

“THE CHRIST OF GOD,”

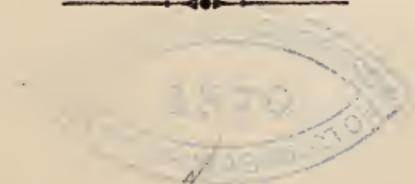
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OR

THE RELATION OF CHRIST TO CHRISTIANITY.

“Τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.”—Luke ix. 20.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following discourse was preached as the Moderator's Sermon before the Synod of New York, at their session in Brooklyn, Oct. 14, 1867, and had the good fortune to be succeeded by a request for publication. With this flattering request the author complies the more readily, that it gives him the opportunity to enlarge the sermon into a dissertation, by adding the matter which the restricted limits of a sermon forbade to be presented at the time it was delivered.

It is due to himself to mention that the substance of this dissertation, in a less expanded and complete form, was published so long ago as 1835, in the *Cincinnati Journal and Luminary*, of which his lamented friend, the late Rev. Dr. Thomas Brainerd, was the editor. The essays were three in number, and were entitled "Three Arguments for the Divinity of Christ." The author begs that this early publica-

tion may be borne in mind as an act of simple justice to himself, that he may not be charged with plagiarism, or with being indebted for his ideas to more recent authors, as Young and Bayne of England, and Drs. Bushnell, Schaff and Scott of America. The only obligation under which he lies to these able writers is, that since he began to prepare these pages for the press he has examined their works, with a view to "lard his lean soil with their fatness;" of which due acknowledgment is made in every instance. But he must be allowed to insist that the staple is original—"a poor thing, but mine own!" The title of Peter Bayne's little book, "The Testimony of Christ to Christianity," is so like the title of the present *brochure*, "The Relation of Christ to Christianity," that the ear of a superficial observer might be deceived by the jingle of sound; but that is the chief similarity. At any rate, it is sufficient to say that Mr. Bayne's book was not read until after these pages had been written.

“THE CHRIST OF GOD.”

CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION STATED.

IN the early ages of the Church there was a striking tendency to depreciate or even ignore the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to exalt the divine nature at the expense of the human. Our Lord himself, after his resurrection, had occasion to correct the misapprehensions of his disciples who thought that they had seen a spirit. “Handle me and see,” said he, “for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” Luke xxiv. 39. Paul felt it necessary to frame an argument to convince the Hebrews that the human nature of Christ was no ground of rejection. Heb. ii. 14. And there

were persons in John's time who denied that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, whom the apostle rebuked as Antichrist. 1 John iv. 3.

After the apostolic age there rose up a variety of sects and heresies, exhibiting in a remarkable degree (Arianism being the sole exception) a tendency to set aside the proper humanity of our Lord. Such were some of the Gnostics and the Docetæ, who denied to Jesus a true body, representing him as a phantasm; while the Patripassians and the Apollinarians denied to him a reasonable soul, pretending that the divine intelligence supplied the place of a human mind. The Monophysites contended for only one nature, which swallowed up the humanity; the Monothelites for only a single will, or rather perhaps for the absorption of the human will in the divine.

Since the Reformation the tendency has been decidedly in the opposite direction. The Socinians of Poland, and the Unitarians of England and America, have advanced opinions greatly derogatory to the dignity of the

Redeemer, and reducing him to the level of ordinary men. A few, indeed, like Dr. Samuel Clarke, have rested in semi-Arianism ; or, like the amiable Channing, have vaguely believed “ Jesus Christ to be more than a human being,”* and have not hesitated to call him a “ Divine Saviour ;” but the prevailing tendency is unmistakably downward, to the sheer Humanitarianism of Priestly and Theodore Parker. The latter did not blush to say that there might arise future Christs as much superior to the prophet of Nazareth as he was superior to all that had preceded him. At a recent convention in New York ground was taken by some of the Progressives that shocked the staid and sedate Unitarian of the old school, while others openly abjured and scoffed at the use of the title “ *Lord Jesus Christ.*” So little consentaneity is there among those who deviate from the simplicity of evangelical truth ! They have, and can have, no common creed, and they glory in their discord—

* Schaff’s Person of Christ, App. p. 339.

"A universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark."

The fate of all aberrations from the essential faith of the Church catholic may be easily foreseen. It is shadowed forth by the history of the past. Truth is one and consistent; Error is multiform and inconsistent. Free therefore from apprehensions for the safety of the Church, we may quietly look on and leave the advocates of the various schemes of error to turn their arms against each other. Strauss demolishes the Rationalist Paulus, and the legendary Renan in turn annihilates the mythical Strauss. So the latest wave washes away the traces of the preceding waves; and one poison is neutralized in the pharmacopœia by another poison. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord! but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!"

Cautiously steering midway between extremes, the catholic faith has constantly settled down upon the tenet tersely expressed in

the Westminster Catechisms, that “Christ, the Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul;” or, in the more subtle and discriminating language of the Athanasian creed, “not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by *the taking of the manhood unto God*. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For *as the rational soul and the flesh is one man*, so God and man is one Christ.”

There are two ideas here suggested which deserve attention. The first idea is, that the unity of person does not consist in the Godhead changing or being lost or absorbed in the manhood, or the reverse; but in the taking of the manhood unto God. The other idea is, that as the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. The union of soul and body, two distinct and totally foreign substances—one material, the other immaterial—is an admirable illustration of the possibility and mode of the hypotactical union. Nor should any one sneer at

the difficulties of the latter dogma till he has successfully solved and unriddled those of the union of soul and body in one man.

Against no doctrine, the inspiration of the Scriptures excepted, have the assaults of the modern school of freethinkers been more vehemently and more ably directed than the divinity of Christ. There is indeed nothing of the bitterness of the Encyclopædists, the coarse ribaldry of Paine, or the polished but ill-concealed sneer of Gibbon; there has been a total change of front, an introduction of new tactics, and, it must be confessed, a great improvement in the management of the controversy. The advocates of Orthodoxy are now called to measure weapons with men of thorough learning, acute criticism and refined taste.

"Theirs the stern joy the warriors feel,
In foemen worthy of their steel."

The vigour of these recent attacks has aroused corresponding vigour of reply; and I deem it not at all out of place to say here

that this country has no reason to be ashamed of the efforts which have been put forth by some of its own sons in the field of Apologetics. The spurs which they had won in other fields have not been tarnished in this.

The subject of Christology is thus forced upon our attention as one of the great controversies of the age. Any new line of argument, or any readjustment of the old—whatever may serve to make us masters of the situation, whatever tends to illustrate or settle the great question of *the relation of Christ to Christianity*, should be welcome to every pious and reflecting mind.

The investigation on which it is now proposed to enter comprises—I. The *importance* of settling the relation of Christ to Christianity; II. Ascertaining *what that relation is*; and III. Weighing the *proofs* which go to establish it.

CHAPTER II.

IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.

THE importance of settling the relation of Christ to Christianity has been contested. It has been maintained that it is not a vital or practical question. Dr. Channing asked, "Must we know his precise rank in the universe, his precise power and influence? On all these points, indeed, just views would be gratifying and auxiliary to virtue. But love to Christ may exist and grow strong without them. . . . I desire indeed, to know Christ's rank in the universe; but rank is nothing, except as it proves and manifests superior virtue. High station only degrades a being who fills it unworthily." *Channing's Discourses*, disc. x. p. 251.

The view thus presented appears jejune

and frigid in the extreme. Such cool reasoning is the poles apart from the seraphic glow of Rutherford, or even the more moderate warmth of John Newton. It involves low and inadequate conceptions of the sinfulness of sin, of human depravity, of the rigour of the divine law, of the inflexibility of God's justice, of the necessity of an atonement. Great sin needs a great Saviour. Depths of misery require a divine Redeemer. It seems to us that the sinner who has an adequate sense of his guilt cannot rest satisfied with less than God for his Saviour.

To this let us add the argument from the appeal to our gratitude and from the condescension of Christ. The higher his rank in the universe, the more refulgent is the splendour thrown upon his generous self-sacrifice, and the greater must be our tribute to his worth. And the higher his rank in the universe, the lower must he stoop and the more conspicuous is his condescension. Take away this view of the subject, and you emasculate the noble argument of Paul in the second

chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. In that passage it is his aim to inculcate the duty of condescension to inferiors on our part from the example of Christ, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and humbled himself." To the construction of such an argument, Christ's rank in the universe is vitally important. The whole conclusion is lame and impotent if this premise be eliminated.

Were Christ indeed on a level with other founders of states, or religions, or systems of philosophy, we might admit the position that rank is of no consequence. For truly it matters nothing who or what was the author of the Newtonian philosophy, or the Atomic theory, or the Code Napoleon. Thousands may live under these systems, and derive benefit from them without either knowing or caring for their authors. There is nothing, and need be nothing, of personal attachment or interest connected with them. But it is

not so with the Founder of Christianity. It is not a *system* he founded, but a *faith*. It involves personality at every step. We are not charged simply to believe what Christ has taught—we are not directed to believe Christ—but in very peculiar, expressive and emphatic phraseology we are enjoined to believe *in* Christ, to believe *on* Christ. It is a personal confidence, a personal trust, that is required. This is the more necessary because Christ is not a dead hero or a defunct legislator, whose memory has evaporated into a mere sentiment. He is still living, to apply and administer his system. It is a government, an organization, of which he continues the active head. “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” He is at this day the Prophet, Priest and King of his people. His is a personal supervision; theirs a personal attachment.

The eloquent writer just quoted subjoins, in a subsequent part of the same discourse, the following language of no less truth than beauty, and very apposite to the subject we

are arguing: "Jesus is his religion embodied and made visible. . . . There is no such thing as Christianity without Christ. It is not a book which Jesus wrote. It is his conversation, his character, his history, his life, his death, his resurrection. He pervades it throughout. In loving him we love his religion; and a just interest in this cannot be awakened but by contemplating it as it shone forth in him. Christ's religion, I have said, is very imperfect without himself." *Channing's Disc.* pp. 264, 265. Is it not strangely inconsistent that a writer who could utter such charming sentiments should contend that it is idle to inquire into Christ's rank in the universe? Truly did he say, "There is no such thing as Christianity without Christ." John Randolph, in his caustic way, said the same thing of the scheme we are discussing: "It is like the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out!"

"There is no such thing as Christianity without Christ!" And yet it is among the latest news that Auguste Comte's Positive

Religion has actually assumed the concrete form; and a Church of Science has been started in London, with divers literary names connected with the movement. The plan of the author comprehended a hierarchy and gorgeous ritual, feast-days and litanies, statuary and fine music. Its calendar is to commemorate sages, poets, inventors, teachers, from Moses to Mohammed; even the followers of Jesus are included—St. Paul, St. Augustine, Bossuet; but the name of Jesus himself is omitted. In this omission it stands rebuked by the domestic chapel of the Roman emperor Alexander Severus. “There was no room for him in the inn.” What a monstrous concoction is this! a worship without a personal God, a religion without a revelation, a church without a Christ!

But even this, monstrous as it is, has been outstripped by a discourse recently delivered. A popular preacher is reported as having said (in a sermon whose title was, “What constitutes a Christian?”), “Every one who lives a true Christian life, who strives for

better and nobler thoughts and actions, is a branch of the true Vine, no matter though he disclaim all outward connection with any visible Church. It matters not even if he refuse to acknowledge Christ; Christ will acknowledge him if he does his work. *Robert Collyer's Sermon: N. Y. Observer, Oct., 1867.* If this is not "Christianity without Christ," what can be so called? We have heard of the Broad Church, but this is the broadest of the broad. It flatly contradicts what Christ has said of those who refuse to confess him before men. With what prescience did our Lord say, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." John v. 43.

We are told that the doctrine which we advocate is only a speculative opinion, of no practical value. But no truth revealed in God's word is without some practical value, as even the bells and pomegranates on the high priest's robe symbolized the necessity of fruit as well as sound. The crucial test of this

question is, after all, an experimental one. It is a fact too well known to be called in question, that those evangelical Christians who gather out of the Scriptures the value and preciousness of the work of redemption and the harmonious scheme of the gospel, do dwell with delight on the love of the Father, the mediatorial work of the Son, the efficacious operations of the Spirit. With all such the doctrine of the Trinity is an intensely practical question. They profess to derive the very life of their souls from it; they rely on it for the understanding of the Scripture itself, and for instruction in the path of duty; they cling to it for assistance to resist temptation; they fly to it in distress for comfort and support; they regulate their daily life according to its impressions upon their hearts. In fine, every prayer they offer is addressed to the Father in the name of his equal Son and through the equal Spirit. Is there no practical influence discernible in all this, and in other particulars that might be specified? No, no! we cannot for a moment admit that

the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence and divinity is not vital and practical in the estimation and personal experience of the friends of Orthodoxy. Negative testimony can never counterbalance positive. The unregenerate may consistently deny what they have never known by experience; but not those who can say, "We speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen." John iii. 11. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." 1 John v. 10.

"A Christian dwells, like Uriel, in the sun;
Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight,
And ardent hope anticipates the skies."

CHAPTER III.

THE QUESTION DEFINED.

HAVING shown the *importance* of knowing the relation of Christ to Christianity, we are now to define *what that relation is.*

Our labour will be facilitated by the preliminary inquiry, What is Christianity? Christianity is not a republication of the religion of nature; it is not a new edition of the laws of Noah or of Moses; it is not a ritual; it is not a treatise on science; it is not a refined and superior phase of Deism; it is not a purer code of morality and virtue; it is not an expansion of the Golden Rule; it is not a muezzin call to repentance and prayer. Whatever it may borrow or appropriate or comprise of any or all of these, none of them

can assume to be the characteristic feature of Christianity. They act but a subordinate and auxiliary part.

Christianity is a *remedial scheme*, divinely proposed and revealed, offering the pardon of sin and reconciliation with God, through the mediation and atonement of the incarnate Son of God. This Mediator is known in the Scriptures as the Word of God which was from the beginning, and was God; the Word made flesh; God manifest in the flesh; the man Christ Jesus; the Lord's Christ; the Christ of God—not *a* Christ, but *the* Christ.* Kings, prophets and priests were Christs, but not one of them all was styled *the* Christ, by way of exception and eminence, but Jesus. He was "*the* Christ," "*that* Christ!" "the Christ of God," anointed, set apart, qualified and commissioned to carry out and administer the mediatorial scheme, the redemption of a lost world. Any definition of Christianity that leaves out this view is defective and imperfect.

* Note I. p. 66.

From this postulate we start. It is not necessary to waste our time in proving that this view is the substantial teaching of the Scriptures, the essence of Christianity. It is an acknowledged fact, “our enemies themselves being judges.” Levi, the Jewish antagonist of Priestley, averred that the pre-existence and divinity of Christ were taught in the Gospels, and that consequently whoever does not receive the same is not entitled to the appellation of a Christian. Coleridge, while still in the Socinian connection, said openly and plainly that it was clear enough Paul and John were not Unitarians. Schelling, Hegel and Strauss, however they differed in their theories and explanations, candidly conceded the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, Fall of Man, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit to be contained and taught in the sacred canon. So did Bolingbroke. So did Newman.

Christianity being a remedial scheme, administered by a Mediator, it is plain that the Mediator must be adequate to his task. I

grant with Parker that "personal authority adds nothing to a mathematical demonstration." But Jesus was more than a teacher—more even than a teacher sent from God. He was a Redeemer. His trust was not a lesson, or a dogma, but a work.*

A Mediator must be the equal of both parties. He must be of independent dignity, the peer of the highest, and capable of entering into sympathy with the lowest. It must be a human hand that can reach down to the lowest depths of sin and sorrow; yet it must be more than human, to be able to elevate to a higher plane, not of holiness only, but of heaven as well. Such were the difficulties in the way of our salvation that none but a God could surmount them; none else could abolish death and destroy the works of the devil. No created being could give the same value and merit to his work as the Son of God, on account of the dignity of his person and the greatness of his condescension. No human being could prescribe laws and intro-

* Note II., p. 67.

duce a new system which could carry with it the same paramount authority or commanding claims to respect. Add to all this that the office was too honourable, as well as too arduous, to entrust to inferior hands; nor was it fit that any other should inaugurate and control the new creation but He who was the author of the old.

I am aware that an eminent divine has advanced the opinion that the incarnation of the Son of God would have taken place, though under different conditions, had no redemption been needed. “The thing itself,” he says, “we may reverentially believe, would not the less have been. . . . In this view, the taking on himself of our flesh by the Eternal Word was no makeshift to meet a mighty yet still a particular emergent need—a need which, conceding the liberty of man’s will, and that it was possible for him to have continued in his first state of obedience, might never have occurred. It was not a mere result and reparation of the fall—such an act as, except for that, would never have

been; but lay bedded at a far deeper depth in the counsels of God for the glory of his Son, and the exaltation of that race formed in his image and likeness." *Trench's Sermon on the Only Begotten of the Father.*

Such speculations may be plausible, they may be not unreasonable, they may be harmless; but they are extra-scriptural, they have no warrant from the divine word, they are nothing but speculations. We conceive that we are not authorized by Scripture to think any incarnation probable save only in connection with redemption. Had the one never taken place, neither would the other. We have nothing to do with a possible incarnation following a possible state of innocence; it should suffice for us that the Lamb was slain in the divine foreknowledge and purpose before the foundation of the world. We are not to be wise "above what is written." 1 Cor. iv. 6. We may relegate it to keep company with that subtle question of the schoolmen, "Whether God loves a possible angel more than an actual insect?" We are

only concerned with the incarnation as a historic fact resulting from the necessity of redemption, and God's purpose relating to it. As the means to accomplish that redemption, the incarnation was, as theologians have termed it, a conditional necessity, or a necessity of consequence. The satisfaction and obedience of the priestly office, and the intercession of Christ in our behalf, required the assumption of our nature, and the fulfilling of the same conditions of humanity as ourselves, as most conducive to the divine glory and the best adapted to secure our benefit.

Redemption being established as the essential feature of Christianity and of the relation of Christ to it, it is obvious that opposition to the divinity of Christ must spring from one or more of these four fundamental errors:

1. An undue exaltation of human reason, from which follows the rejection of everything incomprehensible or miraculous, as well as of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

2. Incorrect views of the vindictory justice of God, and ascribing to him a weakly

lenient character, as pardoning sin without satisfying justice; whereas God is represented in the gospel as just, while yet he justifies the believing sinner.

3. Inadequate views of the evil of sin and of its nature, and of the exceeding breadth of the divine law.

4. Overrating human ability to obey and please God, to recover from error, to reform from sin, and to lead a virtuous and holy life.

Of course, a man who is in error on these points feels the doctrines of the atonement, regeneration, faith and grace to be unnecessary, and consequently the interposition of a divine Redeemer is superfluous. The reverse of this shows us why to one deeply convinced of sin, and having a vivid perception of the spirituality of the divine law, direct arguments for the divinity of Christ are little needed, and, as a matter of fact, little demanded. The subjection or experimental nature of the mental process is accurately as well as feelingly portrayed by John Newton, in his well-known lines, which are so much

to the point that I shall not apologize for repeating them :

“Some take him a creature to be—
 A man or an angel at most ;
Sure these have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost.

“*So guilty, so helpless am I,*
 I durst not confide in his blood,
 Nor on his protection rely,
Unless I were sure he is God.”

In this attempt to ascertain the relation of Christ to Christianity, we have arrived at the conclusion identical with the orthodox faith of the Church catholic, that Christianity is a scheme of redemption, to which a divine Redeemer is essential ; he is its Alpha and Omega, uniting two natures in one person—the divine taking unto itself the human, yet without confusion, or either being lost in the other ; not a demi-god, not a man-god, but a God-man ; God manifest in the flesh ; Jehovah-Jesus.

CHAPTER IV.

SCRIPTURE PROOFS OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

IT remains that we weigh the *proofs and arguments* which establish the divinity of Christ and substantiate the position which we have taken.

The customary line of argument, or the Scripture proof, must be familiar to every one who is at all well read on the subject. A brief outline only is necessary :

1. The *names and titles* of God are given to our Lord Jesus Christ—God, Jehovah, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last.

2. The *attributes* of Deity are ascribed to Christ; such as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence and immutability.

3. The *works* of Godhead are ascribed to

him; as creation, preservation, providence, miracles, the resurrection and the final judgment.

4. *Divine worship* is paid and should be paid to Christ. It was paid by the disciples, by Thomas, by Stephen, by the host of the redeemed in heaven and by the angels. (And it is noticeable that “the Lamb in the midst of the throne” is the object of worship, but is not himself a worshipper.) Divine worship is implied in the formula of baptism and in the apostolic benediction. It is also *commanded*: “Let all the angels of God worship him!” Heb. i. 6. “That all men should honour the Son, *even as* they honour the Father.” John v. 23. If divine worship be paid to the Father, divine worship is to be paid to the Son as well.

This array of Scripture proofs is felt to be conclusive and satisfactory by the general mind of Christendom. Opponents—*i. e.*, the latest of them—have abandoned the task of contesting them; they acknowledge, as Renan and Parker, that the record is essentially au-

thentic. This much progress at least has been made in the discussion of the question, and the facts may be regarded as settled. They adopt the shorter and easier method of a wholesale denial of the authority of any scriptural statements whatsoever. They deny the possibility of a book-revelation or of miracles; and they eulogize the absolute religion which recognizes the identity of all objects of worship, idol or fetish,

"Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,"

and places the savage and the idolater on a level with the saint and the apostle.

It has been said that the age has outgrown or become indifferent to the old-fashioned method of argument from Scripture proofs, and that newer and fresher arguments are exacted. Whether this be so or not, the champions of Orthodoxy are not unprepared to meet the emergent need. They have more than a single arrow in their quiver. They can descend to a lower plane, and argue, if it be necessary, from the Humanity to the

Divinity. We will meet our antagonists on their own ground, and let them choose their own weapons. If we can cut off Goliath's head with his own sword, the triumph will be so much the greater.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S OWN CLAIMS AND ASSERTIONS.

THE *divinity of Christ* is argued from his own claims and assertions. Christ must have been *divine*, or else a *deceiver*.

Consider how careful Paul and Barnabas were at Lystra; and how the angel in the Apocalypse shuddered at the idea of receiving a worship to which he had no right. Remember how Peter raised the centurion, saying, "Stand up! I myself also am a man." And then contrast with these modest acts the numerous intimations of Jesus that he was possessed of a superior nature, and how often he accepted homage and worship. He asked the Pharisees, "How is Christ at once David's Son and David's lord?"—one way his inferior, in another sense his superior? There

was but one interpretation that could have solved the enigma. It would have been the equivalent of that description of him in the Revelation, as “the root and the offspring of David.” He here represented himself as the maker and superior of David.

Weigh well this promise: “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, *for my name’s sake*, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Matt. xix. 20. Who is this that makes such large promises? A reformer might be expected to ensure rewards to his followers for submitting to sacrifices *for the sake of truth*, or *for the sake of God*; but he would lay himself open to the charge of arrogance should he presume to enrol disciples or to encourage them to brave martyrdom solely on his own account. Neither Moses nor John the Baptist ever dared to say, “Every one that hath forsaken all, even to the relinquishment of life itself, *for my name’s sake*, shall receive a hundred-fold and shall inherit *everlasting life*.” But

Christ unhesitatingly promises the largest recompense possible, and the fullest rewards of heaven itself, simply for faithful personal adherence. What could God himself say more?

But this is not all. This individual, who distributes heavenly crowns and paradises in such profusion, takes his stand one day, and says, "Behold! a greater than Solomon is here; a greater than Jonas is here!" Now what would you have thought if Jeremiah had said, I am greater than Isaiah? or if Malachi had said, I am greater than Jonah? or if Herod had said, I am greater than Solomon, I am greater than David? What would you have thought of any other young man of thirty-three, the rich young ruler, or Saul of Tarsus, or John of Galilee, who would have said he was greater and wiser than all the kings, sages and prophets that had ever lived? Would you not have pronounced it insufferable presumption, vanity and self-conceit? would it not have filled you with disgust? Would you not have been tempted

to retort his own words, “Blessed are the meek! Blessed are the poor in spirit! Go and sit down in the lowest room! He that exalteth himself shall be abased. Physician, heal thyself!” Now Jesus did say all this. He did proclaim himself greater and wiser than David, Solomon and Jonas; and you have to explain it on principles compatible with your retaining your respect for him.

Great pains have been taken to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, but it looks like a work of supererogation, in view of the fact that he himself asserted it. It is now simply a question of his veracity. Three times he did so—to Peter on his confession, to the Samaritan woman, and to the high priest on oath. He claimed the title of Christ in explicit and unequivocal terms, with full knowledge of all that it imported—that it was the synonym of Son of God, Son of the Blessed, Only Begotten of the Father, the Word made flesh, Immanuel, the Child born, the Son given, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of the kings of the earth,

King of kings and Lord of lords; yet knowing all this, and the tremendous consequence, he said in so many words, "I am the Christ!" and said it under oath, so that if it was not so, to falsehood was added the crime of perjury.

But Jesus went farther than this. He permitted Thomas unrebuked to address him, "My Lord and my God!" He told the Jews, "I and my Father are one;" and they charged him with blasphemy, and were about to stone him because he, being a man, made himself equal with God. On this occasion, and before the high priest, how easy it would have been to have disclaimed blasphemy, and to have explained that he only meant he was the Son of God as all good men are the sons of God, and that he and the Father were one in counsel. This would have disarmed the severity of his judges. But the explanation was not given. Thus Christ declined to explain away any intimations of his possessing a divine and superior nature, when he had ample opportunities of doing so, when an

explanation was desired, when it would have secured his own safety and that of his adherents, and, to say no more, when such an explanation, if called for, was to be expected of every honest man under the circumstances.

Now he was too wise to be needlessly ambiguous. He was too clear-headed to be deceived, even self-deceived. He never showed any of that headlong, impetuous, unreasoning enthusiasm out of which dupes, even the dupes of their own fancies, such as Mohammed, are made. That hypothesis is utterly untenable. He was no dupe. Was he then a crafty impostor, making dupes of others? Renan has insinuated this in his version of the raising of Lazarus, but the insinuation is too shocking and revolting to be for a moment listened to. And no one has done more to render it improbable than this same Renan, whose glowing eulogies on Jesus rival the finest of Rousseau or Channing, Sherlock or Maclaurin. Our Lord was too pure and spotless to have encouraged anything like deception. His admitted character precludes

all imputation of sinister or unworthy motives. He could not be a deceiver, for his nature and character forbade it; he must have intended to convey the meaning that he was divine, and to lead all men, with adoring Thomas, to call him their Lord and their God.

Oh! if I could be convinced that Jesus had lent himself in the faintest degree to the work of deception, that he made pretensions which were baseless, that he was what I shrink from saying, I would lose all respect for him; I would renounce him; I would spurn him; I would scorn the name of Christian; and then I would sit down, with crushed and broken heart, among the ashes of fond hopes dead and lost beyond resurrection. I would abandon myself to grief, and call the world to mourn and grieve with me, for "we *thought* it had been He who should have redeemed us," and we have found ourselves mistaken, deluded, betrayed, desolate! "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

But hark! from the unseen world there comes a voice to dispel any rising doubt, to reassure any momentary infirmity of faith. It is the voice that spoke to Daniel, that spoke to John: "I, Jesus, the root and the offspring of David. I am he that liveth and was dead, and am alive again for evermore. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending; the First and the Last." There is but one being in the wide universe that can say, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold! I am alive again for evermore." And there is but one being in the universe that ought to say, "I am the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last." But the voice is one and the same.* Away with doubts! away with hesitation! I have found my Saviour; and have found in him my God! Jehovah, Jesus! "made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness!"

* Addenda, III., p. 69.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST INTERCEDING AS A CLAIMANT AND EQUAL.

THE *intercession of Christ as a claimant and equal* opens up another line of argument.

The Scriptures explicitly teach what history and conscience are compelled to acknowledge—that however upright man was once found, and in favour with God, the whole race has long lost that primitive integrity, and has forfeited the pleasing privilege of unfettered intercourse with their Creator. We are taught that we can be restored and introduced again to favour only by a worthy Mediator, acceptable to both parties.* Who

* “Socrates obscurely hints at this necessity of a teacher to instruct us how to approach the Deity, to remove all mists from the mind, and help to distinguish good from evil.” *Sydenham and Taylor’s Plato*, “The Second Alcibiades,” vol. iv. p. 612.

shall the Mediator be? He must be either a *man*, or an *angel*, or an *equal*.

But he cannot be a *man*, because all Adam's race, from the apostate progenitor to his latest son, lie involved in the same condemnation. “What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous.” Job xv. 14. “For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.” Eccles. vii. 20. “And it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.” Rom. iii. 10. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John i. 8. Examine the best of men. Hear Elijah under the juniper tree confessing: “O Lord! I am not better than my fathers.” 1 Kings xix. 4. Hear Isaiah, in view of the unveiled glory of Jehovah, saying with trembling voice, “Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips!” Isa. vi. 5. Hear Daniel, the man honoured with the title of “Beloved of God,” acknowledging that he was not without cause of self-reproach:

"And while I was speaking and praying, and confessing *my sin*, and the sin of my people." And in his prayer, how did he plead? "O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations; for we do not present our supplications before thee *for our righteousness*, but for thy great *mercy*." Dan. ix. 18, 20. With humility, therefore, must mankind acquiesce in the solemn declaration of the Psalmist: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him." Ps. xlix. 7.

It is true that intercession is a Christian duty, and God has heard the prayers of some mortals, as Abraham and Elias. But this proves nothing to our present purpose. God also heard the prayer of wicked Ahab, because "he humbled himself before God." 1 Kings xxi. 29. Abraham acknowledged himself "but dust and ashes." Gen. xviii. 27. These were all appeals to sovereign mercy; they advanced no *claim*; they would have considered it presumption to do so. They

laid the Supreme Disposer of all things under no obligation; he could have rejected their petitions as he did those of the prophet Jeremiah thrice: “Pray not there for this people, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee.” Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 11. He repeated four times to the prophet Ezekiel: “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.” Ezek. xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20. An appeal to mercy, or a plea that may be rejected at pleasure, are on a very different footing from an imperative *claim*, which is not to be rejected.

Nor may an *angel* undertake the office of intercessor; for we are told, “Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly. . . . Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.” Job iv. 18; xv. 15. The Hebrew seer witnessed an expression of their own sentiments, when, dazzled by the intolerable splendour of the thrice

holy One, they shaded their faces with their wings, as at once unable and unworthy to look upon the face of Him that sat upon the throne, and as blushing for their best services. Isa. vi. 2. A parallel attestation was witnessed by the exile of Patmos. When the acclamations of the redeemed resounded through heaven, ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb as alone able to accomplish it, all the host of surrounding angels gave their assent, falling prostrate and adoring, and saying, Amen! Rev. vii. 11, 12. The holy apostle seems to have had in his eye the inadequacy of angelic intercession, when he said, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" Heb. i. 5. They are but messengers, servants, like the winds and the lightnings, addressed in very different language from that addressed to the Son. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever."* Heb. i. 8. Truly

* "The Holy Ghost here asserts the *essential deity* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of his enemies whom he will

is the Son “better than the angels.” Heb. i. 4.

Since, therefore, neither men nor angels dare presume, on the ground of their merits, to stand up and plead with God that he would remit the sins of a lost world *for the sake of their intercession*, and of their intercession *solely*, we are driven to embrace the only alternative—of concluding that He who can do so, who has done so, and who has a right to do so must be an *equal*, and is to be viewed in no other light.

When proclamation was made in the heav-
 make his footstool, some have indeed controverted this position, and endeavoured to blot out the text from the catalogue of his witnesses. Instead of “thy throne, O God,” they would compel us, by a perversion of phraseology, of figure and of sense, to read, ‘God is thy throne;’ converting the great and dreadful God into a symbol of authority in one of his own creatures. The Scriptures it seems may utter contradictions or impiety, but the divinity of the Son they shall not attest. The crown, however, which “flourishes on his head,” is not to be torn away, nor the anchor of our hope to be wrested from us, by the rude hand of licentious criticism.” *Messiah’s Throne*, by Dr. John M. Mason, p. 2.

enly court, "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" we are told, "no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." Rev. v. 3. Then the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, looking like a Lamb as it had been slain—titles which unequivocally describe our Lord Jesus Christ—was found alone worthy, and so confessed, and greeted with honours and eulogies similar to those which were bestowed on the Father Almighty when his worship was celebrated. Compare Rev. v. 12 with Rev. vii. 12. And it is to be observed that this Lamb slain, this Lion of Judah, this Root of David, is spoken of as occupying "the *midst of the throne*," both in this narrative, and in a subsequent passage; "the Lamb which is *in the midst of the throne*." Rev. vii. 17. But "the *midst of the throne*" is the central seat, the place of universal and supreme authority; as was intimated by the mother of James and John, when she asked that they might sit one on Christ's right hand

and the other on his left in his kingdom. To sit at the monarch's right hand is a common scriptural term for the place of honour. Now is it conceivable that the Almighty would vacate the central seat, the place of omnipotent and supreme authority for a moment, and surrender it to any creature, however exalted, however worthy! Even Pharaoh would not so divest himself; “Only in the throne,” said he, “will I be greater than thou.” This idea would be as monstrous as to revive the foolishlest fables of old mythology, and to repeat the adventure of Phæton and the Sun! He who occupies “the midst of the throne” can be no other than He who wields the thunder, who hath all power in heaven and on earth, who hath the keys of death and of hell, who openeth and no man shutteth, and who shutteth and no man openeth, and from whose sentence there is no appeal, because there is none higher to whom to appeal. If such a personage assumes the attitude of intercession, we may be sure it is an equal, he pleads as a

king with a king. And a king he told Pilate he was, though his kingdom was not of this world.

The foregoing position is corroborated by two passages of Scripture, wherein Christ is in so many words, *in ipsissimis verbis*, called the equal of God.

The first passage to be cited is in the prophecy of Zechariah: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is *my fellow*, saith the Lord of Hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." Zech. xiii. 7. This passage was applied to himself by our Lord on the night of his capture and the dispersion of his disciples: "Then said Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of *me* this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Matt. xxvi. 31. Christ here proclaimed himself to be the Shepherd of Zechariah, consequently, "the man who was the fellow of the Lord of Hosts." The word "fellow" is translated "neighbour" in

Lev. vi. 2, meaning a fellow-man, of the same nature and race. He whom God calls his neighbour, or fellow-God, must be of the same divine nature, consubstantial and co-equal—*homoousion*. Such is the interpretation of the learned German commentator, John Henry Michaëli.

The other passage is from the New Testament: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Phil. ii. 5–7. This is an argument for condescension from the example of Christ. If it has any force it is this: Christ being pre-existent and superior, stooped to become man. Men were his inferiors. He “*took upon him*” this inferior condition, the form of a servant. None of us can say that we voluntarily *take upon us* human nature; we have no choice or voice in the matter. But Christ voluntarily *chose* to assume it when he needed not do so.

In so doing he abandoned a superior station to do good to mankind. In that superior station he was no less than equal with God, and on such terms of equality that he could say, "I and my Father are one." If Christ were not originally divine, equal with God, the second person of the Trinity, and did not stoop in taking upon him our nature, it is not easy to see wherein the force of the argument lies.

Here then we have two passages of Scripture which, without any circumlocution call Christ the equal of God. When our Lord therefore undertakes to intercede, he does it right royally, "as a priest upon his throne." Zech. vi. 13. He does not demean his regal dignity, he does not beseech with abject supplication, he does not beg on bended knee, he does not make a piteous appeal to mercy and compassion; he stands erect and speaks as one equal with another. Even in his intercessory prayer after the Eucharist, in what is called his state of humiliation, he said, "Father, *I will*"—"I will that they whom thou hast

given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 24. If Christ interceded thus in his days of humiliation, just on the eve of his crucifixion, much more is it likely that he will use the same mode of address in his state of exaltation. With added emphasis we may imagine him saying, "Father, I will, it is my desire, my wish, I claim it as a matter, not of favour but of right, as the purchase of my sacrifice, the reward of my sufferings. Father, I will." And he asks, because that he will receive no repulse, he is confident that his intercession will be prevalent, "for him the Father heareth always." But he heareth him as a *claimant* and as an *equal*. There was Christ "God manifest in the flesh."

CHAPTER VII.

SUPRAHUMAN EXCELLENCE OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER.

ANOTHER argument for the divinity of Christ is based on the *suprahuman excellence of his character, intellectually and morally considered*. It was recognized by the Apostle Paul; "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Col. i. 18. And his was a towering pre-eminence.

The miracle which the Arabian prophet feigned was fulfilled in its essential conditions in Jesus. Born of poor parents, and working as a humble artisan, his early years were spent in the rudest and most unpolished part of Palestine, a region that was a byword for its want of culture. Thus he was precluded from the educational advantages of the privileged classes; he was one of the plebeians

who were denounced as accursed for their unacquaintance with the law. Aware of this, the Jews in their surprise at the wisdom exhibited by Christ, exclaimed, “Whence hath this man letters, having never learned?” The difficulty was admitted by Jesus himself, when he said, “My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.” John vii. 16; “As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” John viii. 28.

It will certainly be admitted to be a rare occurrence for a man who had thus grown up to emerge from a sphere of society unfavourable to the delicacies of sentiment, the refinements of decorum, the niceties of language and the proprieties of polished life, and elevate himself into contact with a cultured and literary society; and when thus elevated, habitually deport and sustain himself with uniform dignity, simple modesty, faultless propriety and inimitable grace.

Such was his commanding eloquence that while the populace hung delighted on his lips, and even publicans and reprobates felt

the charm, the critics, the literati, the arrogant and jealous scholastics could detect no sophistry in his reasonings, no inconsistency in his doctrines, no weakness in his argument, no inelegance in his style. His maxims, his apologues, his public discourses, his private advice, his disputations with subtle antagonists, whom he reduced to pitiable if not ludicrous silence, his pathetic laments over the follies and vices of the age, his affectionate and tender consolations to the mourner, his expostulations, his reproofs, his familiar conversation, are all characterized by a seriousness and dignity befitting one whose errand was so important. Considered in a *literary* point of view alone, these discourses and remarks are masterpieces of composition. The style is pure, chaste, nervous, adapted to every occasion; bold and figurative for the Oriental mind, profound and acute for the captious and well-drilled disputant, and simple and unadorned for the disciples who thirsted for knowledge alone; now full of melting pathos, again rising to the true sublime.

Another trial is remarkable, which in any other would be styled *the highest order of genius*. I mean the graphic skill with which our Lord in a moment presents to our view a striking scene. The picture needs not the tedious labour of months; two or three strokes delineated by a master's hand, two or three of the most appropriate and characteristic features dashed on the canvas without an effort, give us at once a vivid representation that satisfies the mind with its richness and startles by its truth.

The logical order and dependence of every process of reasoning, the rapid intuition which lies back of all ratiocination, the readiness with which apt passages of Scripture are cited, the pure ethics, and sober, calm, impressive style of the didactic discourses evince a clear mind, a profound observation and a discriminating judgment.*

* “Christ never lost the balance of mind under excitement, nor the clearness of vision under embarrassment; he never violated the most perfect good taste in any of his sayings. Is such an intellect—clear as the

To constitute a perfect character, there should be a complete harmony between the intellectual and the active powers, that enthusiasm may be checked and moderated by cool judgment; and on the other hand, that the sound decisions of the judgment may be preserved from a repellent coldness or austerity by warmth of feeling and ready sympathy. Viewed in this light, what a noble character is presented to our inspection in the Prophet of Nazareth! A clear-sighted and zealous reformer, he avoided on the one side timidity and weakness; on the other, petulance, precipitance and presumption. We are disposed to exclaim with the astonished apparitors sent to apprehend him, "*Never man spake like this man!*" May we not add, "*Never could mere man speak thus; God must be with him, and he can be no less than God!*" sky, bracing as the mountain air, sharp and penetrating as a sword, thoroughly healthy and vigorous, always ready and always self-possessed—liable to a radical and most serious delusion concerning his own character and mission? Preposterous imagination!" *Schaff's Person of Christ*, p. 141.

And this is just what John asserts in the first verses of his gospel.

The doctrines which formed the staple of Christ's teaching were most sublime, pure, simple and necessary. They embraced the divine unity, spirituality, paternity and providence; the immortality of the soul; the pardon of sin; repentance; faith; purity; prayer; spiritual worship; love; self-sacrifice; humility; meekness; forgiveness of injuries. In brief, it has been well said, that "of all the spiritual truth existing in the world at this moment, not only is there not a single important idea which is not found in the words of Christ, but *all the most important ideas* can be found nowhere else, and have their sole fountain in his mind. From his mind there shone a light which neither Egypt, nor India, nor Greece, nor Rome had ever kindled, which no age before his day ever saw, and none since, except in him alone, has ever seen."*

While we pay unqualified reverence and

* Young's Christ of History, p. 182.

admiration to the intellectual pre-eminence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and bow unhesitatingly to his claim to be "the Light of the world," his lofty virtue, his unspotted holiness, his faultless and all-embracing goodness, lead us to esteem him as no less a pharos in the moral world. But I shall not descant on the details of Christ's moral excellence. That has been sufficiently done by various able pens, and the concessions of unbelievers have been so ample and almost unanimous upon this score as to render the task here unnecessary.* We may assume, for the purpose of our argument, the moral excellence of Christ, as an admitted and recognized fact.

But there is a feature in Christ's piety which is deserving of marked attention. In his discourses, in his conversations, in his prayers, there is not a trace of penitence,

* See Ambrose's *Looking unto Jesus*; Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*; McLaurin on *Glorying in the Cross of Christ*; Dwight's *Theology*; Wilson's *Evidence of Christianity*, sec. xvii.; Young's *Christ of History*; Schaff's *Person of Christ*. See the latter also for testimonies of unbelievers.

there is not the smallest confession of sin. In the nervous and elegant language of a popular writer, "Human piety begins with repentance. But Christ in the character given him never acknowledges sin. . . . Beginning with an impenitent or unrepentant piety, he holds it to the end, and brings no visible stain upon it. Now one of two things must be true. He was either sinless, or he was not. If sinless, what greater, more palpable exception to the law of human development than that a perfect and stainless being has for once lived in the flesh? If not—which is the supposition required of those who deny everything above the range of human development—then we have a man taking up a religion without repentance—a religion not human but celestial, a style of piety never taught him in his childhood, and never conceived or attempted among men: more than this, a style of piety withal wholly unsuited to his real character as a sinner, holding it as a figment of insufferable presumption to the end of life, and that in a way of such un-

faltering grace and beauty as to command the homage of the human race! Could there be a wider deviation from all we know of mere human development?"*

The argument is complete. To add more would only make it more diffuse, and perhaps weaken its strength. The conclusion which we have reached is this: *The psychological conditions of Christ's life and character are such as to demand the recognition of a more than human intellect, and a more than mortal goodness.* "The manhood of Christ," says one writer, "as it appealed to the senses and the minds of the men of his own times, supplies and sustains the proof of his godhood."† "The very perfection of his humanity," says another, "is a proof of his divinity. The indwelling of God in him is the only satisfactory solution of his amazing character."‡

By a universal instinct of the heart every

* Bushnell's *Nature and the Supernatural*, chap. x.

† Young's *Christ of History*, p. 21.

‡ Schaff's *Person of Christ*, p. 4.

one that approaches him, whether infidel or believer, feels that he is in the presence of a superior Being; he is struck with awe, and under an involuntary, perhaps unconscious but irrepressible emotion of reverence, renders his tribute of eulogy, and assents to the averment, “Thou art fairer than the children of men!”*

RECAPITULATION.

After showing that the knowledge of Christ's relation to Christianity is not an idle speculation, but of great practical importance and value, the author proceeded to define in what this relation consists; viz, in the essential correlate ideas of redemption and a Redeemer, the exigency being such as to require a Redeemer at once human and divine—a Theanthropos, a God-man. The defence of this position was then attempted. The usual Scripture proofs were adduced of the ascription to Christ of the names, titles, attributes, works and worship of God. Next,

* Note IV., p. 72.

our Lord's own claims and assertions were examined and considered conclusive, as it was impossible that he should have been either deceived or a deceiver. It was then shown that the Mediator between God and man must be necessarily divine, and that Christ interceded as a claimant and equal. Finally, it was argued from Christ's pre-eminent excellence, both intellectually and morally considered—in other words, from the perfection of his human character—that he could not have been other than divine as well as human. "Fairer than the children of men;" "better than the angels;" "the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts!"

NOTES.

I.—THE TITLE, CHRIST, p. 24.

THERE were others besides our blessed Redeemer who bore the name of Jesus. There was Jesus, the son of Sirach; Jesus, a friend of Paul; and Joshua was rendered in Greek by the same name. But the name Christ was only a title of office or condition. It signified any one who was anointed. In fact, every prophet, priest or

king was in this sense a Christ, or an anointed one. "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." Ps. cv. 15. Hence the name is often found with the prefix *The*; e. g., "The Christ of God," Luke ix. 20; "That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." John xx. 31. The definite article, which is never applied to any other in this connection than Jesus of Nazareth, selects and singles him out as peculiar, and distinguishes him from all the rest of the anointed; so true is it that "he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows." Ps. lxxv. 7.

This distinction, between *Jesus Christ* as a mere proper name, and *Jesus the Christ* as a name of office, is a very important one to be observed and borne in mind. Dr. Scott, in his recent admirable and learned work, has clearly shown the depth and fulness of meaning involved in the formula, "I believe in Jesus Christ," or, more properly, "in Jesus the Christ." It is tantamount to saying, "I believe the Messiah who was promised to the patriarchs *has come*—the prophecies are already fulfilled, and fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; . . . *that a divine man, the God-man, was to come, who should be the Messiah, and redeem his people; and I believe that Jesus who was born of the Virgin Mary in the days of Herod is that true Messiah, so long and so often promised.*" *The Christ of the Apostles' Creed*, p. 40.

II.—CHRIST NOT A TEACHER MERELY, BUT A REDEEMER, p. 26.

1. That Christ was not a teacher merely, but that remission of sins is obtained through him as a Redeemer,

is the great "burden" of the *prophecies*, especially of the 53d chapter of Isaiah, who has been called, for the precision of his predictions, "the Fifth Evangelist," "the Evangelist before the incarnation." It was this chapter that converted from infidelity Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.* 2. The Old Testament *sacrifices, types and figures* teach, and can be made to teach, nothing else than remission of sin through the Redeemer. If they were designed only to symbolize a great teacher, then Christ would always have been described as a priest, but never as the sacrifice. Whereas he is expressly called "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John i. 29.

3. We cite further the numerous references in the New Testament to Christ's *substitutional and vicarious character*; as Heb. ix. 26, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet. ii. 24.

4. *The soul's need of a Redeemer* must be allowed to have its weight. Scholars coolly speculating in their cosy libraries may have no experiences of this sort. "He jests at scars who never felt a wound." But they have no right to ignore or make light of the experiences of others. We have on record the mental agonies of such men as Augustine, Luther, Brainerd, Simeon, Newton, Whitfield, who are not to be regarded as exceptional cases, but as representatives of a numerous class of persons with awakened and anxious consciences, who have longed for relief, and found it only in the redemption of Jesus.

* Burnet's Life of Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, p. 107.

In truth, if we are to restrict Christ's functions to teaching solely, I hardly see why Paul may not be assigned an equal or even superior rank. He was better educated, he was more voluminous, he wrote with his own hand; while for Christ's few and scattered sayings we are dependent entirely on the report of his disciples, who, we know, occasionally fell into mistakes as to the longevity of John and as to the nature of Christ's kingdom. No! we reverence Christ as "a *Teacher* sent from heaven," but much more do we adore him as our "*Redeemer*" from sin and its consequences; *man* descending to our level to reach us; *God*, raising us with his powerful hand, and making us "partakers of the divine nature."

III.—JESUS, ALPHA AND OMEGA, p. 43.

There were two distinct and separate occasions when the words "I am Alpha and Omega" were spoken in the hearing of St. John. The first time was at the commencement of the Apocalyptic vision: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, . . . and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot; . . . and when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and

behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. i. 10-18.

There can be no question that the voice here is one and the same. It is one speech, unbroken, uninterrupted. Indeed, the words, "I am the first and the last," and "I am he that liveth and was dead," form parts of the same sentence. It is therefore beyond dispute that the speaker who said, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive again for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death," is the same who said, "I am the first and the last." And there will be no denial that this speaker was the "One like unto the Son of man," the risen and glorified Christ; for to none other is the description applicable.

In the second instance, the dialogue is interrupted. John was about to prostrate himself at the feet of the angel who had acted as his guide, when the angel vehemently forbade him, saying, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

Another speaker is now introduced—he who had spoken before: "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. . . . And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. . . . I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Rev. xxii. 9-16.

The deniers of the doctrine of the Trinity contend that Jesus here refused an act of worship (a thing he never did on earth), identifying him with the officiating angel. But it would be strange if any angel who had just refused to be worshipped should in the same breath affirm, "I am the first and the last." These are epithets which Jehovah appropriates to himself alone. "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God." Isa. lxiv. 6. "I will not give my glory to another." Isa. lxviii. 11. The declaration beyond all question imports a claim to absolute and exclusive divinity.

Besides, it was the angel who pointed out the things revealed in the vision who declined adoration, but the last speaker is one different from this angel, and claims to have sent him: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." So then it is not Jesus who declined adoration, but the angel whom Jesus sent, one of the glorified prophets and John's fellow-servant. On the contrary, since from verse 13th, "I am Alpha and Omega," to verse 16th, "I Jesus have sent mine angel," there is no break of the continuity. It is the same speaker all along. Here then we have two cases—Rev. i. 10-18, and Rev. xxii. 9-16—in which the voice is one and the same. No critical or grammatical torturing can extract any other conclusion. We find our glorified Lord asserting his right to adoration in terms so indicative of absolute divinity, as shown by the citation from Isaiah, that we cannot conceive of anything more definite or sublime.

But we are not yet done with this pregnant passage. Let us sift the sands of this river of life till we have extracted all their gold. In Rev. xxii. 16 we read, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." But in the 6th verse we are told, "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." These words point to a remarkable identity in counsel and act between Jehovah and Jesus. Each claims to have sent the angel to do the same thing, and each claims the angel as his. It is impossible to reconcile these, and many other like apparent contradictions or discrepancies, except on the principles which we have been labouring to establish.

IV.—JESUS A HISTORICAL PERSON, p. 65.

It has been all along assumed in this dissertation that the four gospels are true and reliable biographies of Jesus, and that Jesus himself was a real, historical person. The evangelists were simply narrators, not inventors. Such invention transcended their capacities. Rousseau, in his epigrammatic way, uttered a great truth when he said that the inventor of such a character would be more wonderful than the hero. Parker echoed the same sentiment in homelier phrase when he said none but a Jesus could fabricate a Jesus.

The internal evidence may therefore be safely relied on as conclusive in regard to the reality of Jesus Christ as a living personage, and of his sayings as having been actually pronounced. His pre-eminent wisdom and goodness are then not fancies, but facts.