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BIBLE NEWS:

OR,

SACRED TRUTHS

RELATING TO THE

LIVING GOD,

HIS ONLY SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT,

Illustrated and defended in a continued Series of Letters and Inquiries.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

BY NOAH WORCESTER, A. M.

"But to us there is but one God the Father." ST. PAUL.
"This is my beloved Son." JEHOVAH.
"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost."
ST. PETER.

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1813.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT:

District Clerk's Office.

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"Bible News: or Sacred Truths relating to the Living God, his Only Son, and Holy Spirit, illustrated and defended in a continued series of Letters and Inquiries. The second edition, corrected and enlarged. By NOAH WORCESTER, A. M. "But to us there is but one God the Father." St. Paul. "This is my beloved Son." Jehovah. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost." St. Peter."

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WILLIAM S. SHAW, } *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Letters contained in the following pages are, generally, those which were formerly published under the title of "Bible News;" and "addressed to a worthy Minister of the gospel." Some things, however, have been omitted to give place to others which have been deemed of more importance. But whether this may be properly called an *Improved Edition*, the public will determine.

On condition that it shall be consistent with the will of God, under the general title now assumed, the public may expect some farther communications. A series of Inquiries have, for a long time, occupied my attention; and some things are nearly ready for the press; which, it is hoped, will give additional light respecting the character of the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit; and also additional evidence that the doctrine of a "Three one God" has no foundation in the Bible; and that it is really reproachful both to the Holy ONE of Israel and to his ONLY SON.

It was foreign from the desires of my heart to occasion any *schism*, *tumult* or *clamor* among professed Christians; and I cannot but deeply lament that any things of such a nature have been the *consequence* of publishing my sentiments. It is most sincerely hoped, that those who have been *offended* with me for *thinking for myself* and *publishing* the *fruits of my inquiries*, will yet allow themselves time for *cool reflection* and *patient examination*. For it is confidently believed, that the time is not far distant, when the doctrine, that Christ is really God's SON, will not, by *Christian Ministers*, be classed among "*damnable heresies*."

There are things, respecting which, I must be allowed to express some astonishment, because, when the things are compared together, there seems to be something of the nature of a paradox.

So far as I am informed by *reports*, by *private letters* and by *conversation*, the *sentiment* that Christ is really God's SON, has, above every thing else in my Letters, been made the ground of objection among Trinitarian Ministers. It is on this very ground that they have taken the liberty to represent, that I have *degraded* the character of Christ, that I am an *Arian*, a *Socinian*, and a *heretic*.

In my own defence, and in opposition to their views, I exhibit evidence from Scripture, that *believing* in Christ, as the *Son of God*, is stated as a *condition* of

salvation; and that *disbelief* of this doctrine is what is termed *making God a liar*. Then, my Trinitarian brethren, turn right about, and consider me as really *reprehensible*, for so much as *intimating* that they do not "*as fully as*" *I* "*do*," believe that Jesus Christ is the SON of God.

But if they do, as *fully as I do*, believe that Jesus Christ is the SON of God, why the *alarm?* Why the *opposition?* And why the *cry* of "*damnable heresies?*" If believing, as I do, that Christ is really God's SON; and if, as they affirm, they do, as *fully as I do*, believe that he is the SON of God, why are they free from the charge of "*damnable heresy?*" Is the very *same sentiment*, in them, a *gospel truth*, and in me a "*damnable heresy?*" And if my sentiment be *degrading* to Christ, and they really believe the same, why is not their sentiment equally *degrading* to the Savior?

They will reply, that they really believe that Christ is the SON of God; but not in the sense I have given to the terms. But can any man of candor honestly say, that the sense I have given to the terms is not the *highest sense* which can *possibly* be given them, consistent with *any analogy?* If, then, these Ministers do really believe, that Christ is GOD'S SON, but not in the sense I have given to the terms; they must believe that he is the SON of God in a *lower* sense of the terms. Consequently, if my sentiment be *degrading* to Christ, theirs must be still *more degrading*.

Moreover, as I have adopted the *highest* ground of *possible Sonship*, if my sentiment be *degrading* to Christ, he was *degraded* by the *testimony* of his apostles, his *own testimony*, and the *testimony of God*, by the voice from heaven. For, whatever might be the particular sense, in which these witnesses used the term SON, we may be confident, it was not in *any* sense *higher* than the *highest*. It seems to me reasonable to believe, that the terms "THE SON OF GOD," were designed to express either the NATURE, or the DIGNITY of the Person to whom they were applied, or BOTH together. I have supposed that they *naturally* express both his *nature* and his *dignity*; but if in this I have been under a mistake, still I do not see any room for the charge of my having *degraded* the character of Christ; unless he has been *degraded* by every being who has called him THE SON OF GOD.

But is it a fact, that Trinitarians do believe, *as fully as I do*, that Jesus is "the SON of the LIVING GOD?" The term *Son* is indeed used in different senses; but is there any *one sense* of the term, in which a *Son* is not a *distinct Being* from *him* who stands *related* as *Father?* If not, then, in agreement with every analogy, I have believed the SON of God to be a *distinct Being* from his FATHER. But my Trinitarian opponents affirm, as their belief, that GOD and HIS SON are the same "individual Being." This theory is a manifest contradiction to every analogy of

Father and *Son.* Can they, then, with propriety say, that they believe, *as fully as I do,* that Christ is the SON of GOD? And by what authority are they to be justified in giving a construction to the correlative terms *Father* and *Son,* which has *no analogy in nature,* or in the *language of human beings?*

N. W.

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SACRED TRUTHS.

PART I.

ON THE UNITY OF GOD.

LETTER I.

Introductory Statements and Observations.

REV. SIR,

IN solemn prayer to his Father, our Divine Redeemer said, "This is life eternal, to know THEE, the ONLY TRUE GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom THOU hast *sent*." It must hence appear, that no inquiries can be more justifiable nor more interesting than those which respect the true character of the FATHER and the SON. So far as we are in darkness respecting these characters, we must necessarily be in darkness respecting the gospel of divine grace. To obtain clear and scriptural views of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT, has long been a principal object of my study and pursuit.

From my infancy, I was taught to believe the Athanasian doctrine of three distinct co-equal and co-eternal Persons in one God. And I do not recollect that I had any doubts of its correctness, until several years after I began the work of the ministry. Believing it to be both true and important, according to my ability I

taught it to others. But even while I taught the doctrine, I was often embarrassed by it both in prayer and in preaching. In giving thanks to God for his astonishing love in giving his SON to die for our offences, the theory has occurred with a *chilling* and *confounding* influence. These thoughts would unavoidably rush into my mind—GOD and his SON are one and the same Being; the SON could not in *reality die* or *suffer* any more than the FATHER; it was only a mere man that suffered, to whom the SON was mysteriously united. In my preaching, while expressing the love of God in SPARING NOT HIS OWN SON, the same theory and the same train of thoughts would occur; and, in some instances, both in prayer and in preaching, the influence of these thoughts has been so great as, for a time, to obstruct my utterance.

Such embarrassments had a natural tendency to excite suspicions in my mind that there must be some defect in the theory which I had adopted. But the doctrine had been so long and so generally believed by great divines and good people, that I almost trembled at the thought of indulging my suspicions. At length I became acquainted with the views of Dr. Watts, as exhibited in connection with the Memoirs of his life. These I read with care. He supposed the SON of God not to be a self-existent Person, but a human Being created before the worlds, and intimately united to the Father, so that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead; and that from this union his Divinity resulted. His reasonings, to prove that the union of the Man Jesus was with the Father, and not with a second self-existent Person, appeared to me conclusive and unanswerable. And as a union with the Father must imply as great fulness and dignity as a union

with another Person just equal with the Father, I was unable to see why his theory did not support the Divinity of Jesus Christ in as ample a manner as the Athanasian hypothesis.

Another consideration, which greatly recommended to my acceptance the theory of Dr. Watts, was this, it freed me from those distressing embarrassments which I had formerly felt in prayer and preaching. For on his theory, the *real Person*, who is called the Son of God, was the *real Sufferer* on the cross.

Having obtained this relief to my mind, I rested pretty quietly for several years as a believer in Watts's theory of the Trinity. But my apprehensions and ideas were so indistinct, that I indulged no thought of writing on the subject with any view to publication, until the year 1807. In the course of that year, my attention was in a peculiar manner arrested by the natural import of this text, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."* I noted, that in this verse the apostle was exhibiting the faith of christians, in contrast with the faith of heathens. In the preceding verse he had said, "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many.") Such is the faith of the heathen world. With this he contrasts the faith of christians, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." The ideas which appeared to me to lie plainly on the face of this text were these:—

* 1 Cor. viii. 6.

1. That the one SELF-EXISTENT GOD is ONE PERSON, viz. the FATHER. The apostle does not say, But to us there is but one God, yet this one God is three Persons. His language is, "But to us there is but one GOD, the FATHER." He distinctly names the Person whom he styles the ONE GOD, and calls him the FATHER.

2. That this one God is the Fountain or Source of all things—"*OF whom are all things.*"

3. That Jesus Christ, the one Lord, is a Person as distinct from the *Being* of GOD as he is from the *Person* of the FATHER. After the apostle had distinctly told who is the one God, he then proceeded to say, "and ONE LORD, JESUS CHRIST." As he had named the one God, so he also named the one Lord.

4. That Jesus Christ, the one Lord, is the MEDIUM or AGENT, *through* whom or *by* whom God displays his fulness in the production of events—"*BY whom are all things, and we BY HIM.*"

Such being the views I had of the text, a field was opened which appeared clear, spacious, and delightful. This field I entered, and began to write on the doctrine of the Trinity, in a great measure conformable to the views of Dr. Watts. Nearly two years my mind was absorbed in these inquiries, and my time employed in writing on the subject. I wrote pretty largely, and thought I had produced something which might be useful to the public.

But while writing for the press, it frequently occurred to my mind that the *definitive* and *emphatical* language used in Scripture respecting the SON of GOD, did import a higher character than is implied in Watts's theory—that the terms OWN SON, ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, &c. did import that Christ was the

Son of God in the most strict and proper sense of the terms. After I had written what I intended for the press, that idea became more and more impressed on my mind as the *natural meaning* of the word of God. But though I could not find that any person had ventured to advance the idea, I viewed it to be my duty to examine the point with the utmost care.* This I

* Since the first edition of these letters satisfactory evidence has been obtained that many others have asserted the same views of the Son of God which are contained in these letters. The dispute between Arius and his opponents had no respect to the *number* of *persons* in deity; but simply to the *derived nature* of the Son of God. Arius maintained "that the Son was not begotten of the Father, i. e. *produced of his substance*, but created out of nothing." On the contrary, the Council of Nice affirmed "that the Son was *peculiarly of the Father*, being of *his substance* as begotten of him." The creed of that Council contains no idea of a "three one God." The "one God" is clearly represented as *one Person* only, and the Son as *derived from God*. It was by *adding* to the Nicene Creed that the Council at Constantinople made out the doctrine of a "three one God." Dr. Mosheim says, "They gave the finishing touch to what the Council of Nice had left imperfect, and fixed in a full and determinate manner the doctrine of three persons in one God." Vol. I. p. 426.

Mr. Milner says, "This Council very accurately defined the doctrine of the Trinity, and *enlarging a little* the Nicene Creed, they delivered it to us as we now have it in our communion service." The Macedonian heresy gave occasion to a *more explicit* representation of the *third Person* in the Trinity." Vol. II. p. 184—5.

Dr. Lardner informs us about the "little" which this Council *enlarged* the Nicene creed. It was this—"The Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets."

This was not a *very* "little" to add; for the Nicene creed conveys no idea that the *spirit* is a *person*, but simply says "we believe in the Holy Spirit."

have attempted to do; and the result of my inquiries on that point is this, that Jesus Christ is as truly the SON of GOD, as Isaac was the *son of Abraham;* and that this view of the matter is essential to a due estimation of the love of God as displayed in the gospel of his grace. It is also my real belief, that this view of the subject will be found much better to harmonize with the Scriptures, and unspeakably more HONORARY to the FATHER and to the SON, than any other hypothesis which has been advanced.

Having, therefore, experienced such a revolution in my own views, I have occasion to write anew on the subject. I have concluded to write in the form of letters, and to address them to you, as to a candid friend and brother in Christ.

While writing on my former ground, I derived some consolation from the thought that my views harmonized with the theory of Dr. Watts. I am now in a measure deprived of that source of consolation; but I have another which I esteem much more important, viz. that my views now harmonize with the most *obvious* and *natural meaning* of the language of GOD, of CHRIST, and his APOSTLES; and that if I am in an error, my error has not resulted from *departing* from the *natural import* of scripture language, but from *preferring that* to a meaning which is *foreign, figurative,* or *mystical.*

The Doctor also introduces the following concession of Bishop Burnet—"So that the Creed here called the Nicene Creed, is indeed the Constantinopolitan Creed with the addition of *Filioque* by the Western church." See first postscript to the "letter on the Logos." p. 185.

Thus we have *three* Trinitarians and *one* Unitarian concurring in the fact that the doctrine of a "three one God" was not *finished* until A. D. 381.

There is one formidable objection to my views, which I have to meet in the very threshold of my communications on this subject. I may therefore now state and answer it, that the way may be opened for a candid hearing.

It is said, that my views imply a departure from a great and important article of the orthodox faith, which has for many centuries been admitted by the great body of the most pious Christians, and has been advocated by great numbers of learned and pious divines; that it has long been admitted as an article of Christian faith, that there are THREE distinct, co-equal, and self-existent *Persons* in the ONE GOD; and that it would be reproachful to the great Head of the church, to suppose that he would suffer his most faithful friends to be so long in an error on a point of so great importance.

This, I confess, has appeared to me the most weighty objection which has ever been stated against the theory I have adopted. I shall therefore attempt a serious and candid reply.

1. I have no inclination to doubt either the piety or the learning of those divines who have advocated the doctrine of three distinct Persons in one God. Many such, I doubt not, have already been admitted into the realms of bliss, and others I believe are in the way which leads to the same state. Some of this class of divines with whom I am acquainted, I esteem as the excellent of the earth, and as vastly my superiors in piety, learning, and discernment. But *fallibility* has been the common lot of Christians, as long, at least, as the Athanasian theory has been received as the orthodox faith. And among all the great and good divines, I cannot find one who has ever given evidence of

infallibility. Great and good divines, like other good people, have been liable to err. Nor can I find, that Christ ever promised that he would not suffer his church to fall into any error in sentiment respecting the character of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, however *improbable* it may appear to you that there is any incorrectness in the doctrine which has been so long and so generally received, and so ably and abundantly advocated, the *possibility that* there may be incorrectness *must* be admitted. An investigation, therefore, may be highly proper and useful.

2. I would ask, Is it not a truth, that, for many centuries, the doctrine before us has been *popular*—so popular that a man must run the hazard of losing his reputation for piety, if he should call in question its correctness? And would not such a state of things naturally preclude any general, thorough, and impartial examination of the subject? Would not many, even among good people and good ministers, be likely to choose to take it for granted that the *popular doctrine* is true, and content themselves with searching the Scriptures for texts to *support* it? Such a course of proceeding, I confess, I adopted for a number of years. Such was my veneration for the characters of those writers who had defended the theory, that it seemed to me safe to follow them. My object, therefore, in studying on the subject, was merely to *support* the doctrine. I do not know that others have been so deficient; but if they have, this may be one reason why the doctrine has been so long and so generally admitted.

The proposition, which affirms that there are three distinct Persons in one God, is surely *not* a Bible proposition—I am willing to admit it as a proposition

formed by good men to express *their views* of the *meaning* of God's word. But we have the Bible before us, as well as those who formed the proposition, and it is our duty to bring the doctrine to the Bible for *examination*, and not merely for *support*.

3. Do not your peculiar sentiments, as a Hopkinsian, imply a departure from doctrines which have been considered as highly important, which have been generally received for several centuries by the most pious Christians, and which have been advocated by multitudes of great and good divines? Why were you not afraid of impeaching the character of the great Head of the church by adopting sentiments in a manner which, in your own view, would imply that he had suffered his most faithful friends for a long time to be in an error on some important points? Why were you not contented to receive for truth the theories of our pious forefathers, and thus have saved yourself the trouble of laborious investigation, and from the reproaches of those who have viewed you as departing from doctrines which have long been received by the pious and faithful friends of Christ? It does not, sir, appear, that our Hopkinsian brethren have been much afraid of impeaching the character of Christ, by preaching and writing what they have *thought* to be the truth, although, in some respects, they contradicted theories which have long been received as essential doctrines of the gospel.

4. I willingly admit, that the great body of Christ's faithful friends have been so far united, as to adopt, as an article of faith, a proposition which affirms *three distinct Persons in one God*. But is it not a solemn truth, that nineteen twentieths of those, who have professed to believe the article, have never examined the

terms of the *proposition* so as to be able to tell in what sense *they* believed it to be true? And have not the great and pious divines in every age, since the proposition was adopted, been greatly divided as to its *real import?*

Mr. Jones, and some others, have informed us, that by the THREE PERSONS *they* mean THREE DISTINCT AGENTS. But Dr. Hopkins says, "It must be carefully observed, that when this word is applied to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as three distinct Persons, it does not import the same distinction as when applied to men." But he does not pretend to be able to tell what the word *does import*, as applied to the Deity. There are other ministers who frankly own that they know not what is intended by *Persons* in the proposition.

Dr. Watts, in his day, said, "The common or scholastic explication of the Trinity, which has been long and universally received, and been called orthodox, is, that God is but one simple, infinite, and eternal Spirit: Hence it follows, that the Divine essence, powers, and essential properties of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, in the Godhead, are numerically the very same: that it is the same numerical consciousness, understanding, will, and power, which belongs to the Father, that also belongs to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: and that the sacred Three are distinguished *only* by the *superadded, relative properties of paternity, filiation, and precession.*"

Perhaps the word *procession* should have been used, instead of "*precession;*" but I have given the word as I found it in Memoirs of Dr. Watts, page 98.

If Dr. Watts gave a true account of what had "been long and universally received" as the ortho-

dox faith, Mr. Jones and those who agree with him in sentiment have greatly departed from the orthodox faith. The orthodox faith, according to Dr. Watts, implied no more than one infinite, self-existent Agent; the terms *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, denoted "superadded, relative properties." But Mr. Jones supposes three distinct Agents.

Some, by the three distinct Persons, have understood no more than one Being acting in three distinct offices. The same Person or Being is FATHER as *Creator*, SON as *Redeemer*, and HOLY GHOST as *Sanctifier*. This may harmonize with the doctrine of "superadded, relative properties."

In the conclusion of the "Memoirs of Dr. Watts," the writer says, "If I understand the great reformer Calvin aright, he in like manner conceived of the WORD and SPIRIT as the WISDOM and POWER of the Deity personified.* The pious Mr. Baxter adopted a like personification." The same writer quotes from Mr. Baxter a passage, which shows that there had been other methods still of explaining the personality of the Trinity.

"Abundance of heretics," says Mr. Baxter, "have troubled the church with their self-devised opinions about the Trinity, and the Person and nature of Christ. And I am loth to say how much many o the orthodox have troubled it also, with their self-conceited, misguided and uncharitable zeal against those they judged heretics. I would advise the reader

* When this passage was quoted I had not seen Calvin's "Institutes." He indeed says things which favor the idea that the *wisdom* and *power* of Deity are *personified*, for the *Son* and *Holy Spirit*. But he says other things of a very different complexion. See the quotations in part II. letter IX.

to be none of them that shall charge with heresy all those who say that the three Persons are *Deus seipsum intelligens, Deus a seipso intellectus*, et Deus a seipso *amatus*, (though I am not one,) nor yet those holy men whom I have cited, and many others, who expressly say that *Potentia, Sapientta*, et *Amor*, POWER, WISDOM, and LOVE, are the Father, Son, and HOLY GHOST."

Thus, sir, we may see how the great and pious divines, with which God has blessed his church, have been divided in their *real opinions* of the meaning of a proposition which they all had adopted as an *article of faith*. One class out of six has agreed with you in sentiment, that by the three Persons are intended *three distinct Agents;* a second class uses the term Persons in an indefinite sense, without explanation; a third, by three Persons, understands *three offices;* the fourth supposes one proper Person, and His *Wisdom* and *Power* personified for the other two Persons; the fifth supposes the three Persons to be *three principal attributes of God, Power, Wisdom*, and *Love;* the other supposes the personality to mean no more than this, *God understanding himself, God understood by himself*, and *God loving himself.*

Of what use, sir, to Christianity, can that proposition be, which is thus variously understood by the best divines? While there is so great a variety of *real opinion* about the import of the article, their agreeing to adopt it as an article of faith can be no evidence of its correctness. But is not the disagreement as to the *import* of the word *Person*, in the proposition, some evidence that the word is improperly [illegible]ed? You cannot justly accuse me of differing more in *real opinion* from those who have adopted this arti-

cle, than they differ from each other. And I would suggest it for your serious consideration, whether your departure from the ancient orthodox faith is not infinitely greater than mine—yea, greater by *two infinities?* You suppose *three* self-existent, infinite Agents; I suppose but *one;* and if Dr. Watts fairly stated the explication of the Trinity, which had "been long and universally received" as orthodox, the ancient orthodoxy implied but *one* infinite Agent. And with his statement agrees all but one of the several explanations which have been enumerated; the personality was evidently understood as figurative.

The evidence we have before us, that great and good men have been greatly divided on the subject of the personality of the Trinity, may serve to evince the propriety of the caution given by Mr. Baxter against indulging a censorious spirit one towards another. The more deep and mysterious the subject, the more occasion we have for self-diffidence, and the more room for the exercise of Christian candor towards those who may differ from us in opinion.

The experience I have had of my own *fallibility* may be considered as an admonition to me against indulging a self-confident spirit respecting the correctness of my present views. I have indeed been long searching and laboring to ascertain the truth, and to bring my views to harmonize with the *meaning* of the word of God. But I am yet far from any claim to infallibility. I can hardly expect that I shall be free from mistakes in explaining the numerous passages of Scripture which will naturally come under consideration. But this I know, that I have no interest to serve by perverting or misapplying the Scriptures.

It is, I hope, my aim, to act faithfully for Christ in attempting to explain his word; and with him I may safely leave the event.

I am not insensible that I expose to peril the little share of reputation which I have hitherto possessed, by taking ground so singular and *unpopular*. Nor am I at all indifferent as to the esteem and good will of my fathers and brethren with whom I have been in fellowship. My esteem for them is not at all abated by any change in my own sentiments; and it is my wish to give them no *occasion of offence* in my manner of writing. It will be my duty to expose what I esteem to be erroneous in their sentiments; but I hope to do it in the spirit of meekness, of candor, and of love. My dissenting from them in opinion is surely no reason why I should be offended with them; and I am not sensible that it is a reason why *they* should be offended with me. But should they view my dissent as ground of offence, I hope they will deal with me in a *gospel temper*, and on *gospel principles*, duly bearing in mind that *bitter revilings* and *sound reasonings* are things of a very *different* nature.*

Three principal propositions I shall attempt to illustrate and support, in the course of my Letters to you—viz.

I. That the self-existent God is only one Person.

II. That Jesus Christ is God's OWN SON.

III. That by the *Holy Ghost* is intended the *fulness of God*, or the efficient, productive emanations of Divine fulness.

* Such was my "*hope*" when I published the first edition. I must now say I *wish* it may be so in future. But alas! "what is man!"

In support of the first proposition, I shall, in my next Letter, distinctly consider what is meant by the word *Person.*

LETTER II.

Personality defined and illustrated.

REV. SIR,

IT has been supposed to be a very difficult thing to ascertain in what personality consists, or what constitutes personality. It may, however, be found an easy thing to tell what is meant by the word *Person*, as it is used in Scripture, and in common discourse. I will exhibit a few instances of the use of the term in the Scriptures.

"Noah the eighth Person." "Joseph was a goodly Person." "No uncircumcised Person shall eat thereof." "Whosoever hath killed any Person." "Goest to battle in thine own Person." "A righteous Person." "A wicked Person." "Thy Person." "His Person."

Such a manner of using the term is common in all writings with which I am acquainted. We apply the term Person to any man, or woman, to an angel, to Jesus Christ, and to God. But we do not apply it to any class of beings below the human race. The pronouns *he* or *she*, &c. we apply to the brutal creation; but it would be thought an impropriety of speech to apply the term Person to the most sagacious horse or dog. By careful observation, it will be found that we use the personal pronouns in reference to any beings which are supposed to possess animal life; but the word Person is properly applied only to *intelligent*

Beings. Inanimate objects, in figurative language, are often personified; but the very *idea* and *mode* of personification implies what is intended by the word *Person*, viz. an INTELLIGENT BEING.

What is meant by the word *Person*, is just as obvious to common people as what is meant by the *moon*. And we have no more occasion to inquire what constitutes personality in order to tell what is meant by the word Person, than we have to ascertain the essence of the moon in order to tell what object is called by that name. And it is no more difficult to ascertain what constitutes personality, than to ascertain what constitutes intelligent existence.

It may be objected, that there is no part or property of a man but what is spoken of in the possessive case, as though it were something distinct from personality. We say, *his hands, his feet, his head, his intellects, his heart, his body, his soul*, as though personality were something distinct from any of these.

This is all granted; but in the same manner we use the word *Person* itself; we say *his Person*. And thus the term is used in the Bible, "the express image of *his Person*." But it does not hence follow, that personality consists in something distinct from Person.

As *one person* is *one intelligent Being*, so two or three Persons are two or three intelligent Beings. So obvious is this to the common sense of mankind, that it may be doubted whether any man can form any other idea of two persons than that of two intelligent Beings. If it be understood, that we are speaking of human Beings, and mention is made of *two persons*, it as clearly conveys the idea of two intelligent Beings, as if we should say *two men*. The same observation will apply to angels.

Some writers of eminence have suggested, or asserted, that *Person* and *Being* are not terms of the same import; and, therefore, it may imply no contradiction, to say, *three persons* in *one Being* or *one God*. But I have not found that they have attempted to explain the difference between *Person* and *Being*. I shall not pretend that these terms are uniformly of synonymous import, for the term *Being* may be applied to any object which exists, but the term *Person* is applicable only to intelligent existence. But the phrases, an *intelligent Person* and an *intelligent Being*, may properly be considered as synonymous. If you think otherwise, be pleased to explain the difference.

In writing on divinity, it is highly important that we should use language according to its common acceptation. To make use of terms, of which we can give no intelligible explanation, has no tendency to communicate light. Those who make use of terms in relation to God, or to Christ, ought, at least, to be able and willing to tell their *own meaning* in the use of those terms. If I say that the Father and the Son are two distinct Persons, I ought to be willing to tell what I mean by the word Person. And if I have any definite meaning to the term, it may be expected that, in some way, I can make it known. But if I have no definite meaning to the term, how is it possible that another person can tell whether he agrees or disagrees with me in sentiment?

If I only state, that I believe that the Father and the Son are two distinct Persons, there is, perhaps, no Christian but will say he believes the same. But as soon as I explain what I mean by the word Person, many will dissent and avow their disagreement. Having thus exposed myself to their disapprobation, by

explaining *my* meaning, may I not be permitted to ask what *they* mean by the term, that I may be able to compare the two opinions? And ought I to receive it as a satisfactory answer, if I am told that *Person* and *Being* are *not* the same, and that personality is something which cannot be defined?

As you, sir, profess to believe that the Father and the Son are two persons, and yet but one intelligent Being, I would ask whether the Father is not one intelligent Being? And is not the Son also an intelligent Being? Was he not an intelligent Being who came into the world to die for our sins? And was *he who came* and *he who sent him* one and the same intelligent Being?

As you also deny the human personality of Christ, or that as a derived Being, he was a Person, and still admit that he was, in respect to his human nature, truly a Man, I would ask what addition would have been necessary to constitute that Man a proper person? If we deny that, as a derived intelligence, he was a Person, will it not be difficult to make it appear that there is any such thing as personality in Man? Sin excepted, what do we find in ourselves which was not found in the Man Christ Jesus? If we take ground respecting personality, on which it cannot be proved that there is any such thing as a *human Person*, how shall we be able to show that there is any propriety in applying the term *Person* to the Deity? It is a clear case, that so long as we remain ignorant of the import of the term, we can never be sure that it is properly applied.

I have not, sir, pursued this inquiry with any desire to perplex the minds of others, or to multiply or widen the breaches which exist among professed Christians, but, if possible, to do something which may contribute

to greater unanimity. Nothing, perhaps, has contributed more to keep the subject of the Trinity involved in obscurity, than an *indefinite* and *unmeaning* use of the term *Person*. I will not affirm, that the definition I have given is perfect; but I will hope, that by frankly avowing my own views, and exposing myself to the censure of others, I may, at least, be the *occasion* of further inquiry and further light on the subject.

Permit me now, sir, to appeal from your theory to your enlightened common sense. Did you ever conceive of the Father and the Son as one and the same intelligent Being? When you thank God for the *gift* of his Son to die for us, do you not uniformly conceive of the Father as one intelligent Being, and of the Son as another? From my own past experience, I may presume, that, according to your common sense, the Father and the Son are as distinctly two intelligent Beings, as Abraham and Isaac. Of what importance then can it be to Christianity, to attempt to support a theory of personality which is undefinable and ineffable, which does not accord with the common acceptation of the term Person, nor with the practical views even of those who adopt it? Scarcely any thing is more obvious to the common understanding of men, than what is usually intended by the word Person; but when the term is applied to the Deity, they must be told that it means something which cannot be explained. But if the explanation I have given of the meaning of the word Person shall be found to accord with the common sense of mankind, and with the practical views of Christians in relation to the Father and Son, may I not hope to escape the censure of those who profess *not to know* what is meant by Person as applied to God?

It will probably be urged, that God is incomprehensible, and that the doctrine which affirms *three persons* in *one God* or *one Being*, is no more above our comprehension than the *eternity* and *self-existence* of Jehovah.

It will readily be granted, that God is to us incomprehensible in his Being and all his attributes; yet, in respect to any of his attributes, we can explain what *we mean* by the terms in which they are expressed. We can so explain as to make each other understand what we mean by the terms *eternity* and *self-existence*. Let it, then, be as intelligibly explained what is meant by *Person*, when we say that there are *three Persons* in *one God*, or *one intelligent Being*.

The incomprehensibleness of an object is no reason why we should use terms without any definite meaning. God is an incomprehensible object; but in using the term, we may have an intelligible and definite meaning. We ought, at least, to have so much meaning to the terms we use, that we can explain our *own meaning*.

By some good writers it has been supposed, that the proposition which affirms a *plurality of Persons* in one *intelligent Being*, implies no contradiction. But I would ask, how is it *known* that it *does not* imply a contradiction? Can we affirm any thing of a proposition any farther than we understand the terms? Let the terms be explained, and then we stand on fair ground to judge whether the proposition *does* or *does not* imply a contradiction. But until this be done, it would be very improper, at least for me, to affirm any thing concerning it, one way or another. Until we understand the term *Person*, we know not what is affirmed in the proposition. And if there be no defi-

nite meaning to the term, he who states the proposition either affirms nothing, or he affirms he knows not what. If we think to give instruction by using terms in an indefinite and undefinable sense, we most certainly miss our aim. For no person can be enlightened by any proposition any farther than he understands the meaning of the terms. If then, in writing on divinity, we use terms which are undefinable in our own application of them, what do we better than to darken counsel by words without knowledge?

The following proposition is *supposed* to be apostolic, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." This passage, I am fully satisfied, as will appear, Letter VI, is an interpolation. But even should it be supposed genuine, it affords no proof of the Trinitarian sentiment. For neither the term *Persons*, nor the name *God*, is to be found in the passage. And if we know not the import of the term Persons, was it not very improper for Trinitarians to insert it in a proposition intended to express an apostle's meaning? It was with a view to render this proposition more explicit, that the term Person was inserted. But however inexplicit or indefinite the proposition may be, as it stands in the Bible, it surely could not be amended by inserting a word without meaning, or by using a *definite* term in an *undefinable* sense.

As to the improper use of the term Person, I consider myself as having been culpable as well as others. And while I frankly place myself on this ground, I do it in hope that the preceding remarks will not be viewed as designedly reproachful to any class of Christians or divines.

Thus, sir, I have attempted to establish one point in favor of the proposition, that the Supreme Being, or self-existent God, is only one Person. If the account which has been given of the word Person be correct, to say that the *one self-existent God* is *three self-existent Persons*, is the same as to say that the self-existent God is three self-existent *intelligent Beings*. And if there be a propriety in saying that the ONE GOD is but ONE SUPREME BEING, there can be no propriety in saying that the ONE GOD is three SELF-EXISTENT PERSONS.—But there are still other considerations which may be brought into view in subsequent Letters.

LETTER III.

The Scripture use of PRONOUNS and VERBS in relation to God.

REV. SIR,

ALTHOUGH the definition which has been given of the term *Person* should be admitted as correct, still it may be thought that a definition may be given of the term GOD, which will render it consistent to say *three Persons* in *ONE GOD*. And such a definition has been given by Mr. William Jones in his celebrated performance on "The Catholic doctrine of the Trinity." In page 9, he says, "The word God, though of the singular number, is of *plural comprehension*." In proof of this idea he has written a distinct chapter, in which he has evidenced both labor and ingenuity. And it will be admitted, that if, in the Scriptures, the term GOD be intended to import *three self-existent*

Persons, there is no more contradiction in affirming that there are *three Persons* in ONE GOD, than there would be in affirming that there are three Persons in one *Council*, or one *Senate*, or one *Triumvirate*.

In support of his idea, Mr. Jones has not only mentioned some *nouns* which are plural in the Hebrew, which are in English translated God; but he has stated that there are also *pronouns* and *verbs* of the plural number agreeing with the term God. And it must be acknowledged that, at first view, these things appear much in favor of a plurality of Persons in God. For according to the established principles of grammar, *pronouns* and *verbs* should agree with their *nouns* in number. It then behoves us to examine the subject with care and with candor.

Mr. Jones has exhibited several instances in which, in our translation, the *pronouns* US and OUR are used, as he supposes, as proper *pronouns* for *God* only, and as denoting a plurality of Persons in the one God.

The first text which he mentions is Gen. i. 26. "And GOD said, let *us* make man in *our* image, and after *our* likeness."—In reference to this text, it may be observed, that these pronouns do not necessarily imply more than *two* Persons, nor do they necessarily imply that both of them were self-existent. The representation is, that GOD spake to some *other Person*. And as he created all things by his Son Jesus Christ, the Son was probably the Person to whom God spake. And all the plural *pronouns* which Mr. Jones has relied on may be accounted for in the same manner.

In respect to the plural *nouns* which he has mentioned, I shall only say, that they go as far to prove a plurality of *Gods*, as they do to prove a plurality of *self-existent Persons*.

But besides *nouns* and *pronouns*, he has suggested, that, in the Hebrew, several plural *verbs* and *adjectives* are found agreeing with the noun God. This he also considers as evidence that the word God implies a plurality of Persons. Being wholly unacquainted with the Hebrew language, I cannot pretend to dispute the correctness of his statements. Some things, however, may possibly be suggested, which may be sufficient ground on which to doubt the correctness of his inference.

1. I think we have no evidence, that the sacred writers were perfectly acquainted with the rules of grammar, nor that the Divine Spirit, by which they wrote, secured them from every departure from the rules of grammar in the construction of sentences.—But,

2. If it were certain that the inspired penmen never deviated from the rules of grammar, it would still be possible that as many as *five* or *six* mistakes in the *number* of *verbs*, might be made in copying the Old Testament five or six thousand times. For though we have evidence that great care was taken in copying the Scriptures, we have no evidence that scribes were infallible. And if, in the innumerable copyings of the Old Testament prior to the art of printing, not more than *five* or *six verbs* were changed from the singular to the plural number, we have great reason to acknowledge a superintending Providence.

Thus, sir, I have endeavored candidly to reply to Mr. Jones's arguments from plural *pronouns* and *verbs*. Let it now be supposed, that instead of *five* or *six* plural *pronouns* of doubtful relation, he had found *five* or *six thousand* plural *pronouns* which *obviously* stand as *substitutes* for the names *God*, *Lord*, or

Jehovah; would not his argument have been at least a thousand times more forcible than it is on the ground he has produced? Yea, let it be supposed that, on the most careful examination, he had found in the Bible only *five* or *six pronouns* for God of the *singular number*, and those, too, of doubtful import; and that, on the other hand, he had found ALL the pronouns for God, of the *plural number*, excepting the five or six doubtful instances; would not his argument have been invincible in favor of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead? Would any man of sense, after such an exhibition, ever have called in question the doctrine of three self-existent Persons? Confident I am, that such an argument would have had more weight in my mind than all the arguments I have seen or heard in favor of that doctrine.

Permit me then, sir, to retort the argument from the use of *pronouns* and *verbs* in the Bible. Excepting those doubtful instances of *plural pronouns* mentioned by Mr. Jones, are not the pronouns for God *uniformly* of the *singular* number? Instead of *five* or *six* doubtful cases, do we not find *five* or *six thousand* instances in which *personal pronouns* of the *singular* number are unquestionably used as *substitutes* for the *nouns* GOD, LORD, or JEHOVAH?—And setting aside Mr. Jones' exceptions, do we not find the *verbs*, agreeing with the *noun* GOD, uniformly of the *singular number?*

When God speaks of himself in the first Person, he uses the pronouns *I*, *My* or *Mine*, *Me*. When he is addressed in the second Person, the pronouns are *Thou*, *Thy* or *Thine*, *Thee*. When he is spoken of in the third Person, the pronouns are *He*, *His*, *Him*.—This, you must be sensible, is the general and uniform use of the pronouns for God, in the Old Testament and the

New. It may be added, that *Myself*, *Thyself* and *Himself*, are also used as pronouns for God.

If God were THREE co-equal PERSONS, it would be very natural to expect that we should find explicit evidence of this in the manner of giving the law, and in the prayers of saints. But when the law was given on Mount Sinai, God spake in the singular number, "*I* am the Lord thy God—thou shalt have no other Gods before ME." And is it not, sir, a solemn fact, that in all the prayers throughout the Bible, in which God is addressed, that he is addressed as *one* individual Person?

Moses, David, and Daniel, may be considered as well acquainted with God. Each of them addressed God as *one Person only*.

Moses said, "Yet now if THOU wilt, forgive my sin; and if not, blot me, I pray THEE, out of THY book."

David said, "O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shew THYSELF,"—not *yourselves*. "Lift up THYSELF, THOU Judge of the earth."

Daniel said, "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for THINE OWN sake, O my God: for THY city and THY people are called by THY name."

We may here add, that Christ, who must be supposed to be better acquainted with God than any ancient prophet or any modern divine, addressed the Father not only as *one Person*, but as the "ONLY TRUE GOD." As the Son, he addressed the Father, and in his prayer he had these words, "And this is life eternal, that they might know THEE, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom THOU has sent."

I think, sir, I may say, without hazard, that there is no intimation in the Bible of three self-existent Persons in one God, either in the manner in which Divine

commands were communicated, or in the prayers of saints. But in giving commands, God uniformly made himself known as one individual Person; and as to an individual Person, the prophets and saints addressed their prayers to God.

Moreover, in all the remarkable manifestations of himself to mankind, God made himself known as one Person only.—When he appeared to Adam after the fall, he manifested himself as one Person. And in pronouncing the curse upon the serpent, as one Person he spake, "*I* will put enmity between thee and the woman. And unto the woman he said, *I* will greatly multiply thy sorrow," &c.

As one Person, God manifested himself to Noah. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come up before ME. And behold, *I*, even *I*, do bring a flood upon the earth. But with thee will *I* establish *my* covenant."

In his various appearances to Abraham, he revealed himself as only one Person.—"*I* am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward—*I* will make thy seed as the dust of the earth—*I* am the Almighty God, walk before ME, and be thou perfect."

Similar to this, was the style and manner adopted by God in all his appearances to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In all the manifestations which God made of himself to Moses and the people of Israel, he uniformly represented himself as one Person. And thus he represented himself in his communications to the Prophets. It may also be observed, that in several instances God adopted forms of speech which not only implied a denial of the existence of any other GOD, but also of the existence of any other SELF-EXISTENT PERSON.—"See now that *I*, even *I* am HE, and there is no God with

ME; *I* kill, and *I* make alive; *I* wound, and *I* heal." Deut. xxii. 39.—"And there is no god else besides ME, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides ME. Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for *I* am God, and there is none else." Isa. xlv. 21, 22.—"Remember the former things of old; for *I* am God, and there is none else; *I* am God, and there is none like ME."

When God reveals himself under the title of the HOLY ONE, or the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, he represents himself not only as ONE GOD but as ONE PERSON. "Thus saith the Lord, the HOLY ONE of Israel, and his Maker, Ask ME of things to come concerning MY SONS; and concerning the work of MY hands, command ye ME."

In conformity to the idea which God gave of himself, as being one Person only, all the sacred writers, in speaking of God, speak of him as one Person, by using a personal *pronoun* of the singular number, as *He, His, Him*, together with corresponding *verbs*.

The Son of God, in the course of his ministry, spake of God as one Person. "GOD so loved the world, that HE gave HIS only begotten Son," &c.—And the apostles uniformly spake of God as one Person only.—The scribe who came to Christ, and received his approbation as not far from the kingdom of God, in the course of the conversation, and in reply to Christ, said, "There is ONE GOD, and there is none other but HE." And his remark was approved by Christ.

Nouns of "plural comprehension," such as Mr. Jones supposes the word GOD to be, admit the article *the* before them, as the council, the senate; and the pronouns, to agree with them, must be either *neuter pronouns* of the *singular number*, or *masculine pronouns*

of the *plural number*. Speaking of a council, we either say, *It* adjourned, or *They* adjourned—Of a senate, *It* passed an act, or *They* passed an act. We do not say of a council, *He* adjourned; nor of a senate, *He* passed an act—Nor does a senate or a council, speaking in the first person, say *I* will.

In view of these observations, sir, suffer me to present to your notice some of the foregoing passages of Scripture, in a manner conformable to the Athanasian theory. I will begin with the passage in Genesis, so much quoted by Athanasian writers, and connect with it the following verse. The passage, to agree with your views, should read thus :...." And *the Gods* said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, and after *our* likeness. So *the Gods* created man in *their* own image, and after *their* likeness; in the image of *the God* created *they* him."

If the pronouns *us* and *our* are pronouns for *God only*, the following pronouns should be also of the plural number.

Upon the same principle, the first commandment would read as follows:.... "Thou shalt have no other gods before" US.

When God said, "*I* am God, and there is none like ME," would not your theory have required the following form?...WE ARE THE GOD, and there is none like US.

Would not the words of Christ, to have corresponded with your views, have stood thus?...." *The God* so loved the world, that THEY gave THEIR only begotten Son," &c.

The words of the scribe, "There is one God, and there is none other but THEM," or but IT.

A remarkable variation would also be requisite in the passage in which God speaks of himself as the

the HOLY ONE. "Thus saith the Lord, the HOLY ONE of Israel, and his Maker, Ask US of things to come, concerning our sons; and concerning the work of OUR hands, command ye US."

I would further suggest, whether another variation in this text would not render it still more conformable to Mr. Jones' scheme, even to the language of Athanasians in general? "Thus saith the Lord, the HOLY THREE of Israel!" This, I conceive, would have been a correct expression of your doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. Under the term LORD or JEHOVAH, the *Unity* would have been implied; and under the terms HOLY THREE, the *Trinity* would have been expressed.

Will you, sir, be pleased now to consider what a great and surprizing change must be made throughout the Bible, in respect to the *pronouns* and *verbs* agreeing with God, to have the language conformable to the Athanasian doctrine? You cannot be insensible, that in every instance in which a personal pronoun of the *singular* number is used as a *substitute* for the noun God, something is implied contrary to that doctrine. Of course, a very great portion both of the Old Testament and the New, is, according to the natural import of language, opposed to that theory. If the doctrine of three self-existent Persons in one God were true, and of such infinite importance as seems to be supposed by our good brethren, how can it be accounted for, that God himself, and all the sacred writers, should so uniformly adopt such forms of speech as would *naturally* lead to the conclusion, that the one self-existent God is but one self-existent Person?

Mr. Jones has indeed suggested the idea, that the singular pronouns and verbs are most commonly used as agreeing with God, to guard mankind against the

idea of more Gods than one. But may I not, with as much propriety, suggest, that they are thus used to guard us against the idea of more than one self-existent Person? or that they were thus used, that in case any should adopt the opinion of a plurality of self-existent Persons, the error might be detected by the *current* and *uniform* language of Scripture?

If it be a truth, that there are three self-existent Persons in one God, it is doubtless a very important truth. Nor is it to be admitted, that God should constantly speak in a manner which tended to impress the contrary idea, to prevent our falling into the error of a plurality of Gods. Had it been a truth that there is but ONE GOD, and that this term is of "plural comprehension," comprizing three co-eternal Persons, it would certainly have been a very easy thing with God to have adopted language conformable to both parts of the proposition. The suggestion of Mr. Jones amounts to nothing less than this, that God made use of language which was calculated to *lead us into one error*, lest we should *fall into another*.

Would it not, sir, shock the feelings of a Christian audience, if a minister, in his prayers and preaching, should conform his language to the Athanasian theory, and the established rules of grammar? But if the theory be true, ought you not to adapt your current language, in prayer and preaching, to your theory? You cannot be insensible, that to use *pronouns* and *verbs* of the *singular number*, in relation to God, has a direct tendency to impress the minds of your hearers with the idea that God is but one Person. And if you believe the contrary, ought you not to avoid such forms of speech as naturally tend to mislead the minds of your hearers? You will probably retort the ques-

tion, and ask, why I did not avoid such forms of speech while I was an Athanasian? I answer, I was not aware of the inconsistency between my common forms of speech and the theory I had adopted. If this be your case, you may possibly be excused in respect to what is past; but what will you do in time to come?

To evade the argument resulting from the use of singular pronouns and verbs, some will probably say, that each Person in the Trinity *is God*, and may say *I am God*; and that when a singular pronoun is used for God, one Person only is intended. In reply, the following questions may be asked.

1. If each Person, as a distinct Person, may say *I* am *God*, will it not follow that there are as many Gods as Persons?

2. If there be three self-existent and co-equal Persons in God, can it be proper for either of the three to say *I* am GOD, and there is NO GOD BESIDES ME? When any one Person adopts this language, does he not naturally exclude every other Person from the dignity which he claims for himself? Suppose three Persons to be united as co-equal in one government, under the title of King, would it be consistent for either of those Persons to say *I* am *King*, and there is *no King* besides *ME*? If any one of the three should say thus, would it not be *untrue* in itself, and a *contempt* of the other Persons?

Supposing that you are of the number of divines who venture to tell what is to be understood by the word Person as applied to God, and that by *three Persons* you mean "*three Agents*," I would here suggest some thoughts for your consideration.

Those who avow, that, by three Persons, they understand three *distinct Agents*, allow to each of these

Agents self-existence, independence, infinite intelligence, and almighty power, as distinct Persons. Of course, the three Persons are three *infinite Agents.* I would now wish to be informed, what more would be necessary to constitute three infinite Beings. And I would ask you seriously to consider whether it be possible for you to form any idea of three *infinite Agents,* which does not involve the precise idea of three infinite *intelligent Beings.*

I will next bring into view a text, in which the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, are exhibited, that you may see to what the representation in the text would amount on your hypothesis.

The text we find, Acts x. 38. "How GOD *anointed* JESUS OF NAZARETH with the HOLY GHOST and with Power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him."

Here, sir, we have the Trinity fairly exhibited. But what would be the representation, if by the THREE be intended *three infinite Agents?* Would not the representation be distinctly this, that the *FIRST INFINITE AGENT gave* the *THIRD INFINITE AGENT* to *enable* the *SECOND INFINITE AGENT* to *perform miracles?*

LETTER IV.

The Language of good Writers in favor of what they mean to deny.

REV. SIR,

FOR the support of the doctrine, that the self-existent God is but one Person, my reliance is placed on

the most obvious and natural import of Scripture language. It is, however, hoped, that it will not be deemed *improper* or *unfriendly*, should I avail myself of the reasonings, concessions, and language of Athanasian writers, for a farther illustration and confirmation of what I esteem to be the truth. The authors, whose writings I shall quote, are, in my opinion, deservedly in high estimation, as learned, discerning, and correct writers. And no author will be quoted or named with the least desire to provoke controversy, or in any respect to detract from his reputation.

I would now solicit your attention to some passages from Dr. Hopkins. In his chapter on the Unity of God, and the Trinity, to prove the Unity of God, or that there is but ONE GOD, he has made use of some arguments, which, if I mistake not, are of the same weight against the doctrine of a plurality of self-existent Persons, that they are against the doctrine of a plurality of self-existent Gods.—Thus he reasons.—

"There can be but one First Cause who exists necessarily, and without beginning; for there can be but one infinite Being. To suppose another, or a second, necessarily excludes the first; and to suppose the first, necessarily excludes the second, and any other infinite Being. The same is evident from the consideration of the Divine perfections. God is infinite Power, infinite Wisdom. But there cannot be two infinite Wisdoms, &c. for this implies a contradiction."

Yet, sir, your theory supposes that there are three distinct self-existent and independent Persons, which, if I mistake not, as fully implies three "infinite Wisdoms," &c. as the supposition of three infinite Beings.

The Doctor proceeds...."Moreover, if we make the impossible supposition that there are two or more infinite Beings, they must be perfectly alike in all respects, or not. If not perfectly alike, and without any difference, in any respect, then one or the other must be imperfect; for absolute infinite perfection admits of no variation or difference: so that if any two Beings differ in any respect, they cannot be both absolutely perfect; therefore cannot both be God. But if they are perfectly alike in every respect and every thing, then they are perfectly one and the same; and the supposition destroys itself, being a direct contradiction."

If this reasoning be conclusive, will it not apply, in the most direct manner, to invalidate the theory of three self-existent and infinite *Persons?* The *three Persons* must be perfectly alike in all respects, or not. If not perfectly alike, one or the other must be imperfect, and therefore cannot be God: "But if perfectly alike in every respect, then they are perfectly one and the same."

Those who admit the Doctor's reasoning as conclusive against three infinite Beings, must, I suspect, to be consistent, reject the theory of three infinite, independent Persons.

Dr. Emmons, in his Discourse on the Trinity, has made this concession...."Did the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity imply that three Persons are one Person, or three Gods one God, it would necessarily involve a contradiction."—Yet this correct writer has adopted forms of speech which evidently imply that *one Person* is *three Persons.* Such are the following. "God can, with propriety, say, I, Thou, and He, and mean only HIMSELF."—"Nothing short of three distinct Persons in the one undivided DEITY, can render it

proper for HIM to speak of HIMSELF in the first, second, and third Persons, I, Thou, and He."*—"And so there is a certain SOMETHING in the Divine Being, which renders it equally necessary that HE should exist in THREE PERSONS."

In these passages, HE, HIM, and HIMSELF, are used as pronouns for God or Deity. And each of these pronouns strictly conveys the idea of one Person only. Yet the Doctor supposed that this one HE or HIM, might speak of HIMSELF as THREE DISTINCT PERSONS.

Dr. Spring, in his Sermon on the self-existence of Christ, gives the following exhortation.... "Let us then not deny the self-existence of God, nor the universality of HIS existence, nor that HIS indivisible essence comprises THREE DISTINCT PERSONS."

By the pronoun HIS, God is, in the first place, clearly considered as but one Person; yet we are fervently exhorted not to deny that "HIS indivisible essence comprises THREE DISTINCT PERSONS."

Mr. Jones stands on similar ground. He says, "No sensible reason can be given, why GOD should speak of HIMSELF in the plural number, unless HE consists of MORE PERSONS THAN ONE."

And thus says Dr. Hopkins, "If there be a GOD, HE does exist without beginning or succession; and this is as much above our comprehension, as that HE exists in THREE PERSONS."

To what, sir, are we to attribute these solecisms? Not to the want of mental energy; nor to the want of piety; nor to the want of scientific or grammatical

* Astonishing! Did not the Doctor know that it was a common thing for a *man* to speak of himself in the first, second and third person!

knowledge. But these worthy men had been conversant with the Bible, and from that source had insensibly formed the habit of usually speaking of God as only one Person; but this being contrary to the doctrine which they wished to support, they naturally involved inconsistency in their forms of speech.

A volume might be filled with such solecisms from Athanasian writers. And indeed, sir, I very much doubt whether *you* ever preached a gospel sermon, or ever prayed five minutes, without using pronouns in direct contradiction to your theory.

LETTER V.

The Mystery of the Trinity in Unity unfolded.

REV. SIR,

IN a former letter, I observed to you, that Mr. Jones considered the term God as of "plural comprehension." I therefore classed the noun *God* with other nouns of "plural comprehension," such as, *Council*, *Senate*, *Triumvirate*, &c.—But since that time I again perused Mr. Jones' performance, and find that I did not fully comprehend his meaning. As I was reading his remarks on 1 Cor. viii. 6. "But to us there is but one God, the Father," I noticed this idea, "the *one God, the Father*, is the name of a *nature* under which Christ, as God, is comprehended." I was at first wholly at a loss for his meaning; it however soon occurred to me, that he considered the term GOD, in this case, as a *general* or *generic* term, comprehending a plurality of Persons, of one *common nature*; as MAN is sometimes used for all *mankind*. I therefore

pursued the inquiry, to ascertain, if possible, his real meaning. When I came to the part of his book, entitled, the "Conclusion," my apprehension was fully confirmed.

In page 80, he says, "That the Persons of God are three in number, precisely distinguished, on some occasions, by the personal names Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit; and also by different offices. That the same term is not always peculiar and proper to the same Person; because the words *God*, *Lord*, *Jehovah*, and *Father*, are sometimes applied to one Person and sometimes to another; while at other times they are not *personal*, but *general names* of the *Divine nature*."

In page 81, he observes, "There can be no real Unity in God but that of his *nature*, *essence*, or *substance*, all of which are synonymous terms."

That the three Persons are of the same *nature* or *essence*, he considers as proved on this ground, "Because they partake in common of the name *Jehovah*, which being interpreted, means the Divine essence; and what it signifies in one Person it must also signify in the others, as truly as the singular name *Adam*, in its *appellative* capacity, expresses the *common nature* of *all mankind*."

If this be the true Athanasian theory of the Trinity, it is not so mysterious as has been generally supposed; and I suspect, it will be a much less difficult task to explain it, than it will to reconcile it to the sacred Scriptures.

It is obvious, from the passages quoted, that Mr. Jones considers the term GOD, as sometimes used, as a *general* or *generic* name, comprising a plurality of Persons of one *common nature*, just as we use the term

Man, as comprising the *whole species*. And he also supposes, that GOD is used in this sense as meaning the *Divine nature*, when it is said, "But to us there is but one God."

And as he has given us plainly to understand, that "there can be no real Unity in God but that of his *nature*," it is manifest that, on this theory, the Unity of God is the same as the unity of *Man*. Mr. Jones supposes, that the three Persons in the Deity are all of *one nature*, that is, of a *Divine nature*. So all the individual Persons of the human race are, in the same sense, *one*, they are of *one nature*, that is, *human nature*.

The whole mystery of the Trinity in Unity, according to this theory, results from the ambiguous use of the terms God, Lord, Jehovah, &c. these terms being "sometimes applied to one Person, and sometimes to another; while at other times they are not *personal*, but *general names* of the *Divine nature*." When it is said, there are three Persons in one God, the word God is used "as the name of a nature;" and the import is simply this, that there are three Persons of the same *Divine nature*.

On this theory of the Trinity in Unity, I would suggest the following inquiries:—

1. Whether there can be any reasonable objections to the proposition, which affirms that there are as many self-existent Beings as there are self-existent Persons? While it has been maintained that there are *three* self-existent *Persons*, it has been affirmed that there is but *one* self-existent *Being*. But if the Unity is no more than a unity of *nature*, why may not each of the Persons be considered as a distinct intelligent Being, according to the natural import of the word

Person? When the word MAN is used "as the name of a nature," it comprises many intelligent Beings; as many as it does of intelligent Persons. Why is it not thus with regard to that ORDER of PERSONS included under the "general name" GOD?

2. If it be admitted, that, when it is stated in the Scriptures that *to us there is but* ONE *God*, that the term GOD is used "as the name of a *nature*" comprising a plurality of Persons, what evidence can we have that the number of Persons is limited to *three?* Why may not that order of Persons, which is denominated by the "general name" GOD, be as great as the number characterized by the general name MAN? —The advocates for the theory will doubtless say, that the Scriptures mention but *three* Persons; but do the Scriptures say that there are *no more* than three Persons in God? The Scriptures teach us, that "there is ONE GOD, and that there is none other but HE." And if such declarations do not limit the number of self-existent Persons, the limits are not ascertained in the Bible by any thing with which I am acquainted.

3. Will it not follow, from this hypothesis, that in the sense that each of three Persons is called *God*, there are as many distinct Gods as there are distinct Persons?—When the term GOD is used as "the name of a nature," or as "a general name for the *Divine nature*," it is easy enough to see, that in this sense there may be no more Gods than one; but Mr. Jones does not suppose that it is *always* used in this sense; he supposes the same name is sometimes used *personally*, and applied "sometimes to one of the three Persons, and sometimes to another." This is precisely the case with the word *Man*. It is sometimes used "as the name of a nature," comprehending the whole

species ; yet at other times it is applied in a personal manner, sometimes to one Person, and sometimes to another. *John* is a *man*, *James* is a *man*, *Peter* is a *man*, &c. And when it is used in this sense, it admits of the *plural number*; and we may say *three men*, or *three hundred men ;* yea, in this sense there may be as many *Men* as Persons—And in the sense in which the *Father* is *God*, and *Christ* is *God*, and the *Holy Spirit* is *God*, why are there not as many Gods as Persons ? It is a clear case, that if each of three Persons is *one Man*, those *three Persons* are *three Men*. And analogy will teach us, that if there are three Divine Persons, each of whom is one God, then those three Persons are three Gods.

I am well aware, that this conclusion is not admitted by our Athanasian brethren ; but if it do not fairly result from Mr. Jones' premises, I shall rejoice to see the fallacy of the reasoning detected.

On the whole, the hypothesis of Mr. Jones precludes the necessity of any distinction between *Person* and *Being*, or *intelligent Person* and *intelligent Being ;* and under the *generic* or general name GOD, it exhibits an ORDER of SUPREME and SELF-EXISTENT INTELLIGENCES, to each of whom the name God may be properly applied ; the *number* of this ORDER of DIVINE INTELLIGENCES he supposes to be but THREE ; this, however, is only supposition ; there is no certainty in the case. The *Divine nature* is doubtless as extensive as *human nature ;* and if it include more than one self-existent Person, it may be impossible for us to see why it may not comprise as many Persons as *human nature*. And as Mr. Jones supposed that not only the word GOD, but also the word LORD, was used both as an "*appellative*" or general name, and also in

a personal manner as applicable to each of the Divine Persons, the hypothesis seems to open the way for the re-admission of "*Lords many, and Gods many.*"

In speaking of the three Persons in the Trinity, Dr. Emmons says, "There is a certain SOMETHING in the Divine nature which lays a proper foundation for these personal distinctions. But what that SOMETHING is, can neither be *described* nor *conceived*. Here lies the whole mystery of the Trinity."

Had the good Doctor understandingly and *believingly* read Mr. Jones on the subject, he would doubtless have been able to *describe* that "certain *SOMETHING*," as well as Mr. Jones has done. For the "*SOMETHING*" appears to be simply this, the *Divine nature*, like *human nature*, may comprise a plurality of Persons.

Thus I have endeavored to unfold the Athanasian mystery of the Trinity; the business of reconciling it with the Bible, I shall not undertake.

PART II.

ON THE REAL DIVINITY AND GLORY OF CHRIST.

LETTER I.

Jesus Christ truly the Son of God.

REV. SIR,

THE first thing which I proposed to establish was this, that the SUPREME BEING, or self-existent GOD, is *only* one PERSON. And it is believed, that, in proof of this proposition, something has already been done.

My second proposition is,

That Jesus Christ is truly the SON of God.—If the second proposition should be supported, additional evidence will appear in favor of the first. For according to your theory, Jesus Christ is one of the *three* self-existent Persons, and is personally the self-existent God. But should it appear that he is personally and truly the SON of God, it will also appear that he is neither the self-existent God, nor a self-existent Person. For, to a discerning and unprejudiced mind, it must be obvious, that it is a natural impossibility that the same Person should be truly the self-existent God and truly the Son of the self-existent God. So far as the natural import of language is to be regarded, the terms, a *self-existent Son*, imply a real and palpable contra-

What! does he mean literally? !!

diction. The term *self-existent* is perfectly opposed to the term *Son*, and the term *Son* is perfectly opposed to *self-existence*. If there be any term in our language which naturally implies *derived existence*, the term *Son* is of this import. To affirm that a Person is a *derived self-existent Being* implies no greater contradiction than to affirm that a Person is a *self-existent Son*. And to affirm that Jesus Christ is personally the self-existent God, and at the same time *truly* the SON of God, is precisely the same contradiction that it would be to affirm that the *Prince of Wales* is truly *King George the Third*, and also truly the SON of King George the Third.

These things I have stated on the ground of the natural meaning of terms. That the things I have stated are true, according to the natural import of language, will not, it is believed, be denied by any person of good discernment and candor.

The proposition, that Jesus Christ is truly THE SON OF GOD, is so obvious in its natural import, and so plainly scriptural, that many may suppose it requires neither explanation nor proof. Yet such is the state of things in the Christian world, that both explanation and proof are necessary. For although there is no one point in which Christians are more universally *agreed* than in *calling* Christ the SON OF GOD, there is scarcely any thing about which they are *more divided* than that of the intended import of those terms. But amidst the variety of opinions which have been formed on the subject, the natural import of the words has been pretty uniformly rejected; and almost every other possible meaning has been affixed to them, in preference to that which the terms naturally excite. Indeed, it seems to have been generally

taken for granted, that it is *impossible with God* to have a SON. Athanasians appear to have taken this for granted; and finding that divine titles, divine attributes, divine works, and divine honors, are ascribed to him in the Scriptures, they have set it down as an unquestionable truth, that Christ is so far from being the SON of God, in the natural sense of the terms, that he is the very self-existent God; yea, that very GOD of whom the Scriptures declare that he is the SON. Other denominations, taking for granted the same principle, have pronounced the Savior to be a *mere creature*, more or less dignified and endued. And thus, on the one hand or the other, almost every possible grade of intelligent existence and dignity has been allowed him, excepting that which is naturally imported by his title *the* SON of GOD.

Two ideas are naturally suggested by the title the SON of GOD, viz. DIVINE ORIGIN and DIVINE DIGNITY.

By Divine Origin, I do not mean that the SON of God is a *created* intelligent Being; but a Being who properly *derived* his existence and his nature from God. It has not, perhaps, been common, to make any distinction between *derived existence*, and *created existence*; but in the present case the distinction appears very important. Adam was a *created* being; Seth *derived* his existence from the created nature of Adam; and therefore it is said "Adam begat a son in his own likeness." And as Seth derived his existence from the created nature of Adam, so, it is believed, that the ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER DERIVED HIS existence from the self-existent nature of God. In this sense only do I mean to prove that the SON of God is a *derived intelligence*.

The hypothesis, that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, by properly deriving his existence and nature from God, will probably, by many, be pronounced a very great absurdity. And as, in my view, very much is depending on this point, you will suffer me to be particular in the examination. That the terms the SON of God, as applied to Christ, do most naturally denote that his *existence* and *nature* were *derived* from GOD, will, it is believed, be granted by all judicious and impartial inquirers. And it does not discover the greatest reverence for the Scriptures, nor the greatest sense of our own fallibility, hastily to reject, as absurd, the natural import of inspired language. If there be any ground on which the hypothesis may be pronounced absurd, it must be found either in the *works* or the *word* of God. But what do we find in the *works* of God, by which it may appear, that it is absurd to suppose that God has a SON who has truly derived his existence and nature from the Father? In examining the works of God, we find reason to suppose that God has given existence to various tribes of beings, with natures *distinct* from his own. And is it not quite as difficult to conceive, that God should give existence to beings by proper *creation*, with natures *distinct* from his own, as that he should give existence to a SON truly deriving his nature from the Father?

We also find, that God has endued the various tribes of creatures with a power of *procreation*, by which they produce offspring in their own likeness. Why is it not as possible that God should possess the power of producing a SON in his own likeness, or with his own nature, as that he should be able to endue his creatures with such a power? May it not, then, be presumed, that no shadow of evidence can be produced from the

works of God, to invalidate the hypothesis that Christ, as the SON of God, possesses divine nature by derived existence?

What then saith the Scripture? We may, in reply to this question, notice several things.

1. Dr. Hopkins has said, "The Redeemer is the Son of God in a peculiar and appropriated sense, and by which he is distinguished from every other person in the universe." The Doctor adds, "He is mentioned as the SON of God more than an hundred times in the New Testament; and the Father of Jesus Christ the Son, is mentioned above two hundred and twenty times."

The correctness of these statements is not doubted; and on the ground of them I may say, that, according to the natural import of words, Jesus Christ is, in the New Testament, more than three hundred and twenty times mentioned as a DERIVED INTELLIGENCE, an intelligence who has properly derived his existence and nature from God. For in contradistinction to angels and men, and to all who may be called Sons of God by *creation* or *adoption*, Jesus Christ is *definitively* called THE SON of God.

2. It is to be observed, that several epithets are used as with explicit design to preclude all mistake, and to give us unequivocal evidence that Jesus Christ is the SON of God in the most strict sense of the term. He is emphatically called God's "own SON." And to denote that God has no other Son in the sense in which Christ is his Son, he is called God's ONLY Son. And more fully to express the idea that he, and he only, properly *derived* his existence and nature from God, he is called "the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON of GOD," "the ONLY BEGOTTEN of the FATHER."

I would here ask, whether it be *possible* to find terms which would more clearly and more emphatically express the very thing which I undertook to prove? If no further evidence could be produced in favor of the hypothesis, it would certainly require something very substantial and positive to invalidate what has been already exhibited. But additional evidence is yet to come. What has been produced, is from the general and current language of the New Testament. We may add,

3. It appears to have been one particular design of the miracles which were wrought by Christ, to prove that he was the Son of God; and that, as the Son, was *sent* of the Father into the world.

Christ said to the Jews, "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness of the truth. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the *works* which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works which I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." John v. 33—36.

The account that the Jews sent unto John, and the testimony he gave, we have recorded in the first chapter of the same gospel. The testimony is this, "But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

This was the truth to which John testified; but Christ stated, that the works which he did were of greater weight than the testimony of John. And it is observable, that, as it was one design of his miracles to prove that he was the Son of God, so this con-

viction was produced in the minds of many upon seeing the miracles which he performed.

4. Jesus Christ is the faithful and true Witness, and he repeatedly affirmed, "I am the *Son* of God:" and he also abundantly affirmed that God was his Father.

I am not insensible, that, on this ground, some have supposed that Christ meant to affirm his self-existence, independence, and co-eternity with the Father. But surely I can think of no words which would have been less calculated to impress such an idea on an unprejudiced mind. And had it been his design to affirm his self-existence, and at the same time to mislead the minds of his hearers, I know not of any language which would have been more adapted to such a purpose. Would any person of common discernment and common honesty ever think of asserting that he *is* General Washington, or that he personally existed as *early* as General Washington, by saying, I am the Son of General Washington, and General Washington is my Father?—But if Christ meant to assert that he derived his existence and his nature from God as a Son from a Father, what language could have been more to his purpose than that which he adopted?

5. The awful display of Divine majesty and power which were concomitants of the crucifiction of Christ, produced a conviction in the minds of the centurion and others that Jesus was the Son of God. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." And according to the opinion of St. Paul, he was "declared to be the Son

of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."—Rom. i. 4.

6. That Jesus Christ is the SON of God was a principal article of primitive Christian faith, and a principal doctrine of apostolic preaching.

Christ questioned his disciples thus: "Whom do men say that I, the *Son of man*, am? They said, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the SON of the LIVING GOD."

Nathaniel, on becoming acquainted with Christ, said unto him, "Rabbi, Thou art the SON of God."

When Christ questioned Martha respecting her faith in him, she replied, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the SON of God."

After the ascension, when the eunuch manifested a desire to be baptized, Philip answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The eunuch then exhibited his confession of faith: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the SON of God." And on the ground of this profession he was baptized.

Saint Paul having been converted and commissioned for the gospel ministry, "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the SON of God."

And the same doctrine he abundantly inculcated in his epistles.

Dr. Hopkins has noticed, that the apostle John "mentioned Christ as the SON of God, fifty times—and the Father of Jesus Christ the Son, more than one hundred and thirty times," in his gospel and epistles. And this same apostle has spoken of faith in Christ, that he is the Son of God, as though it

were indeed of the highest importance. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the SON of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. He that believeth on the SON of God, hath the witness in himself. Whosoever denieth the SON, the same hath not the Father. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that *believeth* that Jesus Christ is the *SON* of God?"

Here I would take the liberty to propose a few questions. Is believing that Jesus Christ is a *mere man* or a *mere creature*, believing that he is the *SON* of God, God's *OWN SON*, the *ONLY BEGOTTEN* of the Father? Again, Is believing that Jesus Christ is personally the *SELF-EXISTENT GOD*, believing that he is truly the *SON* of God? Does it not appear, that believing that Jesus Christ was the *SON* of God, was the orthodox faith in the first age of Christianity? But is this the faith of those who call themselves the orthodox at the present day?

To believe that Christ is *personally* the *self-existent God*, and to believe that Christ is *truly* the *SON OF GOD*, are, in my view, very distinct things; and I cannot but be amazed that ideas so perfectly distinct should ever have been admitted as one and the same.

7. The self-existent and SUPREME MAJESTY, by an audible voice from heaven, did repeatedly confirm the truth which I have aimed to support.

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased."

Again, at the time of the transfiguration, "Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a

voice out of the cloud, which said, This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Is it possible, sir, that any man can attend for a moment to the natural import of these words from heaven, and then believe that God meant to be understood as saying, This Person, who has been baptized, and transfigured, is the self-existent God, co-eternal with myself, and the same Being?

8. The avowed design of St. John, in writing the history of Jesus Christ, is a proof that in his view Jesus was truly the SON of God. At the close of the 20th chapter, he says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye MIGHT BELIEVE that Jesus is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD; and that believing, ye might have life through his name."

You will probably urge, that in the very first verse of his gospel, John says, "The Word was God." This is true; and it is also true, that in the same verse, and in the next, he says, "The Word was WITH God." The God whom the Word was *with*, was doubtless *one God;* and unless we are to suppose that John meant to affirm a plurality of self-existent Gods, he did not mean to affirm that the WORD was God in a sense which implied personal self-existence. Besides, the title, the WORD, or the WORD of GOD, probably denotes that the SON was the MEDIUM of Divine *manifestation;* and hence we may easily infer, that it was on the ground of a *CONSTITUTED CHARACTER* that the Son is called God. John proceeds to say, that all things were made *by him;* and Paul tells us *how*—"that *GOD* created all things *BY JESUS CHRIST.*"

In some future Letters, I shall more particularly show in what sense Christ is called God. But I may here observe, that the general current of John's gospel corresponds with what he says was his object in writing, viz. "That ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the CHRIST, the SON of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name."

In my next Letter, you may expect still further evidence that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God.

LETTER II.

Additional evidence that Christ is truly the SON of God.

REV. SIR,

AS introductory to the arguments which I am about to urge, I would suggest to your mind the following suppositions.

1. Suppose that God, in giving the ten commandments on tables of stone, instead of writing the word *sabbath-day* in the fourth commandment, had left a blank; and in giving the fifth, he left a blank instead of writing the terms *father* and *mother*.

2. Suppose he wrote a second time, and filled up those blanks with characters or words which had never before been seen or heard by men.

3. Suppose he wrote a third time, and instead of leaving blanks for those words, or filling them with unknown characters or terms, he, for *sabbath-day*, wrote *birth-day*; and instead of *father* and *mother*, wrote *son* and *daughter*: suppose also, that these words had never been understood by men to mean any

thing different from their common acceptation at the present day.

Permit me now to ask, whether either of these modes of writing those commands could be considered as a revelation of the Divine Will? And would not the mode of writing *birth-day* for *sabbath-day*, and *son* and *daughter* for *father* and *mother*, be as likely to mislead the minds of men, as writing in *unknown characters*, or even as leaving *blank spaces* to be filled up by conjecture?

But what, you may ask, is the object of these extraordinary statements? My object, sir, is this, to evince, that in his communications to us, God must make use of language in a sense which agrees with some analogy, or his communications can be of no use to mankind, any more than *unknown characters*, or *blanks* to be filled by conjecture.

In a connection as deeply interesting as that of giving the law, God has made use of the terms the *Son of God*, MY SON, GOD'S OWN SON, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN *Son of God*. He has represented his love to us as being exceedingly great, on the following ground, "God so loved the world, that he gave his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that spared not his OWN SON, but delivered him up for us all."

Such, you know, is the common representation in the New Testament. And being well acquainted with the natural import of the terms an OWN SON, an ONLY BEGOTTEN SON; and having an idea of the love of a father to an *own* and *only son*; the scriptural representations of the love of God towards us become deeply interesting and affecting.

But the Athanasian theory represents the SON of God as personally the self-existent God, and the very SAME BEING of whom he is abundantly declared to be the SON. And on this ground, the term SON is used in a sense foreign to every analogy with which the human mind is acquainted; as foreign as it would be to use *birth-day* for *sabbath-day*, or *son* and *daughter* for *father* and *mother*. On this ground, the representations of God's love, and the scheme of salvation, are involved in unintelligible metaphor; and we need an inspired Daniel to interpret the import of the term SON, as much as Belshazzar did to interpret the enigmatical hand-writing on the wall. And until this interpretation be given, we have no definite ground on which to estimate the love of God in the atonement made for the sins of the world.

What has been now exhibited, is viewed as a very weighty argument against your theory, and in favor of the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is truly the SON of God.

But there is another argument which, if possible, is still more weighty, to which we may now attend. You cannot be insensible, that it is plainly and abundantly represented in the Scriptures, that the SON of God did *really* and *personally suffer* and *die* for us. And that on this ground, both the love of God and the love of his SON are represented as having been manifested in a very extraordinary manner. And if the *SON* of God be *truly* the *SON* of God, a derived intelligence, these representations may be strictly and affectingly true. For on this hypothesis, the SON of God may be the same intelligent Being as the soul of the Man Christ Jesus who suffered on the cross.

But your theory will not, I suspect, be found to admit, or support, any thing more than the *shadow* of the *suffering* and *death* of the *Son of God*.

Writers and preachers on your side of the question, do, indeed, often speak of the *abasement*, the *sufferings*, and *death*, of the Son of God, as though they believed these things to be affecting realities. But, after all, what is the amount of these representations, upon your hypothesis? You do not conceive that the Son of God became united to flesh and blood as the soul of Jesus Christ. So far from this, you suppose the Son of God was personally the self-existent God; and instead of becoming the soul of a human body, you suppose he became mysteriously united to a proper man, who, as distinct from the Son of God, had a true body and reasonable soul. And I think, sir, it will be found, that on this *Man* your theory lays the iniquities of us all;—that this *Man*, and not the Son of God, endured the stripes by which we have healing. For while you maintain that the Son was personally the only living and true God, you very consistently affirm that "he did not suffer in the least in his Divine nature, but altogether in his human nature." And what is this but affirming that he did not suffer at all as the *Son of God*, but only the *Man Jesus* suffered, to whom the Son was united? As, on the Athanasian hypothesis, the *Man* Christ Jesus and the *human nature* are the same, so the *Son or self-existent God* and the *Divine nature* of Christ are the same. You suppose the Son as incapable of suffering as the Father, and that he did not in *reality* suffer on the cross any more than the Father did; nor any more than either of them suffered while Cranmer was burning at the

stake. How then does it appear, that "God *spared not his own Son?*"

You will probably plead, that the Man Jesus was united to the *Person* of the Son of God, and that *Person suffered* in his *human nature.* But, sir, as you predicate personality on the *Son* or *Divine nature*, and do not allow personality to the *human nature*, it will, I suspect, be difficult for you to prove that *any Person* suffered on the cross: for the sufferings fell simply on a *nature* to which you do not allow personality. As, in your view, the Son was the self-existent God, and could not suffer in his *Divine nature*, HE could not *suffer* in *any* nature. The man was only an appendage to his Person, mysteriously connected; and yet so far was the union from being very intimate or essential, that the *appendage* or the *Man* might suffer the severest agonies, and the *Son* or *real Person* be at the same time in a state of infinite felicity.

Abraham's offering his son Isaac, has long been considered as typical of the conduct of God in giving his Son to die for us. Suppose we should add to the scriptural account the following ideas—That Abraham knew beforehand that his *son* was incapable of suffering, and that all the sufferings would fall on another man, to whom his son was mysteriously united; and that Isaac also understood the matter in the same light when he consented to be bound and laid upon the altar. Would not this additional account, if believed, depreciate, in our estimation, the conduct of Abraham and Isaac, at the rate of ninety-nine per cent.?

This illustration may serve to show how much your hypothesis, when understood, tends to lower down our ideas of the greatness of the love of God in giving his

Son to die for us; and also the love and submission of the Son in consenting to make his life an offering for our sin.—I would, however, by no means intimate, that you and others, view the love of God in this depreciated light. For I think it probable that it is with you, as I am sensible it was with myself—the plain representations of Scripture, by the help of analogy, superseded the force of theory.

It has been, and I think justly, supposed, that the dignity of the Son of God gave value to the sufferings of the cross. And if we consider the Son of God to be what his title imports, a derived Intelligence of Divine origin and dignity, the one by whom God created the world; if we consider this self-same Intelligence as *personally* and *really suffering the death of the cross*, we may perceive something, in view of which we may well exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love!"

But if the sufferings of the cross did not *really* fall on that very Son, who had sustained pre-existent glory in the "form of God," but on a man who had existed less than forty years, who had acted in public character not more than four or five; how small the degree of *condescension* on the part of the *sufferer*, how small the display of the *love* of God, and of what diminished value are the sufferings of the cross! In the Assembly's Catechism we are taught, that "Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, being made under the law; undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time."

Yet this same Catechism teaches us to believe, that Jesus Christ was personally the self-existent God.

I will then ask, whether there be one particular of what is said respecting the humiliation of Christ, which can *possibly be true?* Was the self-existent God ever born? Was he ever in a low condition? Was he ever made under the law? Did he ever suffer the wrath of God, or the cursed death of the cross? Was God ever buried?—If the self-existent God has not passed through such scenes, then the Son of God has not, according to your doctrine respecting the Son. Therefore, according to your theory, all the *abasement*, which can be supported, falls on the *Man* to which the Son was united: And this *Man* you suppose had no existence until he was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary; of course, he had no glory to leave, or lay aside, when he came into the world. As he never had been *rich*, it was impossible for him to become *poor* for our sakes. He had no opportunity to say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and so far as his humiliation consisted in "being born, and that in a low condition," there was nothing voluntary in it; and it could be no evidence of any love or condescension in him.

To make out your theory of the humiliation and abasement of the Son of God, you have to take into view two distinct intelligent Beings; one of which you affirm to be the self-existent God, and the other a proper Man. This God, or Son of God, you find had been in a state of pre-existent dignity and glory; and he, as you suppose, was united mysteriously to a Man; this Man was born in low circumstances, endured the miseries of this life, and suffered death on the cross; and by virtue of his union to the Son of God, he was enabled to bear a vastly greater weight of suffering than he could otherwise have endured.

But, sir, is this all that is intended by God's SPARING NOT HIS OWN SON? Is this the way in which the SON of God BARE our sins in his OWN BODY on the tree? What, sir, was the *real condition* of the SON of God, the self-existent God, from the birth of the Man Jesus till this Man rose again from the dead? According to your theory, the SON of God, during the whole of that period, was in a state of infinite glory and felicity, and as incapable of suffering the agonies of death as the Father. How then can it be true, that "Though a SON, yet learned he obedience by the things which HE SUFFERED?" As it respects the *real character* of the SUFFERING SAVIOR, what is your theory better than Socinianism enveloped in mystery?

LETTER III.

No absurdity in the hypothesis that Christ is truly the SON of God.

REV. SIR,

WHAT has been exhibited in the preceding Letters, it is hoped, will be sufficient to satisfy impartial minds that the Scriptures afford abundant evidence that Jesus Christ is *truly* the SON of God. But a contrary belief has been so long and so generally prevalent, that it may be necessary to say something farther on the subject, with a view to show that the *natural import* of the terms the *Son of God*, or God's *own Son*, implies no contradiction or absurdity.

That God is a self-existent Being, is acknowledged by all Christians; and I shall freely admit, that it is

impossible with God to beget or produce a SELF-EXISTENT SON. But what have we to do with the *mode* of God's existence, in determining whether it be possible with him to produce a Son? What have we to do with the *mode* of Adam's existence, in determining whether Seth could be *his* Son? Respecting Adam, it is said, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." And probably Adam was a man in size or stature at his first existence. Could not Seth be the son of Adam, unless the mode of his having existence was the same with Adam's?

When Adam was in existence, he had a nature by which he was distinguished from God and from angels. Such a nature Seth derived from Adam. Self-existence may be essential to the Divine nature in God, and proper *creation* might be essential to the human nature in Adam. And as *human nature* in Seth might be *derived* from the *created nature* of Adam, why may it not be true that *Divine nature* in the SON was derived from the *self-existent nature* of GOD?

We often speak of *Divine nature*, *angelic nature*, and *human nature*; but what do we know of either, excepting certain properties, attributes, or qualities? Are we not unable to tell what is the radical difference between an angel and a human soul? Yet we believe there is some radical distinction. So we may be unable to ascertain the radical distinction between the *Divine nature*, and *human nature*, exclusive of the different modes of existence. Yet, aside from those attributes which simply respect the modes of existence, there may be some radical difference between

those natures. If we suppose this diversity of natures to result from the diversity of attributes or qualities united, yet there may be some property, attribute, or quality, by which one nature is distinguished from another, and the distinguishing property of nature may be wholly unknown to us.

Are we not, sir, too *ignorant* of the *nature* of GOD, to pronounce that there is nothing in his nature which may be properly *derived* in the existence of an OWN SON? It may not be necessary that every attribute of Deity should be communicable or derivable in order that he may have an OWN SON. Among the children of men, it is not necessary to the existence or the idea of a *son*, that he should possess *all* the attributes, properties, or qualities of his father. Nor is it necessary that he should possess *no other* attributes but such as were possessed by his father. Among the seventy sons of Gideon, perhaps, there were no two that perfectly resembled each other in their attributes, properties, or qualities; and probably no one who was the *perfect* likeness of his father. So Jesus Christ may have truly derived his existence and nature from God, and yet not possess every attribute of the Father.

Jesus Christ was the Son of David, *according to the flesh*; yet we believe his body was not produced by ordinary generation; but as Mary was of the seed of David, and as the body of Christ was derived from her, Christ is called David's Son. Had he not properly derived any properties from David, he could not with propriety be called the Son of David. And if his spirit or soul had not been as properly derived from God, as his body was from David, it is difficult to see why he should be called *the* SON OF GOD, or God's own and ONLY SON.

It has been said by a respectable writer, that "it is totally inconceivable that a derived, dependent nature, should really possess any of those Divine perfections which essentially belong to an underived, independent, self-existent Being."

Had the word *exclusively* been used instead of the word "*essentially*," the observation would have been unexceptionable. *Self-existence* and *independence* belong to God, not only "*essentially*," but *exclusively*. But *knowledge*, *power*, and *holiness*, are *essential* attributes in God, and yet knowledge, power, and holiness, may be communicated, not only to a *derived* but to a *created* intelligence. God may, indeed, possess these attributes in an unlimited extent, while in other beings they may be limited; but these attributes may be of the *same nature* in men that they are in God.

That God does communicate knowledge, power, and holiness, will, it is believed, be granted by most Christians. Nor may we set any limits to the degree in which they may be communicated, unless we may limit the *Divine power of communication*.

However, I have no occasion to maintain that Christ did, with his existence as a SON, derive any attribute of Deity in the extent in which it is possessed by God. Had he been personally *self-sufficient* and *all-sufficient*, he would have had no occasion for God's *giving* him the *Spirit without measure*. He might, with his existence, derive so much of the Divine nature as to be truly the SON of God; and yet he might be the ALMIGHTY, and the SEARCHER OF HEARTS, by the indwelling of the Father, or the *fullness of the Godhead*.

When men are renewed in the temper of their minds, they are said to be "born of God," to have the

image of God on their hearts; and on this ground they are denominated Sons of God. For that which is begotten, or produced, in them, is truly of a *Divine nature*. It is that holiness of heart which is the glory of the Divine character. There is nothing more essential, or more excellent, in God, than holiness; this we see may be derived as the attribute of a dependent being. And this holiness is precisely of the same nature in men that it is in God. Its nature is not changed by being derived or communicated. As that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so that which is born of the spirit is spirit—it is of the same holy nature as the spirit by which it is produced.

Will it be denied, that *holiness* is the excellence of all excellences in the Divine existence and character? And if that which is *essential* to the Divine existence may be communicated or produced as the attribute of a dependent agent, by what principles of revelation, or philosophy, can it be affirmed, that it is impossible with God to produce an intelligent existence from his own nature? If God, from his own nature, may produce his *moral image*, why may he not produce his *natural image?* And why may not Jesus Christ be as truly the "IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD," as Seth was the likeness of Adam?

Holiness is as *self-existent* in God, as any attribute of the Divine nature; yet holiness may be produced as the attribute of a dependent agent. And if one attribute, which is self-existent in Deity, may be *produced* or *derived*, as the attribute of a dependent agent, without any change in its nature, what evidence can we have that other attributes, properties, or qualities, which are self existent in God, may not be properly derived? Yea, by what evidence can it

be made to appear, that all the radical and essential principles or properties of intelligent existence, may not have been properly derived from the Divine nature in the person of GOD'S OWN SON?

From the circumstance, that holiness is of the same nature in angels and men that it is in God, we may easily discern that the term *self-existence* ought not to be used as expressive of the *nature* of Divine attributes, but only to express the *mode* of their existence. And the same may be said of the terms *eternity*, *independence*, and *infinity*. In God, holiness is *self-existent*, *eternal*, *independent*, and *infinite*. But considered as the attribute of a dependent, created agent, an angel or a man, neither of these epithets can be applied. Yet holiness may be of the same nature in men, in angels, and in God. Why may not the same be true respecting other attributes or qualities of the Divine nature?

Some additional light may possibly be obtained, by attending to the idea of *supernatural* or *superhuman* powers, with which God, at some times, endued human beings. Sampson, at some seasons, was weak like another man; but when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, he was able to perform prodigies. This supernatural strength, it appears, was immediately derived from God. Yet while Sampson possessed this strength, it was truly HIS strength; and he was no more dependent on God for the strength by which he performed the wonderful things recorded of him, than I am for the strength by which I move my pen.

The prophets were endued with supernatural foreknowledge, by which they were enabled to unfold the volume of futurity, and predict events not only hun-

dreds but thousands of years before the time in which the predictions were to be fulfilled.

By a baptism of the same Spirit, the apostles were instantaneously endued, and enabled to speak in foreign languages which they had never studied.

These supernatural powers were but *occasional* properties or attributes of the several persons who possessed them. But while they were *possessed*, they were *personal* properties or attributes. Those persons were truly *endued with power from on high.* The prophets forcsaw as the Spirit gave them foreknowledge; and the apostles *spake as the Spirit gave them utterance.* This Spirit was the Spirit of God; and when it was given in an extraordinary manner, men were enabled to do extraordinary things. When men have been thus endued, they have possessed extraordinary portions of Divine sufficiency; and these portions of sufficiency, it appears, they possessed by a *communication* of *Divine fulness.* Nor is there any evidence that God might not, if he pleased, endue every individual of the human race with the strength of Sampson, the foreknowledge of Daniel, and the gift of speaking all human languages: and these, if he pleased, might be continued as *permanent* attributes of character.

From what has been exhibited, it is pretty evident, that created intelligences may, by the pleasure of God, possess holiness, knowledge, and power, which are truly of a Divine nature. May we not properly say, that Sampson possessed an extraordinary measure of Divine power, and that the prophets and apostles possessed an extraordinary measure of Divine knowledge; and that all holy beings do partake of that attribute which is the glory of the Divine nature?

If the attributes of holiness, knowledge, and power, may be properly communicated from God to dependent agents, and in such a manner as to become *personal* properties or attributes of these agents, what properties of intelligent existence may not be properly *derived* from Deity, as a *stream* from a *fountain*, or as a *Son* from a *Father?*

The communication of these attributes, from a self-existent to a derived agent, seems to imply something as distinct from these attributes as the Being who is the *recipient* of these communications. But what that is which constitutes Being, distinct from such properties or attributes, is perhaps beyond the reach of mortal discernment. I have not, however, made this remark with a view to deny the existence of Being, as distinct from all we know of attributes or properties. The language we use, and the language of the Bible, naturally imply a *recipient* or *receiver* of Divine communications; and that Being does imply something more than all we know of properties, attributes, or qualities. If any thing be communicated from one agent to another, there must be an agent or capacity to receive such communications.

But if, from his own self-existent nature, or fulness, God may communicate the attributes of knowledge, power, and holiness, to created intelligence, so that they shall possess, in measure, these attributes as *derived excellences*, what evidence can be found to invalidate the hypothesis that the existence of the Son of God was properly *derived* from the Divine nature?

Angels and saints are called sons of God; yet Christ is God's own and only Son, the only begotten of the Father. The primary and radical distinction may *possibly* be this: angels and saints, as created intelli-

gences, may derive from the Divine nature *some attributes or properties:* while God's OWN SON may derive not only some attributes, but his very *Being or Existence* from the Divine nature. Some may imagine, that I have labored hard, in this investigation, to support a self-invented theory. But this is not the case; I have been laboring to support the *primitive Christian faith*, that Jesus Christ is *TRULY THE SON OF GOD*, God's *OWN* and *ONLY SON!* and to rescue the plain, abundant, and emphatical language of Scripture, from the strong prepossession of my fellow Christians.

Dr. Spring says, "The Scriptures were inspired, to instruct common readers, by using words according to their common acceptation, and not to confound them by an abuse of language."*

Had the principle advanced in this excellent remark been understood and duly regarded, I should have had no occasion for a labored discussion to prove that Jesus Christ is *truly* the SON of God. But the plain meaning of the terms has been so involved in the *labyrinth* of *controversy*, and the *mists* of *prepossession*, that it has required some *fortitude* to *assert* and some *labor* to *prove*, that the concurrent testimony of GOD, of CHRIST, and the APOSTLES, is to be *regarded* as a *correct expression of the truth.* Yea, I have been laboring to prove, that these witnesses used "words according to their common acceptation," and that they did not *mean* "to confound us by an *abuse of language.*"

Had the plain and natural import of language been heretofore duly regarded, an attempt to prove that Christ is truly the SON of God, would have been as needless, as an attempt to prove that Isaac was truly the son of Abraham.

* Sermon on the Self-existence of Christ.

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE are some who predicate the Sonship of Christ simply on the ground stated by the angel to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

That this text contains a reason why Christ, in his incarnate state, should be called the Son of God, I will not deny; and if I were in the habit of believing that the soul or spirit of Christ had no pre-existence, I should readily admit this as the primary ground on which he is called the Son of God. But even on such an hypothesis, nothing could be made to appear against the supposition that *his existence* was truly *derived* from God, in a sense by which he is distinguished from every other intelligent being. But I as fully believe that the Son of God, as an intelligent Being, existed before the world, as I believe that he now exists.

Some will probably object, that it is unaccountable and inconceivable *how* God should have a Son. But, you, sir, I trust, will not make the incomprehensibleness of the mode of Divine operation an objection to the theory. For this hypothesis is far more consistent with all we *do know*, than the supposition of THREE infinite Persons in ONE intelligent BEING. The hypothesis which I have proposed contradicts nothing which we *know* of PERSON, of BEING, or of GOD. It is doubtless repugnant to what *some men* have *thought*; but it may be presumed that it is not repugnant to what is *known* by *any man*. Nor does the hypothesis imply any thing more inconceivable, unaccountable, or incomprehensible, than what is im-

plied in the existence of every other intelligent being in the universe. *How* God exists without any cause, and *how* he could give existence to angels, or to men, are as perfectly inconceivable to us, as *how* he could give existence to an OWN SON. And I may ask the objector, whether it be more inconceivable to us *how* God *could* have an OWN SON, than it is to conceive *how* or *why* such a thing should be *impossible* with HIM? If we are to draw our conclusions from all we *know* of God by his *works* and by his *word*, we have surely as much ground to say that such a thing is *possible*, as we have to say it is *impossible*.

LETTER IV.

The Divine Dignity of the SON of God.

REV. SIR,

WHATEVER may be the apprehensions of others, respecting my attempt to prove that Jesus Christ is truly the SON of God, you may be assured, sir, that it has been no part of my object to degrade his character. If it did not seem a "light thing" to David to be a "*king's son-in-law*," it surely ought not to be viewed by us degrading to Christ, to consider him as *GOD'S OWN AND ONLY SON*.—And I shall now attempt to show,

That the Son of God is truly a Person of Divine Dignity.

No principle, perhaps, has been more universally admitted, than this, that a son derives dignity from illustrious parentage.

The Jews, to whom Christ made his appearance in the flesh, were all acquainted with this principle; and though many generations had intervened, they still gloried in the idea that they were the descendants of the illustrious patriarch Abraham.

There is, perhaps, no nation, whether barbarous, civilized, or christianized, in which the principle is not admitted. The sons of emperors, kings, and noblemen, are considered as deriving dignity from their respective fathers. And the derived dignity of each is according to the acknowledged dignity of his father.—But more especially is the *first-born* or *only son* of a king or emperor, considered as deriving royal or imperial dignity by royal or imperial descent. It is indeed true, that a son of the most renowned and worthy king may, by vicious or disobedient conduct, forfeit his derived dignity, and subject himself to the displeasure of his father, and to general infamy; but this forms no ground of objection to the *principle* of derived dignity. And on the same principle that a worthy son of a worthy king derives *royal* dignity, the Son of God derives *Divine* dignity. And on the same principle that the most worthy son of the most renowned king derives higher dignity than the son of a common *peasant*, the derived dignity of the *Son of God* will appear to be infinite. For his Father is infinitely illustrious. This must certainly be the case, unless the Son has done something by which he has forfeited his claim. But that he has not, we have the highest ground of assurance; twice by an audible voice from heaven, God has proclaimed his perfect satisfaction in his Son, by saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" And we have still farther assurance of the same thing, by the high

and important offices with which God has invested his BELOVED SON.

It has sometimes been the case in earthly governments, that a king's son, who was well beloved of the father, has been admitted, during the father's life, to a joint participation in the government, and invested by the father with kingly authority. Such was the case with Solomon, the son of David. Solomon *derived* his authority from David, and by the pleasure of David he was crowned king; but Solomon was as truly the king of Israel as though he had possessed the same authority by self-existence.

If it be true, that God has an *own* and *only Son*, in whom he is well pleased, it would be natural to expect that he would delight to honor him in the highest possible manner.

Moreover, any wise and benevolent king, being about to invest his son with kingly authority, would, were it in his power, endue his son with every qualification or attribute which would be requisite to the most perfect and honorable execution of the office which he was to sustain. And such we may suppose would be the pleasure of God respecting his Son. Nor may we suppose any insufficiency in God, in respect to communicating of his own infinite fulness to the Son, in whom he is ever well pleased.

Let us now examine the sacred oracles, to see whether these reasonable expectations are justified by revealed facts.

In respect to communicated fulness or sufficiency, we have the following declarations: "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God *giveth not* the SPIRIT by *measure* unto him." John iii. 34.

"For it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell." Col. i. 19.

"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii. 9.

Such then has been the pleasure of God in respect to enduing his Son with Divine sufficiency. If by a portion or measure of the Divine Spirit, the apostles were instantaneously endued to speak a number of languages which they had never learned, what may not the Son of God be able to do, who has the Spirit without measure? And if it hath pleased the Father that *all fulness* should dwell in his Son, we can with no more propriety set bounds to the sufficiency of Christ, than to the *fullness* of the *Godhead*.

Thus we find one of the reasonable expectations justified by plain and positive declarations of Scripture.

We have next to show, that God has manifested a disposition to honor his Son in the highest possible manner.

As the first token of this disposition in God, we may notice that God *constituted* his Son the *Creator* of the world. In this great and astonishing work, a surprizing display was made of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. But in this work, it appears that the *Son* was honored as the *constituted Creator;* for we are expressly told, that God "*created* all things BY JESUS CHRIST." Eph. iii. 9.

The work of creation is sometimes expressly attributed to God, and sometimes as expressly attributed to the *Word* or *Son* of God: and from these representations many have argued that the *Son* and *God* are the same Being. But it is thought that this conclusion has been too hastily adopted. For if GOD

created all things BY JESUS CHRIST, the work of creation may, with great propriety, be attributed to either the Father or the Son; and yet they may be two distinct intelligent Beings. God spake *by the prophets;* and what the prophets said, may, with propriety, be attributed to either *God* or the *prophets;* but it will not hence follow that God and the prophets are but one and the same intelligent Being. As the prophets were *constituted mediums* and *agents* in foretelling events, so Christ was the *constituted Creator* of all things in heaven and earth.

In the next place, we may observe, that the Son was *constituted* the *angel of God's presence,* or the *medium* by which God appeared or manifested himself to the ancient patriarchs.

We have many accounts of God's *appearing* to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and to Moses; and seeing these visible manifestations, is several times represented as seeing God. Yet the matter is so explained in the New Testament, as to give us reason to suppose that these visible manifestations of God's presence were made in the Person of the Son of God. For it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *declared* him," or manifested him. The Son, in those appearances, was usually denominated the angel of the Lord.* And when this angel was employed by God, as the conductor and guardian of the people of Israel in their journey from Egypt to Canaan, God gave this solemn caution to the people, "Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not: for he will

* I feel less confident that Christ was the angel of God than I did when I wrote these Letters. But I have not seen satisfactory reasons for relinquishing the sentiment. March, 1812.

not pardon your transgression; for MY NAME is in him." By *name* here may be understood, *dignity, fulness*, and *authority*. And as God thus dwelt in the Son, and manifested his dignity, fulness, and authority, through the Son, Isaiah denominates the Son the Angel of God's presence—"And the angel of his presence saved them." Accordingly, those visible manifestations are sometimes represented as the *appearance* of God, and sometimes as the *appearance* of the angel of the Lord, or the angel of God: And what was spoken on those occasions is sometimes represented as spoken by God, and sometimes as spoken by the angel; just as the work of creation is sometimes attributed to God, and sometimes to the Son of God. And as God manifested himself thus in the person of his *Son*, so the patriarchs considered God as present in those visible manifestations.

I am not, sir, alone, nor an original, in considering the *Son* of God as the *Medium* of Divine manifestations. Athanasian writers have done the same. But is it not a manifest impropriety to consider a Being as the *Medium* of his own manifestations? If Christ be truly the SON of God, he may be truly the MEDIUM through which God manifests himself; and may thus be in the "*form of God.*" But if he be personally the self-existent God, he can, with no propriety, be considered as the MEDIUM of Divine manifestations.

Although God had, in various ways, manifested his love to his Son prior to the incarnation, yet such was his love to mankind, and so important was our salvation in the view of God, that he was disposed to give his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON as a sacrifice for our redemption. And although the Son of God had been highly honored and exalted by his Father, and had often appeared in

the "*form of God*" to transact affairs of high importance, yet such was the benevolence and condescension of this Son, that he freely concurred in the Father's proposal for the redemption of man, and said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." But to accomplish this great purpose, the Son must lay aside the *form of God*, and take on himself the *form of a servant*—he must become incarnate, be united to a human body, and be the "*Son of David according to the flesh.*" Thus he who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death.

But such voluntary and deep abasement in the Son, was not to pass unnoticed nor unrewarded by the Father. And we have the most plain and unequivocal testimony, that God did honor his Son by *constituting* him a PRINCE and a SAVIOR, the LORD OF ALL, and the SUPREME JUDGE of the quick and the dead.

That it is as the fruit of the Father's love to the Son, and on the ground of a *constituted character*, that Christ bears those and other Divine names and titles, I shall endeavor clearly to prove.

John the Baptist, in his testimony concerning the Son, not only said, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;" but added, "the Father loveth the Son, and hath GIVEN *all things into his hand.*"—John iii. 35.

When the Son was about to leave his disciples and ascend into heaven, he proclaimed in their ears, "All power is GIVEN unto me in heaven and earth."—Matt. xxviii. 18.

Peter, in his impressive sermon on the day of Pentecost, having stated many things from the scriptures,

to prove that Jesus was the Christ, addressed the audience in these words, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath MADE that *same Jesus*, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST."—Acts ii. 36.

In the same sermon, Peter also said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses. Therefore being *by the right hand of God exalted*, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."—Acts ii. 32, 33.

In another address, Peter said, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, HATH GLORIFIED his SON JESUS."—Acts iii. 13.

And again, "the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree: HIM hath GOD EXALTED, with his OWN RIGHT HAND, to be a PRINCE and a SAVIOR, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins."—Acts v. 30, 31.

The same views of the CONSTITUTED CHARACTER of the SON as LORD OF ALL, are, if possible, more forcibly expressed by Saint Paul.

Speaking of the astonishing displays of the grace and power of God, he says, "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and SET HIM at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name which is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath *put all things under his feet*, and *gave him* to be the HEAD over all things to the church."—Eph. i. 20—22.

The same apostle, having in a most striking manner represented the astonishing condescension and

deep abasement of Christ, proceeds to state the *reward given* to him by God—"Wherefore God also hath highly EXALTED HIM, and GIVEN HIM a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. ii. 9—11.

To unprejudiced minds, the passages of Scripture, already adduced, may be sufficient to prove, that it is by the GIFT and PLEASURE of God, that his SON sustains the offices and bears the Divine names of SAVIOR and LORD. Much more of the same import might be produced; but these who can resist, evade, or set aside such plain and unambiguous testimony as has been already exhibited, might do so by a volume of the same kind.

I have yet, however, distinctly to shew, that God has CONSTITUTED his SON the SUPREME JUDGE of the quick and dead. In proof of the point now before us, we may begin with the testimony of Christ himself. As he is the faithful and true witness, and well acquainted with his own character, much reliance may be placed on his testimony.

It will be needless here to introduce the numerous declarations which Christ made of his authority as the JUDGE of the world. All we have to do is to shew how he came by this authority; whether he possesses it as the self-existent God, or whether he hath been *invested* with this authority by the Father.

When Christ had healed the impotent man, the Jews accused him of profaning the Sabbath day. In reply to their accusation, Jesus said, "my Father worketh

hitherto, and I work." His calling God his Father, the Jews considered as blasphemy, and sought the more to kill him. It appears probable, that the Jews well understood the principle of derived dignity, and that they understood Christ as claiming DIVINE DIGNITY by professing to be the SON of God.* They evidently understood him, as calling God his Father, in the peculiar and proper sense. For while they gloried in having "one Father, even God," they considered Christ as guilty of blasphemy in claiming the title of *the* SON of God.

In reply to their accusations, Christ gave them a more full account of his character and dignity, and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the SON can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and *sheweth him* all things that himself doeth: and he will *shew him* greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath COMMITTED ALL JUDGMENT UNTO THE SON, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."—John v.

If God hath COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son, then he has CONSTITUTED the Son as Judge. But

* In the common translation of John v. 18, we read, "but said, God was *his Father*." Dr. Macknight says it ought to be "*his proper Father*." Dr. Hopkins says "*his own proper Father*." Dr. Campbell translates the whole verse thus, "For this reason the Jews were the more intent to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but by calling God *peculiarly his Father* had equalled himself with God."

Christ gives a further account—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the SON OF GOD: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he GIVEN TO THE SON to have life in HIMSELF; and hath GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.—I can of mine own self do nothing: As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

To those who place full confidence in Christ as a faithful and true witness, his testimony may be sufficient. But for the conviction of those who may think that two or three witnesses are needful in the present case, we may add the testimonies of Peter and Paul.

Peter, in his sermon at the house of Cornelius, after stating that he and others did eat and drink with Christ after his resurrection, said, "and he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is HE which is ORDAINED OF GOD to be the JUDGE of the quick and the dead."

Paul, in his discourse to the people of Athens, said, "and the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that MAN whom he hath ORDAINED, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

I see no rational way in which these testimonies can be invalidated, without impeaching the characters of the witnesses.

An earthly sovereign, whose will is the law of the empire, can, at pleasure, advance an *own* and *only* Son to any rank or office, which does not involve a contradiction.

The father cannot cause his son to rank with himself as to *age*, nor can he render the son *independent* of himself in respect to *existence*, *dignity*, or *office*. But it is in the power of a king or emperor to confer on his son any office in the army, from an ensign to that of commander in chief. He may also, at pleasure, make his son the governor of a province, chief judge, or sole judge in the highest court of justice, or viceroy of half the empire, or even a copartner with himself on the throne; and in testimony of the high esteem he has for his son, he may place him at his own right hand.

Such a course of conduct in an earthly sovereign towards an only son may indeed be the result of caprice or partiality; but it may also be the result of consummate wisdom and benevolence. For the good of the empire may be in the best manner promoted by such measures.

As an earthly sovereign may advance his son to any office he pleases, so he may confer on him whatever title of dignity he may think proper. He may dignify his son with the title of lord, or arch-chancellor of the empire, lord chief justice, prince of peace, president of the princes, or he may confer on him his own royal or imperial title, as king or emperor. And in respect to several relations, he may at the same time have various titles of dignity.

These observations present to our view something analogous to the representations given in Scripture in regard to God's conduct in dignifying his only and well-beloved Son. The titles LORD, SAVIOR, and JUDGE, are titles which properly belong to God. But God had a right to confer the same titles on his beloved Son, and to invest him with the authority and

sufficiency imported by these titles. And if we may safely rely on the testimony of Christ and his apostles as proof, God has actually thus dignified his Son.—He hath "EXALTED him to be a PRINCE and a SAVIOR"—"MADE him to be both LORD and CHRIST"—"GIVEN him all power in heaven and earth"—"ORDAINED him to be the JUDGE of the quick and the dead"—"COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son, and GIVEN him a name which is above every name." And the Scriptures afford no more evidence that Solomon sat on the throne of Israel, by the appointment and pleasure of David, than they do that the Son of God sits on the throne of the universe by the appointment and pleasure of *God his Father*. There are other titles that belong to God, which by his pleasure are given to his Son.

God often styles himself the HOLY ONE, or the Holy One of Israel. The title of Holy One is also given to the Son. But the Son is plainly distinguished from the self-existent Holy One, by being represented as God's Holy One, or the "Holy One of God." To the truth, in this case, Satan himself was constrained to bear witness. "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." The words of David, quoted by Peter, are to the same purpose—"Neither wilt thou suffer *thine* HOLY ONE to see corruption."

The name JEHOVAH, which is often translated Lord in the Old Testament, is a name which belongs to God; but by the pleasure of God this name with some addition is given to the Son. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will *raise* unto David a righteous Branch; and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel

shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, The LORD [or JEHOVAH] our RIGHTEOUSNESS."

That the Messiah, the Son of God, in his incarnate state, is intended in this prophecy, there can be no reasonable doubt. And that it is on the ground of a CONSTITUTED CHARACTER, and by the pleasure of God his Father, that he bears the name JEHOVAH our RIGHTEOUSNESS, is sufficiently plain from the passage quoted. It is God himself who gives the information in the text; and this one God tells us of a person or character which he would *raise up*, and the name by which this Son should be called.

The name Jehovah being given to the Son, is considered by Mr. Jones as evidence that the Son is personally the self-existent God. But had he compared one of his own remarks with the words of an apostle, he might have seen his own mistake. Mr. Jones suggests, that the name LORD, in the New Testament, which is given to Christ, is of the same import as JEHOVAH in the Old Testament. The apostle Peter says, "Let all the house of Israel *know assuredly*, that God hath MADE that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ." If, then, Mr. Jones be correct in affirming that *Lord* and *Jehovah* are terms of the same import, and the apostle be correct in the text just quoted; am I not authorized to say that God hath *made*, or *constituted*, his Son *JEHOVAH our righteousness?**

* *Jehovah our Righteousness. Emmanuel.* That these significant names, as applied to the Messiah, are no proof that he was the living God may appear from the following considerations, viz.

1. "JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" is not only applied to the *Messiah*, but by the same prophet it is applied to the *church* or

On similar ground, and by the same Divine pleasure, the Son had his name called Emmanuel—Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. On the very face of the prophecies, in which these names are brought into view, it is clearly intimated, that it is by the pleasure of God that the Son bears these titles. The Son is manifestly the *subject* of the predictions, and God the *author*. And God says respecting his Son, "His *name shall be called* Emmanuel—His *name shall be called* WONDERFUL," &c.

That it is by inheritance as a Son, and by the pleasure of the Father, that Christ bears the name GOD, is plainly revealed in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. As the chapter was evidently designed to give us a correct and exalted view of the Son of God, and the ground on which he possesses such an exalted character, and such divine titles, I shall quote nine verses:—

to *Judah* and *Jerusalem*—"This is the name by which *She* shall be called the Lord (Jehovah) our Righteousness." Jer. xviii. 16.

2. The name "EMMANUEL" is used three times in the Bible. Isa. vii. 14, it is applied to the son of the prophetess, probably as a *type* of Christ. Matt. i. 23, it is applied to Christ, as the *antitype*. But in Isa. viii. 8, it is applied to the people of Judah, "Thy land, O Emmanuel." In all the instances the word implied that *God was with that people by peculiar favor*. But such significant names determine nothing in respect to the dignity of the persons or the people, to whom they are applied. The name *Ishmael* signifies "*God who hears*," just as the name *Emmanuel* signifies "*God with us*." But we do not infer that Hagar's son was the *prayer hearing God*, because the angel required her to "call his name *Ishmael*." If it would be improper to infer that Hagar's son was a person in Deity, it is equally improper to infer this of the Messiah, on the ground of his name *Emmanuel*, or *Jehovah our Righteousness*.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his SON, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

Before I proceed farther in the quotations, I may make a few remarks.

1. God in this passage is evidently spoken of as one distinct Person or intelligent Being, accordingly the pronouns for God are *he, his.*

2. The Son of God is spoken of as a Person or Being, as distinct from God as any son is distinct from his father; and as distinct from God as are prophets or angels.....God spake *by the prophets*.....so God spake *by his Son.*

3. As a son is the image of his father, so the Son of God is represented as the express image of the Person of God.

4. The Son is heir of all things by the *appointment* of God.

5. The Son is so distinct from God, that he can sit on God's right hand.

6. By being truly the Son of God, and by INHERITANCE, Christ hath a better name than the angels.... Being MADE so much better than the angels, as he hath by INHERITANCE a more excellent name than they....Being truly God's OWN SON, he INHERITS his Father's Dignity.

In proof that the Son hath a more excellent name than the angels, the apostle proceeds to state from the Old Testament what had been said respecting the Son, and what had been said respecting the angels :—

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.—And again, when he bringeth in the *first begotten* into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore *God, even thy God,* hath anointed *thee* with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows."

Here we find the *name* which the Son of God has by INHERITANCE, which is better than the name given to angels.* The self-existent God has been pleased to dignify his *own* and *only Son* with his own divine name. And we find also a reason assigned for this Divine honor :—"Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore GOD, EVEN THY GOD, hath *anointed* THEE with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

If we consider Christ as truly the *Son* of God, in the sense which has been explained, and by *inheritance* and the pleasure of the Father possessing Divine dignity and Divine titles, the whole passage appears perfectly natural. But if we consider the Son

* On farther consideration, it is believed, that the "name" which Christ has by "*inheritance*" is *Son*. But still the name *God* he possesses by the pleasure of his "God and Father."

as personally the self-existent and independent God, most serious difficulties immediately arise....Why is he called God's Son? Why is he uniformly spoken of in contradistinction to the self-existent God? Why is he spoken of as *having* a GOD who hath *anointed him* with the oil of gladness above his fellows? What God could thus anoint the self-existent God?

The passage under consideration is not the only one in which the name God is applied to the Son. Nor is this the only passage in which the Son of God is represented as having a God as well as a Father. Christ said to his disciples, "I go to *my Father* and to *your Father*, to *my God* and to *your God*." And in the epistles we several times read of "the *God* and *Father* of our *Lord Jesus Christ*"—and "the *God* of our *Lord Jesus Christ*." As Solomon, after he was crowned, had a *father* and a *king*, so Christ, on the throne of the universe, had a Father and a God. If Christ had been the self-existent God, it would have been just as proper to speak of the *God* of the *Father*, as the *God* of the *Son*. But if he be truly the *Son* of *God*, and as such sustains Divine offices and bears Divine titles, then no difficulty results from his being called LORD, SAVIOR, or even God. For these titles, as borne by the Son, do not import personal self-existence, but what he is as the *Son* of *God*, and by the pleasure of his Father.

After Solomon had been anointed king by order of David, Jonathan reported the matter to Adonijah, and said, "Verily our lord, king David, hath *made* Solomon king." And it is not improbable that this event was typical of the conduct of God in *anointing* and *exalting* his Son. And as truly as David *constituted* his son Solomon to be *king*, so truly hath our heav-

only Father *constituted* HIS SON to be *Savior*, *Lord*, and *God*. He hath invested him with Divine fulness and Divine authority, and conferred on him his own Divine names and titles. If the Son of God did not possess a fulness adequate to his authority, we might view the Divine names, as applied to him, as high sounding and empty titles; but while we are assured that all power, or authority, is given unto him in heaven and earth, we are also assured that "it hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell;" and that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

When, therefore, I speak of the Son as called *Savior*, *Lord* and *God*, on the ground of a *constituted character*, I wish to be understood as implying not merely *official character*, but such a perfect union of the Son with the Father, that in him properly dwells the infinite fulness and all-sufficiency of God, so that in respect to fulness as well as authority he is one with the Father.

We must suppose, that God is the best judge of the ground on which he styled his Son God. And we know, from the scriptures, that *anointing* with *oil* was an appointed ceremony of induction to office. Thus prophets, priests, and kings, were inaugurated by the command of God. The *oil* was an instituted type or emblem of the *Spirit*; and these ancient inaugurations were probably typical of the inauguration of Christ as the promised Messiah; on which occasion the *Holy Spirit*, which had been typified by the *holy oil*, descended and abode upon him. And in the address of the Father to the Son, in which the Son is called God, the ceremony of *anointing* is distinctly brought into view, to shew that it is on the ground of a *constituted*

character that the Son is called God—"Therefore God, even THY GOD, hath *anointed thee* with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

John the Baptist, in his testimony concerning the Son of God, says, "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God;" and gives this as the reason why the words that he speaketh are the words of God, "*For God giveth not the* SPIRIT *by measure unto him.*" And Peter, in his discourse at the house of Cornelius, mentions "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the *Holy Ghost* and with *power*;" by which we may understand, that in this *anointing*, the Son was *endued* with *Divine fulness*, and *invested* with *Divine authority*.

In expressing Divine commands, in foretelling events, and in performing miracles, the Son of God adopted a style of speaking, very different from that of the prophets. He did not preface what he uttered with a "Thus saith the Lord;" but his usual style was, "I say unto you"—"I will, be thou clean," &c. On this ground, an argument has often been formed, in proof of the hypothesis that Christ was personally the independent God. In reference to this argument, I would ask,

1. Was it not to be expected that God's *own Son* would adopt a style corresponding with his *dignity* as the *Son of God?* Would you not expect that a king's son should adopt a style in speaking, different from an ordinary ambassador?—But,

2. I would ask, whether justice has been done in urging the above argument? It is indeed a truth, that Christ spake in a style different from the prophets: but it is also true, that no prophet was ever more particular and careful than Christ was, to let it be known

that he *came not in his own name*, but in the name of God the Father; that the words which he spake, he spake not of himself; and that the Father in him did the work. How often did he declare, in the most unequivocal manner, to this effect, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of the Father that sent me."—"I *proceeded* forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."—"The words that I speak, I speak not of myself."

If John has given us a true account, Christ distinctly mentioned his being *sent* of the Father, nearly forty times. How, sir, has it come to pass, that these ideas have been so much kept out of view in urging the argument from Christ's peculiar style of speaking? I would by no means suggest a suspicion of *dishonesty*; but is there not evidence of a *strong prepossession*, by which good men have been led to overlook some things which are of weight, and to form their arguments without due consideration?

LETTER V.

How the Son of God became the Son of Man.

REV. SIR,

ACCORDING to your theory, the *Son of God* became the *Son of Man* "by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul," or a proper Man. It is my object to prove, that the *Son of God* became the *Son of Man* by becoming himself the SOUL of a *human Body*.

It has been supposed, that the Son of God could not, with any propriety, be called a man on the hypothesis I have stated. But could he not with much more propriety be called a man, if he became the *soul* of a *human body*, than on the hypothesis that he became united to a proper human soul and body or a proper man? If the Son of God became united to a proper man, the *Son* and the *man* were two distinct intelligences, and the union would be properly a union of two persons.

Besides, you say that this union does not imply that the *divine nature* became *human nature*, nor that the *human nature* became *divine nature*, nor that these two natures were mixed or blended. These positions, if I mistake not, are precisely of the same import as the following—The *Son of God* did not become *man*, nor did the *man* become the *Son of God*, nor were the *Son of God* and the *man* mixed or blended. For so far as I can discern any meaning to your language, the *Son of God* is the same as the *divine nature* of Christ, and the *man* the same as the *human nature*. It will hence appear, that the *Son of God* did not *become* MAN, but only became *united to a man*.

There are a multitude of considerations and passages of Scripture, which may be adduced in support of the hypothesis that the Son of God became Man, or the Son of Man, by becoming the soul of a human body. Out of many, I select the following:—

1. If the Man Christ Jesus had been united to a second divine and self-existent Person, we might reasonably expect to find, that, in some of his discourses, he had mentioned that union. But in no instance did he intimate that he was united to any divine person but the Father. His union with the Father he often

mentioned, and he affirmed that it was the Father in him that did the work.

2. Had the Son of God become man in no other sense than "by taking to himself a true body and reasonable soul," and had he been, as you suppose, personally the independent God, he could not with any propriety have asserted his *personal dependence*. For however dependent his human nature might be, as a *person* he would have been *independent* and *self-sufficient*. Yet, it is believed, we have no account of any other person in the Scriptures, who said so much of his *personal dependence* as did Jesus Christ the Son of God. In the most *personal* and most *emphatical* manner he declared, "*I* can of *mine own self do nothing*." It is remarkable, that any of the friends of Christ should think it dishonorary to him to say that he was dependent, while he himself so constantly affirmed his dependence on the Father. Not only did Christ abundantly assert his personal dependence on the Father, but, as a PERSON, and as a SON, he prayed to the Father *for himself* as the *Son* of God. See his solemn prayer, John xvii.

3. When angels have appeared "in the likeness of men," they have been denominated either *angels* or *men*, just as the Lord Jesus is sometimes called the SON OF GOD, and sometimes the *Son of Man*. The angels who appeared to Lot, in Sodom, are, in the same narrative, several times called *angels*, and several times called *men*. The prophet Daniel, in speaking of the angel who appeared to him, says, "The MAN GABRIEL whom I had seen in the vision."

Shall we, sir, accuse Moses and Daniel of great impropriety, in speaking of those personages sometimes as *angels*, and sometimes as *men*? They were

called men, because they appeared "in the *likeness of men*," that is, in an *embodied state.* If a *transient* or an *occasional* residence in bodies of human form might be sufficient ground on which to denominate angels men, a *permanent* residence in a human body might be sufficient ground on which to denominate the SON OF GOD the *Son of Man.*

4. The scripture accounts of the *incarnation* of the Son of God contain no intimation that he took "to himself a true body and a reasonable soul;" but the contrary is plainly suggested.—"The Word was made flesh." John i. 14. "God had sworn to David, that of the fruit of his loins, *according to the flesh*, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne." Acts ii. 30.—"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David, *according to the flesh.*" Rom. i. 3. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as *concerning the flesh*, Christ came." Rom. ix. 5.

Why were these phrases inserted, *according to the flesh*, or *concerning the flesh*, but to teach us that our Lord is of the seed of Abraham and David ONLY *according to the flesh*, or *in respect to the flesh?*

In the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, the writer gives us a most exalted character of the Son of God; and in the second, he represents his incarnation. "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."—Again, "Wherefore, in all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

How, sir, are the *children* partakers of flesh and blood? Is it by taking to themselves true bodies and reasonable souls? Is it not rather by being reasonable souls of human bodies? Or by being in an embodied state, in union with *flesh and blood?* If so, then for CHRIST to become *like his brethren*, a partaker of flesh and blood, he must become in an embodied state, or become the soul of a human body. Before his incarnation, he was not like to the seed of Abraham in respect to partaking of flesh and blood; but it behoved him so to be, that he might be a merciful High Priest; and that by being himself subject to those temptations which result from a union with flesh and blood, he might know how to sympathize with us, and to succor those who are tempted. But if his incarnation implied no more than his becoming united to a man, how was he prepared by this to be "touched with the feelings of our infirmities?"

In the tenth chapter of the same epistle, it is represented, that when the Son was about to come into the world, he said to his Father, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a BODY hast thou prepared me." The Son did not say, "a true body and reasonable soul" hast thou prepared me; nor, a *Man* hast thou prepared me; but "a BODY hast thou prepared me." And does not his language plainly suggest, that he himself was to be the *Soul* of that *Body* which God had prepared? Let common sense decide the question.

5. There is abundant evidence, that the Person, who called himself the Son of Man, had pre-existence; but there is no evidence that he pre-existed otherwise than as the Son of God, or the Angel of God.

That the Son of God had pre-existence, is not doubted by you; and it is amazing, that it should be

denied by any man who professes a respect for the oracles of God. In addition to all that is said of the Son of God as the Creator, or the one by whom God created all things; and all that is said of him as the Angel of God; and all that is said of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; and all that is said of his incarnation; there are a multitude of texts which naturally import his pre-existence.

His pre-existence is naturally implied in the numerous passages which speak of God's *sending* his Son into the world, and of God's *giving* his Son. The same idea is implied in all that Christ said of his *coming forth from the Father*, and *coming down from heaven*, and *coming forth from God*. Such representations naturally import that he had existed with the Father, with God, and in heaven, before he was *sent*, or before he came into the world.

To the unbelieving Jews Christ said, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." To his disciples he said, "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God: I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father."

These passages Christ spake as the SON OF GOD; and they plainly import two things—

1. That the Son is a being distinct from God, so distinct that he could *proceed forth and come from God.*

2. That the Son existed with God before he came into the world.

Similar things Christ spake of himself as the SON OF MAN. On another occasion he said much of his

being the bread of God which cometh down from heaven. John vi. In this discourse he styled himself the Son of Man. Some of his disciples were displeased with what he said on this occasion. "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the SON OF MAN *ascend up where* HE *was before?*"

These several passages, compared together, plainly import not only the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, but the identity of the Son of God and the Son of Man.

6. The personal identity of the SON of GOD and the SON of MAN is plainly implied in the declaration of St. Paul, Eph. iv. 10. Speaking of the ascension of Christ, he says, "He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended* up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." You will, sir, it is believed, admit that it was the SON of GOD who *descended*, and the SON of MAN who *ascended*. And if he that *descended* is the *same* who *ascended*, then the Son of God and the Son of Man are the same. Of course, the Son of God became the Son of Man by becoming the soul of a human body.

7. You will grant that it was the Son of Man, or the Man Christ Jesus, who died on the cross, who was raised from the dead, and exalted at the right hand of God. But all these things are distinctly and abundantly affirmed of Christ as the *Son of God*, or as our *Lord* and *Savior*. I have no occasion to produce any passages of Scripture to prove that these things are said of Christ as the *Son of Man*, but I may produce some passages to show that these same things are affirmed of God's own Son, by whom he made the worlds, and the one who is now our Lord and Savior.

"He that *spared not* his *own Son*." Rom. viii. 32. "Concerning his *Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and *declared* to be the *Son of God* with power, according to the spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead*." Rom. i. 3, 4.—"Who *raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*." Rom. iv. 24. "And God hath both *raised* up the *Lord*, and will also raise us up by his own power." 1 Cor. vi. 14—"Wait for his Son from heaven, whom *he raised from the dead*." 1 Thes. i. 10.—"Now the God of peace, that *brought again from the dead* our *Lord Jesus*, that great Shepherd of the sheep." Heb. xiii. 20.

In these passages it is plainly represented, that it was in truth that *Being*, who is called the *Son of God*, our *Lord*, and the *great Shepherd* of the sheep, who *personally died* on the cross, and was *raised from the dead* by the power of God.

In the first chapter of the epistle to the Colossians, and in the very connection in which the work of creation is attributed to Christ, he is styled the "*first born from the dead*, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

Respecting this same *Son* our *Lord*, David said, "the *Lord* said unto my *Lord*, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thy foes thy footstool." Of the same *Son of God* it is said, "when he had by himself purged our sins, *sat down on the right hand of the Majesty* on high." Heb. i. 3.—But after this Son had become united to the body which God had prepared, he was often called a *man*, or the *Son of man*. Therefore the same writer says, "but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. x. 12.

8. Additional evidence of the identity of the Son of God and the Son of Man, may appear from what is said of Christ as the *Lord* and the *Son*, the *Root* and the *Offspring* of David.

It was the belief of the Jews, founded on prophecy, that the MESSIAH should be the Son of David.—"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Matt. xxii. 41—45.

This, sir, was to the Pharisees an unanswerable question; nor do I see that any rational answer can be given to it on your theory. For the question plainly supposes the *Lord* of David and the *Son* of David to be but one intelligent Being. But your hypothesis would be, that the *Lord* of David was *united* to a MAN who was the SON OF DAVID. But could the *Lord* of David be thus the *Son* of David? No, sir, the Lord of David would be one person, and the son of David another. But if the *Lord* of David became the *soul* of a *body* which was of the *seed* of David, then would Christ be both David's *Son* and David's *Lord*.

The other text to be considered, is this, "I am the *Root* and the *Offspring* of David."

You will observe, that in this passage, Christ speaks in a *personal* manner, and as one individual intelligence. He does not say, *I* am the *Root* of David, and the *man* united to me is the OFFSPRING of David. But as one, and only one intelligence,

he says, "*I* am the *Root* and the *Offspring* of David."

9. In exhibiting a contrast between Adam and Christ, the apostle Paul says, "the first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." What is here asserted of Christ, accords with his numerous declarations that he came down from heaven, and came forth from God. The apostle does not say that the *second man* was *united* to the *Lord* from heaven; but, the *second man* is the *Lord* from heaven. Suppose, sir, that Daniel had said in some of his writings, The man whom I saw in the vision was Gabriel from heaven; what idea would his words have suggested? Would you not have supposed that Gabriel appeared in an embodied state, or in the likeness of a man? You will be pleased to answer the question, and make the application.

10. Christ stated to his disciples this question, "Whom do men say that *I*, the *Son of Man*, am?" They answered. He then stated another, "Whom say ye that *I* am?" Peter replied, "*Thou* art the Christ, the *Son* of the *living God*."—This answer Christ approved in the most decided manner. And you will be pleased, sir, to notice the definite manner in which the question was proposed and answered. Christ, calling himself the *Son of Man*, demands their opinion concerning him. The answer is as definite as the question, "*Thou* art the Christ, the *Son* of the *living God*." Therefore the *Son of Man* is the *Son of the living God*. The Son of God was not united to the Son of Man; but the Son of God became the Son of Man by becoming the soul of a human body. Thus the *second man* was the *Lord* from heaven.

POSTSCRIPT.

MR. Caleb Alexander, in his remarks on Mr. Emlyn, has taken ground different from yours. He says, "Christ is properly a *complex Person.* He has a distinct *human personality* and a distinct *Divine personality*—and yet so united as to make a *complex Person.* Christ has a proper *Divine intelligence* and a proper *human intelligence.*" p. 57. He also states, that Christ is called the *Son of God* in reference to his humanity—"his lowest capacity and character"—That he is called the Son of God, because his "human nature was created by an *immediate* act." p. 43, 44.

These positions are contradicted by Dr. Hopkins, in a very decided manner. And if I mistake not, they are contradicted by the general tenor of the gospel. Those who may have adopted the hypothesis of Mr. Alexander, will be likely to suppose that my labor has been in vain in attempting to prove that the Son of God and the Son of Man mean the same intelligence. For this they would have admitted without proof.

Though I respect Mr. Alexander, I cannot say that I am any better pleased with his theory than I am with yours. But as I do not learn that his views have been generally adopted, I shall say but little respecting them.

In respect to *personality*, I must think that he takes more correct ground than Dr. Hopkins: for if it be true, that in Christ a Divine Person is united to a proper man, no reason can be given why *they* should not be considered as two Persons. But will it not

plainly result from Mr. Alexander's theory, that He who died for our offences was strictly a *human Person*, and no more than a man? That Person might indeed be the Son of God in *his* sense of the terms; for in his view the *Son* of God was no more than a man—a man united to a Divine Person. But why is this man called God's *own* and *only* Son, the *only begotten* of the Father?—He was "created by an *immediate* act," says Mr. Alexander. And so was Adam; and so, probably, were the angels. How then is Christ God's ONLY Son? Why is it represented as so great a display of God's love, to give such a Son to die for us? If there be any great display of Divine love on his theory, must it not be found in this, that God accepted the obedience unto death, of one man, as an atonement for the sins of the whole world? As much might, perhaps, be said, had Moses died for the sins of the world.

But if Christ be called the SON of God in respect to his "*lowest* capacity and character," why did HE never speak of his having a *higher* character than that of the Son of God? How came the Jews to accuse Christ of *blasphemy*, for saying that he was the Son of God? Would the Jews ever have thought of accusing him of blasphemy for saying that he was "created by an *immediate* act?" or for saying, in the same sense that Adam was, I am the Son of God? Christ received worship *as* the *SON OF GOD*; was it on the ground that he was "*created* by an *immediate* act?"

LETTER VI.

The preceding doctrines all implied in Philippians ii. 5—11.

REV. SIR,

NO portion of Scripture has, perhaps, been more abundantly quoted, nor more fully relied on, by Athanasian writers, than Philippians ii. 6. This text, therefore, with six other verses in connection, I shall attempt to examine. And I flatter myself that you will be convinced that the Athanasian theory can have no support from this passage; and that, in it, is fairly implied several of the propositions which I have aimed to establish.

The verses to be considered are the following:—

5. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;

6. Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,

9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In the preceding verses, the apostle had, in the most affectionate manner, exhorted Christians to humility, condescension, and benevolence. To enforce his exhortation, he urged the example of Jesus Christ, who was rich, and yet for our sakes became poor; and the glorious reward which God bestowed on him for what he had done and suffered. To exhibit the example of Christ in a just and striking light, he distinctly brought into view his state of godlike splendor and majesty before his incarnation; who being in the FORM of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

The Son's being in the FORM OF GOD, most probably refers to the glory he had with the Father before the world was, the glory that he had in God's creating all things by him, and the glory that he had as the Angel of God's presence.

But as this verse is so much relied on in support of the doctrine that the SON is personally the self-existent God, it behoves me to be the more particular in the examination. It is not, for me, easy to discern any thing in the sixth verse, nor in the whole connection, which has the least appearance of favoring that idea, unless it be found in the import of the word *equal*—"thought it not robbery to be *equal* with God." The argument is simply this, No Person but the self-existent God can be *equal* with the self-existent God; therefore the Son is the self-existent God. And the utmost that can possibly be meant, in any case, by the word *equal*, is insisted on as the only possible meaning of the term; and that too in the face of the natural import both of the text itself and the connection. For it is urged that the Son is *absolutely*, *essentially*, and *independently* EQUAL with God. And this con-

struction of the term seems to be urged with as much confidence as though the word had never been, and never could be, used in a qualified sense.

But, sir, is it a truth that the word *equal* always implies *absolute equality* in the persons or things which are said to be equal? Does it always imply equality in *every respect?*—And do we not often use the term in regard to two persons who are supposed to be *unequal* in several respects? When we say of a *son*, that he is *equal* with his *father*, do we ever mean that he has existed as *long* as his father? or that he and his father are but *one being?* May not a son be as *rich* as his father, and yet have derived all his riches from his father? Might not Solomon be equal to David in *authority*, though he derived all his authority from David?

It is, sir, no robbery for a king's son to think of himself according to the authority or dignity which his father has given him.—David said, as it is supposed, respecting Ahithophel his counsellor, "But it was thou, a man, mine *equal*, my guide, and my acquaintance." Do you, sir, suppose, that these words imply that Ahithophel was, in *all respects*, David's equal? If David had said, "a man my *companion*," would not this term have expressed about the same idea as the word *equal?* Why then should you be so very positive, that the term *equal*, as used by the apostle, must mean an *absolute* equality, even a coeternity of God and his Son?

Let us notice another text which evidently respects Jesus Christ: "Awake, O sword, against my *shepherd*, and against the man that is my *fellow*." May it not be reasonably supposed, that *fellow* in this text means the same as *equal* in the other?

But the very text in dispute, may perhaps be found to contain sufficient evidence that Christ is not the self-existent God; and that God and Christ are as distinctly *two Beings* as any other father and son.

"Who being in the *form* of God"—Is not Christ evidently spoken of in contradistinction to God? If he be a Person in contradistinction to the self-existent God, he is certainly not the self-existent God, unless there be more Gods than one. If the apostle had been speaking of the Father, and had said of him, "Who being in the *form* of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," would not such a representation of the Father have been a manifest impropriety? But if the Son be the self-existent God, such language with respect to the Father would be as proper as in respect to the Son.

By the *form* of God, we may understand the same as the *similitude* or *image* of God—Christ is declared to be "the *image* of the invisible God"—"the express image of his Person." But does not every body know that a Person and the image of his Person are distinct objects? and that it is impossible that any Person should be the image of himself? Seth was the image of Adam; but he was not Adam, nor was Adam and Seth the same being.—It is, however, true, that an *image* often bears the *name* of the *Person* represented. So Christ, by the pleasure of God, often bears the Divine Names of his Father.

If, by the term God, be intended three Persons, as Mr. Jones suggests, then for Christ to be in the *form of God*, he must be in the *form* of *three Persons*.

The terms, also, *equal with God*, plainly import that Christ is a Person distinct from God. Two Persons are here compared together, one of them is

God, the other is the Son of God; and of the Son it is asserted, in some sense, that he is *equal with God*. If I were to say that Solomon thought it no robbery to be *equal* with David, would you suppose that I meant to assert that Solomon and David were but one and the same Being?*

Besides, in the connection of the text, the Son is represented as a Being so distinct from God, that he could *obey* and *die*, and after that be *exalted by God*, and have a name *given him*, which is above every name. Now, sir, if there be no more Gods than one, as you readily admit, and if Christ be personally the self-existent God, I wish to be informed by what God *Christ* was *exalted?* Or, on what ground it can be said that God *exalted* HIM?

May I not safely conclude, that this text is so far from supporting the Athanasian doctrine, that it fairly implies that God is *only one Person*, and that Christ is truly God's Son?

My next business will be to show how the passage of Scripture, which has been quoted, supports the doctrine that the Son of God became Man, by becoming the soul of a human body.

* Since writing these remarks, I examined Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor. The phrase "*equal with God*," he does not admit as a correct translation. According to him, the text should be read, "thought it not robbery to be *as God*." The Greek phrase is ισα Θεω, and the Doctor says, "the proper Greek phrase for *equal with God*, is ισον τω Θεω." And these are the words used by John, in stating the accusation of the Jews against Christ—John v. 18, "making himself *equal with God*."

But a late learned Trinitarian writer has approved the following translation of the text, "Who being in the form of God, did not eagerly grasp at the resemblance to God." "This," says the writer, "conveys the true sense of the original." Eclectic Review of the "Improved Version."

The passage teaches us, that Jesus Christ, who was in the FORM OF GOD, made HIMSELF of no reputation, and took on HIM the *form* of a servant, and was *made in the likeness of men*, and was found in *fashion as a man.*

Be pleased, sir, to observe the correspondence between this representation and other passages of Scripture—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"—"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"—"In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren"—"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same." Does not the natural import of all these passages, whether severally or collectively considered, convey the idea that the Son of God became Man by becoming the soul of a human body? Can you perceive the least intimation in any of these passages, of any soul but that of the Son of God?

Had it been recorded in the bible, that Satan, or the angel Gabriel, for a number of years, was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man, what idea would such a representation excite in your mind? If Satan were the person, should you imagine that he dwelt in a man? or, that he merely assumed a human body?

You will be pleased to observe, that the text does not say that the Son of God was *united to a Man;* but was "*made in the likeness of men.*" It does not say the Son of God was found *in a man*, but was "*found in fashion as a Man.*" And what can be intended by an unembodied spirit's being made in the *likeness of men*, but his becoming in an embodied state? And what is it to be found in *fashion as a man*, but to be found *like a man* with soul and body united? If it were com-

mon among men to have two intelligent spirits united to one body, then might the Son of God be *made in the likeness of men*, by "taking to himself a true body and reasonable soul." But if it has never been known among men that two intelligent spirits were united to one body, then for the Son of God to be *made in the likeness of men*, and to be found *in fashion as a Man*, he must become the soul of a human body. And I would propose it for your most serious consideration, whether the Athanasian theory, of the *incarnation* of the Son of God, does not come nearer to the scriptural view of *possession*, than it does to the scriptural view of *incarnation*.

I do not, sir, mention this comparison with any view to make light of the subject, or to ridicule your theory; but to *enforce* an examination. And is there not much more evidence, that, in a case of *possession*, Satan took "to himself a true body and a reasonable soul," than that Christ did so by *incarnation?* Besides, in a case of *possession*, it is easy to conceive that the Man might suffer, and even die, and yet Satan be not at all affected by the sufferings and death of the Man: and just so you suppose that the Man Christ Jesus might suffer and die without any pain to the Son of God.

In respect to what constitutes a Man in the present state, what more do we know than this, that an intelligent spirit is united to a human body, so as to constitute one Person? While one affirms that the souls of men are properly produced by ordinary generation, the same as the body, another will affirm that the soul or spirit is the immediate work of God, and united to the body in a state of embryo. And these two, perhaps, will unite in confidently affirming, that Christ

could, with no propriety, be called a Man, if his soul had pre-existed as the Son of God. But if a *true body* and *reasonable soul* united, will constitute a man, is it not unsafe for us to affirm that the Son of God could not become a Man by becoming the *rational soul* of a *human body?*

If I have not misunderstood him, Dr. Emmons differs from Dr. Hopkins, and supposes that the souls of men are not propagated like their bodies; but are the immediate work of God, and by him united to bodies. To this hypothesis I do not object; I am ignorant on the subject. But I do not see how the Doctor, or any who agree with him, can reasonably say that, on my hypothesis, Mary was not properly the mother of a son. For if the Son of God were united to a body in the womb of Mary, and born of her, he was, according to Dr. Emmons' hypothesis, as truly the son of Mary as Seth was the son of Eve. And it is just as conceivable that a pre-existent spirit should be united to an infant body, as a spirit formed at the very moment of union.

The portion of Scripture which we have under consideration, fairly supports another idea upon which I have insisted, viz. That the SON OF GOD was the *real sufferer* on the cross. He who had been in the *form of God*, when found in *fashion as a Man*, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

On your hypothesis, the Son of God was truly and personally the self-existent God. I ask then, Did the self-existent God become *obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?* If he did, who supported the universe during that event? And who *raised* HIM from the *dead?*

But you will say, that it was the Man Jesus, to whom the Son was united, who became obedient unto death. But does the apostle say any such thing? The obedience unto death he attributes to the same Intelligence who had been in the FORM of God. For the *Son of God* to *suffer*, and for a *Man* to *suffer* to whom the Son was united, are as distinct ideas as any two which can be named. And what trace of the latter idea do you find in the apostle's description?

The idea, that it was truly the Son of God who *obeyed*, *suffered*, and *died*, and not another intelligent being to whom he was united, is plainly asserted in other passages of scripture—"Though a SON, yet learned HE obedience by the things which HE SUFFERED"—"Who his OWN SELF bare our sins in his own body on the tree"—"We are reconciled to God by the *death* of *HIS SON*"—"But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the *sacrifice of HIMSELF*."

A vast multitude of texts of similar import might be produced. And can you, sir, pretend that these texts do not support the idea that the SON of God, as such, did *really suffer*? Can you find any language which could more fairly or more fully express the idea that the *Son* of *God* was the *real sufferer*? And shall we still be told that this same SON was personally the self-existent God, and *incapable* of *death* or *suffering*?

I cannot, sir, but feel most deeply interested, when I happen to touch on this point: and I hardly know when, where, or how to dismiss it. It cannot be admitted, that God is chargeable with any imposition on mankind. And yet, what, short of an imposition, would it be for him to pretend that he has so loved the world as to give his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON to suffer an

ignominious death for our redemption, if at the same time this Son was so *spared*, as your theory implies? So *spared*, that all the sufferings of the cross were endured by a Man to whom the Son was united; and the Son himself as free from pain and death as though there were no such thing as suffering and death in the universe. No possible union between the Son of God and a Man could render it proper to call the *sufferings* and *death* of the *Man* the *sufferings* and *death* of the *Son*, if it be true that the SON did *not suffer nor die*. And on this hypothesis, the sufferings of the Man might as well be called the sufferings of *Gabriel*, or the sufferings of *God the Father*, as the sufferings of the *Son of God*. Must the sun be darkened, must the rocks be rent, must the earth quake, and nature be thrown into convulsions, while the SON of GOD *suffers* and *dies* on the cross? Must the angels show so deep an interest in that scene, and must all the world be called on to behold with wonder and astonishment, the height, and depth, the length, and the breadth, of the love of God, as displayed in that event? Must all the redeemed of the Lord unite in songs of everlasting praise to the *SON of GOD*, because he hath loved them and redeemed them to God by HIS OWN BLOOD? And can it, after all, be made to appear that the *Son* of God suffered not at all, unless it were by *proxy* or *substitute*?

May it not, sir, be fairly inferred from your theory, that instead of the Son of God's dying FOR US, that the *Man Jesus* died *for the Son of God*? If the Son of God had covenanted with the Father to lay down his life for us, but instead of bearing the suffering himself, united himself to another intelligent being, and caused the sufferings wholly to fall on that Man,

did not the *Man* die *for him?* And to whom, sir, are we indebted for the redemption purchased on the cross? To the *real sufferer*, or to the one who "suffered not in the least?" To the *Man Jesus*, or to the SON OF GOD?

Most gladly, sir, would I recall every syllable I ever uttered in support of a theory so opposite to the natural import of scripture language, so *degrading* to the *love* of God, and so *dishonorary* to the Lord of glory.

There is another point stated in the passage, viz. that the high *official character* which the Son of God sustains as Lord of the universe, is the result of *God's pleasure*, and not any thing which the *Son* possessed as a self-existent or independent Being. Having stated the abasement of the Son, his obedience unto death, the apostle says,

"Wherefore GOD hath *highly exalted* HIM, and GIVEN HIM a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Is it, sir, in the power of language to give a more full idea of a CONSTITUTED CHARACTER, or of DELEGATED AUTHORITY, than is given in these words of the apostle? Is not the representation *perfect* and *unequivocal*, that the same Being who was once in the FORM OF GOD, then in *fashion as a man*, who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, was, in consequence of that abasement, exalted by the self-existent God, to supreme and universal dominion? Did not the apostle *mean* to be understood as representing *extraordinary* and *real changes* of condition

in Jesus Christ the SON of God? Did he not *mean* to represent that the first change of condition was a voluntary act on the part of Jesus Christ, that he voluntarily descended from the FORM OF GOD to the *form of a servant*, and voluntarily became obedient unto death? If this change of condition was *not real* and *voluntary* on the part of the Son of God, why is he exhibited as an example of humility, condescension, and benevolence? Why are we required to let this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus? But if the Son of God was *really* the subject of this change of condition, if he did *really* and *truly suffer* and *die*, can he be the *Son* of God in your sense of the terms? In other words, can he be the self-existent God?

In regard to the second great change of condition—Did not the apostle *mean* to represent, that for the *suffering of death*, the Son of God was rewarded by his Father with transcendent dignity and glory? Did he not *mean* to represent, that the very identical intelligent Being, who hung in agony, who prayed, who bled and died on the cross, was *exalted by God as* LORD OF ALL? But if the *real sufferer* on the cross was thus exalted by God, then, according to your own views, he could not be the self-existent God; for you cannot admit that the self-existent Person may either be the subject of *death* or of *delegated authority*. The self-existent God could no more be *raised* to the throne of the universe, than he could suffer death on the cross.

As Athanasian writers have found it necessary, or convenient, on their theory, to attribute all that is said of the *obedience*, the *suffering* and *death*, of the SON of God, to the *human nature*, or the *man Jesus*, to whom they suppose the Son of God was united; so, on the other hand, they have found it convenient, or

necessary, to attribute what is stated in the Scriptures respecting the exaltation of the Son of God, to the same *man* or *human nature*. As they have perceived that it must be improper to attribute *real abasement*, *suffering* and *death*, to the self-existent God, so it appears they have perceived that it is equally improper to suppose a self-existent Person should be capable of *deriving* or *receiving* either *fulness* or *authority* from any other Person. And as they have supposed the Person who is called the SON of God, to be the self-existent God, so they have found it necessary to the support of that theory to attach to this Person a proper man, capable of obedience, suffering, and death, and also of receiving *communicated fulness* and *authority*.

According to Mr. Jones, and other writers, it was the *man Jesus*, in contradistinction to the *Son of God*, who received the Spirit without measure—to the man was given the name which is above every name—it was the man who was *ordained* of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead—and the man who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

In view of these representations, I would propose to your consideration the following inquiries :—

1. If the *Son of God* were self-existent and independent, and the *man* or *human nature* but an appendage to a self-existent Person, what occasion could there be of any communications from the Father to that man or human nature? If, as a SON, that *Person* were the independent God, as a *Person* he possessed independent fulness and authority; and no addition or accession to his fulness or authority could possibly be made by the Father.

2. If the Son of God, as such, were possessed of independent and infinite fulness and authority, and in

addition to this the Father gave the *human nature* of the SON the Spirit without measure, and all power in heaven and earth, will it not appear that the same Person was possessed, in a two-fold sense, of infinite fulness and authority?

3. If the Son of God were united to a proper man, and that man, in contradistinction to the Son of God, was endued by the Father with all the fulness of the Godhead, and invested with all power in heaven and earth, what is the *office* or *business* of your supposed second self-existent Person? It is believed, sir, that you cannot make it appear that the man Christ Jesus received any *support*, *fulness* or *authority*, or even *benefit* from any Divine Person but the Father—As a *derived intelligence*, all he received was from the Father. But,

4. If the man Christ Jesus may be the *recipient* of the *Spirit without measure*, of all the *fulness of God*; if he may be *exalted* with God's own right hand, and *made* a PRINCE and a SAVIOR, and the JUDGE of the quick and the dead; I would ask what evidence you have of the *existence* of a second Person in union with God, distinct from the soul of that MAN who was the LORD from heaven?

5. If it was, in fact the Man Jesus who was the subject of all the *abasement*, *suffering*, and *death*, which was endured for our sakes; and if it was the Man who has been the subject of all the exaltation which is in the Scriptures attributed to the Son of God; is there not abundant evidence that the *Man Christ Jesus* and the *Son of God* are identically the same intelligent Being? And that the Son of God became the Man Christ Jesus by becoming the soul of a human body?

You may think, sir, that I ought to notice that all Athanasian writers do not agree with Mr. Jones, that it was the *human nature* of Christ, or the *Man* merely, who is represented as *receiving fulness* and *authority* from the Father. I am sensible, indeed, that there is another opinion advanced by some writers of great respectability; and it is to me a matter of regret, that I have occasion to bring it into view: for, if it be possible, it is to me more inconsistent than the opinion of Mr. Jones.—The opinion referred to is of this import, That the representations in Scripture, respecting the *derived fulness* and *authority* of the SON, result from the covenant of redemption, in which a mutual agreement was entered into by the THREE *self-existent* and *co-eternal* PERSONS, respecting the part which each should perform in the work of redemption.

Dr. Hopkins gives the following view of these covenant transactions:—

"The second Person was engaged to become incarnate, to do and to suffer all that was necessary for the salvation of men. The Father promised, that on his consenting to take upon him the character and work of a Mediator and Redeemer, he should be every way furnished and assisted to go through with the work; that he should have power to save an elect number of mankind, and form a church and kingdom most perfect and glorious: In order to accomplish this, all things, all power in heaven and earth, should be given to him, till the work of redemption is completed."

The Doctor observes again,

"The blessed Trinity, in the one God, may be considered as a most exalted, happy, and glorious society or family, uniting in the plan of Divine operations, especially in accomplishing the work of redemption.

In this, each one has his part to perform, according to a most wise, mutual regulation or agreement, which may be called a *covenant*. In performing these several parts of this work, one acts as *superior*, and another as *inferior*; or one acts *under another*, and by his authority, as appointed or sent by him. This, by divines, is called the economy of the work of redemption. According to this economy, the Son, the Redeemer, acts under the Father, and by his will and appointment, and in this respect takes an inferior part; and in this sense he is supposed to speak, when he says, *the Father is greater than I.*"

I confess to you, sir, that I cannot but be amazed and grieved to find such representations in the writings of so great and so good a man as Dr. Hopkins. I am amazed, because I must suppose that he was so blinded by theory as not to pay due attention to the import of what he wrote. And I am grieved, that a man so eminent should do so much to expose Christianity to the ridicule of unbelievers.

"*A glorious society or family!*"—A family of what? Not of *men*; not of *angels*. What then? A family of *self-existent* and *independent Persons*, each of whom, as a *distinct Person*, the Doctor supposed to be GOD. And if we pay any regard to the natural import of language, what are we to denominate this family, short of a family of Gods? I very well know that the Doctor denied the idea of a plurality of Gods; nor would I intimate the contrary; and I most sincerely wish that all his reasonings and representations had been consistent with that denial. But, far from this, he has not only undertaken to prove that each of these self-existent Persons is God, but in the very passages under consideration he represents these Persons

as properly *distinct Beings*, as distinct Beings as any three angels in heaven. They can enter into covenant with each other—each can have a *distinct part* assigned him—one can be *superior*, and another *act under him*, or by *his order*—one can *send* the other on the most important business; and what more than all this, I beseech you, would be requisite to constitute them three as distinct *beings* as Peter, James, and John.

But the most extraordinary of all these representations are the engagements of the Father to the Son—"The Father promised, that on his consenting to take upon him the character and work of a Mediator and Redeemer, he should be every way *furnished* and *assisted* to go through the work; that he should have *power* to save an elect number of mankind—In order to accomplish this, *all things*, *all power in heaven and earth*, should be GIVEN TO HIM, until redemption is completed."

Be pleased, sir, to keep in mind, that the Doctor was writing about two self-existent, independent, and all-sufficient PERSONS. Was it possible that he should suppose that an *independent* person ever became *dependent?* Did the independent God ever cease for a moment to be independent? If the supposed *self-existent Son* did not become a *dependent* agent by *incarnation*, what could be the *ground* or *occasion* of the Father's promises that he should be *furnished* and *assisted*, and have *all things*, *all power in heaven and earth*, GIVEN TO HIM? I am not, sir, meaning to deny, or to doubt, the fact respecting the existence of these promises of the Father to the Son. The Doctor has proved the existence of these promises of *assistance* and *support* in the connection of the paragraphs quot-

ed. But my question is, *Why were these promises made?* They were either *needful*, or they *were not*. To say they were *made*, and yet *not needful*, would be imputing to God a kind of trifling which would be degrading to a wise and good man. But if they *were needful*, it must be on one or other of these grounds, viz. either the Son was *originally dependent* on the Father by incarnation, or he *became dependent by incarnation*. That he was originally dependent, you and the Doctor positively deny. What ground then have you left but this, that a self-existent and independent Person became dependent by incarnation? I see no possible ground but this which you can take, unless you prefer to reduce the solemn transactions in the covenant of redemption to a mere show.

But can you, sir, believe that an independent person ever became dependent? If you maintain this position, it must be at the expense of another which you have wished to maintain, viz. the *absolute immutability* of the Son of God.

For an *independent* person to become *dependent*, is, I suspect, as great a change as was ever experienced by any creature; and as great as for a *man* to be changed from ENTITY to NON-ENTITY. But this is not all—if you support the hypothesis that the Son became *dependent* by *incarnation*, you must do it at the expense of the *immutability of God*. If it be as you suppose, that the revealed God was *three independent* Persons, and one of those Persons has become a *dependent* Agent, Deity has been changed, and has ceased to be three independent Persons in one God.

Will you, sir, think of evading these objections, or solving these difficulties, by saying that the Son did not *really* become dependent, but only *apparently*, by

becoming united to a *dependent nature?* This, my friend, will increase the difficulties, by representing the part acted by the Son as not real, but only in appearance, as well as the part acted by the Father. On this hypothesis, the Son would put on the *appearance* of *needing* his Father's support, when in fact he did *not need it*—he would put on the *appearance* of *obeying* the Father, when in fact he did *not obey;* and of *suffering* and *dying*, when in fact he did neither *die* nor *suffer*.

Will you say that the engagements of the Father to the Son were of this tenor, that he would support the *human nature* to which the Son should be united? If so, I ask what *need* had the Son of this? Was he not *personally* sufficient for the support of his human nature? Again, I ask, if the engagements of the Father to the Son were, that he would support the *Man* to whom the SON should be united, what part had the SON to perform? Was it not simply this, that he should *appear* to become dependent by becoming united to the *Man*, and the Father would *furnish*, *assist*, and *enable* the *Man* to do the whole business of *obeying* and *suffering?* And is this, sir, the ground of our obligations to the SON OF GOD? Is this the ground on which the redeemed of the Lord sing "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain?*

It is, sir, painful to me thus to expose the theory I once attempted to maintain, and which has been advocated by some of the greatest and best of men. But I view it to be a duty which I owe to God, and to his Son who has given himself for us. And while I sincerely lament that the representations of Dr. Hopkins, on which I have remarked, are to be found in the writings of a man so justly esteemed, it affords me abun-

dant joy that the Bible itself is not chargeable with such inconsistent representations.

As I understand the Scriptures, the promises of the Father were made to one who was in truth and reality the SON of God—to one who *ever was dependent* on the Father, who ever felt his dependence, and was ever willing to *acknowledge* it—one who could pray with propriety and sincerity while in the flesh; and in view of his *dependence*, in view of the *covenant of redemption*, and in view of the *sufferings* he was about to endure, he could lift up his eyes to heaven, and say, "Father, the hour is come, glorify THY SON, that THY SON may also glorify THEE: as thou hast GIVEN HIM POWER over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him: And this is life eternal, to know THEE, the ONLY TRUE GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom THOU hast *sent*. I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, *glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*"

To a Son who could, in sincerity, make such a prayer, the Father might, with perfect propriety and sincerity, make promises of *assistance*, of *support*, of *power*, and *exaltation*. On this ground, the covenant transactions between the Father and the Son may appear *solemn* and *affecting realities*; and likewise all the subsequent proceedings on the part of the FATHER, and on the part of the SON. With this view, also, agree all the predictions respecting what the Son should do and suffer; all the promises of Divine assistance and support; all that is said by Christ of himself, of his dependence, his derived fulness and authority; and all that is said by the apostles

respecting the fulness of the Deity dwelling in him; and of the power and authority which Christ received of God as *Savior, Judge, and Lord of all.* We have no occasion for any *forced* or *unnatural* construction of any of these numerous passages of Scripture; nor have we any occasion to *frame* and *invent* hypotheses which contradict the plain import of Scripture language, and finally involve us in contradiction and absurdity.

Is it not, sir, a truth, that the *personal self-existence* of the *Son* of God has been too hastily established as an article of Christian faith?—established as an article of such *unquestionable truth* and *infinite importance*, that every opposing passage of Scripture must be made to *bend* to it, or *break* before it? And that too while the general tenor of Scripture language and Scripture representations are, according to the most natural import of words, directly opposed to the idea? Yea, with a view to glorify Christ with the attributes of *personal self-existence* and *independence*, have not hypotheses been formed which imply a *sacrifice* of the *solemn realities* of the covenant of redemption, and of the *obedience* and *death* of the *Son of God?* And in attempting to support this one doctrine, have not the plainest and most simple representations of Scripture, and even the whole gospel scheme, been involved in mystery and obscurity? Surely, sir, before we allow any doctrine such a share of importance, we ought, at least, seriously to inquire whether it be founded in the word of God.

As the doctrine of the personal self-existence of the Son of God has long been a *popular* doctrine, have we not on that ground received it as true, and made it our business to support the doctrine before we exam-

ined it by the light of God's word? And instead of making the *Scriptures* a STANDARD by which to *measure* the *doctrine*, have we not been in the habit of making the *doctrine* a *STANDARD* by which to *measure* the *Scriptures*?

Will you, sir, still urge that Christ cannot be a Divine Person unless he be self-existent? By what authority, or by what analogy, will you be able to support such an objection? Nothing more was necessary to constitute Seth a *human person*, than being the son of a *human person*. And if God be a *Divine Person*, his *own Son* must be a *Divine Person*. According to every analogy in nature, to affirm that Jesus Christ is God's *own Son* implies that he is a PERSON TRULY DIVINE.

LETTER VII.

DIVINE HONORS due to the SON OF GOD.

REV. SIR,

THAT the Son of God is to be regarded as an object of DIVINE HONORS, is so plain from the Scriptures, that it seems extraordinary that it should ever have been denied by any one who has admitted the Bible as a rule of faith and practice.—In support of the idea, we may note several things—

1. We have express declarations of the *will of God*. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath *committed all judgment* to the Son, that all men should HONOR the SON even as they honor the Father." This is a sufficient warrant for *men* to give DIVINE HONORS to the SON of God. Angels have their warrant also; for

"When he bringeth in his ONLY BEGOTTEN into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God WORSHIP HIM."—And we have another passage which amounts to a warrant both for men and angels: "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the NAME OF JESUS *every knee should bow*, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

2. We have the example of saints on earth and saints in heaven. In respect to saints on earth, we not only have many individual instances recorded, but the great body of Christians in the apostolic age were characterized as "those who *call on the name of the Lord Jesus.*" That both angels and saints in glory pay Divine honors to the Son of God, is represented by John in the account he gives of his visions: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing: And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, *Blessing*, and *honor*, and *glory*, and *power*, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the LAMB, forever and ever."

To those who regard the Scriptures as of Divine authority, the things which have already been noted may be considered as sufficient to authorize us to pay Divine honors to the Son of God; even if we should be unable to investigate the grounds of the Divine directions, and of the examples of saints and angels.

It may, however, be desirable that we should obtain a clear view of the *reasons* why such honors are to be given to Jesus Christ.—We may therefore observe,

1. That *Divine honors* are due to the Son of God, on the *principle of derived dignity*. He is God's *own Son*, his *First-begotten*, his *only begotten Son;* and he hath, by *inheritance*, a more excellent name than the angels. On the same principle that an *own* and *only son* of a rightful king is to be regarded and honored as a royal person, *Divine honors* are due to the Son of God.

2. The Son of God is worthy of *Divine honors*, on the ground of his *Divine fulness;* for it hath pleased the Father that in him *all fulness* should dwell. That fulness which Christ possesses by the pleasure of the Father, is really *Christ's fulness;* and it is as excellent considered as the *fulness of Christ*, as it is considered as the *fulness of the Father*. The self-existence of God does not imply that he was the *cause* of his own *existence* or his own *fulness*. And God is, in truth, no more the *cause* of his own *fulness* than Christ is the *cause* of the *Divine fulness* which dwells in him by the pleasure of God. If, therefore, the fulness there is in God be a proper ground on which to give HIM *Divine honors*, the fulness there is in Christ is a reason why we should *honor the Son* as we honor the Father—that is, so far as *Divine fulness* is the ground of *Divine honors*.

3. The Son of God is worthy of *Divine honors*, on the ground of his *Divine offices*. It is a dictate of reason and revelation, that *official character* should be respected and honored. And the higher the office any person sustains by right, the greater are the honors which are due on the ground of official character.

The official character of a general demands higher honors than that of a corporal—the official character of the president of the United States demands higher honors than that of an ordinary civil magistrate. And on the same principle, *Divine honors* are due to the Son of God: for his *offices* are truly *Divine*. The offices of Savior, Judge, and Lord of all, are as truly Divine offices as any offices sustained by God the Father. And if there be any reason to give Divine honors to God in view of his Divine offices, there is the same reason to give Divine honors to the Son of God: for the Son has not obtained these offices by violence or usurpation, but by the pleasure of God, who had an unquestionable right to bestow them. And if he truly possess those offices by the gift of the Father, so far as *official character* may be a ground of Divine honors, Christ is as worthy of Divine honors as though he had possessed the same offices by self-existence. Therefore, on the ground of *official character*, we may *honor the Son as we honor the Father*.

4. The Son of God is worthy of Divine honors, on the ground of Divine works. Creation is a Divine work; and by him were all things created. Upholding and governing the world is a Divine work; and he upholdeth all things by the word of his power;* and he is Lord of all. Salvation is a Divine

* Heb. i. 3. In his Family Expositor, Dr. Doddridge expresses the opinion, that the phrase "*his power*" intends the *power of the Father*; and the construction of the sentence is in favor of his opinion. But this is no objection to the idea, that the power, by which the world is upheld, is also truly *Christ's power*. It is the *power of God*, originally and independently, and the *power of Christ* by the pleasure of the Father.

work; and God hath exalted him to be a PRINCE and a SAVIOR.—The price of redemption he has personally paid; and he is made head over all things to the church. Judging the world is a Divine work; and the Father hath *committed* all judgment unto the Son. It is indeed a truth, that God does all these things by his Son; but the Son is the real agent or doer of these things, as truly as Paul was the author of the epistles to Timothy.

It is a principle of reason and common sense, as well as of revelation, that great and excellent works are a proper ground of honor. When the elders of the Jews came to Christ to request favor in behalf of the centurion, whose servant was sick, in commendation of the centurion the elders said, That, "he is worthy for whom he should do this; for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." What honors have been paid to *Washington*, on the ground not only of the important *offices* he sustained, but on the ground of the important *works* he performed! Now, if more honor has been due to Washington on the ground of his works, than has been due to the meanest soldier in his army, or the meanest peasant in community, *Divine honors* are due to Christ on the ground of his *Divine works*. A greater than Washington is here; one who has done greater things; one who hath loved our race, and built us a world, and filled it with the fruits of his kindness; yea, one who hath so loved us as to *give himself*, his *own life*, for our redemption. But God raised him from the dead, and "exalted him with his own right hand." God viewed him worthy of *Divine honors*, on the ground of what he had done, "*wherefore* God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that

at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow.*" If it was not improper for God to place the Son on his own *right hand*, it is not improper for us to pay *Divine honors* to his name.

From the evidence we have in the sacred writings, that Divine honors are to be paid to the Son of God, it has been inferred, that the *Son* is personally the *self-existent God.* And so confident have some been that this inference is infallibly correct, that they have ventured, on the supposition it be not so, to implicate the Christian world in a charge of gross idolatry, and the God of truth in a charge of self-contradiction and inconsistency. Is not this, sir, for fallible creatures, carrying things to a great length? And does it not imply such a degree of confidence in the correctness of their own understandings, as none should possess until they arrive to that state where they shall see as they shall be seen, and know as they shall be known?

But what, sir, is the ground on which this extraordinary confidence rests? Is it not a *principle*, *taken for granted*, which has no real foundation in reason, analogy, or the word of God? Yea, a principle which is contradicted by analogy, and by as plain representations as are contained in the oracles of truth? The principle taken for granted is this, That it is *impossible with God* to *constitute* a CHARACTER which shall be worthy of Divine honors; therefore, if Jesus Christ be not personally the self-existent God, he cannot be an object of Divine honors.

But, sir, be pleased to admit, for one moment, the *possibility* that Christ is just such a Person and character as I have supposed him to be—truly the SON of the LIVING GOD, God's OWN and ONLY SON—a Son in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness

should dwell—one truly united to Deity, and by God invested with the *Divine offices* of *Savior*, *Lord*, and *Judge:* What but *Divine honors* are due to his name?

What says analogy?—By David's pleasure, we behold Solomon placed on the throne of Israel; and we see the friends of David and of Solomon giving him the honors which were due to the *son of David* and *king of Israel.* We also see the SON OF GOD, "for the *suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honor," seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, exalted by God, as Lord of all; and shall we pronounce it *idolatry* to pay *him Divine honors* as the SON OF GOD, and the *constituted* LORD of the universe? Or shall we arraign the conduct of God, and pronounce it absurd for him thus to exalt his OWN SON?

But what saith the Scriptures? When they represent Christ as an object of Divine honors, do they not uniformly represent him as a *Person* as *distinct* from GOD as he is from the FATHER? Is there one instance in which he is represented as the self-existent God, and on that ground worshipped?—In regard to those declarations of the Divine will respecting the honoring of Christ, or the wershipping of Christ, is he not in the plainest manner distinguished from the self-existent God? All judgment was COMMITTED unto HIM by the FATHER, that all men should honor the Son as they honor the FATHER. Was he not a Being distinct from the one who *committed* all judgment unto him? In the connection, he calls that Being his *Father;* and Peter says, that Christ commanded his disciples to preach and to testify that it is HE who is *ordained of God* to be the Judge of the quick and the dead. Therefore, when he is honored as the Judge,

he is honored as one *ordained* of God. He is then, in this case, plainly distinguished from God. It was God also who brought him into the world, as the ONLY BEGOTTEN, and said, "Let all the angels of God *worship* HIM." It was God also who "*exalted him*;" and God gave him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*. In all these cases, the Son is as clearly distinguished from God, as Solomon is, in any place, distinguished from David.

As there is no declaration importing that Christ should be worshipped or honored as being personally the self-existent God, we may perhaps find, that, in the *examples* of worshipping Christ, he was honored or worshipped as a Being *distinct* from God. When he had stilled the tempest, they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." And in several instances he was worshipped under this title. By the woman of Canaan he was worshipped as the *Lord*, the *Son* of David. Can any person of candor and discernment suppose, that in either of these cases he was considered as personally the self-existent God? The terms they used certainly import no such thing. To be the SON of God, and to be the self-existent GOD, are ideas as distinct as *David* and the *Son* of David. The angels were not required to worship him as the self-existent God; but the self-existent God required them to worship Christ as the *only begotten Son of God*. When John, in the Revelations, gives us such a striking representation of the worship or Divine honors paid by all the angels and saints to Christ as the LAMB OF GOD, the LAMB, in the representations, is clearly distinguished from God as another intelligent

Being—as one who had been SLAIN—as ONE who had redeemed us to GOD by his blood. No one, it is hoped, will pretend, that God, *the self-existent*, was ever *slain;* yet when Divine honors were paid the LAMB, the angels and the redeemed of the Lord said, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

There is not, perhaps, a more striking representation of Divine honors paid to the Son of God, in any part of the Bible, than those which are given by John in the Revelations; yet all those honors were paid to one who could say, "I am HE that *liveth*, and *was dead*, and, behold, I live forevermore;" and to one whom the worshippers considered as having been *slain*. Then, as true as it is that God was never personally *dead*, so true it is that Jesus Christ may receive divine honors as an intelligent Being, personally *distinct* from God.

It may not be amiss here to notice an extraordinary idea suggested by Mr. Jones, in regard to the LAMB. Speaking upon these words, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," and feeling the impropriety of supposing that God *suffered* and *died*, he informs us that by the *Lamb* is intended "the *Messiah's humanity.*" [p. 82.] That the title LAMB *includes* the Messiah's humanity, is not denied; but that the term LAMB means the Messiah's humanity in contradistinction to his own proper nature as the SON OF GOD, may not be admitted. If the name *Lamb* mean the "Messiah's humanity" in the sense suggested by Mr. Jones, we may properly substitute the terms "*Messiah's humanity*" whenever the word *Lamb* is used as denoting Christ.

Let us then make use of the substitute in the connection from which Mr. Jones selected the text.

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne—stood the "*Messiah's humanity*," as it had been *slain*, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God: And *he* came and took the book—And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the "*Messiah's humanity*"—and they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, &c.—Worthy is the "*Messiah's humanity*" that was slain, to receive power, &c.—Blessing, and honor, and power, unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the "*Messiah's humanity*" forever and ever." Rev. ch. v.

To such absurdity, sir, are great and good men sometimes reduced, in attempting to support a theory in opposition to the plain import of scripture language. Had Mr. Jones duly regarded the natural meaning of the terms the *Son of God*, and believed that he was made in the *likeness of men* by becoming the soul of a human body, that he *really suffered* and *died* on the cross as the antitype of the paschal Lamb, he might then have considered the LAMB, seen by John, as the *Messiah himself*, and not the "*Messiah's humanity*." But if an Athanasian writer may so construe the names of the SON of God, as implicitly to represent all the heavenly hosts as worshipping the "*Messiah's humanity*," may I not escape censure in regard to the hypothesis that God hath *exalted* his *own Son*, and *constituted him* an object of *Divine honors?*

What! you may say, are we to have two Gods? No, sir; my object is to prove that we have but one self-existent God, by proving that, in the view of God,

of angels, and of saints in glory, the SON of God is an object of *Divine worship;* not indeed, on the ground of self-existence, but on the ground of his dignity as *God's own* and *only Son*, and the *constituted Lord* and *Savior* of the world.

But, sir, let it be distinctly understood, and never forgotten, that while we thus honor the SON of God, we honor the FATHER also. Christ taught his disciples this doctrine, He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. And when he taught the Jews that the "Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men may honor the Son even as they honor the Father," he subjoined, "He that *honoreth not* the *Son*, *honoreth not* the *Father* that *sent* him." And when Paul stated to the Philippians how God had *exalted his Son*, and given him a name above every name, that *every knee should bow* to the name of Jesus, he let them know that the Divine honors to be paid to Christ were "*to the glory of God the Father.*"

On whichsoever of the grounds that have been stated, we pay Divine honors to the Son of God, the same are, at the same time, paid to the Father.

If we honor the SON on the ground of the Father's *requirement*, we thus honor the Father.

If we honor the Son on the *principle* of *derived dignity* as the SON OF GOD, the character of the Father is the primary ground of the *honors paid to the Son.*

If we pay Divine honors to Christ on this ground, that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," we honor the fulness of the Father, as truly as when the person of the Father is immediately honored.

If we honor the Son on the ground of his *official character* and the *Divine authority* he possesses by the

pleasure of the Father, as the constituted Savior, Lord, and Judge of the world, it is not only the *authority* of the SON, but the FATHER'S AUTHORITY IN HIM, which we honor and adore.

If we honor him on the ground of his *Divine works* as Creator and Lord, the FATHER IN HIM *does the work.*

If we honor the Son on the ground of his *abasement, suffering*, and *death*, for our sakes, we are at the same time to remember, that "GOD so loved the word, that HE GAVE his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON"—and that it is "UNTO GOD" that the Son hath redeemed us by his blood.

Therefore, in every point of view, and on every ground, the Divine honors which are paid to the SON are "*to the glory of God the Father.*"

Is it not, sir, surprizing, that Christian writers should have been so unguarded as to assert, that if Jesus Christ be not personally and truly the self-existent God, then the Christian church in all ages have been guilty of "gross idolatry;" and that the religion of Christ "is so far from destroying idolatry, that it is only a more refined and dangerous species of it?" If such writers have incautiously implicated themselves in a charge of idolatry, it is hoped they will not blame me for that. To accuse them of idolatry, or to view them as guilty of it, is far from me. For though the correctness of their views, in respect to the *ground* on which Divine honors are due to the Son of God, is doubted, yet in my view they have not given him *more* honor than is due to his name. They may have, indeed, in support of their theory, said things respecting the personal self-existence and independence of the Son of God, which are more than

are true; but it is doubted whether any Christian on earth, in his devotional views and feelings, ever ascribed so much real excellency and glory to Christ, as are properly due to his name.

If you, sir, entertain the idea, that my views of the *real excellency*, *glory*, and *love* of Christ, have been lowered down by adopting the present theory, be assured that the very reverse of your apprehensions is the truth. While supporting your theory, and speaking conformably to it, my language imported ideas respecting Christ which now appear incorrect. But it is one thing to adopt *forms of speech* of *high import*, and another to have *distinct* and *impressive ideas* of *real majesty*, *dignity*, and *glory*. And while formerly using language which imported the self-existence and independence of Christ, my ideas respecting his greatness and glory, as a distinct Person from the Father, were very confused and indistinct. For it was impossible for me to form a definite idea of what could be meant by *Person*, on the theory of *three Persons* in *one God* or *one Being*. The Son of God, as united to the man or human nature of Christ, was to me a *certain something*, *about which* the terms self-existence and independence were used by me as by others, but *of which* no definite idea was conceived, any more than of *that* in bodies which is called the principle or power of attraction; excepting when, by the aid of analogy, the Son of God was viewed as a distinct intelligent Being. But as this was contrary to the theory, when that occurred my mind was necessarily confused. But on the present theory, the natural import of Scripture language, in view of analogies, affords me ideas of the majesty, the glory, the dignity, and the love of Christ, far more *distinct*, *exalted*, and

impressive, than any which ever entered my mind on Athanasian ground.

Here it may be proper to notice more particularly the self-contradiction and inconsistency, in which it has been supposed God must be involved if his Son be not self-existent—The parts of the supposed contradiction are of the following tenor, viz.

On the one hand, God has positively prohibited the worship of *idols*, or *any god* but himself. He has said, "I am God, and there is none else. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

On the other hand, God said respecting his Son, "Let all the angels of God worship him"—And he has given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

In view of such passages, it has been inferred that Christ is personally the same God who has made these declarations, or there must be a contradiction. To show that neither of these inferences is correct, is the design of the following observations.

1. If Jesus Christ be *truly* the Son of the self-existent God, he is neither a *graven image*, *an idol*, nor a *false god*. Hence,

2. A prohibition respecting the *worship* of *graven images*, or *idols*, or *false gods*, amounts to no prohibition of paying Divine honors to the Son of God, *as* the *Son* of God, or the *constituted Lord* of the universe. Therefore,

3. Consistently with all that God has said in the Bible against the worship of graven *images*, of *idols*, or of *false gods*, he might *exalt* his Son, and require men and angels to pay Divine honors to his name.

It may still be thought, that if the *Son* be not the self-existent God, but has been exalted by God as an object of Divine honors, then God has *given his glory to another*, contrary to his own word. It may therefore be observed,

1. For God to give his glory to another, in the sense of the text alluded to, must imply doing something respecting another or authorizing something to be done respecting another, which is dishonorary to himself. To glorify another, or to cause another to be glorified, in a manner which contributes to his *own glory*, is perfectly consistent with his declaration that he *will not give his glory to another*. To make out, then, that there is so much as the *shadow* of a contradiction in the case, it must be made to appear, that to pay Divine honors to the Son of God, *as* the Son of God, and the one in whom the Father is ever well pleased, is dishonorary to the Father. But to prove this, will be a task which probably very few will venture to undertake.

By those who have urged this supposed contradiction, has it not been taken for granted, that the Son of God may be a *distinct Person* from *God* the Father, and yet the *self-same Being?* And should this, sir, be taken for granted? But if it be, still the texts which they rely upon for the support of the supposed contradiction, do as fully import a prohibition of Divine honors to any other *Person* but the one who made the declarations, as to any other *Being*. In those texts God does not represent himself as *three Persons*, but as *one individual Person*—"*I* am *God*, and there is none else—Thou shalt have no other gods before *me*—*I* am the *Lord*, and *my* glory *I* will not give to another."—Therefore, if these passages

amount to a prohibition of paying Divine honors to the *Son* of God, as being *truly* the SON of God, they equally prohibit paying Divine honors to the Son considered as a *distinct Person* from the Father, whether *self-existent* or *not*. The self-same Person is represented as saying at one time, *I* am the Lord, and *my* glory I will not give to another—At another time he says respecting *the Person* who is called his *only begotten Son*, "Let all the angels of God worship him." And, if these passages would involve a contradiction on the hypothesis that the Son is a *Person truly* DERIVED from the Father, they involve precisely the same contradiction on the hypothesis that the *Son* is a *self-existent Person* DISTINCT from the *Father*.

Having thus endeavored to show, from the Scriptures, that *Divine honors* are due to the Son of God, and the grounds on which they are due, and also to obviate what has been viewed by some as insurmountable objections to the theory, you will suffer me now to appeal to your own conscience, and ask, whether my views of the honors due to the Son of God do not harmonize with your own *practical views* and *feelings*, and with your *usual forms of speech* in *prayer* and *praise?* Reflections on my own former views and feelings, and observations in regard to the prayers of my Athanasian brethren, encourage me to do this.

In respect to my own experience, adopting the present theory has given no occasion to vary my forms of speech from what was natural and usual with me before, in regard to the Son of God. And it is observed, that the prayers of my Athanasian brethren, so far as the Son is mentioned, agree with my present views; excepting when they appear to

wish to introduce some particular expressions to *communicate* or *support* their particular theory. It may not then be amiss to class myself with you and them, and observe *how we pray.*

We occasionally address petitions to Christ as the *Son* of God, the *Lord* of all, the *Redeemer* of our souls, or the *Head* of the church. We sometimes distinctly thank him for his kindness and mercy in laying down his life for our redemption; and for the benefits we receive through his mediation and atonement. But in this particular, perhaps we are generally deficient; and much less frequently bring the Son into view in our prayers than would be proper. In our ascriptions of praise, at the close of our prayers, we *frequently* and *properly* mention the Father and the Son as two distinct Persons, or intelligent Beings.

But *in general*, we address our prayers to GOD as one distinct Person and Being. We bless the name of this ONE GOD for his kindness and love in giving *his own Son* to die for our offences. And the forms of speech which we use clearly convey the idea that God is one distinct intelligent Being, and his Son another; as distinct as any other Father and Son. We beseech God to bestow favors through the mediation and atonement of his Son. We plead with God on the ground of what his Son has done and suffered for us. We adore God for having exalted his Son as LORD of all, and making him HEAD over all things to the church. And, in conformity to the language of Scripture, we make use of thousands of expressions which denote as clear a distinction between GOD and HIS SON, as are ever made between Abraham and Isaac.

And, however, inconsistent such a distinction may be with the Athanasian theory, it is a distinction to which we are *naturally* led by our intimacy with the language of the Bible. And these forms of speech are, it is thought, a correct expression of the *habitual* and *practical* views even of Athanasians themselves, in their *devotional* exercises. Believing this to be the case, and that it is consistent with the manner in which Divine honors are paid to the Son of God by saints and angels in heaven, who can believe that the Christian church have been guilty of "*idolatry*" in the homage they have paid to the "LAMB of God?"

In considering him as the self-existent God, it is thought my brethren have been under a mistake; but not in considering him as an object of Divine honors; nor is it apprehended that in their *habitual* and *devotional feelings* they have ascribed *more honor* than is due to his name. And so far as they have fallen short of *believing*, *feeling*, and *acknowledging* the awful realities of the *personal abasement*, *suffering* and *death*, of the SON of God, so far they have, in my opinion, in one particular, fallen short of giving him due praise.

The ten times ten thousand, and the thousands of thousands, who were observed by John as paying honors to the Son of God, did not say, Worthy is the Lamb who *united himself to a man* that was *slain*; nor did they say, Worthy is the "*Messiah's humanity*" that was *slain*: but, "Worthy is the LAMB, that *was slain*, to receive," &c.

In a preceding verse, the redeemed do not say, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof; for *the man to whom thou wast united* was slain: but, "Thou art worthy—for *thou*

WAST SLAIN, and hast redeemed us to God by THY blood."

Must it not, sir, appear on your hypothesis, either that Divine honors were paid to the "*Messiah's humanity*," or that the self-existent GOD was *personally slain?* As you will deny both these positions, let me ask, how can you consistently join the song of the redeemed, till you renounce your theory? Can you ever, *consistently*, say, Worthy is the LAMB that was SLAIN?

POSTSCRIPT TO LETTER VII.

SO far as I have had opportunity to be acquainted with the views of others, it has been, in general, professedly conceded by Athanasians, by Arians, and by Socinians, that there can be but one object of Divine honors; and that if Christ be not personally the self-existent God, to *worship*, or to *pray* to him, must be *idolatry*.

But, sir, are not GOD, and the SON at *his right hand*, two distinct objects? Are not GOD, and the LAMB, two distinct objects? When God said respecting his Son, "*Let all the angels of God worship* HIM," is the *meaning* the same as though he had said, Let all the angels of God worship ME? Suppose an earthly king should exalt his own son, and give him the right hand as a co-partner with him on the throne, and require all his subjects to "*bow the knee*" and pay royal honors to the son; would not the father and the son be still two distinct objects? And have we not reason to believe, that it is in allusion to such events that we have it represented in the Scripture, that God hath exalted HIS SON with *his own right hand?*

If God has, in very deed, given all things into the hands of the Son, and exalted him to be *Lord of all*, can it be idolatry to worship him according to the rank assigned him by God? Can it be improper or criminal to pray to him who is thus able to help us, and to praise and thank him for what *he is*, and for what *he has done* for our sakes?

When you say that it must be idolatry to worship or pray to Christ, unless he be the self-existent God, do you not implicitly *accuse God of establishing idolatry?* For the Divine honors to be *paid* to the *Son* are *instituted by God.* Besides, do you not arbitrarily attach ideas to the terms *worship* and *prayer*, which do not *neccessarily* or *naturally* belong to them? viz. That *worship* and *prayer* imply, that the object worshipped and addressed is acknowledged to be personally the self-existent God, by him who worships or prays.

But by what authority do you attach such ideas to the words *worship* and *prayer?* May not a child *bow the knee* to his father, and *ask* forgiveness for an offence, or *pray* for favors which the father can bestow? May not a subject do the same before a worthy king? The word *worship* is used to express the *reverence* or *respect* paid by an *inferior* to a *superior;* and in proportion to the degree of disparity, is the degree of *homage* and *respect* which is due.

Shall it, sir, be deemed *consistent* for a poor malefactor to *bow the knee* to one whom the *people* have *exalted* as PRESIDENT of the United States, and supplicate favor? And shall it be deemed a *crime* to make supplication to HIM whom GOD hath *exalted* with his own right hand, to be a *Prince* and a *Savior*, to give repentance and remission of sins? It is not

indeed proper to pray to the president as to the self-existent God; but it is proper to address petitions to him, and to pay *homage* to him according to his rank or dignity. Nor is it in my view proper, in addressing prayers to Christ, to consider him as the self-existent God. Yet it is proper to *pray to him*, and to *worship him* as LORD OF ALL; as a Being whom God hath seen fit to "*EXALT with his own right hand;*" and as one in whom God, by all his fulness, dwells.

And how, sir, can we be in subjection to God, unless we cheerfully "*bow the knee*" to the SON, and acknowledge him to be "*LORD, to the glory of God the Father?*" The *worship* paid to the Son is called *Divine;* not because it is divinely required; but because in my view the SON is a *Divine Person;* a *Person* of *Divine Origin* and *Dignity*, of *Divine Fulness* and *Authority.*

If you, sir, are surprized to find me thus approving the idea of paying Divine honors to *two distinct objects*, will you not be still more surprized, should it be demonstrated, that, on your theory, Divine honors must be paid to *three distinct objects?*

Your theory supposes *three* self-existent *Persons* or *Agents;* and each of these *three distinct Agents* you consider as an *object* of *Divine worship.* As you disavow the idea of *three Gods*, it would be ungenerous to accuse you of worshipping *three distinct Gods.* But, that you *profess* to worship *three distinct objects, as God*, how can you in truth deny? Is not every *distinct person* or *agent* a *distinct object* of contemplation? And are not *three distinct persons* as clearly *three distinct objects* as *three trees?* Is it possible for you, or any other man, to form an idea of *three distinct persons* which does not include *three distinct objects?*

It has, sir, been urged, on your side of the question, that we can easily conceive of the FATHER as *one distinct Person*, of the SON as *another distinct Person*, and of the HOLY GHOST as a *third distinct Person*; and the difficulty is, to conceive how these *three distinct Persons* can be but *one Being*, or *one God*. This part of the hypothesis is acknowledged to be *mysterious and totally inconceivable*. Your worship, therefore, must be paid to the *three Persons* as to *three distinct objects*; for if you worship the three persons at all, you must worship them according to your conceptions, and not according to what you do not conceive. If you have no *conception* of the THREE, otherwise than as *three distinct Persons*, you can have no conception of them otherwise than as *three distinct objects*.

From my own experience as an Athanasian, suffer me to appeal, sir, to your conscience, whether you ever did conceive of the *Father* and the *Son* otherwise than as *two distinct objects*. When you address the Father, and ask favors through the mediation of *his Son*, do you not conceive of the Father and the Son as two distinct objects? And do you not consider yourself as addressing *one* of the distinct objects, and *not the other*? When you address a prayer directly to the SON, as the HEAD of the church, do you not conceive HIM as an object *distinct* from the FATHER? And when you consider the *three Persons* as *one God*, do you not consider them as being as *distinctly* THREE OBJECTS as THREE MEMBERS of ONE COUNCIL? Moreover, do you not *love* the Son of God as a *distinct object* from the Father, and the Father as a *distinct object* from the Son? If you *speak* of the *three Persons* as *three objects*, if you *conceive* of them as *three objects*, and if you *love* them as

three distinct objects, is it not undeniable that you worship them as *three objects?*

If you say that worshipping *one* of the THREE is worshipping the whole, why are you not satisfied with the worship of Socinians? They profess to worship one of the *three*, as possessing all possible perfection. But with this you are not satisfied. And why not? Because, in your view, the other *two Persons* are *neglected* and treated with dishonor. The other two Persons, you say, are worthy of the *same honors* as the Father. And does it not appear from this, that you consider *three distinct objects* as worthy of Divine honors? Besides, is it not a common thing for writers and preachers to take pains to prove that each of the *three Persons* are worthy of *equal* honors? And are they not fond of using expressions of this import in prayer? Is it not, then, evident, that they do consider the *three distinct Persons* as *three distinct objects?* When we have but one object in view, we do not say *equal honors* are due to that object; it is, then, in view of *three distinct objects* that they say that *equal* honors are due to the *Father*, the *Son* and the *Holy Ghost*. And every time they say this, they implicitly say there are *three distinct objects equally* worthy of Divine HONORS.

Now, sir, is it not clearly evinced that your theory does imply the worship of *three distinct objects* AS GOD? Yet to fix upon you the charge of worshipping *three Gods*, is not in my heart; doubtless while you worship the three distinct objects, you do it conscientiously, believing that in some mysterious, inconceivable manner, these three distinct objects are so united as to be but *one God*. Such was the case with me, and such it is believed is the case with you.

Suppose a venerable council, composed of A, B, and C, by whose benevolence you have been benefitted—You address to them a letter of gratitude—In the first place you address them as *one body* or *council*; then you distinctly thank *A*, as moderator, for proposing the plan; you thank *B*, as an *advocate*, who has exposed himself to insult for your sake; you thank *C*, for some special agency in carrying into effect the result of council—You then conclude with an ascription of *equal thanks* to *A*, *B*, and *C*, as one *council*. Let me ask, have you not *distinctly* addressed *three distinct objects?*

Is it not, then, in vain to pretend that you worship but *one object*, while you, in your prayers, *distinctly* name THREE, and thank each for some *distinct agency?*

LETTER VIII.

The two theories compared, in respect to Christ, considered as a SUFFERER *on the cross, as the* SAVIOR *of the world, and the* LORD *of the universe.*

REV. SIR,

PERHAPS it may be useful to enter into a more critical examination of your theory, as it respects the character of HIM by whom the atonement was made for the sins of the world.

For the purpose of examination, let it be admitted as true, that the Father and the Son are two self-existent and co-equal Persons, and that the incarnation

of the Son implies his union to such a proper Man as you suppose Jesus of Nazareth to have been. Let us in the next place make the supposition, that the *Man Jesus* had been united to the *Father* instead of the *Son*, in as strict a manner as it is possible that God and Man should be united. If the Father be equal to the Son, a union of the *Man* to the *Father* would imply precisely the same dignity as a union with the *Son*. Then suppose, that in that state of union with the Father, the *Man Jesus* had suffered on the cross; would not his sufferings have been of precisely the same value as an atonement, as in the case of his suffering in union with the second Person? This, it is presumed, you will not deny.

Permit me now to ask, whether the *sufferings* and *death* of that *Man*, could, with any propriety, be called the *sufferings* and *death* of *God the Father*? Moreover, as on your theory the value of the sufferings of the cross results not from the *dignity* of the *real sufferer*, but from the *dignity* of the PERSON to whom the *Man* was united, we will further suppose, that this *Man*, in a state of union with the Father, was called the *Son* of God; would not the atonement for the sins of the world have been precisely the same that it is on your hypothesis? The SUFFERER would be *precisely* the same, and the *Person* with whom the *Man* was united would be of precisely the same dignity. And, on this supposition, would there not be a far greater propriety in saying that the *Son* of God *died* for us, than there is on yours? If that *Man* united with the *Father* should be called the *Son* of God, and did really lay down his life for us, it might then be a truth that *a* Son of God did die for us. But on your theory, what propriety could there be in such a representation, any

farther than the *Man* is considered as the *Son* of God? But as you consider the *Son* of God as having *complete existence*, and even *self-existence*, *distinct* from the *Man*, the incarnation implied a union of two intelligent Beings, as properly so as Gabriel and Adam. The first of these "suffered not in the least," but on the *Man* was laid the iniquities of us all.

What then, sir, is the difference in the character of him who *really bore* our sins in his own body on the tree, considered on your theory, or on the Socinian theory? You may indeed suppose the Man to be more *intimately* united to God, than is supposed by Socinians. But the second self-existent Person, or even a pre-existent Son of God, suffered no more according to your theory than according to theirs. The sufferings, on both theories, were all *really endured* by a proper *Man*, whose first existence began less than forty years before his death; a man who never had possessed even the shadow of pre-existent dignity, riches, or glory, and who was in no higher sense the Son of God, than Abraham or Moses. You may indeed say, that "the Man Jesus was united to the *Person* of the Son of God;" but this very assertion implies that the *Son* and the *Man* were two distinct intelligences; and that the *Man* was not truly the *Son* of God, but another intelligent being united to the Son of God.

Suffer me now, sir, in an impartial manner, to exhibit in contrast, the different theories we have adopted as they respect the character of HIM who was really *slain* for us, and who *bore our sins* in his own body on the tree.

On your part the case stands thus, The sufferings of the cross were wholly endured by a *Man*, who was somehow mysteriously united to a second self-

existent Person, whom you call the Son of God. Yet this Person you call the Son of God, endured no share in the sufferings of the cross; the *Man only* suffered and died. This *real sufferer* had never enjoyed one moment of pre-existent dignity or glory. He knew nothing what it was to be in the Father's bosom; and as he never had been rich, he knew nothing what it was to *become poor*, in any other sense than is known by other poor children who are born into the world. His "being born, and that in a low condition," was a matter to which he had never consented. He lived, indeed, a life perfectly exemplary, and died a death truly distressing. But this *Son*, to whom you suppose this *Man* was united, was so far from sharing a part in the suffering of the cross, that he only enabled the Man to bear a greater portion of sufferings than he would otherwise have been able to endure. But can this circumstance be considered as any *real favor* to the *Man?* Indeed, sir, can you see that this Man ever received the least benefit from a union with your *supposed* self-existent Son, from the time he was born in the manger, to the moment he expired on the cross? So far as the inspired writings have informed me, this Man derived all the benefits which he did derive, from God the Father. And why should it be thought to contribute greatly to the *dignity* of this *Man* to be united to a Person from whom he derived no manner of assistance or support, unless it were to enable him to endure a greater portion of *real sufferings?*

On the other hypothesis, the *sufferer* on the cross was a very different character—He was *truly* the *Son of the living God*, had long been in the bosom of the

Father before the foundations of the earth were laid, "as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight." He was highly honored by the Father in the great work of creation; for God created all things by him. In him it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. He was as intimately united to the Father, as it is possible the *Man* Jesus should be, on your theory, to a second self-existent Person. He was honored by the Father as the Angel of his presence on the most solemn and interesting occasions, and was truly in the FORM OF GOD: for he was the "IMAGE of the invisible God." But while in this state of pre-existent glory, he beheld our perishing state; he saw that the blood of bulls and of goats was not sufficient to take away sin; and he said to his Father, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a BODY hast thou prepared me"—"Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." He laid aside the FORM OF GOD, and voluntarily became united to the *body* which God had prepared, and was thus "*made in the likeness of men.*" And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Such, sir, is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. This is the character, in view of which, ten thousand times ten thousand tongues sing, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.*

Having thus carried out the two accounts, let us cast them up, that we may clearly see the disparity. As you cannot deny that as *much* dignity may be derived from a union with the *one God*, the *Father*, as from a union with a second self-existent Person; in respect to the character of the *real sufferer*, the case will stand thus:

On your part, the *sufferer* is a *Man* with such dignity as he may derive from a union with a *second self-existent Person.*

On my part, the *sufferer* is that glorious SON, by whom God created all things in heaven and earth, possessing all the dignity which can result from the most perfect union with the *one God*, the *Father.*

The difference, then, in the character of the *sufferer*, is, at least, as great as *all* the difference between the *constituted Creator* of heaven and earth, and the *mere Man* or *human nature* of your *Messiah.*

You have, sir, too much candor to deny, that the *real sufferer* is a character of unspeakably greater importance on this theory, than on yours. But still you may think, that Christ, considered as the *Savior* and *Lord of all*, is greater on your hypothesis than he is on mine. This, however, may appear to be only imagination.

We are perfectly agreed in one point, viz. That there is but *one infinite self-existent God.* In your view, this *infinite God* consists of *three self-existent Persons;* in my view, the *one infinite God* is but *one Person.* The *one Person*, then, on my theory, must be equal to the *three Persons* of your theory, in regard to *fulness* and *sufficiency.* In your view, *one* of the *three* Persons is united to the *Man* or *human nature*, and this self-existent *Person* and the *Man* are the *Savior* and *Lord of all*—In my view, the *Savior* and *Lord of all* is the *Son* of the *living God*, and by *nature* "the brightness of the *Father's* glory, and the express image of his Person;" so united to the *one infinite God*, that in him dwells, not merely *one* of *three* Persons, but *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

As, in your view, the Deity consists of three *distinct* Persons, each possessing *independent* fulness; and as but *one* of these Persons is supposed to be united to the *Man Jesus*; inquiry might be made, whether your theory does not *naturally* suggest the idea, that there is but *one third* of the *fulness of God* implied in the character of our *Lord* and *Savior Jesus Christ*. But it is needless to urge this. And on the ground already stated, the matter is submitted to every impartial mind, whether the *character* of the *Lord Jesus* does not appear *vastly* more *impressive* and *glorious* on the theory now proposed, than on the Athanasian hypothesis.

It may possibly be urged by some, that if Christ derived his existence from God, as a *Son* from a *Father*, he must be as *incapable* of *suffering* as the Father. This conclusion is not admitted as resulting from the premises. But it would sooner be admitted that it *is possible* with GOD to render *himself* capable of *suffering* by union with a human body, than that the SON of God did *not suffer* on the cross. My knowledge of the nature of GOD and his SON is all derived from the Bible. This informs me, that Christ is GOD'S OWN SON; and that "though he were a SON, yet learned HE obedience by the things which HE SUFFERED." And who is so well skilled in the philosophy of *Divine Nature*, as to be *able* to contradict this testimony in either particular? Is it not more safe for us to *receive* the *Divine testimony* as stated in the Scriptures, than to *reject* it by philosophizing on unrevealed properties of DIVINE NATURE?

How often, sir, have our brethren, on your side, urged *our ignorance* of the DIVINE NATURE, as a reason why we should *not reject revealed doctrines*

concerning God and his Son? Yet, have not the same brethren, on the ground of *their supposed knowledge* of the DIVINE NATURE, *implicitly denied* and *explained away* two of the *plainest truths* which are contained in the Bible? Are there, sir, any two propositions more *clearly affirmed* in the Scriptures, than these, viz. That Jesus Christ is God's SON; and, that the SON of God *suffered* and *died* on the cross? Yet how many millions of pages have been written, and how many millions of sermons have been preached, to *prove* that Jesus Christ is so far from being *properly* the SON of God, that he is the VERY GOD, the VERY BEING, whose SON the Scriptures declare *him* to be! Yea, the VERY BEING who proclaimed from heaven, "*This is my beloved Son!*" And have not the numerous, plain, and unequivocal representations of Scripture, respecting the *sufferings* and *death* of the SON of God, been so *explained away* as to imply no more than that a *Man* or *mere human nature suffered* and *died*, to whom the Son of God was mysteriously united? And what is all this, sir, short of *philosophizing* upon DIVINE NATURE, and drawing conclusions at an extraordinary rate? Would Gabriel himself pretend to so much knowledge of DIVINE NATURE as *thus* to contradict DIVINE REVELATION?

Though I may have been accused of being "*too mathematical* for the Bible," yet it is my desire never to be *so philosophical* as to prefer my own *deductions* from *fancied properties* of the DIVINE NATURE, to the most *explicit declarations* of the word of God. But while thus disapproving the conduct of my brethren, the *Monitor* within whispers, Such *has* been *thy own* inconsistency: and perhaps, as great inconsis-

teney, in some other point, still lurks undiscovered—"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*

* Either while asleep or awake, the following scene has sometimes been presented to my imagination—

The writer of these Letters is called before an Ecclesiastical Council to answer to a charge of *heresy*. The accusers with solemn formality, present against him the following articles of charge:

1. He has publicly taught, That Jesus Christ is the SON of God, God's OWN SON.

2. He has also taught, That the SON of God did *really suffer* on the cross, for the sins of the world.

The Council inquire of the accused in what sense he understands those propositions.

He replies, 'According to the common acceptation and most *natural meaning* of the words.'

The result follows—

'This Council are of opinion, that the said accused is *guilty* of *heresy*. For though in some *mysterious sense*, Christ is *called* the SON of God, yet he *is not* the *Son* of God according to the common acceptation of the term *Son*: so far from this, he is personally the *only true God*; yea, "JESUS *is that God, besides whom there is no other*."* And though it be represented in the Scriptures, that the SON of God *suffered*; yet as he is personally the *immutable God*, it was *impossible* that HE should *really suffer*. The *Man* or *human nature suffered*, which was united to the *Person* of the Son of God: The sufferings, therefore, are *called* the sufferings of the Son of God. It is in our view infinitely degrading to Christ, to say, that he is *properly* and *truly* the SON of God; or to say, that HE did *really suffer* the death of the cross.'—Thus far the result.

It has, however, been intimated to me, that some of our brethren are prepared to evade all I have written on the sufferings of the Son of God, by saying that they ever professed to believe that Christ is the Son of God, and that he suffered on the cross. I have, sir, aimed honestly to state the real difference of sentiment between us on those two points. If, in any respect, I have

* *Mr. Jones—page* 2.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE writing the foregoing Letter, it has occurred to me, that there is one mode of illustrating and supporting the dignity of the *sufferer*, which has been adopted by some Athanasians, that has not been particularly considered. As a woman of low rank is exalted by marriage to a worthy prince or potentate, so it has been supposed that the *Man Jesus* or the *human nature* was exalted by union with the SON OF GOD. Upon this hypothesis, let it be observed,

1. When this ground is taken, the dignity of the *real sufferer* is supposed to result simply from union with a Person of infinite dignity. The queen, after marriage, takes rank from her royal husband: so it is supposed that the *Man Jesus* is exalted by union with the *SON OF GOD*. It is true, that the king and queen, in a certain sense, *are one;* but not in such a sense that the *obedience* or the *death* of the queen might be properly considered as the *obedience* or the *death* of the king. And if a king for a certain purpose, had engaged to obey and to die, his becoming married to a woman of low rank, and causing her to die instead of himself, would not be esteemed very honorable conduct.

2. The Scripture representation is, that the SON OF GOD did really abase himself, and become poor, for

misapprehended your theory, I shall rejoice in being corrected. And if indeed you do believe that Christ is *truly* the Son of God, and that HE *really suffered* on the cross, I shall be happy in being informed that there is no ground of controversy between us. But if I have not mistaken your theory, it is believed that you have too much *generosity* of soul and *uprightness* of heart, to attempt to evade the force of truth by a mere *quibble* upon words.

our sakes. But on the hypothesis now before us, the scene is changed—Instead of *abasing* himself, and taking on him the *form of a servant*, he took *to* himself one who was *naturally* in the form of a servant, and exalted the *Man* instead of abasing *himself*—Instead of being "made in the likeness of men," he raised a man to the likeness or dignity of God—Instead of dying *himself*, he caused the *Man* to die to whom he was united.

It seems to have been the general idea, that the Son of God became united to the Man or human nature, that he might be in a situation to obey and to suffer. And yet, on your theory, it was just as impossible that *he* should obey and suffer after the union as it was before. Dr. Hopkins expressly says, that "this personal union of the Divine nature, or of God the second Person in the Godhead, with the human nature, does not cause or suppose any change in the former; all the *change*, or that is *changeable*, is in the *human nature*." [System, vol. I. p. 411.]—By the "*Divine nature*, or *God the second Person in the Godhead*," the Doctor meant the SON OF GOD. The Son of God, therefore, experienced no change, either in becoming united to the Man or human nature, nor in consequence of this union—He was then in precisely the same situation in regard to *obedience* and *suffering* after the union, that he was before. What then, sir, has the SON OF GOD either *done* or *suffered* for our salvation? And why will you pretend that he became united to a Man that he might obey and suffer?

3. If a mere Man, by virtue of a union with the Son of God, might derive such dignity as to atone for the sins of the world, it is evident that the same dignity might result from the same mysterious union be-

tween the *same Man* and the *Father*. And as the Man Christ Jesus *never* spake of his union with a second Divine Person, but *often* spake of his union with the Father, the probability would be much in favor of the idea that his union was with the Father.—If, then, the Socinians would only add to their theory the idea of a *mysterious union* between the Man Christ Jesus and God the Father, what would be the difference between *your* Savior and *theirs?* It is not in my power to discern that there would be so much as one shade of difference. The Man Jesus, considered separately from his union with the Deity, is perhaps as great on their theory as on yours; nor will you pretend that the Son is greater than the Father. If the Socinians would only annex that *one idea* to their theory, it does not appear that you would have the least ground to dispute with them about the *greatness* of the SAVIOR, however much you might dispute about the *number* of SELF-EXISTENT PERSONS.—Be not, sir, offended at this comparison: my aim here is simply to urge you to inquiry, and to a thorough examination of your own theory.

LETTER IX.

On modern Trinitarian views of the Son of God, with the general dissonance respecting three Persons *in one God.*

REV. SIR,

SINCE the publication of the preceeding letters, I have found that a great portion of our Trinitarian brethren entertain an opinion very different from yours,

and from what has, for ages, been called the orthodox faith. They indeed agree with you that God is three Persons; yet they say, that the second Person in the Trinity was not *originally* or *by nature*, the *Son* of God; but that he is *called* the *Son of God* on the "ground of a constituted character," or that he became the Son of God by *incarnation*, &c. &c. This, you know, is a flat contradiction to the opinion of those who were reputed orthodox in former ages. Yet these modern Trinitarians claim to be considered as the orthodox of the present day; nor have I been able to discover much inclination in you, or those who agree with you, to dispute their *claim*. Before I published my letters to you, I was aware that this novel opinion had been adopted by some of our brethren; but I supposed the number not to be great. So far as it respects the *Sonship* of Christ, they make the same objections to your views that they do to mine; and if their objections to my views are of any weight, they are of equal weight against yours. Nearly a year ago I addressed a private letter to one of the most respectable of our brethren who had taken that ground. It is *possible* that the letter might have miscarried; it is certain I have received no reply. Report says, it was the opinion of that brother, that it was best for the Clergy to let the sentiments I addressed to you "die of themselves a natural death," rather than to be at the trouble of refuting them. He might think the same in regard to what was contained in my letter to him. I shall, therefore, give you a copy of the letter that the whole may *live* or "*die*" together. The person to whom the letter was addressed is one for whom I have entertained a great respect, and I addressed him accordingly, in the following manner:—

"REV. SIR,

"THE high rank you sustain in the Christian world, involves a proportionate degree of responsibility, and renders it exceedingly important that the sentiments you publish should accord with the unerring standard. Although we entertain different opinions of the character of Christ, in *this*, I presume, we are agreed, that no sentiments can be of higher importance in divinity than those which represent his character in a true light. If, therefore, I am in an error in my views of Christ, it is of great importance that I should be convinced. And if you are in an error, it is of much greater importance that you should be convinced, as your influence is more extensive than mine. As it respects us, individually considered, the importance may be equal; but as it respects the public, the disparity is great.

"Lately I have re-examined your discourses on the "Trinity," and "On the testimony of Christ to his own Divinity." I shall now submit some things to your serious consideration; hoping that, if I have mistaken your views, you will kindly correct my mistakes; and, on the other hand, if I shall show that your theory is dishonorary to Christ, that you will candidly retract what is erroneous. For I consider it as a fact, that it was not your design to *degrade* the character of Christ, and that you have too much regard to *his* glory to sacrifice it to *your own*.

"In your sermon on the "Testimony of Christ to his own Divinity," you say, that "he called himself the *Son of God*," and also called "God his *Father*," and that by each of these he *meant* "to assert his Divinity." This I esteem as correct; for if he was properly the *Son of God*, he was properly a *Divine Person*;

But in your sermon "on the Trinity," have you not given up this testimony in favor of the Divinity of Christ? You say that "each of the Divine Persons takes his *peculiar name* from the *peculiar office* he sustains in the economy of redemption. The first Person assumes the name of *Father*, because he is by *office* the *Creator*, or *Author* of all things, and *especially of the human nature of Christ*. The second Person assumes the name of *Son* and *Word*, by virtue of his *incarnation* and *mediatorial* conduct." Hence you infer that "there seems to be no just foundation for the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son," and "to suppose that the Son, in respect to his *Divine nature*, was begotten of the Father, and that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the concurrence of the Father and the Son, is to suppose that a Trinity of persons is not founded in the Divine nature, but merely in the Divine Will." You add, "This opinion sets the Son as far below the Father as a creature is below the Creator."

"According to these passages God is the *Father* only of the *human nature* of Christ, and the *human nature* of Christ only is the *Son* of God.

"We have next to consider what you mean by the "humanity of Christ." You say "he asserted his humanity on the just foundation of having a true body and a reasonable soul united in the same manner as the soul and body are united in other men." By the "reasonable soul" you mean a *human soul*. Accordingly you add, "If he had a human soul united with a human body, then he may be as properly denominated a man as any of his progenitors whose names are mentioned in the first chapter of Matthew."

"Thus, for the *human nature* of Christ we have as proper a *man* as *Abraham*. Of this *man* God was

the "*Creator* or Author" by a miraculous conception. On this ground only is God the *Father* of Christ. Of this *man* God is the *Father*, and this *man* only is the *Son* of God.

"But you suppose that this man was united to the second Person in the Trinity, which Person was not by *nature* the *Son* of God. But how united? You observe, "It is easy to say what is *not meant* by it. It does not mean that the *human nature* was made *Divine nature*—Nor, on the other hand, that his *Divine nature* was made *human nature*"—nor "that his two natures were mixt or blended together."

"Still then we have nothing but a *mere man* for the *Son of God*. For God was the Father of the *human nature* only. The second Divine Person, who was *God*, was not the *Son of God*; nor was *he* made human nature or even "mixt or blended" with the man of which God was the Father. Consequently, the *Son* of God was originally of no higher nature than David; nor did he become of *Divine nature* by his union with the second Person, nor were the two natures so much as "mixt or blended together." As, on your hypothesis, the two natures are *God* and *man*, and as it is the *man* only of which you suppose God to be the *Father*, we can have as distinct a view of your *Son* of God as we can of *Adam* or *David*. And he is a being of precisely the *same nature*. What then has become of Christ's "Testimony to his own Divinity?" You have taught that he *meant* to assert his Divinity by calling himself the Son of God; but could he have so *meant* with your views of his own Sonship? Did he mean to assert his *Divinity* by asserting that his *humanity* was the *Son of God?* If the Jews had supposed that he meant that God was

his *Father* in no other sense than as the "Creator or Author of his human nature," would they have accused him of *blasphemy?* With all his prejudices against Christ, I should not fear to submit the question now before us to the High Priest himself, who abjured Jesus by the living God to tell whether he was the *Son of God.*

"Let us, sir, on your hypothesis, state the accusation made to Pilate, "we have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he" said that God was his Father, the "*Creator* or *Author* of his *human nature.*" Can you admit that this was the import of the accusation? If not, we must suppose, that he *meant*, and was *understood to mean*, something by his *Sonship* very different from your explanation.

"Do not the following things fairly result from your premises? viz.

"1. That the *Son of God*, as such, is a *mere creature*, and by nature a proper *human being.*

"2. That the Son of God, as such, not only had a beginning, but a beginning of *recent date.* And no longer ago than the days of Herod?

"3. That if the Son of God be our *Mediator*, we have precisely a *Socinian Mediator?*

"4. That the astonishing love of God in our redemption, consists in this, that he "*spared not*" *a proper man* miraculously begotten, but freely delivered him up for us all. "Sparing not his *own Son*" is the highest ground on which the love of God is ever represented. But what is this Son, on your theory, but a *mere man?*

"5. That the Son who sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high, whom all the angels are required to worship, and to whom every knee must bow, is, by nature, only a man?

"6. That the Son, whom the "Father showeth all things which himself doeth," and whom he hath "*ordained* to be the Judge of the living and the dead," is, by nature, of no higher dignity than David, or Solomon?

"If the hypothesis that the Son, in respect to his *divine nature*, was begotten of the Father, "sets the Son as far below the Father as a creature is below the Creator," to what *depths* has your hypothesis *sunk* the SON OF GOD! How low, compared with the natural meaning of Bible language? "Yet having *one Son, his well beloved*, he sent him last of all, saying, *They will reverence* MY SON." "He who spared not his *own Son*," &c. How different from the import of the language used by the Council of Nice in opposition to the views of Arius, "The Son was peculiarly of the Father, being of his substance as begotten of him."

"I do not, I cannot, believe, that you *meant* to say any thing dishonorary to Christ. But when we depart from the natural meaning of Scripture language we fall into the regions of conjecture; and in those regions we are liable to be bewildered, and to say things which will not bear examination. But can you, my dear sir, be willing that such views of the Son of God should be handed down to posterity sanctioned and impressed by the weight of your character? When posterity shall inquire what the Lord Jesus is, on your theory, distinct from the GOD of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, will they not find that he is the same as on the Socinian theory? as properly a *man* as David, and *no more* than a *mere human being*?

"I hope, sir, you will not consider me as acting an unfriendly part in this address. If I know my own

heart, I write with the feelings of cordial friendship and respect; and with a desire that *truth* may be thoroughly investigated. It has been my aim not to depart from the golden rule; but to do as I would that you and others should do unto me. And notwithstanding our diversity of sentiment, I can heartily subscribe,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

"N. W.

"P. S. In your Sermons you represent that the phrases "These three are one," "I and my Father are one," mean "one God, one Divine Being." But will the Greek text admit the word *God* after the word "*one?*" If not, by what authority may we add it? When Christ prayed that all his followers, with himself and the Father, might be *one*, even as *He* and the *Father* are *one*, did he pray that *all the redeemed*, with himself and the Father, might become "one God, one Divine Being?"

"According to Mr. Milner, the Council of Nice resulted in opposition to the views of Arius, "That the Son was peculiarly of the Father, being of his substance as begotten of him:" And with this the Nicene Creed perfectly harmonizes, so far as I can understand the *meaning* of their language. No idea is suggested that the Father and Son are the *same Being*; but Beings of the *same nature* as *Father* and *Son*. But in subsequent Councils an *addition* was made, by which the Father and Son were represented as two distinct Persons in the same Being. Still they endeavored to maintain the *relation* of *Father* and *Son*; and considered the Son as ineffably begotten of the Father. When we come down to the time

of the Westminster Assembly, we find that venerable body maintaining both parts of what *we* believe to be a contradiction. They not only declared their belief of the doctrine of three Persons in one God, but they stated also that "It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father." They did not, therefore, *mean* to give up the *relation* of *Father* and *Son* by affirming the doctrine of three distinct Persons in one God.

"Perceiving, as you imagined, a contradiction in their theory, you have boldly exploded one part of the contradiction that you might maintain the other. Viewing the doctrine of three independent Persons in one God as of more importance than the *natural relation* of *Father* and *Son*, you have, without much apparent reluctance, made a sacrifice of the natural relation of Father and Son, that you might consistently support the doctrine of three Persons in one God.

"Having so high authority for calling in question the correctness of the doctrine of three Persons in one God, I ventured to look into the subject for myself. After inquiry I was led to agree with you in opinion thus far, viz. that the *natural relation* of *Father* and *Son* between God and Jesus Christ is inconsistent with the hypothesis of three independent Persons in one Being. But instead of exactly following your example, I gave up the hypothesis of *three independent Persons* in *one Being*, that I might consistently support the *relation* of *Father* and *Son*.

"The true state of the case appears to be this,—We have both departed from the former Trinitarian doctrine, on the supposition that it implied a plain contradiction. You have chosen to defend *one part* of

the contradiction, and I the *other*. By thus departing from the theory of those who went before us, one of us has probably approached nearer to the simplicity of the gospel, and the other departed to a greater distance. Being equally sensible of an inconsistency in the opinions of our fathers, and having taken opposite sides of their supposed contradiction, it would perhaps be proper, that we should carefully examine the opposite hypotheses by comparing each with the scriptures, to see which harmonizes best with the most obvious meaning of the gospel.

"If the gospel plainly teaches that God is *three Persons*, and that Jesus Christ is one of those Persons, then my hypothesis of proper *Father* and *Son* is unquestionably erroneous. If, on the other hand, the gospel clearly represents the natural relation of Father and Son between God and Jesus Christ, then your hypothesis of three persons in one God is obviously erroneous. These things are stated on the supposition that we are correct in the opinion that these two hypotheses are inconsistent with each other.

"Let, then, a man of integrity and discernment, who has never heard any thing of the disputes about the character of Christ, nor seen our New Testament, take that precious book, and read it through with care and impartiality; which hypothesis would he most naturally discover, yours or mine? In what sermon or discourse of Christ or his apostles would he find God represented as *three Persons?* But how often would he find *God* represented as the *Father* of Christ, and *Christ* as the *Son* of God? On what ground would he find *Divine love* represented in our redemption? Where would he find it represented on this ground, that God is three Persons, and that one of those Per-

sons became *united to a man?* But would he find any difficulty in discovering that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten SON to be a propitiation for our sins?" What would he think on finding, that Christ so commonly, in speaking of God, used this familiar language—"*my father?*" What would he suppose Christ *meant* by speaking so much of his Father's *sending* him, *loving* him, *teaching* him, *commanding* him, *committing* all judgment to him, *delivering* all things into his hand, *giving* him all *power* in heaven and earth? And of his coming not to do his own will; coming *from God* and *going to God?* Would the impartial inquirer suppose by any of these, or any other of Christ's representations, that God was three Persons, and that the Son was one of the three? Would he not, in fact, find, that God has spoken of Christ, and conducted towards him as we should naturally expect he would do, if Christ were his *own Son?* Would he not also find, that Christ has spoken of God, and conducted towards God, as we might reasonably expect he would do, if God were his *own Father?* If the impartial reader would find no declaration in the Bible expressing the doctrine that God is three distinct Persons; but should find the gospel full of representations agreeing with the hypothesis of the *natural relation* of *Father* and *Son*, between God and Jesus Christ; which part of the contradiction would he adopt, *yours* or *mine?*"

In writing, sir, to our brother, it was my aim to make an honest comparison of the things he had published. Yet I believed it to be possible that I might misapprehend his *meaning*, and, of course, make incorrect *deductions*. On this account I requested that

vould kindly correct my mistakes, if, in any thing,
ad misapprehended his meaning. Whether he
ght it would be too great condescension in HIM
orrect *my* mistakes, or whether he was aware that
could not mend the matter by any explanation
ch he could give, you must determine for yourself.
, however, possible that he might have *good rea-*
for not replying, which have not come to my
wledge.

his writer seems to have been aware, that, in his
anations of the *Trinity* and of the *Sonship* of
ist, he had departed from the faith of former Trin-
ans. Thus he writes—"Many have supposed that
Son, the second person in the Trinity, is, in some
terious manner, *begotten* of the *Father*."

his "*many*" included not only the Westminster
embly of Divines, with all their adherents, but the
ncil of Nice and a multitude which no man can
ber. It is true indeed that the Council of Nice
not suppose God to be *three persons;* but they
osed Christ to be "*by nature* the *Son of God;*"—
the substance of the Father as begotten of him."
this opinion our good brother has censured as
ng "the Son as far below the Father as a *creature*
low the *Creator*." If this censure be just, it falls
all its weight on *your hypothesis;* and the great
of Trinitarians of past ages are represented
ntertaining a belief which "sets the Son as far
v the Father as a *creature* is below the CREA-
"

alvin you will admit as an orthodox Trinitarian.
is attend for a moment to his testimony.

We indeed do confess that the Mediator who was
of the Virgin is properly the Son of God. For

Christ, in that he is man, could not be the mirror of the inestimable favor of God, unless this dignity were given him to be, and to be called, the *only begotten Son* of God. But in the mean while the definition of the church standeth firmly established that he is counted the *Son of God*, because he being the WORD *begotten of the Father before all worlds*, did, by hypostatical union, take upon him the nature of man."—Calvin's Insti. p. 223.

"Servetus, and other such frantic men would have it, that Christ who appeared in the flesh is the Son of God, because out of the flesh he could not be called by that name."—"We grant indeed that Christ is, in the flesh of man, called the *Son*, but not as the faithful are, that is, by adoption and grace; but the *true* and *natural*, and, therefore, the *only Son*, that by this mark he may be discerned from all others. For God vouchsafeth to give the name of his *sons* to us who are regenerate into a new life; but the name of the *true* and *only begotten Son* he giveth to Christ only. How can he be the *only Son* among so many brethren, but because he possesseth that *by nature* which we possess *by gift*?"—p. 224.

"According to the common use of the Hebrew tongue, he is called the *Son of man*, because he is of the *offspring* of *Adam*. By the contrary I affirm, that he is called the *Son of God* in respect to the Godhead and eternal essence; because it is no less proper that it be referred to the *nature of God* that he is called the *Son of God*, than to the *nature of man* that he is called the *Son of man*."—p. 225.

Thus you may see that the orthodoxy of Calvin did not secure him from the censure of holding an

opinion which "sets the Son as far below the Father as a creature is below the Creator."

I am aware that passages might be quoted from Calvin which could not easily be reconciled to those which have been now exhibited. But Calvin is not the *only* Trinitarian who has advanced, and attempted to support, *contradictory hypotheses.*

Since the publication of my letters to you, much pains have been taken to circulate the idea that my views of the Son of God do not distinguish him from a created being. But the censure quoted from our brother was published long before my letters to you; and it was *your* hypothesis and *not mine*, that he meant to condemn. Is it not, then, time for you to inquire on what ground you can defend yourself from the charge of holding an opinion which "sets the Son as far below the Father as a creature is below the Creator?"

Mr. Brown, who was with you in sentiment, in his Dictionary of the Bible, under the word "*Christ*," has passed as severe a censure on the hypothesis of our brother as he has on yours. He says, "To pretend that Christ is called the *only begotten Son* of God, because God sent him as our *Mediator*, or because of his *miraculous conception* by the Virgin, is not only *groundless* and *absurd*, but even *blasphemous*."

Thus Trinitarian writers *contradict* and *condemn* one another; and if Trinitarians are the *only good people*, "who then can be saved?"

P. S. The great diversity which has prevailed in the Christian world on the subject of the Trinity, may be in some degree understood from the following extracts from a note in *Ben Mordecai's* Letters, vol. I.

page 153, annexed to this sentence: "the Christians have never agreed upon the sense of the propositions they disputed about."

Cyril and *Athanasius* define a PERSON to be "Essentia cum suis quibusdam proprietatibus, ab iis quæ sunt ejusdem speciei numero differens." Cudworth, p. 603.

Dr. Waterland allows *Person* and *Intelligent Being* to be the same. p. 350. Reply to Dr. Waterland's Defence, 312.

Mr. Locke defines person to be a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself. [Doddridge says, "the word *person* commonly signifies one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, or conscious being; and this we choose to call the *philosophical* sense of the word: but in a *political* sense it may express the different *relations* supported by the same philosophical person; v. q. the same man may be father, husband," &c. and afterwards says, "If it be inquired in what sense the word *person* is used in the proposition, (respecting the three Persons in the Godhead,) we answer, it must at least be true in a *political* sense, yet cannot amount to so much as a *philosophical* personality, unless we allow a plurality of Gods."—So that Doddridge was only a *modal* Trinitarian.]

The *Greeks* fathers said there were three *Hypostases*; which the *Latins* rejected as signifying three generical *substances*, and accused the Greeks of Arianism. The *Latins* used the word *person* (persona); the Greeks rejected that as signifying no *real*, but only a *modal* distinction, and accused the Latins of Sabellianism. Athanasius summoned a council upon it to quiet the division; and it was found they were both of the same opinion, and only differed about

words; upon which the Synod decreed, that thenceforth the Greek *hypostasis* and the Latin *persona* should be taken in the same sense, to mean *particular substance.* But the schoolmen have confounded the subject more than ever, by explaining *hypostasis* to signify a *person distinguished from the substance;* in which sense it is used by the Romish church, but was never used before, and is utterly unintelligible.

Mr. *B. Bennet*, in his Irenicum, p. 81, tells us, the *Augustan* Confession uses the word *person*, not for a part or quality, but for that which properly subsists.

The *Wirtemberg* Confession says, "tres proprietates per se subsistentes;" but whether the distinction of persons be *real* or *modal*, is a question.

A learned controvertist says, the distinction is something less than *modal*, and greater than *real.*

Dr. South makes the Persons to be *internal* relations of the one substance of the Deity to *itself.*

Dr. Wallis makes them *external* relations of the one substance of the Deity to *mankind.*

Zanchy says, a *Person* is nothing but the Divine essence, distinguished, and as it were *individuated* by a certain personal property.

Junius thinks, the Persons are distinguished from the essence in *notion* only; *ratione tantum; ab invicem reali distinctione:* but really distinguished.

Lud. Capellus says, *non re*, sed ratione.

Mr. Baxter says, he is past doubt, there is in God a trinity of essential, formal, inadequate conceptions or primalities; viz. vital, active power, intellect, and will. Baxter's Works, vol. II. p. 132.

Dr. Doddridge gives the following:—*Mr. Howe* seems to suppose that there are three distinct, eternal spirits, or distinct, intelligent hypostases; which, on

account of their consent, affection, and *mutual self-consciousness*, may be called the one God.

Dr. Waterland, *Abraham Taylor*, with the rest of the Athanasians, assert three *proper distinct persons*, *entirely equal to and independent on each other*, yet making up one and the *same* Being.

Bp. Pearson, with whom *Bp. Bull* and *Dr. Owen* also agree, is of opinion, that though the Father is the *fountain* of the Deity, the *whole* Divine nature is *communicated* from the Father to the Son, and from both to the Spirit; yet so as that the Father and Son are not separate, nor separable from the Divinity, but do still *exist in it*, and are most intimately *united* to it.

Dr. Watts maintained one supreme God *dwelling* in the *human nature* of Christ, which he supposes to have existed the first of all creatures; and speaks of the Divine *Logos*, as the wisdom of God, and the Holy Spirit as the *divine power*, or the influence and effect of it; which he says is a *scriptural person*; i. e. spoken of *figuratively* in Scripture, under personal characters.

Others, to avoid the inconvenience of defining, say in general, that there are

Three *Differences*; as *Dr. Tillotson*:
Three *Diversities*; as *Bp. Burnet*:
Three *Somewhats*; as *Dr. Wallis*:
Three *Subsistences*; as *Archbishop Secker*.

St. Augustine being asked what the three are, says, Human learning is scanty, and affords not terms to express it; 'tis therefore answered, "*three persons*, not as if that was to the purpose, but somewhat must be said, and we must not be silent." Aug. de Trin. l. 5. c. 9.

The word Ομοουσιος, or *consubstantial*, was no more determinate than the word Person. It was rejected by the eighty fathers who condemned Paulus Samosatenus, as *Sabellian;* and within fifty years was made the test of *orthodoxy*. 1. It was understood by the *Athanasians* to signify the same *kind* of substance as are the trunk and the branches and leaves of a tree; or the sun, its light, and derivative light; yet so existing, as that the second and third should depend on its original; as the light upon the sun. 2. By *Gregory Nyssen*, *Cyril*, &c. it was understood to mean the same kind of substance existing independently; as three men. 3. By the *Montanists*, it was understood that the Son and Spirit existed as parts of the Divine substance. 4. By the *Sabellians*, as one and the same identical whole substance. 5. By *Eusebius*, merely that the Son was not of the substance of the creatures; dividing all substance into *created* and *divine*. 6. By the *Lateran* Council, in a sense, if intelligible, very little, if at all, different from the *Sabellians*, and the ancient opinion of Samosatenus.

NATURE is another technical term, much used in the dispute between the *Eutychians* and *Nestorians;* and the meaning of it is as uncertain. *De Rodon*, a learned Frenchman, says, it is taken in *nine* senses; and Mr. *Richard Baxter* says, "the sense was not agreed on before they disputed the matter." Ch. His. p. 98.

"Though the *Nestorians* still go for desperate heretics, I verily believe, says Mr. Baxter, that all the quarrel was about ambiguous words."

Nestorius believed the Divine and human nature of Christ were united, non hypostasi, sed habitudine.

Eutyches was condemned for affirming, that Christ had but one nature, after the two natures were united.

Dioscurus said, that Christ is *of* two natures, but not that he *is* or *has* two natures. The *Eutychians* said, he was *ex duabus naturis*; others, *in duabus naturis*: and *Cyril* reproves *Nestorius* for asserting only an union *secundum personam*, and not *secundum naturam*: and one of *Quintianus'* anathemas was, If any say, God Man, and not God and Man, let him be accursed. Baxter's Ch. Hist. 120, &c. &c.

There is much more in the note from which this is extracted, on the other questions to which this subject gave rise; and however difficult it may seem to have been orthodox in the days of the Nestorians, it would appear by the following extract from the pious and orthodox Bishop Beveridge, that the difficulty is in no degree diminished in our days.

"We are now to consider the order of those persons in the Trinity described in the words before us, Matt. xxviii. 19. First, the Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost; every one of which is really and truly God; and yet they are all but one real and true God. A mystery, which we are all bound to believe, but yet must have a great care how we speak of it, it being both *easy* and *dangerous* to mistake in expressing so mysterious a truth as this is. If we *think* of it, how hard is it to imagine one numerically Divine *nature* in more than one and the same Divine *person?* Or, three Divine persons in no more than one and the same Divine nature? If we *speak* of it, how hard is it to find out words to express it? If I say, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be three, and every one distinctly God, it is true; but if I say they be three, and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say, the Divine persons are distinct in the Divine nature; but I cannot say, that the Divine nature is divided into the

Divine persons. I may say, God the Father is one God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghost is one God, but I cannot say, that the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a third God. I may say, the Father begat another who is God; yet I cannot say, that he begat another God. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another who is God; yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God. For all this while, though their nature be the same, their persons are distinct; and though their persons be distinct, yet still their nature is the same. So that, though the Father be the first person in the Godhead, the Son the second, the Holy Ghost the third; yet the Father is not the first, the Son a second, and the Holy Ghost a third God. So hard a thing is it to word so great a mystery aright; or to fit so high a truth with expressions suitable and proper to it, without going one way or another from it." *Bishop Beveridge's Private Thoughts*, part ii. p. 48, 49.

The same Bishop adds a few pages farther on—"This is the principal, if not the *only* characteristical note whereby to distinguish a Christian from another man; yea, from a Turk; for this is the chief thing that the Turks both in their Koran and other writings upbraid Christians for, even because they believe a *Trinity of persons in the Divine nature.* For which cause they frequently say, *they are people that believe God hath companions;* so that, take away this article of our Christian faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but little difference between a Christian and a Turk."

How different the language of the admirable *Jeremy Taylor!* "He that goes about to speak of and to under-

stand the mysterious Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, or by such which signify contingently, if he reckon this mystery by the mythology of numbers, by the *cabala* of letters, by the distinctions of the school, and by the weak inventions of disputing people; if he only talks of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, distinctions without difference, and priority in co-equalities, and *unity in pluralities*, and of superior predicates of no larger extent than the inferior subjects, he may amuse himself, and find his understanding will be like St. Peter's upon the mount of Tabor at the transfiguration: he may build three tabernacles in his head, and talk something he knows not what.—But the good man that feels the power of the Father, and he to whom the Son is become wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, he in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is spread abroad, to whom God hath communicated the Holy Spirit, the Comforter; this man, though he understands nothing of that which is unintelligible, yet he only understands the mysteriousness of the Holy Trinity." Taylor's Suppl. Sermons, p. 91.

PART III.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

LETTER I.

By the Holy Spirit is intended the same as the fulness of God.

REV. SIR,

HAVING stated to you my views of the Father and the Son, the character of the Holy Spirit will now be considered. On this point the oracles of God are our only guide; and to their dictates it behoves us to submit with reverence.

You will not consider me insensible of my accountability to God in regard to my writings: nor can you reasonably view me as having any interest to promote, aside from the promotion of *truth*.

If your views of the Holy Spirit are according to truth, certainly there can be nothing for me to gain by advancing and advocating a different hypothesis: unless it may be for my advantage to expose myself to censure and reproach.

On the other hand, if my views are according to truth, it is as important for you, as it is for me, to understand and admit them.

Your having so great a majority of the Christian world on your side, is not sufficient to secure to you the approbation of God. Be entreated to keep these things in mind, while you read and reflect on the important subject now before us.

From what you have already seen on the character of God and his Son, you have doubtless concluded, that in my view the Holy Spirit is not a self-existent Person. You will now see, that in my view the Holy Spirit is comprehended in the self-existence of Jehovah, but *without distinct personality.* The terms Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, as used in Scripture, do not appear to me intended to express *another Person* besides the Father and the Son; yet, to my understanding, these terms convey an idea of *that* which is of *no less estimation.* It is *that* in God, by which he is able to do good and communicate, either immediately, or through the instrumentality of other agents.

By the Holy Spirit, radically considered, the same is understood as by the phrase, the *fulness of God.* Yet the terms *Holy Spirit*, are, it is thought, most commonly applied to the *productive, efficient emanations of Divine fulness.*

The following phrases appear to be perfectly synonymous—The *Holy Ghost*—the *Holy Spirit*—the *Spirit of God*—the *Spirit of the Lord*—the *Spirit of the Lord God*—the *Spirit of the Father.* That these are synonymous, will probably not be denied by any person well acquainted with the Scriptures. And should any one be disposed to deny it, the idea may be fairly established by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

My ideas of the Spirit may be better understood by a little attention to some Scripture metaphors.—God is

represented by the metaphor of the natural Sun. "The Lord God is a SUN." Then the *rays* of light and heat, which *emanate* or *proceed* from the sun, are an emblem of the "*Holy Spirit which proceedeth from the Father.*" Like the rays of the sun, these Divine emanations of the fulness of God, *illuminate*, *quicken*, *invigorate*, and *fructify*.

God is also represented as a Fountain of living waters. If we consider the Fountain as in the earth, then the effusions or streams which proceed from the Fountain may represent the *Holy Spirit*. But if we consider the Fountain as a fountain of vapor in the air, then the *showers of rain or dew* will properly represent the *emanations of Divine fulness*.

By the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is not, in my view, intended any one attribute merely, but all those attributes which are implied in the FULNESS or ALL-SUFFICIENCY of God.

Before an attempt to explain those texts of Scripture which have been supposed to import that the Spirit of God is a *distinct Person* from the Father and the Son, it may be well to exhibit a part of the considerations which have had influence on my mind in favor of giving up that opinion.

1. It has appeared to me inconsistent to suppose that the Spirit should be *both* a *self-existent Person* and the *Spirit of a Person;* yet the Spirit is spoken of as the Spirit of a Person twenty times to its being once spoken of as though it were a distinct Person. There are indeed several instances in which the Holy Spirit is personified or spoken of as it would be natural to speak of a Person; but the number of these instances is much less than was expected previous to inquiry. And it is observable that the spirit or soul

of man is also personified in the Bible, and spoken of as though it were something distinct from the man; or as though the *man* and *his spirit* were *two persons.* Instances of this are perhaps nearly as numerous as the instances in which the Spirit of God is personified. But it ought to be distinctly noted, that when we have become habituated to the sentiment that by the *Holy Spirit* is intended a *Person*, the idea of a Person will immediately arise in our minds, upon hearing or seeing the words *Holy Spirit* or *Holy Ghost.* So if we had been taught from our infancy that the natural sun is a person, then we should think of it as such whenever it should come into view. This may account for its having been supposed that there is much in the Scriptures in favor of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit.

In general, throughout the Bible, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the spirit of a person, just as we speak of the spirit of man as the spirit of a person; and in the same manner as the sacred writers speak of the attributes of God; not as distinct Persons, but as something *of* a Person, or *in* a Person, or *belonging to* a Person. The inspired writers speak of the Spirit of Man, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, the Wisdom of God, the Power of God, the Goodness of God, and the Will of God.

We may also observe, that when God speaks of the Spirit, he says, "*my* Spirit," just as he says, "*my* Power," "*my* Goodness," &c. These and similar forms of speech, respecting the Holy Spirit, are very numerous in the Bible, and they naturally convey the idea that the Spirit of God is not a distinct Person, but the Spirit of a Person; as naturally as the forms of speech respecting Wisdom, Power, and Goodness,

convey the idea that they are *attributes* of a Person, and not so many distinct Persons.

If it were admitted, that the term God means *three self-existent Persons*, even on that supposition the phrase, *the Spirit of God*, would not imply that the Spirit is *one* of those Persons, but it would be the *Spirit of three Persons*.

If the Holy Spirit be a self-existent Person distinct from the Father, it is doubtless an important truth, and one which we should not expect would have been unrevealed until the taking place of the gospel dispensation. Yet may it not be said with safety, that there is no more evidence in the Old Testament of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, than there is of the distinct personality of the Power of God, or the Knowledge of God, or the Goodness of God? For, as before observed, the Spirit is uniformly spoken of as something *belonging* to God, and not as a distinct Person.

The phrases "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of the Lord," "my Spirit," "thy Spirit," "his Spirit," are the usual phrases by which the Holy Spirit is represented in the Old Testament. The terms, "the Holy Ghost," are not, I think, to be found in it. The terms, Holy Spirit, are found three times; and in each of those instances it is spoken of as the spirit of a person, and not as being a self-existent Person. "Take not *thy* Holy Spirit from me." "And vexed *his* Holy Spirit"—"And put *his* Holy Spirit within him." Unless, then, the saints under the Old Testament had some evidence which has not come to us, was it possible that they should believe that by the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, was intended an independent Person co-eternal with the Father?

The manner of representing the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is common in the New.—We often read, in the New Testament, of the "Spirit of God," the "Spirit of the Lord;" we also read of the "Spirit of the Father," and "*his* Holy Spirit."

Some writers, if I have not misunderstood them, have been disposed to make a distinction between what they call "the personal Spirit," and the Spirit of God or the emanations of Divine fulness; but I have not been able to find any ground for this distinction. That which is called the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of the Lord, in one place, is called the Holy Ghost in another. In the propheey of Isaiah, we have several predictions respecting the Son of God, and his being *endued* with the Spirit of the Lord—"I have put *my* Spirit upon him"—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," &c. These predictions were fulfilled on the day of Christ's baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended upon him. Matthew says, "the Spirit of God descended:" Mark and John simply say, "the Spirit descended;" but Luke, in giving the same account, says, "the Holy Ghost descended." From these passages it is evident, that "the Spirit," "the Spirit of the Lord," "the Spirit of God," and "the Holy Ghost," mean the same thing. Moreover, when the Holy Ghost was given to the apostles in such an extraordinary manner, on the day of Pentecost, Peter in his sermon said, "This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of *my* Spirit upon all flesh."

There is another class of parallel texts which may help us to some correct ideas of the Holy Spirit. When Christ sent forth his disciples to preach, he

forewarned them that they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake. "But," said he, "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 which speaketh in you." [Matt. x. 19, 20.] This is Matthew's representation.—Mark expresses the same thing thus, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost," [Mark xiii. 11.]—Luke says, "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." [xii. 12.] And Luke, in another place, repeats this, or a similar promise of Christ, in these words, "For I will give you a mouth, and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." [ch. xxi. 15.] From these several passages compared, it clearly appears, that the Spirit of the Father, and the Holy Ghost, are the same thing; that the Spirit of the Father speaking in them, the Holy Ghost's speaking, the Holy Ghost's teaching them what they ought to speak, and Christ's giving them a mouth and wisdom, are all of the same import; and that the sum of the promise to the apostles was, that they should be *endued* with *supernatural sufficiency* or *assistance* on such occasions.

2. That the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is not a distinct Person, may appear from a number of other terms which are used as synonymous.

The *breath* of the Lord is used as synonymous with the *Spirit* of the Lord. The wicked are represented as consumed both by the "*breath* of the Lord," and by the "*Spirit* of the Lord"—"By the blast of God they perish, and by the *breath of his mouth* are they consumed"—"And then shall that wicked be revealed

whom the Lord shall consume with the *Spirit of his mouth.*" Moreover, as an emblem of *giving the Spirit*, Christ *breathed* on his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."*

The HAND of the Lord and the SPIRIT of the Lord are used as synonymous. "So the SPIRIT of the Lord lifted me up, and took me away—but the HAND of the Lord was strong upon me"—"By his *Spirit* he hath garnished the heavens; his *hand* hath formed the crooked serpent"—"The heavens are the work of thy *hand*"—"And the *hand* of the Lord was with them, and a great multitude believed and turned to the Lord."

The *finger* of God and the *Spirit* of God are synonymous. "By *his Spirit* he hath garnished the heavens"—"I consider the heavens the work of *thy fingers*"—"But if I cast out devils by the *Spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come unto you"—"But if I with the *finger of God* cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."

Can it be viewed as proper or respectful to speak of one self-existent Person as the *breath*, the *hand*, or the *finger*, of another co-equal Person?

As the *arm*, the *hand*, or the *finger* of a person, is subordinate to his will, so the Spirit of God is uniformly represented as subordinate to the will of God. And as any thing which is done by the *hand* of a man, is done by the *man*, so any thing which is done by the *Spirit* of God, is done by *God*. Accordingly, in the Scriptures, the same things are at one time attributed

* The *Spirit* of the Lord, and the *breath* of the Lord are the same in the original. Is the *breath* of the Lord a Person? If not, neither is the Spirit of the Lord or the Holy Spirit.

to God, and at another to the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit.

3. The metaphors made use of in Scripture to represent the Spirit, the act of *giving* or *sending* the Spirit, and the *descent* of the Spirit, are clearly against the opinion that the Spirit is a distinct Person. *Water* is the metaphor most frequently used to represent the Spirit; and the act of *sending* or *giving* the Spirit is represented by *pouring out*, *shedding forth*, *sprinkling*, *washing*, or *baptizing*; and the *descent* of the Spirit is compared to the *descent* of rain and dew.

Giving the Spirit is also compared to giving water to drink, and to anointing with oil. And in reference to the *impression* the Spirit makes on the hearts of saints, it is compared to *ink*.

Can you, sir, suppose, that these metaphors and representations properly apply to a Person, or to the act of sending a self-existent Person? *Pouring out* and *sprinkling* are perhaps the most common metaphors to represent the act of *sending* the Holy Spirit; and what metaphors could you invent more improper to represent the act of *sending* a Person? It is GOD who says, "I will pour out my Spirit." And if you say by GOD is meant only one of three self-existent Persons, will you also say that one self-existent Person promises that he will *pour out* another self-existent Person?

Permit me, sir, to ask, what do you mean when you pray to God to pour out his Spirit? Do you mean to ask one self-existent Person to *pour out* another? Do you not mean to ask God to make a gracious display of his fulness for the production of some important effects?

When you speak of a *great out-pouring* of the Spirit of God, do you mean to represent that one self-existent Person has made a great *out-pouring* of another co-equal Person? Do you not mean that God has made a great display of his power, wisdom, and goodness, upon the hearts and minds of men? It is presumed you will admit that the latter is your meaning. And it is a comforting thought that my views of the Spirit not only accord with the natural import of Scripture language, but with what appears to be the real views of God's people in their prayers for the Spirit.

4. The Spirit of God is spoken of in the Scriptures as something which may be given *by measure*, or *without measure*; and when communicated or displayed *by measure*, we may speak of a *residue*.

After John the Baptist had seen the emblem of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Son of God, he not only bare record that He is the Son of God, but also that "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God *giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*" In this verse, the Son's having the Spirit without measure, is given as the reason why the words which he speaketh are the *words of God.*

As the Son of God had the Spirit not by measure, so he had it in a manner that he could *communicate* it to others; therefore John further testified, "This is He, or the same is He, which *baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*" But while the Son had the Spirit without measure, the apostles and saints had it *by measure.*

The prophet Malachi, in bearing testimony against the conduct of the Jews in putting away their wives, brings into view the wise conduct of God in creation.

in making but *one woman* for *one man*—"And did not he make one? yet had he the *residue of the Spirit.*" The idea intended to be communicated appears to be this, that God did not neglect to make more than one woman for one man through any defect of wisdom, power, or goodness. Had it been best, he was *all-sufficient* to have made more, and would have done it. Does not, then, this text plainly suggest, that by the Spirit is intended the *fulness* or *all-sufficiency* of God? And do not the phrases, the *Spirit by measure*, and the *residue of the Spirit*, naturally oppose the opinion that by the Spirit is intended a distinct and independent Person?

As infinite wisdom saw fit not to place me on a level with you, and most of my brethren in the ministry, in respect to the advantages of a learned education, you may think it improper for me to suggest any argument from the Greek language respecting the Holy Spirit. But not pretending to much knowledge of that language, permit me to ask a few questions. Are not the articles and pronouns in the Greek language, agreeing with the terms Holy Spirit, uniformly of the neuter gender? And are not the articles and pronouns agreeing with the Father and Son, of the masculine gender? And what is the ground of this distinction, if the Spirit be a proper Person?

In reply to these questions, it has been said, that the noun, Spirit, is of the neuter gender; and the genius of the Greek language requires, of course, that the articles and pronouns should be of the neuter gender. All this is easily believed; nor is it seen that, in this respect, the genius of the Greek language differs from our own. But why, sir, is the *noun* neuter? And how did you know that it was neuter, but by the neuter ar-

ticles and pronouns? Had masculine articles and pronouns been uniformly used throughout the New Testament, as agreeing with the *noun*, Spirit, would you ever have known or thought that the noun was of the neuter gender?

In some instances, the translators gave us the pronouns, agreeing with the Spirit, in the neuter gender, according to the Greek—"The Spirit *itself* beareth witness with our Spirit."—"The Spirit *itself* maketh intercession for us."—Instead of *itself*, they might have said *himself*, as well as to have given us *he*, *his*, *him*, for *it*, *its*, &c. And if they had as uniformly given us the pronouns in the neuter, as they are so in the Greek, the appearance of the Spirit's being a distinct Person would have been nearly excluded from the Bible. And we should have as much reason to suppose that by "our Spirits" are intended Persons distinct from ourselves, as that by the "Spirit of God" is intended a Person distinct from the Father. This probably would have been completely the case, unless we should have had some source of information, by which we should have been able to correct the natural import of inspired language.

This subject of the pronouns is not introduced as having had any influence in forming my opinion of the Holy Spirit. It was formed previous to any information on this particular. Yet, in my view, this circumstance corroborates that opinion, and is worthy of the most serious attention.

No person, in conversation with me, has pretended to deny the fact, that the pronouns in Greek for the Spirit are of the neuter gender; and no one has given me any satisfactory reason why they should be translated as personal pronouns of the masculine gender.

It is, however, possible, that you, or some other person, may yet do it; but until it is done, you will allow me to consider the argument in view, as of great weight against the personality of the Holy Spirit.

LETTER II.

Some passages considered, which have been supposed to support the Personality of the Holy Spirit.

REV. SIR,

IT may be proper now to pay some attention to those passages of Scripture, which have been supposed most certainly to imply the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. ii. 10. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."

This passage has much of the appearance of favoring the personality of the Spirit. But if we candidly attend to the following verse, this appearance may disappear—"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the *spirit* of man that is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the *Spirit* of God." It is obvious, that the *Spirit* of God is here represented as bearing the same relation to God, as the *spirit* of a man does to the man. But as a man and his spirit are but one person, so God and his Spirit are represented as one Person.

Mr. Jones has quoted the last of these verses, to prove, in opposition to Arians, that the Spirit of God is essentially God, as truly so as the spirit of man is essentially man. This text does indeed afford a con-

clusive argument against the Arian hypothesis; but it also affords an argument equally conclusive against the hypothesis of Mr. Jones. It is on the ground of the *comparison* or *parallel* exhibited in the text, that Mr. Jones shows this text to be opposed to the Arian scheme; and on the same ground it is as clearly opposed to his own, unless he would undertake to say that a man and his spirit are two persons. If he could make this appear to be true, then he might well argue that God and his Spirit are also two Persons.

Acts v. 3. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?"

Peter and other apostles had been filled with the Holy Spirit in a remarkable manner; and it was doubtless by the Spirit of God that Peter was enabled to discern the *deceit* and *falsehood* of Ananias. His lying, therefore, was really *lying to the Holy Spirit.* Ananias had been a witness of the wonderful things which God had done, and that the apostles had done, by the Holy Spirit, or in consequence of being "endued with power from on high," and for him, in the face of those manifestations of Divine goodness, wisdom, and power, to come forward with a lie or deceitful pretence to the apostles, was truly to "tempt the Spirit of the Lord," or to tempt the Lord to display the same power in his destruction, that had been displayed for the salvation of others.

Heb. iii. 7. "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost *saith*, To-day if ye will hear his voice."

We have many instances in Scripture, in which it is represented that the Holy Spirit *spake*, *said*, &c. The words of Peter will explain the matter—"Holy men of God *spake* as they were moved by the Holy

Ghost." [2 Peter i. 21.] God by his Spirit or fulness taught them what "they ought to speak."

2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

This passage has often been urged with considerable confidence as a proof that there are three self-existent Persons in God, and that the Holy Spirit is one of those Persons. But a little attention to the natural import of the passage may be sufficient to show that neither of these ideas are implied. We may note—

1. God is here named as a Person distinct from the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is named as a Person distinct from the self-existent God.

2. The text does not say, "communion *with* the Holy Ghost," as though the Spirit were a Person; but "communion *of* the Holy Ghost," as though the Spirit were something to be received. We have a similar phraseology, 1 Cor. x. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not *the communion of the blood of Christ?*" Neither the *cup* nor the *blood* of Christ is a person; but a *benefit*, of which we may be the thankful partakers. The import of the benediction may be this, May you experience the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, by being made *thankful partakers of the Holy Spirit*, to sanctify, to teach, to support, and to comfort you forever.

The phrase "fellowship of the Spirit," is the same in the original as *communion* of the Spirit. This by Poole's Continuators is explained to mean, communion among saints in the "*grace* of the Spirit." [Phil. ii. 1.]

In our Savior's affectionate discourse with his disciples before his passion, for their comfort and sup-

port, he promised them the Holy Spirit under the title of the Comforter. The substance of what he said in that discourse, respecting the character of the Spirit, shall here be brought into view.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth." [John xiv. 16, 17.]

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things whatsoever I have said unto you." [John xiv. 26.]

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." [John xv. 26.]

"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you; and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." [John xvi. 7, 8.]

"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: And he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." [John xvi. 13.]

Had we no other passages of Scripture, by which to determine the character of the Holy Spirit, we should most *naturally* be led to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is a *distinct Person.* Yet, it may be asked, should we conclude that the Spirit is a Person *independent* and *equal* with the Father? For throughout the whole description, is not the Spirit represented as subordinate to the will of the Father?

In these passages, sir, we may contemplate the Holy Spirit as properly *personified* under another name, for the same reason that we personify the *natural sun* when we wish to give a striking and impressive view of its glory, utility, and importance. And yet there seems to have been particular care taken that our minds should not be misled by the *personification.* If you, sir, will be at the trouble of removing from these verses the *masculine pronouns*, and write *neuter pronouns* in their room, so far as the original will justify such a change, you may find the personification far less strong than it is in our translation. After you have made this change in the pronouns, you will not find the Spirit more strongly personified, than the spirit or soul of man is often personified, or spoken of, as a distinct person from the man. Thus the Psalmist addresses his soul, "Why art *thou* cast down, O my soul? Why art *thou* disquieted within me? Hope *thou* in God," &c. The rich fool is represented as addressing his soul as it would be natural to address another person—"I will say to my soul, Soul, *thou* hast goods laid up for many years, take *thine* ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

Moreover, there are several things said of the Comforter, which *naturally* suggest the idea that it is *not a Person*, but an *emanation* of the *Divine fulness*, which is intended. When Christ had named the Comforter, he immediately explained—*the Spirit of truth*; which naturally suggests the idea, that what he was speaking of was an efficient influence or emanation from that God who is truth. Besides, he said, "The Holy Ghost which *proceedeth* from the Father;" and this is the precise idea of *emanation.* But it does not comport with the idea, that the Spirit is an independent

person, co-equal with the Father. There is, however, still more decisive evidence to be produced.

These gracious promises of the Comforter were renewed to the apostles after Christ had risen from the dead; and in renewing the promises, the *personification* was wholly omitted.

In giving the account of what Christ said to his apostles between the resurrection and ascension, Luke in his gospel states, that Christ said to them, "And behold, I send the PROMISE of my Father upon you; but tarry ye at Jerusalem until ye be ENDUED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH."—Luke xxiv. 49.

In the introduction to the Acts of the Apostles, Luke brings the same thing again into view, but in a different form. After mentioning that Christ "showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of the *apostles* forty days, and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God," he adds, "And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the *promise* of the Father, which, *saith he, ye have heard of me.* For John truly baptized *with water*, but ye shall be baptized *with the Holy Ghost* not many days hence."

The apostles were inquisitive, and asked, saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall *receive power* after that the *Holy Ghost is come upon you.*"

In these several accounts there is an obvious reference to the prior *promise* of the *Comforter;* and these passages serve to explain the import of that promise. To *be endued with power from on high*, to *be baptized*

with the Holy Ghost, and to have the Comforter sent unto them, are all the same thing. The substance of the whole was this, that they should be *endued with supernatural powers, supernatural fortitude, supernatural support, assistance*, and *comfort*; and thus be prepared to go forth in the name of Christ to preach the gospel, and to *confirm* their *doctrines* by *signs* and *wonders* or incontestible *miracles*.

And it may be worthy of particular notice, that the *Holy Spirit* is represented as something *with which* the apostles should be *baptized*, as John *baptized with* water. "John truly *baptized* WITH *water*, but ye shall be *baptized* WITH *the Holy Ghost*." The HOLY SPIRIT, in the baptism which the apostles were to receive, answers to the WATER in the baptism administered by John. And unless we may suppose that the *water* in John's baptism was an *agent*, we may not suppose the *Holy Spirit* to be an *agent* in the baptism received by the apostles.*

The promise of Christ was fulfilled; for "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the apostles were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat on each of them. And they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and

* As the metaphor of *water* is abundantly used to represent the *Holy Spirit*, *baptizing with* the *Holy Spirit* harmonizes with that metaphor; the same as *pouring out, shedding forth, sprinkling*, &c. In the New Testament, six times we have the representation of *baptizing with* the *Holy Spirit*. But where shall we find *one* instance in which the Holy Spirit is represented as an *Agent* or *Administrator* in baptizing?

began to speak with other tongues as the *Spirit gave them utterance.*"

Thus, sir, was Christ's promise of the Comforter fulfilled; the apostles were *baptized* WITH the *Holy Spirit;* they were *endued with power from on high;* and as the first fruits of this power they spake languages that they had never studied or learned; and they spake as the *Spirit gave them utterance.*

Let us now attend to Peter's account of the fulfilment of the promise of the Comforter, which he gave in his sermon on that memorable occasion.

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the *promise* of the *Holy Ghost,* he hath SHED FORTH this which ye now see and hear."

As the Holy Spirit in this baptism answered to the water in John's baptism, and as Christ himself had become the *administrator* of this baptism, Peter with great propriety said, "*He* hath *shed forth* this which ye now see and hear."

Thus evident it is, that, in Peter's view, the Holy Ghost is something which may be *shed forth* by the SON of God to whom the Spirit had been given not by measure; by him, in whom it had pleased the Father that *all fulness should dwell.* The same view of the Holy Spirit is given by Paul, in his epistle to Titus—"According to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed* on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." [Titus iii. 5, 6.]

If by the Holy Spirit be meant the fulness of God, or an efficient emanation of Divine fulness, the word *shed* may very properly be used to express the manner

of its being given or sent. But who will say that this is a proper term by which to express the act of giving or sending a Person? And if we may believe that the apostles understood the promise of "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," may we not believe that the Holy Spirit is not a Person distinct from the Father and the Son?

Thus, sir, it has been my endeavor to explain what Christ intended by the Comforter, by making the Scriptures their own interpreter. You will not, it is hoped, see any sophistry in my reasonings upon this particular. And if not, it is believed you must, at least, very strongly doubt the correctness of any theory which supposes the Holy Spirit to be a Person. For in no other instance is the Spirit so strongly personified as under the name of the Comforter.

Matt. xxviii. 19, and 1 John v. 7, will be duly noticed in Part IV.

LETTER III.

Other considerations, to show, that by the Holy Spirit is not intended a distinct Person.

REV. SIR,

HAVING endeavored faithfully to examine most of those passages of Scripture which have the greatest appearance of favoring your views of the Holy Spirit, and believing it has been shown that they are perfectly consistent with my own without any forced construction, some farther considerations, which have had great weight on my mind against the hypothesis, that

the Spirit is a distinct and self-existent Person, will now be added.

1. Much is said in the Scriptures of the *mutual love* between the FATHER and the SON, and the disposition of each to honor the other; but where shall we find the least intimation of any love on the part of the Father or the Son towards the Holy Spirit as a Person? or on the part of the Holy Spirit towards either the Father or the Son? Yet if the Spirit be a Person, as distinct from the Father and the Son, as the Son is from the Father, should we not have reason to expect the same evidence of *mutual love* in the one case as in the other? And since the evidence of mutual love between the Father and the Son is so abundant in the Scriptures, and no mention is made of any love between the Father and the Spirit, nor between the Son and the Spirit, have we not strong ground to believe that the Spirit is not a distinct Person?

2. We have much said in the Scriptures of the love of the Father towards mankind, and also of the love of the Son; but what is said of the love of the Spirit towards our ruined race? Not a word.

3. We are required to love the Father, and to love the Son, as two distinct Persons; but where do you find any requirement to love the Spirit as a Person distinct from the Father or the Son? Not in the Bible.

4. We have both precept and example for worshipping the Father and the Son, as two distinct Persons; but have we either precept or example in the Scriptures for paying Divine homage to the Spirit as a Person?

5. We have an account, in the visions of John, of the throne of God and of the Lamb; but does John make any mention of the throne of the Holy Spirit? Or is there any intimation in the Bible, that the Spirit, as a Person, has a throne in heaven?

Now, sir, on the supposition that the Spirit is a Person co-equal with God the Father, how will you be able to account for these *distinctions*, or these *omissions*, in the sacred Scriptures? If we could find the same evidence of mutual love between the Father and the Holy Spirit, as between the Father and the Son; and the same evidence that the Spirit, as a Person, loves mankind, as that the Father and the Son do;* or if we could find such evidence in favor of loving and honoring the Spirit as a distinct Person, as for loving and honoring the Father and the Son; it might seem presumptuous to call in question the personality of the Spirit. But since the Scriptures are silent in all these important respects, suffer me to dissent from your opinion; and to take the Scriptures for my guide in preference to any human theory.

6. Though St. John had no vision of the Holy Spirit as personally seated on the throne, he had a vision of the *enthroned Lamb of God*, as having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. These seven Spirits of God have been under-

* It may be said, that "the love of the Spirit" is once mentioned by St. Paul, Rom. xv. 30. But it is needless to give an exposition of my own, to show that the passage does not represent the Spirit as a Person loving. It may suffice to copy the exposition of Mr. Poole's Continuators, who were Athanasian writers—"And for the love of the Spirit"—q. d. "If you love the Spirit of God; or rather if the grace of love be wrought in you by the Spirit, show it in this thing."

stood by some Athanasian expositors to be the same as the Holy Spirit. This appears to be correct. But that an individual Person should be called the *seven Spirits* of *God*, must appear very unnatural; but if by the Holy Spirit be intended the Divine fulness or sufficiency, this may well enough be called the seven Spirits of God in reference to its perfection and manifold operation. In a text, several times quoted, we read, with respect to the Son, that "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;" and, in the passage now before us, we find Christ represented as having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. *Horns* are understood to be an emblem of *power*, and *eyes* of *wisdom*. Then the seven horns and seven eyes denote the *perfect fulness* of Christ, and his *all-sufficiency* to open the book, and to loose the seals, or to direct and govern the affairs of the universe. In view of this plenitude of wisdom and power, with which the Son was endued, and his taking the book and opening the seals, all that stood about the throne "sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; *for thou wast slain*, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."—Let us, my dear brother, go and do likewise.

Here it may not be amiss to suggest some serious questions for your consideration, with a request that you would weigh them in an even balance.

1. If the Holy Spirit be a distinct Person, co-equal with the Father, is he not in the Scriptures exhibited in a manner which appears *degrading*, and truly unaccountable; as bearing the same relation to God as an *attribute*; or as the *hand* or *finger* of God; as

being constantly subject to the control or the will of another Person: never exhibited as a distinct object of *worship* or of *love;* never addressed in prayer as a Person, either by the saints, or by Jesus Christ, though the Father was often addressed?

2. If you, and those with you in sentiment, do really view the Holy Spirit as a distinct Person equal with the Father, are you not justly chargeable with want of respect, yea with *disrespect,* towards the Holy Spirit? How seldom do we hear the Spirit mentioned in prayer, otherwise than as something which is subordinate to the will of God, which may be given, sent, or poured out, for our benefit? At the close of your prayers, you often mention the Spirit, as though you thought it to be a Person; but this is frequently the only instance in which, through the whole course of a prayer, there is the least intimation that the Spirit is viewed as a Person. But if, in your view, the Scriptures do really authorize the belief that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person, and of equal dignity with the Father, how will you be able to answer for your inconsistency in treating the Father with so much more respect than you do the Holy Spirit? Has not the Holy Spirit reason to accuse you of *partiality?* But in vindication of your conduct, you may say, and that with great propriety, that the Holy Spirit is not so much as *named* as a Person in any prayer recorded in the Bible; and that we are not required to address prayers to the Spirit as a distinct Person. But, sir, if you have such ample ground on which you may justify your apparent neglect of the Spirit, have you not reason to examine the grounds of your faith? Does not the very ground on which

you would justify your conduct, afford reason to doubt the correctness of your theory?

8. Do not your *habitual, practical,* and *devotional* views of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, harmonize much better with my present theory, than they do with your own? This may seem to you an extraordinary question; but it is proposed, sir, with considerable confidence, that, on due reflection, if you answer it at all, it must be in the affirmative. My confidence in this matter results partly from experience, and partly from observation. When you approach the throne of grace, and *pour out your* HEART before God without any *studied respect to theory,* do you not address God as *one Person only?* Do you not use the terms God, and Father, as *perfectly synonymous?* When you *thank* GOD for the manifestation of his love, in *sending* his dear Son to die for our offences, do you not naturally consider the Son as a Being properly distinct from the Father, naturally subordinate to the Father, but exalted with the Father's right hand? When you pray to God that he would *pour out* HIS HOLY SPIRIT, is not this your real prayer, that God would make a display of his power, wisdom, and love, for the production of some desirable effect? Do you not mean to ask for some efficient, productive emanation of his fulness? If, in your habitual and devotional views, the Spirit were a distinct Person, co-equal with the Father, would it not be more natural for you, in praying for the Spirit, to address your petitions directly to the Holy Spirit, than to pray the Father to *send* or *pour out* HIS SPIRIT? Does it not then appear that your devotional and habitual views are conformable to the theory I have adopted, and in opposition to your own? How then will you be able to vindi-

PART IV.

...ITION OF DIFFICULT PAS-...ES OF SCRIPTURE.

LETTER I.

...rpretation stated and applied.

...ing Letters, my views of many pas-...s, which have been supposed to favor ...heory, have been occasionally given. ...hers to which no distinct attention ...t is my wish to have error detected, ... my views. Suffer me, therefore, to ... adopted rules of interpretation, and ...en of their application.

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cate your conduct before God, from a charge of inconsistency, in supporting a theory which is repugnant to your own habitual and devotional views, or in indulging habitual and devotional views which are repugnant to the theory which you profess to believe? And permit me to ask, which does God consider the *real sentiments* of your *heart*, those which you express in advocating your theory, or those which you habitually and naturally express in your daily prayers to him?

It is, sir, most sensibly felt, that the theories, prepossessions, and learning, of the Christian world, are at present not on my side. But no small consolation is derived, by considering the general tenor and natural import of Bible language very clearly in favor of each part of the theory set forth in the foregoing Letters. It is also consoling to consider the language of Christian devotion in such agreement with my views, that whatever may be objected against them, may, with equal propriety, be objected against the most devout feelings and language of my brethren. And as long as these things shall appear so much on my side, nothing can deprive me of the pleasing expectation that the theory, now exposed to public view, will be found substantially correct, approved of God, and that which the whole family of Christ will ultimately receive, and rejoice in forever.

PART IV.

AN EXAMINATION OF DIFFICULT PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

LETTER I.

Rules of Interpretation stated and applied.

REV. SIR,

IN the preceding Letters, my views of many passages of Scripture, which have been supposed to favor the Athanasian theory, have been occasionally given. But there are others to which no distinct attention has been paid. It is my wish to have error detected, if there be any in my views. Suffer me, therefore, to lay before you my adopted rules of interpretation, and give you a specimen of their application.

Rule I. "The Scriptures were inspired, to instruct common readers, by using words according to their common acceptation, and not to confound them by an abuse of language."

The language in which this rule is expressed, is borrowed from Dr. Spring's sermon on the self-existence of Christ, and is applied to the many thousands of texts in which personal pronouns of the singular number are used as substitutes for the nouns God,

LORD GOD, &c. and the inference is, that God is one Person only.

The same rule is applied to the numerous texts in which Christ is represented as the SON of God, God's OWN and ONLY SON; and the inference is, that Christ is *not* the self-existent God, but the SON of the self-existent God.

Rule II. The terms used in Revelation must be understood in a sense corresponding with some analogy known to men.

According to this rule, also, it is inferred, that the Son of God cannot be a self-existent Person. It is likewise concluded, that there are no passages of Scripture which were designed to teach us that *three Persons* are but *one intelligent Being;* nor that there may be *two intelligent Beings* in *one Person.* As extraordinary as it may seem, both of these contradictory hypotheses pertain to your theory. God you suppose to be three distinct PERSONS; and yet but one intelligent Being. You also suppose that Christ is both God and a Man united in one Person. This, it is thought, amounts precisely to the hypothesis of two intelligent Beings in one Person. Is it not, sir, extraordinary, that great and good men should adopt two hypotheses so manifestly contradictory, while neither of them can be supported by Scripture, nor illustrated by any analogy in nature?

But did not Christ say, *I* and my FATHER are ONE? Yes, sir; but he never said, I and my Father are *but one intelligent Being.* Nor have we any analogy which can justify such an interpretation of the words. There are many senses in which a Father and a Son may be *one*, besides that of *one Being.* And in no other case, in which the words are used by a Son,

should we have the least suspicion that this is the intended import. God and Christ may be of one nature as a Father and Son; they may be one in affection, in interest, and in operation; they may also be one in respect to fulness and authority, as has been already noted and explained.

When Christ made this declaration, the Jews accused him of blasphemy, and of "making himself God." But Christ, in his answer, distinctly let them know that his words imported no more than that he was truly the Son of God, and as such united with the Father—"Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God."

Rule III. So far as the Scriptures may interpret themselves, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, such interpretation is to be preferred to any human hypothesis.

This rule has been found of extensive application. The Divine names and titles given to the Son of God; the Divine works and honors ascribed to him, and his Divine fulness, are all distinctly accounted for in the Scriptures, on the ground of the Father's love and pleasure. Therefore, these titles, these works, these honors, or this fulness, may not be considered as evidence of the personal self-existence of the Son of God.

Rule IV. In many instances, it is necessary to take into view the *customs* of the people to whom the Scriptures were originally communicated, and to consider in what light *they* would most naturally understand particular passages.

The prophecies respecting the Messiah were probably originally written for the comfort and benefit of the good people among the Israelites or Jews; at

least, this may be supposed to be one principal object of the predictions. In the prophecies, the promised Messiah was called by various names, and some of them were Divine names, or names of Divine import. He was not only called David, and David the King, but it was predicted that his name should be called EMMANUEL, WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, the MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, and the PRINCE OF PEACE.

If we would know how a Jew would be likely to understand these names or titles, we should consider a *custom* which was common among the Jews, viz. that of giving significant names to persons, places, altars, &c. At the close of our great Bibles we have a table of the names used in the Old Testament, with their several significations. If you will examine this table, you will find that other Persons had Divine names, besides the Messiah.—See a few of these names, with their signification—*Eliashib*, the God of conversion—*Elijah*, God the Lord, or the strong Lord—*Eliphalet*, the God of deliverance—*Elisha*, the salvation of God—*Lemuel*, God with them, or him. They also gave Divine names, or names of Divine import, to places and altars—*Jehovah-jireh*, the Lord will see or provide—*Jehovah-Nissi*, the Lord my Banner—*El-elohe-Israel*, God, the God of Israel.

Now, sir, imagine yourself to have been a Jew, living in the days of the prophets, and perfectly acquainted with the *custom* of giving significant names; then consider what ideas you would naturally have taken from the various names given to the promised Messiah. If you had heard him called *David*, or *David the King*, would you have supposed that the Man who killed Goliah was to appear again as the promised

Savior? If you had heard the prophet say, respecting the promised Son, They shall call his name *Emmanuel*, would you have supposed that God himself was to come as the promised Messiah? Would you not rather have supposed the Son to be one in whom God would make some gracious manifestations of himself to men? If you had heard him called the *Mighty God*, and *Everlasting Father*, would it not have been natural for you to suppose that the Son was to be one in whom the Mighty God and Everlasting Father would make surprising manifestations of his power and his kindness? If you had heard him called, "The *Lord our Righteousness*," what would have been more natural than for you to have supposed, that the Messiah was to be one in whom Jehovah would display his righteousness, or one through whose righteousness men should be benefited by Jehovah?

Accustomed as the Jews were to believe in one God only, and to speak of that God as only one Person; accustomed as they were to the use of significant names of high import; would it not have been unspeakably more natural for them to understand the names of the Messiah as significant, importing some such ideas as I have mentioned, than to suppose that the *Son to be born* was the VERY GOD who had *promised* to SEND HIM into the world.

The prophet did not say the SON shall BE Emmanuel, but "*they shall call his name* Emmanuel." He did not say, the Son shall BE the Mighty God and Everlasting Father, but "*his name shall be called*," &c. And this phraseology was probably used with direct reference to the *custom* of the Jews in giving significant names. And the Son's having the Divine names thus given him by the spirit of prophecy, is no proof

that he is personally the self-existent God, any more than his being called David, or David the King, is a proof that he was personally David the son of Jesse.

It may be useful, in this connection, to consider what expectations were in fact excited among the Jews, by the Divine names given to the promised Messiah. And is there, sir, any evidence, that any Jew, whether learned or unlearned, good or bad, ever understood the Divine names given to the Messiah, as importing that he should be the self-existent God? If no such idea was excited in the minds of pious Jews, by the use of those names, we may reasonably suppose that no such idea was intended in the predictions.

LETTER II.

A fifth Rule of Interpretation stated and applied.

REV. SIR,

PERMIT me now to state and apply another rule of interpretation.

Rule V. Particular phrases, terms, and epithets, are to be understood in a sense which is consistent with the general tenor of the gospel, and the character of the objects to which they are applied.

There are two things respecting Jesus Christ, which are, in my view, supported by the general tenor of the gospel, viz.

1. That he is truly the Son of God.

2. That he obeyed, suffered, and died, to open the way for our salvation.

These two points are not only supported by the general tenor of the gospel, but they appear to be *essential* to the gospel plan of salvation. If we deny these, do we not in effect deny the gospel? If we deny these, do we not make *God a liar?*

If these are points unquestionably revealed, and supported by the general tenor of the gospel, then all the particular phrases, terms and epithets, used in respect to the Son of God, are to be understood in a sense which is consistent with these leading truths of the gospel.

There are several texts of Scripture which have been understood as supporting the idea that the Son of God is absolutely self-existent, independent, and immutable. But as this doctrine is, in my view, inconsistent with what have been stated as truths supported by the general tenor of the gospel, let us examine those texts, and see whether they do *necessarily* import what you and others have imagined.

John x. 18. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

If, in any instance, the Son of God said any thing which imported that he had *independent power*, this is the instance—But Christ did not say, "I have *independent power*."—Besides, it is believed, that in this case the word *power* is the same as *authority*. And this *authority* or this *commandment* Christ says he received of his Father. We may add, the resurrection of Christ from the dead is abundantly and explicitly attributed to God in distinction from the Son—"God raised HIM from the dead."

Micah v. 2. "Whose goings forth have been from of *old*, from *everlasting*."

Whatever existed before the world, may be said to be of *old*, from *everlasting*. In the eighth chapter of Proverbs, Wisdom, or Christ under the name of Wisdom, is represented as using language similar to that in the text before us—"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of *old:* I was *set up* from *everlasting*, *from the beginning*, or ever the earth was." But Wisdom adds, "When there were no depths, *I was brought forth*"—Before the hills, was I *brought forth*—"Then I was by him as *one brought up with him*, and I was daily his delight"—*Brought up with him* as a *Son with a Father*; and as a *Son*, was daily his delight. The Son was from *everlasting*, as he was *brought forth before* there were either *depths* or *hills*.

Rev. i. 17. "I am the *First* and the *Last*."

In the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, the Lord of Hosts adopts this title, and says, "I am the *First* and the *Last*, and besides me there is no God."

In view of these texts, Mr. Jones forms this argument—"There is no God besides him who is the First and the Last; but Jesus Christ is the First and the Last: therefore, besides Jesus Christ there is no God." If this be fair reasoning, we may draw another conclusion, viz. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," *is not God*. Is it not amazing, that Mr. Jones should reason in such a manner? In several instances, his conclusions as fully exclude the Father from being God, as it is possible that language should do it.

In Isaiah, God did not say, Besides us there is no God; but, "Besides me there is no God." His words, therefore, as fully exclude every other *Person* as every other *Being*.

When Christ said, "I am the First and the Last," he immediately added, "I am he that *liveth*, and *was dead*." He is therefore to be considered as the *First* and the *Last* in a sense which is consistent with his having been DEAD. There are several senses in which Christ may style himself "the First and the Last"—He may be so called as the *constituted Head* and *Chief* of creation; and as in his glory, as well as the glory of the Father, all things will terminate—He may be so called as the *Author* and *Finisher* of faith; or, as a Son, he may bear the Divine titles of his Father.

Heb. xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

This text on which so much reliance has been placed, has no *verb* in it; and, therefore, considered by itself, it contains no *affirmation*. For the beginning of the sentence, and the sense of the text, we have to look back to the preceding verse, "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the END of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

It is evident, that it is as the END of Christian conversation that Christ is here brought into view. And by *Jesus Christ*, we may understand not merely his Person, but his interest and glory. This END of our conversation is of immutable and perpetual importance—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Heb. i. 12. "But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

This text was quoted from Psalm cii. and there was used in an address to God. This circumstance is worthy of note, and in my view, is the only diffi-

culty presented by the text. Why were words, which were first addressed to God, quoted and applied to the Son? Perhaps you will not find me able to answer the question; but if so, it will not hence follow that it is unanswerable.

In the 5th verse, the apostle quoted a passage from the Old Testament, and applied it to Christ, which was originally used in respect to Solomon—"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." These words are to be found three times in the Old Testament, and each time they are contained in a gracious promise of God to David respecting his son Solomon. Why then did the apostle quote these words and apply them to Christ, as though they had been originally used in respect to him? The answer must probably be this, that Solomon was a type of Christ. May we not then suppose, that the words, which were first addressed to God, were quoted by the apostle and applied to Christ as the Son and "image of the invisible God?"

Let us now attend to the import of the text: "But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Here we have exhibited a contrast between the *material world* and its *constituted Creator*. And what is the contrast? One waxes old and is liable to perish, and the other will remain the same without end. This, it is conceived, is the most which can be supposed to be necessarily implied in the text. And what is here affirmed of Christ, agrees with what he said of himself, "I am the First and the Last. I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, *I live forevermore*."

You suppose the text imports absolute immutability. But, sir, was it no change in the Son of God to pass from the form of God to the form of a servant? Was

it no change to die, and to be raised again from the dead? Is he now, at the Father's right hand, in all respects the same that he was when he cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Permit me, sir, to ask, whether the Greek word αυτος, which in the text is translated *same*, is any where in the New Testament used as importing absolute immutability, unless it be in the two texts which I have been last considering? If the clause had been translated "*But thou art* HE," meaning HE with peculiar emphasis and distinction, would it not have been a literal and correct translation?

But let the translation be as it is, only let the word *same* be understood in a sense which will not contradict the gospel of Divine Love.—It is my choice to *believe* that God has "spared not his own Son;" and *not to believe* that he made a mere *show* of so loving the world, when he did not in reality. It affords me far greater satisfaction to believe that the Son of God was capable of personally *doing* and *suffering* according to the representations of Scripture, than I could find in believing that there is a want of strict truth and simplicity in the gospel representations of Divine Love.

LETTER III.

Other texts considered.

REV. SIR,

SOME texts on which Mr. William Jones has placed great reliance, may now be introduced.

John iii. 29. "He that hath the Bride, is the Bridegroom."

Isaiah liv. 5. "Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name."

Mr. Jones says, "The church, which is the Bride, can no more have two Husbands, than Christ can have two churches."

Whatever difficulty may be involved in the idea of *two Husbands* to the church, the difficulty cannot be *diminished* by supposing a *greater number*. Yet Mr. Jones' theory plainly supposes *three distinct Persons*, or *agents*, each of whom is the Husband of the church.

The truth is, that there is in no other sense *two Husbands* to the church, than there are *two Creators*, *Saviors*, or *Lords*. As GOD *creates* and *saves* by his SON, so by his Son he shows the kindness of a *Husband* to the church. The SON is the *constituted Creator*, *Savior*, and *Lord*; so he is the *constituted Head* and *Bridegroom* of the church. Accordingly, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain KING, who made a *marriage* for HIS SON."

Rom. ix. 5. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

That Christ is, in this text, called God, will not be positively denied. But if he be, we may reasonably suppose that it is in the same sense that the Father

calls him God, in his address, Heb. i. 8, 9—that is, on the ground of a *constituted character*. See Part II. Letter IV.—But it is my prevailing opinion, that the latter clause of this text ought to be understood as an expression of gratitude and praise to God, the Father, for *giving* his *Son* to come in the flesh, and *exalting* him as *Lord over all;* and that the verb *be* is understood in the original, and should be supplied in the translation, so as to have the clause read, "God *be* blessed forever. Amen." The verb *be*, you know, is often understood in the Greek, and often supplied in the translation;* and it is so several times between the words *blessed* and *God*. By comparing the Greek word in this text, with other texts in which it is translated *blessed*, it appears to me clearly to import *gratitude* and *praise*;† and such exclamations of gratitude and praise to God, are common in the writings of the apostle Paul. You will be pleased to examine and judge for yourself. As it respects the point in question, it is to me a matter of perfect indifferency in which of the two senses the text is understood.

2 Cor. v. 19. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."

Mr. Jones says, "Were there no other passage of Scripture to be found, this alone is sufficient to overthrow the whole doctrine of *Arianism*."—However true this observation may be as it respects *Arianism*,

* See Luke i. 68. 2 Cor. viii. 16.—ix. 15. Eph. i. 2, 3.—iii. 21. Rom. vi. 17.

† Was not our word *eulogize*, from the Greek word, in this text, which is translated *blessed*? And if it were common to speak of *eulogizing* God, might not the sense of the text be thus expressed, Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God *be* eulogized forever. Amen!

the text will be found perfectly harmonious with my views. God is evidently spoken of as *one Person only;* and Christ as another Person *distinct* from GOD. "GOD was *in Christ* reconciling the world to HIMSELF." *Himself* is a proper pronoun for *one Person,* and GOD is the antecedent. This *one Person* called GOD, was in *another Person* called CHRIST. If Christ were himself God, and, as Mr. Jones affirms, the *only true God,* let me be informed *what God* was *in Christ.*

In remarking on this very text, Mr. Jones says, "the word GOD, though of the singular number, is of plural comprehension; and he explains himself to mean that it comprises three Persons. The import of the text would then be, that *three Persons* called God, were IN CHRIST, reconciling the world to *himself.* It may be asked, ought not the pronoun to be *themselves?* Besides, if by God be meant *three Persons,* Christ is a *fourth Person,* and not one of the *three* included in the name GOD. The same would be true of the phrase, "the *Son* of God."

1 John v. 20. "And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

With great confidence, this text has been urged as an infallible proof that Jesus Christ is personally the *true* and *self-existent God.* But let us, sir, examine impartially, and take the connection into view—"And we know that we are of GOD, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know HIM that IS TRUE; and we are in HIM that IS TRUE, even in HIS Son Jesus Christ. This is the TRUE GOD, and eternal life."

Sometimes the sense of a passage is rendered obscure by the repetition of *pronouns*; and it is ever safe to substitute the *nouns* for the *pronouns*. Let us do so in regard to this 20th verse. The apostle had mentioned GOD, in the preceding verse. He goes on to say, "And we know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know GOD that *is true*; and we are IN GOD that *is true*, even in GOD'S *Son Jesus Christ*. This is the TRUE GOD, and eternal life."

Now, it may be asked, which of the two is called the "TRUE GOD" in the last sentence, he that is represented as the TRUE GOD repeatedly in the preceding part of the verse, or the SON of the TRUE GOD who had come to give us an understanding that we might know GOD that *is true?* Unless we are to believe that John *meant* to teach us that there are more *true Gods* than one, we must suppose the TRUE GOD in the last sentence is the *same Person* as the TRUE GOD in the preceding sentence, of whom CHRIST was the SON.

Christ, in his prayer to the Father, whom he styled the ONLY TRUE GOD, said, "I have *manifested thy name* to the men thou gavest me out of the world." This perfectly agrees with John's account, that "the SON of God is come, and hath *given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true.*" As Christ was in the flesh; as the *only true God* was *in Christ*; and as the business of the SON was to *give us an understanding of him that is true*, or to *manifest* the TRUE GOD; so GOD was *manifested in the flesh.* [1 Tim. iii. 16.]

Isa. viii. 13, 14. "Sanctify the LORD OF HOSTS himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be

your dread. And HE shall be for a Sanctuary: but for a *stone of stumbling* and for a *rock of offence* to both the houses of Israel."

1 Peter ii. 7, 8. "The STONE which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a *stone of stumbling* and a *rock of offence*."

From these two texts, compared, Mr. Jones draws this conclusion, "Christ is the Lord of Hosts himself."

That by the *Lord of Hosts* is here meant the self-existent God, is admitted. It is also admitted, that, in the text quoted from Peter, *Christ* is called the *stone of stumbling* and *rock of offence*. Isaiah says of the Lord of Hosts, that "he shall be for a *stone of stumbling*," &c. But *how* shall he be thus? By some *act of his providence*, or some *manifestation of himself*. The event proved that the *act* or *manifestation* predicted was that of *sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*. As God thus *manifested himself* in the *Person* of his *Son*, *He* became a *stone of stumbling*, that is, *he did that* at which his people *stumbled*. And at the same time, his *Son* was a stumbling block or stone of stumbling. Accordingly, by the same prophet God said, "Behold I LAY in Zion a STONE, a TRIED STONE, a PRECIOUS CORNER STONE." [Isa. xxviii. 16.] This text is also quoted in the New Testament, and applied to Christ. This *precious corner stone* was a *stone of stumbling* and *rock of offence*: This STONE was LAID in Zion by the Lord of HOSTS HIMSELF; and by this ACT of HIS PROVIDENCE, HE became a STONE of *stumbling* to the *unbelieving* of "both the houses of Israel."

Psalm lxxviii. 56. "They *tempted* and provoked the MOST HIGH GOD."

1 Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us *tempt* CHRIST, as some of them also *tempted*."

"Therefore," says Mr. Jones, "CHRIST is the MOST HIGH GOD."

Christ said to his disciples, "He that despiseth ME, despiseth HIM that SENT ME." On the same ground we may say, he that TEMPTED CHRIST, or the *Angel of God's Presence*, TEMPTED GOD. But if we must hence infer, that God and Christ are the same *Person* or *Being*, what will be the inference from these words of Christ, "He that *despiseth* YOU, *despiseth* ME?" Must we not infer, that *Christ* and his *apostles* are the *same Person* or *Being?*

In Rom. x. 19—21, we read, "First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people. But Esaias is very bold and saith, I was found of them that sought me not. But to Israel he saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." But if we look into the Old Testament, we find that all these things were said by JEHOVAH, the GOD OF ISRAEL. Moreover, we read, "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison." But Christ considered this as persecuting himself; and said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Now, sir, if it were safe to follow Mr. Jones in his method of drawing conclusions, it might be inferred that *Moses* and *Isaiah* were the GOD OF ISRAEL, yea, "the LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF," and that the *men* and *women*, persecuted by Saul, were CHRIST HIMSELF.

If a King has an own Son, whom he delights to honor, and who is united with him in government, whatever the King *does by his Son*, may be properly attributed to either the Father, or the Son: And the *disrespect* shown to the *Son* may be considered as dis-

respect to both the *Father* and the *Son.* Had these ideas been duly considered and applied by Mr. Jones. a great part of his inferences and conclusions would probably have never appeared in print. But by disregarding such analogies, he *compelled* the BIBLE to *speak his mind.*

LETTER V.

The Son of God not the same Person as the God of Israel.

REV. SIR,

MUCH time and labor have been expended, and much ingenuity displayed, in attempts to prove that Jesus Christ is the very Person who is called the God of Abraham, and the God of Israel, in the Old Testament. That he was the *Angel* of God, and the *Medium* of *Divine manifestations*, has been already admitted; but that the *Angel* of God and the *God of Israel* mean the same Person, is not admitted. For the phrase the *Angel of God* as clearly presents to the mind *two distinct Beings*, *one* of which is *sent* by the *other*, as the phrase the *Messenger of David.* Besides, the God of Israel said respecting this Angel, "Beware of him, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for MY name is in HIM." In these words, the *God* of Israel is, in the most decided manner, distinguished from the *Angel of his Presence*, as another Being or Agent.

That the Son of God is not the same Person as the God of Abraham, or the God of Israel, may appear from the following considerations:

1. It was the God of Israel who gave the promise of the Messiah. He never promised that he would *be* the Messiah; but the Messiah was to be a Son whom the God of Israel was to *raise up*.

2. The title given to Christ as the *Son* of God, will naturally lead us to the same conclusion. It was the *God of Israel* who proclaimed from heaven respecting the Messiah, "This is *my beloved Son*." As Christ was made known to the Jews as the SON of God, would they not naturally be led to conclude, that if he were the Son of *any God*, he was the Son of the *God of Israel?* And if you, sir, suppose that he is the *very Person* who was called the *God of Israel*, please to inform me of *what God* he was *the SON*. Will it not follow inevitably from your hypothesis, either that Christ *was not* the *SON OF GOD*, or that the *God of Israel* was the *SON* of some *OTHER GOD?*

3. We have the most decided testimony, both of Christ and his apostles, that the *Person* who is called the *God of Abraham* and the *God of Israel*, was the FATHER of CHRIST. In John viii. 54, we have the testimony of Christ himself—"Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my FATHER that honoreth *me*, of whom *ye say* that HE is YOUR GOD." What God, sir, did the Jews say was *their* God? Was it not the *God of Israel?* If so, then the *God of Israel* was the *Father of Christ*. And is not this testimony of Christ sufficient to overbalance all the arguments on your side of the question? And unless you can persuade yourself, that Christ might be both the *Father* and the *Son* of HIMSELF, must you not either relinquish your hypothesis, or call in question *his veracity?*

Moreover, from this portion of Christ's testimony, we may learn, that when he spake of GOD, he *meant*

his FATHER; and when he spake of his FATHER, he *meant* the GOD OF ISRAEL. Therefore, whenever he spake of GOD, or his FATHER, his language implied that *he himself* was not the Person who had been called the God of Israel.

Let us now listen to the language of Peter, Acts iii. 13. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified *his Son Jesus.*" This testimony is too plain to need any comment.

Paul, in his address to the dispersed Israelites, whom he found at Antioch in Pisidia, said, "The GOD *of this people of Israel* chose our fathers, and exalted the people where they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt." He then rehearsed a number of events between that period and the days of David; and having mentioned David as a man "after God's own heart," he added, "Of this man's seed hath God, *according to his promise,* RAISED unto Israel a SAVIOR, JESUS." [Acts xiii. 23.]

In the first verse of the epistle to the Hebrews, we read that "GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers, *by the prophets,* hath in these last days spoken to us BY HIS SON." Was it not the *God of Israel* who *spake by the prophets?* If so, Christ was the SON of the GOD OF ISRAEL.

In support of the idea now before us, a very considerable part of the New Testament might be quoted; for at the very foundation of the gospel this idea is laid, that Jesus Christ is the SON of the *God of Israel;* and this idea runs through the writings of the evangelists, and the sermons and epistles of the apostles. The matter is so clearly and so abundantly expressed,

that it is amazing that any one, acquainted with the Scriptures, should ever entertain the idea that JESUS CHRIST was the *very Person* who had been called the *God of Israel.*

In regard to the texts which have been relied on to prove that Christ is the very Person who was called the God of Israel, it may be observed, that the most of them would be easily explained, and the argument set aside, by only making a proper distinction between the ANGEL of God as the MEDIUM of *Divine manifestation*, and the GOD who was *manifested* through that Medium; or by only observing that whatever God does by Christ, may be properly attributed either to God or his Son. Many of the principal texts of this class have been already examined; and it is hoped enough has been said to convince you, that the hypothesis that Christ is the *Person* who is called the GOD OF ISRAEL, is without any solid foundation in the Bible. But the circumstance, that this hypothesis has been so long and so generally admitted by pious Christians, may be considered as evidence that it has had advocates who were esteemed eminent for *piety* and *ability*. For it is difficult to conceive, how any thing short of *distinguished eminence of character* in its *advocates* could ever have given *currency* and *popularity* to an opinion so manifestly repugnant to the *express declarations* of CHRIST and his apostles, and to the general tenor of the gospel.

If you, sir, should be disposed to say, that you never *implicitly denied* that Christ is the *SON* of God, let me ask, Is not an *attempt to prove* that Christ is the *very Person* who is called the God of Israel, an *implicit denial* that he is the SON of God? Would not a serious attempt to prove that Isaac was the *very person*

who was called Abraham, *imply* a *denial* that Isaac was the *Son* of Abraham?

POSTSCRIPT.

NO one thing relating to this subject has astonished me more than the attempts of ministers to prove that Jesus Christ is the *very Person* called the "*God of Israel.*" With just the same reason, and show of argument, you might attempt to prove that he is the very Person called "*God the Father.*" Any argument by which you attempt to prove that Jesus Christ is the Person called the God of Israel is of the same weight to prove that he is God the Father. This circumstance, if duly considered, may give you reason to suspect that *absurdity* or *sophistry* is implied in all such arguments.

In Isa. xliii. 11, the Holy ONE says, "I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Savior;" and as Jesus Christ is called our "Lord and Savior," you infer, that Jesus Christ is the Holy ONE of Israel, who said, "Beside me there is no Savior." This is one of your strongest arguments.

Now all you here wish to prove is, that Jesus Christ is a Person in the one God; but if your argument proves any thing, it will prove that Jesus Christ is the God and Father of himself, or that God the Father is not a SAVIOR. For the Holy ONE did not say, besides *us* there is no Savior, but "besides *me* there is no Savior." Yet we have as full evidence that the title SAVIOR originally belongs to God the Father, as we have that he is the SUPREME BEING, or the "God of Israel."

Besides, in your argument, a principle is assumed by which we can as fairly prove *more* than three

Persons in Deity as we can prove that Christ is a Person of the one God. As the Holy ONE said, "besides *me* there is *no Savior*," you assume the principle, that each Person to whom the Scriptures give the title of *Savior* must be a Person of Deity; and as this title is given to *Christ*, you infer that he is the living God.

But in 2 Kings xiii. 5, we read, that the "Lord gave Israel a *Savior*." You will not pretend that *this Savior* was either the *Father*, the *Son*, or the *Holy Spirit*. In Neh. ix. 27, we find the Jews confessing that when their forefathers were in affliction, the Lord gave "them *Saviors* who saved them out of the hands of their enemies." Neither the *number* nor the *names* of these *Saviors* are given in the connection; but there was a *plurality* of them, and we may probably find their names in the history of the Judges. But are we to admit that Othniel, Ehud, Gideon, &c. &c. are Persons of Deity? If not, your argument fails.

You may indeed reply, that we are expressly told, that these were *Saviors* whom the LORD *gave* or *raised up*. This is true; and it is *good evidence* that these persons were not the Deity or Persons in the one God. But we are no less plainly told, that "God *raised* unto Israel a *Savior Jesus*;" "Him hath God *exalted* with his own right hand to be a *Prince* and a *Savior*;" and that "the FATHER *sent* the SON to be the SAVIOR of the world."

How then are we to reconcile the idea of a *plurality* of *Saviors* with the declaration of the high and lofty ONE, "besides me there is no Savior?" He is the only *independent Savior*. He saved Israel by raising up *dependent Saviors*; and he saves *sinners* by sending *his Son* to be the Savior of the world.

Thus fallacious, and thus easily answered, are all the arguments to prove that Jesus Christ is the *very Person* called the God of Israel. They either prove *too much*, or they prove *nothing*.

LETTER VI.

On 1 John v. 7, 8.

REV. SIR,

IN the first edition of my letters to you, I admitted, as genuine, 1 John v. 7, and endeavored to show that it contained nothing inconsistent with my own views. I was not then ignorant of the fact that the *genuineness* of the text had been denied; but I had not seen the *evidence* of its being *spurious*. Since that time, I have seen evidence which, I think, must be sufficient to satisfy any mind which is free from prepossessions. To admit the text, and remark upon it as genuine, after such conviction, would be little better than to countenance forgery. Instead, therefore, of again admitting the text, I shall exhibit the evidence by which I was convinced that it was an *unwarranted interpolation*. As the evidence will be taken from a Trinitarian author, it is hoped that it will be satisfactory to you and many others.

The writer of the "Eclectic Review" of the "Improved Version," and of "Griesbach's Greek Testament," decidedly approves of the omission of the text in those works, and says, "It is found in no Greek MS. ancient or recent, except one to which we shall presently advert; in no ancient version, being *inter-*

polated only in the later transcripts of the Vulgate. Not one of the Greek fathers recognizes it, though many of them collect every species and shadow of argument down to the most allegorical and shockingly ridiculous, in favor of the doctrine of the Trinity; though they often cite the words immediately contiguous both before and after; and though with immense labor and art they extract from the next words the very sense which this passage has, in following times, been adduced to furnish. Of the Latin fathers *not one* has quoted it, till Eusebius of Lyons, in the middle of the fifth century; and in his works there is much reason to believe that it has been interpolated. Under these circumstances, we are unspeakably ashamed, that any modern divines should have contended for retaining a passage so indisputably spurious."

This, sir, is the decision of one on your own side of the question; and one who has given evidence that he possesses both *learning* and *candor*. In connection with the text which has now been given up, I introduced the following verse, "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the *spirit*, the *water*, and the *blood*, and these three agree in one." Upon this text I made some observations to prepare the way for a right understanding of the passage contained in the apostles' commission. But as considerable was then said, which has no immediate connection with the main subject of inquiry, I shall here give only the leading thoughts as they relate to the institution of baptism.

By the *Spirit* is understood those communications of the Holy Spirit which have been given for the *confirmation* of the truths of the gospel, and the *promotion*

of the Christian religion. By the *water* and the *blood* which bear witness, is supposed to be meant *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, as instituted *memorials* of the *inauguration* and the *death* of the Messiah.

The *sabbath*, *circumcision*, and the *passover* were respectively *memorials* of *extraordinary events*. The *Lord's day* is kept as a *memorial* of the *resurrection* of the Son of God; and the *Lord's supper* as an instituted *memorial* of his *death*. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that *baptism* is, also, an instituted *memorial* of some *extraordinary event*. When our Savior was baptized by John, he was inducted into office, the *Spirit* descended and abode upon him, and God from on high proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." No event, prior to this, had been more worthy of a perpetual *memorial*. But of this event we have no memorial unless it be that of Christian baptism. Nor is there any event but this, of which baptism can naturally be supposed the *memorial*. Therefore, as by analogy we are led to believe that baptism is a *memorial* of *some* interesting *event*, and as no other event can be so naturally supposed to be the one, it is believed that it was instituted as the *memorial* of the Messiah's *induction to office*, when he was *baptized* with *water*, *endued* with the *Spirit*, and *announced* to the world as the *Son of God*. It was on this occasion that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost." Accordingly, in instituting the *memorial*, the *God* who *anointed*, the *Son* who was the *subject* of the *anointing*, and the *Holy Spirit*, with which the *Father* anointed the *Son*, are all brought to view.

LETTER VII.

The Apostles' commission considered.

REV. SIR,

THE language of the Apostles' commission, Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, shall now be considered.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

That the text, as it stands in our translation, does very *naturally* suggest the idea of baptizing by the *authority of three Persons*, is admitted; and of course it suggests the idea that the Holy Spirit is a Person. But when this view of the text is urged, as the *only possible meaning*, there is perhaps one thing *overlooked*, which ought to be considered; and some things *taken for granted*, which require *proof* that is not easily obtained.

In the verse already quoted, immediately preceding the one so much relied on, Christ had said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." And what is here asserted appears to be *overlooked*. It was, sir, on this very ground, that he added, "Go ye, *therefore*, into all the world," &c. Now, if Christ had *all authority* in heaven and earth, *his authority* must have been sufficient for *baptizing* in his own name, without connecting any other.—Nor does it appear very natural to suppose that Christ would say to this effect, I have *all authority*; go ye, *therefore*, and *baptize* by the *joint authority* of *myself* and *two other Persons*. And has it not been also too much overlooked, that we

have no example for baptizing in any other name than that of the Lord Jesus? If it be a matter of so much moment as has been supposed, that baptism should be administered in the name of *three Persons*, is it not somewhat extraordinary that we are not able to find so much as *one* example of the apostles to support the practice?

But perhaps some things are *taken for granted* as well as *overlooked*. The things which seem to have been taken for granted, that require proof, are these—

1. That the *preposition*, which is translated *in*, does not mean *into*, *to*, *for*, or *unto*—

2. That the word *name*, unquestionably means *authority*—

3. That the design of Christ, in the passage, was to show the *authority by which* baptism is to be *administered*, and not the END *for which* it is to be administered.

Respecting the Greek preposition εἰς, you are doubtless sensible that this is much more frequently translated *into*, *to*, or *for*, than it is *in*. And had either of those words been used in the text instead of *in*, this would have entirely precluded the idea of baptizing by the authority of three Persons.

And the word *name* is abundantly used in the Scriptures, as of the same import as the word *character*: it is also used for *renown*, *glory*, or *praise*; and it is sometimes used as of similar import with the word *memorial*. In one or other of these senses the word is used much more frequently than as importing *authority*.

It is, sir, my present opinion of the words in dispute, that it was *the* design of Christ to express the OBJECT OR END *for which*, and not teh AUTHORITY

by which, baptism is to be administered; and that the preposition would be more properly translated so as to read "*to* the name," or "*for* the name," than "*in* the name."

Some reasons or analogies, to justify this explanation or construction of the text, may now be stated.

1. This construction agrees with the *character* of the Holy Spirit, as already illustrated from the general and natural import of Scripture language.

2. This construction corresponds with the idea that baptism is a *standing witness* and *memorial* in the church, that the Son of God came *by water*, and was publicly inaugurated, endued, and announced, as the promised Messiah, the Son of God.

3. It agrees with the frequent use of the word *name*, as signifying renown, glory, praise, or memorial.

When monuments are erected, or memorials instituted, to perpetuate the memory of illustrious characters, or illustrious events, renown, glory, and praise, are the *object* of these memorials. When memorials are instituted to perpetuate the memory of remarkable and distinguishing events of Divine providence, they are designed for the renown, glory, and praise of God.

4. When, in the New Testament, any thing is said to be done, or required to be done, for a witness, for a sign, for a testimony, for a memorial, or to the glory, or to the praise of God, this same preposition, εἰς, is used, and translated *for* or *to*. And can one instance to the contrary be found in the New Testament?

Thus, sir, you have before you *some* of the analogies which at least *seem* to justify me in supposing, that it was the design of Christ, in the apostles' commission, to express the END *for which*, and not mere-

ly the AUTHORITY *by which*, baptism is to be administered. The AUTHORITY *by which*, is indeed expressed in the introductory words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth; go ye, *therefore*;" but the clause in dispute appears to me not designed to *re-express* the *authority*, but to show the END for which baptism was instituted.

Can you, sir, produce such analogies in support of the common construction of this passage? Can you produce one analogy from the Bible which will justify you in saying that this text requires us to baptize by the *authority* of the *Holy Spirit* as a *distinct Person*?

If the construction now given of the passage should be admitted and adopted, it would occasion no change in the form of words to be used in baptizing, but simply that of using *to*, or *for*, or *unto*, instead of *in*. The adoption would, however, open a door for much to be pertinently and profitably said, respecting that momentous event in which the promised Messiah was publicly *inaugurated*, *endued*, and *announced* to the world as the SON OF GOD; and the *grace* and *glory* which was displayed on that memorable occasion.

In this *inauguration* we may contemplate a fulfilment of what had been *promised* and *predicted*, and also of what had been *typified* in the manner in which prophets, priests, and kings, had been invested with their respective offices. The *holy oil* was poured on the heads of prophets and kings, as an emblem of the *Holy Spirit*, with which the Messiah was to be *endued*. Aaron was first *washed* with water, and then had the *oil of consecration* poured on his head, as the Son of God was first *washed* or *baptized*, and then *endued* with the *Spirit of God*. If we may connect, in one view, the Old and the New Testament

forms of *inauguration* or *ordination;* in that event we may behold the Messiah condescending to come to John, his herald, to be *washed* with *water* as Aaron was; then we behold him making his own *ordination prayer;* and what is still more august, we may behold the ETERNAL FATHER performing the solemn rites of *laying on of hands*, and *giving the Right Hand of Fellowship*—He first sent down his *Holy Spirit*, which is often represented as his *Hand;* this abode on the Son; then, with an audible voice, God proclaimed, in the ears of attending angels and men, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED." A scene more august, and more expressive of GRACE and GLORY, had perhaps never been seen in heaven nor earth.

POSTSCRIPT.

LET it be distinctly understood, that the opinion, that baptism was instituted as a *memorial* of the *inauguration* of the Messiah, is not viewed by me as *essential* to the main theory respecting the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The opinion resulted from a serious inquiry into the meaning of *Christ's coming by water*, and of the *water's bearing witness.* It is proposed, for examination, as that which appears to me *probably true.* But the main things had in view do not *depend* on the *correctness* of that opinion. Various reasons may be given for the use of the terms *Holy Spirit*, in the apostles' commission, which do not imply the personality of the Spirit. But what, sir, if no such reason could be given by me, or by yourself? Shall one clause of a text, of *doubtful import*, be admitted as *proof* of a *fact*, in *opposition* to

the *general tenor* of *plain* and *inspired representations?* More, it is believed, than *two hundred* times, the Holy Spirit of God is brought into view in the Scriptures, in a manner which clearly conveys the idea, that, by the Spirit, a self-existent Person is *not intended.* And shall *one*, *two* or *three* texts, which *seem* to favor your opinion, be allowed *more weight* than *two hundred* others which are *clearly in opposition?* Suppose, sir, that after long and laborious inquiry, I could obtain no satisfactory exposition of the disputed clause in the apostles' commission, which would accord with my present views of the Holy Spirit; and on that ground should give up the whole theory, and return to *your* doctrine of the Trinity; what then would be my situation? I must cease to reflect, or must take into view the numerous texts which *naturally oppose* your idea of the Spirit, with the multitude which are opposed to the *self-existence* of the *Son* of God, and the many thousands which distinctly represent God as *one Person only.* On the whole, then, instead of *one perplexing* text, I should have to encounter many thousands, each of which, according to the natural import of language, would be opposed to the doctrine that I should profess to believe. If you will show me how those numerous classes of texts can be fairly reconciled to your doctrine, and how the representations of DIVINE LOVE in the gospel can be consistent with your views of the Son of God, you will easily reclaim me from my supposed error. For whatever may have been your views of my *feelings* or my *motives*, this is a fact, that it is far from being a *pleasant thing* to me to be obliged to dissent in opinion from such a multitude of worthy characters.

There is one consideration which will probably have influence against the admission of the sentiments of these Letters, viz. That the writer is a person *obscurely situated*, of *private education*, and *unpromising advantages*. All this may, in truth, be said. But sometimes God has "chosen" *weak* and *unpromising instruments* to carry on his work, "*that no flesh should glory in his presence.*" Besides, if "the Scriptures were inspired to instruct *common readers*, by using words according to their *common acceptation*," it is *possible* that a person, under all my disadvantages, may investigate the truth, by making the Scriptures his *only guide*. It has been no part of my object to *invent* a NEW THEORY. My aim has been to investigate, represent, and support, such sentiments as are *revealed* in the BIBLE, admitting words to be used "according to their common acceptation," comparing Scripture with Scripture. If, on due examination, it shall be found that any sentiment, in these Letters, may be properly ascribed to me as the *author*, let it be rejected. But you will allow, that sentiments, of which God is the Author, should not be rejected, whoever may be the writer. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" This, you will remember, was a question which once arose in the mind of an "Israelite indeed;" and, perhaps, on the same ground, thousands of others, to their own ruin, *rejected* the SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. On no better ground, it may be, that thousands will *reject* the SENTIMENTS contained in these Letters, even if they are *sanctioned* by the ORACLES OF GOD.

LETTER VIII.

Conclusion.

REV. SIR,

THIS series of Letters has already been extended beyond my original design. It shall now be closed. I am not insensible, that publishing my views exposes me to attacks from every denomination of professing Christians. Yet no man can have *less desire* to be engaged in public controversy. But being not my own, it would be wrong to suppress what to me appears honorary to Christ, for the sake of private *ease, quiet*, or *popularity*.

Freedom has been used in examining your opinions, and the opinions of others; but, at the same time, it has been an object of my care to cultivate, in my heart, feelings of *tenderness* and *respect* for my fellow Christians of different opinions. In writing, it has been my aim not to wound your feelings, or the feelings of any other man. While writing this last Letter of the series, my conscience bears me witness, that not *one sentence* in the whole has been *dictated* by the *feelings* of *displeasure* against any one of my fellow creatures.

These Letters are addressed to YOU, in hope, that if there *must* be an *opponent*, it may be one who is *able* and *willing* to *investigate*; and one who has learned of Him who was meek and lowly in heart. This being your character, should you see cause to answer my Letters, you will look *thoroughly* and *prayerfully* into the subject, and not write at random. You will not *shelter* yourself under the *popularity* of your own

theory, and on that ground think yourself *justified* in treating with *contempt* the views of your friend.—You will not *sneer* at arguments which you cannot refute by *fair reasoning*; nor substitute sarcastic and censorious declamation, for argument. You will not *misrepresent* my *real views*, for the sake of having *something* before you which you can *easily refute*. But if you view me in an error, you will pity and pray for me; and, in the spirit of meekness and love, you will endeavor to show me my mistakes and errors. And you will write as one who expects to give account. And if I am in an error, be assured, sir, that it is my *cordial desire* that you may be enabled to detect it, and to set it before me, and before the world, in a convincing light.

You will readily perceive, that there may be mistakes in explaining some particular texts, and yet the theory may be correct. In attempting to explain so many texts, it is *very possible* that there are instances of incorrectness. For one so fallible, it is enough to say, that my labor has been to investigate the real truth, without *perverting* or *misapplying* the Scriptures; and that it has been my sincere desire to make the theory *square* with the *Scriptures* as a DIVINE STANDARD, and not to make the *Scriptures bend to the theory*.

Should you think it to be your duty to express your disapprobation of the theory, by way of a REVIEW in some periodical work, you will give an *impartial representation* of my *real sentiments*, that those who read the REVIEW may have some opportunity to judge as to the correctness of the *opinion* you may express.

After you shall have written your objections by way of REVIEW, be pleased to turn to John xvii. and

review the prayer of the Son of God; examine the *natural import* of every sentence distinctly; then ask yourself these questions—Does not *every sentence* in this prayer *perfectly harmonize* with the *sentiments* against which I have been writing?—Yea, does not this prayer *clearly contain* the *principal sentiments* which the writer of the Letters has aimed to establish?—If he had *forged* a prayer for the Son of God, in support of his own theory, could he have written any thing more to his purpose than that which *really* proceeded from the lips of Christ?—Are not, then, *my objections* to his views *as really* objections to the sentiments contained in the prayer of the Son of God?

And may that DIVINE LORD, in whom is our hope, lead us to a more perfect knowledge of himself; and grant, that not only you and I, but all who may read these Letters, may experience the truth of the declaration which he made in his prayer to the Father, "And this is life eternal, to know THEE the ONLY TRUE GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast SENT." And while it shall be our lot to differ in sentiment, let us daily unite in the prayer of Christ, that *we all* may *be one*, even as HE and the FATHER *ARE ONE*.

Adieu.

NOAH WORCESTER.

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