

with subordinate worship; but this Angel causes himself to be adored, as the Supreme Being. For he says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," Exod. xx. 3. The former attributes to himself the works of God; so does the latter, in the most explicit manner: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I JEHOVAH? I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders; I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt; I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt," Exod. iv. 11; iii. 17, 20. Does Jesus bear very high and honourable characters? so does this Angel. For he is called GOD, and JEHOVAH, repeatedly; he is also denominated the LORD GOD of the Hebrews, THE FEAR of Isaac, and the JUDGE of the whole earth, in whose presence the renowned Abraham was but dust and ashes; for it is the same Angel of the Lord, concerning whom all these things are spoken.

Now, as these characters, in the opinion of our adversaries, are too high and grand for Jesus Christ, they ought, upon their principles, to consider this Angel as usurping the glory of God. But if so, he betrays the Israelites into impiety, and becomes their idol. Consequently, the religion which he teaches, the religion which he establishes, has not sufficient criteria to distinguish it from imposture. You meet, I allow, with many wonderful and supernatural things in the establishment of it; but then you find them produced by one who usurps the glory of the true God, which is a character of the spirit of darkness. What a blasphemous thought! what a detestable suspicion! Does the spirit of darkness concern himself in the holiness and happiness of men, that he

should give them so pure and perfect a law? Impossible! We may rest assured, therefore, that the principle which leads to such a monstrous and horrid conclusion, must be false.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE PROPOSITION PROVED, IN RESPECT OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

WHAT has been said of the Angel who appeared to Moses, may be asserted of Jesus Christ, if the doctrine of our opposers be true. To prove and illustrate the point, I would offer the following things to the reader's consideration.

The New Testament, it is evident, ascribes the most signal works of God to Jesus Christ; such as the *creation* of all things, which had always characterized the God of Israel; the *preservation* of all things, which belongs to the Creator; and the *redemption* of the world, which the prophets refer to the Supreme Being, and to Him only. The same infallible rule of our faith attributes to him the *perfections*, and *names*, and *glory* of God. Therein he is described as *equal* with God, as *one* with God, and as GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. When, therefore, it is considered, that all these things were said and recorded of him, by *his* direction, and under *his* inspiration, we may venture to affirm, that a proud, presumptuous, rebellious creature, whose intention it was to invade the honour, and to put himself in the place of God, could not have adopted a more promising mode of proceeding, or have better succeeded in his design. But these things deserve a more particular consideration.

The New Testament ascribes to Jesus Christ the most magnificent and signal WORKS of God. To begin with the work of *creation*. Could Paul, intending to describe his Divine Master as the Creator of all things, have used more emphatical, or more pertinent expressions than these? "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created *by* him, and *for* him: and He is before all things, and by him all things consist," Col. i. 16, 17. Of him it is said, "There is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. He laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his hands," John i. 3; Heb. i. 14. The *preservation* of the world, or the *conservation* of all things, is also attributed to him; for it is expressly said, "By him all things consist. He upholdeth all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3. The *administration of providence*, and especially the *care of believers*. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xxviii. 20; xviii. 20. A promise this, which Christ could not perform as man, but only as God; because, as man, he is limited by time and place; as God, he acts independently of both. To say that he is in the midst of our religious assemblies "by his Spirit," is not sufficient. For if the Spirit intended be the Spirit of Christ, Christ must be God; because that Spirit is present with devout worshippers in all places at the same time. But that Jesus is really and properly God, our opponents, will not allow. The

Spirit in question, therefore, must be that of the Father, and not of Christ; consequently, not our Lord, but the Divine Father, is present in our assemblies. Nor is Jesus said to be in the midst of his people "by faith," which is a gift of the Holy Ghost. Elisha received a portion of the spirit of Elijah, in receiving from God such gifts as were similar to those of Elijah; yet it is never said that Elijah was with the Jews, or in the midst of their assemblies, after his ascension into heaven. That greatest of all Divine transactions, that most wonderful of all Divine works, *redemption*, is attributed to him in a peculiar manner. Hence he is so often, and in the most emphatical sense, called, THE SAVIOUR and REDEEMER; and hence the church is represented as his property and purchase. "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. Remarkable words! They strongly imply, that Jesus, the Redeemer, is GOD; and that he is declared to be so, by the work of redemption. They lead us also to reflect on that gracious declaration, by an ancient prophet, "Your GOD will come; he will come and save you," Isa. xxxv. 4. Our *sanctification* is attributed to him. He enlightens our minds, and converts our hearts. He quickens the dead in sin, and in his hands the saints are preserved to eternal life. Yet sanctification is a Divine work; "for it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 13. The Scriptures attribute the work of *glorification* also to Jesus Christ. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. To him that overcometh will I

grant to sit with me in my throne," Rev. iii. 5, 12, 21.

The **PERFECTIONS** of God are ascribed to Jesus Christ. The *power* of God. He "upholdeth all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3. The *knowledge* of God. "All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts. Lord, thou knowest all things," Rev. ii. 23; John xxi. 17. The *eternity* of God. "His name shall be called, The everlasting Father. Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail," Isa. ix. 6; Heb. i. 12. The *immensity* of God. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven," John iii. 13. The *truth* and *faithfulness* of God. "I am the truth. Thus saith the Amen," John xiv. 6; Rev. iii. 14. The *mercy* of God; for he pardoneth sin. The *authority* of God; for he commanded the gospel to be preached in *his own* name; and sent his disciples to "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. xxviii. 19: and as the Judge of all, he declares, "I will render to every man according to his works," Rom. ii. 6. He also gave power to the apostles to work miracles in his name, as the apostles wrought miracles in the name of God. The *justice* of God. For of him the Baptist speaks, when he says, "He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," Matt. iii. 12.

Jesus Christ also bears the most eminent and expressive **TITLES** of Deity. The **MOST HIGH** is a character evidently peculiar to the true God. Yet Zacharias, when full of the Holy Spirit, calls our Lord, "The Highest," or the Most High, Luke i. 76. The majesty of God is expressed in the Old

Testament by the title, "King of glory," Psa. xxiv. 7—10. Christ is called in the New, "The Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8. The God of Israel is called "the Holy One," Isa. i. 4. Jesus, according to the evangelist John's application of Isaiah's vision, is adored by the seraphim as the thrice Holy Lord, Isa. vi. 3. He is also styled, "The Saviour; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; the First and the Last," Acts xiii. 23; Rev. xix. 16; i. 11, 17; which are titles of the Supreme Being.

Again: He is declared to be *one* with God, *equal* with God, the *same* with God. He is *one* with God. "I and the Father are *one*," says the Amen, the faithful and the true Witness, John x. 30. ONE, not in *person*, for they are distinct; besides, the word *εἷς* is in the neuter gender, and will not bear such an interpretation. Nor in *consent*, for the sense is too low; it asserts nothing of our Divine Lord, but what may be affirmed of every creature that is perfectly holy. All the saints in light, and all the angels in glory, are one with the Father, by a consent of will; they having no inclination, no desire, contrary to his. It must, therefore, be a unity of *essence* that is here intended. And that it is so appears from the context. For Jesus having declared, in the immediately preceding verses, that "his sheep shall never perish," and that none shall pluck them either out of his own, or out of his Father's hands, adds, to confirm the assertion, and to justify his claim of invincible, Divine power, "I and the Father are ONE." It is, therefore, a *unity of power* which he means. But he who asserts, that two are one by a unity of power, affirms that they are one by a unity of essence. A Christian, in the present state, may be one with God, by a unity of consent;

he having nothing to do, in order to such a unity, but cordially to acquiesce in the methods of Divine providence and grace; but he could not without blasphemy say, These or those shall never perish; nor shall any one pluck them out of mine or my Father's hand. I and the Father are one, John x. 28, 30. But that which removes every doubt in this respect, is, these expressions are explained, and our sense of them supported, by other passages perfectly similar.

Jesus Christ is *equal* with God. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," says an unerring writer, Phil. ii. 6. This equality must include something greater, and something more Divine, than a unity of consent between Christ and the Father. Nothing short of a unity of *essence* can answer the import of the phrase; for, otherwise, it would contradict that high demand so often repeated by Jehovah, "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" Isa. xlvi. 5.

Some, perhaps, may say, "Jesus Christ is equal with God, because the Father has exalted him to an equality."—An *equality*, in what respect? Of *nature*? Our adversaries cannot suppose it. Of *offices, trusts, and honours*? But the delegation and grant of these necessarily suppose, that he who receives them is, in *that respect*, inferior to him who confers them. That the Father, therefore, should exalt Christ to an *equality* with him, implies a contradiction; because, in whatever respect any one is exalted by him, in that very respect he must be *inferior* to him. Jesus Christ, we freely allow, is highly exalted by the Father; but that exaltation regards his person, character, and state, *as Mediator*; under which consideration, though he is the church's

Head, yet he is the Father's righteous Servant. Besides, the glory of the Great Supreme must be incommunicable.

Again : To be *one* with God, to be *equal* with God, to be God's *own Son*, and to *be God*, are, in the language of inspiration, phrases of a similar import, and may be safely explained one by another. So we find the Jews understood them. For when our Lord said, "I and the Father are one," they took up stones to stone him, John x. 30, 31. And when Jesus asked them the reason of their outrageous conduct, they answered, "Because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God," ver. 33. From whence it is evident, that, in their opinion, to be *one* with the Father, and to *be God*, are the same thing. In the same exalted point of light they considered the character, SON OF GOD, as assumed by Jesus Christ. For they looked upon him as appropriating it to himself in a *proper*, not in a *figurative* sense. No; they would never have made such a stir, nor have laid so heavy a charge against him, if the only cause of complaint had been, that he called himself the Son of God by a *metaphor*, or by *adoption*. For they considered themselves as the adopted sons of God, saying, "We have one Father, even God," John viii. 41. They, therefore, must mean something very different from this, when they say, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself THE SON OF GOD," John xix. 7. And in another place they explain themselves; they let us know more fully what they understood by the august character. For when Jesus, vindicating his conduct in healing the impotent man on the sabbath-day, said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work : they sought the more to kill him, because he



not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that **GOD WAS HIS FATHER, making himself EQUAL WITH GOD,**” John v. 17, 18. From which it is manifest, that to be “God’s own Son,” and to be “equal with God,” were the same thing in their account. And, indeed, the characters, *own Son*, and *only Son*, naturally signify an *equality*, a *sameness* of essence. We have no reason, therefore, to be surprised that the Jews, taking his words in their proper sense, should think that he claimed and asserted an equality with God. Nor did our Lord give them any intimation that they had misunderstood him; nor yet the evangelist, as he does in several other instances of much less importance; which silence is a strong presumptive proof, that they were not under a mistake about the sense of the words: for such a mistake, on the principles of our opposers, might have been an occasion of idolatry in them; and a mistake of that kind, not remarked by the historian, would be calculated to answer the same pernicious purpose in succeeding generations.

Nothing can be more opposite than the conduct of those Jews who accused Christ of blasphemy; and that of others, who said of Herod, “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man,” Acts xii. 22. When, therefore, we justify the one, we must condemn the other. The *former* will not allow Jesus to speak of himself as God, because he is a man: the *latter* will not have Herod to express himself as a man, but ascribe to him the voice of God. Now, if Providence condemn the impiety of *these*, by punishing Herod in a signal manner, for not rejecting their blasphemous applause; Heaven, on the hypothesis of our opposers, must approve the language of *those* who exclaim against Jesus Christ, for making him-

self equal with God. And if their charge of blasphemy had been founded on a mistake, by taking his words in a wrong sense, he ought, one would think, to have set them right, by explaining the terms he used. But, if he refused to correct so dangerous a mistake on *their* account, yet was it not necessary that he should have done it on *ours*? that when we read his gospel, we might not entertain the detestable thought, that he equalled himself with the Most High. If, however, he thought it proper not to explain himself at that time; yet it might have been expected, that his disciples should have given us the true sense of the mysterious words when they reported them. But, so far from this, the evangelists and apostles, who undoubtedly knew his meaning, and who knew also that he was condemned for a design to *abolish* the law of Moses, and for having *blasphemed* the sovereign majesty of God, by claiming an equality with him, clear him in the *former* case, and leave us perfectly satisfied, by showing in what sense he abolished the law, and in what respects he fulfilled it. But, as to the *latter*, they take no notice of it. Nay, they not only forbear to vindicate him from the charge of blasphemy, but seem to write as if they intended to confirm the accusation. For, knowing what had passed, they give him such titles of grandeur and Divinity after his resurrection, as he never assumed while he was upon earth. What is it, then, on the hypothesis of our opponents, but to *authorize* the charge of blasphemy, which the Jews fastened upon him, for Paul to assert, "He thought it not robbery TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD?" Phil. ii. 6.

Further: After these invincible reasons to the contrary, (for invincible they are on the principles of our adversaries,) the apostles represent their Master

as being the *same* with God, by saying many sublime things of him, which never were, and which never could be said of any but the true God, without impiety. They call him **GOD**; **GOD**, with the highest epithets. For example: They call him **THE GREAT GOD**; **THE TRUE GOD**; **GOD OVER ALL, BLESSED FOR EVER**. In their infallible writings he is denominated, **THE LORD**, the expression by which the Septuagint renders the most august names of God; **THE LORD OF GLORY**; **MY LORD AND MY GOD**; **THE GOD OF ISRAEL**; **THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**; **HE WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME**. Such are the characters given by the apostles to Jesus Christ, by which to justify him against the charge of "making himself equal with God;" and by which to confute the formal and solemn accusation, drawn up against him in the face of the whole world, under which he died.

The genuine import of several of these titles which I have just mentioned, has been already considered; I shall, therefore, only just touch upon a few of them. **THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL**, is a title given to Jesus Christ by the angel to Zacharias, when foretelling the honourable and successful work of John the Baptist. These are his words, "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to **THE LORD THEIR GOD**. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias," Luke i. 16, 17. He before whom the Baptist went was the Lord, the God of Israel. But he before whom he went, was Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, therefore, is the God of Israel.

He is called **THE TRUE GOD**. "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," 1 John v. 20. That interpretation which refers these words, "This is the true God," to the Father, and not to the Son, is sufficiently refuted by producing the passage.

THE GREAT GOD, is another of his Divine titles. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of THE GREAT GOD and" (or even) "our Saviour Jesus Christ," Tit. ii. 13. The article,\* which, in the original, is put before *great God*, and belongs equally to *Saviour*, is a proof that both these characters are applied to the same Person; a certain proof that our Lord is here called THE GREAT GOD, as well as THE SAVIOUR. The adjective *great*, being connected with the term *Saviour*, as well as with the term *God*; which is the reason why the Greek article is put before the epithet *great*, and not before the noun *God*.

The same divinely glorious Person is called, OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER," Rom. ix. 5. The earnest desire of our opponents to evade the force of this passage, is evident by their maintaining, that the words, "who is over all, God blessed for ever," relate to God the Father; though he is not so much as mentioned in the preceding verses, and though the term *Christ* is the noun, to which the relative *who* naturally and necessarily belongs.

\* Τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆ

## CHAPTER III.

IF JESUS CHRIST BE NOT THE TRUE GOD, THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION HAS NOT SUFFICIENT CRITERIA, BY WHICH TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM IDOLATRY AND IMPOSTURE.

AND now, if the principles of our adversaries be true, it is no very difficult thing to make good of the *Christian*, what we have already proved of the *Jewish* religion, that is, horrid idea! it is not distinguishable from idolatry and imposture.

Not from *idolatry*. For in what does idolatry consist, but in confounding the creature with the Creator? And what is confounding the creature with the Creator, but investing the *former* with the peculiar honours and essential glory of the *latter*? Herod, as before observed, was guilty of blasphemy, and the people of idolatry, when he received their impious applause; "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man," Acts xii. 22, though they considered him still as a real man. Those who cast a grain of incense before an idol were guilty of idolatry, though they did it with reluctance. One could not swear by the emperor's head, without being guilty of the same crime; though nobody, on that account, could imagine the emperor to be God. But it would be the height of idolatry to call him God, and to pay him Divine honours, as the Romans did, on some occasions. Because idolatry does not only consist in giving to a creature *all* that is due to the Creator; but in giving *any thing* to the former, which belongs to none but the latter. The sacred writers, however, not only ascribe to Jesus Christ *a part* of what is peculiar to God; but they agree in a tributing to him *all* the most peculiar and

essential characteristics of his glory. They ascribe to Jesus the most magnificent of all Divine works. To him they attribute the power and wisdom, the immensity and eternity of God, with other perfections of the Divine nature. They also give him God's titles, names, and glory. How, then, would it be possible to confound the creature with the Creator to a greater degree? \*

It may perhaps be said, "Though the writers of the New Testament speak of Christ as one that partakes, in some measure, of the glory of the Deity, yet, that he might not be accused of a design to confound himself with God, he expressly declared, 'My Father is greater than I.'"—But this is far from invalidating our argument. A person, for instance, who loves money, who is really a covetous man, and who has bowed all his life at the shrine of mammon, will readily allow, that God is the chief good, and to be loved above all riches. Yet such an acknowledgment will neither acquit him from the charge of covetousness, nor from the guilt of idolatry. A man who should assume the titles and names of God with a view to be worshipped, would set himself up for an idol, though he were once and again to confess, that God is greater than he. Or, to vary the comparison, a subject who should ascribe to himself all the works of his sovereign, assume his titles, and call himself the true king, the great king, and the lord of the state, whom all around are bound to obey; who should cause himself to be addressed as king, and exact such honours as were never given to any but the real monarch, would certainly be guilty of high treason, though he might have said, once at least, The king is greater than I.

Again: The Christian religion, according to the

Socinian hypothesis, is not distinguishable from *imposture*; is little better than an impious comedy, which is calculated to dishonour God, and deceive mankind. For, shocking to imagine, Jesus Christ appears in the church much like an actor on the stage, who takes the names and titles of a king, who attributes to himself his works and requires his honours, without being really what he pretends to be. Yet, with this difference, a player on the stage, when acting the part of a sovereign, does not pretend that the play is an important reality, nor that the spectators should pay him the honours of royalty after the representation, nor yet that they should be sincerely persuaded he is a king while the play continues. But here, according to the impious genius of the Socinian system, we have a kind of comedy, in which a mere man calls himself **GOD**, the **GREAT GOD**, the **MIGHTY GOD**, and the **TRUE GOD**; who requires Divine honours, and, as God, has received them from his most eminent disciples, though he depends on God for his very existence.

That the Christian religion is turned, by the Socinian system, into an empty appearance and mere show, is evident. For you find in it a *representative* God, and a *metaphorical* sacrifice, an atonement that is only so in *appearance*, and an *imaginary* hell: for the wicked, according to the Socinians, shall be annihilated.

“But the miracles which Jesus wrought were true and real, nor ought they to be compared with the representations of the stage.”—This consideration, detached from other things, is of little weight. For of what worth are miracles performed by one who attempted to seat himself on the throne of the Deity? If Jesus usurp the glory of God, neither humility, nor

justice, nor zeal for God, nor love to men, can be found in him. On this supposition, all his virtues and all his piety are obscured and lost ; and in their stead we behold pride and ambition, injustice and sacrilege, blasphemy and seduction. For, as miracles, accompanied with holiness, are evidently wrought by the Spirit of God ; so those works, however amazing, which patronize blasphemy and idolatry, ought ever to be considered as proceeding from the spirit of darkness.

But I shall not further enlarge on this argument, nor any longer defile my paper with such horrid suppositions. Enough, I persuade myself, has been said to prove into what a dreadful abyss the principles of our adversaries lead. Enough also has been said to evince that the DEITY of Jesus Christ is ESSENTIAL to the Christian religion ; which is the grand principle I proposed to demonstrate.



## SECTION VI.

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS ANSWERED, AND  
SOME CONSIDERATIONS ADAPTED TO RELIEVE  
THE MIND RESPECTING THE DIFFICULTIES  
WHICH ATTEND THIS GREAT MYSTERY.

## CHAPTER I.

DIVINE REVELATION, NOT DEPRAVED REASON, TO BE OUR  
GUIDE IN ALL INQUIRIES OF THIS NATURE.

HAVING established the truth by arguments drawn from the records of inspiration, our next business is, to answer the principal objections which are made by our opponents. They argue against us both from reason and Scripture; but while we are firmly persuaded that neither sound reason nor the Holy Scriptures, rightly understood, will afford any *real* objection against us, we cannot forbear observing, that our opposers lay more stress on arguments drawn from *reason* than on those derived from *Divine Revelation*. Strange as this conduct may appear to some who are not versed in these controversies, we cannot easily question the fact, if we consider the language of their most celebrated writers. Smalcius, for instance, is not ashamed thus to express himself: "We believe that though we should find it, not ONCE, nor TWICE, but VERY FREQUENTLY, AND MOST EXPRESSLY written in the Scripture, *That God was made man*; it would be much better, as it is an absurd proposi-

tion, ENTIRELY CONTRARY TO SOUND REASON, and full of blasphemy, to invent some way of speaking which might render it safe to be affirmed of God, rather than to understand it in the literal sense\*.”

\* These are his words : “ Credimus, etiamsi non *semel* atque *iterum*, sed SATIS CREBRO ET DISERTISSIME SCRIPTUM extaret, *Deum esse hominem factum*, multo satius esse, quia hæc res sit absurda, ET SANÆ RATIONI PLANE CONTRARIA, et in Deum blasphema, MODUM ALIQUEM DICENDI COMMINSI, quo ista de Deo dici possint, quam ista simpliciter ita ut verba sonant intelligere.” SMAL. *Homil.* viii. ad Cap. I *John*.

To these bold assertions of SMALCIUS, in opposition to the doctrine of the incarnation, may be added the no less unwarrantable declarations of SOCINUS and SCHLICHTINGIUS : the *former*, in reference to the substitution and atonement of Christ ; the *latter*, relating to the efficacy of Divine grace and the freedom of the human will. “ Ego quidem,” saith SOCINUS, “ etiamsi non *semel* sed SÆPE id in Sacris Monumentis scriptum extaret, non idcirco tamen rem ita prorsus se habere crederem, ut vos opinamini. Quum ea quæ fieri non posse aperte constat, Divinis etiam Oraculis ea fuisse in speciem attestantibus, nequaquam admittantur ; et idcirco sacra verba in ALIUM SENSUM quam ipsa sonant per INUSITATOS ETIAM TROPUS quandoque explicantur.” *De Servat.* Part iii. Cap. vi. That is, Though it (the doctrine of the atonement and satisfaction of Christ) were found, not only *once*, but FREQUENTLY WRITTEN in the Holy Scriptures ; I, indeed, would not therefore believe it to be entirely as you suppose. Though the Divine oracles may attest things to be so in appearance, yet they cannot, by any means, be admitted, because they are very evidently impossible ; and, therefore, the sacred words are sometimes explained, EVEN BY UNUSUAL TROPES, to a SENSE DIFFERENT from their literal signification,

The following are the words of SCHLICHTINGIUS : “ Itaque non quia utrumque Scriptura dicat propterea hæc inter se non pugnare concludendum est ; sed potius quia hæc inter se pugnant ideo alterutrum a Scriptura non dici statuendum est.” *Ad Meisn. Def. Socin.* p. 102. That is, We cannot conclude, because the Scripture affirm them both,

As if he had said, We are determined to regulate, not our theological sentiments by the Scriptures, but the Scriptures by our preconceived opinions. But let us consider this point a little more particularly.

If human reason had not been corrupted by sin, we might have placed a great degree of dependence upon it, yet even then it would not have been rational to rely more on the powers of our own understanding, than on the light of Divine revelation, supposing such a revelation to have been enjoyed; because the knowledge of man, when his reason was unimpaired, was limited, but the knowledge of God is infinite. What a disparity, then, must there be, when the human understanding is not only limited, but *corrupted*; when the unavoidable commerce between a man's thoughts and his depraved passions fills his mind with a multitude of prejudices, which have a tendency in various ways to disguise or conceal the truth! Were we bound to believe nothing but what appears conformable to reason, in its present state, we might soon reject the great objects revealed in the Gospel in general. For, after all the strenuous efforts of our adversaries, to remove the grand difficulties attending the Christian religion, there are, and there always will be, such depths in it as are unfathomable by the plummet of human reason. On

(that is, the *energy* of Divine grace, and the *freedom* of the human will,) that therefore they are not repugnant the one to the other; but as these two things are inconsistent, we ought rather to conclude that one of them is not mentioned in Scripture.

The above quotations from Smaleius and Socinus, with many judicious remarks on The Use and Abuse of Reason, relating to the Mysteries of Faith, may be found in the learned, accurate, and evangelical WITSIUS. See his *Miscell. Sac.* Tom. ii. Exercit. xvii.

this account the apostle of the gentiles calls the gospel "foolishness." If the doctrines of Christianity had nothing mysterious and inexplicable in them, there would be no difficulty in believing, nor would faith be any more the gift of God, than the persuasion we have of natural truths. Consequently, there would be no more occasion for the agency of the Holy Spirit in order to our believing the truths of the gospel, than there is to our understanding the problems of geometry.

To act on this principle of our opposers is to treat God as if he were less worthy of credit than an honest man. A fallible mortal, who has not forfeited his character as a person of veracity, would take it deservedly ill, if, when speaking of any extraordinary fact of which he was an eye-witness, he were to say, Take my word for it; it is as I assert: and we should reply, We must consider what you say; if we find it agreeable to our reason, we will believe you; if not, we shall entirely reject your testimony. If, then, such language would be reckoned indecent towards a fellow worm, what must we think of a similar conduct in regard to God, who is equally incapable of deceiving us, as he is of being deceived?

"But," they add, "all divines have used the same prudence, in matters of less importance to the glory of God. They have thought themselves warranted to understand, not in a literal, but a figurative sense, all such passages of Scripture as would otherwise appear inconsistent with the perfection and glory of the Divine Majesty. As, for example, when it is said, 'God came down,' 'God was wroth;' and when such expressions are used as attribute the members of a human body to the Supreme Being."—To which I reply, The instances adduced are far from being

parallel. The doctrine of the incarnation is not incompatible with the glory of the Divine Majesty, as is the opinion of the Anthropomorphites: for we cannot ascribe to God the parts of a human body, without supposing bounds, mutability, and imperfection in him. But the doctrine of the incarnation infers no such impious absurdities. The Divine nature undergoes no alteration by its union with the human nature. Nor do the expressions of Scripture, understood in their most natural sense, and compared one with another, impose a necessity upon us of being Anthropomorphites, or to attribute our weaknesses and imperfections to God. For nature and reason do not speak louder than Divine revelation, that God is *unchangeable*; that the heaven of heavens *cannot contain* him; that he is *not like a man*, nor any of his creatures.

If reason were to be the rule of our faith, revelation would be superseded. For, to what purpose should God make known the counsel of his will, if reason were allowed to say, This is not the counsel of God: it cannot be, for I do not comprehend it? Thus the conscience would be influenced, not by revelation, but by the doubt which reason had raised upon it. Besides, if it were lawful for human reason to sit in judgment on Divine revelation, the darkness introduced into our minds by sin could never be dissipated. For how should reason, proud of her own pretended abilities, and resolved to correct revelation itself, be enlightened? According to this arrogant and self-sufficient notion, faith in the Divine testimony is entirely set aside; reason being resolved on following her own light, in preference to that of God in the Scriptures. So that, instead of saying, I believe such a proposition, how

incredible soever it may seem, because God has revealed it; we must say, Though God has revealed it in the most plain and express terms, we will not believe it, because it appears incredible to us. Again: Were we thus to exalt reason, what is usually called Divine faith, would be much inferior to that which is human; because we should not pay so great a regard to the declarations of GOD, as to those of our parents, masters, and tutors; on whose bare authority we receive a great number of truths, relating to the affairs of common life. But, in such a case, where is humility, where is that filial, teachable spirit, which is one of the marks of our adoption and regeneration? What need of submitting to the dictates of inspiration, because it is the Eternal Sovereign who speaks; when we have nothing to do but convince ourselves of all necessary truths, by their own internal characters, and to reject, or embrace them, in exact proportion as they agree or disagree with the light of our own understanding?

“Reason,” our opponents will say, “is the foundation of faith; consequently, faith cannot be more certain than reason.”—Reason, I confess, leads to revelation; because we are taught by it, that GOD is infallibly wise, and that we are liable to err; that we cannot, therefore, do better than regard the light of revelation, in preference to the uncertain conjectures of our own minds. But then, as reason leads us to this infallible rule, which was given by uncontrollable authority; she requires us to receive, with submission, whatever the Great Revealer asserts as a fact, commands as a duty, or proposes as an object of faith. We may distinguish three things in faith; and these are, the principle, the discretion, and the conclusion of it. That fundamental maxim and

first idea in revealed religion, Whatever God says is true; I call the *principle* of faith. Its *discretion*, is that examination by which we assure ourselves that God speaks, and endeavour to understand what he means. And the *conclusion* of it, is that assent which we give to the truth of a proposition, because it is contained in the revelation of God; and because we are perfectly satisfied, that whatever God says must be true. These things premised, I readily grant that reason leads us to the *principle* of faith. By the purest light of our understanding we are persuaded, that whatever God says is true. Reason, also, I freely acknowledge, makes the *discretion* of faith; because it is that faculty of the mind which is impressed with those characters of Divinity that are contained in revelation; and afterwards inquires, whether such or such a doctrine be revealed, by examining and comparing one passage of Scripture with another. But this is all; and reason must acquiesce in what God says, without presuming to call into question the truth or the propriety of his words, when once their meaning appears. The contrary disposition is not Divine faith, but an intolerable temerity of a kind of reason that would be independent of God. We may, therefore, safely conclude, without the imputation of rashness, that the language of Smalcius, in the passage produced, is pregnant with blasphemy against the revelation of God; and in direct opposition to it we should say, Though this proposition, "God was made man," appeared much more contrary to reason than it really does, yet we ought to conclude, that we are under a mistake, and that the proposition expresses a wonderful fact and a capital truth, because it is contained in THE WORD OF JEHOVAH. These two declarations compared, it

will appear that the *former* is daring and presumptuous, as it includes a manifest preference of the powers of our own understanding to the infallible dictates of inspiration; which is directly contrary to the nature of true faith. But the *latter* is modest, humble, rational; as it implies a reverence for Divine authority, and an evident preference of the light of God's revelation to that of our own reason; dispositions these, which are essential to real faith\*.

\* To what is here said by our author on this interesting subject, the editor begs leave to subjoin the reasoning of a late elegant and evangelical writer, and the testimony of a great genius in the beginning of the last century, relating to the same truth. The former expresses himself thus: "We by no means approve of a general and indiscriminate outcry against reason. This would be injurious to our sacred cause, and imply a reflection on our holy religion; as though it could not bear the scrutiny of reason. Whereas it will always appear to be a reasonable system; a reasonable service; reason in its highest refinement. If, indeed, reason affects to be self-sufficient, she is an impotent usurper; but if she act in a state of dependence, she is a valuable servant. Does she pretend to be our light in matters of a spiritual and heavenly nature? she is then a despicable dotard, or an *ignis fatuus*. Does she kindle her torch at the fire of revelation? she may then be a discernor of doctrines, and we will call her 'The candle of the Lord.' Submitting to her Divine Author, and learning at the feet of Omniscience, she is reason *in her senses*: presuming to be equal with the All wise, undertaking to comprehend his works, or daring to dispute his word, she is reason *run mad*. In this quality we disclaim and cashier her; in the other we cherish and employ her. Though I could not, by the powers of my reason discover—though I cannot, by the exercise of my reason fully explain—all the articles of my belief, yet I can 'give a reason,' a very satisfactory reason, 'of the hope that is in me,' 1 Pet. iii. 15. This is what the apostle requires us to do: and without doing this, we are neither wise nor happy."

The latter bears his testimony in the following words: