

CHAPTER II.

AN OBJECTION, FROM THE SUPPOSED SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURE, ANSWERED.

THAT we may not be suspected of weakening the arguments of our adversaries, we shall make use of their own words; and if, to avoid prolixity, we contract them a little, their objections will not be the less forcible. The argument, then, which appears to us to be the first in order, and one of the most plausible, is that which they form on the supposed *silence* of the Scripture, as to the mystery of the incarnation.

“We see,” say they, “that those things which are difficult to be believed, yet absolutely necessary to salvation, are very frequently and plainly expressed in the Scriptures. Such, for instance, as the creation of heaven and earth, the care which God takes of human affairs, his knowledge of our thoughts, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Various things also of less importance, are clearly and distinctly

“The prerogative of God comprehends the whole man; and is extended, as well to the *reason*, as to the *will* of man; that is, that man renounce himself wholly, and draw near to God. Wherefore, as we are to *obey his law*, though we find a reluctance in our *will*; so we are to *believe his word*, though we find a reluctance in our *reason*: for if we believe only that which is agreeable to our *reason*, we give assent to the *matter*, not to the *Author*; which is no more than we would do towards a suspected and discredited witness. Sacred theology is grounded on, and must be deduced from the oracles of God; and not from the light of nature, or the dictates of reason. ‘TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,’ Isa. viii. 20.” Lord BACON’S *Advancement of Learning*, p. 468, 469.

contained in holy writ; for example, 'That Jesus Christ is of the seed of David.' Now, if the incarnation of the supreme God were a fact, it would be an article of faith absolutely necessary, and, at the same time, very difficult to be believed. It ought, therefore, to have been very clearly asserted in the Scripture, and so frequently inculcated by the sacred writers, who designed to promote and secure our happiness, that none should have had any reason to doubt whether it was a part of Divine revelation. Yet it appears to us, that there is no such thing contained in their writings. For the passages produced by our adversaries to prove the tenet, are of such a nature, that they are obliged to draw several consequences from them, before they can infer the incarnation of the most high God, or that he was made man. Nor is the doctrine of the incarnation mentioned where it should be, supposing it were true. For, when Matthew and Luke write the history of the birth of Christ, and relate a variety of particulars of much less importance than the incarnation of the supreme God, how is it possible they should have omitted, should have entirely passed over in silence, that wonderful fact, had it been true? They inform us, that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, that he was born of a virgin, in the days of Augustus, and at the town of Bethlehem, with many other particulars; why, then, should they omit the most important and wonderful thing, and that which was more necessary to be known and believed than any other in the whole narration? Luke has not forgotten the manger, in which the new-born Saviour was laid; yet he has omitted the incarnation of the supreme God, and says nothing about the hypostatical union of the Divine and human nature. How came it to

pass, that Mark should forget the whole history of Christ's birth, which should have included the incarnation; and John, whom they will have to speak of it, should pass over it so slightly, and express himself with so much obscurity? Again: How came the apostles to make no mention of so important a doctrine when they preached the gospel, and exhorted men to believe on Jesus Christ; and, to induce them so to do, set his majesty before their eyes? Read the first sermon that Peter preached to the people, after he had received the Holy Ghost; the success of which was so great, that about three thousand souls believed on Jesus Christ, and were baptized. Consider also his second exhortation to the people, and you may see, that he makes no mention of the incarnation in either of them. Nor will you find it in any of this apostle's discourses concerning Christ; whether to the rulers and elders of the people, or to Cornelius, or to others. Paul says nothing of it in the synagogue at Antioch, in Arcopagus at Athens, nor before Felix and Agrippa at Cesarea. Yet certainly, he had a very favourable opportunity at Athens, to have explained this mystery, when he talked to the Athenians about the unknown God."

In answer to this objection, let the following things be considered. It seems very extraordinary, that those who have so little regard for the Scripture, should improve its very *silence* into an argument against us. At one time they declare, Though the Scripture should *expressly* and *repeatedly* say, that God was made man, they would not believe it; at another, they argue against us from the supposed *silence* of that sacred volume. Such conduct is neither candid nor consistent.

This objection proceeds on a very dubious prin-

ciple. It supposes that those truths which are absolutely necessary to be known, yet very difficult to be believed, are most expressly and repeatedly mentioned in the Scripture. But if they mean, *every book* of the Scripture, the maxim is false; if *the body* of the Scripture, the reasoning is useless; for we maintain, that the mystery of the incarnation is expressly and repeatedly contained in the body of the Scripture. The maxim understood in the former sense is so evidently false, that we need no other examples to prove it, than those which are mentioned in the objection. The resurrection of the dead and eternal life, so expressly revealed in the gospel, are neither so clearly nor so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the work of creation and the conduct of Providence, which are so repeatedly and strongly expressed in the Old Testament, are not so frequently found in the New. But must an important and essential truth be contained in *all* the books of the Scripture, or in every *part* of the New Testament? This is neither necessary, nor possible. It is not *necessary*: because, as the Holy Spirit has given us for the rule of our faith not any particular book, but the whole canon of the Scripture, it is quite sufficient if the necessary doctrines be found in the volume of revelation, though they may not be included in every particular book. Nor is it *possible*: for in the Bible there are several epistles and books too much contracted to contain *all* that is necessary to be known, believed, and performed.

The objection supposes, that a truth is not evidently contained in Scripture when it must be inferred by consequences. But here the objector is under a great mistake, as appears from the conduct of our Lord, who proves the immortality of the soul by a

passage in the Pentateuch ; though that capital truth is not contained in it in express terms, but was only inferred consequentially. The author of this objection is under an equal mistake, when he supposes that these truths, Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, our Lord was born of a virgin, are of less importance to be known and believed, than the doctrine of the incarnation, had it been true. For, supposing the incarnation to be a *greater mystery* than the conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit, yet the latter is no less necessary to be *believed* than the former. That Jesus Christ came not into the world by ordinary means, is a fact so necessary to be known, that without it we cannot be assured either of the mystery of the incarnation, or of the benefits of his death. For if the humanity of Jesus had not been free from original guilt and original depravity, it could neither have been united to the Divine Person of the Son of God, nor have suffered a death capable of expiating the sins of mankind. This consideration will be of use hereafter.

But may we not retort upon our adversaries? May not the silence of the Scripture be improved, with equal force, against the conception of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost, and his birth of a virgin? Yet these are truths, essentially necessary truths, by the confession of all the world. Our opponents cannot dispute them any more than we, because the conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit is the first foundation, according to them, of his august character, **THE SON OF GOD**. Nor will they deny, that ancient prophecy would have been unfulfilled if Jesus had not been born of a virgin, Isa. vii. 14. These truths are also absolutely necessary. Besides, they are difficult to be believed ; for there have been few

things in the world more surprising, than to hear of a man born of a *virgin*. We may, therefore, put the same questions to our opposers, on the miraculous conception and birth of Christ, which they do to us on the incarnation. We ask, then, if the conception of Christ had been as is generally supposed, how it came to pass that Mark should pass it over in silence? Why does not John mention it? Why did not the apostles always insist on this very momentous and necessary truth, when they laboured to convert sinners to Jesus Christ? Read the first sermon of Peter to the people, after he had received the Holy Spirit; consider also his second discourse, after he had healed the lame man who lay at the gate of the temple; and you must soon perceive that he says nothing expressly about the miraculous conception and birth of his Divine Master. The same apostle speaks afterwards of Jesus to the rulers and elders of the people, to Cornelius, and others, but says not a word of the astonishing conception and wonderful birth of his Lord. Nor does Paul say anything of these astonishing facts in his discourses in the synagogue at Antioch, in Arcopagus at Athens, nor before Felix and Agrippa. But ought we from hence conclude, that the miraculous conception of Jesus is not a fundamental article of the Christian faith? Of this our opponents themselves will judge.

“Yes,” they will say, “but Matthew and Luke are not silent on this particular.”—Granted; nor are *all the sacred penmen silent concerning the incarnation*. We produce the express words of the Holy Ghost, who informs us, that Christ is “IMMANUEL, GOD with us,” Matt. i. 23; that “great is the mystery of godliness, GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH,” 1 Tim. iii. 16; and that “the Word was GOD, and

was MADE FLESH," John i. 1, 14. To what purpose, then, is that enumeration of particular passages which the author of the objection has made? If he means, that the incarnation is not to be found in the Scripture, because it is not contained in the passages to which he refers; we reply, His induction of particulars is imperfect, and cannot warrant his conclusion. For he has cautiously omitted those passages which we produce in order to prove our sentiment. But, if he only intended to collect the occasions on which he supposes it was proper, for the honour of Jesus Christ, that the inspired writers should have mentioned the incarnation, we ask, in our turn, Why, on the same occasions, they did not mention his conception by the Holy Spirit, and his birth of a virgin? For if, according to our principles, the Son of God, by the miracle of his *incarnation*, became IMMANUEL, Jesus Christ, according to theirs, became the SON OF GOD by the miracle of his *conception*.

The perfect holiness of Jesus Christ is a truth essential to the Christian religion, and a doctrine of the last importance to our spiritual comfort. The unerring writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes all our consolation depend upon it; "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's," Heb. vii. 26, 27. Yet, if you look into the evangelical history, you will find little, very little indeed, relating to this capital truth. There, to your amazement, you hear Jesus Christ refusing, to appearance, the epithet *good*, when he says to the young man, "There is none good, save one, that is, God," Luke xviii. 19. You find, indeed, that our

Lord says, "I am the light of the world," John viii. 12; but you must reason to know, whether he mean the light of holiness, or the light of truth. You hear him saying, "I am meek and lowly in heart," Matt. xi. 29; but you must learn, by inferences, whether or not his meekness and humility be attended with all other virtues, and also, whether or not those virtues reside in him to perfection. You may hear him ask his adversaries with confidence, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" John viii. 46; and this, I acknowledge, implies that he is not an offender like men in common; but yet he does not expressly say, "I am without sin." I conclude, therefore, that it is not necessary that the most interesting truths should be contained in the Scripture in express and formal terms, and that it suffices to infer them by just and reasonable consequence. For though we had not been favoured with the Epistle to the Hebrews, though several passages in other epistles, expressly to the same point, had never been read by us, and though we had never heard that those words, "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth," Isa. liii. 9, related to Jesus Christ; yet we should have been assured that he was perfectly holy and righteous, both by the analogy of faith, and by a multitude of texts, from which we might have inferred the important consequence. Hence also it appears, that there is no necessity for a capital and fundamental truth to be mentioned in every page of the Scripture, nor yet in every book of which that sacred volume consists. For the whole economy of salvation, and all our happiness, depend on the consummate holiness of Jesus Christ; and yet you may read a great part of the Bible, and not find it so much as once mentioned.

But, more directly to answer this objection, it may be observed, that the sacred writers keep a mysterious silence, on some occasions, even on matters of great importance, which silence may be attributed to various causes. Sometimes to the nature of that economy under which they wrote. So Moses and the prophets did not speak so clearly of the life to come as Jesus Christ; because the perspicuity of revelation, in this respect, was to be a distinguishing character of the Messiah's appearance, and life and immortality were to be revealed by him. Nor was it agreeable to the wisdom of God, that Christ, in his personal ministry, should speak so clearly concerning the spirituality, or so fully concerning the mysteries, of his kingdom, as the apostles did after his ascension, when led into all the truth by the Holy Spirit. At other times the Spirit of wisdom makes use of the clearest and easiest things, to lead us into those which are more abstruse and difficult. The great things which the apostles were called to declare were *facts* and *doctrines*; some of which doctrines were very mysterious. The *former* were objects of sense; the *latter* abstract and spiritual. Now, it would have been preposterous for them to have recommended matters of fact, by first recommending mysterious doctrines; because the order of nature and reason require that the latter should be recommended, by relating and authenticating the former. If only matters of fact had been necessary to be laid before us, the four Gospels would have comprised the whole of the New Testament; they being the history of such facts as are necessary to our salvation. But, as in the grand scheme of salvation there are mysterious doctrines, with which it is requisite mankind should be acquainted, the apostles were inspired to write the other parts of the New

Testament that we might be informed of them. And, if so, it is far from being strange, that Peter, in his first sermon after he had received the Holy Ghost, should engage the attention of his auditors by making remarks on that Divine effusion, the effects of which were so sensible and so wonderful, without saying anything about the incarnation. Nor is it at all amazing, that the same apostle, after he had healed the poor beggar who lay at the gate of the temple, and perceived the astonishment of the people, should take occasion to speak of our Lord's resurrection, in whose name he wrought the miracle; and that he should insist on the leading circumstances of the life and death of his Divine Master, as being adapted to enlighten their minds and alarm their consciences, to soften their hearts and subdue their pride, much better adapted to answer these important ends, than a discourse on the mysterious hypostatical union would have been. The same remark may be made on the conduct of Paul on similar occasions. The silence objected against us, is frequently to be ascribed to the marvellous condescension of God, in proportioning his instructions to our capacities. As it is written, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," John xvi. 12. And again; "We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing," Heb. v. 11. These assertions, and the reason on which they proceed, show the propriety of Peter's conduct and that of other apostles, when speaking to sinners not yet converted, or to such as had just received the light of the gospel; whom they treat as infants in the grace of God and the knowledge of Christ, rather than as adults, laying before them the plainest truths, and reserving the more abstruse till a fitter season occurred.

The objection boldly suggests, that the Scripture is *entirely* silent as to the doctrine of the incarnation. But this is a great mistake; for we find hardly any remarkable occasion to make it known, but the Holy Spirit improves it for that purpose. Jesus, at his birth, is called "God with us." At his baptism, he is honoured in such a manner as cannot agree to a mere creature. In the history of his life and ministry by the evangelists, the names and attributes, the works and worship of God, are frequently ascribed to him. And the apostles, in their invaluable writings, act in a similar way, by describing and treating him as the true God.

The objection asserts, that the passages adduced to prove our doctrine are such, that we are obliged to draw several conclusions before they can serve our turn. And what if they were? this would not invalidate the argument formed upon them, provided the conclusions be fairly drawn. But it is a mistake; for the Scripture expressly asserts, that Jesus Christ is "God manifested in the flesh," 1 Tim. iv. 16; that he is "the Word," that "the Word was God," and that "the Word was made flesh," John i. 1, 14. Here we need only take the natural sense of the expressions, without any further reasoning, to find the incarnation. For the term *flesh* is taken either for the *body* merely, which cannot be the meaning here, because Christ not only assumed a body, but a body united to a spirit: or it signifies *sin*; but this cannot be intended, because Jesus assumed a holy, not a sinful nature: or it must signify the *human nature*; and this undoubtedly is the sense of the term. The obvious meaning, therefore, of the text is, God was manifest in the human nature. If we must reason, it is only for the sense of the

terms; not that we may infer by consequences a truth which lay concealed; for these two propositions, *God was made man*, and, *God was manifest in the human nature*, are perfectly equivalent.

CHAPTER III.

AN OBJECTION, FROM JOHN XVII. 3, ANSWERED.

ONE of the principal arguments in favour of the Socinian hypothesis, is formed on those words of our Lord, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3. "Nobody questions," says Crellius, "but that, by the *true God*, must be understood the Supreme God. When, therefore, Jesus Christ represents his Father to us, as *the only true God*, it follows, that none but the Father is the Supreme God."

Before we return a direct answer, it may not be improper to make a few general remarks. Let it, then, be here observed, that as our Lord may be considered, either in a state of the lowest humiliation, or in a state of the highest glory, so he is variously represented to us, according to these two very different conditions. Accordingly, he assumes, in reference to the *former*, such characters as express his abasement; and, with a view to the *latter*, such as denote his exaltation. In the time of his humiliation, he calls himself "the Son of man" much more frequently than "the Son of God;" but, after he was glorified, his apostles constantly call him "the Son of God," hardly ever "the Son of man." Before his resurrection, his disciples thought they said a great deal

in this confession of their faith, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," John vi. 69; but their light increasing with his glory, when they saw him risen from the dead, one of them said, "MY LORD, AND MY GOD," John xx. 28. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he gave them an admirable pattern of devotion in what is called "The Lord's prayer;" yet in that excellent directory, the name of Christ is not once mentioned. But when the Redeemer is just leaving the world, and is going to be glorified, he says to his disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," John xv. 16. And after his exaltation, the church places her hope of Divine acceptance, in devotional services, entirely in his intercession; addressing her prayers and praises to the Father, through the hands of her Divine Saviour only. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages. Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," Eph. iii. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 5; 1 John ii. 1. These things considered, it is no wonder that Jesus Christ, when speaking of himself in the time of his humiliation, should speak suitably to that condition; nor that, in the evangelical history, the Father is more frequently called GOD than he; nor yet that our Mediator, on various occasions, should speak of himself, as subject to his Father; and of the Father, as the Creator of heaven and earth, and the sovereign Manager of all events.

Arguments drawn from the silence of the Scripture, are in some cases excellent, but in others impertinent and entirely false. Will our opponents assert, for instance, that Christ is not the *Redeemer*, because

he taught his disciples the duties of morality when on the mount, without expressly mentioning the work of redemption? Or, dare they affirm, that he is not an *Intercessor* with God, because, when teaching his disciples to pray, he does not always direct them to ask the blessings they want in his name? Crellius, then, gains no advantage to his cause, by remarking, “Jesus Christ, when speaking of himself on various occasions, says nothing greater, nor yet his apostles when speaking of him, than that he is **THE SON OF GOD.**” For as, on some occasions, Christ spake of himself as a man; as, on others, he spake of himself as a Prophet, without saying anything of his kingly or priestly office; and yet we cannot, with any appearance of reason, conclude from hence, that he is neither King, nor Priest, nor Mediator between God and man: so he might speak of himself, and the apostles might represent him as a Priest and a King, as Mediator and the Son of God, on certain occasions, without speaking expressly of his Divinity, and yet not militate in the least against it.

To answer more directly. If our adversaries mean to prove, from this passage, that Jesus Christ is not **GOD**, they act inconsistently; for they acknowledge that he bears the name in the holy Scriptures. Nay, if they would hence make it appear that he is not the **TRUE GOD**, they contradict themselves; for Socinus expresses himself in the following remarkable words: “It is very false that we should openly declare, Jesus Christ is not *true God*. We profess to say the contrary, and declare, that **HE IS TRUE GOD**, in several of our writings, as well in the Latin as in the Polish language.”* “Jesus Christ,” says Smalcus, “may

* *SOCIN. ad Wick. p. 49.*

be called, with a sovereign right, **OUR GOD**, and **THE TRUE GOD**; and so he really is." And, in another place, he assures us, "That Jesus Christ is God *perfectissimo modo*"—in the **MOST PERFECT MANNER**. If, then, Jesus Christ be **GOD**, the **TRUE GOD**, and **God** in the **MOST PERFECT MANNER**; and if this be the sentiment of our opponents, what do they mean by adducing and arguing upon this passage? Is it their intention to prove, by taking the words in their greatest rigour of signification, that Christ is not the true God, and that the sublime title belongs only to the Father? But this is diametrically opposite to their own declarations. Let them, then, first agree with themselves; after which it will be time enough for us to attempt a coalition with them. It is proper, however, to return a more particular answer to their objection.

Paul says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," I Cor. ii. 2. Now, it is evident, if we understand this declaration in the full rigour of its literal sense, that the apostle excludes every object from the doctrine of salvation, besides his crucified Lord; but will our opposers from hence infer, that the Divine Father is excluded from that object which the apostle determined to know, in contradistinction to all other things? No, doubtless. Both they and we must except the Father; because we find from other passages of Scripture, that the knowledge of Him is absolutely necessary to eternal felicity. Were we to take the words of Paul in their strictly literal meaning, they would be diametrically opposite to the declaration of his Divine Master in the text which is now under consideration, and which our adversaries, with so much confidence, object against us. For the

apostle says, that we must propose nothing to ourselves, as the object of the doctrine of salvation, but the *crucified Jesus*; while his Lord most solemnly asserts the necessity of knowing *the Father*, in order to our future happiness. Consequently, these assertions cannot be both true, if understood in the rigour of their literal meaning; but they are easily reconciled by supposing that Paul, when he determines “to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” does not mean to exclude the Father, who, being one with the Son, is revealed by him, and known at the same time with him. And if our adversaries themselves be obliged to adopt this method of interpretation, when these two passages are to be reconciled; why will they not admit of it, when we are called to reconcile the text before us, which, according to them, asserts, that “the Father only is the true God,” with other passages of Scripture which have taught them, “that Jesus Christ is the true God?” If, when Paul says, “I determined not to know anything, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” we except the Father; because we are taught by the same unerring Spirit, that life eternal consists, not only in knowing Christ crucified, but also in the knowledge of the Father: is it reasonable, when the Scripture calls the Father “the only true God,” that we should except Jesus Christ; there being other passages of holy writ which declare, even by the confession of our opponents, that he is the true God?

It is very remarkable, that the most ingenious of our antagonists, when handling this argument, deprive themselves of all advantage from it, by the concessions which they are obliged to make. Crellius observes, on the passage, “The design of Christ was not to deny that the idols, or gods of the heathens,

were really idols, or gods of the heathens ; but only to deny, that they were the *true God*." And acknowledges that, if we consider the construction of the words, we ought not to connect the term *only*, with "*thee, Father*." " We would not," says he, " have any one charge us with supposing, merely on account of the grammatical construction of the words, that the term *only* ought to be connected with *thee*, or, *thee, Father* ; for the article before the adverb, *only*, will not bear it ; and, therefore, we must understand the verb, *to be*. For, otherwise, it were as if Jesus Christ had said, *To know that thou only art the true God* ; which, though true in itself, is very far from being the sense of this passage."*

Such concessions from one who holds the first place among our opponents, are very considerable ; nay, they are sufficient to decide the question in our favour. For when we produce a text of Scripture, in proof of any particular doctrine, we reason either from the bare signification of the words, or from the occasion on which they were uttered. If, then, we here dispute from the *occasion* of the words, our opposers will prove nothing against us ; for they allow that Christ, in this place, contrasts the true God with the idols of the heathen ; which, though it utterly excludes every fictitious deity, yet does not in the least militate against our Immanuel's claim of Divinity. Nor will our adversaries have any advantage by attending to the *bare signification* of the words ; for they cannot infer from thence, that the Father only, to the exclusion of Jesus Christ, is the true God ; without connecting the adverb *only*, with *thee, Father* ; which Crellius declares they do not attempt.

* CRELL. *De Deo uno Patre*, sect. i. cap. i. p. 15, 19.

The passage before us, far from attributing Deity to the Father, in opposition to the Son, evidently ascribes the infinite honour to them both. For the second member of the proposition is equivalent to this, That they may know that He whom thou hast sent, is also the true God. And the meaning of the whole text is, That they may know thee the only true God, *with Him* whom thou hast sent. As if one should say to the emperor, This is the welfare of Hungary, that they may know thee to be the only true king, and arch-duke Joseph, whom thou hast appointed over them. Which proposition would be equivalent to this, That they may know thee the only true king, with arch-duke Joseph thy son.

Though we might exemplify this way of speaking, by multitudes of instances in profane authors, yet we shall content ourselves with producing two from the holy Scriptures. When Christ says to his disciples, "Abide in me, and I in you," John xv. 4, the verb, *abide*, is necessarily understood in the second member of the proposition, thus: Abide in me, and I will abide in you. And when Paul says, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers," 1 Cor. iv. 15, (for so it is literally in the original,) we must also repeat, in the second member of the proposition, what is expressed in the first, after this manner: Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers in Christ. This, it is manifest, is the sense of the passage. So, in these words, "That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;" we must repeat in the latter part of the proposition, what is expressed in the former, thus: That they may know thee, the only true God, and that Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, is the true

God with thee. For when it is said, in the second branch of the proposition, "AND Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," it is natural to ask, What of him? To which the answer is, That they may know HIM ALSO to be that only true God.

Our opponents allege the following text on this occasion; "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords: ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν, the only having immortality," I Tim. vi. 15, 16. But as these last words, when reduced to an ordinary construction, are thus read, "Who only hath immortality;" so our adversaries will have it that these τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν, should be thus read, "Who only is the true God." But this text and criticism will be of little service to their cause. Nay, they could hardly have produced an instance more unfavourable to it. For it appears from the context, that JESUS CHRIST is the glorious person here intended. As, therefore, when he is called, "the blessed and ONLY Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who ONLY hath immortality," the Father is not excluded from an interest in those august titles and the perfections signified by them: so, had the Father been called the *only* true God, it would not have followed, that the Son is excluded from being a Person in the Deity; seeing he bears the same sublime character, with other titles of equal grandeur.

But there is an obvious and an essential difference between the two passages. In the example adduced by Crellius, "the only having immortality," is a nominative which does not depend on the verb, but the verb depends on the nominative; whereas in the passage before us, "the only true God," is an accusative, and depends on this verb, "that they may know;"

an accusative, I say, which ought to be connected, not only with *thee*, but also with the following accusative, "Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This, it is evident, entirely alters the case. Besides, with what consistency could this author render the text, "That they may know thee, who only art the true God;" after he had confessed, that the adverb, *only*, does not relate merely to the pronoun, *thee*, as has been observed?

Further: I demand of our opponents, how they would reduce this proposition, That they may know thee the true God, and Jesus Christ? Would they not, if ingenuous, reduce it thus: That they may know thee for the true God, thee, and Jesus Christ? When I form these propositions, That they may know thee, the only wise, and Jesus Christ; Thee, the only immortal, and Jesus Christ; Thee, the only King, and Jesus Christ; no one would ever suppose, that I intend to exclude the Lord Redeemer from wisdom, immortality, and royalty. On the contrary, every one would immediately see, that I comprehend, in these propositions, the wisdom, the immortality, and the royalty of the one and the other. Why, then, should any person form a different judgment of this proposition, which is perfectly similar, "That they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ?" For these words, "whom thou hast sent," do not in the least alter the nature of the proposition.

When our opponents express the proposition thus, That they may know thee, who art the only true God, it is necessary to inquire, whether the term *only* is to be connected with the pronoun, *thee*, or with the noun, *God*; for if the word *only* be joined with *thee*, that is, the Father, it indicates, that the Father only is the true God: but, if it be connected with the term

God, it declares the Father to be that God, who is the only true one. To see which of these interpretations ought to be preferred, we need only to consult the original. For there, it is observable, the article does not stand immediately either before *God*, or *true God*; but before these three terms, *only true God*. If the original were, *σὲ μόνον τὸν ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν*, the meaning would be, That they may know thee only the true God. Which proposition might be reduced to this; That they may know thee, who only art the true God. But the pen of inspiration has recorded it thus; *σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν*, "that they may know thee, the only true God:" the signification of which is plainly this; That they may know that thou art the only true God. Now, he who says, The Father is that God who is the only true one, asserts nothing inconsistent with our sentiments. For he who says, The Father is *God*, says also, The Father is the *only true God*. And so when we say, Jesus Christ is God, we assert, that He is the only true God; because we have no idea of two Gods. If, then, the Scripture do not militate against the Deity of Christ, in saying, that the Father *is God*; it asserts nothing inconsistent with that capital truth when it affirms, that the Father is the *only true God*.

But the sense of the passage will be more apparent, and its consistency with our doctrine more evident, if we consider, the occasion of the words—a parallel passage—that equality on which the Father and the Son are here placed—and the principal terms of which the remarkable text consists.

The *occasion* of the words. It was evidently in opposition to the corrupt theology of the heathens, that Christ thus expressed himself. As if he had said, The gentiles perish, because they have no knowledge of any but false

gods ; but it is life eternal to know thee the true God, in opposition to idols, and Jesus Christ thy Son. This is quite consistent with our hypothesis. For who does not perceive, that the words of the text are limited by the occasion of them? Crellius, indeed, says, "The sense of a discourse is not always determined by the occasion of it; and it frequently happens, that we deliver general expressions on a particular occasion." That this is the case in *some* instances, we freely allow; but that it is *always* thus, our learned opponent dares not affirm. We have several examples of each kind, in the evangelical history. So when Christ says, immediately before he raised Lazarus from the dead, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," John xi. 25; and when, upon his disciples showing him the temple, he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," John ii. 19, it is manifest that, on these particular occasions, he delivers general expressions, which are not limited by the subjects of which he speaks. But then this is not *always* the case. For example; when Jesus said to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is heaven," Matt. xvi. 17, will Crellius affirm, that the expressions are not limited by the occasion on which they were spoken? Will he assert, that by *it*, or *these things*, the good confession which Peter had just made, is not to be understood?

It being certain, then, that the sense of a period is sometimes limited, and sometimes not limited, by the occasion of it; we must inquire, under which of these two classes the text in question should be placed. That the sense of it ought to be limited to the occasion

of the words, is evident to me from this consideration, there is a *double allusion* in it. The first is in these words, "This is life eternal." The second in these, "The only true God." In the *latter* of these clauses, Christ speaks in allusion to the false divinities of the heathens. In the *former*, he makes eternal happiness consist, in the knowledge of the true God, in allusion, and in opposition to the state of heathens, who were lost, by having only false objects of worship, and by not knowing the true God. A *single* allusion to the occasion on which the words were uttered, would have been sufficient to limit their meaning to that occasion; and if so, the passage must undoubtedly be understood, according to its *two-fold* allusion, in which the force and spirit of it consists. This double allusion, therefore, limiting the sense of the words, requires us to explain them thus: That they may know thee the only true God, in opposition to the false gods, who have betrayed the heathens into a fatal error; for in the knowledge of thee eternal life consists.

"But," says our opponent, "suppose any one should imagine, that Peter, James, or John, is of the same essence with the eternal Father; might we not correct and confute him by this text? And could the force of the passage be eluded by saying, The design of Christ was only to exclude the fictitious deities of the heathens?"—I reply; Peter is far from being in the same predicament with Jesus Christ. He is not God; nor is he *called* God, and the true God, in the sacred Scriptures; yet all this is affirmed of the Lord Redeemer by the Holy Spirit: nay, as before observed, our adversaries themselves acknowledge him under these Divine characters. Peter is far from being invested with the names and attributes, the

prerogatives and honours of God ; but his Lord, as we have already proved, has them all ascribed to him, by the pen of inspiration. Again : The words were spoken of the Father and of Jesus Christ ; not of the Father and of Peter. Nor was it necessary that this passage should be adapted to confute every wild and monstrous opinion that might be embraced on the sublime subject of the Godhead. For if Peter, for instance, should imagine that he is the Father, who, according to our opponents, is the true God, in contradistinction to the Son ; I demand, whether they could convince him of his error and blasphemy, by confronting him with this text ? It is I, he would say, who am the Father ; and the passage you produce asserts my eternal Divinity ; represents me as the true God. But were Peter in the same circumstances with Jesus Christ ; did we consider him as having existed before the world began ; as being the Creator of heaven and earth ; as the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last ; were he, by unerring writers, called GOD, the MIGHTY GOD, the GREAT GOD, the TRUE GOD, and GOD BLESSED FOR EVER ; were he represented as equal with the Father, and as one with the Father ;—could we, in such a case, reasonably refuse him the title of *true God*, while we admitted the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures ?

Our interpretation of this text will be further confirmed, if we compare it with the following *parallel passage*. “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,” I John v. 20. We shall not spend our time in refuting the criticisms of some