

Scriptural Arguments

FOR THE

DIVINITY OF CHRIST,

ADDRESSED

TO THE

Serious Professors of Christianity.

BY JOSEPH KINGHORN.

WHOSE ARE THE FATHERS, AND OF WHOM AS CONCERNING THE FLESH CHRIST CAME, WHO IS OVER ALL GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. AMEN.

PAUL.

Dorsetch:

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P R E F A C E.



THE following pages are intended for the use of that numerous and important class of persons, who seriously read our common English Bible, who are earnestly desirous of knowing the truth, but who have neither the time, nor the means requisite for extensive research. I have therefore kept on plain ground. It will, I am aware, be alledged, that by using only our common translation, I have taken the advantage of a version, which is in favour of my own sentiments. To this I reply, that I have attended to the criticisms of the Unitarians, on the passages which are of the most importance in this controversy, and after examining as fully as I am able, their various ways of translating them, I am satisfied that new versions cannot permanently establish modern Unitarianism. I have not discovered the shadow of a proof, that any of the texts which I have quoted, are in any important points wrongly translated. The attempts, however, which have been made to give them, and others of the same kind, a new colour, have done good, and will do good. They occasion them to be examined more rigorously, than otherwise would be deemed necessary. Antient languages cannot now be modelled anew; literature, which in every thing is of importance, will at length exhaust its stores; and investigation, fairly conducted, will ultimately bring men nearer the truth. The antient and the modern state of any controversy are seldom the same; and discussion brings forth the real strength of every system.

The passages quoted in the following pages, though few in number, appear to me sufficient to settle the point. The main enquiry is,—how are they to be interpreted? The New Testament is the only standard to which we can appeal, respecting the truths of the Gospel Revelation. It was designed for

readers of different ranks, and of various degrees of cultivation and improvement. The obvious sense of the several expressions which relate to the same thing, is most likely to be the sense designed, because it is the only one which is calculated to impress men at large. On this plain principle, it appears to me manifest, either that modern Unitarianism cannot stand its ground, or that the authority of our Lord and his Apostles as inspired teachers, must be given up. I see no medium. Such a view of the subject gives vast importance to every inquiry concerning the character of Christ; for many very serious consequences follow it. A strong conviction that this representation is just, has induced me to send the following pages into the world. I am well aware that controversial pieces are open to many objections; but as it is always important in "the meekness of wisdom," to enquire what is truth, so it is often both expedient and necessary, "to contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the Saints." If the brevity of the following tract be a fault, I cannot plead inadvertence as my excuse. The subject is extensive, many things might have been added,—but my design would have been frustrated by such enlargement. What I have written, I submit to the candid perusal of the reader; and humbly intreat, that the blessing of God may attend it, for the establishment of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

NORWICH, JUNE 5, 1813.

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FOR THE

DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

MANY attempts are making at the present time, to lead you to believe that **JESUS CHRIST**, the **LORD**, is nothing more than a *man* like yourselves, and that though he was inspired like a prophet, and was in excellency and dignity above all other prophets, yet that he was nothing but a man; that all the sentiments which you ever entertained of him as divine, or as God as well as man, are nothing but mistakes and delusions; and that every degree of religious worship which you have ever paid to Jesus Christ, is *idolatry*.

Before you give up a sentiment so important as the divinity of Christ, read the Scriptures;—reflect on the meaning of a few passages;—and pray that God would guide your minds to a knowledge of his holy truth. If Jesus Christ really possesses a divine nature, it cannot be a matter of no moment, whether we are giving him the honour which is his due, or are degrading his character and lowering his glory. If he be thus glorious, what will be your feelings, should you at last discover that your opinion of him was infinitely below his dignity; and that your sentiments had been far different from those of the Heavenly hosts, who cast their crowns before him in humble adoration?

Look then into your Bibles: believe nothing which you do not find there, but be not afraid of believing what *is* there. Jesus Christ is spoken of as man. Jesus Christ is spoken of as God. If so, Jesus Christ must have existed before he was born of the Virgin Mary; and the scriptures represent that this was the fact.

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FIRST. Jesus Christ is spoken of as a man. This is granted. No one denies it. Those who believe the divinity of Christ never think of disputing it. They plead for it; it is a part of their system. If any one, from a false idea of aggrandizing the Saviour should deny it, they would immediately quote the strong passages, which prove that Jesus Christ “was the seed of David according to the flesh,” and, that if any confessed not that he was come in the flesh, he was “*Antichrist.*” The plain words of scripture convince them of this; and they would consider any other representation as destructive of the gospel. They fully believe, that “when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law;” that “forasmuch as the children” (whom he came to redeem) “were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil.” Heb. ii. 14. Every thing recorded of the early life of Christ shews that he partook of our nature, and we view this not only as a truth, but as an important truth.

SECONDLY. Jesus Christ is called God, he is represented as doing the works of God, and as bearing the various titles which belong to God.

Read seriously the beginning of the gospel of John:—
“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was WITH GOD, and the WORD WAS GOD. The same was in the beginning WITH GOD. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made. (ch. i. ver. 1, 2, 3.) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (ver. 10.) 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.” (Ver. 14.) Is it possible that any declarations can be plainer? In whatever way we understand the words here used, how could the Apostle more plainly tell us, that the

“*Word was with God and was God,*” and “*was made flesh and dwelt among us?*”

Again, look at the Apostle Paul’s words, Rom. ix. 5. when speaking of the privileges of the Israelites, he says, “*whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God, blessed for ever, amen.*” And still farther, read Heb. 1. chap. 8 ver. “*To the son he saith, thy throne O God is for ever and ever!*”

But perhaps you will here reply, we are told that these passages are not rightly translated, and that the original does not mean what our English Bibles seem to say. Take a few things into the account, and you will not find much reason for uneasiness and doubt on this point. Is it likely that passages so plain as these, could be so wrongly translated as the Unitarians assert, without its being too evident to be denied? Others, quite as learned as they are, have constantly declared, and still boldly maintain, that they are NOT wrongly translated. Besides, if you must have a new Bible before you can be brought to believe that Jesus Christ is not God, does not this plainly prove, that you have not a sufficient guide to lead you into truth? And if so, it is in vain for them to attempt to reason with you, on the ground of the only Bible you have. But, just as a specimen how little is to be done, by any new or different way of translating the Bible, observe how the first passage above mentioned is translated in what is called *The improved version of the New Testament*, by a society of Unitarians; printed no longer ago than the year 1808. There you read, “*The word was in the beginning, and the word was with God, and the word was a god! This word was in the beginning with God. All things were done by him, and without him was not any thing done, that hath been done. He was in the world, and the world was enlightened by him, and the world knew him not. And the word WAS FLESH, and full of kindness and truth he dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only son who*

came from the father.” You see, that with all the supposed error of our common Bibles, it cannot be kept out of sight that the *word was a god*; and then afterwards, this word, called a god, we are told was *flesh*! What! was the word, who was with God and was *a god*, FLESH? Is this the way to lead plain people to deny the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ? And again, what is meant by saying “all things were *done* by him?” Can you help suspecting that this, and such like expressions were used, because it was found difficult to get quit of the more simple and exact translation,—all things were *made* by him? It will be said, that some Unitarians hold this *improved version* in no great esteem. I do not mean to charge the mistakes of that book on any who disallow it; but then we must come back to our old Bible as a better translation, and if so, how can you understand it, without you allow that Christ is plainly called God?

You know also, that when Thomas was convinced of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, he addressed him with this exclamation, “My Lord and my God!” John xx. 28. No difference of translation occurs here. The *improved version* is the same as our common Bibles. How can this be understood? Do you think that Thomas spoke carelessly or profanely? Or, was it the effect of strong conviction that his master was really divine?

But it will be said, that Moses was called a god to Pharaoh, and that angels and magistrates are sometimes called gods. Very true. But the sense in which Moses is called a god to Aaron and to Pharaoh, is so evident that it cannot be mistaken. When God sent Moses to the people of Israel, he told him to take with him Aaron his brother, and said unto him, “I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and I will teach you what ye shall do; and he shall be thy spokesman unto the people, and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him *instead of a God*.” Exod. iv. 15, 16. Again, ch. vii. 1, “And the Lord said unto Moses, see,

I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." Moses was to dictate what Aaron should say; Moses was to command what Pharaoh should do; and Aaron, like a prophet, was to deliver the message and explain it. Thus as God directed Moses, so Moses directed Aaron; and as God commanded Moses and Aaron, so Moses was to command Pharaoh. Here the reason why he was called a god to Pharaoh, is so clearly pointed out, that it will not be readily misunderstood. If it be said, that it proves the name, god, may be given to a person who is not divine, it is granted; but it will not follow that Jesus Christ is *not* God; for surely none will say, that because Moses was called a god to Pharaoh, therefore every being that is called God, is no higher than Moses: for this would bring the Almighty and Moses to the same level, because they are called by the same name. But as soon as we begin to compare the characters of Moses and of Christ, we find the great difference between them. Was it ever said of Moses, that he was in the beginning *with God*, and *was God*, and that all things were *made by Moses*? The same observations will apply also to magistrates and to angels. It will be time enough to consider, what is to be said farther in reply to this objection, when it is proved, that any thing like the same evidence can be produced that *they* were divine, that can be brought in proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Besides, Jesus Christ is evidently represented as superior to angels, and much more to Moses; and as a proof that he was above them, it is said, in words which are clearly applied to him, "thy throne O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. i. 8. He must therefore be called GOD in a higher sense than they are.

If Jesus Christ is God, we may expect to find the works of God ascribed to him. And this is the case. You cannot but observe, that he is stated, in the above passages from the gospel of John, to have made all things, and that with-

out him was not any thing made that was was made. And farther, Paul asserts, that he “is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature.” And if you ask, what proves that he possesses this high distinction, and in what sense are these high epithets applied to him? read the next verses and they will tell you. “For by him were all things created, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created *by him*, and *for him* ;” one would think that the Apostle had now said enough; but he still adds, “and he is *before all things*, and by him all things consist.” Col. i. 15, 16, 17. In exactly the same style, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, “God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, *by whom also he made the worlds*. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and *upholding all things* by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” ch. i. ver. 1, 2, 3. This was addressed to Jewish Christians, who had been habitually taught that God created the world, and who are here expressly told that he created all things *by Jesus Christ*, who not only *created* but *sustained* the worlds which he had made.

Suppose that some Jewish Christians then, believed as the Unitarians do now, that Jesus Christ was nothing more than a *man*, did not this first chapter to the Hebrews plainly tell them that they were wrong? I appeal to the common sense of you all. If any one wished to make it appear that Jesus Christ was nothing more than a *man*, do you think that he would select this chapter, and read it to you, as a clear and decisive statement of his sentiments? If he did, would you not say, it proves the very reverse; and that supposing it was written to Unitarians, it must have been intended to exalt their views of Jesus Christ, and not to confirm them in the sentiments they then held.

If Jesus Christ is represented as truly and properly God, the characters and attributes which belong to God will be applied to him; and so they are. He both claimed them himself, and they were ascribed to him by his disciples. He threatened the church at Thyatira with his judgments; “and all the churches shall know, that *I am he* which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” Rev. ii. 23. He said to his disciples, “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt. xviii. 20. And when he sent them abroad into all nations, he said, “Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. xxviii. 20. These texts illustrate each other; they shew that he did not intend any thing figurative; but that he was capable of knowing their state, of assisting and encouraging them in their obedience, and of investigating the very hearts of all his disciples, wherever they might be. What would you think of any *man* who would assume such a style as this? Especially, as you know that it is God only who can be present every where to behold, or is able in every place, to “search the hearts, and try the reins of the children of men.”

You know, friends, that God is the judge of all the earth: yet we are told that we must “all stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST.” Rom. xiv. 10. And mark what the Apostle brings as his proof: (ver. 14.) “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.” These words are taken from Isai. xlv. 23. The Prophet brings them forward as spoken by JEHOVAH. ver. 21. 23. The Apostle quotes them in proof that we shall stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST! Now if he was not in the habit of considering it right, to apply to Christ what belonged to Jehovah, how came he to make this application? And how is it that we have so many instances of the same nature?

The great God calls the attention of men to his character

as the **FIRST** and the **LAST**. Isai. xlv. 6. You know that this very title is given to Jesus Christ in the book of the Revelations. And it is allowed by Unitarians themselves, that this expression occurs in three verses, in which it applies to Jesus Christ. They are, Rev. i. 17, 18. "Fear not: I am the *first* and the *last*; I am he that liveth and was dead—ch. ii. 8. These things saith the *first* and the *last*, which was dead and is alive—ch. xxii. 13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the *first* and the *last*." These are enough for our purpose. The reader of the *Old Testament* finds those very titles which *there* are applied peculiarly to God, in the *New Testament* applied to Jesus Christ, without either explanation or apology. What is the just conclusion? Can it possibly be, that Jesus Christ is after all nothing higher than a "mortal man?" If this is *all* that the Apostles intended, how very unfortunate have they been in their phraseology? For after having represented Jesus Christ as the word of God, who was *with* God and *was* God;—God blessed for ever,—the Creator of all things,—the Searcher of hearts,—every where present with his disciples,—the Judge of all,—the first and the last;—if they intended nothing more than that Jesus Christ is a mere *man*, how are we to know what they *mean* by what they *say*?

As my design is only to point out a few passages to your notice, I shall not enlarge, but observe,

In the **THIRD** place, that both from the above statements, and other parts of the Bible, we clearly see that Jesus Christ existed before he was born of the Virgin Mary.

The New Testament account of the birth of Christ is, that it was miraculous. And though many Unitarians reject it, yet they confess, that it is found in all the ancient manuscript copies and versions. This is a very strong argument for it; and if we adopt this statement, we can understand many passages, which on any other plan are not clear, if even they can be made intelligible at all. We read, Rom. i. 2.—"Jesus Christ, our Lord, was

made of the seed of David *according to the flesh.*" (Ch. ix. 5.) "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as *concerning the flesh* Christ came," &c. Now the expression *according to the flesh*, is without meaning, if it be not opposed to some sense in which Christ was NOT *according to the flesh*. Nor have we far to go for such a sense. The miraculous birth of Christ suggests, that both in his formation and character, he was extraordinary. And he is accordingly described, not as a *mere man*, who in no respect had existed before, but as a person who was to come in that very form which was prepared for his appearance. "Wherefore when *he cometh into the world*, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; *but a body hast thou prepared me*: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure; then said I, Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." Heb. x. 5, 6, 7.

Again, we are told, Gal. iv. 4.—"When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law," &c. Here is an evident allusion to the history of Christ's birth; but if we reject this history, the language of the Apostle is, to say the least, destitute of simplicity, and what he intended, might have been said with more clearness in fewer words.

Besides this evidence, the existence of Christ before his appearance in flesh, is manifest from many passages. I will direct your attention, in a very brief manner, to a few, and intreat you seriously to consider their force.

Turn to John, ch. vi. Our Lord had been saying he was the bread of God that came down from heaven; and when the Jews murmured at him, he says, (ver. 61, 62.) "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the son of man *ascend up WHERE HE WAS BEFORE?*"

John, viii. 56, &c. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews, thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, *Verily, verily, I say*

unto you, BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM." According to some, our Lord here means, that he was designated, or appointed to his office, before Abraham was born. If that be all that he intended, it was saying nothing;—for it was as much appointed by the Deity beforehand, that Abraham should be born, and be the father of the faithful, as it was appointed that some ages afterwards, Jesus Christ should be born. But the debate with the Jews, was not concerning the design and council of God, but concerning the superiority of Christ to Abraham; and how was his superiority proved by saying, that he was appointed to his office before the birth of Abraham, when *in that sense* Abraham himself had existed before the foundation of the world?

John xii. 41. "These things said Esaias when he saw HIS GLORY AND SPAKE OF HIM." Whose glory? The glory of the LORD JEHOVAH in the temple, (see Isai. ch. vi. 1, &c.) here applied to Jesus Christ. Had Jesus Christ then *no existence*? And what was the glory which the Prophet saw? Was it the glory of a *man* or the glory of the LORD?

John xvi. 28, 29. "I came forth from the father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb."

Jesus knew that they understood him literally. Ver. 31. But how is it possible to interpret these words in any sense that is plain, and not proverbial or figurative, if Jesus Christ did not exist before he was born of Mary, and did not in some important sense, as truly come from the father, as afterwards he went to the father?

John xvii. 5. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was." One would think such a declaration decisive. But the Unitarians say that this passage means, "Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee, in thy *immutable purpose and decree*; the

glory which was *intended* for me before the world was." For this interpretation I cannot see the slightest pretence. Our Lord is not referring to the purposes and decrees of his father; his words have all the appearance of relating to things *as* they had been, and not as they *were to be*. On this plan all good men might pray for the glory which *they had with the father* before the foundation of the world: for *they* also were the objects of the immutable purpose and decree of God, and were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Eph. i. 4. II. Tim. i. 9. Yet the Apostles who at different times express themselves very pointedly respecting the purposes of God, never represent *Christians* as *existing with God in glory* before the creation. What would you think of a man that should now talk in this manner? Consider this for a single moment, and then ask yourselves, how it can be believed, that if Jesus Christ was like you, and had no existence before his birth, he would have prayed for the glory he **HAD** *with the father* before the foundation of the world?

These five passages are very forcible, taken in connexion with the first chapter. They all perfectly agree with the statement there made, that the word was in the beginning with God, and that all things were made by him; and they so plainly and naturally point out the existence of Jesus Christ before his birth, and before the creation of the world, that it is surprising how men should be induced to explain them in a different sense.

We are led to the same view when we read Col. i. 15, &c. where it is expressly said, that Jesus Christ created all things. He must have *existed* before the things which he created; and there is no way of avoiding the conclusion, that he existed before the creation of the world, but by interpreting the passage figuratively, and applying it to that "great change which was introduced into the moral world, and particularly into the relative situation of the Jews and Gentiles, by the dispensation of the

gospel." *Imp. Vers. Notes.* On this plan, notwithstanding all that the Apostle has said, Jesus Christ did NOT CREATE all things *visible* and *invisible*; and the obvious sense of these words, which is most likely to engage the attention of men, is contrary to their real meaning.

The next passage which I shall bring forward is Phil. ii. 6, &c. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," &c. Here you will immediately be told by some, that our translation is not correct. Happily there is no occasion to introduce controversy respecting the translation. An eminent Unitarian* says, "*I do not think the words much mistranslated in our version.*" But without availing ourselves of this authority, the text exhibits a set of plain declarations. It says, that Jesus Christ was "in the form of God";—now let the next part of the verse be translated in any way that an objector pleases, it must mean, either that he *did*, or that he *might*, claim to be as God. Then it is added, (ver. 7.) "But" (he) "made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and" (for this purpose) "*was made in the likeness of men:—*(ver. 8.) *AND being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,*" &c. These declarations of the Apostle, agree exactly and naturally with those passages, which shew that Jesus Christ *did exist* and *had a glory* before the world was;—and that "the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us";—but they cannot be applied to any thing else without a violence that is so manifest, that one would think the minds of all men would revolt against it.

Farther, Jesus Christ is represented in this connexion, as giving us a most singular example of humility. But on the plan of the Unitarians, where is the great humility? He had no form of God to *put off*; he had no form of a

* Mr. Cappe.

servant to *put on*; for he never was any thing else than a *servant*, and could not, without unjust assumption, claim any honour as God. Not only was he unable to claim *equality*, but he could not claim *any resemblance* to deity. He gave up *no* right and made *no* sacrifice of dignity at all. It was *wonderful* humility, that a *servant*, a mere *man*, did not assume the honour of being God! And yet this is what the Unitarian statement amounts to.

Once more, we are told, (ver. 9, 11.) that “therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth; and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father.” It is evident here, that the Apostle refers to the text before quoted from Isai. xlv. 23. In the Prophecy, the words are spoken by JEHOVAH. This is clear from the whole connexion. The person speaking tells us his name, (ver. 21.) “the LORD.” In the twenty-third verse he says, in very forcible expressions, “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*, every tongue shall swear.” But how could Jesus Christ have the *name that is above every name* given to him, that every knee should bow *to him*, if he be nothing but a glorified MAN? It *will* glorify GOD THE FATHER, if Jesus Christ was a partaker of his glory, clothed in human nature, and exalted by his right hand, to receive the honour which was his due: it will then be seen, that “all men are to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;” but if not, it does not admit of an explanation, how language applied in the highest sense to GOD, can without any guard or commentary, be correctly applied to a *mere man*.

But then it will be said this is inconsistent with the UNITY of GOD. How can Jesus Christ be God, and the Father be God, without making *two* Gods? Does the truth of the divinity of Christ depend on our being able

to shew *how* this is? I apprehend not. For what is God? An infinite being; whom no man hath seen or can see. His nature is incomprehensible. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Can you form any just idea of **ETERNITY**? Yet God is eternal. What conception can you form of a being who always existed, and who will continue to exist for evermore? What caused him to **BE**? and in what manner does he exist, whose *nature* is so different from that of all other beings? When only these questions are answered, it will then be time enough to consider, what *can* and what *cannot* consist with the unity of God. In the mean time, since God has given us a revelation, for the very purpose of telling us what we could not discover; which is the most likely to be true, the obvious sense of the plain declarations of God's word, or the reasonings of men on a subject which they cannot understand? How many things are there daily before our eyes, that we cannot comprehend? How are we then to explain what is possible and what is not possible respecting that infinite being, whose perfections and nature are incomprehensible?

Such plain observations are sufficient to shew the weakness of various objections. For instance, it is said, Peter, James, and John are three men; and how can three men be *one* man? True; they cannot; because from what we know of the existence of men, we know that three men exist separately, and independently of each other; but if we did not know this, and if we did not know any thing of the manner in which human beings exist, we could not answer the question at all. Now we do not know *how* the infinite and incomprehensible God does exist, and therefore we are not authorised to say, that the divine nature of Jesus Christ and of his father cannot be *one*.

Another objection against the divinity of Christ is taken from his resurrection. It is said, that if he was any thing more than man, *his* resurrection could not be a proof of

our resurrection. "He could not be the first fruits of those who are to rise from the dead, if he was not of the same nature with those of whom the general harvest was to consist." It might be a sufficient answer to this objection to reply, that if Jesus Christ *was* really man, which we constantly assert, all the proper consequences of the resurrection of his body stand fast on our system. "As by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Besides this, we affirm, that the proof of our resurrection, does not arise from the mere fact that Christ rose; for the resurrection of Lazarus as much proved the possibility of a man's rising from the dead, as the resurrection of Christ. But we believe that the dead will rise, because Jesus told his disciples that he would raise them up at the last day, and that he himself would rise, and thus shew the truth of what he had promised;—and hence he is called the "first fruits of them that slept,"—an earnest of the resurrection of the rest. As his dead body was raised from the grave, so shall the bodies of all men be raised also. The Apostle's argument is concerning the resurrection of the *body*; and as Christ possessed a human body, like our own, he became the first fruits preceding the harvest, and exhibited his raised human body, as a specimen of the general resurrection. What he was *more* than man, or even superior to other men, has clearly nothing to do with the Apostle's representation. He here states only one end of the resurrection; elsewhere he maintains that other important ends were also answered by that event, for he "was delivered *for our offences*, and was raised again for our *justification*."

It is objected,—Can God die? "How can it be said of God that he was dead, or if dead, who could bring him to life again?" It is surprising that those who know our sentiments should make such objections. We do not suppose that what is properly divine, can be rendered mortal because it dwells in mortal flesh. Some go greater lengths than others, in speaking of the works of Christ as the

works of God, because they consider him as possessed of a divine as well as a human nature; and attributing to one part of his character what is effected by the other, they may have used expressions, which some disapprove and which others abuse. But strictly considered, no one admits that *God died*. We not only do not allow such an inference when drawn from our sentiments, but we oppose it as unjustly drawn. Indeed it hardly deserves a refutation.

An illustration of its weakness may be taken from an opinion which is very general. Most people believe, that man has an immaterial *soul* as well a *body*; but if any of those who do not believe that man has a soul distinct from the body, but who view him as merely a material being, were to represent their opponents as believing that the *soul* died when the man died, would he be considered as stating their sentiments fairly? Would they not say, whether we are right or wrong, *that* inference has nothing to do with our opinion. For while we believe that man has a soul, which from its nature, *cannot* die, it is not just to say, that our sentiments admit that the soul of man *dies*. The application is easy.

We are frequently told that the divinity of Jesus Christ involves a contradiction, that it is absurd, impossible, and that even miracles could not prove it, &c. The difficulties of the case arise from the subject itself, and must belong to its nature. It is not possible that we should comprehend the nature of God. If we could, there would not be that distance between him and ourselves that there is. Can we say that there may not be some very important sense in which Jesus Christ is partaker of divinity, although we are not able to discover, or to comprehend it? Which is likely to be the best guide, the word of God, written for our instruction, by men inspired for this purpose, or the suppositions of our own reason, on a subject, of which we can know nothing, except from the Bible?

It will be said, this is presuming that the Bible asserts

the divinity of Christ; whereas the Unitarians assert, that “the general tenor and plain literal sense of scripture” is in their favour. The reply is, the appeal is open. The scriptures say a great deal concerning Jesus Christ and his glory, in the very same words in which they describe the glory of God; and is it possible that all this should mean nothing more than that he was a *man*?

We conceive that we have much the advantage over the Unitarians in the use we make of the scriptures, and the appeal we can make to them. We acknowledge as fully as they do the *unity of God*, and feel its importance in a variety of ways. We view it as the clear statement of divine revelation. We believe also that Jesus was *man*, on the authority of the New Testament representations, taken in their plain literal sense. But besides this, we take the passages which speak of Christ’s dignity, in the same plain and literal sense, and therefore *we* view him as *divine*: this we consider as the only fair inference that can be deduced from such statements, and that whether we can or cannot understand how Jesus Christ is divine, makes no difference in the obvious meaning of the words. Here the Unitarians take a different course, and represent all the expressions which speak of Christ’s dignity as so figurative, that they do not at all *mean* what they seem to *say*.

It is in our view unaccountable, that the Apostles should have written and spoken as they did, if all that they intended was, that Jesus Christ was nothing but an inspired man. They do not guard what they say; they never intimate a fear lest it should be applied in a manner opposite to the unity of God; they knew well the idolatry of the Gentiles; yet they take no care to prevent the misapplication of their words. Among those who were used to Gods many and Lords many, they did not hesitate to speak of Christ as pre-existing, and call him God as well as Lord. Now if they designed to represent Jesus Christ as really *God*, there is no difficulty; but if not, they laid themselves open to a double attack both from Jews and

Heathens, and it remains a mystery what could lead them to speak of Christ as they did.

Unitarianism is exposed to this great objection, that it is not the obvious sense of a great number of those passages in the New Testament which engage the attention of every one that reads it with seriousness. Hence Unitarians interpret so many texts figuratively. Thus, do we find Christ called God;—we are told that Moses was a god to Pharaoh;—though it is very evident that Moses never was represented as having claims to divinity like Jesus Christ. Is he said to have made all things, and that without him nothing was made that was made—to have created all things, and that God by him made the world? We are then told that Jesus Christ did *not make* all things—that in reality he made *nothing*;—that creation does *not* signify what we generally consider as creation;—that he had nothing to do with creating the world;—that when the world was created he had no being; and that when he is spoken of as existing before the world was, the expressions which seem to point this out so clearly, only refer to his appointment by the decree and council of God! Even when the Apostles, in very pointed style, seem to speak of God, and of the creation of all things in *heaven* and on *earth, visible* and *invisible*, by Jesus Christ, they mean nothing more than that he was a *man*, who sent his Disciples to preach Christianity both to Jews and Gentiles! On this plan, how are we to interpret what they have written? All that they state concerning “redemption by the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins,” may be of little consequence. The resurrection may be nothing but a figurative resurrection; and as to heaven itself, the hope of the Christian and the end of his faith, it may evaporate into mere description. We are told that it is very doubtful whether there are *any angels*—that what is said about Christ’s superiority to them, either means no more than that he is superior to the Prophets and preachers of the gospel—or else that when Jesus is represented as a judge attended

by angels, they are represented as proper officers to support his dignity, though there is no evidence of their existence; and that when the Lord and his Apostles spake of them, it was only in conformity to the popular opinions of the Jews. If so, the glory of Christ, and the grandeur of a resurrection and judgment day, become only splendid imaginations, and how small a portion of reality they may adorn we cannot tell. Every thing else may on this plan crumble away, till it would be difficult to say what would remain. As far as I can trace the operations of my own mind, I could not pay much regard to the Apostles, as authorities in matters of faith, if I adopted a Unitarian manner of interpretation. Every one will judge for himself, whether this is, or is not, the genuine tendency of modern Unitarianism.

One thing is plain, it is the essence of that system to *lower* the Saviour. It so explains the New Testament, that what at first view seems *great*, ends in being *little*; and while the Apostles speak of Christ in the highest language, Unitarianism takes great pains to lessen the impression that is made on the mind, and to bring him down nearly to a level with ourselves. The Saviour said to the Apostles, when he told them that he would send the holy spirit, "he shall GLORIFY ME, for he shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you." John xvi. 14. But how is Christ *glorified*, by interpreting the expressions used concerning him in the lowest sense the words can bear? Judge whether this is not too true a description of Unitarian explications. It would be a very easy thing to bring abundant proofs of it.

Let us look forward to our dying day. Who would not wish, at the hour of his departure, to say with the faith and hope of Stephen, "LORD JESUS receive my spirit?" Acts vii. 59. But you say, he *saw* him, when he called for his assistance. He did so;—he saw *him* who said, *I am the FIRST and the LAST, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the KEYS OF HELL AND OF*

DEATH. Rev. i. 17, 18. He therefore had no doubt of the importance of that aid which Jesus could render him. Nor is this recorded as an impropriety, but only as a part of the history of those that *called on the name of the Lord*.

To conclude;—on earth men *degrade* the Saviour; in heaven saints and angels *adore* him. Which of the two are in the right? “Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be *unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER.*” Rev. v. 13. Would you wish to join this chorus;—you must adopt their language, but how can you do that, and ascribe such honour to Jesus, if you believe him to be nothing more than a glorified *man*?

In the preceding observations, I have freely expressed my opinion of Unitarian interpretations. I conceive them to be very far wrong; and that they strip Christianity of many important sentiments. But I have endeavoured to keep clear of all that could give offence, or excite enmity of spirit against those that maintain them. May we always remember that bitterness and hatred can never promote the cause of Christ. No: search the scriptures seriously and diligently; and speak the truth in *love*. Earnestly pray that God would guide you in all your enquiries; and be more especially careful that you walk humbly before him, when your minds are in any difficulty. You have the strongest motives for serious and attentive investigation. You each have a soul that will live for ever, either in happiness or misery. Jesus Christ came that he might be our saviour. How important then is the question, “who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?” May God in his goodness direct your hearts into the love and knowledge of the truth.