

SECTION II.

IF JESUS CHRIST BE NOT THE TRUE GOD, OF THE SAME ESSENCE WITH HIS FATHER, THE SANHEDRIM DID AN ACT OF JUSTICE IN CAUSING HIM TO BE PUT TO DEATH; AND THE JEWS HAD SUFFICIENT REASON TO REJECT THE PREACHING OF HIS APOSTLES, WHEN THEY CALLED THEM TO BELIEVE ON HIM.

CHAPTER I.

JESUS CHRIST IS CALLED GOD.

As the opinion of those who believe Jesus Christ to be a mere man consecrates the Mohammedan religion; so it also justifies the Jews in the most execrable parricide that ever was committed; that is, the MURDER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Fully to vindicate the conduct of the Jews in this respect, on the principles of our opposers, we need only to show, That the sanhedrim had authority to judge Jesus Christ; that they had sufficient cause to condemn him; that they had a right to put him to death; and, that the common people had reason to adhere to the sentence of their sanhedrim, and to reject the preaching of the apostles when they called them to believe in the crucified Jesus.

The authority of the sanhedrim to *judge* Jesus Christ is incontestable; it being the proper business of that grand court of judicature to take cognizance of all capital affairs, which regarded the tranquillity of

the state and the preservation of religion. It is equally clear that they had a right *to put him to death*, on a conviction of blasphemy; and *to reject the preaching of the apostles*, if he was justly put to death. So that the whole difficulty lies in this; *Whether they could convict him of blasphemy*. He is no longer on earth; the Jews, therefore, cannot bring him again to the bar, and proceed to a new trial; but they may easily know his doctrine by those writings which his disciples have left; for all agree, that they spake and wrote by his order and inspiration.

Now, it appears from the writing of the apostles, that Jesus Christ was called GOD; that the perfections of God were attributed to him; that he received Divine adoration; that he was equalled with God; and, that the oracles of the Old Testament, which express the glory of God, were applied to him. But, can all this honour be given to a mere man? can all these glories be ascribed to the most exalted of mere creatures, without the guilt of blasphemy? Let us, for a moment, put ourselves in the place of the modern Jews; and see whether, supposing the principles we oppose be true, we are not obliged to persevere in our infidelity. To induce us to renounce it, we must be persuaded, either, that Christ was *not* called God; that he did *not* receive Divine adoration; that he did *not* pretend to be equal with his Father; and, that he did *not* apply, nor suffer to be applied to him, those oracles of the Old Testament which express the glory of God. Or, else we must believe, that a mere creature may take upon him the name, GOD, with those ideas which that august name conveys, without being guilty of blasphemy.

The *former* is not possible. For Christ is called GOD, and the TRUE GOD, in the apostolic writings.

Thomas, after the resurrection of Jesus, said to him, "My Lord, and my God," John xx. 28.¹⁴ John begins his gospel thus; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God," John i. 1. Paul calls him, "God manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. It is of no importance whether this name was given to him in Greek or in Hebrew; for, in all languages, the term signifies an essence greatly superior to ours. Besides, as the apostles apply to Christ so many of the ancient oracles which speak of the Supreme Being, they must have given to him the names of God in general; those names which were of known established use in the sacred language.

Here it is worthy to be remarked, that the several heads of accusation, which the Jews may form against Christ, mutually support each other. "We cannot doubt," they might say, "that he took on him the name, GOD, since he received Divine worship; nor can we question but he was worshipped in a *proper sense*, being adored under a Divine character. We have not the least reason to doubt but the sublime character was attributed to him, as it *expresses the glory of God*; seeing it was applied with the idea of those perfections which are naturally signified by it; for he is said to be equal with God, after having Divine perfections ascribed to him. We cannot but conclude that he is *really equalled* with God; because those oracles which speak of God only, are applied to him." But these things deserve a more particular consideration.

Every one knows that we all naturally scruple to take upon us the name, GOD. This backwardness must arise, either from the reverence we have for the Deity, or from some other principle. If the *latter*, what is it? If the *former*, it must be either from the

regard we have for the Supreme Being, or from the respect we have for some subordinate divinity. It cannot be out of respect for a subordinate deity; for they who deny the existence of any such being, will not, dare not, call themselves by the name GOD. If out of regard for the Supreme Being, it must be because we are fully persuaded that we should injure him, and be guilty of a capital crime, were we to call ourselves by the name, GOD, or by any other name that is peculiar to him. If so, we cannot but consider him as an impious wretch, who, not being God, dares to take that name upon him.

The names, JESUS CHRIST, SAVIOUR, and REDEEMER OF THE WORLD, are not more peculiar to the Son of Mary, than is the name, GOD, to the Supreme Being. For as no Christian will give those names to any but the Son of the virgin; so no Jew dares to apply the name, GOD, to any but the Great Supreme. And as Christians no sooner hear this gracious and glorious name, JESUS CHRIST, than they think of him who was conceived in the womb of Mary; so the adorable name, GOD, is no sooner pronounced among the Jews, than they have an idea of HIM that created heaven and earth; except there be some intimation given of its being used in an improper sense. As, therefore, a man who should now call himself JESUS CHRIST, and desire to be treated as the Saviour of the world, would be justly condemned of horrid impiety; so, if Jesus took upon him the name, GOD, without being God, the Jews might justly accuse, condemn, and punish him for blasphemy.

It will not avail to say, "Though Jesus took upon him the name, GOD; yet he gave sufficient notice that he was not God." For it does not appear that he gave any notice of it; at least, not *sufficient* notice.

The contrary is evident from his language and conduct. But, if he be not God, why does he take a name which had been long consecrated to that Supreme Being? If he be not God, why does he permit men to adore him? adoration being due to God only. Besides, as it would be absurdly impious for a man, who confesses that he is not Jesus Christ, to take upon him the names and receive the honours which are due to that Divine Saviour only, so it is a compound of absurdity and blasphemy for one, who is not God, to take upon him the names and attributes of God; and, by receiving adoration, to usurp the honours which are due to none but God.

If Moses, when returning from the mount with his face shining, by reason of his intimate converse with JEHOVAH, had presumed to call himself GOD, to attribute to himself Divine perfections, and to demand the adoration of the people, though he was known to be a mere man; the chosen tribes would have had sufficient ground to reject, condemn, and punish him as a seducer, notwithstanding the wonderful miracles that were performed by him. For, by such conduct, he would have violated the first command of the law, at the very time in which it was given. Jehovah had said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," Exod. xx. 3; and yet he would have put himself in the place of God. If, then, the ancient Israelites would have done well to reject Moses, in the case supposed, the sanhedrim had reason to reject the pretensions of Jesus Christ, and to condemn him for blasphemy, when he either required or permitted Divine honours to be addressed to him. For when the names and the glory of God are usurped, neither miracles* nor the dignity of the person accused,

* Admitting, for the sake of argument, that such an usurper could perform real miracles.

can in the least vindicate his conduct. Not *miracles*; because they cannot authorize blasphemy. Nay, blasphemy is a sufficient ground of utterly rejecting those works, however wonderful, which are wrought in favour of it. Not *the dignity of the person*; because robbing God of his glory is a crime, by so much the more heinous, by how much the more excellent the person is who commits the horrid act.

Should the head of a family, for instance, call himself a king, under a pretence that he possesses authority over his children; should he frequently so call himself without any restriction or explanation, and also require to be honoured as a king, he would involve himself in much guilt. But the crime would be more aggravated, if a magistrate should usurp the name and the honours of majesty among his fellow-citizens; because it would be of more dangerous consequence to the state. And it would be still greater, if the governor of a province were to do so; and greater yet, in proportion to the dignity of the guilty person. Thus the name, GOD, being, by a most ancient and holy use, appropriated to HIM who made heaven and earth, the application of it to any other is so far from being justified by the excellence of the creature who dares to assume it, that he is, on that very account, so much the more guilty of impiety and blasphemy.

The name GOD, in our language, and Θεός, in Greek, answer to those august and venerable names which the Supreme Being appropriates to himself in the Old Testament; names which ought to be sacred to HIM, because he took them on himself, and because they were intended to distinguish Him from all his creatures. One of them signifies, HE THAT IS SUFFICIENT; to denote, that all other beings have need of God, but that He has no need of them.

Another signifies, I AM; or, I AM THAT I AM; to indicate, that God is self-existent and independent, unchangeable and eternal. I omit several others which might be mentioned; but it may be observed of them in general, that they express such an eminence of perfection and glory, as cannot agree to any but the Most High.

In the language of the New Testament, and in that of the Septuagint, are two names, Θεός, and Κύριος, intended to express what is signified by the various characters which our Maker assumes, in the Hebrew oracles. And, certainly, we ought not to imagine that the names which God hath set apart for himself in the New Testament, are less sacred, or less proper to Him, than those by which he revealed himself in the Old. For if it was then necessary that God should be distinguished from all his creatures; and if, on that account, he took on him such names as express his essential glory, there must be the same propriety, and an equal necessity now. Nay, it is more necessary now, that the grand, the infinite distinction between God and his noblest creatures should be displayed and asserted; because this is the time in which it was foretold, that **THE LORD ALONE should be exalted**, Isa. ii. 11. So that as there would have been evident and abundant reason to condemn and punish a man for blasphemy, who, under the Old Testament, should have usurped the name, **JEHOVAH**, with the adoration due to Him who calls that name **HIS OWN**; so nothing can be more apparent than the impiety of him, who should now usurp the name, **GOD**, and receive that worship which has been always paid to the Most High only, under that character.

When Herod, making an oration to the people, was smitten by Divine vengeance, for receiving this

impious acclamation, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" Acts xii. 22; neither the people nor he could consider it as literally true. Herod, elated as he was, did not believe himself to be god; nor could the multitude suppose that their king was all on a sudden become the Supreme Being; yet his impiety met with exemplary punishment. If Jesus Christ, therefore, be a mere man, he cannot be acquitted from a charge of blasphemy, by pleading, "That he declared himself to be a man, and that he acknowledged his Father to be greater than he." Because a man may be guilty of horrid impiety in receiving Divine honours, without either believing or declaring that he is the true God; as appears by the example of Herod. For he who usurps the glory of God, though it be but in part, is guilty of blasphemy; and he who ascribes it to an usurper, is guilty of idolatry.

Have not the Jews, then, sufficient reason to abide by the sentence of their sanhedrim, and, on the principles of our adversaries, to maintain, That Jesus Christ was justly condemned and put to death, having been convicted of blasphemy? And what can be said in vindication of our Messiah? It may, perhaps, be said, "There is a manifest difference between the conduct of Herod and that of Jesus Christ. The *former* received Divine honours out of pride, and contrary to the will of God; but the *latter* calls himself GOD, and receives adoration, only because the true God will have it so." But where, and by whom, has God declared his will, that Christ should bear his name, and receive his worship? If there be any such revelation, it must have been made either by the prophets, or by his Son, or by the apostles. If our adversaries say, By his *Son*; the Jews will immediately

ask," Whether all the seducers in the world do not pretend to Divine authority for what they say and do? They all affirm, that the names they bear, the works they perform, and the honours they receive are by the command of God : yet they are easily convicted of falsehood, and their wonderful works, if they perform any, are proved to be mere imposture ; because they usurp the characters and glory of God." If, by the *apostles* ; they are no less embarrassed. For they who reject Christ, condemn his apostles ; condemn them of blasphemy, for ascribing the glory of God to a crucified man. If, therefore, such a revelation have been made, it was by the *prophets*. But if so, Christ is the true God. For all those oracles which represent the Messiah as GOD, speak of him as the TRUE GOD. Nothing can be more express than that command which is given to all the angels to worship him ; nor is anything more certain than that it is the true God of whom the words are spoken. And as the prophets have so expressly and repeatedly declared that there is but *one* God, the Creator of heaven and earth, it is evident that He of whom they speak must be the true, the eternal God.

That sublime Being whom the prophets foretel, as coming into the world, as sending his messenger before him, as commanding his servants to "say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" is the Creator of heaven and earth. If not, there must be *two* gods of whom they speak ; but Moses and the prophets unite in asserting, and insist upon it as a principle essential to that religion which they taught and established, that there is but *one* God. Hear how Isaiah declares the unity and publishes the names of God. "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD OF HOSTS ; I am the

First, and I am the Last ; and beside me there is no God," Isa. xlv. 6. According to these important and sublime expressions, He only is to be called GOD, whose names are, JEHOVAH, THE REDEEMER OF ISRAEL, THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE FIRST AND THE LAST. Again ; " I am the LORD, and there is NONE ELSE ; there is NO GOD beside me. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is NONE BESIDE ME. I am the LORD and there is NONE ELSE. I form the light, and create darkness ; I make peace, and create evil : I the LORD do all these things. There is NO GOD ELSE beside me ; a just God and a Saviour ; there is NONE BESIDE ME. I am God, and there is NONE ELSE," Isa. lv. 5—7, 21, 22. See in what a reiterated manner the prophet asserts the important truth ! Hear with what vehemence of spirit and force of language he maintains the supreme dignity of JEHOVAH'S character, in opposition to all that are called god, who made not the heavens and the earth, the light and the darkness ! Of this the Jews cannot be ignorant. " On this principle," they will say, " our fathers condemned your Messiah. He called himself GOD, and we know there is but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Your Messiah, not being the Former of all things, could not be God ; he was, therefore, guilty of blasphemy, and worthy of death."

How, then, shall we vindicate the conduct of Christ if we suppose him to be a mere man, and yet allow that he called himself GOD ? Shall we say that he has nothing of God but the *name* ? But, if so, any other man might be so called as well as he. Shall we assert that he is a *metaphorical* God ; that he is so called in the sense in which kings bear the name ?

But the contrary appears, by his receiving adoration. When we call a man who is exceedingly brave, “King of the courageous;” we do not mean to ascribe any royalty to him. Besides, when we attribute any thing to a person metaphorically, we do not use the name simply, without any limitation, or explanation. Shall we say, then, that Christ is a *subordinate* God? But the Scriptures, by excluding a plurality of gods, exclude also every subordinate god: for they utterly reject every being, as unworthy to be called GOD, who is not the Creator of all things. When the Supreme Lawgiver says, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me;” does he mean to exclude *all* persons and *all* things that are not God, or only *some*? If *some* only, then the Israelites were allowed to have *other gods* before him; provided they were but of the right sort. But if *all, all entirely*, then the Jews did right in accusing Christ of blasphemy, when he proposed himself, or was preached to them, as a subordinate god.

I may, perhaps, be told, “When the Supreme Lawgiver said, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me;’ he meant to exclude the false gods of the heathen.” But whatever gods he intended, they are excluded by a general proposition; which utterly forbids all such objects of worship as are not the true God. The Lawgiver does not abhor the idols of the heathen, because they are the idols of *the heathen*; but because they are not the TRUE GOD, and yet are worshipped. Suppose it were not wood, or stone, but a man, or an angel; so soon as you adore him, he becomes a heathen idol: otherwise, one that worships an angel could not be convicted of idolatry, by the first command. It is, then, a general prohibition, and absolutely forbids the worship of any one besides

the Supreme Being; consequently, it must entirely exclude all subordinate gods. Nor can the meaning be, to exclude a plurality of *supreme* gods. For if so, of all the heathen deities, the worship of none but their Jupiter would be condemned, by this command. Besides, why should it condemn a crime that never did, and, according to all probability, never will exist? for none ever yet worshipped *two supreme* gods.

Were not the Jews in the right, then, when they complained that Jesus, being a mere man, made himself God? Or, can we blame their conduct, unless we consider Christ as of the same essence with Him who created the universe? They affixed the idea of the Supreme Being to the name GOD; having been taught, by the prophets, that there is but *one* God, and that all other deities shall perish from the earth. So that if they were under a mistake, in this respect, they were led into it by their prophets; but if not, they were obliged, on the principles of our opponents, to condemn Jesus for usurping the names and honours of God. For it should be observed, that names do not *naturally* express these ideas rather than those; their signification being fixed, either by God himself, speaking in the Scriptures; or by general consent and custom. We are not, therefore, to consider the *letters* which compose the name GOD in English, Θεός in Greek, or יהוה in Hebrew, as having any thing sacred, or peculiarly significant, in them; but we must examine what *ideas* are affixed to these names. Now these ideas are not such as any particular person may please to fix upon them; but those which have been, and are annexed to them, by the unerring Spirit, in the Bible; and by the common consent of mankind. Were a count of the German

empire, for instance, to assume the title of emperor; he would, no doubt, displease the princes; and it would be but a poor apology to say, "That by the exalted title, he meant no more, than a sovereign prince in his own country." He would soon be informed, that the common consent of men, not his particular fancy, settles the signification of the term. In like manner, it would be to no purpose for Christians to say, "Though Jesus assumed the name GOD, yet he did not apply it to himself in that sense in which it is commonly used:" for the question is not, What *he* understood by it; but, What *men ought* to understand by it, when it is given to him.

If, therefore, we would know what Jesus meant, by calling himself GOD; or what his disciples intended, by giving him that name; we must inquire, What was the *common acceptation* of the term, in the language of men in general, or in that of the Jews, or of the prophets, or of God himself. If the name agree to Christ, as a mere man, let our adversaries inform us which of these they follow. It is not agreeable to the manner of speaking among men *in general*; for it never was their custom to call a mere man by the name GOD. Much less is it conformable to the current language of the *Jews*; nor to that of the *prophets*; nor to that of *God*. The Jews used to affix to that sacred name the idea of the Great Supreme; the idea of him who formed the universe: for they knew of no other God. The same is evident concerning the prophets, who had taught them so to believe and so to speak; and of the Holy Spirit, who had so taught the prophets.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARGUMENT CONTINUED.

THE Jews, who lived in the apostolic times, ought not to be blamed for speaking as God and the prophets had taught them. They cannot be justly blamed for not being able to guess, that the name, GOD, had a signification which had not been heard of till that time ; a signification which fully acquitted a man who, without it, would have been convicted of blasphemy. Much less are the modern Jews to be censured for speaking as their forefathers taught them. But let us consider the various ways in which the members of the ancient synagogue were instructed by their prophets, in this respect.

The prophets frequently reminded them of this precept, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," without ever subjoining the least qualification, or restriction, by which they might learn, that this command was not general and obligatory in all ages and places. Were the Jews, then, obliged to believe, without any manner of notice, that a command so inviolable till then, had lost its force in the time of Jesus Christ ?

They constantly put that God who made all things, in opposition to every created god. As they assert the unity of God, with great frequency and great solemnity ; so they distinguish him by this character, "He made the heavens and the earth," Isa. xlii. 5. Nay, they declare that "the gods who made not the heavens and the earth, shall perish from under the heavens," Jer. x. 11. The Jews could not but consider this assertion as general ; and as teaching them,

that no one ought to be acknowledged as God, but Him who created the world, and who is unchangeable.

The prophets taught, that God cannot be *represented* by any picture, or image; because there is nothing in the world fit to represent him. "To whom," or to what, says God, "will ye liken me?" Isa. xl. 25. By which the Jews were informed, that nothing which might be represented on canvas, or in statuary, ought to be acknowledged as God. Consequently, they must conclude, that a mere man was very far from deserving to be called GOD.

The name JEHOVAH, with all other Divine titles and characters which our Maker assumes in the Scripture, are names of *distinction*; and were designed to exalt him far above all creatures. "I am JEHOVAH, that is my name. There is no GOD besides me. Ye shall swear by my name. He that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the GOD of truth," Deut. vi. 13; Isa. xlii. 8; lxxv. 16. Now, these characters and claims were designed to distinguish God, either from *all* his creatures, or only from *some* of them. If the *latter*, in vain does He say; "There is no GOD besides me." Because it might be answered, "Though that be thy name, it does not distinguish thee from *every* creature: for there is, or there will be one, that shall bear it with thee." If the *former*, then whoever calls himself GOD, disowns the condition of a creature; and, consequently, if Jesus Christ assumed that name, or any other expressive of the same glory, the Jews could not but accuse him of blasphemy.

The prophets abundantly assert the *unity* of God. Nor can we consider their extraordinary care, in this respect, as owing to any thing but the danger there was of men falling into idolatry; by acknowledging,

as God, one that was not JEHOVAH. But were the days of the prophets the only time in which men were in any such danger? Were they not exposed to the same evil, when the sanhedrim judged Jesus Christ? But why do I ask such questions? for, if we believe our adversaries, the event has proved, that it was possible for men, with the writings of the prophets in their hands, to become idolaters; by placing a creature, honoured with the name of God, on the throne of the Deity. The Jews, then, were obliged to be jealous for the glory of God, as the prophets had been in the times of their fathers. For they might easily foresee, that if a mere man were suffered to *call* himself God, he would soon be put in *the place* of God; and the event has verified such an apprehension. As the prophets, therefore, had for so many ages constantly declared, that there is but *one* Object, to whom the name GOD belongs, in order to guard the people against idolatry; the same reason required the Jews to withstand a man, who dared to assume the names and titles of God.

Jehovah, by the prophets, declares, "My glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images," Isa. xlii. 8. The Jews, therefore, had reason to conclude, that He had not given his glory to Jesus Christ. For either this proposition is *general*; and so signifies, that God never gives his glory to any one: or it is *particular*, and imports, that at some times, and on certain occasions, he does give his glory to another. If the *latter*, the assertion is trifling, and the reasoning vain. For the meaning must be, God gives not his glory to another, on *some* occasions, though he does it on *others*. Therefore, he will not give his praise to graven images. If the *former*, as it must undoubtedly be, the Jews were

obliged to conclude, that God had not given his glory to Jesus Christ; and, consequently, he could not, without manifest impiety, either invest himself with the titles of God, or pretend to Divine honours.

The prophets have so great a respect for the names of God, that they carefully avoid taking any *metaphors* from them; which is a very remarkable difference between human and Divine language. The *former*, being that of men who do not sufficiently reverence the Deity, abounds with metaphors taken from God. Almost every thing is represented, by one or another, as “divine, adorable, infinite.” “Incense and sacrifice, dedication and devotion,” with many other expressions that are taken from the worship of God, cost us nothing, and are frequently used. But they are banished from the language of the Holy Spirit; who, speaking of God as God, and of a creature as a creature, avoids those metaphors which would seem to infringe on the rights, or the honours, of the Great Supreme: or that might seem to elevate the creature above a state of dependence. When the Holy Spirit personifies death, he does not call him the GOD, but the “KING of terrors.” And though the psalmist, speaking of the rulers of this world, says, “Ye are gods;” yet he immediately adds, “but ye shall die like men,” Psa. lxxxii. 6, 7. The figurative application, therefore, of the adorable name, in this passage, cannot possibly injure the glory of God; because it is given to princes for no other reason, but to form an antithesis to humble them. “Ye are gods—but ye shall die like men.” If, then, the reverence which the writers of the Old Testament had for the proper names of God be so great; and if the same reverential regard be found in the penmen of the New Testament; who, when speaking of a creature,

do not fetch their metaphors from the attributes of God, as the heathen authors did, and as is common at this day; ought we to censure the Jews of an excessive tenderness, who would not suffer the name, GOD, to be given to a mere man, and given to him in such a sense as requires us to worship him? For, either the name GOD expresses the glory of the *Creator*, or that of the *creature*, or one that is *common to both*. It cannot be a glory *common to both*; for if it were, the prophets could not have so often declared, that there is but *one* God: besides, every one of us might call himself by the adorable name, without any scruple. Nor can it be the glory of *the creature*; for no man ever could suppose it. It must, therefore, be the glory of the *Creator*; a glory peculiar to him. And if so, the Jews could not but accuse Jesus of blasphemy; who, though a mere man, assumed a name which expresses the Creator's glory.

Once more: The prophets have two principal ends in view, when they proclaim the characters, perfections, and honours of the Supreme Being. The one is, to *glorify* GOD, by exalting him far above all creatures; the other, to *save mankind*, by preserving them from idolatry, and by instructing them in the knowledge and worship of the true God. But these high designs are opposed, are destroyed, as to multitudes, if the Jews permit a mere man to assume the names of God. For, as names are given to persons and things, with a design to make them known, and to distinguish one from another; if a mere man take upon him the names of God, he will, in some degree at least, be confounded with him: and thus the design of the prophets *to glorify God*, by exalting him far above all other beings, is opposed. For as God

glorifies himself, by laying a peculiar claim to such characters as do not, as cannot belong to a mere creature; so the creature impiously dishonours God, by assuming those names which are appropriated to him. The other great end is no less opposed, by an usurpation of God's names. For when Jesus calls himself GOD, he must apply the name, either *with* or *without* an idea. If the *latter*, he acts absurdly. If the *former*, it must be either the same which *men in common* affix to it; or a *particular one* of his own. If the same which *mankind in general* annex to the term, it must be that of the Supreme Being; and, consequently, he leads men directly into idolatry. If it be a *particular one* of his own, he lays a snare for immortal souls; for he takes a direct step to lead men into error, from error to idolatry, and from idolatry to damnation. He renders language a commerce of deceit and mischief; whereas, by its natural appointment, it ought ever to be an intercourse of truth and benefits. Besides, the signification of the name, GOD, not depending on the caprice of any particular person, his latent meaning cannot acquit him from a charge of blasphemy.

“Jesus Christ,” it will be objected, “did not call himself GOD, but the SON of God.” Supposing he did not assume the name GOD, in the course of his personal ministry; supposing the sanhedrim could have produced no evidence of any thing like it, as the ground of that sentence which they pronounced upon him; yet it is beyond a doubt, that his disciples gave him both the names and the praises which are peculiar to God. When, therefore, the Jews are informed, that the evangelists and apostles wrote the New Testament by his authority, and under his peculiar direction; they cannot, so long as they understand

their own language, and read their own prophets, but consider the gospel as impious, and are obliged to approve the sentence which their fathers passed upon him. For they cannot doubt, that their sanhedrim had authority to judge him; that they had good reason to accuse him of blasphemy, because the writings of his disciples (by which only they are able to judge of his own sentiments and claims) invest him with the characters and honours of the true God; and, that they could not but pronounce a blasphemer worthy of death, without deserting their duty and betraying their trust.

“But those who composed the sanhedrim that condemned Jesus Christ, acted on principles of envy, malice, and rage.” Admitting that they did, yet the Jews in after-times will reply; “It is not for us to *search the hearts* of our forefathers; our business is, to inquire into *the justice* of their sentence. It was never heard that wise and impartial men, laid more stress on surmises conceived, of the ill disposition of a judge on the bench, than on the characters of justice, or injustice, found in the sentence he passed. We cannot penetrate the hearts of men; but we are taught by our law, how to distinguish blasphemers. For its first command is, ‘Thou shall have no other gods before me.’ By this we are obliged to reject your Messiah, for assuming the titles and honours of God; though, by your own confession, he is not the God of Israel.”