he says, “In like manner, we must judge concerning God, who intending to build a magnificent city, first devised the plan of it, from which he formed the visible world, using it as a pattern. As the pre-conceived plan of the building in the mind

* Τὸσαυτὸν δ' αὐτὸν τοῖς ἐλλήνεσσι παραχρῆν θαύμα τῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις δυνάμεως, ὡς καὶ λέγειν αὐτὸς, ἢ Πλάτων, φιλωνιζεῖ ἢ φιλωπλατωνιζεῖ. Phot. Bib. S. 105. p. 278.

“ of

“ of an architect has no existence externally, but
 “ is stamped upon the mind of the artist, in like
 “ manner this *world of ideas* has no place but the
 “ divine logos, which disposes all things. For
 “ what other proper place can there be to re-
 “ ceive, and contain, not only all ideas, but
 “ even a single idea. It is a world-creating
 “ power, which has its source in the *true good**.”
 “ In another passage also, speaking of the dif-
 “ ferent significations of *place*, he says that “ one
 “ of them is the divine logos, the whole of
 “ which God himself has filled with incorporeal
 “ powers †.” In this place the logos is evidently
 nothing more than the divine mind itself, or
 the seat of his ideas, and the *true good*, in the
 former passage, in which the creative power is
 said to reside, is the platonic term for the Su-
 preme Being.

Like the other Platonists, Philo does not, however, content himself with giving these *ideas*,

* Τα παραπλησια δη και περι Θεου δοξισειον, ος αρα την μεγαλοπολη κτιζειν διανοηδεις, ενενοησα προτεραν τους τυπους αυτης, εξ αν κοσμον νοητον συνησαμενος αποτελει τον αιδητον, παραδειγματι χρωμενθ εκεινω. Καθαπερ εν η εν τω αρχιτεκτονικω προδιατυπωθεισα πολις, χωραν εκτος εκ ειχεν, αλλ' ενεσφραγισο τη τε τεχνιτε ψυχη, τον αυτον τροπον εδ ο εκ των ιδεων κοσμος αλλον αν εχοι τοπον, η τον Θειον λογον τον παντα διακοσμησαντα. Επει τις αν ειη των δυναμεων αυτε τοπος ετερος, ος γενοθ αν ικανος, ε λεγω πασας, αλλα μιαν ακρατου ηντινου δεξαδαι τε και χωρησαι; Δυναμις δε και η κοσμοποιητικη, πηγην εχουσα το προς αληθειαν αγαθον. De Mandi Opificio, p. 4.

† Κατα δευτερον δε τροπον, ο Θειος λογος, ον εκπτεπληρακεν ολον δι ολων ασωματοις δυναμεσιν αυτος ο Θεος. De Somniis, p. 574.

of the intelligible world, which is composed of them, a place in the divine mind, or *logos*, but he also confounds them with the *logos*. “To speak plainly,” says he, “the ideal world is no other than the *logos* of God, who makes the world, nor is an ideal city any other than the reasoning of the architect intending to produce it*.” Agreeable to this use of the term *logos*, as synonymous to the *ideal world*, he says, “The imitation of a perfectly beautiful pattern, must be perfectly beautiful; but the *logos* of God must be more excellent than beauty itself, as it is in nature, without any additional beauty †.”

So far this writer is tolerably intelligible, and so also he is in the following passage, in which he speaks of the ideal world as formed by a power inherent in the divine mind. Speaking of God saying *Adam will be like one of us*, he says, “though God be one, he has many powers. By these powers the intelligible and incorporeal world is made, the architype of that which is visible, consisting of invisible ideas, as this does of visible bodies †.”

* Εἰ δὲ τις ἐθέλησῃ γυννυτέροις χρῆσασθαι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, ἕθεν αὐ. ἕτερον εἶποι τὸν νοητὸν εἶναι κόσμον, ἢ Θεὸν λόγον ἢ δὴ κοσμοποιούντῳ. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ νοητὴ πᾶσις ἕτερον τι ἐστίν, ἢ ὅτι ἀρχιτεκτονος λογισμὸς ἢ δὴ τὴν νοητὴν σοφίαν κλιζεῖν διαιοκμεῖν. De Mundi Opificio, p. 5.

† Ἀναγκὴ δὲ παγκάλῃ παρδείγματῳ πάλκαλον εἶναι μιμημα. Θεὸς δὲ λόγος, καὶ αὐτὸς κάλλος, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ φύσει κάλλος, ἀμεινωτῶν, ἢ κοσμημένος κάλλει. Κοσμητὴς δ' αὐτὸς ὢν; εἰ δὲ πάληθ' εἰπεῖν, ἐκπρεπέστατος ἐκεῖνα. Ib. p. 32.

‡ Εἰς αὐτὸν ὁ Θεὸς ἀμυδῆτους περὶ αὐτὸν ἐχει δυνάμεις. Δι' αὐτῶν τῶν δυνάμεων ὁ ἀσώματος καὶ νοητὸς ἐπάγειν κόσμος.

In one passage he speaks of these divine powers by which the invisible world is made as *two*, but he does not explain himself with respect to that particular number. "God," says he, "being one, has two supreme powers. By these powers the incorporeal and ideal world is made, the archetype of the visible world, consisting of invisible ideas, as this is visible to the eyes*." He likewise speaks of the divine logos as "flowing from the fountain of wisdom like a river †." But in the following passage he makes the logos to be the same with *wisdom*, and thereby makes a nearer approach to the ideas of the christian Fathers. Allegorizing the rivers of paradise, he says concerning one of them, that "it is the river which is productive of goodness. It proceeds from the wisdom of God, which is the logos of God; for according to this its productive power is made ‡."

But in another place he makes the *logos* to be different from this *wisdom*, which he makes to be the mother of the logos; and this circumstance may, perhaps, throw some light upon

κοσμος, το τε φαινόμενν τῆδε ἀρχετυπον, ιδεαις ἀορατοις συσθεῖς, ὡσπερ κτος σῶμασιν ορατοις. De Confusione Linguarum, p. 345.

* Εἰς ὧν ὁ Θεὸς, δύο τὰς, ἀνώτατω δυνάμεις εχει. Δια τούτων τῶν δυνάμεων, ὁ ἀσώματος καὶ νοητοῦ ἐπαγῆ κοσμος το τε φαινόμενν τῆδε ἀρχετυπον, ιδεαις ἀορατοῦ συσθεῖς ὡσπερ οὗτος ὀμμασιν ορατοῦ. De Mundo, p. 1150.

† Κατέϊσι δὲ ὡσπερ ἀπο πηγῆς τῆς σοφίας ποταμῶ τροπον ὁ Θεὸς λογος. De Somniis, p. 1141.

‡ Ποταμὸς ἢ γενεὴ ἐστὶν ἀγαθότης. Αὐτὴ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τῆς τε Θεοῦ σοφίας. Ἡ δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς λογος. κατὰ γὰρ τῆτον πεποιτῆται ἢ γενεὴν ἀρετῆ. De Mundi Opificio, p. 52.

the

the *two divine powers*, by which, in the passage quoted above, he said that the intelligible world was made. Allegorizing Moses's description of the high priest, he says, "This high priest does not mean a man, but the logos of God, free from all sin, voluntary or involuntary. When Moses forbids him to defile himself on account of his father the *nous*, or his mother the *senses*, I think that he must have parents incorruptible and holy; his father God, who is also the father of all, and his mother *wisdom*, by which every thing was produced*." In this figurative and confused manner does Philo at length come to what may be called an intermediate principle between God and the creation. This logos he also calls "the *image of God*, by which all the world was made †."

Having got an *image of God*, he likewise makes an image of this image; but his expla-

* Λεγομεν γαρ τον αρχιερα, ουκ ανθρωπον, αλλα λογον Θειον ειναι, παντων εχ εκουσιων μον.ν, αλλα και ακουσιων αδικημάτων αμετοχον. ετε γαρ επι πατρι τω νω, ετε επι μηρι τη αιδησει φησιν αυτον Μωϋσης δυναθαι μαινεσθαι, διοτι οίμαι γονεων αρθάρων κ' καθαρωτατων ελαχεν. πατρος μεν Θεου, Ος κ' των συμπαντων εσι πατηρ, Μητρος δε σοφιας, δι ης τα ολα ηλθεν εις γενεσιν. De Profugis, p. 466.

Those who are offended at the allegorical method of interpreting the scriptures in Origen and the other christian fathers, should be informed that it is not peculiar to them, nor did it originate with them. Philo is as extravagant as any of them in the scope that he gave to his imagination in this way.

† Λογος δε εσιν εικων Θεου, δι ε συμπας ο κοσμος εδημιουργειτο. De Monarchia, p. 823.

nation of this I do not pretend fully to understand. Having called "the invisible and intelligible world the divine logos, or the logos of God, the image of God, and the image of that intelligible light which was the image of that divine logos, which explains its origin, It is," he says, "that super-celestial star, which is the source of the visible stars, and which may be called the universal splendor, from which the sun, moon, and stars, fixed or wandering, derive their respective splendors*."

But besides making the logos to be the image of God, Philo gives it an occasional real personification, and makes it to be the medium of the divine communications to mankind, the symbol of the divine presence, and even to assume the form of an angel, or a man. "Though no person," he says, "is worthy to be called the Son of God, endeavour to be accomplished like his first begotten logos, the most ancient angel, as being the archangel of many names; for it is called the αρχη" [the beginning or principle] "the name of God, and the logos, and the man according to his image, and the fear of Israel. For if we are not worthy to be called the sons of God, let us be so of his

* Τον δε αορατον κ' νοητον θειον λογον, κ' Θεου λογον, εικονα λεγει Θεου. Και ταυτης εικονα το νοητον φως εκεινο, ο Θεου λογος γεγοθεν, εικων τε διερμηνευσατος την γενεσιν αυτου. Και εστιν υπερεφανους αστηρ, πηγη των αιδηλων ασεραν. Ην εκ αποσκοπης καλεσειεν αν τις παναυγειον, αφ ης ο ηλιος κ' η σεληνη κ' οι αλλοι πλανητες τε κ' απλανεις, αμυνται καθ' οσον εκασω δυναμεις, τα ωρεπαντα φεσηγη. *De Mundi Opificio*, p. 6.

" eternal

“ eternal image, the most holy logos ; for this
 “ most ancient logos is the image of God *.”

We likewise find this logos dignified with the appellation of *god* ; but to distinguish him from the supreme God, he says, that the latter is known by the term God with the article prefixed to it, *the God* ; whereas the logos, like other inferior gods, is only called God without the article. Speaking of the God who appeared to Abraham, he says, “ The true God is one, “ but those who are figuratively so called are “ many ; wherefore the sacred word on this “ occasion distinguishes the true God by the “ article, I am *the God*, but he that is so called “ figuratively without the article ; he that ap- “ peared to thee in the place, not of *the God*, “ but only of *God*. For here he gives the name “ of God to his most ancient logos, not being “ solicitous about the name, but respecting the “ end which he proposed †.”

* Καν μηδεπω μεντοι τυγαανη τις αξιοχρεως αν υιος Θεου προσαγορευεσθαι, σπευδαζε κοσμεισθαι καλα τον πρωτογονον αυτε λογον, τον αγγελον πρεσβυβαλον, ως αρχαγγελον πολυωνυμον υπαρχοντα, η γαρ αρχη, η ονομα Θεου, η λογος, η ο και εικονα ανθρωπου, η σρων Ισραηλ προσαγορευεται. Και γαρ ει μηπω ικανοι Θεου παιδες νομιζεσθαι γενομεν, αλλα τοι της αιδικεικονος αυτε λογου τε ιερωβαθε. Θεου γαρ εικων, λογος ο πρεσβυβαλος. De Confusione Linguarum, p. 341.

† Ο μεν αληθεια Θεου, εις εσιν. οι δ' εν καλαχρησαι γενομενοι, πλειεις. δια η ο ιερος λογος εν τω παρολι τον μεν αληθεια, δια τε αρθρου μεμνηκεν, ειπων, Εγω ειμι ο Θεου τον δε καλαχρησαι χωρις αρθρου, φασκων, ο σφθεις σοι εν τοπω, ε τε Θεου, αλλα αυλο μονον, Θεου. Καλει δε τον Θεον τον πρεσβυβαλον αυτε νυνι λογον, ε δεισειδαιμονων περι την δεσιν των ονοματων, αλλ' εν τελος προσλεθειμενος πραγματολογησει, De Somniis, p. 599.

It might be imagined that the Divine Being, by the emission of this logos in so substantial a form, should be deprived of some of his proper power; but to this Philo would probably have replied, That this *second God* was only like a lamp lighted at the original fountain of light, which did not diminish its substance or splendor. For he does apply this comparison (which is so commonly used by the early christian fathers) to the case of Moses, whose spirit God is said to take from him, in order to impart it to the seventy-two elders. "This," he says, "is not
 " to be understood as if he suffered any loss
 " thereby, but it was like the lighting of one
 " torch by another, which is not diminished by
 " that means, though ten thousand be lighted
 " by one fire*." Or he might have supposed that the loss sustained by the emission of the logos was only temporary, because he thought that the emission of the logos only resembled the emission of light from the sun, which was afterwards drawn into its source again.

According to Philo, angels are nothing more than this divine logos; so that he could not consider them as having a permanent being. Speaking of Hagar, he says, "She was met by
 " an angel, which is the logos of God, advising
 " her to return to her mistress, and encouraging

* Λέγεται γαρ, ὅτι ἀφελῶ ἀπο τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἐπι σοι, καὶ ἐπιθήσω ἐπὶ τὰς ἐβδομηκοντὰ πρεσβυτέρους. ἀλλὰ μὴ νομισῆς οὕτω τὴν ἀραίρεσιν κατὰ ἀποκοπὴν καὶ διαζευξίν γινεσθαι, ἀλλὰ οἷα γένοιτ' ἀν ἀπο πυρός, ὃ καὶ μυρίας δάδας ἐξάβη, μένει μηδ' ὅτι οὖν ἐλάττωθεν ἐν ὁμοίῳ. De Gigantibus, p. 287.

" her*."

“ her*.” And treating of the migration of Abraham, he says, “ He that follows God must “ of necessity make use of the attending *logoi*, “ which are commonly called angels †.”

Thus it is evident, that Philo made a much more substantial personification of the divine *logos* than any of the proper Platonists had done; and it is very possible, that by the perusal of his writings, the christian fathers, to whom they could not be unknown, might be led to their still more enlarged system of personification. As Philo had represented the divine *logos* as being the immediate agent in all the communications of God to the patriarchs, they had nothing to do besides making this *logos* to be the same with Christ, and their scheme was very nearly completed. But Philo himself was far from imagining that the *logos* had any more relation to the Messiah than to any other prophet. According to him, it was the medium of the divine communications with the prophets, but was never supposed to reside with any of them, and much less to be inseparably attached to them, or to animate them. The *logos* was still a *divine influence*, or *efflux* apprehended to be something belonging to the Divine

* Σημειον δε, το υπανταν αυτη αγγελον Θειον λογον, ε χρη παραινεσοντα, η υφηγησομενον επαροδου της εις τον δεσποινικς οικον, ος η δαρσυνων φησιν, Επηκουσε κυριος τη ταπεινωσει σε, ην ετε δια φοβον εσχες, ετε δια μισος. De Profugis, p. 451.

† Ο δε επομετος Θεω, κατα ταναγκαιον συνοδοιπορις χρηται τοις ακολουθοις αυτε λογοις, κς ονομαζειν εδος αγγελου. De Migratione Abraham, p. 415.

Being,

Being, but occasionally emitted from him, and drawn into him again, when the purpose for which it had been emitted was answered.— Where Philo ended the doctrine of personification, that of the christian fathers began. The difference was that, whereas Philo thought the emission of the *logos* to be occasional, and to assume various forms, particularly that of angels, the christian fathers thought it to be constant and permanent, and interpreted it of Christ only.

But the first christians who adopted this opinion of the emission of a divine *logos*, or *efflux*, went very little farther than Philo, saying, as Justin Martyr explains their opinion, that this *logos*, which had been that which appeared to Moses and the patriarchs, in the form of a luminous cloud, or *glory*, which had sometimes assumed the form of a *man*, and constituted what are called *angels*, was likewise in Jesus Christ, and enabled him to work miracles, &c. Since, however, according to their opinion, nothing was emitted from God but what he could at pleasure draw into himself again, just as a beam of light was supposed to go out of the sun, and go back to its source (without indeed being ever separated from it) they who held it were properly *philosophical unitarians*; and this is the opinion that is ascribed to Marcellus of Ancyra, and other acknowledged unitarians of early times. Athenagoras held this doctrine with respect to the *holy spirit*, though he followed Justin Martyr in supposing that, after the emission

tion of the logos, before the creation of the world, it always remained a *person*, distinct from the Father, and constituted *the Son*, or *Christ*.

With respect to the Jews, it is evident that, in general, they did not use the term *logos* in the Platonic sense, but as synonymous to *God*, or the mere token, or symbol, of the divine presence. The Chaldee paraphrasts often use the term מִמְרָא, *mimra*, which may be translated *logos*, or *word*, as Gen. i. 27. *The word of the Lord created man*, instead of, *the Lord created man*. Gen. ix. 12. *This is the token of the covenant which I make between my word and you*, instead of *between me and you*. But that, in the ideas of these writers, the *word* of a person was merely synonymous to *himself*, is evident from their application of the same phraseology to man, as the same paraphraser says, Numb. xv. 32. *A certain man said in his word, I will go forth and gather sticks on the sabbath-day*, when he could only mean that *he said to himself*, or purposed in his own mind. Eccles. i. 2. *Solomon said in his word, Vanity of vanities, &c.* 2 Sam. iii. 15, 16. *Phaltiel put a sword between his word and Michael, the daughter of Saul*, i. e. between himself and Michael, as is justly observed by Mr. Lindfey, in the Sequel to his Apology, p. 381.

Phraseology similar to this is used in the book called the *Wisdom of Solomon*; when the author, describing the plagues of Egypt, says, chap. xviii. 15. *Thine almighty word leaped down from heaven, out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war, into the midst of a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment, as a sharp sword, and,*
standing

standing up, filled all things with death; and it touched the heavens, but it stood upon the earth. But that this is only a figurative description of the *power of God*, reaching from heaven to earth, is evident from the language of the whole chapter, where those plagues are ascribed to God, and no other being whatever. chap. xix. 9. *For they went at large, &c. praising thee, O Lord, who hadst delivered them.*

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

IF the following brief observations upon the apostolical or Jerusalem decree, as it has been sometimes called, be proper for insertion in your work, they are much at your service; and if you judge otherwise, I shall not be offended. I was led to make them some few Sundays since, when my course of duty called me to the exposition of the fifteenth chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*, though I had not probably communicated them at this time, and in this way, but for the following passage, p. 195, of your third number.

I

—“ and

—“ and after much debate on the subject,
“ which evidently implies a difference of opi-
“ nion among them (the apostles) at the be-
“ ginning, they agreed at length, that it would
“ be right not to circumcise any of the new
“ converts, but only to impose upon them the
“ observance of certain things, *by which we may*
“ *suppose they would become less obnoxious to the*
“ *Jewish christians.*”

This, I conceive, cannot be right; though with you, perhaps, in this instance may agree, the larger, and not the meaner part for learning and other commendable qualities, of the commentators.

For, first, it seems to me to be not thinking rightly, nor with due reverence and respect of this assembly of apostles and of elders at Jerusalem, to suppose that they would stoop to determine the important question before them upon any other ground than that of the real merits; for they are plainly, I conceive, appealed to as persons having authority, and as to whom it belonged to determine the matter judicially and finally. They are supposed, and do in fact suppose themselves, to be persons in authority, and not mere umpires, moderators, or referees, between contending parties. And why then should we suppose them to be only making concessions and contriving expedients, when it was even expected of them to act *ex officio*, and authoritatively?

But this is not all. For, supposing them to have done and intended to have done otherwise, it is obvious to remark, in the second place, that their expedient, or scheme of accom-

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modation

moderation between the Jews and Gentiles, cannot easily be conceived to be any thing better than very weak and ineffectual. For if the *cavilling* or *conscientious* Jews could give up every thing, but the very few things mentioned in ver. 20th and 29th of the before-mentioned chapter, why not *these* also? We may surely say here, if any where at all,

Quid te exempta levat spinis de pluribus una?

And, no doubt, they would have done so in such a case, and more especially, considering that these same *reserved* things, if I may so call them, do not seem to be those of which Jews, considered as Jews or Jewish christians only, were likely to be the most tenacious.

Note, In this reasoning I suppose, that the question, or subject proposed in ver. 1. was *pars pro toto*, and that subjugation to the *whole* law of Moses, or the contrary, was the thing to be considered.

What other account then remains to be given of this matter? My opinion is this, briefly, that the several things mentioned were considered by the apostles and elders as having something evil or wrong in them, independent of any mere Jewish prejudices, and as being at all times, and amongst all persons, an *inferior* sort of immoralities. Laying the consideration of *fornication* out of the question, for the present, (which will be seen, however, hereafter, to be a less difficulty upon my scheme than yours) let us observe a little on the other articles.

The first is that of *abstaining from meats offered to idols*. But is it possible to doubt, for a moment, whether the doing of this is a *duty*, at least

least of some *little* obligation (for the obligation to all duties is not equal) and the not doing so a species of immorality? So St. Paul convincingly proves, upon no peculiarly Jewish principles, in 1 Cor. x. 14—21. and the same will appear to be still agreeable to the common sense of mankind, if we will only consider how we are wont to be affected, or, however, should no doubt be, if any professed Deist or unbeliever should be known to partake, in our own times, of the Lord's Supper. I do not say the cases are quite the same; they will be allowed, I suppose, analagous and *nearly* similar.

I must be allowed to speak in the same manner of the *abstaining from blood*, which is the next thing mentioned; to think it, I mean, an *improper* thing; in other words, a *lower* species of immorality. To you, Gentlemen, it might be sufficient to observe in this view, what is said upon this subject in Gen. ix. where it is expressly forbidden, long before the peculiarities of the Mosaic law and ceremonial dispensation; and for reasons, probably, which were much *more* universal, and which we cannot but think must have been respected by this assembly of apostles and of elders. For let the reason originally have been to keep up in the minds of men, in those early and less cultivated ages of the world, a due sense of the preciousness of human life in particular, and a correspondent dread of murder and blood-shedding, as some phrases in that chapter may seem to suggest; or to have been rather this, to prevent any positively bad effects which the too free use of blood might be at-

tended with amongst mankind, making them, by a sort of natural and obvious consequence, greater bears, wolves, lions, hyænas, and tygers to one another, than they at present are (which is the hypothesis to which I incline, and to which the meliorating art of modern cookery, its propriety, usefulness, and even necessity, in some degree, tends to give some confirmation)—In either of these cases, who shall say that the prohibition was improper, either in the first instance, or when as now renewed and promulgated again by these apostles and first christian elders? And more especially when this circumstance is considered, that the gospel was now to be published in all nations, some of which were as barbarous, uncivilized, and ferocious in their manners, and as much in need of such a softening and humanizing precept as any of those for whom it had been formerly intended.

As the article concerning *things strangled*, or in which the whole quantity of blood is retained, has been generally supposed, and seemingly with justice, to stand upon the same basis as the former, it need not be now noticed more particularly: but that of *fornication* is more difficult to speak to. It is, however, much more so upon your hypothesis than mine; for upon you it is incumbent to tell us, if you can, why, in a connexion such as this, when only a few matters of a ritual and ceremonious nature were to be treated of and adjusted, so serious and substantial an immorality as this of *fornication* should be mentioned; of me, or Grotius (*absit invidia*) the enquiry to be made is, I apprehend, this

this smaller one only—Why, amongst such inferior immoralities as the former, one, which is confessedly of a more obvious and gross nature, and which would seem not to have needed to be so particularly specified and reprobated, should be mentioned.

And here, Gentlemen, I shall not answer, as Grotius does, by saying, that amongst the ancient heathen nations, *fornication* was usually considered as being rather a very venial than enormous offence, and did therefore now need, under the gospel, to be so particularly mentioned and proscribed; for I am by no means satisfied that this was the case, and think, that the illustrious commentator has here failed in his proofs very observably. He has, however, still done something. For I would ask, whether in the passage from Tertullian, which I find in him, and place in part below *, in which the Holy Father, speaking of the singular purity of the christian law above all others, says, or however insinuates, that it would neither permit *incest*, *polygamy*, or *divorce*,—we may not find the proper solution? And more especially, if to this we will subjoin what is somewhere observed by the candid and judicious Lardner, that the word *πορνειν*, or *fornication*, in this place, very probably means some peculiar kind of *incest*, or of marriage within the prohibited degrees, &c. though the *Credibility* not being be-

* —Adeo in Christo omnia revocantur ad initium, ut — & matrimonii individuitas, sicut ab initio fuit: et repudii cohibitio, quod ab initio non fuit," &c.

fore me, I cannot now quote, as you, no doubt, may, if you please, more particularly.

Note, By prohibited degrees, I would be understood to mean, not the Levitical ones only, or chiefly; but such rather, as the common sense and delicacy of mankind revolt against, more or less, in all nations and in all ages.

I would now conclude, Gentlemen, by desiring your answer to these questions:---First, Whether the exceptions which I have now opposed to the rightness of your interpretation, or, however, general idea of the nature and intention of the apostolical decree, are acknowledged by yourselves to have any force in them? Secondly, Whether you can allow that which I have offered to be more satisfactory? And if you cannot, then, Thirdly, Whether it may not with truth be said, that there is something yet wanting, in order to the setting in a just, full, and truly great and respectable light, the principles and conduct of these apostles and elders, when professedly assembled together upon so solemn an occasion?

INQUIRENDO.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I Ingenuously own, that I did not particularly attend to the words used in the original of those passages, in which, according to our translation, demoniacs are represented as calling Jesus *the* Son of God. Whether, if I had done so; I should have given such translations of them, as would have prevented Nepiodidascalos from charging me with an insufficient apprehension of the scripture phraseology, it is not necessary for me to say. It is more to my present purpose to observe, that, if I had happened to light upon the same criticism, relating to the expressions, $\nu\iota\ \Theta\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$, or $\tau\epsilon\ \Theta\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$, and $\circ\ \nu\iota\ \tau\epsilon\ \Theta\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$, and had found the former of them only employed to convey the ideas of demoniacs concerning the person of Jesus, my reply to the argument, drawn from their language in favour of real possessions, might have been much shortened. For scarcely any thing more would have been necessary than to have shewn, that the demoniacs appeared to conceive and speak of Jesus in the same manner as others of their countrymen, or, at least, in a manner that doth not prove them to have enjoyed any peculiar or superior knowledge of his person.

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But

But on reviewing the texts adduced in my former paper, I find ο αγιος τος Θεος, Mark i. 24. Luke iv. 34. ο Χριστος ο υιος τος Θεος, Luke iv. 41. and ο υιος τος Θεος, Mark iii. 11. used by demoniacs. I suppose, therefore, that, as they sometimes called Jesus *the* Holy One, *the* Christ, *the* Son of God, Nepiodidasalos will allow, that something more was needful to be done by a person who rejected the doctrine of real possessions; and that it was incumbent on such an one to account for their using those phrases without having recourse for that purpose to the supposition of their being suggested by indwelling spirits. Accordingly, he might have spared his criticism; or, if he had judged it proper, out of a becoming concern for truth, to publish it, in order to undeceive our readers, and prevent the repetition of like mistakes for the future, it would not have been amiss, had he at the same time intimated, that it did not weaken the force of my reasoning, as it most obviously doth not.

But I beg leave to say, that I cannot help entertaining some suspicion, that the assertion made by Nepiodidasalos, No. II. p. 218, will not be found to hold universally. He says, that “Jesus “ is *not* acknowledged to be the *Messiah*, or the Christ, or *the* Son of God—in all those passages (I suppose he means, any of those passages) where the expression is υιος Θεος, or τος Θεος, and not ο υιος τος Θεος.”

Perhaps he will insist, that the words ει υιος ει τος Θεος, Matt. iv. 3. 6. mean, *if thou be a divine character*. Though I am not perfectly satisfied, that this must be the case, unless it can be proved,

proved, that the same expression ought every where else to be so translated, yet I will not enter into any dispute about its meaning here, but proceed to the examination of some other passages, where the same, or some similar expression, occurs. Now, in Matt. xxiii. 35. we find the words *ὁ υἱὸς Βασιλέως* without the article, where, notwithstanding, *ὁ υἱὸς* seems plainly to be used in a definite sense, and to signify *the* Son, and not *a* Son. It doth not appear unlikely to me, that *ὁ υἱὸς* and *Βασιλεὺς*, Matt. xxvii. 40, 42. mean *the* Son, *the* King, as Jesus had not long before, in the presence, *probably*, of some, at least, of those who were passing by his cross, acknowledged himself to be *the* Son of God, ch. xxvi. 63. and to be *the* king of the Jews, *certainly*, in the presence of the chief priests, ch. xxvii. 11, 12.

Mark begins his gospel, in which he must be supposed to be professedly writing the history of *the particular person* called *Jesus*, with the words *Ἀρχὴ τῆς εὐαγγελίας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, which, indeed, may be translated, The (or Nepiodidascalos may choose) A beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, *a* Son of God, or a divine character; though it seems much more natural to translate *ὁ υἱὸς* by *the* Son, meaning *the particular person*, to whom the character of Son of God emphatically belonged, and on the history of whom he was entering. Further, *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* are without articles; yet few, I believe, would translate those words *a* Jesus Christ. In Mark x. 46. we have *ὁ υἱὸς Τιμαίου Βαρτιμαίου*. Did the writer mean, that Bartimæus was *a* Son (one among others) of Timæus, or *the* Son, to distinguish

guish him from some other, who might bear the same name, and specify the particular person he intended? Did the scribes mean that Christ was only *a* son, or *the* son, *the* promised son, of David? Mark xii. 35.

Did the angel mean only *a* Son of the Most High, and *a* Son of God, or *the* Son, that particular person, whose miraculous conception he announced, and to whom, on account of that circumstance, he gave that appellation, as is generally supposed, κατ' ἐξοχήν, Luke i. 32. 35? The devil asks Jesus, Luke iv. 3. εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τὸ θεοῦ. ver. 9. εἰ οὐ υἱὸς εἶ τὸ θεοῦ. Did he mean by the former expression, Art thou *a* divine character; and by the latter, Art thou *the* Son of God, that great personage, who is to make his appearance among men; or had he the same ideas in both places? Here, indeed, Nepiodidasalos may avail himself of a different reading, some MSS. omitting the article. I will, therefore, proceed. Did the Jews apprehend, that Jesus represented himself only as *a* divine character, when they said, he ought to die, οτι εαυτον υιον τε θεου προειπεν, Luke xix. 7? I do not think that will appear probable to a person, who reads the tenth chapter attentively.

In Heb. i. 1. we are told, that God hath in these last days spoken to us εἰς υἱω. Are these words to be rendered by *a* Son? I think not; but by *the* Son. The writer seems plainly to oppose the person signified by υἱω to the prophets, to ascribe to him a superiority of character, and to point to that particular person, who is often denominated ο υἱος τὸ θεοῦ. My reasons for thinking

thinking this to be the fact are, 1. That the prophets, considered as inspired persons, were men of God, and in that sense sons, or as Nepiodidasalos would translate *υιοι τῆς Θεου*, *divine characters* *. 2. That the writer immediately proceeds to give a description of him, whom he meant by *υιος*, which, in my present judgment, proves him to speak in a definite sense, and of a particular person, and to import as much as if he had said *εἰς τὸν υἱὸν ἐξούτου*. The same writer appears to me to mean *the* Son, and not only *a* Son, ch. vii. 28. though we have there *υιος*, without the article. I think *υιος* is likewise used *definitely*. Rev. i. 13. xiv. 14.

That Greek nouns without the prepositive article are not always used *indefinitely*, might, I think, be proved by many instances from the New Testament, in which the nominative and oblique cases of *Θεος* are to be found without it, and yet seem plainly to be used *definitely*. Glasius appears to be with me in opinion relating to the use of the article. See his Phil. Sac. lib. 3. trat. ii. canon 3. Slichtingius appears to be the same, who says, *Articulum—Græci sæpe negligunt, præsertim in asserto rerum ipsarum discrimine*. See him on 2 Pet. ii. 1. See also Bishop Pearson on the creed, who says, "We must not then

* I conjecture, that the reasons for which Nepiodidasalos translates *υιὸς Θεου*, when applied to Jesus, a *divine character* (See his translation of Rom. i. 4.) is, that he conceives the phrase to signify *one commissioned by God*. If my conjecture be right, he will allow *υιοι Θεου*, or *τῆς Θεου*, to be applicable to the old prophets; and then the opposition, that seems to be made by the writer in the above passage, will, according to his way of translating, vanish.

" think

“ think to decide this controversy by the articles, “ of which the sacred penmen were not *curious*.” Ed. ix. p. 150, where the reader may find more to the same purpose. Perhaps, had I time to look for them, I could produce the authorities of other learned men to set against that of Nepiodidascalos.

I make no doubt, but Nepiodidascalos thought his observation, respecting the distinction between *ui* and *o ui* well founded, and, perhaps, he thinks so still. I feel no disposition to enter into a controversy on the subject, and my engagements would not admit of my doing it without great inconvenience. Though I do not wish to see your useful work much occupied by mere verbal criticisms, which, I suppose, Nepiodidascalos will own to be sometimes at least trifling; yet I shall be obliged to him, if he will condescend, in some future number, to take a candid notice of what I have ventured to propose to his consideration, and that of your other correspondents and readers. I am very willing to become his pupil, and to receive his instructions: for I am quite sincere, when I declare, that I look up to him as a gentleman of great erudition, and that I promise myself information and pleasure from the productions of his pen.

I am, Gentlemen,
His and your very humble servant
and well-wisher,

A CHRISTIAN.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

AS you have allowed me to lay before your readers some free thoughts on the inspiration of the *prophets* and *apostles*, I beg leave to make use of the same channel of conveyance to the public, in order to extend my observations to the inspiration of *Christ*; proceeding, as I think, we are not only fully authorized, but even absolutely obliged to do, on the same general maxims, which I have hitherto pursued. For if *Christ* was, of himself, a *mere man*, he could not, *of himself*, have more knowledge, or more power, than other men, enjoying equal advantages; and if we have seen reason to believe, from observations on the history of all the dispensations of God to mankind, that it is a rule in the divine proceedings, not to communicate supernatural information, except when it is absolutely necessary, and also that no other prophet had more illumination than the occasion of his particular mission required, we certainly ought not to make any exception with respect to *Christ*, merely because he was the greatest of the prophets.

Athanasians, or Arians, supposing that *Christ* had, *within himself*, all knowledge and all power, must think his case to be an exception
from

from that of the other prophets; and, therefore, on *them* my reasoning can have no force. But *unitarians*, who believe that it was by no superior knowledge or power of his own, but merely by *the Father within him*, speaking and acting by him, that he was distinguished above all other messengers from God to man, must, if they be consistent with themselves, apply to this exactly similar case, the same maxims, and mode of reasoning, that they scruple not to make use of with respect to all preceding prophets. If they feel any difficulty in doing this, it must be owing to the remains of prejudice, in favour of other doctrines than those which they now hold.

I shall not wonder, however, if many of your readers, who have attended me with some satisfaction thus far, should desert me here. For it is no uncommon thing to abandon speculative principles, and yet retain their consequences and influences. Without being discouraged by this circumstance, I shall give free scope to my speculations on this subject, as well as on others; but, I hope, with that diffidence which becomes all persons who are sensible that they are liable to err, and who are truly willing to be better informed when they do err. If no doubt be ever proposed, and no freedom of speculation indulged, an entire stop will soon be put to our progress in all useful knowledge. Hoping, therefore, for your continued indulgence, and the candour of your readers, I subscribe myself,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

P A M P H I L U S.

P. S. To these observations on the inspiration of *Christ*, I had prefixed a few respecting that of *John the Baptist*; but, besides, that they coincided, as far as they went, with those of your correspondent, CHRISTOPHILOS, they are so far exceeded by those of that masterly and sagacious critic, that I thought it more advisable to suppress than to insert them. I therefore leave that field open to one who is so much better acquainted with it than myself, from whose observations I have already derived very material instruction, and from whom, if he continue his communications, I expect to derive still more.

Observations on the Inspiration of Christ.

IN order to ascertain the necessary articles of christian faith, it is of principal importance that we, in the first place, fix upon some *standard*, by which to decide concerning them; and as by *christian faith* we always mean some articles of *revealed religion*, or such knowledge as we could not have acquired by the use of our reason alone (i. e. from the consideration of appearances in nature) the only ultimate authority to which we can appeal is that of *God*, giving us assurance of things by his prophets; because we cannot entertain a doubt either of the divine knowledge, or the divine veracity.

Had we any certain intercourse with other good beings, of a nature superior to ourselves, we might receive information from them. But this not being the case, there is no authority less than the *divine* that ought to command our implicit assent.

assent. In his assurances we may have perfect confidence, but all *men* are necessarily fallible. They may be deceived themselves, and, therefore, with the best intentions, they may lead us into error.

Our Saviour himself, being a man, could not, naturally, be either *infallible* or *impeccable*; and, with the greatest humility, he always ascribed his superior knowledge to his *God and Father*, who spake and acted by him. But as all the preceding prophets were only inspired for particular purposes, viz. with respect to the object of their particular commissions, and were as fallible as other men with respect to other subjects; we seem to be authorized to judge of the extent of our Saviour's inspiration, by the consideration of the object of *his* mission; the principal article of which, I shall here take for granted, was *the revelation of a future life*.

We may safely conclude from the whole history of revelation, that divine communications have only been imparted where they were absolutely *necessary*, and where the reason that God had given to men was not sufficient for their information; so that whatever mistakes men may have fallen into, if they were either of little consequence with respect to their moral conduct, or such as their own reason would enable them to rectify, he has not thought proper to *interfere* in a supernatural manner, to prevent or correct them. It does not therefore follow, that, though Christ was the most distinguished ambassador from God to man, he was under a *constant inspiration*, and never spake but what
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was immediately dictated to him by God ; because the object of his mission did not require it. In many things, no doubt, he spake as other men do, without any inspiration at all ; and, therefore, might be liable to error. Indeed, there is all the appearance of his having expressed himself, on many occasions, just as other men do, from proper thought of his own, and an attention to the circumstances in which he was. And with respect to some of his most important discourses, it may be said, that, having been once fully instructed in the nature of his mission, and having been impowered to act in consequence of it, *immediate suggestions*, on all particular occasions, were unnecessary. This general commission, and the power originally imparted to him, might be all that he referred to, when he said, that *the words which he spake were not his own*.

It was certainly necessary, for the purpose of his mission, that Christ should be enabled to work miracles, or to do what man could not do without God being with him ; this being the only certain testimonial of a divine mission. But as the *visible effect* was all that was necessary for this purpose, and not a knowledge of the manner in which the Deity exerted his power on these occasions, he might be as ignorant of *that* as any of the bye-standers. When, for example, he cured persons of blindness, it was sufficient that when (prompted by the Divine Being) he pronounced any person cured, he who had before been deprived of his sight should be restored to the use of it. But it was

by no means necessary that he should know even the true and immediate *cause* of the blindness, as whether it was a disease affecting the optic nerve, or any other part of the complex organ of vision. Much less was it necessary that he should know by what means the obstruction to vision was removed. This would suppose him to have had a knowledge of anatomy, for which there was no occasion, and which there is, therefore, no reason to suppose him possessed of, unless we had known that he had had recourse to the proper means of acquiring that knowledge, by a course of study and enquiry.

In like manner, it was quite sufficient for the purpose of his mission, that Christ should be able to restore to the use of their reason those who had been disordered in mind, without his knowing any thing more of the true cause of this disease than he did of that of blindness. And as his countrymen in general appear to have imagined that disorders of this kind were occasioned by the influence of demons, or evil spirits, the probability is, that Jesus himself was under the same mistake; and, certainly, his language seems to authorize such a conclusion. It is commonly supposed that, though he well knew the cause of this disease, he did not chuse to discover it, but contented himself with speaking according to the popular opinion, which it was no business of his to rectify, as he did not come to teach natural philosophy. But, if he was not sent to *teach* men philosophy, why was it necessary that he should *understand* the principles of it himself? And it is certainly more favourable to his

his character, to suppose that he always spake according to the best of his knowledge, rather than that he said one thing and meant another. This he must have done, if he spake to demons, as if there actually were such beings as demons possessing the minds of men, at the same time that he knew it was merely a popular prejudice, to which he was giving countenance, and that, in reality, no such beings existed.

As I must be allowed to take it for granted, that Christ was, in himself, a *mere man*, he could not, in the age and country in which he lived, have had the knowledge of the true nature of maniacal disorders, without particular inspiration; and as we are not informed that he *had* any such knowledge imparted to him, and perceive no traces of his having had it, we certainly are not authorized to suppose him to have been possessed of it.

Also, though Christ came to give men the most absolute assurance of a future life, and died and rose again for the purpose of exemplifying this great doctrine, it was not necessary that he should know more than the *simple fact*, and he might be as ignorant as any of his hearers of the *manner* in which the dead are raised to life, or even of what it is that constitutes *life*, and much more of that which constitutes the power of *thought* and *intelligence*; as whether it depends upon the structure of the brain, or belongs to another principle, to which the brain is no more than an organ or instrument.

I do not perceive any trace of his having supposed that there is in man a principle

that could feel and act when the body is in the grave, or that the *soul* is any thing more than the *breath*, or *the life of man*. But if I had perceived that he had thought otherwise, it would neither have changed my opinion on the subject, nor would it have affected my faith in his divine mission. When he commanded Lazarus to come out of his grave, he simply said, *Lazarus, come forth*, as if every thing that had constituted Lazarus had been in the grave, which I, therefore, conclude was his idea. But if, on the other hand, he had commanded the soul of Lazarus to come down from heaven, and re-animate his body, and Lazarus had come to life in consequence of an order so expressed, I should not, from that circumstance, have inferred, that there was an *immaterial principle*, called a *soul*, that animated the body of Lazarus, and, therefore, that there are such immaterial souls in all men, any more than I infer that there were demons within men, producing disorders in their minds, because, in curing demoniacs, or madmen, his language implied his belief in that doctrine. In both these cases, it should be said, that Christ, having no particular information on the subjects (the object of his mission not requiring it) he was left to his own speculations, that he had not made these things his particular study, or might have formed a wrong judgment if he had.

Indeed, with respect to a *knowledge of nature*, I see no great difficulty in supposing, that Christ was as ignorant of all the principles of *it*, as those of his countrymen, who enjoyed equal advantages

advantages for attaining it; but there is much more difficulty with respect to his knowledge of *the scriptures*, because it is not easy to ascertain how far the great objects of his mission required that he should have some extraordinary illumination with respect to them. As many of the ancient prophecies related to himself, he being the *Messiah* foretold by the prophets, there can be no doubt of his having been supernaturally informed that he was that person, and also that John the Baptist was his forerunner, in the character of Elias. These particulars he could not have known of himself. He must also have been informed concerning the nature of his kingdom, of which all his countrymen were ignorant. Still less was it in his power to learn from the Old Testament what he has informed us concerning his own second coming, to raise the dead, and to judge the world, or the nature and duration of that future life which is to succeed it. For though he found his countrymen fully persuaded concerning the doctrine of a *resurrection* in general, they were under several mistakes with respect to it, which he rectified, not by reasoning, but by authority, as from God. He must also have been supernaturally illuminated to enable him to predict, as he did, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fate of his religion in future times.

Thus far, therefore, we proceed with certainty; but it does not follow that, because our Lord was informed that he was the Messiah, he was instructed in the perfect understanding of *all* those passages of scripture which related

even to himself. Because no inconvenience, that we know of, would arise from his being left to himself, with respect to his application of a general proposition, such as that of his being the Messiah ; and, therefore, from his supposing, as his countrymen in general appear to have done, that several passages of scripture related to him, which really did not do so. John the Baptist, though a prophet, was, probably, as I think your correspondent *Christophilos* has evinced, mistaken with respect to his own character, and the prophecies relating to him ; and the great end of his mission was better answered by his ignorance, than it would have been by his knowledge of those things.

The apostles had much more to do with the interpretation of scripture than our Saviour had, especially in proving from them that he was the Messiah. Their ministry was also more extensive, and of much longer continuance ; and yet it is evident that the apostles often applied the scriptures very improperly, and with no better judgment than their unbelieving countrymen. Why then should we suppose that our Saviour, who had really much less occasion for this kind of knowledge, was possessed of it in a greater degree than they were ?

Our Lord reproved the Scribes and Pharisees with so much authority, that he seems to have felt himself particularly authorized to do so ; and he was, no doubt, fully apprized of the grossness and extent of the abuses which they had introduced into the religion of Moses. But then the abuses were so flagrant, and the additions

additions which had been made to the law were so distinguishable from the law itself, that it is, perhaps, possible, that his own good sense and uprightness might enable him to understand the genuine meaning of the law, and the extent of the pharisaical abuses of it, without a particular illumination. If this was *possible* (but I do not pretend to say whether it was absolutely so or not) we shall be authorized to conclude, that Christ spake from the fulness of his own heart and a just indignation, and not from any particular *divine impulse*, in his solemn reproofs of the Scribes and Pharisees. On this subject I do not know that we have any certain means of attaining complete satisfaction, nor is it of any consequence that we should. His censures are allowed to be just and important, whether they came immediately from God or not.

If we consider the great object of the divine mission of Christ, as well as that of all the prophets and apostles, we shall be less tenacious of supposing that any of them had *naturally* more knowledge, or more power, than other men. For, in proportion to any idea that we may entertain of this kind, we exclude the necessity of divine interposition. If Christ could, by any power, as much his own, and at his own command, as the power of speaking and walking is ours, have said all that he said, and done all that he did, and yet have been a created being, and of course *finite* and *imperfect*, we must necessarily have been liable to deception. The less, therefore, it appears to be in the natural power of any person speaking in the name of God, to know, or to do,

what he exhibits *as from God*, the more conspicuously is the divine knowledge, and the divine power displayed in him, and consequently the greater is our confidence that we are not misled by him. For what greater security can we have against imposition, or sinister views of any kind, than the persuasion, that a message delivered to us comes immediately from the greatest, and the best of beings?

Rather, therefore, than suppose with the Arians, that Christ was a created being, naturally equal to the making of the world, and supporting it by his providence, I should be inclined to wish that he was the supreme being himself, or in all respects equal to him. But the hypothesis of God himself speaking to us by means of a man, in no respect naturally differing from, or superior to, other men; has every advantage of the hypothesis of God himself being incarnate, without any of the shocking absurdities attending it. The Arian hypothesis has the inconveniences of both schemes, without the advantages of either of them.

Though we are not particularly informed, in what respects Christ had supernatural illumination, and in what respects he had none; we may safely conclude that he had none, in cases in which his reason as a man, and his advantages as a Jew, were sufficient to direct him. But we lose the benefit of his *example* altogether, if we never consider him as thinking, speaking, or acting like other men, that is, as other men of good principles and good sense would naturally speak and act, without any particular prompting.

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Whatever be meant by Christ's *temptation*, whether it was something that passed in a vision, or it consisted in the thoughts that occurred to his own mind, it is injurious to him, as a good man, to suppose, that the replies which he made to his tempter, were not properly *his own*, or such as his own pious disposition; the knowledge which he then had of his mission, and the consciousness of the powers with which he was endued, could not enable him to make *of himself*, and that he would not naturally have made, with his disposition, and in his circumstances. No particular respect could ever be due to Christ, personally considered, if he was always regarded as the mere organ of the *Diety*, inspiring every word that he spake, as well as performing, all the miraculous works that he did: And if he was left to himself at all, being no more than a man, he would, like other men, be liable to err.

It will be said, that if his virtues were properly *his own*, and of course imperfect, he might be liable to *sin*, as well as subject to *error*. I answer, that I know of no inconvenience to christianity, in supposing, that neither he, nor any other man, was *naturally impeccable*. He himself lays no claim to any such prerogative, and the object of his mission did not require it. He says, indeed, to the Jews, John viii. 46. *Which of you convinces me of sin*; but by *sin*, in that place, the connexion naturally leads us to understand *imposture* only; and when he was stiled *good*, thinking, we may suppose, from the manner in which it was said, that more was meant by the appellation, than he was entitled to, he expressly disclaimed it, saying

ing, *there was none good but God.* If we interpret the language of scripture rigorously, we must say, that Job was a perfect character, for it is said of him, Job ii. 3. *that he was a perfect and an upright man.* It is also said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that *they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.* This encomium is certainly equivalent to what is said of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 22. *He did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* 2 Cor. v. 21. *He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.* Heb. vii. 26. *Such a high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.*

As to those who lay great stress on the literal interpretation of scripture, and who think that we are authorized to infer from the passages that I have quoted, that the character of Christ must have been almost infinitely greater than that of other men, I would recommend to their attention, besides the passages quoted above (which, if also interpreted literally, would lead us to conceive of the characters of various other persons, as being equal to that of Christ) what the apostle John says concerning all christians; 1 John iii. 9. *Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* If this language, respecting christians in general, is not to be interpreted literally, what can oblige us to a literal interpretation of similar expressions, relating to the excellence of Christ's character? And, if in this passage, and every other in which the word *sin* is used, we are to understand some overt

overt act of iniquity, something that all the world would condemn as base and wrong, we must likewise restrict the meaning of it, in the same manner, when it is said, that *Christ had no sin*; and it is only from the language of scripture, and not from any mere imaginations of our own, that we can be authorized to form any judgment in the case. All the virtue that human nature, such as we observe it to be, can attain, I am as ready as any person to ascribe to Christ. There is a greatness, and dignity in his character, superior to that of any other man. I flatter myself that I feel it, and I am sure that I rejoice in the contemplation of it. But, I think also, that I can account for the superiority of his virtue, and the exalted nature of his feelings, without supposing, that, till he was divinely inspired, (which I see no occasion to fix at an earlier period than a little before his baptism) he was *naturally* a greater, or better man, than Abraham, or Joseph, or Daniel.

What an effect new and extraordinary situations are able to produce on the mind, we have a remarkable instance of in the apostles. Before our Saviour's death, they were merely virtuous well disposed men; and, expecting, like all their countrymen, that their Messiah would be a temporal prince, were far from having their minds divested of worldly ambition, and that spirit of emulation and faction which always accompanies it. This we see in the attempt of James and John, to secure the first places in their master's kingdom. But finding, in the event of his death and resurrection, and especially upon the

the descent of the spirit, what kind of a kingdom it was, and that their reward was not to be on earth, but in heaven, they became as disinterested and heavenly minded, as their master himself had been, and as indifferent to ease or life. From that time, their only ambition was to promote the cause of truth and virtue, and no symptom of envy or jealousy can be perceived in them. And yet, we have no reason to believe that this change was effected by any supernatural influence upon their minds, but simply by the great change in their *views* and *prospects*. For this will easily account for the whole.

Why then might not the full persuasion of such a peculiar presence of God as Christ was conscious of, and the sense of his being made the head of a new and great dispensation (the object of which, was to bless all the human race, and to last till time shall be no more) inspire him with that exalted devotion towards God, who had so highly honoured him, and with that intense affection for his followers, and for mankind in general, to whom he stood in so peculiar a relation, which distinguished, and gave such a singular dignity to, his character, without supposing, that *originally*, and before those great prospects were opened to him, he was any thing more than other men are, either with respect to intellectual or moral powers. It was not necessary to send an angel on this business, or to make a man for this purpose.

The prospect of the painful and ignominious death, which Christ had before him, might be no more than was necessary to keep down that
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undue elation of mind, which would otherwise have been the necessary consequence of his being placed in such an exalted station. But this shade over the prospect, and in the fore-ground of it, would have a wonderfully fine effect in giving the mind its right tone and temper; and those painful apprehensions mixing themselves with all his pleasing and glorious prospects, would heighten the intensity and fervor of all his generous feelings. That he was in the least appalled at the prospect of his death, with such views beyond it, is a clear proof that, in reality, and in himself considered, he was no more than a man, and that he had naturally no more courage than other men have.

It appears to me that we lose much more than we gain, by contending for absolute perfection of character in Christ, as well as in other prophets. It is no better than catching at a shadow, which could do us no good, and losing a most valuable substance. It is, in fact, making an approach to the doctrine of the Arians, and submitting to the inconvenient consequences of that system, and upon a foundation far less probable in itself. If other men, even good men, are all supposed to have improper thoughts and inclinations rising in their minds, so that it requires some struggle with themselves to suppress them, can it be supposed that Christ should have passed through his whole life, without one improper thought or wish occurring to him? And this cannot be supposed, without abating of the *absolute perfection* of his character. If he was so perfect, it is impossible not to conclude, that,

notwithstanding his appearance *in the fashion of man*, he was, in reality, something more than man. For a similar constitution will necessarily produce similar effects. Also, upon this plan, the benefit of Christ's example is as effectually lost to us, as if he was an angel, or the Arian *logos*.

The authors of the books of scripture do not seem to have conceived of the peculiar excellence of the character of Christ as derived from his *nature and constitution*, but as having been the effect of *discipline*, which is the case with respect to the virtue of other men. Luke says, that Jesus increased, not only in *wisdom*, but also in *favour with God and man*, ch. ii. 52. that is, he improved in those qualities which recommend men to God as well as to man, which can only be virtuous dispositions and habits; and this certainly implies an advance from a less to a more perfect state.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews both says, that Christ was *made perfect through sufferings*, ch. ii. 10. and that he *learned obedience by the things which he suffered*, ch. v. 8. evidently implying that before his sufferings he was less perfect than he was after them, so that he had some moral virtue to learn; which is nearly equivalent to what the Psalmist says of himself, Ps. cxix. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word*. The difference is, that the apostle alludes to a less perfect state of virtue, and the psalmist to actual transgressions.

Indeed, if Christ had feelings like those of other men, the discipline of his mind, during his
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public ministry, could not but have interested, animated, and improved him in a high degree. He must have been led by it to a stronger sense of his dependence upon God, and his connexion with him. His prospects into futurity must have enlarged his comprehension of mind; and the consequence of the whole must have been a great advancement in piety, benevolence, and every good disposition. But this would have been impossible if he had been as perfect as he was capable of being when he entered upon his ministry. Christ must also, no doubt, be more perfect *now* than he was at any time during his ministry here; and, like other good men, must improve in virtue as long as he continues to exist, and still fall infinitely short of that perfection of moral character which belongs to God, who will, after all, be alone *the supremely and absolutely good*.

It has been a propensity, recurring again and again in a variety of forms, to add to the personal advantages and dignity of Christ, by giving him a nature, or natural endowments, superior to those of other men, that has laid the foundation of almost all the corruptions of christianity. And we shall never see and enjoy the true scheme of it, till we come to consider Christ as being, *in himself*, and without those supernatural aids (which were given to him, as to other prophets, only when they were absolutely necessary) a *mere man*, and not in name only, which is the case with some who are called Socinians, but in reality; having the same affections of mind, as well as those of the body, that
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other men are subject to : for then only will the *power of God* be fully displayed in his history. And we should ever remember, that he came not to do his own will, or to seek his own glory, but to do the will, and to promote the glory, of him that sent him. Judging from the uniform tenor of his own discourses, we may be well assured, that he is far from taking pleasure in any honour that is done to him *personally*, which can, in the smallest degree, or by the most remote consequence, take any thing from the glory of the Father who sent him.

Thoroughly to understand the *real character* of Christ (the most important, without doubt, of any that has ever appeared upon the theatre of this world) and in order to this, accurately to investigate his *feelings*, is a great and most important subject of enquiry ; and the gospel history affords us, perhaps, sufficient *data* for the purpose. But what will these avail us, if, from a fond prejudice, we debar ourselves of the use of the only *principles* on which those *data* can be applied. If Christ be either *God*, or *man*, we are already possessed of knowledge sufficient to guide us in our investigation of his conduct. We have the works of nature, and all the preceding dispensations of religion, to judge by in the former case ; and all history, observation, and experience, in the other. Upon either of these grounds, therefore, we have some chance of forming a right judgment. But if we begin our enquiry with taking it for granted, that Christ was either a super-angelic being, or a man in the strictest sense of the word, *perfectly sinless*,
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that is, so constituted, as that no improper thought or desire should ever arise in his mind, it is a *kind of being* of which we have no previous knowledge ; so that neither observation nor experience can throw any light upon it ; and, therefore, we can never expect to understand it. Such a character is absolutely an *unique*, and never existed before ; and, therefore, those *data* which might have been sufficient upon either of the other hypotheses, will be wholly insufficient here.

We shall find difficulty enough in investigating the real feelings of Christ, on account of the new and extraordinary situation in which he was placed, and the singularly great views that were before him. But if to this great and necessary difficulty, we add that which must arise from his being considered as *a new kind of being*, concerning whose feelings, even in common situations, we should not be able to form a judgment, we must be absolutely lost. How a *man*, such as we ourselves are, would feel in any new situation, we may at least form some probable conjecture, from its analogy to other situations ; but how such a being as *we are not* would feel, either in common or uncommon situations, we have no certain means of judging at all.

A good man, whose views are upright and disinterested, will be the best qualified to judge of the feelings of Christ, by imagining himself to be placed in the same situations ; and on this account, a *man of the world*, whose object is pleasure, wealth, power, or fame, cannot be expected to enter into it. His own character will

always mislead him, and prevent his forming a right judgment. On this account we see, that the most depraved part of mankind (let their natural capacity of judging be ever so great) never fail to misconceive the characters and the conduct of those who are better than themselves, because they go upon the false assumption that other men are just what themselves are. In like manner, very good men will necessarily deceive themselves, by supposing the bulk of mankind to be better than they are.

If Christ, therefore, was as much superior to the very best of men, as the best of men are superior to the worst of their race, there is no man who can expect to form a truer judgment concerning his feelings and character, than the worst of men form concerning those who are the most distinguished for their benevolence and piety. And I appeal to the conviction of all good men (such of them at least as are not altogether destitute of a knowledge of the world, but are apprized what kind of opinion the depraved and shrewd part of mankind express concerning those who are above their level in the *scale of moral improvement*) how very imperfect that judgment must be.

I know no study so interesting, or so improving, as that of the character and conduct of Christ, and those of the first preachers of christianity. There is no subject more worthy of our attention as men, as christians, or as philosophers; and it is a study that is pregnant with the most satisfactory evidence of the truth of the christian history: but the imperfections,

the partial ignorance and mistakes of the first preachers of christianity, of which unbelievers have hitherto taken advantage, supply some of the most certain of all *criteria*, that the scheme was not of man, but of God.

If it be said that, as, in this disquisition, I give up what has been a favourite opinion of all christians, I ought to gain something in return; I answer, that, in my own persuasion, I do gain a great deal, and especially in making the defence of christianity more simple, and easier than before.

There is no one circumstance in the controversy with unbelievers that has more embarrassed the defenders of christianity, than the use that has been made of the Old Testament by the writers in the New, and by Christ himself, as well as by the apostles. If, therefore, it can be shewn, that the divine mission of Christ is not concerned in the defence of those applications of scripture, it will certainly be a considerable acquisition. For the whole force of the objection, as it has been hitherto stated, may (if it should be necessary) be allowed, and yet the boasted conclusion from it be denied; the divine mission of Christ, and the truth of christianity, being as much unaffected by any mistakes of this kind, made even by Christ himself, as the divine mission of any other prophet, and the truth of the religion taught by him, by similar mistakes of his.

In the case of any other messenger from God to man, we content ourselves with considering the *object of his mission*, and *his credentials*. What *he himself* was, personally considered, or what

was the extent of his knowledge in other respects, we do not think ourselves concerned with. Why then should we needlessly embarrass ourselves, and the defence of christianity, by making an exception with respect to Christ, at the same time that we profess to consider him as no more than *a man*, commissioned and empowered by God, to say, and to do, all that he said and did? If all other men in these circumstances were still liable to error, why should we, *a priori*, suppose that he was exempt from it?

If there be any truth in history, Christ wrought unquestionable miracles as a proof of his mission from God, he preached the great doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, he raised several persons from a state of death, and, what was more, he himself died and rose again in confirmation of his doctrine. The belief of these *facts* I call the belief of *christianity*; and I think that a great deal is gained by carefully excluding from the *essentials* of the christian religion every other opinion whatever, except that of Christ being the Messiah. What Christ was, *in himself considered*, whether he was fallible or infallible, peccable or impeccable, is no essential of christianity. Let every thing of this kind respecting Christ, his character, and qualifications, be discussed with the same freedom as those relating to any other prophet, or any other man; but let it not be imagined that christianity is at all concerned in such discussions.

It is remarkable, that our Saviour himself never drew the attention of mankind on what he was personally considered. He declared that he

he came not in his own name, but was sent by another; that he did not do his own will, but the will of him that sent him; that of himself he could do nothing; that the words which he spake were not his own; and that the Father within him did the works. Why then should we think it necessary, as christians, to attend to any thing farther than the authority by which he acted? Otherwise, our faith and hope is placed in man, and not in God.

It may be alledged, that higher things are said concerning the divine communications from God to Christ, than concerning those to the apostles, or any other men. Thus we read, John iii. 13. *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.* ver. 34. *God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him.* ver. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and giveth all things into his hands.* v. 19. *What things soever the Father doth, those also doth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* xvi. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine.*

With respect to these passages, I would observe, that, besides being all in the gospel of John, the style of which is highly figurative, they are nearly at least equalled by expressions relating to the apostles, and even the disciples of Christ in general.

Thus, whatever be the union that subsists between Christ and the Father, from which idea is

derived that of their participation in possessions, in glory, and in happiness, our Lord says, that all his disciples should be admitted to the same. John xvii. 21. *That they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* Whatever be meant by the *glory* which Christ receives from God, his disciples also partake of it; v. 22. *And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.* As to the power that was given to Christ, he intimates that it would even be exceeded by that which should be given to his disciples. John xiv. 12. *Verily I say unto you, that he that believeth in me, the things that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.* The knowledge also that was communicated to Christ, he communicated to the apostles; John xvii. 8. *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.* And though there were some things that Christ knew, which the apostles were not prepared to receive before his death, they were acquainted with them afterwards. John xvi. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.* There is no evidence, therefore, of Christ having any more knowledge than the apostles were afterwards possessed of. To suppose that he had more is an arbitrary assumption, without any authority in the scriptures.

Much has been inferred from the knowledge and power that Christ must necessarily be possessed of, in order to judge the world at the last day

day. But, besides that, this relates to a future time, at which we may all have unknown sources and means of knowledge, the power of judging at the last day is what our Lord himself represents as shared by the apostles, Matt. xix. 28. *When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Accordingly, the apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. vi. 2. *Know ye not, that the saints shall judge the world.*

With respect to *knowledge*, if we interpret the scriptures literally, nothing can exceed that of the apostles, and even christians in general. Besides its being said of the apostles, that *the spirit of truth should guide them into all truth*, Paul speaks of the christians at Corinth as *enriched in utterance and in all knowledge*, 1 Cor. i. 5. and John says, 1 epist. ii. 20. *Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* ii. 27. *The same anointing teacheth you all things.*

With respect to *nature and dignity of character*, nothing is said of Christ that exceeds what Peter speaks of as belonging to all good christians, 2 Pet. i. 4. *That ye may be partakers of a divine nature.* Had this been said of Christ only, and not of his disciples, what an advantage would it have given to those who contend that his *nature (ousis)* is the same with that of God the Father. This argument, from the express declaration of scripture, would have been deemed decisive and unanswerable. But it is happily in our power to come at the meaning of this, and other passages of scripture, by comparing the phraseology in different places; and there can be no reason why we should not suppose that the same words

and phrases always mean the same thing. At least, no argument can be drawn from their being supposed to mean different things.

Surely then, judging by this rule, we must think ourselves fully authorized to conclude, that all the difference between Christ and *his* disciples, especially the apostles, was nothing more than that of precedency, the same that an elder brother has over the younger children of the same family. If he be the *heir of God*, and of *all things*, we also are *joint heirs* along with him, as the apostle says, Rom. viii. 17. And there is no *dignity*, or *office*, to which he will be advanced, but his disciples will be raised to the same.

One of the most striking circumstances relating to the *knowledge* possessed by Christ is his acquaintance with the dispositions and secret thoughts of those with whom he conversed, so that he often replied to things that they did not express. But even this kind of knowledge was communicated to Elisha, when he discovered the lie of his servant Gehazi; and this is not the only instance of the kind that occurs in the scriptures. Whatever knowledge of this kind our Saviour may be possessed of, in order to his being a competent judge of all mankind, it may be imparted to him *at the time*, and also to the apostles, and others, who may be, as it were, assessors with him in that judgment, whatever is to be understood by it. All the account that we have of the *day of judgment* is only a figurative description; so that the plain and naked truth corresponding to it, may be a very different thing from what we now take it to be;

and Christ and the apostles may have less to do in it than, judging by such a description, and the phraseology of scripture, we are apt to imagine. The abundant evidence that will then be had concerning every man's character and conduct, and, perhaps, a more obvious method of discriminating them, may place all men nearly on a level in this respect. Indeed, they must be so in some measure, if, as is commonly supposed, both the parties and the auditors will perfectly acquiesce in the sentences that will be pronounced. For then, without *implicit faith*, they must themselves see, and be judges of the propriety of them.

As this is a subject on which I have bestowed some thought, you may probably hear from me again upon it, when I propose to enter into a more particular discussion of the principles on which our Saviour *reasoned* and *acted*, both with his enemies, and with his friends. But I do not promise to make these communications immediately. In the mean time, I wish to hear what your learned and liberal readers may object to this Essay, as well as to those which have preceded it; both that I myself may form a more decided judgment of what I have, perhaps too hastily, advanced, as well as be directed in my future disquisitions. I feel myself disposed to give free scope to my thoughts, and I am the less concerned in this unrestrained course of enquiry, as there will always, I hope, be enow to hold the reins and check me; and if the bridle be in a steady and able hand, I hope I shall never be unwilling to obey it.

To

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

IN Genesis xlix. 10. Jacob, as is generally understood by a prophetic spirit, declares, that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come. And in 1 Sam. xiii. 13. Samuel assures Saul, that if he had not offered a sacrifice, the Lord would have established his kingdom upon Israel *for ever*.

Were Jacob and Samuel inspired in these passages? If they were, How is the intention of God, mentioned in the former, reconcileable with the event foretold in the latter? What, or whom, doth Jacob mean to point out by the word *Shiloh*? He cannot mean Jesus Christ; because the sceptre was *really* departed from Judah before his appearance in the world; for Herod, who then enjoyed it, was an Edomite. See Lightfoot, vol. I. p. 109. The expression, "nor a lawgiver, &c." seems to point out the duration of the mosaical dispensation; and, therefore, to confirm the common interpretation. But Moses was not of the tribe of Judah; hence, it can have no reference to the duration of that covenant, or the appearance of the Messiah.

If

If *Shiloh* means the Messiah, does it not afford a foundation for a powerful argument against the truth of christianity?—If these queries be of sufficient importance, I hope you will take some opportunity of calling the attention of your correspondents to them.

I am, yours, &c.

MAGNIRROC.

*Observations on the Mission of John the Baptist,
continued from page 360.*

AS to the expression, “*He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit,*” I think, a reasonable doubt may be entertained, whether we do not restrict its meaning too much, in supposing it to refer merely to the *communication* of miraculous or extraordinary powers. It should be considered, that John no where, if not here, refers to the long and amazing series of miracles performed by our Lord before his crucifixion: and it is thought, that he was *understood* to have predicted them from John x. 41. “*And many resorted unto him (Jesus) and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true:*” which latter words are generally supposed to mean, “*But this*

this man does perform miracles as John foretold." And I know of no declaration of the Baptist's which can be thought to be here referred to, except that under consideration.

To baptize with the Holy Spirit, and to baptize with fire, are, most evidently, figurative expressions. By the latter, I hope, it has been sufficiently shewn, is meant, to *visit with calamity**; the former, therefore, is most naturally understood as signifying, to *visit with favour, by the performance of beneficent miracles*. To baptize, does not naturally mean to *impart powers*. John's baptism with *water* conferred none; the baptism with *fire* communicated none; when our Lord said, he had a baptism to be baptized with, he did not mean, that any thing was to be given to him which he naturally had not; nor, when he told the sons of Zebedee, that they should be baptized with the baptism wherewith he himself was to be baptized, did he mean,

* Sir Isaac Newton, in his *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel*, page 18, says, That in the prophetic style, "burning any thing with *fire*, is put for the consuming thereof by *war*;" which confirms the opinion of G. H. that this part of John's prediction relates to the *destruction of Jerusalem*.— Though it is by no means contended, that John himself knew the precise meaning of this his own prophecy; the contrary is supposed. For I have the pleasure to agree perfectly with Pamphilus, in his *third Essay on Inspiration*, in this volume of the *Theological Repository*, p. 208. I am persuaded, that John the Baptist, and not only he, but, as Pamphilus observes, "the apostles mistook the meaning of the prophecies which were properly their own, or the revelations made by themselves, as the old prophets also did with respect to theirs," and that "this circumstance is so far from being an objection to their divine illumination, that it is a striking confirmation of it."

that

that they should receive any extraordinary *communications* from such a baptism. On the whole, then, I should suppose, that John did not understand, *at most*, any thing farther by his own prediction, than that his successor should exert miraculous powers in behalf of his sincere followers. This seems to be abundantly sufficient to authorize the expression *to baptize* them with the Holy Spirit. John employed *water* as a means of promoting the virtue and happiness of the Jewish nation; but his superior employed *supernatural* means for these purposes. I cannot, therefore, think, that the baptism of the Spirit has any peculiar reference to the day of Pentecost; but, rather, that in the intention of the Spirit of God, by which John delivered this prophecy, the whole series of miracles and extraordinary operations, employed for the promulgation and full confirmation and spread of the gospel, was intended by the expression, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." So that I do not deny that *these* words refer to the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; but only, that they are to be restricted to this event, which was only one beneficent miracle (a very important one, indeed) in a series of them.

To this it may be objected, that our Lord seems to appropriate the expression we are considering, to the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in Acts i. 5. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days hence." But I do not see how our Lord's applying it to this miraculous event, which was a very remarkable one
in

in the series, can be said to appropriate or restrict the meaning of it to that event alone. Nor, indeed, do I think it clear, that our Lord had an eye *only* to this event. He considered the kingdom of heaven as commencing with the preaching of John, who baptized with water; and as carried on by himself, with the full and gracious evidences of the Spirit, as John had foretold. As, therefore, he was going immediately to leave his disciples, and the blessed encouragements of these evidences were to be for a time suspended, and they be left destitute, as it were, like sheep without a shepherd; to prevent their desponding in the interval, as if the whole of John's prophecy was completed, and the purpose of it answered, our blessed Master told them, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days hence." By which I apprehend he meant, 'John has finished his baptism with water; I have completed my baptism with the Spirit *personally on earth*, which is now, therefore, terminated; but be not discouraged, for in a few days the baptism with the Spirit will recommence, and form a new æra in the kingdom of heaven*.' Seeing that our Lord may reasonably be supposed to have known the true meaning of this prophecy, and he limits the

* When miraculous powers entirely ceased, another æra of the kingdom of heaven took place. There have been many æras since, and will, I doubt not, be many æras more; upon which account it seems probable, that God is said "to have made or appointed the ages or æras by his Son;" some of shorter, some of longer duration, some in this life, and some in the next.

time for the recommencement, as being to take place within a few days, there can be no doubt, that he had an eye to the day of Pentecost, as furnishing the first, and constituting a part, of a new series of miracles; but there is no reason from thence to suppose, that he did not look forward to the remainder.

What the apostles thought of this prophetic promise at the time of delivery is quite uncertain; but it is most probable, that their ideas respecting it were very confused and indistinct. For they had not at this time any just views of the true nature of the Messiah's kingdom. No sooner were they told, that they should be baptized with the Holy Spirit, than they enquire, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" After they had received the gifts of the Spirit, it is observable, that they do not appropriate our Lord's promise to the day of Pentecost, nor even expressly apply it to that event. Peter, however, applies it to the case of the *Gentiles* receiving the gifts of the Spirit. Acts xi. 16. "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." It would not be at all wonderful, if the apostles considered this promise as limited to the single circumstance of the *communication* of spiritual gifts (though it is not quite certain that they did) so deep an impression must have been made upon their minds by the astonishing and awful circumstances with which (in their own case) it was attended; and the vast change and enlargement of their views consequent

consequent upon it. But it by no means follows, that this was all that *our Lord* intended.

If, Gentlemen, after what I have offer'd, any of your readers chuse to understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as restricted solely to the *communication* of miraculous gifts or powers, they still seem necessitated to extend such baptism beyond the day of Pentecost; every new instance of such a *communication* being as much a baptism with the Spirit as the first. Whether, therefore, the larger and more comprehensive interpretation of this baptism be adopted, or the more limited one, I think it must follow, that John's expression, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit," had no particular reference to the day of Pentecost; as it is generally thought to have. But, most probably, few, if any, of your readers, who may be convinced, that the day of Pentecost was not the *particular* object of John's prophecy, will hesitate to allow, that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is an expression of large and general import, nor, therefore, to admit the interpretation given of it above.

If I be thought to have dwelled too long upon this subject, I dare not positively deny the charge; and have only to alledge in excuse, that being obliged to take some notice of it, I was desirous to place it in a *true* light, according to my *present* judgment; and, perhaps, the *more* desirous, because it is a *new* one. The reason of my noticing it at all was, that I apprehended, if John was supposed to refer in this passage to the day of Pentecost, it would be regarded

regarded as a strong objection to my *grand hypothesis*; namely, 'That John did not bear testimony to Jesus as the Messiah.' Seeing it might have been said, That John actually knew that he was sent to bear witness to the Messiah, even *before* the baptism of Jesus. For to whom, it might have been asked, could the words "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (being a prophecy of the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost) refer, but to the Messiah?—To this I might have replied, That it is by no means necessary to believe, that John knew the strict meaning of his own prophecy; and I hope, few who have read Pamphilus's *Essays on Inspiration*, will doubt, that this ground would have been tenable. But (unwilling to extend the maxim further than was needful, in order to save a little trouble of study and thought) I judged it best to show, that this prophecy has no *peculiar* relation to the day of Pentecost, as to *one* part of it; and as to the *other*, none at all. In attempting this, it has, I hope, been made sufficiently apparent, that the baptism of the Spirit respects, *in the intention of God*, not simply the particular *communication* of spiritual gifts and powers, but also the *exercise* of them.

With respect to the construction which John would put upon the words, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit," I have already given my opinion; namely, 'that his successor would exert miraculous powers in behalf of his sincere followers.' More than this, I think unnatural to suppose. For if he understood the real im-

port of his own prophecy, he must have known a great deal more of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom (even before the Messiah stepped out of private life, and "came forth into the world") than the Twelve did, after having been taught by John himself (for some of them were certainly John's disciples, and most probably all) and after having, besides, attended our Lord, been instructed by him, and been witnesses to his miracles: for *they* were totally ignorant of it, even after his *ascension*.

But when I allow, that John expected his successor to work miracles, I do not suppose, that he had any idea of their number, nature, or immediate tendency. That he had *not*, is evident. According to Dr. Priestley's *Harmony*, in a few days after the commencement of our Lord's public ministry, John was thrown into prison; and in little more than a month after, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, whether he was the Messiah, or the Messiah was to follow him. Now a message of this nature, *so early* in the course of our Lord's ministry, fully proves that John's expectations, in point of miracles, were very limited indeed. How then could he have supposed, when he spoke of his successor's baptizing with the Holy Spirit, that his successor was to be the Messiah? No one, I apprehend, will imagine, that the Jews thought the miraculous operations of the Messiah were to be confined within the compass of five or six weeks. I could much sooner suppose, that John did not expect his successor to perform any miracles at all, than believe this.

In short, then, this prophecy does by no means prove, that John thought, that he was to be *immediately* succeeded by the Messiah; and, therefore, does not affect my hypothesis.

As to the axe which was to cut down every tree that did not bear good fruit, that it might be burned; it refers only to the power of punishment which his successor should possess; and as John did not look upon himself to be the Elias who was to introduce the Messiah, could only be so understood by him. With respect to the preservation of the wheat, and the burning the chaff, there is no reason whatsoever to suppose, that he could annex any other ideas to it, than that the followers of his successor should be safe, and his opponents be destroyed. Here, then, I might conclude; but it is not improbable that I might be asked, Who, then, could John suppose his successor to be?

I have already intimated my suspicion, that he *afterwards* thought him to be Elias; and am inclined to think, that at the time of delivering this prophecy, such also was his opinion. But I assert nothing on this head. It is, however, remarkable, that performing of miracles and visiting with fire exactly correspond with the prophetic character of the real Elijah. And what could induce James and John (that man of love) to ask, "Lord, wilt thou, that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as ELIAS did?" I cannot easily imagine; unless John had directly told him his opinion of Jesus; or they had inferred

it from the prophecy itself, of which we have been treating.

But I am by no means under an obligation to say what *was* John's real opinion concerning his successor, *before he knew who he was*; to say what the opinion of a man, who lived almost eighteen hundred years ago, and of whom we have so short a history, *was not*, seems sufficient till new lights arise.

Here, then, I conclude my first head. In my next communication, I mean to enter on the second, and endeavour to prove, that as his prophecy respecting his successor does not imply, that John expected him to be the Messiah; neither do his declarations concerning him, *after he knew who his successor was*.

I am, Gentlemen,

respectfully yours,

CHRISTOPHILOS,

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

AS you have favoured me with the insertion of my observations on the promise made to Abraham, I take the liberty to send you some doubts which have occurred to me with respect to the supposed prophecy of Jacob concerning the Messiah, under the title of *Shiloh*, Gen. xlix. 10. which we render as follows: *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

That this should be a prophecy concerning *the Messiah*, is, I think, improbable, for the following reasons: 1. The term *Shiloh* is here used without any explanation, as what was well known and understood by the children of Jacob, and also what the writer must have supposed to be understood by his readers; and yet if it be the Messiah, this is the only passage, not only in the writings of Moses, but also in all the scriptures, in which he is so called. The prophets, like other men, speaking in order to be understood, would naturally use such terms as their hearers would be able to affix some ideas

to ; though, using figurative expressions, there would still be a source of mistake with respect to them.

2. Had the later prophets understood Jacob to designate the Messiah by this term *Shiloh*, it is probable that they would have continued to use it, or, at least, would not have introduced another term, without giving some intimation that it meant the same with that which had been used before by Jacob. For, otherwise, it would naturally be concluded, that Jacob meant one person, and they another.

3. There is no reference to this speech of Jacob's, as a prophecy concerning the Messiah, in the New Testament.

4. On the supposition that there is no prophecy concerning the Messiah in the time preceding Jacob, nor from his time to that of Isaiah (which, I think, has been made to appear in this volume of your work) it will be improbable, *a priori*, that any should be delivered on this occasion, as there does not seem to have been any particular use for it.

5. The word Shiloh is the name of a place in the land of Canaan, probably well known to Jacob and his sons, which, till the time of David, was the center of the Hebrew worship, and where the people were assembled on all their great festivals, and other solemn occasions. I am, therefore, inclined to think, that this was the Shiloh of which Jacob spake.

I would farther observe, that in the phrase *יבא שילה*, Shiloh is by no means necessarily the nominative case to the verb *shall come*, since it
is

is quite as proper to render it, *he shall go to Shiloh.*

As the pointing of the books of scripture is arbitrary, there is no occasion to join the two particles עַד כִּי, and, therefore, to render them *until*. This is observed by Manasseh Ben Israel; and, indeed, they are separated in the Chaldee paraphrase, the sense of which is, that the scepter shall not depart from Judah *for ever*, (עַד עַלְמָא) *until the Messiah shall come*, as if they had read in the Hebrew, לַעַד, or supposed the ל to be understood, and the עַד had been repeated again before כִּי.

The particle כִּי frequently signifies *although*, as may be seen in *Noldius*; so that this latter clause of the verse may be rendered *though he shall come to Shiloh.*

With respect to the former part of the verse, the term שֹׁבֵט signifies properly *a rod*, figuratively a *tribe*, as a rod, or branch growing from a tree, and likewise *dominion*, the emblem of which was a rod, or scepter; and lastly, the word מְדַבֵּר signifies a *law-giver*, or a *scribe*, who, as Manasseh Ben Israel says, sat at the feet of the Jewish judges.

Admitting these variations in the construction of the passage, and that we are at liberty to chuse which we think to be, upon the whole, preferable, I should be inclined to translate the verse as follows; “The scepter shall never depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from his feet, though he shall go to Shiloh, and to it shall be the gathering of the people.” And the meaning may be, that the tribe of Judah

shall always have the chief authority, though the great resort of the people will be to Shiloh, which will not be in his lot, but in that of Ephraim.

The chief objection to this rendering is, that לֵי signifies *to him*, or something in the masculine gender; whereas the names of places are feminine. But we know there are exceptions to this rule in all languages; and the general meaning which I have given to the prophecy may be retained, though לֵי be supposed to refer to Judah; as it may signify that, though Judah, together with the other tribes, should resort to Shiloh, the people should be assembled *to him*; so that he should have the chief authority there; which Manasseh Ben Israel shews was the case in every period of the history of the Israelites.

I chuse to render שבט a *scepter*, or *authority*, because Jacob had been speaking of the supremacy of the tribe of Judah in the preceding verse. But the prophecy will have been literally fulfilled, if it be supposed to have signified *tribe*, as it will then imply, that "Judah will always continue to be a tribe, and be distinguished as such," which it is to this day; whereas all the other tribes are either totally dispersed, or confounded with that of Judah.

I readily admit, that there is great obscurity, and much uncertainty, in the interpretation of this prophecy, though I am pretty well satisfied that it has no relation to the Messiah. But I wish to draw the attention of your readers to the subject, and shall be glad to collect all the light that any of them may be able to throw upon it.

B I B L I C U S.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I Wish that any of your learned readers would inform me, whether there is any evidence now existing, that either the ancient or the modern Jews believed the pre-existence of the Messiah. In the third of Ben Mordecai's Letters, p. 72, I find the following paragraphs on this subject: " Among the notions of the more
" modern Jews, we must also observe that the
" Cabbalists believed *El Shaddai* to be the same
" person as the angel *Metatron*, whom they sup-
" posed to be the instructor of Moses, and the
" Messiah, i. e. as Dr. Allix expresses it, He
" was, according to the christian phrase, the
" logos before his incarnation, or, according to
" the Jewish phrase, the soul of the Messiah,
" whom they look upon as something between
" God and the angels, whom nothing separates
" from God." Allix, p. 456 *.

" Bishop

* Here Mr. Taylor inserts the following note in French, but I shall give it in English: " Calmet, on the word *Meta-*
" *tron*, says, The Hebrews give this name to the first of the
" angels, him who conducted them in the wilderness, and of
" whom it is said, in Moses, *I shall send my angel to go before*
" *you*. He acted towards the Israelites the part of the officer
" whom the Romans called *Metator*. He marked out the
" encamp-

“ Bishop Pearson, in proving by several arguments that Christ is called Jehovah, says, the Jews themselves acknowledge that Jehovah shall be clearly known in the days of the Messiah, and not only so, but that it is the name which doth properly belong to him, for the proof of which he quotes the book *Sepher Ikkarim*, ii. 8. *The scripture calleth the name of the Messiah Jehovah our righteousness*, and *Midrash Tillim*, on Ps. xxi. *God calleth the Messiah by his own name, and his name is Jehovah, as it is*, Ex. xv. 3. *The Lord is a man of war, Jehovah is his name*. And it is written of the Messiah, Jer. xxiii. 6. *And this is the name which they shall call him, Jehovah our righteousness*. Thus *Echa Rabbi*, Lam. i. 6. What is the name of the Messiah? *Rabba* said, *Jehovah* is his name, as it is said, Jer. xxiii. 6. The same he reports of *Rabbi Levi*; and the Bishop concludes, that the Rabbins then did acknowledge that the name *Jehovah* did belong to the Messiah.”

Consulting Dr. Allix’s own work on the subject, I find the following reference to authorities for what he advances: “ See *Reuchlin*, L. i. *De Cabala*, p. 651, where he proves *Metatron* to be the Messiah from their writings; or, in short, take the confession of *Manasseh*

“ encampments, traced the form of them, the dimensions, extent, &c. He is thought to be the archangel *Michael*, who was at the head of the people in the wilderness, that it was he who wrestled with *Jacob*, who is called *the face of God*, in *Exod.* xxxiv. 14. and who is the mediator between God and man; that he writes down good actions, and keeps a register of them.”

“ Ben

“ Ben Israel, Q. 6. In. Gen. f. 2.” The former of these authors I have not, and in the latter I find no such passage as Dr. Allix quotes; owing, perhaps, to some typographical erratum in the reference. But as there is abundant evidence that the Jews in general, and in all ages, from the time of our Saviour to the present, considered their Messiah as a *mere man*, and a proper descendant of David, I own that I am disposed to examine, with some rigour, any pretended evidence to the contrary; though the speculative opinions of some of the Cabbalists among them is a thing of little consequence, when they can be proved to be different from those that were entertained by the nation in general.

What Calmet says concerning the angel Metatron in Ben Mordecai's note, has no relation to the Messiah; so that, what I should be disposed to infer from what the Jewish Cabbalists may have said on the subject is, that this *Metatron* was something similar to what Philo represents the *logos* as being, namely, an *efflux of the divinity*, but no *being*, or *person*, permanently distinguished from him. And it is highly improbable, that any Jew should have supposed that their Messiah, a man descended from David, should have had no proper human soul, besides this *Metatron*, or *logos*, supplying the place of it; though they might suppose the Messiah to be distinguished by the presence and influence of this divine efflux.

The Jewish Cabbalists might easily admit even that the Messiah might be called *Jehovah*,
without

without supposing that he was any thing more than a man, who had no existence before his birth. That it must have been the mere *name*, and not the *nature* of God, that the Jews supposed their Messiah to partake of, is all that can be admitted in the case. Several things in the scriptures are called by the name of Jehovah, as Jerusalem, in the passage above quoted, is called *Jehovah our righteousness*; but this never led the Jews to suppose, that there were two Jehovahs, a greater and a less; for nothing can be more expressly declared, than that there is but one Jehovah; and in the passages quoted by Bishop Pearson, there is no intimation of there being two Jehovahs; so that if the Messiah be Jehovah, there must have been no other being above him, which Ben Mordecai would not suppose.

From reading the above quoted passage from Mr. Taylor, the reader would conclude, that it was the universal opinion of the Jewish Cabbalists, if not of the Jews in general, that this great angel *Metatron* was the soul of the Messiah. But this would be a mistake; for Beaufobre quotes some of them, who said, that the soul of the Messiah was the same that had been the soul of Adam, and likewise that of David. The Cabbalistic proof of this mystery, he says, is the letter A in *Adam*, meaning Adam, the D David, and the M the Messiah. *Histoire de Manicheisme*, vol. II. p. 492. So little dependence is there on the whimsical and uncertain notions of these Jewish Cabbalists. However, when they are quoted, they ought to be quoted fairly.

fairly. Mr. Taylor, probably, saw nothing of them, but what he found in Dr. Allix.

Many mistakes on this subject have been occasioned by its being taken for granted, that what is said of the *logos* may be applied to the *Messiah*, because the generality of christians have supposed them to be synonymous. But this was not the case with the Jews; for though Philo says a great deal concerning the *logos*, and supposes it to have been the medium of all the communications of God to man, he never hints that the *logos* was to be the *Messiah*, or the soul of the *Messiah*, or that it had any particular relation to him. And there is a passage quoted by Basnage, in his history of the Jews, L. IV. c. xxiv. f. 9. which shews, that some of their writers considered them as quite distinct from each other. "Jonathan says, that the *Messiah* and *Moses* will appear at the end of the world, the one in the desert, and the other at Rome, and that the *word* or the *logos* will march between them."

Till I see much more evidence than I have yet met with (and I have not spared any pains to come at it) I cannot admit that any Jew ever supposed that their *Messiah* either pre-existed, or was, properly speaking, God. Basnage, who, it cannot be doubted, was as diligent in his enquiries on this subject, on which he has written so largely, as Dr. Allix, Bishop Pearson, or Mr. Taylor (the author of Ben Mordecai's letters) and who, being a believer in the doctrine of the trinity, could have had no unwillingness to find some traces of it among the Jews, candidly acknowledges

acknowledges that he had not ; and he appears to have considered all that Dr. Allix, Cudworth, Bishop Bull, and others, had written on this subject.

How far Menasseh Ben Israel was from supposing that there was any trinity in the divine nature, appears from the very section that Dr. Allix has quoted, which contains his interpretation of Gen. i. 26. And God said, *Let us make man.* After reciting a variety of interpretations, he concludes as follows : “ Aut dicemus, ple-
 “ rumque id, quod majoris momenti videtur,
 “ majori quoque studio et deliberatione nos ag-
 “ gredi : ideoque scripturam in creatione ho-
 “ minis peculiari modo loqui in plurali, *facia-*
 “ *mus* : quod verbum videtur imperantis sibi
 “ ipsi, & ad suscipiendum ac faciendum aliquid
 “ incitantis : eaque re ostendere Dominus vult,
 “ omnes reliquas creaturas suo beneficio creatas.
 “ Sed sive cum omnibus secundis causis loquatur
 “ Deus, sive cum intelligentiis tantum, sive cum
 “ elementis, sive cum animis, sive regio more
 “ hæc dicat, seu denique incitet semetipsum,
 “ sibi que imperet, conciliatione ejusmodi tota
 “ tollitur controversia. Etenim non quia *fa-*
 “ *ciamus* dicitur, inde sequitur multiplicatio ali-
 “ qua primæ causæ, quæ simplissima est & unica.
 “ Moses vero causam cur ita scriberet, justam
 “ habuit, quia clarissime passim docet unicum
 “ Numen esse ; eo que solus is, qui sciens volens
 “ errat, his verbis errorem suam defensusus est.”
Conciliator, p. 12. “ Or shall we say that, what
 “ seems to be of greater consequence, we gene-
 “ rally undertake with more study and delibe-
 “ ration,

“ration, and therefore that the scripture, in
“describing the creation of man, makes use of
“the plural number, *Let us make*, which is the
“language of a person commanding and ex-
“citing himself to undertake and do any thing;
“so that God would shew that all other crea-
“tures were made for the use of man. But
“whether God be supposed to speak to all se-
“cond causes, or to intelligences only, or to
“the elements, or to souls, or to use the stile
“of a king, or lastly, whether he be supposed
“to excite or command himself, all ground of
“controversy is removed. For it does not fol-
“low, that there is any multiplication of the
“first cause, which is most simple, and one,
“because the phrase, *let us make*, is used. For
“Moses might very safely make use of this
“language, since he every where most clearly
“teaches, that there is but one God; and,
“therefore, he only will defend his error by
“these words, who knowingly and willingly
“errs.”

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.

JOSEPHUS.

To the DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY,

GENTLEMEN,

I Am unable to express the great satisfaction which *Ebionita* has afforded me, on the subject of the *miraculous conception*. I have long disbelieved it, and had intentions of bringing forward to public notice, my reasons for rejecting it; but am happy, that the subject has fallen into hands so much better qualified to do it justice. I beg leave to return my thanks to your correspondent, for the additional reasons with which he has furnished me, for withholding my assent from a fact so strange, and seemingly so unnecessary. In the course of his *observations*, he hath greatly weakened the evidence in favour of the whole of the two introductory chapters, both of Matthew and Luke; by proving, that there were *very early* copies of those gospels without them. If you please to allow me room in your *Repository*, I wish to examine some of the *facts* related in those introductions, independently of this consideration; and to enlarge upon some of the difficulties attending them, farther than *Ebionita* has done. I mean to begin with what is *supposed* to be Matthew's account of the appearance of the
Star,

star, the coming of the magi to Judea, and Herod's massacre of the infants. By inserting what I have to offer on these subjects, you will oblige, Gentlemen;

Your most humble servant,

S Y M M A C H U S.

As *Ebionita* has produced a considerable weight of external evidence, against the authenticity of the introductions to the gospels of Matthew and Luke, contained in the two first chapters of each; it must needs be proper to attend to the probability of the several *facts* recorded in them. If they have in themselves a reasonable degree of probability, that circumstance will proportionably tend to counteract the opposing external evidence; if they appear highly improbable, the authenticity of these introductions becomes proportionably more suspicious. Such a circumstance will operate as a weight taken from the positive scale, and thrown into the negative, in addition to the external evidence which was there before. Upon this account, the friends of free enquiry in matters which respect revelation (and it is hoped we are all becoming daily more and more so) can have no objection to a particular examination of those *facts*; in order that, if possible, a decided opinion may be formed on the subject.

The *facts* proposed to be now considered, are related in Mat. ii. 1—13. and 16—19.* and are as follows:

* The credibility of the intermediate verses has been already very considerably shaken by *Ebionita*.

That at our Saviour's birth a new star appeared, which was observed by some magi, or as we should call them philosophers, in the east; generally supposed to mean *Arabia*. That the star's place, when observed by them, appearing to be directly over the land of Judea, they concluded, that it signified the birth of a king of that country; and for some reasons not mentioned, were induced to pay their respects to the infant king. That they accordingly took some gold and other things of value, agreeably to the usage of the east, as a *present* to the new-born monarch, and set out on their journey for Jerusalem. That being arrived there, they made enquiry, where the new king resided; which enquiry occasioned great uneasiness to Herod and all the city. That Herod summoned a council of the chief priests and scribes, to learn in what place the Messiah was, according to prophecy, to be born; who informed him in Bethlehem of Judea. That upon this, Herod privately sent for the magi, told them the place, asked the exact time of their first observing the star, bade them find the infant, and then return to inform him where he resided, and so dismissed them. That when the magi set out for Bethlehem they saw the star, which as they travelled moved on before them, and continued so to do, till it brought them to the house where the child was, and then it stood still. That, having prostrated themselves before him, according to the manner of inferiors to a superior in their own country, and made their *presents*, they proposed

to

to return, and inform Herod where they had discovered the new king; but in consequence of a divine admonition by a dream, took another rout in their return home, and avoided Jerusalem. And that Herod upon this, became violently enraged, and sent officers, who, by his orders, put to death all the male children in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood, who were of a certain age; regulating the massacre of them in that respect, by the time of the star's first appearing, according to the account which the magi had given him of it.

The first thing which strikes us in this narrative is, the circumstance of a new star appearing on the birth of our Saviour.—This is a very extraordinary event, and of course requires some collateral evidence, to give it probability. But from prophane writers we seek it in vain; nor is it ever noticed any where else in the gospel history, nor so much as alluded to in any of the epistles, not even by Paul; who, if he had heard of it and believed it, would perhaps have noticed, and allegorized it, as he hath done circumstances of much less importance. Neither is there any intimation in the ancient prophecies, that a new star should appear at the birth of the Messiah. The star mentioned by Balaam, most evidently means a *person*, who was to be a conqueror; for so he himself explains it; and this is now, I believe, almost universally allowed.

The difficulty attending this out-set of the narrative has been felt, and various schemes contrived to give it, as far as possible, an air

of credibility. The best summary of them which I recollect to have met with, is found in *Cruden's Concordance*, article *Star*. And as few but divines by profession, are probably possessed of this work, I shall take the liberty of giving it from him. He says then,

“ The star that appeared to the magi, or wise
 “ men, and conducted them to *Betlehem*, where
 “ our Saviour was born, has furnished matter
 “ for many conjectures. Some ancient authors
 “ have asserted, that it was a new star pur-
 “ posely created to declare to them the birth
 “ of the Messiah. Others take it for a kind of
 “ a comet, which appeared preternaturally in
 “ the air. *Lightfoot* thinks, that the same light
 “ which appeared to the shepherds near *Beth-*
 “ *lehem* might also be visible a far off to the
 “ magi, hanging over *Judea*, and so be their
 “ guide, to find our Saviour. Others have
 “ pretended, that it was an angel with a lu-
 “ minous body in the form of a star, which tak-
 “ ing his course towards *Judea*, determined
 “ the magi to follow him: they found their
 “ opinion upon this; that this *star* appeared to
 “ be rational and intelligent, appearing, and
 “ disappearing, stopping and going forward,
 “ in such manner as was necessary for the con-
 “ duct of the magi, to the proper place. It is
 “ said that some writers believed this *star* was
 “ the Holy Ghost, which appeared to the *magi*
 “ under the form of a *star*, as he appeared at
 “ the baptism of Christ under the form of a
 “ *dove*. Lastly, *Calmet* says, that this star was
 “ an inflamed meteor, in the middle region of
 “ the

“ the air, which having been observed by the
 “ *magi* with miraculous and extraordinary cir-
 “ cumstances, was taken by them for the *star*
 “ so long foretold by *Balaam*; and that after-
 “ wards they resolved to follow it, and to seek
 “ the new-born king, whose coming it declar-
 “ ed. It was therefore, says he, a light that
 “ moved in the air before them, something
 “ like the pillar of a cloud in the desert.”

As to the *first* of these suppositions.—A *star* created on purpose to declare the birth of the Messiah to the magi, and having served that use, and brought them to the spot where he was, annihilated again, is a prodigious miracle indeed: when one, seemingly of a much inferior nature would have served full as well. For as God, it is said, directed them in a dream to return from *Bethlehem* by a different rout than they had come; a dream might have served as well, to have informed them, that the king of the Jews was born; and there was no danger of their losing their way without the star from *Arabia* to Jerusalem, or from Jerusalem to *Bethlehem*, as will be seen hereafter.—The same observations will equally apply to the *second* supposition, of its being a comet; for it must have been a supernatural comet.—*Lightfoot's* solution of its being the glory which appeared to the shepherds, is a very strange one; and founded upon this supposition (as he himself tells us, *Works*, vol. I. p. 438.) that “ a great light or fire
 “ which happens at any place in the night, be
 “ it never so great in itself, or in the eyes of
 “ those that are in the place where it is; yet

“ to those that are at a great distance off, it
“ seems to be a *star* or some such thing;” and
this he says we know by experience. For my
own part I know it not by experience, nor
ever heard, that any person else did. I know
by experience, that a large fire in the night,
puts on a quite different appearance from a
star. It approaches not to the colour of a star,
and causes the atmosphere about it, for a con-
siderable distance, to be of a dusky red, sur-
rounded by a gloomy brown, terminating in
blackness. Besides, such a brightness as is
here supposed, must have given a great alarm
at Jerusalem, of which we have no account.
As to its being a rational and intelligent angel,
or the Holy Spirit in the form of a *star*, I think
none of your readers will wish me to show how
wild and extravagant such imaginations are.
Calmet’s idea of its being an inflamed meteor,
comes pretty near to that, which is I believe
most generally adopted at this time; namely,
of its being a kind of *falling star*, to which it
by no means corresponds in its supposed use;
because such stars (as they are improperly call-
ed) as soon as they are kindled, rush along the
air with an astonishing rapidity, and are almost
instantly extinguished. If it should be said,
that this was a miraculous falling star, I hope
to shew in the sequel, that there was no ne-
cessity for a miraculous star of any kind; and
surely no person can suppose, that the Deity
performs miracles to no end; or a greater mi-
racle when an inferior one would answer as well.
But after all, there is great reason to think, that
the

the writer of this narrative intended a *real star*. Indeed he has scarcely left us any room to doubt his meaning; for by his account it appears, that the magi themselves denominated it a star, and the magi were *astronomers*. If it had been a star *then* created, and not destroyed after the purpose of leading them to the Messiah was effected, it would have acquired a *name* expressive of its use; which name Christians would have carefully preserved, and we should now have been able to point out that very star, as the *magi's star*. And if it be supposed, that it was created for this occasion only, and then annihilated again, I have already observed upon this *hypothesis*.

Let it, however, for a while be allowed, that the magi, when in their own country, saw a new star over Judea; a natural question arises, How came they to infer that a king of the Jews was born? The answer given is, That new stars were considered among the heathens, as signs of the birth of some king, prince, or potentate, of that country over which such stars appeared. But though this is asserted, I can find no evidence of it, nor any thing like evidence. I beg leave therefore, Gentlemen, to recommend to your learned readers, who may think the matter of consequence, to ascertain the fact. Fully satisfied I am, that the connexion between the appearance of a new star and the birth of a king, was never understood to be so certain, as that any persons would act upon it without additional evidence, much less undertake a long journey, to make presents

and pay their court to an infant monarch, of a foreign country. And it is observable, that most of our best commentators, though they have adopted the above opinion, could not depend upon it alone in this case; but have supposed, that God, by a vision or a dream, explained to the magi the meaning of the star. And how they could be so clear in their supposed interpretation of its appearance without this, cannot easily be conceived. But then here seems to be an unnecessary miracle, for the star might as well have been absent; since it was certainly a shorter way, for God to have declared to the magi, that the king of the Jews was born, than first to create a star upon the occasion, and then inform them, that that star was made and placed over Judea to *instruct* them, that the king of the Jews was born. There does not therefore appear to have been any necessity for the star, in the *commencement* of this business; which greatly affects the probability of this part of the narrative. Let us then proceed.

It may be asked, Was not the star of considerable use, in conducting the magi from Arabia to Jerusalem? I answer, of none at all. Nor is there the least reason to think, that the writer of this story meant us to suppose, that they ever saw the star again, till they were leaving Jerusalem to go to Bethlehem. And indeed they no more wanted the guidance of a miraculous star upon such a journey, than their countrymen. If they did, they would have required the star to have conducted them home again;

again; for they are said to have returned by *another* rout. If it should be replied, that they returned by the *usual* road, but the star had conducted them to Judea by an uncommon one; I shall only observe that this is all *gratis dictum*, and without the least foundation; as is the notion of the star's conducting them from *Arabia* to Jerusalem at all. In this *second* stage therefore of the affair, the star actually does nothing.

Let us now then consider the magi as arrived at Jerusalem, and enquiring, Where the king of the Jews resided, whose star they had seen when in the east. This enquiry is prosecuted, till the report of the birth of the king of the Jews, had spread through the city, and at last come to the ears of Herod. The result was, as might naturally be expected, that the tyrant was alarmed and terrified; but we are also told, what could not have been expected; namely, that the whole city was in the same predicament, "And Herod was troubled, and *all Jerusalem with him.*" Surely the account would have appeared much more natural and probable, if we had read, 'And Herod was troubled, but all Jerusalem rejoiced with exceeding great joy.'—The ground for supposing, that Herod would be troubled at this news, is too plain to need pointing out. But there is no sufficient reason, that we can discover, for the trouble and alarm of the people. *Lightfoot*, indeed supposes, that "they were afraid of the disturbance of the state." A state which no doubt they wished to see disturbed, and would have

have cheerfully assisted to alter. They could not be afraid of recovering perfect liberty and independence, and must have rejoiced exceedingly at the birth of their Messiah, who was to lead them to these blessings. *Lightfoot* afterwards alters the word *fear* to *perplexity*; and says, "If they understood this king to be the *Messias* (as the nation now looked for his coming) yet could it not choose but breed some *perplexity* in them; partly to think of the rareness of the matter, and chiefly of their being in subjection to so potent a nation as the Romans, when their Deliverer should appear." As to the latter consideration, their subjection to the Romans, that was certainly the circumstance of all others, which would make them rejoice; because of the prospect afforded them of throwing off that subjection, in consequence of the birth of their Deliverer; and they could have no apprehensions for his safety at this time, since they had the sure word of their prophecies on their side. As to the rareness of the matter (or as *Dr. Clarke* says, strangeness of the enquiry) since they were in expectation of the birth of their Messiah, they could not be *perplexed*, much less in *fear*, because they heard it had taken place.

Herod now calls a council, to learn where the Messiah, according to the national prophecies, was to be born; and is informed at Bethlehem of Judea. But the calling of this council at *this* time, seems to have been a very superfluous affair; if the account of the angel and the shepherds, in the introduction to Luke
be

be authentic. For almost twelve months probably had passed, since his birth was publicly announced at Bethlehem, when it was full of people: and to suppose, that a report of this nature had not, in this time, reached as far as Jerusalem, is in the highest degree unnatural and incredible. The consternation therefore of Herod and the people, and the calling of the council, should have taken place long before the coming of the magi.

The next step of Herod's, we are told, was to inform the magi privately, where to go to seek the object of their enquiry; and to desire them, when they had discovered the child, to come back to him, and inform him where he might be met with; secretly intending to destroy him. To this part of the narrative however an objection arises, from the interest which Herod must have had, to make sure of the child. From the crafty policy of the tyrant, it might have been expected, that he would have sent a few trusty friends with the magi, as attendants, under the pretence of doing them honour; who, when the child was found, might without difficulty have dispatched him. It is highly improbable, that such a man as Herod, should not have taken the shortest and most certain road to effect his purpose. And that which I have mentioned is so obvious, that a much weaker prince than *Herod* could hardly have missed it.

But the account proceeds, and informs us, that on the magi's departure from Jerusalem, the *star* which they had seen when they were in
the

the east, appeared to them again; and went before them, till it brought them to the very house where the child was, and over that it stood still. Here a difficult question arises; namely, Why did the star go before them in their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem? I apprehend it is usually supposed, that it was intended for a guide to them, that they might not miss their way. But the distance between the two places was so small, that no such a guide could be necessary. *Maundrell*, who travelled it, in company with about two thousand pilgrims, and several bands of soldiers as a guard, says, that from Jerusalem to Bethlehem is *two hours travel*; now so large a body cannot be supposed to have gone forward at most, above three miles an hour; and this computation agrees exceedingly well, with the distance marked in the maps. Now what occasion could there be for a miraculous guidance, from the metropolis of a country, to a town only six miles distant?—But it may be said, that the appearance of the *star* on the road, was merely *introductory* to its pointing out the particular residence of the young king. This however does not mend the matter; because no such miraculous *introduction* was at all necessary. Neither was there any need of a miraculous *star* to point out the house in which the young king resided; if the story of the angel and shepherds be authentic. For the people of the town could not have forgotten in less than a year, that on the night this infant was born, they had been miraculously informed, that he

was

was the Messiah: and after this information, they never could have over-looked him at all; much less, whilst he resided in their town, could they have been so inattentive to him, as not to be able to point out the house in which he lived. So then in this *last* stage, the star intrudes itself to no purpose; except the magi's rejoicing when they saw it. But there was more reason to this end, that it should have accompanied them from Arabia to Judea, on account of the much greater distance. However, God can scarcely be thought to work such stupendous miracles, for so trifling a purpose. And another circumstance very unfavourable to the appearance of this star at all, is, that the Jews themselves, though it is said to have hung over their own country, do not appear to have drawn any inferences from it, nor even so much as to have seen it.

In the return of the magi homewards, we are told, that they by divine direction pursued another rout, and avoided Jerusalem. Upon which Herod sent, and slew all the male children in Bethlehem and the neighbourhood, who were of a certain age. Our translation says, *from two years old and under*; but in consequence of an excellent note in *Knatchbull's Annotations*, p. 6. 14. I have (as the reader must have observed) considered these transactions as falling *within* the first year; provided they ever happened at all. In this note he has made it highly probable, that "from *two years old and under*," means exclusively those who had entered into their second year;
that

that is, all the male children of a year old and under. "For," says he, "from a full whole year and upwards, a child beginneth to be called by the *Hebrews* בן-שנתים, *filius duorum annorum*, with the *Greeks*, *δωδεμήνη*, with the *Latins*, *Bimus*." In short, it appears, that they reckoned their ages from the beginning of every year, and not as we do, from the end; so that as soon as the first year was completed, and the smallest entrance made into the second, a child was considered as "a two-yearing child," according to his mode of expressing it. The whole note is well worth perusal, but is too long to be copied into this paper.

If *Knatchbull's* criticism be just, as I think it is, it considerably reduces the number of infant sacrifices to Herod's jealousy on this occasion; I mean, provided there were *any*. For a story of this nature requires to be well authenticated. To convict Herod of this atrocious crime, as *Prideaux* seems inclined to do, from *other* instances of his cruel and bloody disposition, is not just. To establish the fact, we naturally and reasonably expect some collateral evidence in point; but as none such appears, either in prophane or scriptural writers, there must remain a strong suspicion, that it may not be true: and this suspicion receives additional strength, when a charge of such a kind as this, is found in close connexion with, and represented as the result of, a series of previous events, which are themselves of a very suspicious nature; which were very early rejected by christians, and the history of this massacre together with them.

But

But supposing the story to be true, we are naturally led to enquire, concerning the *benefits* which arose from the magi's finding the Messiah, by means of the extraordinary and miraculous guidance of God. Certainly, the mere opportunity of paying their court to an infant, and offering him a few presents, cannot be regarded as any. In behalf of this account it is alledged, that the coming of the magi to Bethlehem might, when the issue of their journey was related by them to their countrymen, contribute to prepare the way for the more easy reception of the gospel in Arabia, at some distant period. But it is difficult to say, why Arabia should be thus peculiarly distinguished. The same kind of evidence which made converts in other nations, would, no doubt, have been as effectual in that country. Nor is there any evidence to be found, that a single convert was made, in consequence of the magi's journey; nor any reference to the story, in any view of advantage derived from it, or otherwise, to be elsewhere met with. But the account itself sets forth a very serious *evil* resulting from it; the destruction of many innocent helpless infants.

The narrative closes with a quotation from Jeremiah, which the writer seems to consider as a prophecy, though it evidently never was a prophecy at all, but a mere figurative speech, referring to the unhappy situation of the people of Israel at the time it was uttered.

The evidence in behalf of the truth of the narrative which we have been considering, is simply, that it is ascribed to Matthew, and prefixed

fixed to his gospel. But, since it may have been prefixed thereto by some other person, and seems to contain many great improbabilities (and many more might have been added to those I have noticed) and since it was very early rejected, as forming no part of the genuine history of Matthew, I leave it, Gentlemen, with your readers, to determine whether the evidence for or against its authenticity preponderates.

THE END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

