

# CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

## DIVINITY OF CHRIST,

EVINCED FROM HIS NAMES

### JEHOVAH, GOD, AND SOVEREIGN LORD;

HIS

### ATTRIBUTES AND ACTION

THE BEAUTIES OF

### CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND REDEMPTION

AND THE

### A C T S OF W O R S H I P

PAID TO HIM IN

### S C R I P T U R E.

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V O L. III.

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By JOHN RYLAND, A.M.  
OF NORTHAMPTON.

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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE DESIGN of this work is to display the glorious character of GOD, and by placing it in the most beautiful point of light we are able, to endear GOD's nature and attributes, as infinitely amiable to all serious christians; and this we effect by shewing that all the lost prospects of divine goodness and beauty are restored with infinite advantage in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In order, therefore, to honour the DIVINE FATHER, we attempt to demonstrate the divinity, grandeur, fulness, and beauty of his eternal Son; and the farther we go in displaying his lovely perfections as GOD over all, the more we advance the dignity and enhance the worth and usefulness of the inspired Scriptures of GOD; and especially we endear the New Testament to every believer in the world. Nothing can render the sacred Scriptures so precious as to consider that they reveal all the united glories of GOD in Christ to the immortal souls of perishing sinners: and by discovering such a character as the eternal Son of GOD, making satisfaction for sin, we give the utmost glory to the natural and immutable justice of the divine nature: we demonstrate the infinite

evil of sin, as it strikes at all possible and infinite good, and fixes a stain in the soul that will endure for ever, unless taken away by the atonement and spirit of Christ: we shew that sin, as filth and pollution, is a most horrid deformity; and, as rebellion and guilt, it is a most dreadful offence. When we view ourselves as captives to an almighty conqueror, we love Christ as our precious redeemer: when we view ourselves as rebels to an injured sovereign, we love Christ as the great high priest who has reconciled God to us by an atoning sacrifice: when we view ourselves as hateful criminals before an injured judge, we love Christ as our surety, making full satisfaction to divine justice for our crimes: and we see, in a light as bright as heaven, the vast, the infinite worth of our immortal souls; and how dear our souls are to the Lord Jesus, who, as our divine prophet, full of wisdom, takes away the plague of a dark and blind understanding; as our divine high priest, full of merit, removes the terrible plague of a guilty conscience; and, as our divine king, full of power, takes away the plague of a stubborn and obstinate will, full of enmity to God.

In this demonstration of the true and eternal divinity of Christ, we open out all possible encouragement to every awakened and distressed sinner in the world. There is not one convinced  
sinner

finner that has the least reason to be afraid of approaching the Lord Jesus for life and salvation in it's fullest sense and beauty ; for we shew him a favour that is God in our nature, obeying and dying for the worst of men ; who is able to save to the uttermost, i. e. perfectly and perpetually, all that come to him ; able, and as willing and resolved as he is able, to remove all guilty fears, to solve all doubts, to answer all scruples and objections, to break all bars, and level all mountains, and clear off all difficulties in the way to heaven ; a favour that conquers all enemies ; shews us all our best friends ; and suits all the faculties, powers, and affections of our souls.

In the divinity of Christ we see the only spring of all vital religion, or holiness in the souls of men. His eternal person is the source, the origin, the fountain of all godliness : it's nature is a resemblance of Christ : and in all it's properties and operations, it is nourished by an intense union with the person of Christ. We do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us, Philip. iv. 13. We are strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. ii. 1.

RELIGION is a serious and delightful sense of God in the soul, producing in us a consciousness of our incessant dependence upon his agency as the God of nature, and the God of grace ; and  
of

of our obligations to adore his perfections, admire his beauty, and be grateful for all his blessings.

This is true RELIGION; and Christ is the principle, the pattern, the end of it; he only is the fountain of our life, the example of our life, and his glory is the end of our life. For us to live is Christ, and without him we can do nothing, John xv. 5. We are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought, but our sufficiency is of GOD, of GOD our Saviour, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Titus i. 3.

Religion flows from the nature, will, and life of Christ. We live, yet not we, but Christ liveth in us, Gal. ii. 20. And Christ is our life, Colos. iii. 4. Our life is hid with Christ in GOD, ver. 3. Because he lives, we shall live also, John xiv. 19. Except we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, i. e. receive by faith the effects of his ATONEMENT, we have no life in us, John vi. 53.

This is the only true religion, which enlivens and enlarges the capacities of the soul, to take in great and sublime ideas of GOD, and to receive new and surprizing discoveries of his counsels and perfections. This religion gives us liberty of soul, and dominion over our corrupt appetites and passions, and inspires us with the delightful  
 enjoyment

enjoyment of our own existence.\* This enables and animates us to propose the noblest end of life, i. e. the being like a God, in order to live to the glory of God. This produces the greatest serenity and solid peace of the mind and conscience; and advances the soul to an holy boldness and familiarity with God, in his perfections and promises. This vital religion in the soul teaches us to spiritualize the visible world, turns  
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\* In order to our reading the following work with pleasure, and receiving the doctrine with approbation and delight, it is necessary to have the pride of our understandings humbled deeply before God, and to be fully convinced of the utter incapacity of our reason to comprehend any one object in the universe.

Men who have an high opinion of the strength of their own minds strive to account for every thing in revelation; but before they attempt this, they should try their powers on the mysteries of nature, and of natural religion.

A mystery is any thing, the truth of whose existence we have no reason to doubt; but the manner of it's existence and operation we cannot comprehend.

There are ten thousand mysteries in creation all around us. There are every where to be observed by the senses or the mind, many objects of which we have ideas clear enough to command our assent, as to their truth; yea, to force our firm persuasion of their being. But the manner of their existence and operation is quite incomprehensible.

In some things, each side of a contradiction seems to be demonstrable. As for instance, in the DIVISIBILITY of matter: it appears to us that it is infinitely divisible, and yet it is not: matter cannot be divisible to infinity, since all division is into parts, and all parts are capable of being numbered; that is to say, they are more or fewer, even or odd; and therefore they are  
capable

the whole universe into a school of instruction, and makes every creature a teacher to lead us to Christ. This religion fixes the understanding to a lively attention to the providence of Christ, and excites us to admire the motions, adore the depths, and comply with the intentions of providence.

This glorious and sublime spirit of religion in the soul, carries us on incessantly towards a greater  
likeness

capable of addition or subtraction, which is contrary to the nature of infinite.

A second instance to puzzle the pride of our understandings is this: nothing is clearer to every understanding than that all the parts into which the whole is divided, being taken together, are equal to the whole; yet it seems many ways demonstrable, that any single part is equal to the whole.

Let us give one such proof of this as may be most obvious and easy to the meanest capacity to understand. "It must be granted, that in any circle, a line may be drawn from every point of the circumference to the center."

Suppose, then, the circle to be the equator of the globe, which is about twenty-four thousand miles in circumference; that is, a line drawn round the globe of the earth: and that ten thousand lesser circles are drawn within the equator round the same center; and that a right line is drawn from every point of the equator to the center of the globe: every such right line drawn from the equator to the center must of necessity cut through the ten thousand lesser circles drawn about the same center; and, consequently, there must be the same number of points in a circle ten thousand times less than the equator, as there is in the equator itself. The lesser circles may be multiplied into as many as there are points in the diameters, and so the LEAST circle imaginable may have

likeness to the moral perfections of God : and the path of the just is like the shining light, which shineth with brighter evidence, certainty, beauty, and pleasure, unto the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18, [See GROVE and HENRY, on the Beauty and Pleasures of Religion.] CHRIST'S PERSON and LOVELINESS hath more than all the force of attraction of gravitation, of cohesion and magnetism, which we see in the world of nature : and his religion in the soul will have it's progress and growth till it comes to it's grand and final termination or ultimate end, which is nothing less than perfect and eternal happiness in God.

The divinity of Christ, being clearly demonstrated in this work, will secure to us the true and eternal divinity of God the Holy Spirit, whose perfections, glory, personality, and works, shall be displayed in the best manner we are able in the IVth volume of this work. In the present age, there is a peculiar and dreadful enmity to the divinity, personality, and work, of the Holy Spirit ; and therefore it behoves all who love him, to exert all their powers and abilities to honour him to the very utmost extent of their capacities. We owe all we have of nature, literature, and grace, to his wise and gracious agency ; and gra-  
b
titude

as many points as the GREATEST ; that is, be as big as the greatest ; as big as one that is millions of times as big as itself. Who can deny it ?



titude will excite us to cherish a lively sense of the worth of his blessings, and the generous goodness of his nature, from whence they flow. Gratitude ought to rouse us to ardent desire to make the best returns, and to make better returns whenever it is in our power; and never to lay gratitude aside, but abound in it more than ever to all eternity.

But to return to our purpose. The divinity of Christ is the life and beauty of all public worship; the glory and pleasure of all public and private ordinances. Without his vital and gracious presence, all prayer, praise, and preaching, with baptism and the Lord's supper, have no life or force. All the forms of religion are meer moonshine and amusement, if Christ be not in them by his spiritual presence.

The DIVINITY of CHRIST secures the happy issue of all our transactions with GOD at our death, and approach into eternity. None but Christ can give us strong consolations against the terrors of death: none but Christ can support us in our dying agonies: none but Christ can take care of our souls at the moment of separation from the body: and it is Christ alone who can place our souls in glory, and introduce us into the full fruition of GOD.

Therefore let all the rational, happy creation  
adore

adore Christ as God. Let us cry out with Thomas, my LORD and my GOD, John xx. 28.— See Dr. Zephaniah Marryatt's noble treatise on this text, 12mo. 1719.—I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our GOD, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb; and all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, i. e. the gospel churches: and the four living creatures, i. e. the gospel ministers, fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped GOD, i. e. in the present life on this earth; for it is a description of gospel worship in the true church of Christ here below; and they said amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving or GRATITUDE, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our GOD for ever and ever. Amen. Rev. vii. 9--12. We give thee thanks, O LORD GOD the almighty Saviour, who art, and wast from eternity, and art to come, to eternity; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned, Rev. xi. 17. Let us sing the song of the Lamb, saying great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints! Who shall not fear thee,

thee, O Lord Jesus, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy, xv. 3, 4. This is a noble act of worship paid to Christ! Alleluia! i. e. praise ye the LORD: the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth, xix. 6. Let the whole church on earth join in one grand act of powerful, pathetic, ardent adoration; and carry up their action to the foot of his throne. Come, LORD Jesus! Come, LORD Jesus, come quickly! Come quickly! for thy FATHER's sake, for thy own sake, for the sake of thy blessed SPIRIT, for the sake of thy poor dark lukewarm churches; for the sake of thine enemies, the atheists, the infidels, the persecutors of this world; and for the sake of thy glorious church, which is yet unborn, and hath at present no existence but in the prescience of GOD.

I will conclude my preface with a testimony of my affection to the present and future generation, in what I would call

ADVICE to serious CHRISTIANS, and young STUDENTS of DIVINITY, with respect to their enquiries into the doctrine of the sacred TRINITY, and the DIVINITY of CHRIST.

I would first consider the MYSTERIES\* in the  
creation,

\* There are millions of mysteries all around us, with respect to the divisibility of matter, the laws of attraction and gravitation, electricity, magnetism, and air; and ten thousands of other objects whose existence are without doubt, but the mode of their existence and operation we cannot possibly understand.

Who

creation, or the world of nature. I would then proceed to consider the MYSTERIES in natural religion. In the third place, I would enter upon a calm enquiry into the scripture idea of GOD, and draw out the divine character to a proper extent. I would enquire into the scripture idea of the divine UNITY, and shew that there is but one divine NATURE, or essence. I would then proceed to the true idea of a divine PERSON, and after I had well settled the notion of personality, I would

Who can tell the last division of a grain of sand? a drop of water! a particle of quicksilver, a particle of light? Who can explain the division of matter in infusions, tinctures, solutions, and odours? A dish of tea will puzzle Sir Isaac Newton; it is beyond his understanding to tell how many particles are drawn off from a tea-leaf to give the water a flavour: a grain of saffron will give a yellow colour to gallons of water, and who can tell how many millions of particles are in that saffron? a grain of musk will fill a large room with its odours, and where is the man that can tell how many millions of particles are fled off from that grain without diminishing its weight? the ductility of copper, of silver, and of gold, beat into a leaf of vast extent, are beyond all human understanding to comprehend: who can tell the manner in which the magnetic virtue acts on iron? if you take a large artificial magnet, you may move the needle of the mariner's compass at the distance of two or three feet through a man's body! now who can tell the modus operandi, the manner in which this magnetic effluvia acts on the needle? Who can explain how far a cubic inch of air will expand itself, if the pressure were taken off on all sides? Who can tell all the properties and operations of fixed air,† and especially the manner of its operation! Who can explain all the mysteries of electricity? Who can explain the manner of muscular motion? The celebrated Dr. Hunter told me, that it was quite  
incomprehensible

† Fixed air, whether considered dephlogisticated or not. See NICHOLSON'S Introduction to Natural Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 160, 161, 340, 343.

I would proceed to shew that we have near thirty instances of a plurality of persons, or intelligent agents, in the undivided being of GOD: and we have a clear representation of three persons in the divine nature, in above twenty different places of Scripture. I would then go on to produce all the texts of Scripture, which mention Christ under the title of the Son of GOD, of which we have above forty instances. I would then proceed to shew the distinct personality and divinity of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT, with

incomprehensible to him. Who can explain the generation, nourishment, and growth of plants and animals? and the laws of union between the soul and body of man? Who can explain the cohesion of matter in solid bodies? Who can tell the manner in which the grand law of gravitation acts through the whole solar system, as far as the utmost length of the most distant comet! In a word, there is not an object in the universe, but is full of mystery: you can see nothing, you can touch nothing, you can hear nothing, you can taste nothing, but what is full of incomprehensible wonders: and that man who can say, that "where mystery begins religion ends," is every way as little a philosopher as a divine.

THE MYSTERIES OF NATURAL RELIGION.—GOD is a spiritual being; he is not matter: but who can tell what a spirit is? GOD is eternal: but who can understand what eternity is? GOD's eternity renders him no older than he was five thousand seven hundred years ago! but who can conceive of this so as to comprehend it? GOD is an omnipresent being! but who can comprehend omnipresence; who can tell whether it is diffusive or not diffusive! He is a living being; but who can tell all the nature and properties of life! He is an almighty being: but who can tell the manner in which the power of GOD exerted itself in the creation of the universe! In fine, go through all the natural and moral perfections of GOD, and you will find that every one of them

with the distinct parts they act in the grand work of man's salvation. And lastly, I would display, in the bright light of Scripture, all the duties we are to pay to each of the divine persons every day of our life; and the gratitude we shall express towards them, according to their distinct characters, when we come to view GOD in the light of eternity.

All these heads shall be amplified in a preliminary DISSERTATION to the fourth volume, on the DIVINITY of the HOLY SPIRIT. It was intended to be prefixed to this volume, but is found too large for the work.

The following book is a demonstration of the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from his NAMES, ATTRIBUTES, WORKS, and WORSHIP; with a conclusion, setting the good OLD SCHEME and the

NEW

them is incomprehensible: so that, on the principles of natural religion, if a man is resolved not to believe till he can comprehend the modus of GOD's existence and attributes, he must go into downright ATHEISM, and commence a fool and a brute for life.

I close this note with a hint at one most glaring and confounding absurdity, which clogs the Arian scheme. They hold one divine person in the deity, and two creatures which have a rank far above angels. Now, on their principles, a creature, i. e. the Holy Spirit, made the noblest and highest creature in the universe, i. e. the Lord Jesus Christ: and this creature the Spirit, furnishes Jesus with all his powers, gifts, graces, and miracles, which is a greater work than GOD the Father has ever done since the foundation of the world.

NEW in contrast, and the infinite advantages we have over the new scheme.

My highest end is to lead my fellow creatures and fellow sinners to CHRIST, as the SUPREME GOOD to immortal souls. In him all the properties of the SUPREME GOOD are found; and we never can possess it but in him. He is suited to our noblest powers of understanding, will, and affections: he is fit to make us happy in all places round the globe, and in all conditions of human life: he may be enjoyed without shame, i. e. sorrow and self-contempt: he may be possessed without suspicion of our being fools, and without dread of bad consequences: he will comfort and bless us in all trials and afflictions, and give us a calm and steady serenity in all troubles of life: he refines and sweetens the passions. The enjoyment of his vital presence will abide the severest test of sound reason, and will endure the most impartial review. His goodness to us improves upon longer experience, and grows still better on farther enjoyment: his love yields sweeter fruition on the most frequent repetition: and this good is larger than our vastest capacities, and as lasting as our immortal existence. He must be therefore to us the SUPREME and ETERNAL GOOD.

JOHN RYLAND,

NORTHAMPTON, Oct. 23, 1782.

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A  
 COMPREHENSIVE VIEW  
 OF THE  
**THIRD VOLUME;**  
 ON THE  
 DIVINITY OF CHRIST,  
 AND THE  
 BEAUTIES of CREATION and PROVIDENCE.

CONTEMPLATI<sup>O</sup>N I.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| I. On the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from the name<br>JEHOVAH, ascribed to him in the Old Testament, and<br>confirmed in the New                        | - Page 1—12 |
| Recollection and devotional exercise   | - 12—14     |
| II. The name JEHOVAH, applied to a PERSON, who makes<br>an appearance in a human or angelic form, or assumes<br>some character or office inferior to GOD | - 14        |
| PASSAGES in the five books of Moses  | - - 15      |
| RECOLLECTION and devotional exercise to Christ   | - 23        |
| PASSAGES in the historical books, psalms and prophets  | 26          |
| A third DEVOTIONAL EXERCISE  | - - 35      |

CONTEMPLATI<sup>O</sup>N II.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| On the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from his names<br>GOD and sovereign LORD, given to him in Scripture | 43 |
| RECOLLECTION and devotional EXERCISE to CHRIST   | 51 |
| Select Books on the glories of CHRIST  | 55 |

CON-



C O N T E M P L A T I O N III.

|   |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|
| On the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from his NATURAL PERFECTIONS   | - -     | 59      |
| The nature of truth, goodness, and perfection   | -       | 59      |
| Truth in existence, conception, and expression  | -       | 60      |
| Goodness  | - - - - | 62      |
| Perfection  | - - - - | 63      |
| A prospect of all the perfections, in one clear and concise view  | - - - - | 66      |
| On the nature of eternity, as incomprehensible by reason  |         | 68      |
| I. CHRIST hath the ETERNITY of GOD  | -       | 70      |
| The vanity of the world, compared with the eternity of Christ   | - - - - | 73      |
| RECOLLECTION and devotional EXERCISE  |         | 76      |
| II. CHRIST hath the OMNIPRESENCE of GOD   | -       | 80      |
| On Christ, as our omnipresent friend, to comfort and animate us   |         | 80      |
| A beautiful passage in poetry, on the omnipresence of Christ, in Boyse's poem on deity  | - -     | 81      |
| A devotional exercise to Christ   | - -     | 87      |
| III. CHRIST hath the IMMUTABILITY of GOD  | -       | 90      |
| Unchangeable in all his natural and moral perfections   | 92—98   |         |
| IV. CHRIST hath the LIFE and OMNIPOTENCE of GOD   | - - - - | 99      |
| The life of Christ  | - - - - | 100     |
| The almighty power of Christ  | - -     | 103     |
| Prospects of the OMNIPOTENCE of CHRIST in the planetary worlds; the magnitude, distances, and velocities of the planets Mercury, Venus, our Earth, Mars, Jupiter with four moons, Saturn with his ring and five moons | 106—112 |         |
| The COMETS, their velocities and periods  | -       | 113     |
| The fixed STARS   | - - - - | 114     |
| On the charms of PHILOSOPHY, viewed in connexion with Christ  | - - - - | 116—120 |

|  |           |         |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Four kinds of attraction, an emblem of the grace of<br>Christ                            | - - - - - | 120—121 |
| A devotional poem on the omnipotence of Christ, in<br>Boyse's deity                      | - - - - - | 121     |
| Farther prospects of the omnipotence of Christ in the acts<br>of providence in Scripture | - - - - - | 126     |
| A short and clear view of miracles   | - - - - - | 128     |
| Devotional exercise on Christ's power  | - - - - - | 131—134 |
| V. CHRIST hath the OMNISCIENCE of GOD  | - - - - - | 134     |
| An astonishing prospect of the human soul  | - - - - - | 136     |
| A devotional exercise from Mr. Boyse's poem  | - - - - - | 137     |
| Select books on the power of Christ  | - - - - - | 139     |

C O N T E M P L A T I O N IV.

|  |           |         |
|--|-----------|---------|
| VI. Of the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from his<br>WILL and sovereign DOMINION | - - - - - | 143     |
| Twelve AXIOMS concerning the DECREES of his WILL                               | - - - - - | 148     |
| The EXTENT and OBJECTS of his DECREES  | - - - - - | 151     |
| The practical USES of his DECREES.   | - - - - - | 152     |
| VII. CHRIST hath the full DOMINION of GOD                                      | - - - - - | 157     |
| Ten demonstrations   | - - - - - | 158—166 |
| USES of his DOMINION   | - - - - - | 166     |
| On the special PROVIDENCE of Christ, from FLAVEL and<br>CHARNOCK               | - - - - - | 169—207 |

USES of his PROVIDENCE.

|   |           |         |
|---|-----------|---------|
| 1. USE of information   | - - - - - | 208     |
| 2. USE of comfort in the low estate of the church, and in<br>the most pinching extremities of the people of GOD | - - - - - | 210—216 |
| 3. USE of exhortation; ten duties to Christ's particular<br>providence  | - - - - - | 216—221 |
| Devotional poetry on providence   | - - - - - | 222     |
| FAITH in Christ's DOMINION is our wisdom, duty, and<br>happiness  | - - - - - | 223     |
| Two wise MAXIMS concerning Christ's dominion  | - - - - - | 224     |
| A GREAT QUESTION answered   | - - - - - | 226     |

|  |         |     |
|--|---------|-----|
| Doth the absolute dominion of Christ require us to be willing to perish without mercy?—Answer, No. | -       | 227 |
| Submission to his will with respect to the eternal state of children                               | - - - - | 229 |
| Farther uses of Christ's dominion  | - -     | 230 |
| SOCINIANISM is the nearest approach to the unpardonable sin  | - - -   | 234 |
| Some noble passages from Dr. Witfius's <i>Irenicæ</i> translated                                   |         | 236 |

C O N T E M P L A T I O N V.

On the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from his DIGNITY, PREROGATIVES, TASTE, and AFFECTIONS.

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| VIII. The DIGNITY of CHRIST, as God  | -   | 242 |
| IX. The PREROGATIVE of CHRIST, as God  | -   | 252 |
| X. The TASTE of CHRIST, as God   | -   | 254 |
| The objects of Christ's taste are truth, gratitude, generosity, liberty, cheerfulness or habitual joy; new exercises of grace, a holy imagination like HERVEY's, personal beauty of the graces, christian divine and social friendship, sublime conceptions of God | -   | 254 |
| XII. The AFFECTIONS of CHRIST :—Love, grace, and beauty; joy in himself, in all his works, in his people, of our correspondent joy in him  | - - | 272 |
| His hatred, anger, zeal, and wrath   | - - | 286 |
| Recollection and devotional exercise   | - - | 294 |

C O N T E M P L A T I O N VI.

On the MORAL PERFECTIONS of CHRIST.

I. The WISDOM of CHRIST, as God.

The wisdom of Christ appears in the sun, the moon, the fixed stars, planets, comets, air, clouds, rain, cold and frost, hail, snow, thunder and lightening, light, earth, sea, waters, winds, storms, attraction of gravitation, tides, fire, darkness, magnet, minerals, vegetables, insects, a song of praise to Christ's wisdom

303—318  
His

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| His wisdom appears in the reptiles, the fishes in various classes, the birds in six classes, the beasts in six classes  | 323 |
| The wisdom of Christ appears in the wonderful structure of the human body, in the variety of faces, voices, and handwriting; in the five senses, in the human speech and tongue | 326 |
| A morning hymn in prose to Christ, on the wonders of creation   | 332 |
| On the WISDOM of Christ in the wonderful POWERS, affections, and IMMORTALITY of the human SOUL  | 344 |
| The understanding, the will, the passions, the memory, the conscience, the imagination  | 347 |
| The PROPERTIES of the SUPREME GOOD all center in CHRIST   | 353 |
| A devotional exercise to Christ, on a survey of his wisdom in creation  | 380 |
| Select BOOKS on the WISDOM of CHRIST  | 387 |

### C O N T E M P L A T I O N VII.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| On the MORAL PERFECTIONS of CHRIST, his PRUDENCE, GOODNESS, MERCY, PATIENCE, HOLINESS, JUSTICE, TRUTH, SINCERITY, VERACITY, FAITHFULNESS, SELF-SUFFICIENCY, ALL-SUFFICIENCY, PERFECTION, HAPPINESS, and incomprehensible GLORY | 391 |
|--|-----|

### C O N T E M P L A T I O N VIII.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| On the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from the WORKS of CREATION, PROVIDENCE, REDEMPTION, the RESURRECTION of the DEAD, the DAY of JUDGMENT, and the FINAL REWARDS and PUNISHMENTS in HEAVEN and HELL | 427 |
|--|-----|

### C O N T E M P L A T I O N IX.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| On the DIVINITY of CHRIST, evinced from the ACTS of WORSHIP paid to him in SCRIPTURE | 435 |
| A clear  |     |

|   |   |     |
|---|---|-----|
| A clear IDEA of the NATURE of WORSHIP               | - | 437 |
| Christ was worshipped by the patriarchs, in Genesis | - | 438 |
| By Moses in Exodus and Deuteronomy                  | - | 439 |
| In Joshua, Judges, Job. Psalms, and the Prophets    | - | 440 |
| CHRIST is worshipped as the TRUE and most HIGH GOD  |   |     |
| in the four Evangelists                             | - | 441 |
| In the Acts of the Apostles                         | - | 443 |
| CHRIST is adored as the true GOD in the EPISTLES    | - | 444 |
| In the REVELATIONS                                  | - | 446 |
| CONCLUSION of the WORK. The good OLD SCHEME         |   |     |
| set in contrast with the NEW, or SOCINIAN SCHEME    |   | 448 |
| SELECT BOOKS  | - | 456 |

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