

A
SERIES OF LETTERS
ON THE
DIVINITY AND HUMANITY OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST ;

BY

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REV. J. BATEY.

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PREFACE.

THE letters contained in this little volume were the private property of Mr. Harris, of West Hampstead. Being impressed with the importance of their contents, he resolved to publish them, with fervent prayer that the Truth of God might be thus served, and the best interests of His people be promoted.

The letters bearing Mr. Carne's name fell into the hands of Mr. Harris during the early portion of his Christian life ; and he will not readily forget the gracious impression their perusal made upon his young mind. Originally, these letters appeared in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, for the year 1815. This will account for their peculiar style.

The letters bearing the names of Dr. Mather and Mr. Batey were addressed by those gentlemen to Mr. Harris some few years since. They refer to an opinion held by some good men that Christ's human soul existed in union with His Divine nature before the creation of the world. Deeming this to be a serious error, the writers of these letters have ably controverted it.

The Person of our Adorable Lord must ever remain a profound mystery to finite minds. Faith, however, is privileged to grasp a fact which reason fails to comprehend. Right views of Christ's Person and Work are necessary to an establishment in the faith. In the day in which we live

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men are being wafted about by various errors. The numerous cries of "Lo, here !" and "Lo, there !" are a perplexing danger to the young and inquiring believer.

May this little volume be greatly blessed by the Holy Spirit, and rendered subservient to the instruction of the ignorant, the guidance of the perplexed, the salvation of the lost, and the glory of our Triune God.

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SOCINIANISM REFUTED.

LETTER I.

SIR,

It may be worthy the observation of your readers that Dr. Carpenter, in his letter of the 25th of November, allows that *Griesbach* is *Trinitarian*, and, at the same time, that *his* is the *most perfect* edition of the *New Testament ever printed*: confessedly, therefore, the *New Testament*, according to the most correct and unadulterated edition, is on the Trinitarian side; and, to make his own cause good, Dr. Carpenter is frequently obliged to depart from this *learned Editor*, and, in so doing, to reject the *text of Scripture* in its *chastest* condition.

In proof of this, your readers need only refer to the Socinian *New Version*, and the *Remarks* of the Rev. Mr. Nares on the same, who very ably points out and exposes the tricks of the adversary in this, as also in many other respects. It only remains, therefore, that every sincere Christian determine to follow the words of truth as addressed to him in the Scriptures, in preference to being led astray by the unfounded, though confident, assertions of the Socinian party. As to *reasoning* with them, in the hope of *convincing* them, it is a vain endeavour; and even if you were to convince a Socinian of Trinitarianism being the doctrine of Scripture, according to *Griesbach's* edition, that is, the *purest* and the *best*, you would not *then* persuade him to embrace it as the faith once for all delivered by infallible inspiration to the Saints. He has ever a hole to creep out at; he will tax even *Griesbach* with inaccuracies and interpolations, if no other subterfuge will serve his purpose, and discard *whole*

*chapters** that make a part of *his* edition, because they happen to contain a full account of the *obnoxious incarnation*. I would therefore say of the *twin teachers* of the prevailing heresy in your city what Jesus said of the judicially blinded *Pharisees*—"Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, *both* shall fall into the ditch."

One other observation I would make, in reference to Dr. C.'s letter before alluded to. *Our* cause entirely depends upon *one* point being fully established, and that one point is what Dr. C. presumes to style "the unscriptural and unintelligible doctrine of *two natures* in the *person of Christ*." This is what might be expected from a *materialist*: it is to be supposed that the person who despises the notion of an immaterial spirit in man looks down upon the *incarnation* with the same eyes. Dr. Priestley, in the preface to his letters to Bishop Horsley, pronounces the doctrine of the distinct existence of the *soul* to be utterly *unscriptural*; Dr. C., as I understand, is of the same opinion. If these reverend doctors can read the Bible without perceiving *this* truth, they may of course overlook the *other*, of the two natures of deity and manhood in the person of Christ. What *they* have not been able to discover, *we*, Mr. Editor, must endeavour to bring to light, and place in such a view as will encourage the *believer* to stand fast in the faith, notwith-

* "If this version (say the authors of the Socinian Testament) possesses any merit, it is that of being translated from the most correct text of the original which has hitherto been published." "Yet notwithstanding this (observes Dr. Lawrence) and other similar assertions, the reader scarcely opens the gospel of *St. Matthew* before he finds *three pages* together printed in italics—an intimation, he is told, that the passages themselves are all of doubtful authority—and when he gets to *St. Luke's*, almost *seven* more of the same description. Being repeatedly informed (adds Dr. L.) that this version is adapted to the 'admirable' text of *Griesbach*, we naturally turn to *Griesbach* for the *authority* of this bold step, *but in vain*; for *there*, the doubtful passages, as they are denominated, appear in the genuine text, without the *slightest hint* of their supposed illegitimacy." If therefore this vaunted version *pretend* to no other merit than that of adherence to *Griesbach*, it can lay claim to no merit at all, since its scrupulous adherence to this text of the Editor is a mere pretence.

standing all the gainsayings of the enemy. And, as I conceive, we cannot do better than begin with—

Matt. i. 23—"A Virgin shall be with *child*, and shall bring forth a *son*, and they shall call *his* name *Emmanuel*, which is, *God with us*." This was predicted in Isaiah vii. 14; and it was repeated in ch. ix. 6, where the *child born* is called *the mighty God*.

A second proof we have in Matt. ii. 2—6: "Herod demanded where *Christ* should be *born*; and they said, In Bethlehem of Judæa; for it is written by the Prophet, out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." But if we refer to the Prophet, he will give us to understand that this Governor existed everlastingly, though manifested *in time* in the flesh. For Micah's words are,* "out of thee shall *he* come forth unto me, to be Ruler in Israel, *whose* goings forth have been from *of old*, from *everlasting*;" or, as the Septuagint has it, "from the days of eternity."

A third proof presents itself in Matt. iii. 3—"This is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying, the voice of one crying in the Wilderness, prepare ye the *way of the Lord*;" for this intends *Christ*, for whom alone John prepared the way, and who, while he was proper man, was also, according to the Prophet, both Lord and God; for the original is—"prepare ye the way of *Jehovah*, make straight in the desert a highway for our *God*."†

We have a fourth passage to the point in Matt. xi. 2—6. John heard of the *works* of Christ, and sent disciples and said, "Art *thou* he that *should come*, or do we look for another?" Jesus said, "Go, shew John the things ye hear and see: the blind see, the lame walk, and the deaf hear;" thus referring to the prophecy on record, which had promised long before—"Behold, your *God* will come, *he* will come and *save* you: *then* the eyes of the *blind* shall be opened, the ears of the *deaf* shall be unstopped, and the *lame* shall leap as a hart.‡"

A fifth proof appears in Matt. xi. 10—"This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee;" for the

* Micah v. 2.

† Isaiah xl. 3.

‡ Isaiah xxxv. 4-6.

Psalms* it is, "in the name of *Jehovah*." If it be said Jesus came *not* in his *own* name, but in that of his *Father*, it is to be answered that Jesus himself declares, "If ye had known *me*, ye should have known *my Father also*, and henceforth ye know him and *have seen him*; he that hath seen *me*, hath seen the *Father*, and how sayest thou then, *shew us the Father*? Believest thou not that *I am in the Father*, and the *Father in me*?" And again he says, "*I and the Father are one*."† To believe this *oneness* of essence in the Father and Son, is to be a true *Christian Unitarian*; to deny it, as a *Socinian* does, is to be a *Deist* in a poor disguise.

A tenth proof is given us in Mark xii. 35—37. Jesus said, "How say the Scribes that *Christ* is the *son* of David? for David himself said, by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to *my Lord*, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself called him *Lord*, and whence is he then his *son*?" If we refer to the 110th Psalm, we shall find *Christ*, who is styled *Adonai* in the first verse, styled *Jehovah* in the fifth; for it is *he* who is expressly said to be at the *right hand* at the commencement of the Psalm—"Sit thou at my right hand"‡—and he must be intended in the fifth and two following verses: "The Lord (*Jehovah*) at *thy right hand* shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath, § *he* shall judge among the Heathen, &c.; *he* shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall *he* lift up the head."

An eleventh proof is given us in Luke i. 16, 17.—"Many of the children of Israel shall he (*John*) turn to the Lord their God." Now he turned them to *Christ*, as the first chapter of John's gospel abundantly proves; and St. Paul bears witness to the same effect, when he says, "John said to the people, that they should believe on *him* which should come after him, that is, on *Christ Jesus*."|| Accordingly, St. Luke having said John "shall turn them to the Lord their God," immediately adds, "and he shall go before *him*," that is, before the Lord their God, "in the spirit and power of *Elias*," whereas he in fact went thus before the Lord *Christ*,

* Psalm cxviii. 26. † John xiv. 7-11, and x. 30. ‡ Verse i.
§ Compare Psalm ii. 9-12. || Acts xix. 4.

who is, therefore, the Lord God of Israel. And, agreeably to this, John is called, in the 76th verse of this same chapter, "the prophet of the Highest," who was to "go before the face of the Lord."

A twelfth proof we collect from Luke ii. 11—"Unto you is born a Saviour," a Saviour, observe, from sin,* "who is Christ the Lord." But it is the Lord God who declares that he will be Israel's King, and will save them, ransoming them from the grave, and redeeming them from death;† and solemnly protests, "for there is no Saviour beside me." Is it at all surprising, then, that Isaiah should entitle Christ Immanuel, God with us, and the mighty God?

A thirteenth proof may be derived from Luke ii. 34—"Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel," or, as St. Peter has it, "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence."‡ But how read we in Isaiah?—"Sanctify Jehovah Sabaoth himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel."§

A fourteenth proof we have in John i. 1, 3, 14—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God; all things were made by him; and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." This incarnate Word is said, in the next chap., verse 11, to have "manifested forth his glory." Now this he did by the display of a divine attribute, in an exertion of omnipotent power, nothing short of which could possibly convert water into wine; by this, therefore, he proved himself "the power of God."|| And in this miracle, if he really manifested forth his own glory, as it is said he did, he exhibited his Godhead, whose the glory exclusively is of every act of omnipotence: and was it not predicted that "the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together?"¶

A fifteenth proof occurs in John ii. 19—21: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up: he spake of the temple of his body:" and what made his body a

* Matt. i. 21. † Hosea xiii. 4, 9, 10. ‡ 1 Peter ii. 8.

§ Isaiah viii. 13, 14. || 1 Cor. i. 24. ¶ Isaiah xl. 5.

temple, unless the inhabitation of the *Godhead* †—according to that of Malachi, “The *Lord* shall come to *his temple*.”* The Apostle therefore asserts, “In him *dwelleth* all the fulness of the *Godhead* *bodily* :” † and again, in the same epistle, ‡ he makes a similar assertion, since the passage had better be read, as *Parkhurst* renders it, under the word *cardo* O, “for in him all the fulness (of the *Godhead*) was pleased to dwell ;” for *Griesbach* has the various reading of—of the *Godhead* (*tees Theoteetos*), in his note on the place. And if it be objected that our bodies are called temples, in that the gracious *Spirit* dwelleth in us, and therefore it proves nothing in favour of *Christ’s* divinity, any more than of our’s, the objection is absurd ; for *we* indeed are the temples of the *Spirit*, and so a holy habitation of *God*, which only proves the Deity of the *Spirit*, whose temples we are said to be, according to that remark of *Augustine*, as quoted by *Calvin* in his *Institutes*, “If we were commanded to erect to the *Spirit* a temple of wood and stone, forasmuch as *God* is the sole object of worship, it would be a clear proof of *his* divinity ; how much clearer then, is the proof, now that we are commanded, not to erect one, but to be ourselves *his* temples !” Now *Christ* is his own temple : when he was incarnated, then, as *Malachi* speaks, “the *Lord* suddenly came to *his*” (his own) “temple :” and therefore he proceeds to speak of himself surviving the ruin of his temple, yea, as both causing its fall, and as being able to rear it again from the ground—“Destroy it (said he to the Jews), and I will raise it again.” And more particularly in another place, § having said, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again,” he adds, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself ; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Owing to this power, “it was not possible that he should be holden,” even in respect of his body, in the bands of *Death*. || And thus he was “declared the Son of *God* with power by the resurrection from the dead,” ¶ it being his own act and deed ; which nicely proves the truth of that saying of his, “My *Father* is greater than all, and I and the *Father* are one ;”** whence it

* Mal iii. 1. † Col. ii. 9. ‡ Col. i. 19. § John x. 18. || Acts ii. 24.

¶ Rom. i. 4.

** John x. 29. 30.

is plain, that he is indeed, what he expressly styles himself, the *Almighty*.*

A sixteenth proof we have in John v. 17. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" which agrees well with, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with God*, and was (himself) *God*, and the *world* was *made by him*."† The Jews accounted this as "making himself *equal with God*;" and yet Jesus proceeded to say, "What things *soever* the Father doeth, these also doth the *Son* likewise; for as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the *Son* quickeneth *whom he will*." Nor is what follows less in favour of the Son's co-equality with the Father: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the *Son*, that *all men* should *honour* the *Son* even as *they honour the Father*." Accordingly, in Genesis xix. 24, "*Jehovah* (the *Son*) rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire, *from Jehovah* (the *Father*) out of heaven." And in Zechariah iii. 2, "*Jehovah* said unto Satan, *Jehovah* rebuke thee, O Satan:" what is this, but the *Son* rebuking in the *Father's* name?

Proof seventeen, from John viii. 58.—"Before Abraham was I am." This is not true of the *man* Christ, as concerning the *flesh*; but it is true of him "as our great God and Saviour."‡ St. Paul's expression is like it: "*He* is before all things, and by him all things *consist*,"§ and "all things were created by him and for him." If all this prove not the proper Deity of Christ, then what is *peculiar* to the Almighty *author* and *sustainer* of all is predicted of a *creature*; for if Christ be before all things, he is *eternal*; if he sustain and uphold them, he is *omnipotent*; and if all were created by him and for him, he is both the *first* and the *final* cause of all, as himself affirms, when he says, "I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."||

Proof eighteen, from John x. 38.—"The Father is in me, and I in him." Christ had just before said, "I and the Father are one,"¶ and, although the Jews esteemed that

* Rev. i. 8. † John i. 1, 10. ‡ Titus ii. 13. § Col. i. 17. || Rev. i. 8.
¶ John x. 30.

saying as *blasphemy*, "because that *thou*, being a *man*, makest thyself *God*," still he is bold in repeating the obnoxious truth: and the moment he uttered it, we read, "*therefore* they sought *again* to take him, but he escaped out of their hand." That the Father was *in him*, yea, and the whole fulness of the Godhead, was plain from his *works*, to which he constantly appealed; and if *he* was not *in the Father*, how could he with any propriety speak of himself, *while on earth*, as "the Son of man who *is in Heaven*?"* or, how could *John* represent him, when yet in the world, as "the only begotten Son, who *is in the bosom* of the Father?"†

Proof nineteen, from John xii. 41.—"These things said *Esaias*, when he saw his," that is *Christ's*, "glory, and spake of him:" but *Isaiah*, as he relates it in his sixth chapter, saw "*Jehovah* sitting upon a throne," even "*the King, the Lord of Hosts*." The vision, it is likely, was, in this instance, similar to that of the prophet *Ezekiel*.‡ "Above the firmament was the likeness of a *throne*, and upon the throne the likeness as the appearance of a *man* above upon it,—this was the appearance of the likeness of the *glory of Jehovah*." After such an exhibition of *Jehovah's* glory, in the likeness of *manhood*, let our Socinian adversaries scoff at the doctrine of *two natures in Christ*, if they please: let the confident Doctor call it *unintelligible*, we will still uphold it because *purely scriptural*.

Proof twenty, from John xvii. 5.—"O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which *I had* with thee *before the world was*." Christ had before observed, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man *ascend up where he was before*?"§ Now surely, if Christ were *only* a mere mortal *man*, and not *also* truly and properly of the *Godhead*, it could not possibly be so repeatedly taught us, as it so plainly is, that he was in the beginning, before all created beings, that he had divine honours, in conjunction with the Father, ere time and the world commenced, and that by him "*the worlds were made*,"|| even *those* of the *heaven* above and the *earth* beneath. Certainly, if it be possible to prove

* John iii. 13. † John i. 18. ‡ Ezek. i. 26, 28. § John vi. 62.

|| Heb. i. 2, 10.

the *existence of God*, it is possible to prove the *Godhead of Christ*; for everything that is peculiar to *Deity* is applied to him: and let Dr. Carpenter, or his fellow-labourer, or any other degrader of Jesus of Nazareth, produce his demonstrations of the *being of Jehovah*, and the Christian will as easily shew from his Bible that those very *features*, which are considered as unitedly forming the glorious *image and likeness* of the ever-blessed *God*, do manifestly appear in all their perfection of beauty *in the face of Jesus Christ*,* and who is therefore declared to be, and that too by a divinely inspired oracle, “over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.”†

Proof twenty-one, from John xx. 27, 29.—“Then saith he to Thomas, be not *faithless* but *believing*: and Thomas answered, and said *unto him*, *My Lord and my God*! Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast *seen* me, *thou* hast believed, *blessed are they* that have *not* seen, *and yet have believed*.”

These proofs, Mr. Editor, may suffice; and I the rather stop here, that I may confine myself at present entirely to the *Gospels*, which are sometimes erroneously supposed to afford little or nothing in favour of the point in debate. Indeed, were I to collect from the other parts of the New Testament such portions only as are directly in proof, your whole paper would fail to contain the quotations. Enough is adduced, I am persuaded, to satisfy the humble Christian of *Christ* being *God* as well as *Man*, and so a proper *Saviour*: ten times more, if exhibited, would utterly fail, I fear, to convince, at any rate to *persuade*, the ungodly, who undeify the Redeemer, and sacrilegiously rob him of his glory.

January 14, 1815.

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. † Rom. ix. 5.

LETTER II.

SIR,

I BEG to offer you another Scriptural demonstration* of the proper DEITY of the Lord Jesus, which occurred to me subsequently to my transmitting you the former proofs. You have this, like the others, drawn pure from the fountain of eternal truth : and, like David's smooth stones of the brook, they are indebted in no respect to human ingenuity, but were exactly suited in their native state to the service into which they are now enlisted. These proofs, I conceive, each of them, are as a bright ray of the solar light, and calculated most admirably to flash conviction upon every ingenuous mind. If any can resist their evidence, are they not hence convicted of intellectual blindness? for truth is light, and light is its own evidence, and none but the blind can remain uninfluenced by its testimony, and resist its force. But if *each* of these proofs be as a piercing beam of the parent orb, *together* they form a *blaze* of evidence, as imposing upon the *soul* not shrouded in impenetrable night, as is the excessive brightness of the meridian sun upon the overpowered *eye*. The God of truth very strikingly observes, "Is not *my word* like as a *fire*?"† And I think we may fairly say of these *specimens* of it, that they are exceedingly well adapted to reduce to the obedience of faith the heart of the most obdu-

* The *highest* kind of demonstration is a clear proof from the word of God, which is the "demonstration of *the Spirit*" (1 Cor. ii. 4.), which is truth itself, and *cannot err*. Man's senses may be deceived, and man's reason, but the asseverations of him who "cannot lie" are to be depended upon as the unambiguous declarations of an infallible oracle. As for *Socinians*, "what they do not think it *rational to conceive*, they will not allow to be *contained in Holy Scripture*," though as manifest in its pages as the sun in the heavens at noon-day. But what is this rule of human reason, from which revelation itself must never be supposed to swerve? If they will listen to a critic of character (Michaelis), he will tell them that, "what we call *reason*, and by which we would new model the Bible, is frequently nothing more than some *fashionable system of philosophy*, which lasts only for a time, and appears so absurd to those who live in later ages, that they find it difficult to comprehend how rational beings can have adopted such *ridiculous notions*."

† Jer. xxiii. 29.

rate, just as the concentrated solar rays are found to dissolve and reduce to atoms the solid diamond.

The proof I have now to adduce is from Luke xxi. 8.—“Many shall come in *my name*, saying *I am*.”* It is evident, from the Old Testament, that *this* is a title peculiar to the very *God*; since Jehovah himself, the sole Eternal, is introduced asserting himself to be the *I am*, to the utter exclusion of every one else. “Behold (said Moses), when I come to the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, “*The God of your fathers hath sent me to you, and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say to them? And God said to Moses, I am; and thus shalt thou say, I am hath sent me to you.*”† Now the Greek version of the Septuagint renders this title of *I am*, in Exodus, by *ego eimi*, which, to a letter, corresponds with the *name* that Christ has assumed in the above passage of the Evangelist St. Luke. That Christ claims it as his own, using it in such a way as no mere Prophet ever did; indeed, such as clearly bespeaks him the everlasting God, with reference to whom there exists no distinction of time, such as past and to come, but who, comprehending in one glance all the whole immensity of things, makes equally *present*, with respect to himself, what happened a thousand or five thousand years ago, what is now happening, and what is yet to happen in the course of future ages—that Christ does so speak of himself as the *I am* in a *God-like* way, and such as should naturally lead us to take him for a person in the divine essence, is undeniable in the face of the Scriptures. “If ye believe not (said Jesus) that *I am*, ye shall die in your sins;”‡ which was as much as saying, “I, even I, am *Jehovah*, and *beside me* there is no Saviour, so that rejecting me ye must inevitably perish.” A little after, he asserts again, “When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye *know* that *I am*,”§ that I am the eternal “Son of God,” as the astonished centurion and

* (*ego eimi*.)—Simon Magus pretended to be the *supreme God*; the *Father* among the Samaritans, the *Son* among the Jews, and the *Holy Spirit* among the Heathens: and, as such, he claimed the *ego eimi* of the Lord, so as to induce, it is said, even Dositheus to worship him. (See Nares, pp. 65, 66.)

† Exodus iii. 13, 14.

‡ John viii. 24.

§ John viii. 28.

others confessed ;* that I exist everlastingly as one with the Father, and, by virtue of its indissoluble union with me, my *flesh* is incapable of being held in the bonds of corruption ; it shall force the barriers of the tomb, and will arise again ere the *smell* of death shall have passed upon it. Inexplicable upon any other mode of interpretation is that passage of St. John, "*Before Abraham was* (not I was, which would best befit a mere mortal, but, before Abraham was) *I am* ;† a manner of expression truly *divine*, and well comporting with the great Apostle's "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and with another Scripture of a similar import, "All things were created by him and for him, and *he is* before all things, and by him all things consist." ‡

It may be further observed, that the Greek *ego eimi*, and the English *I am*, are one in signification with the Hebrew *Jah* or *Jehovah*. It will be, therefore, a completion of our proof, if, in a single instance, either of these titles be applied to Christ. And this is indisputably the case in the 68th Psalm, in the course of which he bears the several names of *Jehovah*, *Jah*, and *God*. "The chariots of *God* are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels ; *Jehovah* is among them, as in Sinai in the holy place ; *thou* hast ascended on high, *thou* hast led captivity captive, *thou* hast received gifts for men:" § all which, in the Ephesians, || is applied to *Christ*, who is therefore the *Jah* in the fourth verse of the Psalm. "Sing unto *God*, sing praises to his *name* ; extol him that rideth upon the heavens by *his name Jah*, and rejoice before him."

* Matt. vii. 54. † John viii. 58. ‡ Col. i. 17. § Psalm lxxviii. 17, 18.
|| Eph. iv. 8.

LETTER III.

SIR,

A correspondent in an Exeter paper who signs himself "A Trinitarian," judging it difficult to explain satisfactorily, that is, agreeably to the Trinitarian scheme, a passage in St. Mark, very unguardedly observes that *it may be an interpolation*. Now this is to countenance the Socinian party in one of the most delusive of their many artifices. What is fair for one is of course fair for the other; and if Trinitarians be allowed to get rid of difficulties in this easy way, how can they, with any colour of propriety, find fault with Socinians for adopting a similar method of clearing the Scriptures of every text that militates against their favourite system? I desire therefore to offer the following observations in explanation of the text of Scripture above referred to, which, I trust, will make it appear that the passage is in no way hostile to the doctrine of the Trinity, admitting, as it does, so easy an elucidation, upon the ground of the *incarnation*.

The passage I allude to is Mark xiii. 32. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father."

This wears a strange aspect, at the first glance, to a Trinitarian eye, accustomed to look on Christ as God and, as such, *omniscient*. For this seems to set a *limit* to his knowledge, as the parallel place* puts a bound to that of men and angels. But why should it have a strange appearance? Does not the Trinitarian maintain the *incarnation* of the Word—that "the Word was God" indeed, but also that "the Word was made *flesh*?"† And does he not contend for a permanent *distinction* of the *united* natures, upon the ground that union is not necessarily attended by *confusion*—and that, although two things happen to be *conjoined*, it is in no way necessary that the one should swallow up and annihilate the other? There is, he observes, in man a body material and an immaterial spirit, and these component parts preserve their respective properties, notwithstanding the very intimate union subsisting between them. And therefore, what is true of man, as

* Matt. xxiv. 36.

† John i. 1—14.

touching his soul, is false of him in respect of his animal portion, since the keen dagger's point can kill the body, but is not able to destroy the soul.* he is at once a mortal and an immortal being.

And the great Mediator, Christ, is perfect man and perfect God—man, of the substance of the Virgin, and God, of the substance of the Deity ; consequently, he possesses all the properties peculiar to each *nature* ; so that he could *die*, in respect of the assumed humanity, whose characteristic is *mortality*, though, in respect of his essential divinity, he was not subject to death, nor indeed could he be. “The *Son* abideth ever.”† The Jews exclaimed in surprise, when Jesus spoke of being *lifted up*, signifying what *death* he should die, “We have heard out of the law that *Christ* abideth for ever ; and how sayest thou the Son of Man must be lifted up ?”‡§

* Matt. x. 28.

† John viii. 35.

‡ John xii. 34.

§ “Choosing from the womb of the Virgin a temple for his residence, he who was the Son of God became also the Son of Man, not by a *confusion of substance*, but by an *unity of person*. For we assert such a connection and union of the divinity with the humanity that each *nature* retains its properties entire, and yet both together constitute one Christ. If anything among men can be found to resemble so great a mystery (*1 Tim. iii. 16*), man himself appears to furnish the most apposite similitude ; being evidently composed of two substances, of which, however, neither is so confounded with the other as not to retain its distinct nature. For the *soul* is not the *body*, nor is the *body* the *soul*. Wherefore that is predicated separately of the soul which cannot be at all applied to the body : on the contrary, that is predicated of the body which is totally incompatible with the soul : and that, again, is predicated of the *whole man* which cannot with propriety be understood either of the soul or the body *alone*. Lastly : the properties of the soul are *transferred* to the body, and the properties of the body to the soul ; yet he that is composed of these *two parts* is no more than *one man*. Such forms of expression signify that there is in man *one person* composed of these *two distinct parts* ; and that there are two different *natures* united in him to constitute that one *person*. The Scriptures speak in a similar manner respecting Christ. They attribute to him sometimes those things which are applicable merely to his humanity, sometimes those things which belong peculiarly to his divinity, and not unfrequently those things which comprehend both his *natures*, but are incompatible with either of them alone. And this union of

Wherefore, upon the same ground, the *knowledge* of Christ as the son of *David* must necessarily have been limited, otherwise we convert the manhood into Godhead, by attributing to it what cannot belong to any created intelligence whatever, whether human or angelic. But, on the other hand, as *David's Lord*,* Jesus knew all things;† for in him are hid all the *treasures* of wisdom and knowledge;‡ so that he is most properly entitled the *only wise God our Saviour*, to whom be "*glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, amen.*"§

Keeping in view the real humanity—that Christ came "*in the flesh*"||—we are not astonished at reading that "*Jesus increased in wisdom*," any more than he grew "*in stature.*"¶ Of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting, it was to be expected that he would expand in mind as he should increase in stature, and that his intellectual faculties would make at least an equal advance with his animal strength; yet this hinders not his being from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, the *wisdom of God*,** as the co-essential Son of the highest, who could inherit no shadow of imperfection from his co-existent Father, and could not therefore in any, the slightest, possible degree, admit of gradation or improvement.

But to advert more immediately to the case before us: it evidently respects a circumstance that could be known to no creature by any thing short of a divine revelation, for it respects "the times and the seasons, which the all-ordaining Father hath put in his own power."†† Therefore, the man Christ could not be privy to the particular moment afore-appointed when his sign should be seen in the firmament, and he should come riding upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, except by an express communication

the two natures in Christ they so carefully maintain, that they sometimes attribute to one what belongs to the other, a mode of expression which the ancient writers called a communication of properties."

* Matt. xxii. 41—46. † John xvi. 30; xxi. 17. ‡ Col. ii. 3.
§ Jude, 25. || 1 John iv. 2. ¶ Luke ii. 52. ** Prov. viii. 23;
1 Cor. i. 24. †† Acts i. 7.

from the all-knowing Divinity. And since such a communication was, for some wise purpose, with-held, although our Lord Christ, as one with the Father and the Spirit in the unity of the indivisible Godhead, was indisputably acquainted with the period in question, still, as a descendant of Israel, "as concerning the flesh,"* he might plainly be ignorant of it ; and it could very consistently be averred, "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels in heaven, *neither the Son, but the Father.*"

"It is not unreasonable to suppose (observes Abp. Tillotson) that the divine wisdom, which dwelt in our Saviour, did communicate itself to his *human soul* according to his pleasure, and so his *human nature* might at some times *not know some things*. And, if this be not admitted, how can we understand that passage concerning our Saviour, that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature ?"

But, after all, I should rather imagine, judging from the general current of the Scriptures, that it fared with Christ's *assumed nature* as it fares with those who are "of his flesh and of his bones ;" †—I mean his saints—it was under the conduct, blessing, and influence of the *Spirit*, as *they are*. "*Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit into your hearts,*" it is said: in the same manner as Christ, being a son, and the eldest, received him also, only after a peculiar manner, and in an eminent degree—an elder brother's portion ; "for God giveth not the Spirit *by measure* unto *him*," but in all his abounding fulness. Therefore we read that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, *filled with wisdom*, and the *grace of God* was upon him : " which, what means it, but the sacred influence of the "Spirit of Wisdom," and the "Spirit of Grace ?" It is yet more particularly observed that he was "*anointed with the Holy Ghost,*" as the saints are the happy subjects of "*the anointing which teacheth all things.*" ‡ This divine unction, then, by whose blessed operation the faithful "know all things" § necessary to their salvation, insinuated knowledge into the soul of Christ, and imparted such information to him as was agree-

* Rom. i. 5. † Eph. v. 30. ‡ 1 John ii. 27. § 1 John ii. 20.

able to the good pleasure of his heavenly Sire. The celestial *dove* * brought him frequent messages from the skies, and gradually developed to him his holy Father's will. We may conceive much to have been revealed to him of the purposes of heaven upon his baptism at Jordan, when the no fabulous bird of Paradise, descending from the realms of bliss, alighted and abode upon him ; and still he might not then be privy to a variety of particulars afterward to be revealed. When, in an agony, he prayed that the mysterious cup of wrath might pass, might be delayed a little, ere he drank its fearful contents, he perhaps was acquainted at the moment with the exact hour of his death ; notwithstanding, after, he was aware of its approach, and he then could say, "*This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*" †

Agreeably to this idea, Christ was wont to say, "This have I received of my Father ;" ‡ and, "*He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak ;*" § and, yet more immediately to the point, "The Father loveth the Son, and *sheweth* him all things that himself doeth ; and he *will shew* him *greater* works then these, that ye may marvel." || Now these communications were made through the agency of the Holy Ghost ; as it is afterwards said of Christ, "that *he*, through the *Holy Ghost*, gave commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen." ¶

When risen from the dead, and all power was given him in heaven and in earth, no doubt the sphere of his knowledge was yet further and very considerably enlarged, if not increased to its utmost possible extent. At any rate, upon his ascension into the holiest, and his session at God's right hand, and his full glorification upon the throne of David, on the hill of Zion, as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,—then, at least, we may suppose, upon the plenary inspiration of the eternal Spirit,** according to the Father's promise, Christ Jesus was perfected in every faculty of *soul*, as well as of *body*, and became possessed of all truth and knowledge even to the everlasting ages.

* Matt. iii. 16. † Luke xxii. 42, 53. ‡ John x. 18. § John xii. 49.
|| John v. 20. ¶ Acts i. 2. ** Acts ii. 33 ; John vii. 39.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

WITHOUT controversy, the True God is the *great Unknown*. "Canst thou by searching find him out?"* No. "The world by wisdom knew not God," in any age;† its *Sages*,‡ in respect of this particular, were always groping in the dark, and while they renewed their attempts to define his nature, and made fresh efforts to imagine something worthy of his Majesty, they did but the more expose their ignorance, and unwittingly exemplify what the Lord had said, "I will *destroy* the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to *nothing* the understanding of the prudent;"§ so that, when convinced of his existence, and thoroughly persuaded that there was a God, surrounded as they were by the most expressive and unequivocal demonstrations of his being and perfections, they were nevertheless constrained to

* Job. xi. 7. † 1 Cor. i. 21.

‡ One of these, the renowned Socrates, "convinced of the narrow limits of the intellectual powers, and the scanty portion of human knowledge, declared, that all he knew was, that he knew *nothing*." Bildad, the Shuhite, makes a like acknowledgment. "We are but of yesterday," he says, "and *know nothing*." In later times, the great Apostle of the Gentiles was not ashamed to confess, "I know *nothing* by myself." (Job viii. 9; 1 Cor. iv. 4.) While these truly great men ingenuously proclaimed their universal ignorance, our modern pretender imagines he possesses universal knowledge; for he presumes to search the deep things of God, and reject, as unintelligible and absurd, whatever he cannot comprehend, even though it respect the necessarily incomprehensible *nature* of Jehovah himself. Really when I observe a poor worm of the earth sporting himself so unceremoniously with the truths of revelation, methinks I see a wild ass's colt frolicking among the secrets of wisdom.

It is well remarked by Abbe Pluche, that "the whole earth raises our admiration, and gives us transports, by its beauties and services; but we know not the *least piece* of it. *Religion*, likewise, strikes us by its proofs, affects us by the proportion of its objects to our wants, and raises our minds by magnificent hopes; but it has, like all the rest, a *dark side*, inaccessible to our intelligence. What rashness is it here to require that God should reveal to us the *bottom* of his work, and, before the time, spread a plenitude of evidence thereupon, while he still makes a secret to us of the *nature* of the drop of *water* that refreshes us, or the *ray* that gives us light!"

§ 1 Cor. i. 19.

confess his *incomprehensibility*, and acknowledge him to be of an *ineffable* and altogether *unimaginable* glory. To *them* it was no insuperable objection to the entity of God, which they saw reflected in his *works* as in a most lucid *mirror*, that the essence of the Deity was totally beyond their reach—"as high as *Heaven*, what could they do?"—and that it left them, even in their loftiest flights and most soaring fancies, at an infinite distance from anything like a *correct* apprehension of the Almighty. To *them*, it was no such great offence as to drive them from their persuasion of a first great universal cause, so apparent in the whole creation, that the mighty efficient was absolutely *unsearchable*—"deeper than *hell*, what could they know?"—and that, in their profoundest researches, and after their severest investigations, they saw before them an *unfathomable* abyss. They nobly confessed the omnipresent Deity, though involved in clouds and darkness which they could not penetrate, or clothed in *light* which they could not approach. A reflection, this, upon those, in a Christian age, who impiously refuse to acknowledge the God of the Bible because he exhibits himself as a highly mysterious Being, passing the knowledge of a finite mind. "No one* knoweth *the Son* but the Father, neither knoweth any one *the Father* save the Son, and he to whom the Son will *reveal* him."† But it ought to suffice us, that the great Eternal, who cannot possibly be known but to himself, has condescended to make a revelation of himself in the sacred volume: not but still it is his peculiar glory to be concealed from the too curious inspection and familiar acquaintance of the creature by the insufferable brightness of his own native splendour. And therefore, even now, when he has vouchsafed us so advantageous a representation of his Godhead that every one, not horridly abandoned or outrageously insane, must be abundantly satisfied with it, the too daring *searcher* of the increate Majesty shall be oppressed and utterly confounded with its intolerable glory.

Wherefore, since he has manifested himself to us through the medium of Scripture, we need not now laboriously search for the Deity, like the philosophers of old, and enquire

* (*oudeis*) † Matt. i. 27.

vainly into "the nature of Gods." For although no man "hath *seen* God at any time," yet the only begotten *Son* "he hath *declared* him;"* and that he is competent to the arduous task, himself affirms, when he says, "as the Father knoweth me, *even so* know I the Father."† Come we therefore to the inspired page, and humbly take an adoring survey of the *revealed unknown*. The first grand truth is, "God is *one*;"‡ most perfectly an unity in himself, and *with* himself at unity; *one* and at *one*. There is no *division* in the Godhead, nor anything like *distraction*: it is absolutely and infinitely one and harmonious; and though it have distinct *perfections* inseparable from its essence, and *persons* distinct, that mutually participate its glorious attributes, it is a *concord* most complete, admitting no discordancy in any sense. Secondly, as God is one, he is also *sole*; he stands alone; there is none but he who is by nature God.—"I am the *Lord*, and there is *none else*, there is *no God* besides me."§ All other than Jehovah are creatures: he is the Being of beings, the universal parent, of whom are all things throughout the vast creation. They had never *been* but for his plastic power; and but for his sustaining energy they could not continue to exist—"for thy pleasure they *are* and *were created*." And, thirdly, as God is one in his nature, and stands alone without an equal, so there are certain *subsistences* coexistent in him, which are no more injurious to, or destructive of, the unity of the divine essence than the several properties of fire, light, and heat, that meet together in the solar orb, are fatal to the oneness of that celestial body. These subsistences are usually denominated *persons*, the Scripture ascribing to them correspondent *actions*. As persons, they are distinct; but in essence they are one and indivisible, and unitedly they constitute "all the fullness of the Godhead." *This* the human mind could never have imagined: it is the mysteriousness of the awful Majesty of Heaven. It is, however, a mystery now laid open, a secret now divulged, and therefore to be known by all, and universally confessed. "*Man* was not made to *question* but *adore*."

First. The name of *God*, according to the *Hebrew* tongue,

* John i. 18. † John x. 15. ‡ Gal. iii. 20 § Isaiah xlv. 5.

confirms this truth. It is a *plural* noun, and is expressive therefore of *more than one*. "In the beginning *God created* :"* here the self-same word is used, which in a passage further on is *translated Gods* ; for the word is *Alehim*, and in chap. iii we read, "God (*Alehim*) doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as *Gods*," as *Alehim*, the true real God, "knowing good and evil."† That it means the very God is made apparent from the 22nd verse, in which Jehovah *Alehim* observes, "Behold the man *is become as one of us*, to know good and evil." As one of *us* ! How decisive this expression ! How illustrative of the subject in discussion ! But, before I dwell upon this peculiarity of style, it must be remarked, in reference to verse the 5th, that, in the Greek translation of the Septuagint, the title *Alehim* is rendered *Theoi*, that is *Gods* ; and, corresponding with it, is the rendering of the other phrase *as one of us*, it being *oos eis ex eemoon*, which agrees precisely with those English words. Now to preserve the *unity* of essence, while thus revealing the *plurality* of persons in the Godhead, Moses connects with the *plural noun* a *verb* of the *singular* number ; and this remarkable circumstance is observable in other passages that are parallel to the one in hand, as, for instance, "Thy Maker (*Makers* in the Hebrew), is thy husband."‡ And how consonant to the *Alehim created* of Moses is that of Solomon—"Remember now thy *Creators* in the days of thy youth."§ To these let me add another example : "The fear of *Jehovah* is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the *Holy*" (the *Holy Ones*) "is understanding;"|| for this word is so *translated* in Daniel iv. 17, where the *fate* of the King of Babylon is said to be "by the *Word* of the *Holy Ones*." The humble *Agur's* confession is in point,—"I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the *Holy Ones*," that is the *thrice holy* of Isaiah, ¶ the *holy persons* in *Jehovah*.**

Secondly, The *Language* adopted by the Almighty is likewise agreeable to the idea we are enforcing of a plurality of subsistences in the Divinity. "*God* said, Let *us* make man

* Gen. i. 1. † Gen. iii. 5. ‡ Isaiah liv. 5. § Eccles. xii. 1.
 || Prov. ix. 10. ¶ Isaiah vi. 3. ** Prov. xxx. 3.

in *our* image, after *our likeness*.”* Again, “The Lord God said, Behold the man is become as *one of us*, to know good and evil.”† And again, “The Lord said, Go to, let *us* go down, and there confound their language.”‡ Nor is that in *Isaiah* § to be overlooked.—“I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall *I* send, and who will go *for us*?”

Thirdly, If *persons* be not allowed to coexist in the *unity* of the divine nature, then all these passages, and others that might be adduced, would lead to the idea of more *Gods* than one, which we have already shewn to be unscriptural. Such is that extraordinary passage in Genesis: “Then *Jehovah* rained upon Sodom brimstone and fire *from Jehovah* out of Heaven.”|| And that, again, in Zechariah, : “*Jehovah* said unto Satan, *Jehovah* rebuke thee O Satan!”¶

Fourthly, From these places we collect not *how many* subsistences there are in God; but, since the Old Testament speaks of “the *Son*,”** and of “the *Holy Spirit*,”†† as well as of God the Father, we might have supposed them to be three, though we had the old Scriptures alone to refer to. But the *new* Testament, which is a much fuller revelation of heavenly things in every respect, puts this matter beyond dispute. In proof, we need but refer to the third chapter of St. Matthew’s gospel, where *the Spirit* descends, assuming a visible form, *the Son* is revealed in our flesh, and the voice of *the Father* resounds from heaven.‡‡ And in St. John, §§ the Son, and the Father, and the Spirit of truth, are severally spoken of, and yet in such a way as to lead us to esteem them the *one* only God.

Fifthly, These glorious persons being unitedly the sole Supreme, we are therefore commanded, “Go *teach* and *baptize* in the *name* of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*.”||| And, for the same reason, St. Paul pronounces his *blessing* after a similar manner: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the *love* of God the Father,¶¶ and the *communion* of the Holy Ghost, be with you all;”*** which

* Gen. i. 26. † Gen. iii. 22. ‡ Gen. xi. 7. § Isaiah vi. 8.

|| Gen. xix. 24. ¶ Zechariah iii. 2. ** As in Psalm ii. 12.

†† As in Isaiah lxiii. 10. ‡‡ Verse 16, 17. §§ John xiv. 6, 26.

||| Matt. xxviii. 19. ¶¶ So Griesbach has it in his notes.

*** 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

form of benediction naturally reminds one of that of *Aaron*,—
“*Jehovah* bless thee and keep thee, *Jehovah* make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, *Jehovah* lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” *

To this body of evidence what will the enemy say? We will say to *him* and to all else, “Be silent, O all *flesh*, before *Jehovah*, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation,” and, coming forth as it were from the secrecy of his pavilion, hath exhibited himself to man. And what does he say? “Be still, and know that I am *Alehim*; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” †

Feb. 9. 1815.

* Numb. vi. 23—26. † Psalm xlv. 10.

LETTER V.

SIR,

DR. CARPENTER is pleased to notice my first letter. He does not even attempt to disprove what was advanced in favour of the *incarnation*, which was the single point I professed to demonstrate from the Bible, he having defined it to be "the unscriptural and unintelligible* doctrine of *two natures* in the *person of Christ*." As for my arguments in proof of his *divine* nature (his human not being contested), which consisted mostly of Scripture quotations, the Doctor says, "If they have any force, (they) *must prove* that the Apostles, while their Lord sojourned among them, *knew* that he was Jehovah." This he asserts to be a necessary consequence,

* What is unintelligible must be, according to Socinian computation, unscriptural; or, in other words, what *reason* is unequal to the comprehension of, that, in the estimation of Socinians, revelation cannot possibly have promulged. Dr. Priestley is more honest than many of his party, and speaks with less reserve. He therefore shall speak for the rest, in confirmation of this remark. In reference to John vi. 62, he says, "Rather than believe our Saviour to have existed in any other state before the creation of the world, or to have left some state of dignity and happiness when he came hither, I would have recourse to the old and exploded Socinian idea of Christ's actual ascent into heaven, or, of his *imagining* that he had been carried up thither in a vision, which, like that of *St. Paul*, he had not been able to distinguish from a *reality*; nay, I would not build an article of faith of such magnitude on the correctness of John's recollection and representation of our Lord's language; and, so strange and incredible does the hypothesis of a pre-existent state appear, that, *sooner than admit it* (though confessedly, observe, in Scripture), *I would suppose the whole verse to be an interpolation!* or, that the old Apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote another!"

But *natural* things are as impenetrable to our reason as those that are *revealed*. If, therefore, it be made an universal criterion, it must unavoidably lead to universal scepticism: we shall doubt of every thing, yea,

"And reason downward, till we doubt of God."

Certainly, as Abbe Pluche observes, "it is enough for us that both kinds (things natural and revealed) be well *attested* to us; and it is utterly unreasonable to pretend to judge of them by the imaginary evidence of our own lights, while God hides the bottom of them from us, and purposely shews us nothing beyond the *existence* and the use of them."

but he can by no means establish his position ; for, if the passages I adduced prove the doctrine of the *incarnation*, then, though Christ *were* Jehovah as to his superior nature, he might nevertheless be unknown as such, and might pass for a merely human being. If the *Word* were *God*, and the *Word* clothed himself in *flesh* ;* if he, who was essentially in the *form of God*, were pleased to assume an inferior nature, and appear in the *likeness of man*,† what hindered his being taken for a man only, and treated as such ? Was not this the case in the affair of Jacob, who, after wrestling with a *man*, declared, “ I have seen God face to face ? ” ‡ Dr. C. knows, but he seems willing at times to forget, that we consider Christ to be as really *man* as *God*. While, therefore, the Apostles were ignorant or forgetful of his invisible nature, they might address the man Christ with a degree of familiarity, and even *rebuke* him, as *Peter* did,—who, by the way, discovered amazing temerity in carrying himself thus, after being an eye-witness of so many miracles ; but, be it observed, it was *previous* to his beholding the *glory* and *Majesty* of the Lord in his transfiguration on the Mount. § But after Christ rose from the dead, and the disciples were blessed with a more perfect knowledge of their Lord, what was their uniform behaviour toward him ? Did they *then* treat him at any time with undue familiarity, or offer him reproof in a single instance ? Let the Dr. search and see. The first meeting is thus described by St. Matthew : || “ Behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail ! and they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” ¶ The second meeting, according to to the Evangelist, was like the first. “ When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.” There were even then Socinian-like spirits, who could not discern through the veil of his humanity the glory of his divine nature. And what is Luke’s account ? “ It came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven, and they worshipped him.” ** The Septuagint uses the same

* John i. 1, 14. † Phil. ii. 5—8. ‡ Gen. xxxii. 24—30; Hos. xxii. 3—5.

§ Matt. xvi. 22, and xvii. 2. || Matt. xxviii. 9.

¶ Prosekuneesan—the same word as that in Matt. iv. 10. —“ Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.” ** Luke xxiv. 51, 52.

verb in Ps. xcvi. 7 : "Confounded be all they that boast themselves of *Idols* ; *worship him*," (i.e., Jehovah) "all ye Gods." And, while it occurs to me, I would beg your readers to compare this verse of the 97th Psalm with the 6th verse of the first chapter of the Hebrews, particularly in the *Greek* ; for *Jehovah only* is spoken of throughout the Psalm, and yet the 7th verse is attributed to *Christ* in the verse of the Hebrews cited above—"Let all the Angels of God worship *him*"—the rendering of the Septuagint being, "*proskunesatoo autoo pantes aggeloi autou*," whence, no doubt, the *Apostle* made his quotation. But, to proceed, St. John relates the case of *Thomas*, who at first refused to credit the resurrection of Christ, but at last, being fully convinced, he witnessed a good confession. "Thomas answered and said *unto him*," not, truly thou art Messiah, the very Son of God, but (*eipen autoo*) he said to Christ himself, "my *Lord* and my *God*."* Afterwards he appeared to certain of the disciples who had spent the night in fishing, on which occasion John said to Peter, "It is *the Lord*." Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea ;" as though he would confess by this expressive action what he had before acknowledged when struck with amazement at a miracle performed by Christ,† "I am a *sinful man*, O Lord !" and utterly unfit for thy holy presence.‡ And when Peter is said to have been grieved because of Christ's reiterated demand, "Lovest thou me?" did Peter reprove him or in any way behave disrespectfully to him? Did he not, on the contrary, bear testimony to his omniscience, and in that to his proper deity? "He said unto him, *Lord* ! thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."§

I shall pass over the Doctor's contemptuous language, just observing, by the way, that commendation from such a character would be an utter discredit. The severe castigation he received from a certain Editor was calculated to humble him ; but it is true of a *conceited* man, as of another character,

* John xx. 28.

† Luke v. 8.

‡ John xxi. 7.

§ John xxi. 17.

"Though thou shouldst bray him in a mortar, yet will not his *conceit* depart from him."*

Dr. C. is very desirous of being thought to adhere invariably to Griesbach's Second Edition. "The charge," he tells us, of his departing from this learned Editor, "is *utterly groundless*." But I would know what he met with in his text that induced him to render the famous passage in Heb. i. 8, "God is thy throne?" If he give up this translation, as I am told he does,† as being quite indefensible, I would next enquire what is to be found in Griesbach's text to justify his translation of John i. 10, "the world was *enlightened*," instead of "the world was *made*† by him." Besides, if he really adhere *strictly* to his favourite Editor, must he

* I might have refrained from this brief retort had I alone been the object of Dr. C.'s insolence, but he treats all his opponents in much the same way. And what determines me not to omit it is the effrontery of the Doctor in taxing so able a critic as the Rev. Edward Nares with ignorance and want of candour, and in employing mockery in his controversy with so respectable a Theologian. See Nares' Remarks, p. 41—45.

† Since the publication of his discourse before the Unitarian Society, June, 1808, Dr. C. has seen reason to admit that the idiom of the Greek *forbids* our rendering it, "God is thy throne," which, in his discourse, he had selected as one among the *most important improved renderings* !!—(Nares. p. 211.)

‡ The Dr. still adheres, I believe, to this rendering, though equally improper with the former. Abp. Newcome, who is made a handle of, just like Griesbach, renders it, "the World was *made* by him;" and that the Greek verb is used at times, in reference to *Creation*, is plain from James iii. 9, where it is said of *men*, that they are "*made* (or created) after the similitude of God;" and in Hebrews iv. 3 we have another instance, "the works were *finished* from the foundation of the world." Mr. Ralph Wardlaw, a very respectable dissenting minister, alluding to the *expedient* of Dr. Carpenter, says it is "One, of the candour of whose *inventor*, I honestly confess I have not charity sufficient to persuade myself." To the merest sciolist in Greek, this translation (if such it must be called) may be left to its own merits. But it is not, by any means, ignorance of Greek that has produced it. It is not easy for charity itself to ascribe it to anything else than *attachment to a system* which, in so many instances, warps the judgment, makes "the *worse* appear the *better* reason," disposes to the admission of *anything*, rather than the obnoxious doctrine, and causes that to seem *natural*, which, in other circumstances, would be instantly rejected with *indignant derision* !"

not necessarily renounce his present creed, and adopt the creed of Griesbach, who, himself being judge, is Trinitarian? Must he not abandon the system he now espouses, and embrace the doctrines of the *Incarnation* and the *Trinity*? For I suppose every unprejudiced person will allow that these points would plainly appear if Griesbach were faithfully translated, without alterations, additions, or omissions,—without any change in punctuation,—without any conjectural emendations, against which he protests, laying it down as a rule, “*nihil mutetur e conjectura.*” For if the *Incarnation* were not conspicuous in them, why have the authors of the New Version marked as spurious, or at least of very doubtful authority, the first chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel, and those likewise of St. Luke’s? Or if the *Deity* of Christ did not stare them in the face, in the first chapter of the Gospel by St. John, why such artifices used to destroy the obvious sense of the words? Why has Dr. Carpenter himself departed so widely from the original? In a word: is the Doctor prepared to follow Griesbach closely in Roman ix. 5, in Titus ii. 13, in 2 Peter i. 1? *

In fine, it seems inconsistent to recommend a *strict adherence* to Griesbach, and at the same time to represent the New Version, which departs so abominably from him, “as the most faithful representative in the English language of the original writings of the Apostles and Evangelists.” On this head let us hear a learned critic. “In truth,” says Dr. Laurence, “it is nothing more than a mere *patch-work* translation, solely manufactured to promote the cause of Unitarianism. When a passage occurs which, in its obvious sense, threatens fatality to the Unitarian Creed, its sting is instantly and ingeniously extracted; what exposition the language of Scripture *can*, not what it *ought* to bear, becomes the object of investigation; and the context is twisted into subserviency

* The literal rendering of Romans ix. 5, is this—“Of whom the Christ, as concerning the flesh, who is over all God blessed for ever.” The plain English of Titus ii. 13, is—“The manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ:” and that of 2 Pet. i. 1, is—“The righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Nor does Dr. Carpenter adhere to either Griesbach or Archbp. Newcome in 1 Cor. xv. 47—“The second man is the *Lord from heaven.*”

to the gloss, and not the gloss made consistent with the context. The translators, indeed, unreservedly confess that they have studied 'to preclude many sources of error, by divesting the sacred volume of the technical phrases of a systematic theology;' but they forget to add that it was only in order to supersede one system by another. If a clause admits the slightest pliability of meaning, every nerve is strained to give a peculiar direction. Instead of inquiring, with Christian simplicity, what really *are*, they presume with philosophical arrogance upon what *must be*, the doctrines of Scripture, and substitute the deductions of reason for the dictates of revelation." Upon the whole, therefore, if the Dr's. extravagant panegyric amount not to a *burlesque*, I imagine no one that can compare the New Version with the text of Griesbach will be able to refrain from smiling at such a fulsome strain of adulation so unworthily bestowed. *

Dr. C. gives us to understand that he is not quite so *Priestleian* as to be a *materialist*. He will therefore, at least for the present, leave his congregation at George's Meeting in quiet possession of their *souls*, if not of their *God and Saviour*. Though, so strongly recommending the New Version, he must strangely perplex them on this, as on other points; for it rejects the idea of the distinct existence of the soul, and is decisive in favour of materialism: so much so, that in reference to Philippians i. 21, it maintains in a note the Apostle does not "express an expectation of an *intermediate state* between death and the resurrection," but simply represents "*a quiet rest in the grave* during that period as preferable to a *life of suffering and persecution*." The passage in 2 Cor. v. 8, "We are willing rather to be *absent from the body*,

* Let us hear *Mr. Nares*. He says of it, "I think the version *not an improved one*, the text *not correct*, and the knowledge it would promote *not truly Christian*. It has, in fact, no determinate basis or standard: its deviations from *Newcome* are calculated to amount to 750, besides those from the received text, and from *Griesbach's second edition*, which are not duly noticed, or pointed out to the reader, as they ought to be." All this, too, is remarked by an *Unitarian Reviewer* in the *Monthly Repository*, *which Reviewer* is no other than Dr. Carpenter himself! And yet, with all its imperfections on its head, he persists in misrepresenting it as an "*improved version*," and "the *most faithful* in the English language."

and to be present with the Lord," which seems fully to illustrate the former text, is suffered to stand without a comment. If the *body* quietly rest in the grave, which we grant, the Apostle must refer to the *soul* in his expression "*absent from the body, and present with the Lord.*" "While, however (observes Dr. Laurence), they here abstain from all explanatory remark, on *another* occasion they contrive to preclude the necessity of it altogether. The *Sadducees* are said to believe that there is 'no resurrection, nor Angel, nor Spirit.*' Now the conjunction *meete* (*nor*) they have chosen to translate or—'the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor Angel or Spirit'—in order to convey the idea of the word *Spirit* being synonymous with that of *Angel*, instead of being intentionally distinguished from it." So much, Mr. Editor, for this *incomparable* version, which, like Dr. Carpenter, *professes* in its introduction, "to be a translation (says Dr. L.) scrupulously adhering to the text of Griesbach"!! but which, in the whole execution, fully justifies the observation of the aforementioned critic, in reference to the Socinian party, namely, that "their creed uniformly rules the text, and not the text their creed."

Feb. 16, 1815.

*(*meete* pneuma) Acts xxiii. 8.

LETTER VI.

PART I.

SIR,

You are fully aware, in common with a large proportion of your readers, of the immense importance of ascertaining the absolute matter of fact in respect of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as to whether he be a simple human being like ourselves, and nothing more, though signally favoured of the most High ; or whether he be, as the *man* Christ Jesus, begotten mysteriously of the virgin by the overshadowing power of the eternal Spirit, so also a person in the *Godhead*, and, as such, one with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the Unity of the uncreated Essence. It must be of infinite consequence to *Christians* of every sect and denomination, not to *Churchmen* alone, but to all really pious *Dissenters* of every name ; for, notwithstanding the various differences subsisting among them, they are most happily agreed, if I mistake not, and unanimous in sentiment, as touching the Person, Dignity, Majesty, and superlative Glory of the adorable Redeemer of the world. By some, indeed, it is artfully insinuated, on the contrary, that the doctrine we contend for is but a superstitious tenet of the *Church*, an article of faith upheld by the *Priests* in opposition to right reason and common sense ; and that, when corrupt *establishments* shall fall, and antiquated *Creeds* shall be abolished, this *incomprehensible* dogma, teeming, as they say, with “absurdities and contradictions,” will meet its fate, and be buried for ever in their ruins. But when *Luther* withdrew from the Church of Rome, and abandoned her unscriptural opinions, in separating from this iniquitous “Mother of Harlots,” did he renounce the common faith, as far as respects the Redeemer’s claims, and embrace an *Anti-Trinitarian* Creed ? When *Calvin*, fostered in the bosom of the papal hierarchy, espied its abominations, and, indignant at its numerous corruptions, fled from its communion, at the expense of his home, his native country, and at the hazard of his life, among the many generally received ideas he saw good to reprobate, and explode as erroneous, did he decry as *unorthodox* the doctrine of our Immanuel’s Deity ? Or when the intrepid *Zuingle*

boldly opposed the creatures of the Pope, resisted their vile impositions, and, in abhorrence of the existing evils, seceded from the pale of the then established Church, did he apostatize from "the faith of God's elect," or reject that essential part of it which relates to Christ, and disown the Redeemer's Godhead? No: these resolute Reformers were conscientious dissenters from a degenerated establishment, but they saw no reason for rushing onward into a horrible denial of the "Lord of all,"* whom they knew to be, and whom they honoured as, the Foundation, Head, and Glory of the "Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven," † that transcendently immaculate Church, whose comeliness is undefiled, and beauty undeformed by "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." ‡ The same may be with equal truth averred, if I do not greatly err, of the reformed Churches universally throughout the Christian world. *Socinians*, with their Arian brethren, stand alone, mere pretenders to the Gospel, who have no more to do with genuine Christianity than the disciples of Confucius, or the dupes of the Mahometan imposture. § He, therefore,

* Acts x. 36. † Heb. xii. 23. ‡ Eph. v. 27.

§ The true Mussulman believes as much, or rather more of Christ than the Unitarian requires to be believed; and, though the Unitarians have not yet recognised the divine mission of Mahomet, there is good ground to think they will not long stand out. For in Unitarian writings of the last century it is allowed of *Mahomet* that he had no other design than to restore the belief of the unity of God,—of his *religion*, that it was not meant for a new religion, but for a restitution of the true intent of the Christian,—of the grand *prevalence* of the Mahometan religion, that it hath been owing not to force and the sword, but to that one truth contained in the Alcoran, the unity of God. In the reign of Charles the Second a negociation was regularly opened on the part of our *English Unitarians* with his Excellency Ameth Ben Ameth, Ambassador of the Emperor of Morocco at the British Court, in order to form an alliance with the Mahometan Prince for the more effectual propagation of the Unitarian principles. The two Unitarian divines who undertook this singular treaty addressed the Ambassador and the Mussulmen of his suite as "votaries and fellow-worshippers of the sole supreme Deity." They *return thanks to God* that he hath preserved the Emperor of Morocco and his subjects in the excellent knowledge of one only sovereign God, who hath no distinction nor plurality of persons, and in many other wholesome doctrines. They say that they with their pens defend the faith of one supreme God,

that would represent our belief as a piece of *Priestcraft*, and a relic of a decaying *superstition*, must be either a deceiver, who attempts an imposition upon the uninformed part of the community, or else a mistaken novice, who is ignorant of the subject he pretends to understand.

I have stated it to be a vastly momentous question, Mr. Editor (and it is so, because involving our highest interests), which remains for us now to decide on ; for decide upon it we must, since it is impossible for a serious mind to be at rest until it can assure itself, upon firm and solid ground, of its being undeceived as to the proper being it should honour and adore, and in whom it should confide for salvation, life and immortality, and the felicities of heaven. Either we are justified in honouring the *Son* even as we honour the Father,* and our adversaries are guilty of withholding what Heaven demands, and treating the divine Majesty with sovereign contempt, since he that honoureth not the Son, *honoureth not the Father* ; or, in honouring the Son, as we do, we egregiously

and that *God raised up Mahomet* to do the same with the sword, as a scourge on *idolizing Christians*. They therefore style themselves the fellow-champions with the Mahometans for these truths. They tell the Ambassador that the Unitarian Christians are a great and *considerable* people. To give weight to the assertion, they enumerate the Hærosiarchs of all ages who have opposed the Trinity, from Paulus Samosatensis, down to Faustus Socinus, and the leaders of the Polonian fraternity. They celebrate the modern tribes of *Arianizing* Christians as assertors of the proper unity of God, and they close the *honourable* list with the *Mahometans* themselves. "All these (they say) maintain the faith of one God. And why should we forget to add *you* Mahometans, who also consent with us in the belief of one only supreme Deity !" This singular epistle may be seen entire in Dr. Leslie's Socinian Controversy Discussed. Dr. Priestly was pleased to treat this story with great contempt, as an invention of Dr. Leslie's. "Fortunately (says B. Horsley) the evidence of this extraordinary fact is yet extant in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, in a thin folio containing four tracts. The *first* is the very letter to Ameth Ben Ameth ; and I do most solemnly aver that I have this day (Jan. 15, 1789) compared the letter, as published by Dr. Leslie, with the manuscript in the Archbishop's library, and find that the printed *copy* is exactly conformable to the *manuscript*, without the omission or addition of a single word."—See Bishop Horsley's 16th Letter, sect. 3, and the Postscript.

* John v. 23.

err, paying to a mere creature the homage that exclusively belongs to the omnipotent Proprietor of heaven and earth, and, blinded by this enormous mistake, we are hurried into the commission of a gross *idolatry*. Our appeal shall be to the Scripture alone. The Bible is the Christian's oracle : happy is he who can resolve to be satisfied with its decision. *Human* authority is of no avail in "the things of the Spirit of God." If our Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury could err, with those foreign geniuses, Rosseau, D'Alembert, and Voltaire, as also our historians Hume and Gibbon, then our great *Newton*, and the sagacious *Locke*, might mistake also. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the *wise*, that they are *vain* ; therefore let no man *glory in men*."* Away, then, with the weight of names, which, in opposition to inspired verity, are no more than as the small dust of the balance. "To the law and to the testimony,"—to that "more sure *word of truth*, whereunto we shall do well to take heed, as unto a *light* that shineth in a dark place."

In his title of *Son of Man*, who sees not an obvious declaration of the *humanity* of Christ? It is an appellation arising out of, and it is every way suited to designate, his inferior nature. And if he be likewise called "the *Son of God*," † and "the *Son of the Father*," ‡ as he is repeatedly, and that too exclusively, the *only*, and the *only-begotten Son*, as well as *his own Son*, § what plausible argument can be produced why we are not to consider *this* title as applicable to a superior Nature, and declarative of the absolute *Divinity* of Christ? It was in the proclamation of his *Sonship* that he is said to have received of the Father *honour and glory*, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"|| Let us search, then, for further traces of his *glory*, that we may ascertain of what description it is, whether it be *purely divine*, or such as a mere creature might partake of. In the next

* 1 Cor. iii. 20, 21.

† (ο υιος του Θεου)—Matt. xxvi. 63, 64 ; Mark xiv. 61, 62.

‡ 2 John iii. (του υιου του πατρος.)

§ (του εαυτου υιου)—Romans viii. 3 ; John i. 18.

|| 2 Peter i. 17.

place we will investigate the *honour* that is due to his name ; that we may assuredly know whether, while we pay worship and adoration to him who is " the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,"* we *idolatrize*, in worshipping and serving the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for ever, or whether we perform an *acceptable*, because a *legitimate*, service to God.

The disciple whom Jesus loved, and who, enjoying peculiar intimacy with the Holy One, was doubtless acquainted with the person and pretensions of his Lord, in describing his complex nature, as God and man, observes, in allusion to his transfiguration on the mount, " We beheld *his glory*, the glory as of the *only begotten* of the *Father*, full of grace and truth." † Now this was a *royal splendour*, some grand display of the imperial dignity of Christ, as " King of Kings, and Lord of Lords," ‡ which, like the vision of St. Paul in the third heaven, it was not lawful, perhaps, for the disciples to reveal to the world ; for *another* disciple, who was likewise present at this stupendous manifestation, when the Lord arrayed himself in resplendent robes, white as the *snow*, and shining as the *light*, and wore on his countenance a beamy glory like the radiance of the noon-day *sun*, testifying of this matchless revelation of the Saviour's greatness, says, " We were eye-witnesses of his *Majesty*." § It was an exhibition, perhaps, in some sort agreeing with that recorded by the Prophet, when " *he saw his glory, and spake of him ;*" || for it was a glory as of *Jehovah*, appearing in regal pomp, seated on a majestic *throne*, and filling the temple with his train, the hosts of seraphic spirits ministering before him, and celebrating the praises of his holiness. *Such* a glorious high throne *Ezekiel* saw him on, of the colour of sapphire, when he had a vision of this " *King Jehovah Sabaoth*," in " the likeness as the appearance of a *man*." ¶ The Psalmist's address to Messiah the Prince, in the 45th of the Songs of Zion, is in a consistent strain. " Touching the *King*," he says, " Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most *Mighty*, with thy *Glory* and thy *Majesty*, and in thy Majesty ride prosperously ;" while

* Heb. i. 3. † John i. 14. ‡ Rev. xvii. 14. § 2 Pet. i. 16.

|| John xii. 41. ¶ Isai. vi. 1—10 ; Exek. i. 26—28.

the address of the Father himself to his co-equal Son is decisive of the point we are seeking to establish :—"Unto *the Son* he saith, *Thy throne, O God!* is for ever and ever." *

Hitherto, in our researches, we have found the word of inspiration uniformly representing "the Most Holy" † in a splendour and magnificence not *another's* but his own. And, at his second advent, to summon the myriads of culprits from among men and angels to the bar of his tribunal, to answer for offences against their God and Maker, if he appear in *another's* glory it will be "the glory of his Father," ‡ who is at once *another* and the *same* ; another *subsistence* in the same *Supreme*. For the solemn asseveration of the Divinity is this : "I am *Jehovah*, that is my name, and *my glory* will I not give to *another*," § which forbids that a *mere creature* should sit presiding as universal judge, clad in uncreated excellency, and accompanied by all the hosts of heaven ; and, therefore, it is said, "*Jehovah* is our judge, *Jehovah* is our lawgiver, *Jehovah* is our king : he will save us." || But nothing hinders the *incarnate* co-essential Son, who, though inferior to the Father as touching the flesh, is able in respect of his Deity, to affirm, "I and the Father are *one*"—nothing hinders such an one from shining forth in all the brightness of the Godhead, and adorning himself with the insignia of the celestial majesty, when "he cometh to judge the earth ; when he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." So that its being once and again averred that Jesus is to come in all the splendour of the *excellent glory*, without the mention of *his own*, although it seems to have been adduced by our Socinian opponent in the winding up of his last epistle with the design of representing the Son as essentially inferior to the Father, and, indeed, his mere delegate and servant, its being thus averred is, however, still in our favour, since, when taken in connexion with other explanatory texts, it serves to substantiate our position of the *co-equality* of the persons of the Father and the Son, and their *oneness* in the indivisible Godhead.

* Heb. i. 8. † Dan. [ix. 24. ‡ Mark viii. 38. § Isaiah xlii. 8.
|| Isaiah xxxiii. 22.

But if the *truth* be expressed in the passage of St. Mark cited above, is the said passage expressive by itself of the *whole*? In a case of such moment we can allow of no *suppression*. It might have been accidental, but it looks like *design*; for Dr. Carpenter could not but know that the Evangelist St. Luke states that Christ “shall come *in his own glory* and *in his Father's*.”* Nor is the statement of St. Matthew less corroborative of our opinion: “The Son of Man shall come in *his glory*, † and *all* the holy angels with him;” and, what most happily coincides with our previous remarks, the recording historian subjoins, “Then shall he sit upon the *throne of his glory*, and before him shall be gathered *all nations*.” ‡

But if the glory of our Immanuel be super-human, super-angelic, yea, and truly *divine*, which we seem to have clearly established, it must therefore be likewise *eternal*. And it is so. He himself declares it. He plainly speaks of the glory which he *had*, in conjunction *with the Father*, and this too *before the world was*. § This is palpably demonstrative, as of the pre-existence of the Son, so also of his antemundane dignity; and, as if he had already perfected the work he had undertaken in the completion of the salvation of his people, by his obedience *unto death*, the ignominious death of the *Cross*, and as if his *humiliation* were now at an end, and the whole tragedy of Calvary over, and he had again arisen from the tomb, and were ready to ascend the skies, and re-enter his native Heaven, he exclaims, in his conference with the eternal Father, “I have glorified *thee* on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: and *now*, O Father! *glorify thou me* with *thine own self*, with *the glory* which *I had with thee before the world was*.” This, as it completes our argument, and, in a manner, *crowns* our proof, setting the question of the Redeemer's Majesty and essential Glory beyond all fair and reasonable dubitation, at the same time forms a suitable introduction to a noble passage of St. Paul, which shall stand for the conclusion of this first division

* Luke ix. 26. † *en tec Doxei autou*. ‡ Matthew xxv. 31
§ *ee eikon, pro tou ton Kosmon einai*—John xvii. 5.

of my letter. The Apostle, discoursing of the saving grace of the Gospel, says "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the *glorious appearing* (the *manifestation* of the *Glory*) of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,* who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."†

Feb. 23, 1815.

* *epifaneian tees Doxeas tou megalou Theou kai Soteeros eemoon Jeesou Christou.*

† Tit. ii. 11—14.

LETTER VI.

PART II.

ASCRPTIONS of *honour* to "the Lord of Glory" * (a title *this*, by the way, exuberant in dignity, and admirably befitting the superlative excellency of the *universal* Lord, † "Lord both of the dead and living,") are by no means infrequent in the inspired writings. "To him," says St. Peter, "be *glory* both now and for ever." ‡ "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," exclaims the grateful St. John, "*to him* be glory and *dominion* for ever and ever." § And what say the Spirits of Heaven? "I heard the voice of many *Angels* round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with aloud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb* that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and *honour*, and *glory* and *blessing*." || Such forms of words reflect no little lustre on the Lord; and if such ascriptions, taken in the light of praise and adoration, be allowed to be the current language of *worship*, as well they may, since the celestial intelligences making them do evidently bless, extol, and magnify the Lamb as super-eminent in their esteem, *then* the honour is *divine* that our Immanuel receives, and, unless Heaven itself be the scene of *idolatrous* worship, he that receives it is *God*.

Creature-worship, under every form it can assume, is gross idolatry, and idolatry in every shape is an execrable sin. Jesus, therefore, is Jehovah incarnate, and, being so, is most indisputably the proper object of worship; or, being but a glorified saint, apostle, or prophet, it is the height of impiety, and a tremendously dangerous delusion, to honour him at all with *religious* reverence. Upon any other ground than that of his divinity, Jesus of Nazareth, like the stocks of the heathen, is "a doctrine of vanities," and we, who perform toward him the variety of devotional acts, are "altogether brutish and foolish." I shall, therefore, in this second division of my letter, endeavour to shew, and solely from the Scriptures of

* James ii. 1. † Rom. xiv. 9. ‡ 2 Peter, iii. 18. § Rev. i. 5, 6.
|| Rev. v. 11, 12.

truth, that we are authorized to regard him as the worship of Israel, and to venerate him supremely as such.

And this is deducible, in the first place, from the paternal purpose in the declared appointment of Christ to the high office of universal *Judge*. “The *Father* judgeth no one,* but hath committed *all judgment* unto the *Son*.” And to what end? “That all men should *honour the Son*, even as they honour the *Father*.”† This, then, is the positive ordinance of Heaven, that every creature do homage to the Son, not paying him some inferior worship as to a Demi-god, but, like the Presbyters of the Sanctuary above, uniting in one common service the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.‡ “They *fell down* before the *Lamb* and sung a new song” to his praise; and, being joined by an innumerable company of angels, they break forth into a general chorus—“Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto *him* that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the *Lamb*, for ever and ever.” Nor may this royal canon, thus regularly observed by the angelic myriads, be dispensed with here on earth; much less hath *puny man* the power to annul it. It is irreversibly determined that “he that honoureth *not* the *Son* honoureth not the *Father* who hath sent him.” Wherefore the sacrifices of those who condemn this unalterable decree, and, in defiance of the good pleasure of Jehovah thus unequivocally expressed, offer them to the *Father*, to the exclusion of his co-equal *Son*, are vain oblations. Their prayer is sin, and it is iniquity, even their solemn meeting.

In further justification of our practice, and, indeed, I may add, of the common faith of Christendom, we would next advert to that most explicit *mandate* of the skies, which, though issued expressly to the armies of the Heaven above, must be equally imperative upon the inhabitants of the earth beneath. I allude to that passage of St. Paul, wherein we read of the *Father*, that “when he bringeth in the *first-begotten* † into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God

* *oudena*. † John v. 22, 23. ‡ Rev. v. 8, 12, 13.

§ Bishop Horsley observes in reference to this title of Christ, as it occurs in Col. i. 15, “that the words in the original text are equivalent to these, he who was born or begotten *before any creation*,

worship him ;" * and which, in the 97th Psalm, is spoken of *Christ*, under the sacred, incommunicable name of *Jehovah*. Let it be here remarked that the unvarying language of Scripture is this, "Worship God;" which indispensable command was reiterated in the ears of St. John, who, in the visions of Patmos, struck with the splendour of a glorified fellow-servant and brother, fell at his feet to worship him, unconscious perhaps of what he was doing, like Peter in the Mount, who, overpowered by the grandeur of the scene, *spoke*, not knowing *what* he said; or else the beloved disciple imagined himself accosted by his Lord and master, whom he had seen at the first. "And *when* I saw him (the Apostle observes) I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not! I am"—what? thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren? no such thing: but he said—"I am *the first*, and *the last*, and he *who lives*."† A title every way expressive of divinity, which Jesus had used before, ‡ which he again repeats in the subsequent chapter, § and which in the Prophets is only in use with the Almighty himself. "Thus saith *Jehovah*, the *King* of Israel, and his *Redeemer*, *Jehovah Sabaoth*, I am *the first*, and I am *the last*, and besides *me* there is *no God*."||

But if the holy myriads above are *commanded* to do him honour, and that of the most exalted nature, the *disciples* of the Lamb, it is manifest, voluntarily offered him while on earth the profoundest obeisance. I will not insist upon the continual *prostrations* that occur in the gospels, and were suffered to pass unrebuked, which were begun by the eastern

or before any thing was made." And Dr. Clarke says, "It is observable that St. Paul does not here call our Saviour the *first created* of all creatures, but the *first-born* of every creature, that is, the *first-begotten* before all creatures;" whence it follows, "*For by him were all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, *all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things*, and by him all things consist."—See B. Horaley's Letters to Priestley: Letter 5—Sec. 13.

* Heb. i. 6.

† Rev. i. 17, 18.—(*ego eimi o protos, kai o eskatos, kai o zoon.*)

‡ Rev. i. 11. § Rev. ii. 8, see also xxii. 13. || Isaiah xlv. 6.

Sages, who "*fell down and worshipped*" the infant Saviour,* and were afterwards persevered in by those numerous supplicants who crowded around his person, acknowledged his power, and humbly intreated his mercy. I will rather confine myself to the conduct of those, who having had intercourse with him after he rose from the dead, and received an accession of knowledge in respect of the Scriptures, must have understood what was proper for them to do, and could not have acted as they did through ignorance of what was their duty. St. Luke records of the eleven apostles, and other disciples assembled with them, that after he had "opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures," it came to pass, while he blessed them, that "*they worshipped him.*"† *He* lifted up his hand, and bestowed a benediction, while *they*, grateful for the blessing, unreservedly adored him as the God of their salvation. How true a picture of genuine worship!

But, to prosecute our proof a little farther, we will descend to some *particulars* of worship, and adduce specific acts of devotion. One of these is genuflexion, or the bending of the knee. "O come, let us worship and *bow down*, let us *kneel* before the Lord our Maker."‡ But in Isaiah the Saviour is introduced, proclaiming, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else; I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that *unto me* every knee shall bow."§ This, in the 14th of the Romans, is applied to Christ: "We shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me." In the 2nd of the Philippians, however, it is still more full and express: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in heaven and beings on earth, and beings under the earth."|| This, therefore, is a name, which, signifying *Jehovah* the Saviour, is above "*every* name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."¶

* Matt. ii. 11. † Luke xxiv. 45—52. ‡ Psalm xcv. 6.

§ Isaiah xlv. 22, 23.

|| *ina, en too onomati ieesou, pan gonu kampsē, epouranioōn, kai spigeioōn, kai katakthonioōn.*

¶ Eph. i. 21.

A second devotional act, expressive of sincere attachment, profound adoration, and ardent affection, is that of *salutation*, which is observable in the votaries of Baal, whose sin consisted in "bowing the knee" to that idol, and "kissing him with the mouth."* Job very beautifully exonerates himself from this species of idolatry. "If I beheld the *sun* when it shined, or the *moon* walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or *my mouth hath kissed my hand*, *this also* were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge; for I should have *denied* the *God* that is above."† Yet the Patriarch David exhorts us, yea, and admonishes all Kings and Judges of the earth, to "*kiss the Son*, lest *he be angry*, and *ye perish* from the way, when *his wrath is kindled but a little*. Blessed are all they that *put their trust in him*."‡ And who recollects not the Saviour's commendation of *Mary*, that most interesting of all penitents, who, in addition to other demonstrations of the deepest reverence and most ardent love, ceased not to *kiss*, with all the fervency of impassioned devotion, the *feet* she had previously washed with her tears, and wiped in the hair of her head?

Let a *third* particular suffice; it is that of *supplication*. Now in reference to prayer the decree of Heaven is precise, it being enacted, that "whosoever shall *call* upon the *name of the Lord* shall be saved."§ in the original of *Joel*, it is "*the name of Jehovah*."|| But that the Lord *Christ* is intended, is, I think, most evident from the following verse: "How then shall they call on *him* in *whom* they have not *believed*? And how shall they believe in him *of whom* they have not *heard*? And how shall they hear without a *Preacher*?"¶ For the world was undoubtedly to believe in *Christ*, of whom, for ages and generations, it had not heard; for whom did the first preachers proclaim to their audience as an object of faith, unless this same Jesus who was crucified? In his name *alone* the remission of sins was to be published, for neither is there "*salvation in any other*;" and "to *him* give all the *Prophets* witness, that through *his name*,

* 1 Kings xix. 18.

† Job xxxi. 26—28.

‡ Psalm ii. 10—12. § Rom. x. 13. || Joel ii. 32. ¶ Rom. x. 14.

whosoever *believeth in him* shall receive remission of sins." * Besides, throughout the Gospels, the distressed of every kind, availing themselves of the generous invitation given to the labouring and heavy-laden, are represented as coming suppliant to Christ, saying, "*Lord ! if thou wilt, thou canst :*" and "*speak the word only, and it shall be.*" Nor did he give answers of peace only in healing diseases and ejecting devils, but in forgiving sins. To him therefore the Apostle ascribes the mercy *he* obtained : "*In me Jesus Christ shewed forth all long-suffering*"; † and to the Colossians he says, "*Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*" ‡ Nor was it other than a species of *invocation* of the name of the Lord Jesus that was in use among the Apostles in the performance of their miracles. "*In the name of Jesus Christ,*" said St. Peter, in restoring the cripple, "*rise up and walk ;*" and that the same Lord, so invoked, was really the *author* of the marvellous effects produced, is manifest from the case of the paralytic. "*Peter said unto him, Eneas ! Jesus Christ maketh thee whole : arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.*" §

But, not to multiply instances in proof of a point so clear, let the following *facts* speak for confirmation. When St. Paul was buffeted by a messenger of Satan, he "*besought the Lord thrice ;*" who answered him, "*My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength || is made perfect in weakness.*" Upon which the Apostle observes, "*Most gladly therefore will I glory in mine infirmities, that the power (strength) of Christ ¶ may rest upon me.*" ** To this we will add the account of the thief on the cross, which, while it differs from the former instance very materially in all its circumstances, tends notwithstanding to demonstrate, equally with its precursor, the propriety of prayer to Christ. "*He said unto Jesus, Lord ! remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*" †† In this character, truly, the divine edict receives

* Acts x. 43. † 1 Tim. i. 16. ‡ Col. iii. 13. § Acts ix. 34, 35.

|| *ee* *dunamis mou*. ¶ *ee* *dunamis tou Christou*.

** 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. †† Luke xxiii. 42.

exemplification, namely, that "*whosoever* calls on the Lord"—(the Lord *Jesus*)—"shall be *saved*;" since no one can less *deserve* his compassion, less *merit* his mercy, than this repentant robber, to whose prayer of faith, though issuing from such unworthy lips, and uttered so late as the eleventh hour, the agonizing Redeemer answered, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." For the sake of adducing something that varies from the two foregoing cases in a certain degree, at the same time that it concurs to establish the point in debate, we will finish our evidence for the Worship of Christ with the death-scene of the first Christian martyr, which, as it must necessarily throw considerable weight into the scale, and tend very powerfully to make it preponderate in our favour, will form a *conclusion* to my letter, at once replete with encouragement to the saints to persevere in their accustomed adoration of the Lamb, and calculated to cheer them in the prospect of their final dissolution, and to banish their fears; since in the heroic *Stephen* they will see a man of like passions with themselves, and having the same infirmities, suffering a violent death, and yet making his exit with as much composure as if he had *fallen asleep*. "They stoned *Stephen*, *invocating* and saying, *Lord Jesus!* receive my spirit;" and then, assuming a still more solemn posture, the very attitude of prayer, as if he would intercede for his murderers with intenser devotion, "*he kneeled down, and,*" having bowed his knees to *Jesus* in glory, he "*cried with a loud voice, Lord! lay not this sin to their charge.*" *

March 8, 1815.

* Acts vii. 59, 60.

"I shall always insist that the blessed *Stephen* died a martyr to the *Deity* of Christ. The accusation against him was, among other things, the charge of *blasphemy* against *Moses* and against *God*. (Acts vi. 11). The blasphemy against *Moses* was, probably, his assertion that the authority of *Moses* was inferior to that of Christ; but what could be the blasphemy against *God*, except it was, that he ascribed *divinity* to one who had suffered publicly as a *malefactor*? That this was the blessed *Stephen's* crime none can doubt who attend to the conclusion of the story. He 'looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God (the splendour of the *Shekinah*, for that is what is meant, when the glory of *God* is mentioned as something to be *seen*), and *Jesus* standing on the right

hand of God.' He saw the *man* Jesus in the midst of his *divine light*. His declaring what he saw, the Jewish rabble understood as an assertion of the divinity of Jesus. They stopped their ears, they overpowered his voice with their own clamours, and they hurried him out of the city, to inflict upon him the *death* which the *law* appointed for blasphemers. He died, as he had lived, attesting the Deity of our crucified master. His last breath was uttered in a *prayer* to Jesus, first for himself, and then for his murderers. It is to be noted that the word *God* is not in the original text, which might be better rendered thus : 'They stoned Stephen, *invoking* and saying, Lord Jesus ! receive my spirit.' Jesus, therefore, was the God whom the dying martyr invoked in his last agonies, when men are apt to pray with the utmost seriousness to *him* whom they conceive the mightiest to save." See B. Horsley's 12th letter, sect. 5.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

APPENDED to the foregoing Letters were passages of Scripture illustrative of the Divinity of Christ and the Personality of the Holy Ghost. As many similar selections are extant, we refrain from printing the entire appendix. We think, however, that Mr. Carne's concluding remarks are too good to be lost, especially as they refer to a passage of Scripture which has been expunged by the Revisers of the New Testament.

Mr. Carne says, "I have studiously avoided all allusion to that celebrated passage in the first epistle of St. John, which may most truly be esteemed a master-piece of proof in confirmation of the doctrine. I have purposely made the omission, that every one may see how well we can do without its assistance, and that our cause, instead of depending upon this or that particular portion of Scripture, has the Bible itself for its basis, being established upon the sure foundation of Evangelists, Apostles, and Prophets, who, inspired by the self-same Spirit, breathe the same sentiments throughout their writings, as upon other topics so upon the one more immediately in question.

"It is not omitted as if of doubtful authority, much less of a decidedly spurious origin. With the Rev. Mr. Jones I would say, "I firmly believe it to be genuine." It is a component part of the great whole of the book of God for anything absolute that can be alleged against it, and those persons seem to take too much upon them who, with an air of Popish infallibility, pronounce it to be indisputably 'a gross interpolation.' Even Griesbach does not entirely give it up; he still preserves it in the margin of his second edition. Bishop Horsley defends it. "Why must I acknowledge (he asks),

that the passage is at *all* an interpolation? Because Newton and others have clearly proved it? To me the proof is not clear. Were the defect of positive proof in favour of the passage much greater, than Newton and others have been able to make out, it would still be with me an argument of *its authenticity* that the omission of it breaks the connexion, and wonderfully heightens the obscurity, of the Apostle's discourse." *

"This is the ground to stand upon; it forms the last of Mr. Jones's four reasons for the genuineness of the passage. 'The sense (he says) is not perfect without it, there being a contrast of three witnesses *in heaven* to three *upon earth*, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, whose testimony is called the *Witness of God*, and the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, which, being administered by the Church upon earth, is called the *witness of men*.' In reference to this of Mr. Jones, Mr. Nares† observes that 'the note is fair and candid.' We may, therefore, count it a providence that, at the instant when so many were for abandoning this noble passage, and thus mutilating the word of God, the *Bible Society* arose and preserved it to the world. Now, therefore, all tongues and peoples may understand the speech of Joshua when he says, "Ye cannot serve *Jehovah*, for *He* is the *Holy Gods*."‡ "For there are *three* that bear record in heaven, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and these three (*Alehim*) are one (*Jehovah*)."[§]

* Remarks on Priestley's 2d. Letters, part 1, sect. 15.

† P. 200. ‡ Joshua xxiv. 19. § 1 John v. 7.

LETTERS

ON THE

PRE-EXISTERIAN THEORY.

LETTERS

ON THE

SUPPOSED PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST'S HUMAN SOUL.*

LETTER I.

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS,

DR. WATTS' view on this subject are presented very concisely in the words subjoined. "Now, if we can give ourselves leave to suppose that the human soul of our Lord Jesus Christ had a being, and was personally united to the divine nature, long before his body was born of the Virgin, even from the very foundation of the world, and that this was the angel that conversed with Abraham, Moses, Joshua, &c., then we may most easily account for those expressions of Scripture which signify something inferior to Godhead before his incarnation; and we may attribute them to the human soul of Christ, which, though infinitely inferior to God, yet doubtless is a spirit of a very excellent and noble nature, a being formed on purpose to be united to God, and never existed but in personal union with God. There is nothing in the whole word of God, that I know of, which discountenances such a supposition as this; and there are a great many texts, both of the Old and New Testament, which are with the greatest ease explained and reconciled this way, which it is very hard to account for without admitting this opinion, nor has it the least ill aspect in any other article of our faith." Dr. Watts adds in a note, "I do

* Mr. Harris (the gentleman to whom these letters are addressed) received the above epistle from Dr. Mather in answer to a request that he would give his opinion of Dr. Watts' theory. Some time after, in conversation with Mr. Batey, he (Mr. Harris) referred to Dr. Mather's letter, which he promised to lend him. The perusal of this epistle by Mr. Batey led to further correspondence, the result being the following letters.—ED.

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not mention this pre-existence of the human soul of Christ as a point of faith which I firmly believe, but merely as a matter of opinion not to be rashly rejected, and well worth our further inquiry ; for I have not met with anything yet published against it that is sufficient to forbid the proposal of it here."

Now, in reference to this view, I venture to remark that it seems inconsistent with the New Testament account of the boy Jesus' growth in wisdom, as stated in Luke ii. 52. Had the fulness of the Godhead existed in union with the human soul of Christ from the very foundation of the world, that is, for a period of many thousands of years, would it not have made unbounded advances in knowledge and wisdom. We all know that a desire for knowledge exists in the soul of man even as a fallen being, and what advances are made in the midst of infinite difficulties within the limits of man's present life. But were the spirit free from the paralyzing influence of depravity, and endowed with all the life and strength which holiness imparts, what advances would it not make in the space of four thousand years, when it had not only God for its teacher, but had the benefit of personal union with him. Would not such a spirit almost at once attain to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, such as man is capable of, when it had in closest conjunction with it the fulness of the Godhead.

Now, could it be said with propriety, had the soul of the child Jesus been in personal union with God for some thousands of years, that, when located in Nazareth, it grew in wisdom, just as the body grew in stature ?

Then, again, it seems inconsistent with the declaration made in Mark xiii. 32, that Christ did not know the day of judgment.

The use I would make of this is, that the full results of union with the Godhead were apprehended and enjoyed by Christ's manhood gradually. All knowledge was not his from the very beginning, nor yet was all power and authority his from the beginning. He had a joy set before him, for the sake of attaining which he endured the cross and despised the shame. But, on the supposition that his human

soul had been personally united to the divine nature thousands of years before his being born into the world, he must have enjoyed from the very first a perfection and exaltation which we believe was only subsequently acquired as the reward of his humiliation.

Then, again, as Dr. Pye Smith remarks, "This hypothesis destroys the proper affinity of the Saviour to the human race." As President Edwards states, according to this scheme the man Christ Jesus was not properly the son of the Virgin, and so not the son of man. To be the son of a woman, is to receive being in both soul and body in consequence of a conception in her womb. The soul is the principal part of a man, and sonship implies derivation of the soul as well as the body by conception, it being consequent on it according to the law of nature.

It is agreeable to a law of nature, that where a perfect human body is conceived in the womb of a woman, and properly nourished and increased, a human soul should come into being; and conception may be as properly the cause whence it is derived from natural causes or antecedents. For it is the power of God which produces these effects, though it be according to an established law. The soul being so much the principal part of a man, a derivation of the soul by conception is the chief thing implied in a man's being the son of a woman. In any case, Jesus Christ, if animated by a soul that had pre-existed thousands of years, could not be said to be a man as other men are, whose bodies and souls come into existence at the same time. He could scarcely be called the Son of David, as that phrase was understood, and exception might be taken to his claims.

Then, again, the uses of the theory are doubtful. The passages of Scripture which it helps to explain have been already satisfactorily explained on the other system. To show here how this has been done is not necessary, as you have Dr. Hawker's works, &c.—all that is required to be known for the understanding of each.

In the above remarks I have stated the views which Dr. Watts held at an earlier period of his life. At a later period he went further, and seems to have concurred with Dr. Thomas

Goodwin in supposing "that the human soul of Christ was the first created of all finite natures, was immediately united to the Divine Nature, and was the medium of the creating and governing acts of God in relation to this Earth and the human race, but particularly the Hebrew nation under the Theocracy." This seems to me wonderfully to increase the difficulties of the subject. Can a human soul, itself created, become the Creator of the Universe? If the human soul of Christ be the medium of God's creating power, then it cannot be true in such a scheme that the Son of God, who is a distinct person from God the Father, did at all create the world, and there was no necessity why he should, when the human soul of Christ was equal to the task, and was charged with the work; and so it was, in fact, as Dr. Pye Smith states, that Dr. Watts scheme made the divine nature of the Saviour not that of the Son of God, but as that of the Father.

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT COTTEN MATHER,
M.A. & L.L.D. Glasgow University.

LETTER II.

22, Vernon Terrace,
East End, Finchley,
April 28th, 1877.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I have carefully read the remarks of Dr. Mather on the "Pre-existence of the human soul of our Lord Jesus Christ," which you kindly lent me in his own handwriting. I think his remarks are very pertinent. I have penned the following observations on the same subject, and on the same side of the question, and which I believe to be in harmony with the clear testimony and teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the only infallible rule of Christian faith on this and all other doctrines.

Now the *pre-existence* of the *human soul* of Christ is nowhere *stated* in the word of God. No text affirms it. Even its advocates fail to show us one. If we read, either in the writings of the old Testament or of the New Testament, that Jesus Christ existed as a *man* before his birth of the *virgin Mary*, then we could believe that he received his *human body*, but not his *human soul*, at his incarnation. That the Son of God existed before his manifestation in the *flesh* is distinctly and frequently taught in the word of God; but this is sufficiently explained by the *duality* of *natures* in the *unity* of his *Messiahanic* personality. The old divines speak of Christ as *truly God*, *perfectly man*, *distinctly two natures*, and indivisibly *one person*. That he is *truly God* is proved by the names, attributes, works, and worship of God being ascribed unreservedly to him. That he is *perfect man* is fully testified by the sacred writers. As man he has a human body and a human soul. The ancient Gnostics held the perfect deity of Christ, but denied his proper humanity. Holding the theory that all depravity has its seat in *matter*, they felt it necessary to deny that he had a material body. The Sabellians admitted his *divinity*, and that he had a true *human body*, but denied that he possessed a *human soul*. There are others who admit his proper *Godhead*, but who think that his *human soul* was the *first* and most excellent of all *created spirits* or *angels*, and that it was taken into

personal union by the second person in the adorable Trinity, and that at his incarnation this spirit was united to the *body* he took of the virgin, and that *thus* the Son of God became the son of man. It is unfortunate for this theory, like the other dogmas named above, that it is utterly void of any Scripture proof. You cannot say, "Thus it is written," or "Thus saith the Lord," in stating it. That he had a true *human body* is evident. He was born of a woman. He was the "holy child Jesus." He is called the *Man* Christ Jesus. After his resurrection he could say, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

It is just as clear that he had a proper *human soul*. Hence it is said that "the child *grew*, and waxed *strong* in spirit," and that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."—Luke ii. 40—52. He often spake of his soul. "Now is my soul troubled;" "My soul is exceeding sorrowful;" "Thou wilt not leave my *soul* in hell." Thus he was "made in all things like unto his brethren." This declaration of the Apostle is inconsistent with the supposition that his *human soul* existed before he was born of a woman, as in that case he would be infinitely *different* from his brethren. Besides, it contradicts the positive statement that he was "made of a woman." It is equally opposed to Luke i. 35 : "That holy thing (or holy one) who was 'born' of the Virgin, was *the (called)* Son of God." Surely neither the Apostle Paul nor the Evangelist Luke could mean that only a part of the Son of God, and that the *inferior* part of his human nature, was "made of a woman," or "born" of her. To be "like his brethren" in "all things," his *whole manhood, body and soul*, must be derived from his mother, as theirs was from their mother. There is no escape from this conclusion. There are several other passages with which the theory of the pre-existence of his human soul is at utter variance. It is opposed to Deut. xviii. 15 : "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thy brethren like unto me." If his *soul* had existed in *heaven* before he had lived on the earth, it would have been more proper to have said he would have been raised from among the *angels* than of his *brethren*.

It can never be reconciled with Heb. ii. 17. "For verily He took not on him the nature of angels, but He took on him the seed of Abraham." There are only *three intelligent* natures with which we are acquainted—the *divine*, the *angelic*, and the *human*. Now observe (1) he passed by the *angelic*, (2) he took the *human*; (3) he *must therefore previously have existed only* in the *divine*. This passage alone is decisive. It is confirmed by Col. i. 15—17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: 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*." If verse 15 stood alone, it might seem to favour the idea that he was the first-born of all creatures ever brought into existence by the creative power of God, and that it became the soul of the Messiah. But this is contradicted by the 16th and 17th verses. "For by *him*—the *first-born*—were *all things created*, both in *heaven* and in *earth*." Now, if he were the *first-born*, or *first created* spirit, he must have created or generated *himself*, which is a positive contradiction, as in that case he must have *acted before he existed*. Again, if he, as the first-born is, "*before all things*," as the Apostle asserts, then he cannot be a "*thing*," or he would have been before himself, which is impossible. The words of Dr. Watts on this subject is simply an absolute contradiction. He says the human soul of Christ is doubtless a spirit of a very excellent and noble nature, a being *formed on purpose to be united to God*, and *never existed* but in a *personal union with God*. Now it must be certain that, if he were "*formed on purpose to be united to God*," he *must have existed before* he was in *personal union with him*, and, therefore, *apart from God*.

In conclusion, I observe that the supposed pre-existence of the human soul of Christ is unnecessary in order to explain the *appearances* of the Son of God under the Old Testament dispensation. It was an easy thing for Him to *assume* the appearance of either man or angel. It must have been as possible as to *assume* the *real nature* of man, which he

did at his incarnation. Arguing from his appearances to Joshua and others, it might as well be contended that his *body* had a *pre-existence* as well as his *soul*, for it is certain he appeared in a *bodily* and not in a *spiritual* form, or in the form of a *soul*, if we may use such an expression. It is equally unnecessary in order to explain the nature of the *covenant relationship* of his Church. It has been argued that, if we do not hold the pre-existence of his human soul, we must admit that, until his incarnation, the Church was without a head; but this proves too much, and therefore nothing, for it implies he existed as a *Head* of the *body*, the Church, it may be *thousands of years before* there was a *Church* to constitute his body! The same remark will apply to the relationship of Christ as a King, a Husband, a Shepherd, &c., &c. The truth of the matter is simply this, that these things all existed in the divine plan from all eternity, as He was the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*," and as all the works of God are "known unto him from the beginning." It is, therefore, as absurd to speak of a *Head* without a *body*, as it is to speak of a *body* without a *Head*, or of the *Bridegroom* without a *bride*, of a *Shepherd* without a flock, as of a *flock* without a *Shepherd*, &c., &c. Some profess to find the *pre-existence* of the *human soul* of Christ, and others *eternal sonship*, in the eighth chapter of the Book of Proverbs; but the first verse of the chapter ought to convince every reader that it speaks of neither one nor the other. The first chapter of John's Gospel is our best guide in regard to the Person of our blessed Lord. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

"Unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

Hoping that these remarks will shed a little light upon the subject of which they treat,

I am, yours truly in Christ Jesus,

JOHN BATEY.

Mr. E. HARRIS.

LETTER III.

22, Vernon Terrace,
East End, Finchley,
May 9, 1877.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Since my last interview with you, I have considered the two passages of Scripture we spoke of together, but which I had not thought necessary to refer to in my former remarks.

I shall first notice Phil. ii. 6, 7. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Various and contradictory opinions have been held as to what is meant by the "*form of God*" in this passage. The note of *Dr. Macknight* is, perhaps, the best to be found upon it. "As the Apostle is speaking of what Christ *was before* he took the "form of a servant," the form of God, of which he is said to have divested himself when he *became man*, cannot be anything which he possessed during his incarnation, or in his divested state ; consequently, neither the opinion of *Erasmus*, that the "form of God" consisted in those *sparks of divinity* by which Christ, during his incarnation manifested his Godhead ; nor the opinion of the *Socinians*, that it consisted of the *power* of working *miracles*, is well founded. For Christ did not divest himself of the *one* or the *other*, but possessed both, all the time of his public ministry. The opinion of *Whitby*, therefore, and others, seem better founded, who by the "form of God" understand that *glorious state* in which the Deity is said to dwell, 1 Tim. vi. 16 ; and in which he manifested himself to the patriarchs of old ; Deut. v. 22-24 ; and which was commonly accompanied with a numerous retinue of angels, Psalm lxxviii. 17 ; and which in Scripture is called the "*similitude, face, presence, and the shape* of God," Num. xii. 8, Psalm xxxi. 16, Exodus xxxiii. 15, John v. 37. This interpretation is supported by the term *morphe* here used, which signifies a person's external appearance, and not his *nature* or essence—Mark xvi. 12 ; Matt. xvii. 2. Farther,

this agrees with the fact. The "form of God," that is the *visible* glory, and the attendance of angels above described, the Son of God enjoyed with his Father *before the world was*, John xvii. 5 ; and on that, as on other accounts, he is the *brightness* of the Father's glory. Lastly, this sense of the words *morphe theou* is confirmed by the meaning of *morphen doulon* (verse 7), which evidently denotes the *state*, or appearance and behaviour of a servant. This view of Macknight may be further illustrated. The word "form" is used for *outward pomp, splendour, or dignity*. He hath *no form* nor comeliness, no *outward state or splendour* as the Jews expected to see in their Messiah. The word is used by the LXX.—Dan. vi. 6, 9, 10 ; vii. 28—for splendour or *brightness*. Parkhurst says the original word signifies "*outward appearance*," and refers to our Lord's *glorious appearances as God before* and under the Mosaic dispensation. Dean Stanhope says, "The Apostle here illustrates the dignity of our Lord's person in terms which speak him very God and very man. The 'form of God' as strongly infers the *former*, as the *likeness* of man does the latter." Bishop Pearson remarks, "If any still question how he took the '*form of a servant*,' he hath the Apostle's resolution, by being made in the '*likeness of man*.'" Other writers might be quoted to the same effect, but they are unnecessary. It is quite clear that this could not be said of the *human soul* of Christ before his *incarnation* ; because, had he *so existed*, he must have been in the *form of a servant in heaven*, whereas the Apostle asserts that he took that "*form*" when He emptied Himself of the "form of God"! In fact, it implies the absurdity that He divested Himself of *one form of servitude* which He sustained in *heaven before He became man*, for *another*, upon which He entered when He was made in the "*likeness of men*!" The same mode of interpretation gives the true meaning of II. Cor. viii. 9, where it is said, "That though He was *rich*, for our sakes He became *poor*!" It does not mean that He *ceased* to be *what He was*, but that He became *what He previously was not*. An earthly *Prince* may for a time put off the *appearance of royalty*, and put on the *appearance of a peasant*, without ceasing to be a *Prince*. It is, moreover, expressive of the infinite condescension

of our divine Redeemer. If it be asked, how could the infinite Jehovah be said to humble Himself, it is only necessary to reply that the Bible declares that He "humbleth Himself" even to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth ! Again, *local motion* is also spoken of the Divinity, which might be argued to be inconsistent with omnipresence. "Let us go down, and there confound their language." If this could be said consistently with the *divine nature* of the *several persons* of the adorable Trinity, then surely it can be said more strictly of the Mediator—the Second Person in the Covenant of Life and Peace—that He "came down from heaven," when He took our human nature upon himself, and was "God manifest in the flesh."

As intimated in my former letter, the duality of *natures* in the *unity* of the *mediatorial person* of our Lord fully accounts for all the variety of expressions employed by the sacred writers on these glorious subjects. Strictly adhered to, they utterly destroy, as they have no foundation in the Word of God, the Sabellian, Arian, Socinian, Swedenborgian, and human soul pre-existerian theories, and demonstrate the proper Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Unto Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one Jehovah, be all honour and glory, world without end.

With very kind regards,

I am, yours truly in Christ Jesus,

JOHN BATEY.

Mr. E. HARRIS.