OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST GOD-MAN:

WITH A VINDICATION OF HIS PROPER GODHEAD.

By JAMES REID, Minister of the Gospel, in Galloway, Scotland.

Nunquid ideo negandum est quod apertum est, quia comprehendi non potest quod occultum est?—Nunquid, inquam, propterea dicturi sumus, quod ita esse perspicimus, non ita esse, quoniam cur ita sit non possumus invenire?

August. de Persever. lib. ii. cap. 14.

Shall we, therefore, deny that which is manifest, because we cannot comprehend that which is hidden? Shall we say, that which we plainly perceive to be so, is not so, because we cannot find why it is so?

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TO THE READER.

AMBITION to commence an Author, was not the cause of this Discourse now appearing in print: but the importunity of some persons, who heard part of it preached, prevailed to let it come forth unto public view.—And as these persons were part of my pastoral charge, for whom I ought to watch, as one who must give an account, I durst not reject their continued request.

The times seem also to call for appearances, by all lovers of the truth, against error and immorality. To use the expressions of an elegant writer,—"The spirits of *infidelity* and of *heresy* are broken loose upon us; and with a rapid violence they threaten the most dismal effects; to which a Laodicean lethargy hath given, and still continues to give, the greatest encouragement.*

And it is very remarkable, that Christ no sooner appeared in our nature, *to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*, than he was persecuted both by earth and by hell. *Herod sought the young child to destroy him*, Mat. ii 13.—*Jesus was led up of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil*, Mat. iv. 1.—And he was sorely persecuted, by both Herod and the devil.

In like manner, the malice of heretics hath been, and still continues to be, directed against Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*, 1 John iii. 8. see Heb. ii. 14.—And, therefore, the devil, and all his agents, direct their malice, in a special manner, against the Son of God. Accordingly, the rage of the heathen, and the conspiracy of rulers, are said to be against the Lord, and against his Anointed, Ps. ii. 1, 2. see Acts iv. 25, 26, 27. And the deniers of Christ's proper Godhead, made their appearance at a very early period of the Christian æra.

The justly celebrated Mosheim informs us, that among the various sects that troubled the peace of the Christian church, in the first century, the leading one was that of the Gnostics. These enthusiastic, and self-sufficient philosophers, boasted of their ability to restore mankind to the knowledge of the true and Supreme Being, which had been lost in the world. Their notions concerning Jesus Christ were impious and extravagant. They denied his Deity—looking upon him as

* The Universal Magazine for April 1789, vol. 84. London, in an Essay on the End of the World.

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inferior to the Father; and they rejected his humanity, upon the supposition that every thing concrete and corporeal, is in itself essentially and intrinsically evil. From hence, the greatest part of the Gnostics denied that Christ was cloathed with a real body, and that he suffered really, for the sake of mankind They maintained, that he came to mortals with no other view, than to deprive the tyrants of this world of their influence over the virtuous. And, destroying the empire of these wicked spirits, to teach mankind how they might separate the divine mind from the impure body, and render the former worthy of being united to the Father of spirits.*

Jerome also informs us, that when John the Apostle and Evangelist was in Asia, the errors of Cerinthus, of Ebion, and of others, who denied that Christ was come in the flesh, sprung up: and, that John calls these heretics Antichrist, in his epistle—See 1 John ii. 22, 23. It is said, that Cerinthus and Ebion denied Christ's Godhead. And Jerome says, that John was urged, at that time, to write concerning the Godhead of our Saviour, by many in Asia. And at last he complied with the request, if they would appoint a General Fast, and all pray unto God for his spirit. Upon this, John is said to have a revelation from heaven, which runs thus: *In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*† And, it is very probable, from the general scope of the gospel according to John, that the book was written against these penicious errors of Cerinthus, Ebion, and other heretics. For, he insists more in proving Christ's proper Godhead, than any other of the Evangelists: and he produces his miracles, as incontestible proofs thereof. This great Apostle of Christ, confessed his Master's name before men, when he was openly denied in the world.

But, further, in relation to the denial of Christ's proper Godhead:

Elipandus, archbishop of Toledo, and primate of all Spain, a very learned man, began to maintain, in 783, that Jesus Christ was not God's own Son: and, that if the Father called him his *Son*, it was *only by adoption*. Severals exclaimed loudly against this error of Elipandus—As Beatus, an Asturian priest; and Etherius, bishop of Osmu. Beatus wrote two books against this error, which are preserved in manuscript

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, ancient and modern, vol. 1. cent. 1. pages 108 and 110. † Hieron. Lat. Proem. in Matth.

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manuſcript in the archives of the church of Toledo; and are inſerted in the Bibliotheque des Peres. But Elipandus ſtill maintained this hereſy, with greater obſtinacy; and ſeverals were taken in his ſnare. Pope Adrian wrote warmly to ſeveral biſhops, who had gone into this error, to renounce it But after all, Felix, biſhop of Urgel, a very learned man, of great reputation in Catalonia, received the hereſy of Elipandus, by means of a flattering letter from him.*

The ſect of the Socinians aroſe in Italy, in the States of Venice, about the year 1546. They attacked the myſteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. They taught, that there was but one perſon in God; that Jeſus Chriſt was not God, but a man born of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt; and that the Holy Ghoſt was not a perſon, but a ſimple virtue of God. Some bold and looſe perſons, began to vent that doctrine in private meetings. There was about forty of that cabal, among whom was Lælius Socinus, whoſe name was afterwards given to thoſe of that ſect.—Upon being diſcovered, they were forced to fly,—ſome to Tranſylvania, others to Hungary, and a part of them to the Turkiſh dominions. Socinus travelled, and inſtilled his ſentiments into ſeveral perſons, particularly in Poland and Moravia. Socinianiſm was alſo promoted by Fauſtus Socinus, at Sienna, a noted city of Italy, in Tuſcany, about 1555.—Michael Reves, known by the name of Servetus, a Spaniard, attacked the myſtery of the Trinity. He went to Geneva for refuge, and was condemned and burnt there, 1533.†

And, of late, Dr M'Gill, one of the miniſters of Ayr, and his colleague, have made great efforts for the revival and propagation of Socinianiſm in Scotland. Doctor M'Gill's Practical Eſſay on the Death of Jeſus Chriſt; and the pieces publiſhed by his colleague, are ſufficient proofs of this.—Many excellent pieces have been lately publiſhed in North Britain, againſt the heretical opinions, revived by theſe miniſters.

This poor performance hath no pretenſions to equal the many excellent publications on this important ſubject. But it is only deſigned, as a fellow-labourer with them, however far inferior, in contending for an eſſential part of *that faith, which was once delivered unto the ſaints*, Jude, ver. 3. What an eminent Scots divine ſaid in relation to the Eraſtian controverſy, may be applied here: "The controverſy is now hot:

* Hiſtory of the Revolutions in Spain, vol. 2, book 6, Revol. 3.
† Du Pin's Church Hiſtory, vol. 4. cent. 16.

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hot: every faithful ſervant of Chriſt, will be careful to deliver his own ſoul by his faithfulneſs, and let the Lord do what ſeemeth him good. The cauſe is not ours,—but Chriſt's. It ſtands him upon his honour, his crown, his laws, his kingdom. Our eyes are towards the Lord, and we will wait for a divine deciſion of the buſineſs: *For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will ſave us*, Iſ. xxxiii. 22.*"

Truth is the great and only object of purſuit in this performance. And, therefore, to the protection of the God of truth it is recommended, by him who is,

CHRISTIAN READER,

Thine to ſerve thee in the goſpel of Chriſt,

CURCHIE-HILL, DEC. 31, 1792.

JAMES REID.

* The Rev. George Gilleſpie's Aaron's Rod, book 2. chap. 1. at the end.

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SERMON.

ROMANS ix. 5.

Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

THAT inspired writer, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, in the first part of this divine epistle to the Romans, proves both Jews and Gentiles to be under sin. Then he explains the gospel-way of salvation, by free grace, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Having pointed out the sore, he discovers the remedy.—He enlarges particularly upon the capital benefits of the new covenant, justification and sanctification, which all believers in Christ enjoy, chapters fifth and sixth. And, he informs the people of God, that altho' they have a continued spiritual warfare, while in this world; yet, being under the special influences of God's Spirit and grace, *all things work together for their good*; and, they shall be brought to the full possession of immortal glory at last, chapters seventh and eighth.

In the ninth chapter, he shews his great affection and concern for the Jews, his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. Here, he anticipates an objection, which might be raised relative to his following doctrine, concerning the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentile nations. What is here recorded, respecting the calling of the Gentiles, is a message which I have received from heaven; and argues no prejudice in me, against mine own nation. Accordingly, he proceeds to clear himself of any prejudice against the Jews, in the most solemn manner, verse fifth. He declares his great sorrow for their rejection, verse second: and, particularly, for their obstinacy and infidelity, the causes thereof, as may be gathered from what follows, especially from the two last verses of the chapter. In the third verse, he fully declares his very strong affection for the welfare of his kinsmen, according to the flesh. *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh*—I could wish to undergo any temporal calamities

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calamities for their good. Accordingly, the Arabic translation is, as the learned inform us, *That my body were an anathema from Christ.* But the true meaning of this expression may be gathered, perhaps, from the ordinary form of speech among the Jews, *May I be his expiation.* Maimonides, the famous Jewish Rabbi, says, that this form of speech was used, to express very great love or kindness to any—My regard for you is exceeding great. Then, in the fourth verse, he enumerates the distinguishing privileges enjoyed by the Jewish nation. They were honoured with the name which was divinely imposed upon the noble patriarch Jacob, being Israelites. They had the dignity of being God's people, by external adoption, in preference to other nations. They had the *glory*,—the ark and the temple, where God was pleased to manifest his glorious presence with them, Ps. lxxviii. 61. God had entered into covenant with them—See Gen. xv. 18. and xvii. 2, 7. Exod. xxxiv. 27. To them the law was given, with great solemnity, Exod. xx. And this is mentioned as a special privilege of the Jewish nation, Deut. iv. 8. Besides the moral law, they had the judicial and ceremonial law. They had *the service of God*,—the true and pure worship of God set up amongst them, Deut. vi. 13. They had promises pertaining to this life, and unto that which is to come, particularly concerning the Messiah—See Exod. xx. 12. Is. lv. 3. and Is. vii. 14.

Another distinguishing privilege of the Jewish nation was, that they were lineally descended from those great progenitors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other holy fathers.—*Whose are the fathers*—The plain meaning is, that Christ, who is the true God, and eternal life, by nature, 1 John v. 20. took his human nature from those of the Jewish nation. It was indisputably a great honour to the Jews, that the Great God *took on him the seed of Abraham*, their honourable father, Heb. ii. 16.—and that with an intention to redeem sinful men, Gal. iv. 4, 5.

The inspired writer might have many reasons, for this accurate enumeration of Jewish privileges, in preference to other nations:—As, that he had sufficient ground to make such a strong profession of his affection for them, as in verse third—That his account of their rejection, did not proceed from prejudice in him against them; but was the Lord's message to them, through his instrumentality—That he had an earnest desire they should comply with the gospel-calls,

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and so come to the participation of those inestimable benefits, which he had formerly described. And, the mention of these glorious privileges, might be considered as conducive to their ready submission unto Christ, in all his saving offices, which was one great end of the Apostle's ministrations among them.

Accordingly, the scope of this place fully evinceth, that the more dignified the person was, who had taken his human nature from the stock of the Jews, the greater proportionably was their honour. The more dignified were their privileges. And, mention of the derivation of Christ's human nature, from the Jews, led the inspired writer natively, to speak of his proper Godhead. The one could not be mentioned properly, without the other. And, the scope of the place fully evinceth, that mentioning the dignity of Christ's person, tended greatly to enforce the Apostle's argument. *God over all*, taking the human nature, from the stock of the Jews, was their dignified privilege, and unspeakable honour. Besides, Christ is usually exhibited in the holy Scriptures, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person. But I find, that Socinian and Unitarian writers, are careful never to investigate seriously the scope of any place where their text lies; lest, perhaps, they should raise spirits that they cannot so easily lay.

The text then contains as strong an attestation, that Christ is God-man, as words can express. The first part of the verse attests his human nature: and the last part of it contains that glorious title, whereby the one living and true God was known among the Jews; which is here expressly given to Christ, *who is over all, God blessed for ever*—To which testimony of heaven, let all the churches say, *Amen*.

From the words thus glanced, we observe:—That our Lord Jesus Christ is usually exhibited, in the holy Scriptures, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person; to which important discovery, all the churches should say, *Amen*. He is descended of the Jews, as to his human nature: and *over all, God blessed for ever*; which is fully expressive of his proper Godhead.

For the illustration of this great truth, the following method is humbly proposed, with a view to be prosecuted, through Divine assistance.

1st, To produce a few instances of Christ's being usually exhibited, in the holy Scriptures, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, which will ascertain this truth.

 2dly, To

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2dly, To prove, from the holy Scriptures, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal with God the Father, in every point of view, considered as God—*Over all, God blessed for ever.*

3dly, Make application.

1. That our Lord Jesus Christ is both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, is not obscurely hinted, in that first promise of grace, Gen. iii. 15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* By the woman's seed here, as opposed to Satan, is indisputably meant our Lord Jesus Christ, *who,* being *over all, God blessed for ever,* should come of David and of Abraham, and so of Eve, according to the flesh, Rom, i. 3.—For she was *the mother of all living.** Christ, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, bruised Satan's head. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil,* 1 John iii. 8. And, while Christ, *who is over all, God blessed for ever,* destroyed the works of the devil, by his sufferings in the human nature; it was only this nature Satan's malice could reach. *For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God,* 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Satan, by his means, brought about Christ's suffering in the human nature, even unto death. But, Christ being both God and man, he effectually destroyed the works of the devil, when he suffered in his human nature. *He,* or *it, shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ is plainly and fully exhibited as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, Is. vii. 14. and ix. 6. In the seventh chapter, it is said,—*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* This name is interpreted, *God with us,* Mat. i. 23. And, this prediction is expressly said there, to be fulfilled in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proves his exhibition to the church, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person. That, in the 9th of Isaiah is still more fully to the purpose—*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* Here, the same person, who is said to be *a child born unto us,* is also called, *The mighty God.* The Son given us,

* See Ainsworth on the place.

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us, is declared to be, *The everlasting Father*: Or, as it is in the Hebrew, *The Father of eternity*. He was set up from everlasting, who became man, in the fulness of time. He is unto everlasting God, who was made of a woman, made under the law, Gal. iv. 4, 5.

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ is evidently exhibited unto the church, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, Micah, v. 2. *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, who is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* It is indisputable, that this is to be understood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God, expressly, applies it unto him, Mat. ii. 4, 5, 6. It is equally evident, that two things are very observable in this text: First, a temporal act, namely, the birth of Christ, expressed by these words, *out of thee shall he come forth unto me*: Secondly, *his goings forth from everlasting*. And, this temporal act, Christ's birth in the fulness of time, is obviously set here, in opposition to his goings forth from the days of eternity. Accordingly, the words exhibit Christ very plainly, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person.

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ is very plainly set forth, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, in the New Testament. We have full evidence of this, John i. 1. compared with the 14th verse of the same chapter. *The Word was God*, verse 1st: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*, verse 14th. *God was manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16 —Let all these instances be joined with the plain words of the text: and, then, it will certainly appear, that our Lord Jesus Christ is usually exhibited, in the holy Scriptures, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person.

I have been very brief here, because I design, God willing, to spend my strength on the next head of the doctrine, with the application:—But this head, already discussed, appeared to me very necessary to be well understood, by those who would know Christ—And, it will be found serviceable for the right understanding of several texts of holy writ: As, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one*, says Christ. And again, *My Father is greater than I*, John xiv. 28. Christ and his Father are essentially one. And, his Father is greater than He, when Christ is considered as man, or in his humiliation-state, in the form of a servant.

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We come now unto the ſecond thing propoſed in our method: To prove, from the holy Scriptures, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the true God, co-eſſential, co-eternal, and co-equal with God the Father,—in every point of view conſidered as God.

We have many ſtrong teſtimonies, in the holy Scriptures, that Chriſt is of the ſame eſſence with God the Father: As, *I and my Father are one*, John x. 30. The context proves, that Chriſt ſpake theſe words. And, here we are ſufficiently guarded, in the firſt place, againſt the Sabellian error; confounding the Father and the Son into one and the ſame perſon. They taught, that there was no diſtinction between the perſons of the Trinity. But, the very compellation, *My Father*, declares a perſonal diſtinction. And, as often as Chriſt calls God *Father*, he acknowledges this perſonal diſtinction. And, he further teſtifies here, that He and his Father *are one*. One eſſence; one thing. The original language will not admit another ſenſe. And, the ſcope of the place fully declares, in what ſenſe Chriſt and the Father *are one*. They are one in omnipotence, to preſerve the ſheep, ſo that none can deſtroy them. And, therefore, they are indiſputably one in nature; one in eſſence.—While Chriſt then acknowledgeth, that there is a real perſonal diſtinction between himſelf and the Father; he alſo poſitively aſſerts, that there is an eſſential unity. *I and my Father are one.* The eſſential unity of the Father and of Chriſt, is alſo very clearly expreſſed, John xiv. 9, 10, 11. In the ninth verſe it is ſaid, *Jeſus ſaith unto him, he who hath ſeen me hath ſeen the Father*—I am the expreſs character of the Father. And, accordingly, in ſeeing the one, you muſt ſee the other. Verſe 10th, *Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* Verſe 11th, *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*—No words can be more plain to our purpoſe than theſe. And, there appears to be a ſpecial emphaſis on the word *in*, as it is here uſed. We have ſtated the perſonal diſtinction before, between the Father and the Son, in oppoſition to the Sabellians. And, therefore, we ſhall not enter upon that ſubject again. However, it ought to be carefully attended unto here, as it is a real foundation for the eſtabliſhment of our doctrine. For, if there is a real perſonal diſtinction between the Father and Chriſt, as the ſacred texts, already mentioned, ſufficiently prove; then this mutual inexiſtence of theſe divine perſons, muſt be underſtood *quoad*

eſſentiam,

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essentiam, as to the essence, which they have in common. *I am in the Father*, says Christ with an emphatical reduplication, *and the Father in me*. These words clearly denote a mutual in-existence of God the Father, and of God the Son, in each other. And, this mutual in-existence is not to be understood, so far as we can form any opinion of this sublime mystery, with relation to their personality, but in respect of their nature, or essence. The Father and Christ are two distinct persons; but one in their essence.

This great foundation-truth, may be further confirmed and illustrated, by the express declaration of the Holy Spirit, when he identifies this unity. To set the matter in a clear light, let that sacred text be considered: *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one*, 1 John v. 7. Now, the question at present is, How may we know certainly, in what sense these three divine persons *are one*?—I answer, by the language of the same Spirit, who is the author of these words, where he declares expressly in what sense they *are one*; as, Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord*. In the original, it is, *one Jehovah*. Now, *Jehovah* is allowed by the learned, to be a name of essence; so, we are told, the Hebrew Rabbins rightly called it.* The learned Broughton, in his translation of the book of Job, often renders Jehovah, *The Eternal*. This is also allowed to be the incommunicable name of God, which is never given directly to any creature. This expression then, must certainly point at the essential unity, which is among the three divine persons. And, it seems plainly to say, that these three persons are one in essence, one eternal, one God. The very learned and judicious Ainsworth, in his Annotations on this place, says; "Here it is probable, that Moses closely taught the unity of the Godhead, and trinity of persons." And thus, says he, many do understand these words. Besides, it is expressly said, Mark xii. 32. *There is one God*. And, 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6. *There is none other God but one*: and, *to us there is but one God*. Accordingly, while the holy Scriptures acknowledge three divine persons, in the plainest terms, they also positively maintain, that there is but one God. It is then certain, that this *oneness* must be understood of the unity of the Godhead, or divine nature, equally found in all these glorious persons. Thus we have proven,

* See Edwards's Body of Divinity, vol. 1. page 45. and Greenhill on Ezek. vol. 1. chap. i. ver. 28.

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proven, that Christ is of the same nature with God the Father, whatever the enemies of this glorious truth may say to the contrary. *This is the true God and eternal life*, 1 John v. 20.

I am forewarned, that they who would crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put the Redeemer of men to an open shame, say, that he is God only by office, but not by nature. One writer expresly affirms concerning Christ, that "As angels, and even earthly governors, are called Gods in Scripture; so he is sometimes, in a more eminent sense, stiled a God: not on account of his metaphysical nature or essence, (which the Scripture saith not a word of,) but on account of the dominion or government, which God hath committed to him, for the eternal salvation of men." *

This is a very bold assertion indeed: but the writer would have done better, if he had kept back his assertion, until he had produced his evidence. I hope, we have given already sufficient evidence to the contrary. But as the glory of our adorable Redeemer is particularly concerned here, permit me to advance a few things, in confutation of such a blasphemous doctrine.

In the first place, we observe, that they who are men by nature, and called Gods *only* on account of their office, in the holy Scriptures, are always called Gods with such plain limitations, as are fully expressive of what they are by nature. We shall begin with Moses, who was made a God to Pharaoh:—*And the Lord said unto Moses, see, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet*, Exod. vii. 1. *I the Lord have made or given thee for a God*: "that is, one to whom the word of God shall come, and by whom it shall be made known to Aaron, and so to Pharaoh." This is the interpretation of the learned and judicious Ainsworth. Accordingly, they are called Gods, unto whom the word of God came, John x. 35.—See also Exod. iv. 15, 16. Here then, Moses is expresly said to be *made a God*. He was one *to whom the word of God came*: and so is spoken of with such limitation, as sufficiently denotes that he was only a creature; a man by nature.

But where is Christ said *to be made a God*? or to be called a God, on account of the word of God coming to him?—Let our adversaries produce one instance of this in the sacred page. When they cannot do this, it certainly appears, that they have no foundation for their blasphemous assertion, in the

* Bourn's Discourses on various Subjects, vol. 2. Disc. 6. London, 1760.

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the word of God. Their doctrine is a very great ſtranger to the word of God; and can no more ſtand before that quick and powerful word, than Dagon could ſtand before the ark.

Gods are alſo ſpoken of with limitation, in the book of Pſalms. *I have ſaid, Ye are Gods: but ye ſhall die like men, and fall like one of the princes,* Pſ. lxxxii. 6, 7.

This Pſalm appears to be addreſſed unto the magiſtrates, or judges, of Iſrael. And, earthly governors are here called Gods, not on account of their nature, but by reaſon of their office, as Cajetan well obſerves, in his commentary on the place. This is well atteſted by what follows;—*But ye ſhall die like men.* They are alſo here called Children, or Sons, of the Moſt High. They appear evidently to be ſo called here, on account of the eminence of their ſtation, to which they were advanced under the providence of the Moſt High. Accordingly, it follows—*And fall like one of the princes.* That is, of the other princes of the world, according to Ainſworth. And, this fall ſeems to be from the eminence of their ſtation;* and by a cruel and violent death.

Now, no ſuch thing is ever ſpoken concerning Chriſt, in the holy Scriptures. The contrary is fully declared there. In the text, he is proven to be *over all, God bleſſed for ever.* This is the character of the true God; and is never given to any creature, whether in office, or out of office.—This is ſufficiently atteſted, Eph. iv. 6. with Rom. i. 25. *One God and Father of all, who is above all. Who is bleſſed for ever.* When theſe texts are read with attention, it will be found, that the true God is here diſtinguiſhed from all creatures, by this character—God alone can be *above all,* or *over all.*—And, He alone is *bleſſed for ever.* Therefore, this text alone ſufficiently proves, that Chriſt is God by nature, and not by office. And hereby, all the blaſphemous aſſertions of Socinians, or Unitarians, on this ſubject are for ever overthrown.

Beſides, Chriſt is uniformly called God, in the holy Scriptures, in the ſame abſolute ſenſe in which the Father is called God. For proof of this, ſee Iſ. ix. 6. where he is called *The Mighty God.* John i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 16. and iv. 10. where he is called *The Living God,* 1 John v. 20. Upon the ſame principle then, that Chriſt is ſaid to be God only by office, you may ſay, that the Father is God only by office: and ſo there will be no God by nature. *The fool hath ſaid in*

* Vid. Gejer. in loc.

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in his heart, There is no God, Pſ. xiv. 1. And the Socinians, or Unitarians, are ſuch fools, as will more fully appear, very ſoon, God willing.

Further; The enemies of Chriſt object againſt the perſonal diſtinction, between the perſons of the Trinity, and their eſſential Unity, that they cannot comprehend it with their reaſon. It is an article of the Socinian creed, That human reaſon is the ſtandard of divine revelation. Accordingly, one ſays, *Nihil credi poteſt, quod a ratione capi et intelligi nequeat*—Nothing can be believed, which cannot be comprehended by reaſon.—This is given for a rule by a Socinian.*

This doctrine is equally monſtrous, as that of tranſubſtantiation. If we believe nothing, but what we can comprehend with our reaſon, we will believe nothing at all. However, it is abſurd beyond imagination, to think that human reaſon ſhould, or could, comprehend the contents of divine revelation. The contents of divine revelation are divine things. And, human reaſon can never judge concerning the propriety of theſe. Every principle of truth muſt be confined into its own object. This is fully proven, and well illuſtrated, by an eminent Engliſh divine, a member of the Weſtminſter Aſſembly. "To ſeek out ſpiritual things," ſays he, "by the ſagacity of reaſon, were to plow with an ox and an aſs. *Senſus non fallitur circa proprium objectum*—Senſe is not deceived in judging of its own proper object." If ſenſe and reaſon make no other report than this; this is the ſtate of things, according to our principles: This is the appearance of things to us. Senſe and reaſon may be admitted for true witneſſes: But; if they will be wiſe, beyond what is written in their book, and ſay, This is the only, abſolute, true appearance of things; becauſe this is the appearance which things make to us. Now ſenſe and reaſon become blind guides, and will lead you into the ditch. Spiritual things are ſpiritually diſcerned. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. By proportion, ſenſual things are ſenſually diſcerned: Rational things are rationally diſcerned. You cannot reach the things of reaſon by the hand of ſenſe, though it be ſtretched out like Jeroboam's towards the prophet. You cannot underſtand ſpiritual

* See Principal Wiſhart's Theologia, vol. 2. Serm. 106. and Mr J. Goodwin's Hagiomaſtix. ſect. 90.

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Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Mat. xxviii. 19. *All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. And, when John saw visions of God, he heard every creature in heaven and in earth, saying, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever*, Rev. v. 13.—See Rev. vii. 9, 10. All the angels of God are commanded to worship Christ, Heb. i. 6. Here we have what is called in the schools, *argumentum a majore ad minus*: a reasoning from the greater to the lesser. And, the meaning is, that when all the angels of God ought to worship Christ, men, who are inferior creatures, ought to do so also. Accordingly, we are told, that his disciples worshipped him, Luke xxiv. 52. We are commanded to believe in Christ, equally as in the Father, John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* They are blessed who trust in the Lord, Ps. xxxiv. 8.—They are also blessed who trust in Christ, Ps. ii. 12.—See John iii. 16. But cursed is he who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.

Grace and peace are sought from Christ equally as from the Father, Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Gal. i. 3. Eph. i. 2. Comfort and establishment are sought equally from Christ as from the Father, 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. The solemn benediction is pronounced equally in the name of the Trinity, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.—See Rom. xvi. 20.

All these things certainly prove, that Christ is equal to God the Father, in every point of view considered as God; and so is God by nature—*God over all, blessed for ever.*—Thus we have finished the doctrinal part.

APPLICATION. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is usually exhibited to the church, as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person; then, we may justly infer from this exhibition, that the redemption of fallen man was more costly to God, than the creation of the world. The creation of the world cost God only a word. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light*, Gen. i. 3.—See the whole chapter. But the redemption of man was effected by God's sending his own Son, *made of a woman, made under the law*, Gal. iv. 4, 5. When Christ came to seek and save that which was lost, he behoved to have a special ordination for that purpose. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20. He behoved to have a par-

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ticular commiſſion, for the execution of this unparalleled work, under the great ſeal of heaven—See John vi. 27. A body was to be prepared for him, Heb. x. 5. In the great work of our eternal redemption, God not only ſpeaks; but the Redeemer alſo becomes *obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*, Phil. ii. 8. He roſe again for the juſtification of his people, and makes continual interceſſion for them in heaven, Heb. vii. 25. Let us then admire the very coſtly work of our eternal redemption. Let believers admire the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who became man to die for them, and was *over all God*, to overcome death. Let us take the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper, admiring what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for us, in our nature. Let us *take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord*, Pſ. cxvi. 13.

Further; Since Chriſt is both God and man, then we may juſtly infer from thence, that they are in a ſtate of perfect ſafety, who hope for redemption through his blood. Chriſt's ſufficiency, as a Saviour, is originally founded upon his eternal power and Godhead, Heb. vii. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. The dignity of his perſon made all his obedience, and ſuffering in our nature, available for our redemption.—Accordingly, the apoſtle, writing to the Hebrews, inſiſts, particularly, in the firſt place, upon the dignity of the Redeemer's perſon, as the foundation of the ſafety of the way of ſalvation through his blood. This appears to be his general ſcope, in the ten firſt chapters. Here, he enlarges on the excellency of Chriſt's perſon, and on the nature of his ſaving offices: And ſo ſhews us that they are ſafe, they are bleſſed, who truſt in him. We could not rely with ſafety on the blood of Chriſt, for the remiſſion of our ſins, if it was not the blood of Immanuel. Accordingly, the overſeers of Chriſt's flock are exhorted, *to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28. Our ſafety, then, in depending upon this blood for the remiſſion of our ſins, is, that it is the blood of him who is both God and man, in two diſtinct natures and one perſon. Thus, it diſarmed the arrows of divine juſtice: the curſes of a violated law. Here alſo we may infer, that Chriſt is a very proper Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Being God, one with the Father eſſentially, he was fit to be entruſted with the glory of God. And, as God-man, he was well accompliſhed for reconciling us unto God by his death—See Rom. v. 10. Being God-man, he knew well how to lay his

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his hand on both parties for reconciliation. Admire Christ then, as God-man, every way accomplished for the work of mediation, between an offended God, and offending men! One who gave adequate satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, which required an infinite ransom. And, let us hold fast the excellent form of sound words, on this important subject, in the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, questions 21 and 22.

Since Christ is here plainly declared to be *over all, God blessed for ever*, then we may infer, that they who deny his proper Godhead, are chargeable with great folly. Their folly must be extreme, when this grand truth is exhibited with such luminous evidence, as it is in this text, and others mentioned in this discourse. And, this will further appear when we consider, that the certainty of this grand position, is of the greatest importance for the salvation of men. *For, if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*, John viii. 24. The Greek is, *If ye believe not that I am.* Some refer this to Christ's divine nature; because I AM is the name of God, Exod. iii. 14. Others understand it of Christ in his mediatory character, as the object of faith in the promise, without whom there is no salvation, Acts iv. 12. The one of these interpretations includes the other: And Christ's proper Godhead is included in both. For *cursed is he who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.* This then clearly manifests both the danger and the folly of denying Christ's proper Godhead. Such are equally foolish, as Dionysius the Stoick, who maintained that pain was nothing: but when he was tortured with the stone in the kidneys, he cried out, that what he had wrote relative to pain was false; for now he found it to be something. They are like madmen shooting arrows at the sun, which will fall upon their own head. Like *raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame*, in their contention with the immoveable rock, against which they dash themselves to pieces. It is equally foolish for frail men, thus to contend with the *Rock of eternity*, as it would be for briars and thorns to enter the lists with devouring fire—See Is. xxvii. 4. And, in the dissemination of their corrupt tenets, they are like madmen running through a country, casting every where around them arrows, fire-brands, and death. Let the generation then beware of such extreme folly.—This is an application which we should make of the doctrine.

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We may alſo here infer, from the open denial of Chriſt's Godhead, ſo clearly proven by this text, and doctrine, that there hath been a great progreſſion of wickedneſs, and of error, in this land for many years. *Nam nemo repente fit turpiſſimus*—For no one becomes moſt wicked ſuddenly. This awful progreſſion is clearly ſtated, and fully proven, Rom. i. from verſe 21. to the end of the chapter. Firſt, they were ignorant of God, and did not glorify him as God. Then they became unthankful, and vain in their imaginations, *and their fooliſh heart was darkened. Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools.* At length, they *changed the truth of God into a lie, and worſhipped and ſerved the creature more than the Creator, who is bleſſed for ever.*—At laſt, they went into what was againſt nature itſelf. There muſt have been a progreſſion then, before men arrived at ſuch exceſs of impiety. How awfully then is God diſhonoured in our land! For this, let the land mourn. Let every one weep in ſecret, becauſe Chriſt is now crucified afreſh, and put to an open ſhame—See Jer. ix. 1, 2, 3. Let us bewail the doctrinal errors and blaſphemies, which have gone abroad into the world: And lament them as they are found in our corrupt nature. They proceed from the wickedneſs of the human heart, Mat. xv. 19.

Further; Let us have faith in God, *that no weapon formed againſt Zion ſhall proſper*—See Iſ. liv. 17. That *when the enemy ſhall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord ſhall lift up a ſtandard againſt him,* Iſ. lix. 19. That in the permiſſion of hereſies in the church, God intends not the church's ruin, but her reparation. "Though the church be full of ruins, yet becauſe it is his own houſe, he will repair it.*—This ſubject may be alſo improven for the conſolation of Zion in diſtreſs.

Since Chriſt is *over all, God bleſſed for ever,* then in war he can make peace. *And this* (God-man) *ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land,* Micah v. 5.—Accordingly, he is called *The Prince of Peace,* Iſ. ix. 6. And the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles calls him *Our Peace,* Eph. ii. 14. He can give peace with God, Rom. v. 1. He can bleſs us with peace in our own conſciences, by ſprinkling them with his blood. This was the ſacred legacy he left unto his diſciples, John xiv. 27. And, in the ſpiritual warfare between grace and corruption, he can give the ſpirit of judgment for chaining up our luſts; and the ſpirit of

* Dr Reynolds on Pſ. cx. ver. 9.

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of burning for the removal of our drofs. He can fpeak a fea-fonable word to the difconfolate. He can make the melancholy mind chearful. He can bruife Satan under his people's feet, Rom. xvi. 20.—He can fill the hearts of God's people with joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13. He can give reft to the weary, Mat. xi. 28, 29. He can heal all manner of ficknefs, and all manner of difeafes among the people, Mat. iv. 23, 24. He can give fight to the blind, Mat. xi. 5. He can make the lame man leap as an hart; and the tongue of the dumb to fing. He can repair the wafted ftrength of the weak; and make the dry bones flourifh like an herb. He can be a Father to the fatherlefs; and the widow's hufband. He can help thofe who feel experimentally the helplefsnefs of man's aid. He can give light to fuch as fit in darknefs; and life to thofe who dwell in the region of the fhadow of death. He can fave to the uttermoft, Heb. vii. 25. *Though your fins be as fcarlet*, he can make you whiter than fnow. Though they be red like crimfon, he can make you as the wool—See If. i. 18. and Pf. li. 7. *Though you have lain among the pots*, he can make you as *the wings of a dove covered with filver, and her feathers with yellow gold*, Pf. lxviii. 13. He can ftrengthen you to do all things. He can keep the flock of his pafture in perfect fafety amidft all dangers, If. xxvii. 3. John x. 28. He can create new heavens and a new earth, where righteoufnefs fhall dwell for ever, If. lxv. 17. He can reform both church and ftate. He can bring the church through all the fwelling feas of manifold tribulations, unto the fea of glafs before the throne—See If. xlii. 1, 2, compared with Rev. iv. 6. The fhip, the church militant, can never be loft, under the conduct of fuch a glorious pilot. She can never be dafhed to pieces againft the rocks; nor can the fwelling waves, rifing ever fo high, drown her. She cannot be wrecked upon the bars of the fea; nor can thefe impede her motion. He, who *is over all, God bleffed for ever*, fhall bring her fafe to the glorious haven of eternal reft.

Further; He can over-rule the floods of herefy and of blafphemy, for the good of his own, Rom. viii. 28. He can make the denial of his own Godhead, a mean to caufe his own faithful followers love him with the greater affection,—as a true faithful wife will fhew her affection for her hufband, when he is openly abufed. By error, he can make the light of truth fhine the more clearly. In a flood of

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of error, he can make the truth prevail. He can make his people faithful in the vindication of truth. And, when he hath made them faithful to the death, he can bestow upon them the crown of life, Rev. ii. 10. He can make his own overcomers, and then give them power over the nations, Rev. ii. 26. And, such as bear the burden in the heat of the day, he can crown with double blessings, as Melchizedeck blessed Abraham with double mercies, when he returned from the slaughter of kings. This doctrine may be improven in an use of trial, Whether we have a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, who *is over all, God blessed for ever.*

If we have a saving interest in Christ, he will be precious unto us. *Unto you therefore who believe, he is precious,* 1 Pet. ii. 7. He is precious as both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person. His proper Godhead is precious. His incarnation is precious. His blood is precious, as procurative of the remission of your sins. And your language will be, what you may find, Eph. i. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

If you have a saving interest in Christ, you will be deeply affected with the dishonour done to him, by the men of this generation. You will be deeply affected with the open denial of his proper Godhead; and with the awful contempt which is now poured upon his atonement. Genuine children must be greatly affected, when their respectable parents are treated with disgrace: So must the children of God, when their spiritual Father is despised in the world. If you are Christ's spiritual seed, you will certainly cry out, when he is crucified afresh, and put to open shame. Like the dumb son, of whom it is reported, that he cried out when he saw injury offered to his father. Although you should have been silent hitherto, in regard to prevailing error and sin; yet you will certainly cry out now, when Christ is crucified afresh, if you are his genuine spiritual seed. Who would not be deeply affected, if such injury was offered to his relations, as is now offered to the *Son* of God? Much might be advanced here: But we shall abridge what was, and might be advanced on the subject; and come to conclude with some brief exhortations.

Be exhorted then, to believe the testimony of God, in his word, with regard to divine truth. Believe that there is a personal distinction between Christ and his Father; and also, an essential unity. And, consider this as purely an object

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object of faith, which human reason can never comprehend. And, where reason cannot wade, let faith swim. You believe the testimony of your own senses, that sea-water is salt, when you have tasted it, though you cannot comprehend the cause of its saltness. Will you not also believe, *that the three who bear record in heaven are one*, though you cannot comprehend their essential unity? Alas! alas! Shall vain foolish man give more credit unto the testimony of his own senses, than to the infallible testimony of his God! Believe, O Christians, that your God is possessed of immutable fidelity; and you may believe the whole of his testimony with the greatest safety. And, you cannot give unto him all the glory due to his name, if you do not believe his testimony. Hereby, you must and ought to set to your seal that *God is true*. And particularly in this generation.—The more God's testimony is discredited, the more you and I ought to believe it. And, in this way, we are called now to glorify God. The more others trust the testimony of their own senses *only*, in matters of faith, let us trust the infallible testimony of our God. And, beware of measuring divine things, by the short line of human reason. Beware of rejecting what corrupt reason neither can receive, nor will receive. Account human reason most like itself, when it submits to divine revelation.

Further here; Let us go, with the faithful, into our watch-tower, and into the sanctuary of the Lord, that we may there wait upon the Lord in the way of his judgments —Wait upon him, that he may teach us his way.—Further here; Be exhorted, in the name of the Lord, to hold fast the doctrine of Christ's proper Godhead, *that no man take thy crown*, Rev. iii. 11. Micah cried out, *Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and what have I more?* Judges xviii. 24. And shall Christians be silent, do nothing, when the proper Godhead of Christ is openly denied, by the men of this and of former generations? The Samaritans ventured their lives, for the precedence of their temple on mount Gerazzim, in their contest with the Jews, in the time of Alexander the Great.* And shall not we, who bear the Christian name, venture our all for the dignity of our Redeemer's person? Our plea hath an infinitely better foundation than theirs. Our cause is, indisputably, good. Therefore, let us not lay down the bucklers, for any opposition. But, while the contest waxeth hot, let us pray fervently

* Joseph. Jew. Antiq book 13. chap. 6.

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vently unto the *Lord of Hosts*, that he may take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for our help. And, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. viii. 31. If Jehovah is on our side, we need not fear the wrath of the enemy—See Ps. cxviii. 6. The enemies of Christ are, indeed, equally obstinate in the denial of his proper Godhead, as if each of them had sworn with Peter, in a public manner, *I know not the man.* But the truth is strong; and it shall prevail. Truth is like a well-built arch; the more it is pressed down, the firmer it will stand. The more it is opposed, with the greater lustre it will shine. And, *truth*, every word the Lord God hath spoken, will reign, until the heavens be no more.

Therefore, hold fast the truth; and the truth shall make you free. The truth shall obtain the victory over all error at last. We shall then conclude with the words of Christ, Rev. iii. 11. *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* Hold fast all the glorious truths, contained in this sacred text: *Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.* AMEN.

THE END.

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