

exercise our faith ; yet it does not appear that ambiguous and obscure expressions, if employed to represent those objects, could answer any such purpose. And though the Holy Spirit had intended to put our faith to the trial, he certainly would have been very far from doing it in such a way, as had a natural tendency to injure the glory of God and hazard our salvation, by suggesting such ideas as opened a door to blasphemy and idolatry. If, notwithstanding, the Spirit of inspiration really designed that the passages in question should be understood in the sense of our adversaries, he has been greatly disappointed ; for there have been comparatively few that have so considered them, or whose faith has been so exercised by them.

The hypothesis of our opponents not only renders the language of Scripture obscure, but also *false* and *deceitful*. A discourse is generally considered as false, when those ideas, which common consent and custom have affixed to the terms of which it consists, are not found to be true ; even though the speaker or writer should annex, mentally, a signification to each word, so as to render the whole consistent with fact. For equivocations and latent reservations are a species of lies. Now, it is demonstrable, that the sentiments of our opposers render the language of Scripture deceitful. For if it be lawful to give the sacred records a sense that is remote from the ordinary signification of the terms which are used, there is no opinion so absurd, no doctrine so monstrous, but may be easily established by the Bible.

Admitting the lawfulness of such a procedure, it would be no hard matter for me to prove, that the true God had no hand in the work of creation ; nay, that there is no mention of any such thing in the ancient oracles. Even such a sentiment, horrid as it

is, I could maintain, without offering greater violence to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, than our adversaries do to those of the New. I would assert, that he who created the heavens and the earth was an *angel*, the minister of Jehovah ; one who is not God by nature, but merely by office. If reminded of the *names* given him in Scripture, I would answer with the Socinians, He bears them only as he is the minister and representative of the Most High. The epithet, *almighty*, which is sometimes given him, would not much embarrass me. I should say, this angel does all things in our lower world, by the will of the Great Supreme, who has committed the administration of its government to him ; but there are an infinite number of other worlds, which do not in the least come under his control. And though he is called, "The searcher of hearts," yet he bears the august character only because the most high God reveals to him everything that passes in the soul. He is, indeed, said to have "created all things;" but these words are to be understood with great limitation : not of all things without exception ; but only of such as respect us, or belong to this visible world. He was, I confess, *worshipped* ; and worship has been considered as an honour peculiar to the true God ; but there is a very important distinction which is here to be made, between *supreme* and *subordinate* worship. And should it be said, This dependence of the angel, who is called God, upon the Supreme Being, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, I should soon produce instances to the contrary. As, for example, "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire *from* the Lord out of heaven," Gen. xix. 24. And those words to Abraham, spoken by him who is called God, "Now I know that thou fearest

God," Gen. xxii. 12. And so when the God of Israel is represented as the greatest "among the gods," may we not consider him as the greatest among the angels, to whom the Infinite Supreme has committed the government of several parts of the universe? which would imply, that the God of Israel is not the Supreme God. In vain would it be objected, That the God of Israel is the Creator of heaven and earth; and that the act of creating, supposes an infinite power, which cannot belong to any but the Most High. For our adversaries furnish me with a solution of this difficulty, by showing that the term *ברא* does not always signify *to produce out of nothing*; but merely to *produce*; and, sometimes, to *fashion*, to *dispose*. If it were objected, The God of Israel speaks as the true God when he says, "I will not give my glory to another;" it might be answered, The angel who has received the government of this world, has a glory peculiar to himself, exclusive of other intelligences, and possesses this glory in opposition to idols, which are vanity. It might be further supposed, that the true God has granted him the power of communicating to another so much of his empire as he pleases; and, therefore, he could impart it to Jesus Christ, as the true God did to him. Now, I leave our adversaries to judge, whether it would be easy for them to force me in these intrenchments which they have prepared; and to consider, of what vast importance it is, never to deprive the terms of Scripture of their *natural* signification. Because, if we once take the liberty of affixing new ideas to the words, *God*, *worship*, and such like expressions, we destroy all certainty in the analogy of faith and in the sacred Scripture, and abandon ourselves to perpetual scepticism.

As Jehovah is the God of truth, it cannot be supposed, without shocking impiety, that he ever designed to betray us into error, by speaking to us in ambiguous and deceitful language. If, then, such a procedure would be considered as contrary to his eternal truth, it is no less inconsistent with his wisdom, nor less derogatory to the dignity of his revelation, to speak in language that is absurd and ridiculous. Yet such is the language of the Bible, in many places, if understood according to the principles of our opposers.

What expressions, for instance, can be more ridiculous than these, if Christ be a mere man, honoured with the name, GOD, on account of his ministry? "He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh?" Rom. i. 3. What is the meaning of the term, *flesh*? If you understand it, as opposed to *spirit*, the sense of the passage will be, He was made of the seed of David, according to the *body*; not according to the *soul*. A goodly way of speaking, for Gamaliel's pupil, for Christ's apostle to use! Alexander had a body and soul; yet all would unite in pronouncing that man contemptibly weak, who should say, Alexander was made of the seed of Philip *according to the flesh*. Nay, the language would be absurd in the mouth of one who believes the conqueror of the world to be the son of Jupiter. For such an one should say, Alexander was *not* the son of Philip; not, He was the son of Philip *according to the flesh*.

It may, perhaps, be said, "These words, 'according to the flesh,' are opposed, not to the *nature* of Christ, but to his *heavenly offices* and *Divine ministry*; and the meaning is, Jesus was made of the seed of David, not as he is God, or as he is

honoured with a Divine ministry; but as he is man, or possessed of a corporal nature."—But Peter was the son of Zebedee, not as an apostle, but as a man; his apostleship being a divine office, and coming immediately from God. Yet this proposition, Peter was made of the seed of Zebedee, according to the flesh, would be ridiculous.

"The text under consideration may imply, that Jesus Christ had a nobler origin than other men, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit."—But it is not the power *by* which, but the matter *of* which, he was made, that is intended by these words, "He was made according to the flesh." Again: Jesus was made of the seed of David, and made flesh, by the power of the Holy Ghost. This proposition, therefore, "He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," is, in the sense of Scripture, equivalent to this, He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, by the Holy Ghost. And if so, we are still at a loss for the meaning of "He was made according to the flesh." For, if Christ be a mere man by nature, this expression, "according to the flesh," is perfectly ridiculous.

Equally absurd, on the Socinian hypothesis, is that celebrated saying of our Lord's, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," John xvii. 5. If you expound these words of the glory which Jesus had in the *Divine decree*, you render the expressions absurd, being contrary to the common forms of speech. For it is as if a man should say, Give me, Lord, the health which I had with thee before the world was. Feed me, O Father, with my daily bread, with which I was fed in thy presence before the world was created. Grant, O

gracious God, that I may safely arrive at that celestial place, where I was with thee before the foundation of the world. Many other instances might be adduced of that ridiculous air which the Socinian sentiment gives to the language of inspiration, but these may suffice.

The same perverse hypothesis renders the language of Scripture *impious* and *blasphemous*. This impiety has various degrees. For instance, the sacred writers, when speaking of Jesus Christ, take no care to avoid such expressions as might give occasion to blasphemy. Of which number are these, *God, equal with God, the Creator of all things, worship,* and others of a similar kind, which were never piously used but to express the glory of the Eternal Sovereign. Again: They represent Jesus Christ as using these expressions, in connexion with others, which imply an excessive and criminal familiarity with God, if he be not of the same essence with him. As when he calls himself *the Son, the own Son, and the only Son of God*; asserting, that God is *his Father*, not occasionally, and so as to intimate that he claims the Divine relation only in a figurative sense; but, frequently, in the most solemn discourses, and that without any limitation, saying, *My Father*, when an apostle would have said, *My God*; plainly signifying, that he assumes the exalted title in a literal and proper sense. Further: This impiety appears to a shocking degree in the writers of the New Testament placing a creature on an equality with the Creator by such expressions as these, "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6; "Philip, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," John xiv. 9. As if he who beholds the glimmering of a glow-worm, saw the splendour of the meridian sun! And

by attributing to Jesus, a mere man, the same authority as they do to the Father, in the great commission which was given to the apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. xxviii. 19. As if one should say, Go and enrol the people, by order of the king and his slave! A still further degree of impiety consists in this: When the penmen of Scripture express the honour which is due to Jesus Christ, they do it by the general term *worship*, without ever giving the least intimation that it means a *subordinate* worship, or that there is any such thing; though, on the principles of our opponents, there is as great a difference between supreme and subordinate adoration, as there is between the Creator and the creature; and though it be certain, that if a man should frequently give the title of *majesty* to any one but the king, he would be highly culpable in the eye of his sovereign, whatever mental distinction he might make between supreme and subordinate majesty; because terms have their signification principally from general custom, not from the particular fancy of the person who uses them. Once more: The apostles invest a mere creature with the *qualities*, and attribute to him the *works* of the great Creator. Nay, which is carrying impiety to the highest degree, if the hypothesis of our opposers be true, they boldly apply to a mere man the *sublimest oracles* of the Old Testament, those oracles which were intended to express, in the most emphatical manner, the *infinite glories* of the Most High. But this argument shall be the subject of the following section.

SECTION IV.

IF JESUS CHRIST BE NOT OF THE SAME ESSENCE WITH HIS FATHER, THERE IS NO HARMONY BETWEEN THE PROPHETS AND THE APOSTLES, OR BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

IF JESUS CHRIST BE NOT OF THE SAME ESSENCE WITH HIS FATHER, THE PROPHETS, WHO SPAKE OF HIM, DID NOT FORESEE THINGS AS THEY WERE TO COME TO PASS.

As the religion of Jesus depends on the united testimony of the prophets and the apostles, it is absolutely necessary, for the confirmation of our faith, that these testimonies should agree and mutually support each other. An hypothesis, therefore, which destroys that agreement which ought to subsist between the penmen of the Old, and the writers of the New Testament, saps the foundations of Christianity. Such is the system of those who maintain, that Jesus Christ is a mere creature. For, if that sentiment be true, the Spirit, by whose inspiration the prophets wrote, neither foretold nor foresaw things as they were to come to pass under the gospel dispensation; nor did that Spirit, whom the apostles received, and by whose direction they spake, understand the oracles of the Old Testament. To prove the *former* of these propositions, we need only consider, in what manner the prophets describe the true God; how they represent the Messiah; on what fundamental truths they establish the Jewish religion; and with what cir-

cumstances they describe the establishment of the new covenant, and the calling of the gentiles.

The prophets describe the *true God* by titles which they give to him, exclusive of all other beings. To distinguish him from, and to assert his infinite superiority over all his creatures, they call him, "THE CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; THE FIRST AND THE LAST; THE KING OF GLORY; THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS; THE SAVIOUR AND REDEEMER; THE JUDGE, LAWGIVER, AND KING; and, THE MOST HIGH." Here it is to be observed, that these are not only the characters of the true God, but they are such characters as are *peculiar* to him; and in which no creature has a share. For He *only* is the Most High: He *only* knoweth the hearts of the children of men: He *only* blotteth out transgression for his own sake: He *only* is the Saviour and the Redeemer of Israel; for He expressly declares there is *none else*. It ought also to be remarked, that these characters are such as principally distinguish the Creator from the creature; and that it would be very difficult either to invent or to meet with others in the sacred records, by which the important distinction could be more strongly marked, or appear with greater clearness. For there is the utmost reason to conclude, that these are the titles which JEHOVAH chose, by which to distinguish himself from all other beings.

Yet these titles are all given to Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Of Him it is said, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands," Heb. i. 10. He is called repeatedly, "The First and the Last," Rev. i. 11, 17; ii. 8; xxii. 13. He expressly claims the prerogative of searching the reins

and the heart, Rev. ii. 23; John ii. 25. He is called, by Zacharias, "the Highest," or the Most High; before whose face John the Baptist was sent, Luke i. 76. He is the "King of kings, and the Lord of lords," Rev. xix. 16. He is "the Saviour," John iv. 42; Luke ii. 11; and he is the "Judge," 2 Tim. iv. 1; Matt. xxv. 31—46.

But if these titles belong to Jesus Christ, what was the reason that the prophets gave them to the God of Israel, as *peculiar* to him, and *incommunicable*? Did not those holy men foresee that they would be applied to a mere creature; who, how excellent soever, must be considered as infinitely below the eternal God? What! is there nothing in all those grand characters and sublime descriptions of the Deity, contained in the Old Testament, but what is equivocal, and was to be applied to Jesus, a mere creature, as well as to the infinite JEHOVAH? When the Holy Spirit informs us, in the ancient oracles, that the great, the true, the eternal God, possesses these characters as peculiarly his own; what can we think, but that the Spirit of inspiration either did not *foresee* the glory of Jesus Christ, who was to bear these Divine titles; or, if he foresaw it, that he intended to betray us into an error, which confounds the creature with the Creator?

These horrid suspicions will be increased, if we consider the characters of the *Messiah*. If He who inspired the prophets did not foresee what would come to pass after the appearance of the Messiah; what the effects of his doctrine would be; how it would be condemned as impious by the Jews; how they would prosecute Jesus to death, under a charge of blasphemy, for claiming an equality with God; and that his disciples would make him the object of their worship;

if, I say, He by whose inspiration the prophets wrote and spake, did not foresee these things, he could not be the Spirit of Him who is omniscient. And if he did foresee them, we have reason to wonder, and it is hard to forbear complaining, that, instead of taking proper precautions to *prevent* the errors and idolatry which he foresaw, he took the most *direct way* to give birth and encouragement to them. For what else could he intend by calling the Messiah, "GOD WITH US; THE MIGHTY GOD; JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; THE GOD AND SAVIOUR OF THE WHOLE EARTH; THE LORD THAT SHOULD SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE?" Matt. i. 23; Isa. ix. 6; Jer. xxiii. 6; John iv. 42; Mal. iii. 1.

"But," our opponents say, "though the Messiah is called, 'God with us,' and, 'Jehovah our righteousness,' yet he is not called GOD, absolutely. Besides, these two characters only signify, that God, by the Messiah, would be with men, so as to grant them the special marks of his favour; and that, by him, he would justify and save them."—But we do not here argue from the *force* of the expressions, but from the *wisdom* and the *design* of the Holy Spirit who used them. Though it were not the Spirit of God, but a man of common prudence and piety, who acted on this occasion, we cannot imagine, if he foresaw that men would fall into such a mistake as to commit idolatry, by treating a mere creature as if he were the true God, that he would ever think of describing Jesus-Christ by such characters as those before us. If our adversaries could put themselves in the place of the prophets, and were, by Jehovah's order, to form an anticipated model of the Christian religion; *they* would take particular care not to describe the expected Messiah after this manner.

“ It is not so surprising, perhaps,” they may say, “ that the prophets should speak thus of a man, to whom they knew God would communicate his name and glory.”—But if that had been the reason of their conduct, it is unaccountably strange, that they should so frequently inculcate the following truths, as the *fundamental principles* of their religion: “ The gods that made not the heavens, shall perish from the earth; I will not give my glory to another; Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve; He that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth,” Jer. x. 11; Isa. xlii. 8; Matt. iv. 10; Isa. lxv. 16. These are truths essential to the Jewish religion, and quite inconsistent with the idea of a subordinate and dependant God.

The truth of the proposition we here endeavour to confirm, will be still more evident if we consider, *With what circumstances* the prophets describe the calling of the Gentiles and the establishment of the new covenant, by Jesus Christ. These grand events are described by the following characteristics: *An universal and exuberant joy*: “ Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains!” Isa. lxv. 18; xlix. 13. And, as if inanimate creatures were suddenly to possess the powers of reason, in order to share in the pleasure and praise, the prophets declare, that the isles and the sea, the earth and the mountains, the forests and the deserts, shall shout for joy. *God’s dwelling among men*: “ Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. Behold, YOUR GOD will come—He will come and save you. Then

the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing," Zech. ii. 10; Isa. xxxv. 4—6. *The exaltation of God*: "The LORD ALONE shall be exalted in that day," Isa. ii. 11. *The destruction of idols*: "The gods, that made not the heavens, shall perish; The idols he shall utterly abolish; from all your idols will I cleanse you," Jer. x. 11; Isa. ii. 18; Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

If the Spirit, by whom the prophets uttered and penned their predictions, foresaw things as they were to come to pass; then he knew very well, that he described the calling of the Gentiles and the establishment of the new covenant, in such a manner as would never be verified. He knew, that the gospel, while it destroyed one species of idolatry, would introduce another more dangerous. For if we compare the Christian idolatry, which makes an idol of Jesus Christ, by setting him on the throne of the Supreme Being, with the idolatry of the heathens, we shall find that the latter has the advantage of being the *less dangerous*, in several respects. The pagan idolatry was *grossly absurd*, and unworthy of understanding persons; but the Christian idolatry is *spiritual*, and much more plausible. The former sprang from an *abuse* of natural light; the latter from the most *natural use* we can make of written revelation. For what use more natural, than to understand its expressions in their common and well known signification? The pagan idolatry was repeatedly and peremptorily *forbidden* by the Holy Ghost, from age to age; forbidden under the most awful penalties, and in the most alarming way, both in the Old and New Testament; whereas the Christian idolatry is a

mischief which the Spirit of prophecy either did not *at all foresee*, or, foreseeing, used *no means to prevent*; but rather, by various forms of expression, encouraged and authorized. The former did not run so high, as to *equal* their subordinate divinities with Jupiter, their supreme god; but the latter consists in treating Jesus, a mere creature, as the Most High. Though the *heathens* worshipped several gods, yet they did not consider them as possessed of infinite perfection; whereas *Christians* believe it of Jesus Christ. God's *jealousy* also is sooner provoked, by investing a very excellent creature with his attributes and glory, than by transferring his Divine honours to one that is mean and base; because the consequences are more dangerous to the interest of men and the glory of God. The *Christian* idolatry, therefore, being a more plausible evil, is more pernicious than that of the *heathens*.

Either, then, the Spirit who inspired the prophets, did not foresee things as they were to be; or he knew that the calling of the Gentiles would not be signalized by the destruction of idols; but, on the contrary, that a more absurd and less dangerous idolatry, would give way to one more refined and more destructive, that would soon overspread the world; that the Desire of the nations, would become the idol of the people; and that the very Name, which was to be given among men, and by which they were to be saved, would become, for many ages and over all the earth, a name of blasphemy. Consequently, God has been so far from being *exalted*, under the new dispensation, by the abasement of men; that, at its commencement, he himself began to be *abased*, by the exaltation of the man Jesus; because the exaltation of Christ occasioned the apostles to compare him with God, and

boldly to ascribe to him an equality with God, by investing him with all the prerogatives and titles of the Great Supreme. The prophets, therefore, had no great reason to rejoice in the prospect of the gospel, and its reception in the world; since, by its most natural impressions, it betrays men into idolatry. To which I may add, were the sentiment of our adversaries true, God would be much less present in the Christian church, than he was in the ancient sanctuary; for he was there in the cloud of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat, in a very illustrious manner; but our opponents will not allow Jesus Christ to be any more than a man. The Spirit of inspiration, therefore, instead of making "God's dwelling with men," one of the characteristics of gospel-times, would have spoken more agreeably to fact if he had said, Under the new covenant, God shall not vouchsafe the illustrious tokens of his intimate presence to so great a degree, as he did to the ancient Israelitish church.

Thus the characters of the true God, which are drawn by the ancient prophets, the characters of the Messiah recorded in the Old Testament, the fundamental principles of the Jewish worship, and the circumstances which were to attend the establishment of the new covenant and the calling of the Gentiles, all conspire to show, That the Spirit of prophecy either did not foretell events as they were to come to pass; or that the system of our opponents is false.

CHAPTER II.

IF JESUS CHRIST BE NOT OF THE SAME ESSENCE WITH HIS FATHER, EITHER THE APOSTLES DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE PROPHETS, OR THEY DESIGNED TO BETRAY US INTO ERROR.

As the hypothesis of those who consider Jesus Christ as a mere creature, casts a foul reflection on the predictions of the ancient prophets: so, by unavoidable consequence, it obliges us to conclude, that though the apostles made the Old Testament the foundation of their whole doctrine, by constantly appealing to it; and though they received the Holy Ghost, whose province it was to lead them into the true sense of it; yet, after all, they did not understand it. The truth of this proposition we shall endeavour to prove in the following paragraphs, by considering a few of those passages in the Old Testament, which the apostles apply to Jesus Christ in the New.

The eloquent Isaiah says, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, PREPARE YE THE WAY OF JEHOVAH, MAKE STRAIGHT IN THE DESERT A HIGH-WAY FOR OUR GOD," Isa. xl. 3. Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, and applying this oracle to his infant son, cites and expounds it thus: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of THE HIGHEST: for thou shalt go before the face of THE LORD to prepare his ways," Luke i. 76. In both these oracles, it is evident, these exalted characters, JEHOVAH, OUR GOD, THE HIGHEST, and THE LORD, are applied to the same glorious Person. And it is equally certain, from the constant application of them by the sacred writers, that they are

peculiar to God. Consequently, if they belong to Jesus Christ, he must be a Divine Person, of the same essence with his Father, and the Most High.

That all these adorable names really belong to our Lord, appears from their being applied to him by the unerring Spirit. For he, before whose face John the Baptist was to go, is Jesus Christ. It must be either he, or God the Father. Not the Father; for either these words, "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord," are to be understood in a *proper* sense; in such a manner as the Lord was to come properly to men, agreeably to that saying, "Your God will come and save you," Isa. xxxv. 4; or they are to be taken *figuratively*, and only signify, that God would visit mankind in an extraordinary way, either in justice, or in mercy; and that John should be instrumental in preparing the way to Divine mercy, by bringing them to repentance. If the *former*, the oracle cannot agree to God the Father; for he did not come properly to men. If the *latter*, John did not walk before the face of the Lord; except in the same sense as Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, and denounced the judgments of God on a sinful generation; or as Moses, who spake to Pharaoh that he should let the people go, and to the Israelites, persuading them to believe what was revealed to him; thus preparing the way to God's mercy, in the redemption of Israel, and to his justice, in the punishment of his enemies. But if so, we must seek the accomplishment of the prediction, not in John, but in Christ. For if the communication of Divine benefits be intended, by God's coming to his people, he came the most remarkably when he baptized the apostles with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and when, by their ministry, he converted the nations; for then

did his law go forth from Zion, and his word from Jerusalem, Isa. ii. 3. If the inflicting of judgments be meant; then God came, in the most signal and terrible manner, when he sent the Roman legions to destroy the unbelieving Jews, with their city and temple. But then it was not John, but Christ, who principally prepared the way, in both these respects. For he prepared the way to Divine mercy, by his preaching and miracles, his sufferings and death: he revealed the pardoning love of God, and confirmed the everlasting covenant. The ministry of John was of short duration, and the preaching of the apostles produced much greater effects than his. To suppose, however, that Jesus Christ, not John the Baptist, was the forerunner described by the prophet, is absurd to the last degree; yet such is the consequence if the passages be interpreted in a figurative sense.

If, then, this oracle was not fulfilled by the coming of the Father, it must have received its accomplishment in the appearance of his Son. In the language of the prophets, therefore, Jesus Christ bears those venerable, those truly Divine names **JEHOVAH, OUR GOD, THE HIGHEST, and THE LORD**; for such are the characters of Him before whose face John the Baptist went, He is consequently the true God.

The next ancient oracle that I shall consider, is that which is quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews; where it is produced to show, what an immense difference there is between Jesus Christ and the angels: "Thou, **LORD**, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be

changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail," Heb. i. 10—12. These words were undoubtedly spoken by the psalmist of the true God ; the prophets having so often informed us, that He only made the heavens and the earth. Besides, the preceding words cannot be understood of any but **JEHOVAH**. Either, then, the inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews did not understand the passage he quoted ; or he knew that the immutable, the eternal God was described by it : for the sublime characters contained in it are so peculiar to Him, that there is no instance of the prophet's applying them to any other. So that when the inspired author applies them to Jesus Christ, he must either consider him as of the same essence with the Father ; or else he speaks against his conscience, to advance his Master's honour, and betrays the interests of God's glory.

To say, with the Socinians, "That he does not apply these words to the great Redeemer ; but that, digressing from his former subject, he makes a short apostrophe to God the Father ;" is to declare not the meaning of the text, but what they desire it should be. Such an apostrophe would be very awkwardly introduced here. For it is not the design of the sacred writer, in this place, to assert the glory of God the Father. The Hebrews, to whom he wrote, had no doubt of that ; their minds were filled with ideas of his dominion and grandeur. Nor does he compare the Father with the Son ; but the Son with the angels. The Hebrews entertained the highest opinion of that revelation with which Moses and the prophets were honoured. The infallible author takes occasion, therefore, to prefer the new revelation to the old ; representing the *latter* as communicated by

the prophets, who were only *servants* in the house of God; but the *former* as made by the SON, who is Lord of the house. See Heb. i. 1—3.

But because it might be objected, That the law was given by the ministration of angels; he takes occasion to show the vast superiority of Jesus Christ, in comparison with those noble intelligences. He allows, indeed, that they bear the honourable character, “Ministers of God;” as it is written, “He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire,” Heb. i. 7. But then he signifies, that the SON partakes of his Father’s authority and Godhead. He participates of his *authority*. This he proves by those words of the psalmist: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever 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,” ver. 8, 9. Here we behold our Lord, as Mediator, receiving the kingdom from his Father. But because he partakes with him in the glories of the Godhead, or in the essential perfections of the Supreme Being, he afterwards applies to Jesus such oracles as equal him with the Father, and manifestly prove him to be the Eternal God. For he adds, without the least intimation that he is speaking of a different person, “And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail,” ver. 10—12. Which distinction, between the authority he received, and his essential dominion, is contained in a preceding verse: “Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made

the worlds," ver. 2. The *former* clause is expressive of that economical kingdom, in respect of which it is said, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity," ver. 9. This kingdom he received from the Father. The *latter* clause indicates his essential glory, his eternal power and Godhead; in regard to which this oracle is applied to him, "Thou, LORD, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." This is that participation of the Godhead, in reference to which Jesus says, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," John xiv. 11. Hence it appears, that the supposed apostrophe if admitted, would be of little service to the cause we oppose. For though it might serve to elude the force of these words, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth," yet our adversaries could not defend themselves by it against the evidence of these, "By whom also he made the worlds;" it being evident, that he who made the worlds, may well be considered as having laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the heavens.

Again: These words, "Thou remainest; Thou art the same; Thy years shall not fail," are, even in the judgment of our opponents, to be understood of Jesus Christ. Nor could they, with the least shadow of reason, deny it; because the terms are synonymous with those which precede, and are incontestably applied to him; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The following expressions, "As a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed," they also understand as relating to Jesus Christ; as expressive of the renovation of all things by the Son of God, at the last day. But then they violently separate these words from those which immediately

go before, and with which they are closely connected. They would persuade us, contrary to all the rules of language; contrary to the natural signification of the words, and scope of the discourse; and contrary to common sense; that there are *two* persons spoken of: that He, of whom it is said, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth," is not the same with Him of whom it is said immediately after, "Thou remainest; Thou shalt fold them up." They sometimes declare, that they will hearken to nothing but their own *reason*, when they dispute with us; but here we need nothing but our own *eyes* to dispute with them.

The next oracle we shall consider is that of Isaiah, which is applied to Jesus Christ by the evangelist John. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him," John xii. 37, 39—41. This passage presents us with an irrefragable argument for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. That the evangelist applies to Jesus that splendid appearance of Divine glory, mentioned by Isaiah, and that it is the glory of JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, which he describes, cannot, one would think, admit of a doubt. Or, if any doubt should arise concerning the latter, we need only to peruse the history of that remarkable vision, as it stands in the prophet, in order to be fully satisfied.

That it is the glory of the Supreme Being of which the prophet speaks, appears from the several parts of that description which he gives of it. The majesty

of none but the true God can be so great, as to cause the seraphim to veil their faces before it. None but Him, would those princes of heaven thus address, and thus profoundly adore; "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD OF HOSTS: THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY," Isa. vi. 3. Nor could the presence of any but the Most High cause the prophet thus to exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips—for mine eyes have seen THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS," Isa. vi. 5. And that the evangelist applies this oracle to Jesus Christ is equally evident. For it is of Him that he speaks in the preceding verses, and it is of Him that he continues to speak, in the verses following; which puts it beyond all reasonable doubt, that it is Him also of whom the evangelist speaks, when he says, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." From all which arises this argument: Isaiah saw the glory of the Supreme Being; but, at the same time and place, he saw the glory of Jesus Christ; therefore, Jesus Christ is the Supreme Being.

All this is evident, one would have thought; evident beyond dispute. But what cannot subtlety do, when resolved to eclipse the brightest truths? It asserts various things, which are all equally unwarrantable. For instance: it endeavours to persuade us, that the pronoun *him*, does not relate to Jesus Christ, but to God the Father. It refers these words of the evangelist, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him;" not to what *immediately* precedes; but to another citation from the prophet, at some distance; "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ver. 38. And it maintains, that the prophet, in describing

the glory of *God*, described also the glory of *Christ*; because the latter is contained in the former. But these suppositions and assertions are all so wild and unnatural, that a man must be blind not to see through them, and exceedingly fond of error not to despise them.

As the evangelist through the whole chapter treats of Jesus Christ, not at all of God the Father, what reason has any one to believe that these words must relate to the Father? "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Who does not perceive, and what but a predilection for an unscriptural hypothesis can prevent a man from acknowledging, that the last clause of the sentence is to be understood of the very same person that is intended in the immediately following words? "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him," John xii. 4. If Jesus be meant in the *latter*, why not in the *former* verse? The prophet spake of the true God on every occasion. This the evangelist knew; of this he could not be ignorant. These things said Esaias "when he spake of God." *When he spake of God!* Why, then, he must say them all his life; say them continually; say them in every page of his prophecies; because, through the whole course of his ministry he spake of God, proclaiming his glories, revealing his will, and asserting his dominion. "But this," they say, "is a parenthesis." How does that appear? Have they nothing to do but to suppose or assert, without proving? Yet if it were, the pronoun *him* would still refer to Jesus Christ, because both in the foregoing and following verses the evangelist speaks of Christ, and of him only.

Nor is there the least shadow of reason for any to consider these words, "These things said Esaias,