

blasphemer and have execrated his memory. Now, on the principles of our adversaries, God is infinitely more exalted above Jesus Christ, than Christ is above his apostles: if, then, an apostle would have been justly accused of impiety, had he equalled himself with his Lord; ought not Christ to be censured for blasphemy, when he claims an equality with God?

CHAPTER V.

JESUS CHRIST RECEIVED RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

THAT the apostles and disciples of Christ esteemed and treated him as a truly Divine Person, and that he claimed, in a proper sense, an equality with God, will further appear by considering; That he received, as a tribute due to his dignity, those honours and that adoration which belong to none but JEHOVAH.

That God, and none but He, ought to be worshipped, is a fundamental truth. Whenever, therefore, men have set up themselves as objects of worship, they have pretended to be gods; and when they have relinquished their claim to divinity, they have ceased to require adoration. So that though we had not been expressly told, by the inspired writers, that Jesus Christ is GOD; yet we could not have questioned it when we found them assert, that he received adoration from his disciples, and that the angels were commanded to worship him. If Jesus Christ be God, by nature, he has an undoubted right to Divine honours; he cannot but require them. But if not, we cannot, without sacrilege and idolatry, address them to him, because they are due to none but JEHOVAH. For though it were possible, on our

adversaries' hypothesis, to account for the titles he bears, for the authority he claims, and for the works of creation and providence being ascribed to him ; yet his conduct, in receiving Divine worship, would for ever remain indefensible, if he were not the true God.

A man, for instance, who should take the name of *king*, where a rightful sovereign is acknowledged, would certainly be very guilty. But his crime would be far greater if he dared to assume the titles appropriated to signify the *grandeur* of his sovereign and the *extent* of his dominions. For example, if, in France, he should call himself, King of France, Navarre, &c. If, in Hungary, King of Bohemia, Hungary, &c. But he would be still more guilty, if he caused himself to be *treated* as a king ; if he demanded the titles of majesty, from those who addressed him ; and required, as some kings do, to be served on the knee. In this case, either the allegiance due to the lawful sovereign must be renounced ; or this pretender must be called an usurper, and be punished as guilty of high treason. Thus the Jews, on the principles of our opponents, had sufficient reason to treat Jesus Christ. The regard which they had to the honour of God, and the obedience they owed to the precepts of his unchangeable law, would not suffer them to connive at the conduct of a man, or of any mere creature, who received those honours which are due to none but the God of Israel.

To invalidate this conclusion, it must be proved, either that religious worship is *not* an honour peculiar to God ; or, that Christ did not *pretend* to this worship ; or, that he did not mean to be worshipped on the *same ground*, and in the *same way*, as the true God. It may, perhaps, be said, "Worship is not an

honour peculiar to God; for the angel who appeared to the patriarchs, and to Moses in the burning-bush, was worshipped, though a mere creature." This is a great mistake; for that Angel was a Divine Person and the true God. This appears from hence: Abraham addressed him as "the Judge of all the earth," and acknowledged that he was "but dust and ashes" before him, Gen. xviii. 27. That Angel revealed himself to Moses, out of the burning-bush, as "the GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." From which words Christ himself infers, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Consequently, he teaches us to conclude, that He who spake to Moses out of the bush, was more than a creature; was the true God. For he who is "the Angel of the Lord," in the oracle of Moses, is "the God of the living," in the language of Jesus Christ, and both according to our hypothesis.

Again: That honour which is peculiar to God, ought never to be given to any but God. Religious worship is such an honour: religious worship, therefore, ought never to be given to any but God. That honour which cannot be given to a creature, without idolatry, is peculiar to God. But religious worship is such an honour, as appears from the idolatry of the Gentiles, which consisted in paying adoration to objects that were not God.

"But worship is two-fold; that is, *subordinate*, and *supreme*. The *former* is paid to subordinate beings; the *latter* is due to none but God." This distinction, were it founded in truth, would be of little service to the cause, in defence of which it is applied; because it is easy to show, that Christ received *supreme* worship. This worship consists, either in thought, in word, or in action. He, therefore,

who requires us to think of him, as we do of the true God, would have us worship him as such. But Christ would have us think of him, as we do of the true God; for he attributes to himself the perfections of God, and he claims an equality with him. Consequently, he would have us think of him, as we ought to do of God. He who speaks of himself, or directs others to speak of him, as of the true God, would be acknowledged and worshipped as such. But Christ speaks, and would be *spoken* of by us, as the true God. This appears from his taking the names, and ascribing to himself the works of God. If not, why does he assume such names? why does he declare that he performed such works as are proper to God, if he would not have us *speak* of him as God? What, shall *he* speak of himself as God; shall *he* assert, that he created all things, and performed the works of God; and, after all, be unwilling that *we* should speak of him as God? Absurd, to imagine; impossible, to prove. He who requires we should *do* that for him, which we cannot lawfully do for any but the true God, expects to be worshipped as such. But Christ requires us to do that for him, which we ought not to do for any but God. This appears from hence. We are bound to love God above all things; consequently, an affection so ardent, and a duty so high, are due to none but God. We ought, however, to love Jesus above all things; to love him more than our lives, which, of all things in the world, are the dearest to us. He requires that we should suffer martyrdom for his sake: and, by so doing, enjoins a duty which we do not, which we cannot owe, to any but God. None of the prophets, nor any of the apostles, ever said, "He that forsaketh not wife and children, and houses and lands, yea, and his

own life, for my sake, is not worthy of me," Matt. xix. 29.

“ But Christ declares, that he acts in the name of his Father, and that the Father is greater than he ; which is sufficient to forbid us addressing him with *supreme* worship.”—To this I answer ; Suppose a minister of state should give orders, under his own seal, for coining money with his image upon it ; at the same time assuming the names and titles of his lawful sovereign ; would his conduct be justified by declaring once or twice, “ My sovereign is greater than I, and I act in his name ? ” Should we not, in such a case, have reason to say, He denies by his actions, what he confesses in words, and contradicts himself ? The application is easy. For as there is a certain idea of royalty, which subjects ought never to apply to any besides their king ; as there are names and titles so appropriated to the person of a sovereign, that they cannot be given to any other without offence ; and as there are particular honours due to a crowned head, which cannot, on any pretence whatever, be paid to others, without being guilty of high-treason ; because the signification of words and actions is not fixed by the caprice or authority of any particular person, but by general consent and custom : so, by a most ancient, sacred, and inviolable use, established by the prophets, established by the eternal Sovereign himself, there are some ideas so appropriated to God, that they cannot possibly belong to any other ; there are some titles so peculiar to him, that it is high-treason, in a divine sense, to give them to any other ; and there are certain honours so peculiarly due to him, that they cannot be given to another, without “ denying the God that is above,” and incurring the complicated guilt of blasphemy and idolatry. Such an

honour is religious worship. For, if there be any dispositions of heart, if any language of the tongue, if any actions in life, by which it is possible for us to express a suitable distinction between God and every mere creature, they must be those of a *devotional* kind. And as the most sincere, the most fervent, the most sublime adoration we can pay to JEHOVAH, neither expresses, nor implies any more than a dutiful desire and endeavour to treat GOD AS GOD; so the least degree of that worship, when given to a mere creature, is an alienation of the rights of Deity, and a placing that creature on the throne of the Most High.

“*Subordinate* worship is distinguished from that which is *supreme*. The *latter* belongs to God only, as the source of being and perfection: while the *former* may be given to Christ, though a dependent being; he having received, from the great Sovereign, peculiar honours and authority.”—But there is abundant reason to conclude, that this *subordinate* worship was not known to the Divine Legislator, nor to the prophets, nor to the apostles, nor to angels, nor to Jesus Christ himself; of all which in their order.

That the *Divine Legislator* knew nothing of this kind of worship, appears from hence: He forbids *all worship*, in general, which does not belong to the true God; and that in a moral precept, the obligation of which is perpetual. This he would not have done, had subordinate worship been lawful; lest, by ambiguous expressions, he should have led mankind into error. Nor would he have forbidden us, without exception, to worship any besides God; but only to worship any other with *supreme* worship. If the Divine Lawgiver intended that the promised Messiah, though a mere creature, should be adored when he appeared; why did he, in such general terms, utterly

forbid all manner of worship that is not given to the God of Israel? Besides, he evidently designed to discourage and condemn the gentile idolatry. But that idolatry principally consisted in worshipping various divinities with *subordinate* worship: for the ancient heathens, no less than the Jews, acknowledged but *one supreme* Being.

“The law forbids,” it will be said, “such subordinate worship, as terminates on *idols*; not that which has Christ for its object.”—But when the law prohibits that kind of worship, it does it in general terms; in such terms as forbid *all sorts* of subordinate worship, without any exception. Our adversaries, perhaps, may say, “There being idols, and these idols becoming the objects of worship, render that worship idolatrous.” But they should rather say, There is an object worshipped: this worship, being given to an object which does not deserve it, renders the object, though innocent in itself, an idol. The God of Israel, expressing himself in a general way, and forbidding to worship any thing in heaven or on earth, after the manner of the heathen, it is evident, that so soon as we address subordinate worship to any thing in heaven or earth, we make an idol of it. It is worthy to be remarked, that the law does not only say, “Thou shalt have no other gods;” but “Thou shalt have no other gods **BEFORE ME**;” which seems principally to forbid subordinate worship.

The *prophets* were ignorant of subordinate worship. They had no instance of it before their eyes, but what they detested as idolatrous. They never heard, they never speak, of any such thing as lawful; or as having any existence among the pure worshippers of Jehovah. Nay, they laugh at, they despise all subordinate gods; because they cannot conceive how any

man can worship an object that “created not the heavens,” and causeth not “the rain to descend upon the earth:” which they would not have done, had they known that there was, or ever would be, a subordinate God, to whom adoration should be paid. “But the prophets,” I shall be told, “charge the people with idolatry, because they addressed *supreme* worship to gods who created not the heavens and the earth.” Quite a mistake; for the heathens did not pay *supreme* worship to their subordinate divinities; because they did not look upon them as the source of being and the original of all good; Jupiter being the only god whom they acknowledged under those exalted characters.

Nor were the *apostles* acquainted with subordinate worship, as appears from the following considerations. They considered all worship, even that which was only external, and could not be esteemed as addressed to a supreme object, when given to a creature, as doing infinite prejudice to the glory of the Creator. When Cornelius fell down at Peter’s feet, he did not look upon him as the Supreme Being. Though he worshipped him, it was not, it could not be, as the Original of all good, and the Ruler of all worlds. He knew very well that Peter was but a man; for the angel had told him so, when he commanded him to send for that apostle from Joppa. This worship, therefore, could be no more than *subordinate*, and even that in a very low degree. The devout centurion could not possibly think of worshipping a man called *Simon*, surnamed *Peter*, who had lodged at the house of another *Simon*, a tanner, with the same adoration which he paid to GOD. And yet, as worship, even *external* worship, was an act determined by custom to express that honour which is due to none but the Great Supreme; Peter did not so consider

the good intention of Cornelius, as to receive it. No ; with an holy emotion he said to his admiring and revering friend, " Stand up ; I myself also am a man," Acts x. 26. Hence it follows, that it is not lawful to worship any but the true God. For Peter, from a regard to the glory of God, refuses and rejects with abhorrence that worship which Cornelius was disposed to give him ; by saying, " I am a man ;" I am not God. Consequently, subordinate worship is contrary to the glory of God. Hence also it is manifest, that whoever is a mere man by nature, ought neither to require, nor to receive religious worship, whether supreme or subordinate.

More fully to prove and illustrate this conclusion, I would ask : What is it that hinders Peter, on this occasion, from accepting worship ? It must be, either the respect which he has for God, or that which he has for Jesus Christ. If the *former*, he must consider what is called *subordinate* worship, when addressed to a creature, as injurious to the glory of God : and if so, not only Peter, but Jesus Christ himself, if he be a mere creature, is bound to refuse it. If the *latter*, he should not have said, as the reason of his rejecting it, " I also am a man : " because Christ, of whose honour he is so jealous, is also *a man*, and by nature, no more than a man. But the apostle here tells the centurion what he *is*, only to let him know what is *due* to him. He calls himself *a man*, to inform him that if any mere man should claim or accept this kind of worship, he would greatly dishonour God. And though the character of Peter, as an ambassador of God, deserved extraordinary honours ; though it was under this notion that Cornelius considered him, and under this idea that he attempted to worship him ; yet he rejected it with detestation, as

an impious infringement on the rights of **JEHOVAH**, without assigning any reason but this, "I also am a man." It is evident, therefore, and by the conduct of Peter it is established as a general principle, that no man, though a messenger of God, that no mere man, whatever title he may bear, ought to be honoured with religious worship. In a word, if the regard which Peter has for Jesus Christ hinder him from sharing in that worship which belongs to the great Redeemer, the respect which Jesus ought to have for the Supreme Being should prevent him from partaking in the honours of religion with the true God.

Nor did the *angels* know of any subordinate worship, when John had his prophetic visions in the isle of Patmos. If they had been acquainted with it, at least, if they had considered it as lawful, that holy intelligence, who conversed with the beloved disciple, and showed him so many wonderful objects, would either not have refused those honours which the apostle was, once and again, desirous of giving to him, or have rejected them on different principles. For none can suppose that the amazed, delighted, and revering apostle mistook the angel for the Great Supreme. He would have worshipped his celestial informant because he was the *angel* of God, not because he took the servant for the eternal Sovereign. The angel, however, not knowing of any religious worship which might be addressed to a mere creature, says, "See thou do it not! Worship **GOD**," Rev. xxii. 9; asserting, in the clearest manner, that *all* worship must be paid to God, and to him only.

Once more: **JESUS CHRIST** himself was not acquainted with this distinction, nor knew any thing of subordinate worship, when he was tempted of the devil. Satan, when he tempted our Lord to worship

him, did not pretend to be the true God ; consequently, he did not solicit Jesus to worship him as such. For he plainly intimated, that there was one superior to him; one from whom he had received the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. The devil, then, desired to be honoured with subordinate worship. But Christ rejects with abhorrence his blasphemous attempt, and shows the iniquity of it, by adducing that precept out of the law, “Thou shalt worship the LORD THY GOD, and Him ONLY shalt thou serve,” Matt. iv. 10. It follows, therefore, that this command forbids us to worship any one besides the God of Israel, either with a supreme or a subordinate worship: or, rather, that this distinction has no foundation in Scripture; but it is calculated to disguise blasphemy, and vindicate idolatry.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHARACTERS OF JEHOVAH'S GLORY, IN THE ANCIENT ORACLES, APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST; AND THE ARGUMENT ARISING FROM THAT APPLICATION ILLUSTRATED.

THE apostles and evangelists, when asserting the dignity of their Divine Master, made no scruple of applying to him those oracles of the Old Testament which express the characters of God's essential glory. Of this various instances have been already produced, which we shall examine more particularly hereafter; and our adversaries themselves do not deny it, since they pretend that those oracles are applied to Christ by way of allusion, or accommodation. But it is very surprising and absolutely unaccountable, that the apostles should make such applications to him, if he

be not the true God. For common sense, one would have thought, was sufficient to inform them, that such things as were spoken only of the Creator, ought not to be applied to a mere creature. For it was never known that such applications were made without being censured, by those that feared God, of impiety and blasphemy. The ancient heathens, indeed, were not very scrupulous in this respect; for it was common with them to debase God, and to exalt creatures, by attributing to them the glories of the Deity; and in this the prodigious excess of their superstition principally consisted. Their example, however, ought to have no weight with us; as it was, we may assure ourselves, detested by the apostles: for they had been instructed in the school of the prophets; they, therefore, were incapable of falling into such a mistake. The care of the prophets, in that respect, is very remarkable. Always jealous for the glory of God, they are perpetually cautious that the Creator should not be confounded with any of his creatures; and being thus constantly upon their guard, they never apply the characteristics of Jehovah's glory to any mere creature.

It cannot, I think, be supposed, that those exalted and descriptive characters, which the apostles give of Jesus Christ, are more sacred, or more peculiar to him, than those which the prophets gave of the God of Israel. As, therefore, we should not dare to apply the peculiar characters of Christ to any of his apostles, so a similar reason ought to hinder us—ought to have hindered all—from applying the distinguishing characters of Jehovah to Jesus Christ, if he be not the true God. A man would be justly charged with blasphemy, were he to apply to Peter, for instance, the following names, characters, and works of Jesus

Christ: were he to call him, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; our King, Prophet, and Priest; the High Priest of our profession, and a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck; the Prince of peace; Immanuel; the Word; the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; the Lion of the tribe of Judah; the Saviour and Redeemer; the Son of God, his own Son, and his only begotten Son."* Were he to proceed and assert, that Peter "redeemed the church with his own blood; that he bare our sins in his own body on the tree; that we have redemption through his blood, and are reconciled to God by his death; that there is no name but that of Peter, by which we must be saved; that Peter is made unto us of God, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption; that Peter dwelleth in our hearts by faith; and, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Peter."† Were any one thus to speak of that great apostle, what would the Christian world say of him? They would certainly call him, either a madman, or a blasphemer. Nor would their indignation against his conduct be much abated, were they to hear him once and again acknowledged, "That Jesus Christ is greater than Peter;" for they would boldly tell him, that, by such a declaration, he only contradicted himself, and tacitly confessed his blasphemy. Nor would it avail such a one to say, "That the application he makes of the characters and attributes, the grace and works, of Jesus Christ to Peter, is only by way of *allusion* and

* John i. 29; Heb. iii. 1; v. 6, 10; Isa. ix. 6; vii. 14; Matt. i. 23; John i. 1; Rev. xxii. 13; v. 5; Isa. xliii. 3, 11, 14; John i. 18, 34.

† Acts xx. 28; 1 Peter ii. 24; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 21, 22; Acts iv. 12; 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 1.

accommodation." For it would quickly be replied, Such allusions and accommodations are impious; are absolutely unwarrantable; are full of blasphemy.

If, then, an application of the principal characters, attributes, and works of our Lord to Peter would be considered and treated by Christians as abominable blasphemy, it must be a much higher degree of that malignant crime, to apply the names and titles, the attributes and works of the Supreme Being, to Jesus Christ, if he be not a Divine Person. Nor is it any wonder that the Jews should so consider it. For if the disproportion between Jesus and Peter be great, that which is between Christ and God is inconceivably greater, according to the principles of our opponents; the *former* being finite, the *latter* unbounded. Consequently the blasphemy, in the one case is infinitely greater than that in the other.

The impiety of applying the characters of Christ to Peter will appear in a still stronger light, if, in the case supposed, he who makes the application be considered as knowing that this question, Is Peter equal to Jesus Christ? had been debated on very important occasions; and that he foresaw this error would become general in the world; so that, for many ages, Peter would bear the names and receive the honours of Jesus Christ. In such a case, he would be guilty of prodigious impiety indeed; the consequences foreseen being so injurious to the honour of Christ, and so fatal to the souls of men. This, it is obvious, is applicable to the apostles. For they were not ignorant that this question, Is Jesus Christ equal with God? had been debated. Nay, they well knew, that it was under a charge of pretended blasphemy, for claiming an equality with God, that the Jews had persecuted their Master, and procured his death. And as they

foresaw that false teachers would arise in future ages, and were able to describe their heretical doctrines; they could not be ignorant that vast multitudes professing Christianity would so apostatize, as to put Jesus Christ, a mere creature, in the place of God. But if they knew and foresaw these things, ought not a zealous regard for the honour of God, and a tender concern for the souls of men, to have prevented their applying those oracles of the Old Testament, which express the glory of JEHOVAH, in contradistinction to that of his creatures, to Jesus Christ? Who, then, on the principles of our opponents, can justify the conduct of the apostles in so doing? Who can exculpate Jesus himself, by whose command and inspiration they wrote? Who can justly condemn the conduct of the sanhedrim, who arraigned him for blasphemy, and caused him to end his life on the cross, as an enemy to God and a deceiver of men? Or, who can blame the modern Jews for continuing in their infidelity?