

of our adversaries, who have maintained that these words, "This is the true God, and eternal life," ought not to be referred to Jesus Christ, who is mentioned immediately before, but to God, who is spoken of in the preceding verse. For nothing but an extreme desire to defend their cause at any rate, could induce them to assert any such thing. Nothing can be more evident than that He who is called "The true God, and eternal life," is the same who is called *true*; of whom it is said, "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." Socinus does not deny it. Nay, he not only allows that Christ is here called, "The true God, and eternal life;" but he also confesses, that these words are parallel to those which are now in dispute between us.

"I am easily induced to think," says he, "as the sense of this passage seems to be entirely the same with that of Christ himself, John xvii. 3, that this clause, 'This is the true God, and eternal life;' ought to be referred, not only to the Father, but also to Christ himself, as much as it can and ought to be referred."—But here our subtle opposer falls into a contradiction. For if the two passages be not parallel, why does he say, that the sense of the one is the sense of the other? And if they be, how can he maintain, that one of them says, Jesus Christ *is* the true God, and that the other implies he is *not* worthy of any such character?

But it is of still greater importance to consider that *equality* on which the Father and the Son are here placed. They are evidently represented as being unitedly, as being equally, the *grand object* of spiritual and saving knowledge. It is, indeed, pretended by our opponents, that it behoved Jesus to speak very modestly, when he was praying to his Father. Crellius observes, that it was by no means

proper for Christ, on such an occasion, to say, that he was the only true God, with his Father. The reasons which he assigns are; "Partly, because he is praying to his Father, and therefore, ought to speak with the greatest modesty; and, partly, because he considers himself as the Father's messenger. For it is not to be supposed that he should, when praying to his Father, set himself on an equality with him, by assuming a title so great, that the Father has none superior. And, seeing he here considers himself as his Father's messenger, we must not suppose, that he attributes to himself the glory and majesty of Him who sent him, which consists in his being the only true God."—But if Jesus be *not* the only true God with his Father, it is so far from being the *greatest* modesty in him not to call himself so, that there is no modesty in it at all. Extraordinary modesty, in a subject, a servant, to say, I am not the sovereign of the state! Wonderful modesty, truly, which restrains a worm, an atom, from calling itself **THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS; GOD BLESSED FOR EVER!** Never was modesty more offended, nor the laws of decorum violated in a more outrageous manner, than by Jesus Christ on this occasion, if he be a mere man, or a mere creature. I, therefore, may return Crellius his own words, and affirm, that neither *modesty*, nor the character of *messenger*, would permit Jesus Christ to associate himself with the Father, as unitedly constituting an Object that is the happiness of mankind, if he were a mere creature. *Not modesty:* for if Jesus be a mere creature, he is not, in comparison with God, so much as a grain of sand to the firmament; as a glimmering taper to the sun; as the smallest worm to the Lord of the whole earth. Shall we say, then, that the firmament and a grain of

sand support the world? That the sun and a glimmering taper illuminate our terraqueous globe? That the Lord of the earth and a worm cause great revolutions in states? Not the character of *messenger*: for in what empire was a dutiful servant ever known to name himself with his master, and to attribute every honour and act of royalty to himself and the sovereign? Were a minister of state to issue a proclamation, informing the public, that all affairs relating to government must be transacted in the king's and his own name; were he to cause his name to be stamped, with his royal master's, on the coin, and to be inscribed on public edifices; and were he to grant pardons in his own name, he would certainly be guilty of high-treason. How, then, dared Jesus to assert, that life eternal consists in the knowledge of God and of himself? How dared he to institute an ordinance, and require it to be administered in this form of words; I baptize thee, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" Matt. xxviii. 19. With what propriety, truth, or decency, could he say, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me?" John xiv. 1. Or, how dare we say, "I believe in God the Father almighty, and in Jesus Christ?"

The principal *terms* of which this text consists furnish us with a further proof, that the Lord Messiah is not excluded from the Godhead of the Father. Let us consider the word *know*. By this term we must either understand a merely speculative, or a practical knowledge. Not the *former*; because, our adversaries themselves being judges, life eternal does not consist in such a knowledge. For Crellius says, "It is false that eternal life consists, nor yet the means to obtain it, in knowing that the Father and his Son Jesus Christ are the only and true God.

This cannot be, if taken according to the letter. Otherwise it would be sufficient, in order to obtain eternal happiness, to acknowledge the Father and the Son for the only true God. But if so, all that are of this opinion would obtain eternal life; though, at the same time, they might be guilty of such sins as exclude them from the kingdom of heaven, according to the express declarations of Scripture. You will say, then, All this should be taken in an improper sense; in such a manner, that this knowledge may comprehend faith in Jesus Christ, a faith working by love, and all sorts of graces." *—It must, therefore, be a *practical* knowledge. And if so, to know the true God, must include a reliance on him and love to him, adoration of him and obedience to his commands. To this our learned opponent agrees. Now, as the term *know*, is applied to the Son, as well as to the Father, in the text before us; it necessarily follows, that eternal life does not only consist in trusting, loving, adoring, and obeying God the Father; but also in paying the same honours, and in performing the same duties, to our Lord Jesus Christ. But if it be our happiness to know Jesus Christ, so as to believe in him and love him, so as to worship and obey him, he must be the true God; for it is not possible that a rational creature should owe these honours and duties to any other. None but the true God ought to be served and worshipped in a religious way. "Thou shalt worship," says the supreme Lawgiver, commented upon by the Teacher come from God, "the Lord thy God, and HIM ONLY shalt thou serve," Matt. iv. 10. None but the Divine Being therefore, can deserve those honours, which are presented

* CRELLI. *De Uno Deo Patre*, Sect. i. p. 21.

to the proper object of "faith, and love, and all sorts of graces."

Life eternal is another expression which deserves our notice. None but an Infinite Being can render the life of a creature eternal. But Jesus is not an Infinite Being, if he be not the true God with his Father: consequently, on that supposition, he cannot give eternal life. When the passage asserts, that the knowledge of God is eternal life, and that the knowledge of Christ is eternal life; either it means, that the knowledge of the latter is eternal life, in the same sense in which it is affirmed of the former, or in a different sense. If in a *different* sense, no expressions can be more ambiguous; they are equivocal, and adapted to lead us into a fatal error. If in *the same* sense, Christ must bestow eternal life on the subjects of that spiritual knowledge for the same reason that the Father does to them that know him. But the Father gives life eternal, because he is the true God. So says the text; "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God," John xvii. 3. It follows, then, that our Immanuel bestows life eternal, only as he is the true God.

Again: Either the knowledge of Christ is life eternal, because that boundless blessedness *consists* in this knowledge; or because this knowledge is the *principle* of it. If the *former*, Jesus Christ must be the Supreme Good; for consummate felicity, or life eternal, is no other than the complete possession of the Supreme Good. If the *latter*, then I demand, Whether this knowledge be the source of eternal life, or only a means to obtain it? If the *source* of it, the object of that most beneficial knowledge must be the true God; for it is only the knowledge of Him that humbles, comforts, and sanctifies us; that produces both holiness and

happiness, which are the two grand constituents of that life which is eternal. If only as a *means* to obtain everlasting felicity, the language of the text, though seemingly strong and full of meaning, was intended to express very low and feeble ideas: for if so, there is very little excellence in the knowledge of Christ, which is not found in an acquaintance with other persons and other things. Were this all, it might have been said with propriety, "This is life eternal, to know the law, to know the Scriptures." "This is life eternal, for the Israelites to know Moses;" and, at the commencement of the gospel dispensation, "for the Jews and gentiles to know the apostles." For the knowledge of the apostles, as the messengers of God and ambassadors of Christ, was a means of obtaining eternal happiness; and the knowledge of Moses, as the honoured servant of Jehovah, was a happy means by which the Israelites were brought to obey God and obtain everlasting felicity. Or, if you will, the knowledge of Moses, and of the apostles, being a means of converting sinners to God, was also a means of bringing them to eternal life. Whether this means was greater or less, is not material to my present purpose; a means it undoubtedly was, and the argument requires no more. It must, notwithstanding, be granted, that it would have been impious and blasphemous to have spoken after this manner, "This is life eternal to know Moses;" "This is life eternal to know the apostles." And it would be the height of impiety to call Moses and the apostles **ETERNAL LIFE**, as the Scripture calls Jesus Christ, "This is the true God, and eternal life," 1 John v. 20.

Whoever considers this apostolic testimony, will find that the Holy Spirit very closely connects the

ideas of "the true God" and "eternal life;" and that it was his design to inform us, that it is because Jesus Christ is the *former*, that he gives the *latter*. We may, therefore, safely conclude, that as he *bestows* the one, he must *be* the other. For when he is called "Eternal Life;" and when it is said, that eternal life consists in "knowing him;" the expressions do not merely signify that he *promises* everlasting felicity, or that he *bestows* it on his disciples; but that he is the *Author* of it, and that it consists in the *enjoyment* of him. Moses *promised* the land of Canaan to the Israelites, and Joshua put them in *possession* of it; yet neither the one nor the other is called, "The land of Canaan," because such a name, for such a reason, would be ridiculous. But Christ is called "Eternal Life," and that immense bliss is said to consist in "the knowledge of him," to teach us, not only that he *promises* that infinite blessedness, nor only that he will certainly *bestow* it, but that he is the *source* of it; and that we need only to know him, in order to be both holy and happy for ever. Jesus, therefore, must be an Infinite Object, must be the true God. For if he were a mere creature, it would be impious to suppose, that everlasting life is infallibly connected with the knowledge of him; that being the royal prerogative of the Great Supreme. As it is written, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Let us now consider the name GOD. Our opponents labour to persuade us, that the term *God*, is not a proper name, but an appellative. For this purpose they have written whole treatises; nor need we wonder at it. For if it be certain, that the emphatical term is the proper name of the Supreme Being,

they must be obliged to acknowledge Jesus as a truly Divine Person; because they allow, that he is frequently called GOD, even in such passages as are not supposed to be figurative. They, therefore, will have it, that the sublime name is an appellative, and that it is frequently given to others besides the Great Supreme. Without entering into this dispute, we shall reason with them on their own principles. If, then, the term *God* be an appellative, we may form the same judgment of it as of the name *king*, which is given to Jehovah by way of excellence, but is also attributed to others. Now, I demand of our adversaries, supposing the words of the text were, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true *King*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," whether they would affirm, that the expressions, "only true *King*," belong to the Father exclusively of the Son? or whether they would allow them to belong to both? They would, I am persuaded, understand the words thus: This is life eternal, to know thee the only true *King*; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ. Now, as the name *God*, on their principles, is no less appellative than the term *king*; they ought, if they would act consistently, to understand the words of our Lord thus: This is life eternal, that they might know thee to be the true *God*; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ.

The adjective *true*, will furnish us with another argument. By the "*true God*," our opponents understand, the great *God*; *God*, by way of excellence; the Supreme Being. We allow, that the true *God*, is the great *God*; and that the great *God*, is the true *God*. But we maintain, that the idea of *true God*, and that of *Supreme Being*, are two ideas which

represent the same Object in different lights. The *former* opposes the infinite Object to all such as *falsely bear* the name GOD. The *latter* contrasts the same eternal and sovereign Object with every other being in the universe; for all creatures are necessarily and infinitely *inferior* to him. So that though the very same adorable Object is signified by these two Divine characters, yet, as they convey distinct ideas, they ought not to be confounded. This, however, our opponents constantly do, when they dispute against us from the text under consideration. It would not avail to say, The term *true* conveys the idea of excellence; as when it is said, "Constantine was a *true* emperor; Alexander was a *true* hero." Meaning, the one had all the qualities which an emperor ought to have, and the other was a great hero. For though the adjective, *true*, is sometimes used to indicate the *excellence* of the subject intended; yet it more frequently signifies the *reality* of it. As when it is said, "Henry the fourth was the *true* king of France, when he fought against the league after Henry the third's death." That is, he was then *really* king; he did not *usurp* the crown. So, in the text before us, the words, "only true God," carrying in them a manifest allusion to the multitude of pagan divinities, who falsely bore the name of gods; the epithet *true*, must signify the *reality*, rather than the *excellence* of Him to whom it is applied.

But if so, it is very easy to prove that the phrase, "only true God," should be referred to the Son as well as to the Father. For if the character, "true God," ought to be confined to the Father, it must be either because it is *not repeated* in the second member of the proposition, or because it is *too excellent* to belong to the Son. Not the *former*; for we have

already proved, that the analogy of language, as well as the verb, *know*, requires that it should be understood. Nor is it the *latter*; because it is intended to signify a God that is *not fictitious*; one that *really exists*. And who can doubt, if Jesus Christ *be* God, as our opponents themselves acknowledge, that he is, in this sense, *the true God*? Further: As that God, who is opposed to idols, does not exist merely in the imagination of men, but really and truly; I demand, whether the epithet *true*, belongs to Jesus Christ or not? If not, he is, by the confession of our opposers, a false and imaginary god. If it does, he must be the only true God.

But, perhaps, the word *only*, connected with "true God," may give the title an excellence, so as to render it peculiar to the Father. By no means. For as the term *only*, determines that of *true*; so the term *true*, limits that of *only*. As the adjective, *true*, is opposed to *false*; so the adverb, *only*, is opposed to *many*. "Only true God," therefore, stands opposed to the multitude of false gods worshipped by the heathens. Further: "Only true God," is not the epithet of the Father alone, but of the Father and the Son unitedly. As in this passage, "Or I only, and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" Here it is evident, that the term *only*, which, in construction, is the epithet of Paul, is, in the sense of the words, the epithet of Paul and Barnabas conjointly. Again: If the term *only* had been the epithet, not of God, as including both the Father and the Son, but of the *Father*; if the text had been thus read, That they might know the Father only to be the true God; yet it would have required some caution not to overstrain the sense of the word *only*, which does not always express the idea of

exclusion, so much as it may seem to do. This appears by an unquestionable instance. For of whom does the Scripture speak, when it says, "The blessed and **ONLY** Potentate; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who **ONLY** hath immortality," 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. *We* say it is of Jesus Christ; but, for argument sake, we will suppose ourselves under a mistake, in that respect. Whether our opponents attribute the epithet to the Father or to the Son, is to us indifferent, as to our present purpose; for they will still find, that the term *only*, which is here repeatedly used, does not limit so much as it seems to do. Can it be said of the Father, to the exclusion of the Son, that he is "the **ONLY** Potentate; He **ONLY** hath immortality?" No, doubtless; for both these qualities belong also to the Son. Can it be said of the Son, to the exclusion of the Father, that he is "the **ONLY** Potentate; He **ONLY** hath immortality?" Certainly not; for both eternity and dominion belong to the Father. If, then, the word *only*, when applied to the Father, excludes other objects, but not the Son; and if, when applied to the Son, it exclude not the Father; it follows, that the same term, in the passage before us, if it had been applied directly to the Father, would not have warranted us to say, that the Son is excluded; especially as the Son is called **GOD**, and the **TRUE GOD**, as well as the Father. Hence it appears, that this passage which our adversaries produce against us with so much confidence, confirms our sentiment.

CHAPTER IV.

AN OBJECTION, FROM I COR. VIII. 4—6, ANSWERED.

A SIMILAR objection is raised by our opponents on the following text, “ We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth ; (as there be gods many, and lords many ;) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” On which passage Crellius forms this argument : “ What could be said more clearly to prove that there is no God but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Paul, explaining who this one God is, says, he is *the Father* ; not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But there was no reason that he, when his design was to show who this one God is, should mention only the Father, if it be true that this one God is not only the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Ghost ; because these two last Persons were as proper to show who the one God is, as the Person of the Father ; and, consequently, should not have been passed over in silence.”

Here I shall make a few reflections, which may serve as so many general answers to this objection. And it may be observed, both in this passage and several others of a similar kind, that the names *Father* and *God* are not used to signify one single Person in the Deity ; but that Infinite Essence which is common to all the Divine Persons. This is what theological writers mean, when they speak of the term *God*, being taken *ουσιωδῶς*, or essentially. GOD, then, that eternal, invisible, omnipotent, and infinite

Being, who is neither the Father alone, nor the Son alone, nor the Holy Spirit alone; but who comprehends the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; is called *Father*, in a large and general sense, because he is the First Cause, "of whom are all things, and we in him." In this place he is called *Father*, in the same sense as when it is said, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," Jam. i. 17; and again, "One God and Father of all," Eph. iv. 6. In which passages the character, *Father*, is general; and signifies, that God is the First Cause of all things. A character this, like those of Creator, Redeemer, Saviour; all which belong to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, because they are applied to the essence which is common to the three Persons. Crellius, therefore, is under a mistake, when he suggests that Christ and the Holy Ghost are never in the Scripture called Father. For Jesus Christ is expressly called, "the everlasting Father." And as he made the world, and is the great First Cause, he may, with propriety, be called the Father of all things; for "all things were made by him and without him was not any thing made that was made," John i. 3. Should it be said, Though he is called "the everlasting Father," yet not simply "*the Father*;" I answer, Neither is God called simply *the Father* in this passage, but "the Father, *of whom are all things.*"

The character, *Father*, may be taken two ways; either as standing alone, or as connected with adjectives, which limit the signification of it. When *alone*, it signifies that Person in the Godhead who is distinguished from *the Son*; but in this text it is limited. We must not say, "To us there is but one God, the Father," and stop there; but we must add, "of

whom are all things." Had the apostle said, There is but one God, *the First Cause*, of whom are all things; our opponents could have found nothing in the words which they would have imagined to be in their favour. And though we could not find a similar epithet given to Jesus Christ, or to the Holy Spirit, this would not prevent our concluding, that He to whom Infallibility gives the names, and ascribes the works of God, is the First Cause, of whom are all things. Now, it is plain, that "the *Father*, of whom are all things;" and, the *First Cause*, of whom are all things, are equivalent propositions. Consequently, our adversaries have no more advantage from the former, than they could have by the latter.

But though the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have all the same essence; yet they are revealed, in the work of redemption, under very different views. The Father appoints, the Son executes, and the Holy Ghost applies. The Father, in a more particular manner, sustains the character of the offended Deity, and asserts the honours of Divine government; for which reason he is more frequently called GOD than the other adorable Persons. The Son appears as Mediator; holding the place of man, yet invested with the rights of the Godhead. And the Holy Ghost holds the place of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, supplying the absence of the latter. We need not wonder, therefore, that the name GOD, which is common to all the Persons of the most holy and glorious Trinity, should be more frequently given to the Father, who sustains the Divine character in a very particular manner in the wonderful economy of redemption.

Again: The adjective, *one*, which here limits the name, GOD, should not be understood in that rigour of

signification which our adversaries urge. For though it utterly excludes the "gods many and lords many," that are here mentioned, from having any claim to the character of Deity; yet, without entirely departing from the analogy of faith, it cannot be understood as militating against the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Because he not only bears the names and titles of the true God, but is also represented, by the unerring Spirit, as possessing the attributes and performing the works, as requiring the honours and receiving the adoration, which are peculiar to the Infinite Supreme. Such is the union between the Father and the Son, that, in respect of their essential glories, what is asserted of the one is to be understood of the other. Jesus does not only say, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30, but also affirms, that he who honours the Son, honours the Father also, John v. 23. And again he says, "All things that the Father hath are mine. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also," John xvi. 51; xiv. 9.

Hence it follows, that, when the Scripture ascribes any perfection to the Father alone, it does not mean to exclude the Son. This our opponents are obliged to acknowledge; and in so doing, confess the weakness of their own objection. For, when God is represented as the *only* Saviour, will they except our great Mediator? Or, when Christ is exhibited in the gospel as the *only* Saviour, there being no salvation in any other, will they exclude the Father? The Scripture asserts, that "God only is wise;" that He only is good; but must we consider the term *only*, as excluding Jesus Christ from an interest in those perfections? And when it is said, "The things of God knoweth (*οὐδείς*) no one but the Spirit of God," I Cor. ii. 11, must we from hence conclude

that the Father and the Son are ignorant of the things of God?

From these general reflections I come to my author "Paul, explaining who this one God is, says, he is *the Father*; not the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."— This is a great mistake. For Paul neither explains who this one God is, nor does he say that he is the Father, to the exclusion of the Son, and Holy Spirit. He does not *explain* who this one God is; or, if it be called an explanation, it is an imperfect one, and only adapted to the matter in hand. It was not his business, in this place, to explain the nature of the Father of our Lord, and to show what the Father had more excellent than the Son. His business was, to characterise that God who is opposed to idols; and to assert his infinite superiority over the deities of the heathen, the angels of heaven, and the kings of the earth, who are sometimes called *gods*. This being the apostle's design, he describes God in such a manner, as exalts him far above all other beings; and, well remembering what the prophet had said of all fictitious divinities, "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens," Jer. x. 11, he gives this opposite description of the true God; "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him."

Our author proceeds: "The apostle's design was to explain who this one God is. But does he explain a thing well, who omits more particulars that are proper to illustrate it than he expresses? and who, instead of mentioning *three* Persons, speaks only of *one*, as the apostle would do in this place, if the opinion of our adversaries were true? Who, among them, designing to explain and to show who

this one God is, would mention only the Father, and say, There is but one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? and would not rather say, There is but one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."—I reply: The design of the inspired writer was, not fully to explain who the one God is, but to make him known so far as his subject required; by giving him character which exalts him infinitely above all created intelligences and fictitious gods, calling him "The Father, of whom are all things." Nor is it necessary, every time we speak of a thing, that we should endeavor to *explain* it; much less, every time we describe a thing by some epithet, that we should explain it *fully*. The same apostle declares, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. But shall we say, The discourse is absurd; because the apostle, undertaking to describe the way of salvation, omits more things than he expresses? for he does not mention God the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, nor eternal life, nor many other objects which are proposed to our faith in the holy Scriptures. When the Philippian jailer inquired what he should do to be saved, and was answered, by Paul and Silas, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," Acts xvi. 31, will our learned opponent say, that those ambassadors of Christ spake impertinently on that occasion? The jailer desired to know how he might obtain salvation. A most important query, concerning the greatest of all blessings. Their business was to answer the query; and it was equally necessary for them to be full and explicit, on such an occasion, as upon that before us. Yet these unerring guides did not direct the trembling inquirer to believe in the Father, nor in the Holy Spirit, though it was necessary he should

do so; for he was to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Nor did they, so far as the history informs us, tell him to repent, though repentance was no less necessary than faith. The Ethiopian eunuch professes his faith in these words; "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," Acts viii. 37. But was this *the whole* of his faith? If not, can we say "that he explained himself well, when he concealed more than he expressed?" It is neither necessary, nor possible, to say every thing belonging to a subject, on all occasions; and a man must be ignorant both of Divine and human language, to imagine that an explanation given of any thing by an adjective, should be an exact definition of it, according to the rules of logic, and take in the whole extent of its object. Philosophers, indeed, speak thus; but people in common speak in a different manner. True it is, since we began to dispute on these important subjects, we choose to express ourselves with such caution as would be needless, if these questions had never been agitated; and, therefore, when speaking of the Supreme Being, we frequently say, One God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But how often do we express ourselves otherwise? On how many occasions do we give thanks to God, as the Author of our being and salvation, through Jesus Christ the Mediator? which is a way of speaking similar to that of the apostle, in the text before us.

Our opponent further says, "Who among them would fail to say, It is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? They must, indeed, so express themselves, if they would speak agreeably to their own principles. Much more ought the apostle to have spoken after that manner if he had been of their sentiment, because it

was his duty to give no occasion to the great and pernicious error, as they think it, of believing that God is *one*, as well in *Person* as in essence, and that none but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is God."—It is not necessary, to speak agreeably to our principles, that we should always fully express them. Though we are verily persuaded of the mystery of the Trinity, yet we may consistently speak of the Father without mentioning the Son, and of the Son without mentioning the Father, and of the Holy Spirit without mentioning either the Father or the Son. For there is no necessity that everything we say concerning God should be attended with an explicit declaration of this grand mystery.

Nor was it necessary that the apostle should be so very apprehensive of giving occasion to an heretical opinion, by expressing himself as he does in this passage. Such an insinuation, however, comes with a very ill grace from the lips and pens of our opponents, and betrays their inadvertence to a great degree; for it may be retorted upon them with the utmost propriety and unanswerable force. Was it proper for the apostles, was it their duty, to avoid giving occasion to pernicious errors? Ought they not, then, to have forborne the use of such language as tended, strongly tended, to lead mankind into error and impiety, into blasphemy and idolatry? Could they, without renouncing all concern for the salvation of man and the glory of God, apply to Jesus the peculiar, essential, and incommunicable characters of JEHOVAH? Could they, without affronting their Maker and laying a snare for immortal souls, apply to Christ, a mere creature, those oracles which manifestly speak only of the true God? Or could they, with a due regard to the honour of the Eternal Sove-

reign and the happiness of their fellow-creatures, assert that Christ is GOD; that "he is before all things," and that he created all things, Col. i 16, 17; that he is "the First and the Last," equal with God, and one with the Father, Rev. i. 11; Phil. ii. 6; John x. 30; that before him "every knee shall bow," Phil. ii. 10; and that all the angels are commanded to worship him? Heb. i. 6. Nay, in those very passages which are produced against us, the apostles associate Christ with the Father, as a performer of the same works, and a partaker of the same glories. They assert that life eternal consists in the knowledge of Christ, no less than in that of the Father; and, in this text, where Jesus is opposed to all false gods, it is said, "To us there is but one GOD, the Father, OF WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE IN HIM; and one LORD Jesus Christ, BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS AND WE BY HIM;" as if the Son were on a level with his Father. Could anything be more arrogant and impious than this familiarity with which Jesus Christ treats the infinite God, if it be true that he is a mere creature? For it must not be forgotten, that these, as well as other expressions of a similar kind, were penned by his authority and his direction. What! shall the Holy Ghost confine his care to the salvation of our adversaries, by avoiding every occasion of betraying them into pernicious errors, while he takes little or no heed to preserve us from blasphemy and idolatry? But, whatever had become of us, as there is nothing so precious, nothing so great, as the incommunicable glories of the Godhead, it might have been expected that the Holy Spirit would take particular care, in penning the New Testament, that no occasion

should be given to Christians to rob God of his honours, by giving them to a mere creature.

Our opponent adds: "From whence it appears, that what some of them answer is idle, when they suggest that the apostle calls this one God, 'the Father,' by *attribution*, as they express it. For, if so, he would not have instructed the common Christians, but rather have led them into a pernicious error. For the people do not know in what this attribution consists; nay, many among the learned have never heard it so much as mentioned."—The *term* attribution may perhaps be unknown to many, but the *thing* is well known, and it is that about which we are chiefly concerned. *Attribution* consists in giving a name to one only, which belongs to others. For example: As the name LORD belongs to both the Father and the Son, when it is given to Christ only it is called an attribution; and so, as the name GOD belongs to them both, it is an attribution to give it to the Father only. Those gracious characters, REDEEMER and SAVIOUR, are common to the Father with Jesus Christ; when, therefore, it is affirmed of the latter, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12, it is called an *attribution*, or an appropriation of a name common to the Father and the Son, to the latter only. Shall we say, that the Scripture knows nothing of a love of *appreciation* and a love of *intention*, because these terms come from the schools, and are not found in the Bible? The *names*, indeed, are not there, but the *ideas* intended by them are strongly expressed in that sacred volume. The *former* consists in loving God with all our hearts; the *latter* in forsaking kindred, property, and life

itself, at his command and for his glory. So in the case before us. Either, then, our opponent who makes the objection, meant only that the *term* attribution is strange to common Christians, or that the *thing* represented by it was equally unknown. If the term, we have nothing to object. If the thing, his mistake may be rectified by showing, that in these words, "ONE LORD, Jesus Christ," there is an attribution perfectly similar to that which we find in these, "ONE GOD, the Father."

Our opponent further remarks: "If the term GOD be understood in this place as peculiar to the Father, either it includes a particular excellency, and is taken for that Person who is the source of the other; or for the Father, without denoting any particular excellency. If the *former*, we have already shown that they who speak thus either contradict themselves, and acknowledge that the Father only is the Supreme God, or else they say nothing to the purpose. If the *latter*, the apostle must have spoken impertinently; for the question was not whether *the Father* is but one, but, whether *God* is but one; as appears from the preceding words."—Here we retort upon Crellius. If the term LORD be taken in this place as peculiar to the Son, either it includes a particular excellency, and is taken for the Person who has an original authority, or for one possessed of dominion, without denoting any particular excellency. If the *former*, they who speak thus either contradict themselves, and acknowledge that the Son is the Supreme Lord, or else they say nothing to the purpose. If the *latter*, the apostle must have spoken impertinently. For the question was not whether *the Son* is but one, but, whether *the Lord* is but one; as appears from the preceding words.

Our adversaries, if they can, may answer this objection; as for us, we are not concerned in it. For what is this argument but a mere sophism? The term **GOD**, by being appropriated to the Father, does not lose its natural signification. It still denotes that infinite excellence which distinguishes his essence to whom it is applied, from all that are called gods or lords, whether on earth or in heaven. The **FATHER**, who is here opposed, not to the Son, nor to the Holy Ghost, for that was not the question, but to false gods, to magistrates, and to angels, is represented as infinitely superior to "all that is called God." But what insurmountable difficulty is there in all this? Is not **JESUS** also opposed in this place, not to the Father, for that was not the question, but to all those that are called lords, whether on earth or in heaven?

CHAPTER V.

AN OBJECTION FROM LUKE I. 35 ANSWERED.

ANOTHER objection against the doctrine maintained, is formed by our adversaries on the following words: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called **THE SON OF GOD**." From hence they infer, that the sublime title, **SON OF GOD**, is founded on the miraculous conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Here they demand how Christ could be so called, on account of his wonderful conception by the power of the Highest, if he was the Son of God from eternity?

In answer to which I observe, that God, in this revelation of his will, accommodates his language to the capacities of the person to whom he makes known his gracious designs. Thus he had frequently done to the Jewish prophets. When he revealed to those holy men the calling of the gentiles, it was often under such images as were borrowed from the ancient sanctuary, with which they were well acquainted. He informed them, that "an altar should be erected in the midst of Egypt;" and that from the rising to the setting sun, "incense should be offered with a pure offering." Such ideas were familiar to them, and, therefore, spiritual things and future events were revealed to the prophets and the church of old under these images. So the angel who appears to Mary speaks in a similar way. He might, if he had pleased, have described Jesus Christ as the Mediator who should reconcile heaven and earth. He might have represented him to the virgin mother as a universal Monarch, according to the oracle of Daniel; as a spiritual King, who should reign over the hearts and consciences of men; and as Lord of the universe, having all authority in heaven and in earth. These things, however, he does not mention, because it was expedient that she should be gradually led into the mysteries of the kingdom of God. He, therefore, speaks of the re-establishment of David's kingdom, which was at that time the object of the nation's hope, and most familiar to the mind of a Jew. "The Lord God," says Gabriel, "shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever," Luke i. 32, 33. Now, as the eternal Sonship of Jesus is one of the most sublime and mysterious doctrines in the whole book of God, we have no reason to be surprised if the