

*Professor Mac*

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**PRINCETON, N. J.**

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**FLATT'S DISSERTATION**

ON

**The Deity of Christ.**

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TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN.

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**FLATT'S DISSERTATION**  
ON THE  
**DEITY OF CHRIST.**

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THE doctrine of the deity of Christ, as revealed in the word of God, is a mystery so high and transcendent in its nature, that we can scarcely wonder at the almost infinite diversity of sentiment existing in relation to it. But neither the abstruseness of the subject in itself, nor the discrepancy of men's notions with respect to it, is sufficient to justify us in declining the investigation as desperate and useless, or in rashly setting down all hypothesis and theories as equally fallacious. Those who take the former course, and withhold their attention from the subject altogether, would do well to consider the presumption and ingratitude of wilfully remaining ignorant of that which God would have them know; and at the same time, to bear in mind, that, in propounding these obscure and mystic doctrines, one design of the Almighty, no doubt, was, to teach men experimentally the limits of their intellectual capacity, and the utter inadequacy of the human faculties, to grasp, in their whole extent, the invisible things of God.

As to those, who are so bewildered in the mazes of conflicting and confused polemics, that they cannot, or dare not, choose any definite opinion from among the many which have been proposed, I shall only say, that they must either be extremely inexpert in measuring the relative force of difficulties and objections; or else so unreasonably rigorous in estimating evidence, as to reject all proof that is short of demonstration. Let such consider, that when called upon to

form an opinion upon any doubtful and contested subject, they are not expected to produce a theory encumbered with no difficulties, but merely to give the preference to that which is encumbered with the least; and which harmonizes best, not with a few detached expressions of the word of God, but with the whole tenor and spirit of the scriptures.

That no theory, which has ever been promulgated respecting the divinity of Christ, so well merits this description, as the doctrine of our church set forth in her confessions, it is my design to prove: in the prosecution of which object my method shall be this; to show, in the first place, that the doctrine in question, has more evidence, positively in its favor, than all others—and secondly, that it is open to less serious objection.

#### SECTION I.

*Containing an exposition and defence of the scriptural arguments for the divinity of Christ.*

An essential preliminary to my argument is a distinct exposition of the doctrine, which I undertake to prove. This of course, requires not merely an acquaintance with the form in which it is propounded, but an accurate idea of the genuine import of the expressions used. To this point, therefore, I shall first address myself. I would remark, then, that there are two phrases, which the church has borrowed from the Fathers, and employed for the purpose of expressing briefly the sum and substance of its doctrine with respect to the deity of Christ. The first is, that the Son of God is *ομοιος*, or *consubstantial* with the Father; the second, that the Father and the Son are distinct *προσωπα* or *persons*. As both the Greek terms here employed are somewhat ambiguous and obscure, it becomes a question of essential moment, what they do in themselves legitimately signify, and in what sense they are adopted by the church.

As to the word *ομοσιος*, the first question which presents itself is this: does it, in its application to the Son of God, imply a *numerical identity of essence*, or does it merely intimate, that the Father and the Son are *the same κατ' εσιν* that is to say, are specifically alike, having so far a common nature as to be reducible to the same species? There can be no doubt, that the latter sense is fully authorized both by the classics and the Fathers.\* Dionysius Alexandrinus, for example, says, that Christ, considered as a man, is *ομοσιος ημιν*,† and the same expression is employed, in a sense evidently similar, in the formula prescribed by the council of Chalcedon. Nay, it might easily be proved, that the word was not understood as denoting *numerical identity of essence* by the Nicene Fathers themselves, who introduced the expression into the language of the church.‡ Be that as it may, the fact is certain, that in later times, the term has been understood by Catholics to mean, that the *εσιν* of the Father and the Son is *numerically identical*, or one and the same; which opinion is adhered to by our own church, as appears expressly from the words of her confession.§

We shall find as little difficulty in determining the sense attached to the word *εσιν* by the church, when used in application to the Father and the Son. It is very true, that it has also a variety of meanings, and is used, in more than one, by the Fathers themselves.|| But at the same time, it is very

\* See Doederlein's *Instit. Theol. Christ.* P. I. p. 376. not. c.

† *Εἰ μὲν οὖν ΟΜΟΤΥΣΙΟΣ ἔστιν ὁ υἱος, καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἡμῖν ἔχει γενεσίν: ἔστω καὶ κατὰ τὸ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἀλλοτρίος κατ' εσιν τὸ πατρὸς, (Ἀθηναῖσι περὶ Διονυσίου.)* See *Bibl. der Kirchen.* T. II. p. 380.

‡ See Fuchs' *Bibliothek der Kirchenversammlungen*, Vol. I. p. 386.

§ August. Conf. Art. I. Art. Smalcald. P. I. &c. The same conclusion may be drawn from the profession of faith made by the sect condemned, in form. Concord. XII. p. 829, &c. (Ed. Rechenb.)

|| See S. R. Doederlein. p. 373. obs. 3:—also, Fuchs' *Bib. Kirchl.* P. I. p. 385. not. 33.



clear, that in the language of our church, it is always used to denote the *divine essence*; that is, either the *substance* or *nature* of God, generally, or in a more restricted sense, the aggregate of all those attributes, which Natural Theology ascribes to God, whether derived from the abstract idea of supreme perfection, or, by induction, from the works of nature; such as eternity, self-existence, omnipotence, &c. The following is the definition of the term, given in the Augustan Confession. "*There is one divine essence which is called God, and is God; eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, omnipotent, infinitely wise and good, the creator of all things visible, and invisible.*"\*

It appears, then, that the first of the two formulas before recited, viz: *that the Son of God is ομωσιος, or consubstantial with the Father*, was intended by the church to signify, that the Father and the Son are partakers of one and the same infinite substance; and that the attributes by which the Father is distinguished from all finite things, as being an infinitely perfect spirit, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, are *numerically identical* with the attributes of the Son, (not merely *similar* or *equal*) and are common to both, without multiplication or division.

But though the divine essence, common to the Father and the Son, is thus numerically identical and *one*, the church, notwithstanding, teaches, that there is between them a real intrinsic difference; to express which difference, this formula is used—*The Father and the Son are two distinct persons*. This word person (*προσωπον, υποστασις*) is, in itself, no less vague and ambiguous than *ομωσιος*. Its meaning, however, may be readily discovered and precisely fixed, by referring to the object of the orthodox, in using the term

\* Una est essentia divina, quæ appellatur et est Deus, æternus, incorporeus, impartibilis, immensa potentia, sapientia, bonitate, creator et conservator omnium rerum, visibilium et invisibilium. (*Augustan Confession, Art. I.*)

at all. For it is very clear that the early Catholics, as well as the modern Trinitarians of other churches, have uniformly introduced this word into their professions of belief for the purpose of drawing a more marked distinction between orthodoxy and Sabellianism; and of more effectually guarding the true church from that and other kindred heresies. We are not, therefore, to understand the phrase in question in the same sense as when we say of men, that *they are different persons*; for that would destroy the numerical unity of God. Nor on the other hand, is the hypothesis admissible, that the difference is merely *nominal* or *logical*—in other words, that *Father* and *Son* are different names for the same thing, or at most, serve only to distinguish different parts and affections, exterior relations, or modes of thought and action, in the self-same substance—or to denote the difference between the substance itself, and its own attributes and operations.\* This exposition of the formula, though expressed altogether in negative terms, is, in my opinion, a substantial one.† Indeed, as the very nature of the subject precludes the possibility of a comparison with any thing which is the subject of our knowledge or experience, it follows, of course, that we cannot conceive, much less define, it otherwise than negatively. Besides all which, we have historical evidence of the inextricable difficulties, in which those theorists have been involved, who have attempted to define this personal distinction between the Father and the Son with mathematical precision. In all such attempts of the kind as I have seen, the definition is either less intelligible than the thing defined, or is such as to land

\* The Augustan confession thus defines the sense of the word *person*.  
 “Nomine personæ utuntur ea significatione, qua usi sunt in hac causâ scriptores ecclesiastici, ut significet non partem aut qualitatem in alio, sed quod proprie subsistit.”

† See Storr über den Zweck der evangelischen geschichte, und der briefe Johannis. Tubing. 1786. p. 474, &c.

us in Tritheism on the one hand, or on the other, in the very error, to preclude which the term was introduced.\*

As to the proposition added to this formula, by the ancient Fathers, the scholastic writers, and various theologians of our own church, with respect to the generation of the Son, and the *αγεννησία* of the Father, I concur with many eminent divines, in thinking that it might be abrogated, or at least left *in medio*, without at all invalidating the established doctrine respecting the divinity of Christ. It is clear, that this doctrine of the generation of the Son involves neither the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son, nor the difference between them. There may be some, however, whose respect for the decisions of the Nicene Fathers, and the scriptural arguments by which they are supported, may induce them to retain the word *generation*. By such the formula before us may be still employed with the addition of that term. But let it be observed, that the word in question, when used by itself, can only serve as an arbitrary symbol of some unknown relation of the Son to the Father; so that they who employ it, even by so doing, acknowledge their inability to comprehend its meaning: and when the phrase is amplified so as to declare that the Son is generated *ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς*, it denotes, after all, no more than this, that he was neither begotten out of any other essence, nor created out of nothing. But if they undertake to define this generation positively, let them be cautious to produce a definition neither inconsistent with itself, nor clashing with established principles respecting the nature of the Father and the Son.

I conclude, then, that the doctrine, which I undertake to defend, may be summed up in these two propositions:

I. *Christ is not merely like the Father, or equal to him in nature and in dignity, but is of one and the*

\* See note A, at the end of the article.



*same divine substance*: or in other words, *the attributes of Christ are numerically the same with those by which the Father is distinguished from all finite and created things, as being an infinitely perfect spirit, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe.*

II. *There is between the Father and the Son, not a mere nominal or logical\* distinction, but a real difference.*

In attempting to defend the doctrine here propounded, I shall content myself with selecting from among the multitude of arguments which have been brought to bear upon the subject, those which I consider as most striking and conclusive, to the explanation and support of which, I shall limit my attention. And here I would observe what I take for granted in the very outset, that the foundation of all argument upon this subject must be *exegetical*, not merely *philosophical*.† Indeed, the whole subject of the Trinity, and more especially that part of it immediately before us, (the divinity of Christ,) is so distantly removed from all analogy, and lies so far beyond the reach of sense and intellect, that a demonstration, strictly philosophical, of the truths which it involves, seems quite impossible. And this conclusion is strengthened by experience; for of all the writers, who, in the middle ages, or in later times, have attempted to build a demonstration of these truths upon abstract principles alone, not one has been able to prove any thing but the miserable weakness of the human mind. It may not be amiss to illustrate this assertion by two signal instances, drawn from the writings of two most ingenious men. The

\* By a *nominal or logical* distinction, is meant a mere difference in name, in exterior relations, in the mode of conception, &c. See p. 6.

† Leibnitz himself, admits that the questions which arise upon this subject, must be decided more by the authority of texts, than by mere abstract reasoning; and Lambert, in his letter to Urlsperger, where he lays down the proper method of investigating this same subject, expresses a similar opinion.

first is Toellner, who observes, "that we cannot but conceive in God, of three eternal and essentially distinct operations; the operations of working, conceiving, and desiring all possible good, both within and without himself. Now three operations really distinct from one another, yet performed from eternity in mutual connexion, presuppose three operating principles, themselves distinct. And accordingly, the mind enlightened by revelation, does admit, that the *power*, the *understanding* and the *will* of God, are not merely faculties, but three distinct independent powers, that is, three substances."\*

It need scarcely be observed, that the reasoning is here founded on a mere gratuitous assumption of the fact, that the three divine acts, which are commonly distinguished in our conceptions of the Deity, are to be ascribed to three acting principles really distinct; and that these three principles are substances. But independently of this, if we admit the validity of Toellner's argument, some new definition of the difference between the Father and the Son, must be substituted for the one proposed above, and some new idea of equality and consubstantiality, take the place of that which the orthodox, for the most part, entertain.

A more ingenious, but not more tenable, hypothesis, is that proposed by Lessing, who imagined that the necessary existence of the Son of God might be argued from the fact, that God must, of necessity, have always present to his view, a perfect image of himself, exhibiting the whole extent of his perfections, with such complete exactness, that

\* See Toellner's Kurze Vermischte Aufsätze, II. B. 1 Samml. 1769. p. 81, &c.

This mode of reasoning was very much in vogue among the Catholics of early times, and among the school men always, as a means of demonstrating the truths of theology on philosophical principles; the faculties and operations of the human mind, being put in requisition, first to *illustrate*, and afterwards to *prove* the doctrine of the Trinity.

nothing which exists in the model can be wanting in the image. His expressions are as follows: "Must not God have a perfect conception of himself, (that is, one in which every thing is, that is in God himself?) Now would it be true, that this conception of the Deity comprehended all things existing in the Deity, if, of his necessary reality, as of his other attributes, there were only an idea, or possibility, and nothing more? Such a possibility might exhaust the other attributes; but would it be so, in respect to necessary reality? If not, it follows, either that God has no such perfect image of himself at all; or else, that such perfect image is as necessarily self-existent as he is himself."\* We find the same hypothesis set forth in Lessing's posthumous works, in a way which shows that it was intimately associated, in the author's system, with the doctrines of Pantheism.† It is unnecessary to observe, that the cause of truth owes slender thanks to any one who would have recourse to the principles of Pantheism, in order to prove the divinity of the *λογος*. But it is easy to demonstrate, that from such a source, no aid can be derived in establishing our doctrine of the Trinity. For, waving the palpable discordance of

\* *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*. Berlin, 1785. p. 68. See note B.

† "God can think of himself only in two ways. He may either consider his perfections in a mass, and himself as their aggregate or sum; or he may consider his perfections one by one. God has conceived himself, from eternity, in all his perfections; that is to say, he has created a Being from eternity, possessing all that he himself possesses. This Being is God himself, and cannot be separated from God; when we conceive of it, we conceive of God, and cannot think of it, but when we think of God, any more than we can think of God without God; or in other words, there could be no God, without this perfect conception of himself. This Being may be called the image of God; but it is an identical image."

(See also Jacobi über die lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn, 1785. p. 41, 42.)

the latter with Lessing's notion of the Son of God, who does not see, that upon his principle, no valid reason can be given for believing simply in a *pair* or in a *trinity* of self-existent beings, or for not believing in an infinite series of such beings? For if all things, that exist in God, exist also in this image, supposed to be formed by God, it is plain that perfect consciousness must be ascribed to it: and when that is once admitted, I can see no principle that would restrict the number of these images to any thing below infinity.

It is no part of my design, however, to give a full specification of the many similar attempts which have been made to derive the truths in question from mere abstract principles. Were such a detail included in my plan, it might easily be shown, that the result, in every case, is an ample confirmation of the fact before asserted, that this *philosophical* or abstract method of proving the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the trinity, is absolutely futile. I shall, therefore, dismiss it altogether, and proceed at once to the consideration of the arguments derived from scripture: reviewing, first, those *dicta* of the apostles John and Paul, in which our doctrine is apparently inculcated—and afterwards inquiring what confirmation the inferences thence derived receive from the words of Christ himself.

1. That John is to be esteemed the highest authority upon this subject, may be fairly inferred from the circumstance, that he enjoyed, in an especial manner, the affection and confidence of Christ; together with the no less important fact, that he composed all his writings, and especially his gospel, for the very purpose of expelling from the Church, an erroneous notion which had crept into it, highly derogatory to the dignity of Christ. He himself declares this to have been the case, in a passage near the close of his gospel, where he states, that it was written *ἵνα πιστεύσωσι οἱ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ὁ χριστός ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, that those who read it, *might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*. To the same point goes the

testimony of Irenæus, which, so far as I can see, is unimpeachable.\* In his book against heresy, (B. III. ch. 11. § 1.)† he distinctly asserts, that the Gospel of John was written, to extirpate from the Christian Church, the errors of Cerinthus; who, as Irenæus states,‡ denied that the world was made, either by Christ, or by the Supreme God; while he held, that the former was superior to all the angelic spirits, but in essence different from God, and united himself with Jesus, a mere man born in the ordinary way, during the period which intervened between his baptism and his death, for the purpose of assisting him in teaching wisdom, and in working wonders.

Whether, in the composition of this gospel, the apostle had not also in view those who held that John the Baptist was the Christ, is a question which does not admit so satisfactory an answer.§ It is a doubt which I am not prepared to solve; for although I am persuaded, that the gospel itself affords just as complete a refutation of the one heresy as of the other,|| I am not aware that the historical evidence is clear enough to warrant a positive decision. It is by no means certain, that, while John was living, there prevailed at all, or at least, among those to whom his writings were addressed, a notion that the Baptist, and not Jesus, was the true Messiah.

But whatever may have been the particular occasion,

\* See Storr's remarks, in the *Repertory of Biblical and Oriental Literature*, P. xiv. p. 127: also, his work *über den Zweck der Evangel. Gesch. und der briefe Johannis*. 1786. p. p. 55, 176.

† His words are these: "John wishing, by the explicit declarations of his gospel, to extirpate the error disseminated by Cerinthus, begins with declaring, that, in the beginning, &c.

‡ See note C.

§ See note D.

|| This is clearly proved by Storr, *über der Zweck, &c. Abschn. I. Haupt. A.*



which gave rise to so careful and minute an exposition of the nature and character of Christ, as we find in the works of this apostle, it is certain that the whole New Testament contains no testimony to the Deity of Christ more clear and conclusive, than the introduction to John's Gospel. It is in these words *Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.* It will here be necessary to ascertain precisely the true import of these terms, and how far they go to prove that the doctrine which I am maintaining, is coincident with that of the apostle John.

There could be no difficulty in determining the sense of the word *λόγος*, were we possessed of authentic information respecting the source from which it was immediately derived, or any peculiar circumstances which may have led the apostle to make use of the expression. But as all such historical guides are wanting, we must find some other clue to the interpretation. It has been said, but never proved, that the term must be traced to the Chaldee language,\* to the phraseology of Philo, or to that of the Cerinthians, in order to discover its peculiar import as used by the apostle. For my own part, I believe, that there are only two practicable methods of making the discovery. The first is, to appeal to the apostle's own authority, by comparison, and reference to other passages. The other is, to trace the idiomatic senses of the term, in the Hebrew, Greek, or Alexandrine dialect. I shall have recourse to both.

I. To begin with an inspection of the context ;—it is clear from that criterion, that the apostle used the word *λόγος* to denote an *essence—an intelligent and divine essence, truly different from the Father, and yet the same, which is otherwise called Christ.* For the first three verses of the chapter, as well as the fourteenth and fifteenth, will not bear the meaning put upon them by interpreting the word to

\* See Doederlein's Institut. Theol. Christ, P. I. † 105.

mean a mere attribute, or action, or exterior relation, or nominal distinction, or any thing, in short, but a distinctive name for Christ. To prove my point more clearly, I shall examine these hypothetical interpretations one by one.

In the first place, then, if we interpret λογος as an abstract term, the words, with which this gospel opens, will, if significant at all, have only such a meaning as is, at once, unworthy of the author, and foreign from his purpose. Admitting, for example, that it means, what it often means in Philo's writings, the חכמה or *intellect* of God, or the whole *vis divina* generally, how shall the apostle be defended from the charge of needlessly accumulating tautologies and truisms? or how can we account for his insisting with such earnestness, upon a truth, which those, for whom he wrote, had never doubted, much less disbelieved?\*

Or, suppose that λογος comprehends not only the *vis divina* in itself, but its outward exhibition; and that John intended by it to express the power of God, so far as it appears in actual exercise. The first clause of the sentence would in that case, be appropriate enough to his design of refuting the Cerinthian heresy. Εν αρχη, *in the beginning*, (the very beginning of which Moses speaks in Genesis, i. 1.) ην ο λογος, *the power of God exerted itself*. But with what possible design, or in what imaginable sense could he have added what comes next, ο λογος ην προς τον Θεον και θεος ην ο λογος; that is to say, upon the assumed hypothesis, *the exertion of God's power was with God, and the exertion of God's power was God himself!* No one, I suppose, would tolerate the following analogous expressions, "Peter's mind, so far as it is seen in outward action, and becomes conspicuous to others, is with Peter, pertains to Peter, is intimately united to Peter, is Peter himself!"

Another sense that has been proposed, is that of *action*,

\* See note E.

as applied to God.\* Nothing more need be said of it, than that it makes the words  $\delta$  λογος ην προς τον Θεον quite superfluous, and those which follow, perfectly absurd.†

But of all the interpretations that have ever been suggested, the most far-fetched and unnatural, is that which makes λογος synonymous with *gospel*.‡ For even waving the important fact, that this meaning does not harmonize with the design of the apostle, it is no easy thing to twist the words  $\text{Ev } \alpha\rho\chi\eta\eta \eta\nu \delta \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , into the sense, that *from eternity God knew the gospel, and had decreed its propogation*. It is harder still, to reconcile with any rule of legitimate interpretation, the application of λογος in the third clause of the first verse to the *author of the gospel*, and in what goes before and after, to the gospel itself.§ But it is superlatively hard to justify, upon any principle of grammatical construction, the arbitrary reference of αυτου, in the third verse, to Θεος, instead of λογος as its antecedent. It appears, then, that the first three verses of this gospel, cannot be interpreted simply and intelligibly, upon the supposition, that the word in question is either used abstractly to denote any attribute of God, or the exhibition of any of his attributes—or employed as a synonymous expression for the gospel.||

By the same process we are led to the conclusion, that the λογος, does not differ from the Father merely in name or in

\* So Hesse understood the word. See his *Plan des Reichs Gottes*. P. II. p. 77.

† For this reason, Hesse in translating the third clause, changes the abstract to a concrete: *Gott selbst war es was sich offenbarte*.

‡ This is the opinion of Benjamin Dawson. See *British Theological Magazine*. Vol. IV. No. 2.

§ The ουτος in verse 2, evidently refers to λογος, the word that was God.

|| See note F.

the mode of conception. For although the words Θεος ην ὁ λογος, teach clearly, that the λογος is divine, and has a separate personal existence, it is no less clear from the preceding words, that between the λογος, and the being there called Θεος, and in other places Πατηρ, there exists an actual and real difference. It is not merely *nominal*: for who can read the words ὁ λογος ην προς τον Θεον and imagine that ὁ λογος and ὁ Θεος are one and the same person? We should laugh at the absurdity of a similar expression in relation to a man; Σιμων ην προς Πετρον, *Simon was with Peter!* It is not merely *logical*; that is to say, the difference is not in exterior relations, but in the thing related; not in our mode of conception, but in the thing which we conceive. For if we admit the λογος to be itself the very being, *with whom* it was in the beginning, viewed under some particular aspect—as endowed, for example, with some specific quality,\* or as manifested in exterior acts,† or as operating in the man Christ Jesus,‡ we cloud the apostles words in obscurity and convert them into nonsense.§ We must therefore conclude from the words of the apostle in the first three verses, that the distinction between Θεος λογος, *God the word*, and Θεος Πατηρ, *God the Father*, is not a mere *nominal* or *logical* distinction, but a real difference.

Again, it is clear, that λογος is not used abstractly, but to denote an essence, from the terms employed in describing the true light (το φως το αληθινον||) the identity of which with the λογος is apparent from a collation of the first five verses with the ninth and tenth. The same inference may be drawn from the words ὁ λογος σαρξ εγενετο.¶ For I see no practicable

\* See note G.

† See note H.

‡ See note I.

§ See note J.

|| Ο κοσμος αυτον εχ εγνω—οι ιδιοι ΑΥΤΟΝ ε παρελαβον—εδωκει εξεσιαν τεκνα Θεου γενεσθαι, τοις πιστευουσιν εις το ονομα αυτου (John i. 10—12.)

¶ See note K.

method of applying these expressions to an *attribute* of God without supposing a *personification* (a figure foreign from the apostle's style) and that, too, of the most extravagant description. That John ever dreamed of adopting Philo's notion, that the wisdom of God was *literally personified*, is a supposition wholly void of plausibility, though it has been advanced by some who deny the apostle's inspiration.\* I conclude, then, that neither  $\phi\omega\varsigma$  nor  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is to be considered as an abstract term, but that both are employed to denote a real essence.

That this essence or person (the name of which is Christ,) is essentially distinct from God the Father,† through the same in substance, the fourteenth and eighteenth verses explicitly declare. From the language of the latter, we learn, that  $\delta\ \mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$  there mentioned and  $\delta\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  are the same.  $\text{Εθεαδ\alpha}\ \mu\epsilon\theta\alpha\ \tau\eta\nu\ \delta\omicron\zeta\alpha\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma\ \delta\omicron\zeta\alpha\nu\ \omega\varsigma\ \mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$ . *We have seen his glory* (the glory of the  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , of the word made flesh,) *as of the only begotten Son*, (such glory, to wit, as becomes the only begotten Son of God.) Now in this very same verse,‡ as well as in the eighteenth,§ the *only begotten Son*,|| thus clothed with the glories of the Deity, is in such a way distinguished from the Father, that we cannot possibly suppose it to imply a mere metaphysical or verbal difference, without supposing, at the same time, that the apostle uttered nonsense.¶ We are, therefore, really forced into the con-

\* See note L.

† See note M.

‡ Whether we suppose  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\ \pi\alpha\tau\rho\omicron\varsigma$  to refer to  $\delta\omicron\zeta\alpha$ , or, which is more probable, to  $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$ , a distinction between the  $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$  and the Father is plainly indicated.

§ Where the *only begotten* is said to be *in the bosom* of the Father; that is, intimately united with him.

|| See note N.

¶ As sheer nonsense as if one should say "Cicero the orator in the bosom of Cicero the consul" &c.



clusion, that the *λογος*, though refulgent with the fulness of the majesty of God, is at the same time, really distinct from God the Father. And that the being thus proved to be distinct, is Jesus Christ himself, I infer from the declaration in the fourteenth verse, that he dwelt among men, and that they beheld his glory; as well as from the language of the 7th, 8th, 11th, 12th,\* and 15th† verses.

Such is the testimony of the context: I now proceed to show that the sense which it leads us to attach to the word *λογος*, is not at variance with the *usus loquendi* of the language,

II. I admit, that the term is strictly and originally abstract; but, to any one acquainted with the idioms of Hebrew and of Hebrew-Greek, the fact must be familiar, that, in both those dialects, abstract and concrete terms are freely interchangeable. Assuming this, however, the question is, what sense can be legitimately fixed upon the term thus used? The answer can only be obtained by tracing the analogies and idioms of the two dialects just mentioned. The analogy of Hebrew which was no doubt, followed by the seventy, as well as by the writers of the books of the New Testament, would justify the use of *λογος* to denote either generally an *intelligent or thinking nature*; † or in a narrower sense, *one who speaks*, whether in the name of another or his own; ‡ or, again, the *author or teacher of a doctrine*; || or finally,

\* Where it is said that the *light* (which has already been identified with the *λογος*) is the person of whom John was to bear witness, and whom *his own* received not. All this, it is plain, can be applied to none but Christ.

† *Ἰωαννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ.*

‡ See note O.

§ See Psalm cix. 4. and *Storr's observations*. p. 15.

|| See John i. 4; 5. xi. 25. xiv. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30.

*one who is promised or foretold.\** From various expressions in the works of Philo,† it appears, that he applied the term in question, not only to the exalted being whom he calls the *Word of God, the most ancient word, the first begotten, the eldest angel, the archangel, God's interpreter, &c.*; but to all *intelligences*, human and angelic, as having alike emanated from the intellectual power of the Deity. It seems also very probable, that the author of the book of *Wisdom* intended by the λογος which he mentions, (xviii. 15,) to designate some angel, perhaps the very same whom Philo calls the Word of God and the archangel.‡

Of all these authorized interpretations, which would be most appropriate to the passage now in question, is a point, which I do not venture to determine. I lean, however, to the sentiment of those who explain the term to mean the *teacher of a doctrine,§ a messenger from heaven,|| an expounder of the will of God.* I prefer this sense, because it harmonizes best with the language of the eighteenth verse; and because it enables us more clearly to account for John's choosing out this term, to denote Christ Jesus as distinguished from the Father. At the same time, I cheerfully admit, that by adopting any one whatever of the meanings thus submitted to our choice, we may render the interpretation of the passage, intelligible, simple, and consistent with the context.

Having now proved, from the authority of John, that the person called Christ, is truly different from the Father, I pro-

\* See Storr's *obs.* p. 19. d Cramer's *Comm. on the introd. to John's Gospel.* Part. I. p. 228.

† See note P.

‡ See Schleusner's *Spicileg. Lexici in interpr. Gr. Vet. Test. maximè Apocryphos.* p. 75.

§ See Doederlein's *Inst. Theol. Christ.* P. I. p. 217, (first edition.)

|| See Storr über den Zweck &c. p. 49.

ceed to show, by the testimony of the same apostle, confirmed by that of Paul, that the nature of the difference between them is not such as to involve the idea of inferiority upon the part of Christ, or to imply that he is merely similar in substance to the Father, or even equal in dignity and perfection, but not numerically identical with God.

I think it clear, that John designed to represent the *λογος* as partaking of the very essence of the Deity, and as being God in the very highest sense. For he is not content with saying that the *λογος* was *with God in the beginning*; that is, before the creation of the world, or at the very time of its creation,\* but clearly intimates in the succeeding words, that the terms, employed in describing this intimate association, are equivalent to an expression of identity, *for the Word was God*. I presume, that the genuineness of this latter clause will not be questioned. Crellius and Bahrdt have proposed emendations of the text; but founded merely on conjecture and in the face of all authority.†

It has been, said that *Θεος* here means, not the Supreme God, but an inferior Deity. As the former sense, however, is that which it uniformly has in the New Testament,‡ it is scarcely credible, that the apostle would, without admonishing the reader, employ it in another and a lower sense. A Jew and an apostle, he would never have used language in relation to the Deity, so ambiguous and obscure, and consequently, so well fitted to mislead the Gentile convert into error and idolatry. But whatever doubt might possibly arise upon the point, it is wholly dissipated by the words of the apostle in the third verse: “*All things were made by*

\* See Grotius' remark on the meaning of the phrase *εν αρχη*, in his commentary, also Semler's paraphrase of the Gospel of John, and Storr über den Zweck &c. p. 432; See also note Q, at the end of the article.

† See note R.

‡ See Storr über den Zweck.

‡ See note S.

*him, and without him was not any thing made that was made ; and again, in the tenth, the world was made by him.* That these expressions indicate the consubstantiality of Christ with the Father, I shall attempt to prove, by showing, first, that *both John and Paul do actually ascribe the creation of the world to Christ ; and, secondly, that, he must in consequence be God, identical with the Father ; and that not specifically merely, or as one of the same species, but numerically, that is, one and the same being.*

To begin with John, I maintain that he ascribes the creation of the Universe to Christ, in the third and tenth verses of his Gospel. This interpretation of the passage is required by the import of the terms employed, by the context and by the design of the apostle. That *παντα*, in the third verse, is used in its largest sense, and signifies literally *all things*, is clear from the latter clause of the same sentence, where the apostle, as if on purpose to obviate any difficulty on that point, agreeably to the Hebrew idiom, explains his affirmative by a negative, denying the opposite of what he had asserted.\* It is no less evident, that *εγενετο* must mean *were made, or were created*, in the proper sense of those expressions, and cannot possibly be made to signify any new creation, physical† or moral.‡ It may be proved, in the clearest manner by induction, that the term is never used by the Seventy, or the apostles, or contemporary writers, in the sense of moral reformation.§ To Faustus Sdcinus' hypothesis, that *παντα* means the *gospel dispensation*, and *εγενετο* that new creation of a moral nature, which it wrought,|| there is this additional objection, that Christ is said to have made the *world*, a term which is admitted to be never used in

\* See Grotius' remarks upon the passage.

† See note T.

‡ See note U.

§ See note V.

|| See note W.



the New Testament, to designate the gospel, or the gospel dispensation, or the renovated hearts and minds of men. But it may be said, that the true sense of the words ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτὰ ἐγένετο, is, that the moral condition of the human race, or of its major part, was meliorated by Christ. But how shall this be reconciled with facts, or with the very words of the apostle in the very same sentence? ὁ κόσμος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐγνώ, *the world knew him not.*\*

If, then, any regard is to be had to the true import of language, and to the testimony of the context, it must be admitted, that, at least in John's opinion, the world was made by Christ; † and that all things excepting God the Father, owed their origin to him. The pertinence of such a doctrine to the design of the apostle, as explained above, is evident at once. What indeed, could be better fitted to exhibit, in its true light, the dignity of Christ; and what more at variance with the Cerinthian notion of a *Demiurgus*, or *Creator* distinct from the Supreme God as well as from his Son?

For proof of Paul's concurrence with John in these opinions, I would refer, in the first place, to the first chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews. His design appears to have been this: to show the excellence of Christianity from the exalted rank of its founder, ‡ by correcting the grovelling notions of the Jewish converts, in regard to the Messiah, and at the same time, their extravagant opinions with respect to the dignity of angels. § With this view, having proved the superiority of Christ to the angels, he goes farther in the tenth verse, and declares, that he was as truly the Creator of the world as Jehovah himself. This I believe to be the genuine import of the words Σὺ κατ' ἀρχὰς κυριεῖ τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσὶν οἱ οὐρανοί. To justify my inference, however, two things must be proved:—first, that

\* See note X.

† See note Y.

‡ See note Z.

§ See note AA.



the words are addressed to Christ ; and secondly, that they are addressed to him as the Creator of the world.

As to the former point, I think the supposition, that *ουρανοι* means angels, and that what is said respecting them, (v. 10—12.) is to be taken in connexion with what follows—clearly repugnant to the words themselves, as well as to the context.\* But even admitting, that *ουρανοι* might possibly mean *angels*, and that those to whom the epistle was addressed, imagined like the Jews of later times,† that some of the angels were every day annihilated and their place supplied by others—can we suppose, that a doctrine, in itself so absurd, and so inconsistent with the word of God, would have been received and sanctioned by an inspired apostle †? Nay conceding even this, and admitting, for the sake of argument, what is utterly untrue—namely, that his interpretation of the words, is, in itself, legitimate ; still, the tenor of the context will not suffer us to sever these three verses (10, 11, 12,) from the eighth and ninth, and connect them with what follows. If the apostle had designed these three verses to be understood of angels, he would certainly have instituted in the tenth, some new comparison between them and the Son, which is not the case. Besides, what is said of the Son in the thirteenth verse, is evidently said by way of contrast, not with what had just before been said (as Wetstein supposes) of the angels, but with that which follows, in the fourteenth verse. The inference then is, that the comparison of Christ with the angels is resumed in the thirteenth verse, and that the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verses are to be taken in close connexion with the eighth and ninth. Assuming this as proved, the question still arises, whether the words *κατ' αρχας* &c. are addressed to Christ himself, or to God the

\* Wetstein interprets the 10, 11, and 12 verses as having reference to angels.

† See Wetstein's notes upon v. 12.

‡ See note BB.

Father, exclusively of Christ. The latter supposition is at variance with the context, and destroys the force of the apostle's reasoning. The passage is totally obscured, unless the words  $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \upsilon\iota\omicron\nu$ , prefixed to the eighth verse, are also understood before the tenth. And there is another cogent reason for rejecting all interpretations, which apply the words in question to the Father, exclusively of Christ. It is, that they must either forcibly sever the natural connexion between the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verses,\* or else unite them to what goes before by some unmeaning *nexus* which makes the apostle's reasoning illogical and inconclusive.† On every principle of sound interpretation, therefore, these words, whatever be their import, must be considered as addressed to Christ. Nor can this conclusion be invalidated by asserting, that the supposed allusion to Messiah, in the Psalm from which the words are taken, cannot be positively proved. It will scarcely be disputed, that the apostle was at liberty to point out, in explicit terms, those covert allusions in the books of the Old Testament, which he knew by inspiration.‡ And it will not be denied, that in the sixth, eighth, and ninth verses, the apostle speaks of Christ; and yet the language of those verses is derived from the Old Testament, and from passages in which the reference to the Messiah is not a whit more susceptible of proof. I conclude, therefore, that the words of the tenth verse, are addressed to the same being whose dignity is represented in the eighth and ninth—in a word, to the Son of God.§

But the question now arises, how are these words to be understood of Christ? Do they represent him as an agent or an instrument? Do they imply that he did, of himself, lay the foundations of the earth, or merely that the Father did it by him? The latter interpretation is by no means in-

\* See note CC.

† See note DD.

‡ See note EE.

§ See note FF.

consistent with the doctrine of the apostle, who distinctly asserts, in the second verse, that the Father laid the foundations of the earth by means of the Son. There is nothing, however, in the words before us, which, in itself, has such a meaning, nor any thing in the context which renders that idea necessary to complete the sense. Nor could the words *by Christ*, or *by means of Christ*, be inserted in the latter clause—*The heavens are the work of thy hands*. From these considerations, it appears most probable, that the expressions of the tenth verse have reference to the Son precisely in the same sense as the eighth and ninth; and consequently, that the words  $\Sigma\upsilon\ \text{Κυριε}$ , are addressed to Christ.

If this conclusion be admitted, it follows of course, that Christ is represented by the apostle, as the creator of the world.\* The expressions here employed—*thou hast laid the foundations of the earth—the heavens are the work of thy hands*,† and others of like import,‡ are uniformly used in the scriptures, to denote the first and original creation described by Moses, and can never be so twisted from their strict sense, as to mean mere moral reformation, or a new creation of the world itself, such as Artemonius pretends took place.§ Grotius interprets the words  $\text{Την γην}$ , &c. thus: *Thou wast the cause of the earth's being founded, and for thy sake were the heavens made*. To this interpretation it may be objected, that the forms of speech in question are always used in scripture to denote the *efficient cause* of the creation||—and there is not a single passage to be found, where a thing done *on account* of any person, or for any person's sake, without his actually doing it himself, is called his work, or the work of his hands,¶

\* See note GG.

† See note HH.

\* See note JJ.

† See Psalm viii. 4. 6.

‡ See note II.

¶ See note KK.

Such being the import of these words, and such the person to whom they are addressed, the irresistible conclusion is, that the same work of creation which the Psalmist ascribes to Jehovah, the apostle Paul ascribes to Christ.

This conclusion is corroborated by the words of the same apostle in another place, (Col. i. 16, 17,) where he infers that the Son is the Lord of every creature (or the whole creation, *πάσης κτίσεως*, v. 15,) from the fact, *that by him were all things created* (*ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ ὡαντα*) *that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.* Here again we find Paul representing Christ as the maker of the world. We cannot explain the sentence otherwise, without doing violence at once to the construction and the context. I admit that there are instances\* in which *κτιζειν* and *κτισις* are so modified by being joined with other words,† as to denote the change from a worse to a better state; in particular, the moral renovation, effected by the gospel. But I do not see how such a meaning can be fixed upon the term as used in the case before us. To interpret the expression, *things in heaven and things in earth, visible and invisible*, to mean the Jews and Gentiles, is an outrage on the principles of language.‡ The words must signify either *all things* in the widest sense, which the visible and invisible universe contains, or in a narrower acceptation, angels and men of every rank and order.§ But who can suppose the apostle to have meant, that the pure spirits who dwell in the city of God,|| or the fallen angels whom the scriptures uniformly represent as excluded from salvation, were created (*κτισθεντες*) in the same sense in which Chris-

\* Such as Ephes. II. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; which passages are appealed to, as decisive of the question by Jonas Schlichting, Grotius, Wetstein, &c.

† See note LL.

‡ See note NN.

‡ See note MM.

|| See note OO.



tians are said (Eph. ii. 10.) to be *created* in Christ Jesus, and (Gal. vi. 15,) to be a *new creature*? Can it be supposed, that creation would be asserted of the angels, in this sense, by the same apostle, who, (Heb. ii. 16,) explicitly declares, that Christ *took not upon himself the nature of angels* with a view to their salvation?

It may be said, however, that no such objections could be urged against a more extended interpretation of the words, as indicating some great revolution wrought in the general condition of the universe. But, even admitting the reality of such a change, affecting men and angels, I hold, that the usage of the New Testament writers will not justify this vague interpretation of the words.\* I deny that any instance can be found in the writings of Paul or in the whole New Testament, where *κτισειν* or *κτισις* can, with any plausibility, be shown to mean such a general or universal change as is supposed. And I need scarcely add, that the apostle's reasoning will be rendered weak indeed, if we understand him to deduce the inference, that Christ is the first-born of every creature, (*πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως*) from the fact of his having wrought some universal change in the nature or condition of the universe.

Since, then, both the *usus loquendi* and the context are so utterly repugnant to any forced interpretation of the word *εκτισθη*, it follows, that it must be understood of the first or original creation† And it is worthy of observation, that the apostle has expressed this ascription of creative power to Christ, in language remarkably explicit and precise. He first enumerates the several classes of created things, celestial and terrestrial, invisible and visible, of whatever rank or order,‡ affirming Christ to be their author; and then shuts out every difficulty and exception by comprehending all in

\* See note PP.

† See note QQ.

‡ See note RR.



one general proposition : *all things were created by him\* and for him.†*

It appears, therefore, that both John and Paul explicitly declare, that the Son of God is the maker of the world. We are now to deduce from these premises the fact, that the power and perfection of Christ are numerically the same with those of the Father. I freely admit, that no such consequence can be inferred from the terms of the passages which make Christ the Creator, considered in themselves. But at the same time, I maintain, that, having once conceded the truth of the assertion, that the world was made by him, the whole tenor of the word of God and every principle of sound philosophy constrain us to admit, that he is God identical with the Father.

That there is one supreme God, the Scriptures uniformly teach. That this supreme God must have made the universe, by the exertion of incommunicable power, and consequently that it could not possibly have been accomplished by the agency of any being inferior and subordinate, is a proposition capable of proof, not only from scriptural authorities, but by reasoning upon abstract principles. The former doctrine of the unity of God is so interwoven with the system of truth revealed in the sacred scriptures, that, without impeaching their authority, it cannot be consistently denied. No one at all familiar with the books of the Old Testament, can be ignorant, that Moses and the other prophets proposed it as the end of all their ministrations to impress indelibly upon the hearts and understandings of the Jews, a proper conception of the one true God, Jehovah ;‡ and that

\* See Rom. xi. 36 ; 1 Cor. viii. 8 ; where *δι' αὐτοῦ* and *εἰς αὐτόν*, are used in reference to the Father.

† i. e. for his glory, or in dependence on his power. See Koppe's N. T. Rom. xi. 36.

‡ e. g. Deut. xiii. 2 ; Isai. xliii. 10. xlv. 6—8. xlviii. 11. See Zachar. Bibl. Theol. p. 1. p. 302.

this same essential truth which lay at the foundation of the Jewish faith, was fully sanctioned and confirmed by Christ and his apostles, is evident as well from their acknowledging, in general terms, the divine legation of the ancient prophets,\* as from their more explicit declarations on this very point, in various parts of the New Testament.† If, then, it is admitted, on the one hand, that there is one supreme God, and, on the other, that Christ is the Creator; to demonstrate the identity of the latter with the former, we have only to prove, that creative power is an incommunicable attribute of God. To this task let us now address ourselves. The arguments upon this point will be naturally two-fold, philosophical and scriptural—those founded upon abstract principles, and those derived from revelation. I shall consider them in turn.

In the first place, then, neither philosophy nor common sense will permit us to ascribe less than infinite perfection to the maker of the world. We can form no conception of active power in a higher degree than that exhibited by him, the mere exercise of whose volition brought all things out of non-existence, of combining and arranging them at pleasure.‡ We can imagine no extent or force of intellect superior to that which grasps in its comprehension all the numberless combinations and relations which bind the elements of the world together.§ And we can conceive no benevolence and wisdom more exalted than that which controls and directs all means and causes to the best of ends—the true felicity of sentient and intellectual nature. How, then, without confounding all distinction between infinite and finite, can we ascribe this power, this wisdom, and this goodness, to a finite being?|| Indeed I know not whether there

\* e. g. Heb. i. 1; Acts iii. 18, 21; 2 Pet. i. 10; John x. 35.

† See note SS.

‡ See note TT.

§ See Plotner's Aphorisms. P. I. p. 459. (new ed.)

|| See note UU.

is any argument which proves more conclusively the perfection of the Deity, than that deduced from the creation. We may regard it, therefore, as established, that the work of creation could only be performed by a being endowed with infinite intelligence and power. One of two things must follow : either God, by the immediate exercise of his own power, created all things but himself ; or else, the work of creation was performed by a being distinct and separate from God, inferior to him, and dependent on him, yet possessed of infinite perfection. That the latter hypothesis is inadmissible, will be clear, on a slight consideration of the indissoluble union which subsists between the attributes of God. For whether we adopt the notion of existence entertained by Leibnitz and Descartes or not, it is certain from the very nature of the Deity, that his necessary self-existence and his infinite perfection are inseparable, so that the rejection of either involves that of the other.\* The world could not, therefore, possibly, be made by the delegated power of any inferior and dependent being, but only by an immediate act of the Deity himself.

The conclusion, thus established by a train of abstract reasoning, may also be derived by induction from the scriptures.

For, in the first place, the Old Testament abounds in revelations, obviously intended to impress the hearts and understandings of the Jews with a deep conviction of this very truth. There are some passages,† in which the work of creation is ascribed to God, in terms so unambiguous and explicit, that no one acknowledging the prophets' inspiration, could for a moment think it possible that it was, or could have been performed by any but Jehovah. Of like import are all those passages which demonstrate the glory and perfection of the Deity, from the wonders of the visible

\* See note VV.

† See note WW.

creation,\* to which may be added, such as declare that God alone is worthy of implicit confidence; that he alone had power to free the Hebrews from oppression; that he alone had knowledge of the future;† and others of like import. For of all these assertions not one could possibly be true, were any other being possessed of such perfection, as the exercise of creative power presupposes.‡

That the doctrine thus promulgated by the ancient prophets, was abrogated by Christ and his apostles, is a supposition which involves, as a necessary consequence, that the prophets, the apostles, and even Christ himself, are open to the charge of the grossest inconsistency. Nay, assuming, what is explicitly declared in the New Testament, that the religion of the early Jews was a divine institution, we charge the Deity himself with inconsistency, if we suppose, that an article of faith, established with such pains and at such expense, and not at all local or temporary in its nature, was annulled by a posterior revelation.§ The apostles would also have been inconsistent, had they admitted and maintained the divine authority and origin of the doctrines taught by the prophets to the Jews; and, at the same time, required them to abandon, not a mere ceremonial rite, but a fundamental article of faith, by transferring to an inferior being the worship due to the one true God alone. Above all the rest, would Paul have been inconsistent, in thus representing the Creator of the world as inferior to the Father. In the Epistle to the Romans, i. 20)|| he affirms that the existence and attributes of the Supreme Being,¶ are so apparent from the works of nature, that the heathen who either know

\* Ps. xix. Is. xl. 26, &c.

† Is. xliii. 10, 11. xlv. 6, 8. xlviii. 11, &c.

‡ See note XX.

§ See note YY.

|| See Zacharia's Biblical Theolog. P. I. p. 78, and Koppe's remarks on Rom. i. 20.

¶ See note ZZ.

him not, or knowing him, refuse to worship him aright, are wholly *inexcusable*. Now all this is fair, and perfectly consistent,\* upon the supposition, that the visible creation was produced by the immediate act of the Supreme God himself. But, on the contrary hypothesis, how can it be true, that a contemplation of effects produced by the operation of a power subordinate to that of God, affords so clear a knowledge of the latter, as to render those, who overlook it, inexcusable? Can the mass of men † be expected to infer from the mighty works of a being merely finite, the existence of one infinite? or be blamed for falling short of the Most High, and paying their devotions to a Spirit, subordinate indeed, but gifted with all the stupendous qualities required in the creator of a world? Surely not. How, then, can we suppose, that Paul here ascribes the creation of the universe to any finite being? Shall we have recourse to the hypothesis, that the creating Spirit is *infinite in power*, yet dependent upon God? what then, shall be said of other passages, in which the same apostle ascribes this infinitude of power to the Most High God, and him alone? And how can we believe, that the apostle, would, in that case, have held him inexcusable, who conscientiously adored, the Infinite Creator, though of secondary rank, believing with the greatest philosophers of Greece, ‡ that the worship of mankind is due to the Creator of the world, as such. At the same time, it must be confessed, that in the words, which ascribe the creation of the world to Christ, there is something, which, at first sight, may appear to favor this hypothesis. We are told in John, i. 3, and Colossians, i. 16, that the word was made *δια τῆς λογῆς*; and in Heb. i. 2, it is said, that God *δια τῆς υἱοῦ αἰωνῶν ἐποίησε*. Now I admit that the preposition *δια*, in itself considered, may be understood to indicate the relation

\* See note AAA.

† See note BBB.

‡ See Meiner's *Histor. Doctr. de Verō Deo*. P. II. † 5.



of an instrument to him who uses it. But I maintain, that no principle of interpretation requires that meaning to be here attached to it; and, what is more decisive, that the phrase cannot be so interpreted, except on the presumption of an inconsistency in the apostle's doctrine. That the words *δι' αὐτῶν*\* in John i. 3, and *ἐν αὐτῶν*† in Col. i. 16, may be understood to denote a principal efficient cause, will scarcely be disputed; and as to Hebrews, i. 2,‡ we can no more infer from the phraseology there used, that the creative power, exercised by Christ, was specifically, or numerically different from that inherent in the Father, than we can infer from the language of Hosea, i. 7, that there are two distinct Jehovahs, one inferior to the other. Nor will the context suffer the words *Δι' αὐτῶν τῶν αἰώνων ἐποίησε*, to be understood of a subordinate and instrumental cause. In the tenth verse, Paul himself explains his obscure expressions in the second, by making a direct application to the Son, of the words of the 102 Psalm, which ascribe the work of creation to Jehovah; at the same time setting him in marked opposition to the angels, considered as God's ministering Spirits. Finally, and above all, any explanation of the words in question, which would represent the son as a ministerial agent, in the process of creation, is utterly repugnant to the uniform language of the prophets and apostles.§

It appears, therefore, as well from the principles of sound philosophy, as from the authority of scripture, that the work of creation could not have been performed by any being inferior to God, but only by an immediate act of the Deity himself. Assuming this as proved, we must either abandon the unity of God, a doctrine most clearly and uniformly taught throughout the Sacred Scriptures, or admit, that

\* See note CCC.

† See note DDD.

‡ See note EEE.

§ Rom. i. 20, Acts xvii. 24.

Christ (who has already been proved to be the Creator of the world, by the evidence of two apostles\*) is possessed of the same *invisible power and godhead* with the Father.

Such are the legitimate conclusions, to be drawn from the testimony of the two apostles, John and Paul. I proceed, as was proposed in the next place, to inquire, how far their statements are confirmed, by those of Christ himself. The question is, did Christ, in any case recorded by the Evangelists, claim the honors due to the Most High God alone? A sufficient proof of the affirmative, is, perhaps, afforded by the fact, that, although habitually reverent towards God the Father, and accustomed to view all things in relation to his glory, yet, when accused by the Jews, of impiety and blasphemy, in arrogating to himself, what exclusively pertained to God, or, in other words, *making himself equal with God*, he neither evaded nor denied the charge.† But this is not all: there are instances, in which he explicitly ascribes to himself, what could not be ascribed to any being inferior to, and separate from God. For example, in John v. 19,‡ he attributes to himself such an intimate participation in the acts and honors of the Deity, that the Jews could not but understand him, as asserting his equality with God. And that the active power, to which, in this last passage, he lays claim, is to be considered as identical with that of God the Father, is apparent from several other passages, particularly, John xiv. 10,§ where he represents the Father as abiding and operating in him;|| and operating to produce the same effects, which, in another place (John v. 19, 21, 26,) he professes to perform, by his own independent power.¶ I agree, therefore, with those who think, that, in these and other passages,

\* See note FFF.

† Matt. ix. 3. Mark. ii. 6. Luke iv. 21. John v. 18.

‡ See Storr über den Zweck, &c. p. 197.

† id. p. 196.

|| See note GGG.

¶ To which may be added, John xv. 14, 15.

Christ does himself, assert his participation in the Godhead of the Father. It is very true, that on the subject of his own pre-existence, and the personal distinction between the Father and himself, he was much less explicit and precise than his apostles. Nor, is the fact, by any means, surprising, for it was, obviously, his design, and one altogether worthy of his wisdom, to confine his personal instructions to the elementary and fundamental truths of his religion, leaving his apostles, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to develop it more fully, and expound it in detail. But while I admit this, I would not be understood as admitting, that the words of Christ himself afford no premises from which we may infer his pre-existence, and his personal distinction from the Father. What other conclusion can be drawn from John viii, 58, *πριν Αβρααμ γενεσθαι εγω ειμι*—which words can only mean, that he existed before Abraham.\* Neither the text nor context will admit of any other explanation. So, also, his words in John xvii, 5, *Δοξασον με τη δοξη ην ειχον προ τε τον κοσμον ειναι παρα σοι*,† can receive no explanation so simple and intelligible, as that which is afforded by the fact, that in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God.

So far as the evidence of Christ himself and his apostles goes, the doctrine of the church is now established. For I hold, that whatever can be proved *hermeneutically*, or by exegetical induction from the scriptures, must be a genuine article of faith. To suppose the contrary, is to suppose, that opposite doctrines may be taught in the self-same forms of speech, and that the gospel, preached by Christ and his apostles, was a medley of truth and falsehood. That Christ and his apostles are authority sufficient to set the subject of dispute at rest, and are altogether worthy of our confidence, I take for granted, as an argumentative discussion of these

\* See note HHH.

† See this passage fully explained in Doederlein's *Instit. Theol. Christ.* P. II. (3d. ed.) p. 255, and Storr, *über den Zweck*, &c. p. 427.

points, would here be out of place. I would only observe, that if their credibility be once conceded, the supposition of their having taught some doctrines by way of accommodation to the prejudices of their hearers, is wholly inadmissible, particularly in relation to the doctrine now in question.\* We have, indeed, no reason to believe, that the Jews of Palestine, at that time, entertained any notions with respect to the Messiah, analogous to those revealed in the New Testament concerning Christ. On the contrary, all history is at war with such a supposition.† But even if the fact were undisputed, that they did consider the Messiah as a partaker in the essence and perfections of Jehovah—or, to use the words of Philo—as a θεος δευτερος, *second to God*, if not co-equal with him; can any one suppose, that Jesus Christ, would, for the sake of conciliating a superstitious mob, have impiously arrogated to himself the honors of the Deity, and continued the profane assumption till the end of life; nay, even then confirming his false doctrine with an oath before the judgment seat, and sealing it with his blood upon the cross?‡ Or if even this were possible, can any man believe, that the apostles—Jews—and, as Jews, educated in the deepest reverence for God, could, for the same poor motive, so far abandon their religious principles, as to be *false witnesses of God*, by rendering to a fellow man the peculiar honors due to the Most High—honors, moreover, which, if Christ were no more than an apostle, each might have claimed, with equal justice for himself?§ It is incredible. It is worse. The supposition is a monstrous one, and can only be regarded as an insult to Christ and his apostles.

\* See Storr's *dissert. de sensu historico*. Tüb. 1778.

† See *Vermischte Versuche*. Leips. 1785, p. 237.

‡ See note III.

§ See note JJJ.

## NOTES.

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### NOTE A. (p. 14.)

Even *Leibnitz*, though so fond of defining every thing, has taught us by his own example, how difficult it is to define the word *person*, with logical exactness. In the first of his letters to *Loefer*, (who designed, at the time, to write a mathematical refutation of a book, by some English Unitarian,) though he does not altogether approve of the method which his friend had chosen, he helps him, notwithstanding, to the following definition: "By *several persons* in the same absolute substance, we mean several individual intelligences, essentially related to each other." In another letter, however, he is for amending this definition, by declaring that "*personæ, &c.*, intelliguntur per modos subsistendi relativos incommunicabiles." It need scarcely be observed, that both are in the true scholastic style—obscurity itself. It is very clear, too, that *Leibnitz* himself, was by no means satisfied with this method of defining the idea, from his language, in a work which he composed about the same time, (*Remarques sur le livre d'un Antitrinitaire Anglois, qui contient de considerations sur plusieurs explications de la Trinité.*) He there lays it down as a principle, that "in relation to *mysteries*, we should keep as close as possible to the very terms of revelation;" and although he afterwards undertakes to tell us what a *person* is, it is rather a negative than a positive explanation. "There must be relations," says he, "in the Divine substance, to distinguish the persons from each other; for they cannot be absolute substances. And yet these relations must be substantial. The Divine persons are not mere nominal distinctions, or diverse relations; as we say of a



man, that he is a poet and an orator. And yet it must be admitted, on the other hand, that they are not as absolute substances as the whole Deity." See *Leibnitz' works*, *Duten's ed.* Vol. I. pp. 18, 22, 25, 26.

NOTE B. (p. 17.)

*Melancthon* makes use of a hypothesis very similar to this, not to prove, but merely to illustrate, the doctrine of the Trinity. "The human mind," says he, "when engaged in thought, forms an image of the objects upon which it thinks. We, however, cannot transfuse our essence into these images, which are consequently evanescent. But the Eternal Father, by contemplating himself, begets a conception of himself, which is his very image, not evanescent, but abiding and partaking of his essence." *Loc. Theol. Lips.* 1552, p. 13. In this way he imagined that the application of the terms *λογος* and *απαυγασμα* to the second person of the Godhead might be best explained.

Similar to both these theories, but much more improbable than either, is that maintained by *Johannes Damascenus*. In the sixth chapter of his book *de orthodoxâ fide*, after laying down the proposition, that *unity is the principle of duality*, he proceeds as follows: "Therefore it is, that the one only God is not without his *Word*, a word, not unsubstantial, but eternally subsisting. There never was a time when God could have been without a Word. He has always had a Word, not like ours, dissolving into air, but abiding, living, absolute; not fluctuating without him, and apart from him, but constantly abiding in him. For where would it be, if generated without the Father? The word of man cannot be permanent, because man himself is frail and short-lived. But as God is perfect and eternal, his Word is perfect, living, and eternal, possessing all things possessed by God himself. The word of man, as it is the product of the mind,

must be something different from the mind itself, and yet it is in one sense the same. Even so, the Word of God is different from the Father, because begotten by him; and, at the same time, is the same in substance; because all things that exist in the Father, exist also in the Word, &c."

NOTE C. (p. 19.)

In the twenty-sixth chapter of his first book, Irenæus makes the following statement: "One Cerinthus taught in Asia, that the world was not made by the Supreme God, but by a power separate and distinct from *that which is over all things*. He maintained that *Jesus* was not born of a virgin, (which he held to be impossible,) but was the son of Joseph and Mary, born in the ordinary way; yet excelling other men in rectitude and wisdom:—that after his baptism, CHRIST descended upon him, from the power which is over all things, in the form of a dove; revealed to him the unknown Father, and perfected his virtues, but at length withdrew from him, so that Jesus died and rose again, while Christ remained incapable of suffering—a spiritual essence." See also Book III. ch. 16.

NOTE D. (p. 19.)

*Wolzogen* supposes that John's primary design, in opening his gospel with a description of the excellence and dignity of Christ, was to do away the impression common at that time, that John the Baptist was to be considered the Messiah, and not Jesus of Nazareth. This inference he supposed to be deducible from Luke iii. 15, John i. 6—8, 15, 19, 29, &c. iii. 28. (See *Wolzogen's works*, p. 701.) The same opinion has been maintained and supported by new arguments in our own times. (See *OVERBECK'S Neue Versuche über das evangelium des Johannes*—and *STORR über den zweck der Evangel. Gesch. Joh. Abschn. 1 Haupt.*

## NOTE E. (p. 21.)

The third verse would, indeed, still be pertinent enough to the apostle's purpose; but the first would be quite superfluous, and the second a ridiculous tautology. It may be proper here to mention, that this second verse is wanting in two MSS. (marked 47 and 64, on Wetstein's catalogue.) They are MSS. however, of no authority.

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There may be some inclined to think, that λογος, in the first verse, means not the *vis divina* precisely, but, in a more general sense, *active intelligence* or *intellectual power*;—and that the words should, consequently, be translated thus: *In the beginning* (of which Moses speaks) *an intelligent power was exercised; viz. the intelligent power of God.* I would only ask of such to explain, why λογος has an article prefixed, defining and restricting it—and also, why the words και Θεος ην ο λογος, are subjoined.

## NOTE F. (p. 22.)

Those who hold that λογος, in the case before us, is an *abstract* term, gain nothing by appealing to the first Epistle of John i. 2. For even admitting that the passages are parallel, may it not be a *concrete* in both cases? There is certainly nothing in the cited verse repugnant to the supposition.

As to those who concur with *Grotius*, *Zacharia*, and others, in understanding ζωην αιωνιον to mean *eternal life* itself, and not *the giver* of eternal life, they must interpret the expression ης ην προς τον πατερα much more rigidly than the apostle Paul. Nor is our doctrine at all at variance with the words απ' αρχης, which, in themselves, neither imply nor exclude the idea of eternal existence. (See Ps. xciii. 2. and STORR, *über den Zweck der Gesch. Johannis*, p. 385.) On the other hand, granting, that λογος, in the first verse, (1 John i.) means the *quickenings doctrines of the gospel*,

and ζῶν, in the second, *eternal life*, it may still be denied, that the context is so much alike in both cases, as to require the same interpretation of the terms.

NOTE G. (p. 23.)

There is an additional reason for not interpreting λογος to mean *Deus qua λογικος*, (*God as endowed with wisdom*.) It is, that we cannot in that case, possibly conceive of any reason for John's affirming so earnestly that the λογος *was in the beginning with God*.

NOTE H. (p. 23.)

If we adopt this meaning, we render the words ὁ λογος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεον, unmeaning and obscure; and those which follow (Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λογος,) perfectly superfluous.

NOTE I. (p. 23.)

This hypothesis is defended in a late work, called *Kurze Revision der Wichtigsten Christlichen Religionslehren*. (p. 8, &c.) It involves us in the same difficulty respecting the words, ὁ λογος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεον, and is liable, besides, to this objection, that the λογος is said, in the third verse, to have made all things.

NOTE J. (p. 23.)

How silly and incoherent are the following analogous expressions: The author of the Gospel of John, was [intimately united] with John, the son of Zebedee—the King of Hungary, with the emperor of Germany—and Newton, as a devout and pious man, with Newton, as a man of genius.

NOTE K. (p. 23.)

*Teller* admits, that it is difficult to justify the explanation of λογος as denoting the *vis divina*, in the phrase ὁ λογος σαξξ

γενεσι. (*Antitheses* prefixed to *Harwood's Dissertations*. Berlin, 1774, p. 51.) But even if we admit, that by an oriental license (of which, by the by, there is not another instance) the terms are here employed in such a sense, is it not really absurd in John to draw so marked a distinction between the Father and the Son, on the ground that in the latter the *λογος* was incarnate—when the *λογος* is nothing more than the *vis divina* of the Father himself? Nor is the difficulty removed by supposing, that the phrase *ὁ λογος σαξξ γενεσι*, was intended to denote that *influence* or *energetic operation* of the power of God, which was common to Jesus with the ancient Prophets and his own apostles. For, in that case, how shall we explain the fact, that *the word* is never said to have been *made flesh*, except when Christ appeared upon the earth; and that the same form of expression is no where used in relation to the prophets and apostles? And I would observe, in passing, that this exclusive application of the phrase in question will by none be found so hard of explanation, as by those who imagine, that John borrowed his notions in relation to the *λογος*, from the works of Philo. The latter, far from limiting its application, would have freely extended it to all men. His doctrine was, that the soul of man is an emanation from the *nature*, or rather from the *intellect* of God—(εκ της λογικης δυναμειως.) See his treatises, *Περι της θεοπεμπτης εναι της ονειρας*. (*Turnebus* and *Hoeschel's* Ed. of *PHILO's works*. p. 570.) and *Περι της Μωυσεως κοσμοποιιας*. (p. 33.)

## NOTE L. (p. 24.)

An accurate comparison of the works of John and Philo, will clearly show how rash and ungrounded is the notion, that the former borrowed from the latter his peculiar sentiments and mode of reasoning. There are passages, it is true, in Philo's writings, from which it would appear, that he enter-



tained some fanciful hypothesis respecting the transformation of an *attribute* of God, into a *person* or *substance*, distinct from God; into which error he was probably misled by a mystical interpretation of the eighth chapter of Proverbs combined with his attachment to the reveries of Plato. To my mind, however, his ideas on that subject, and the doctrine taught by John, seem so totally unlike, that I cannot imagine how the visionary notions of the Jew ever came to be charged upon the Christian.

NOTE M. (p. 24.)

On the supposition that *λογος* means *God considered as an intellectual being*, or *as united with the man Jesus*, I do not see how the words *ὁ λογος σαξ εγενετο* can be explained. If we adopt the latter sense, it is a mere tautology; if the former, why is it, that only the *intellect* or *wisdom* of the Deity is said to have displayed itself in Jesus?

NOTE N. (p. 24.)

That the only begotten Son, in the passages referred to, is distinguished from the Father, not as a mere man, but as the incarnate Word, may be argued from the fact, that the glory ascribed to him, is such as could not be ascribed to a mere man. (See John v. 17, 19.) So, also, in the eighteenth verse, the same conclusion may be drawn from the words *ὁ ὦν εἰς τον κολπον εἰ πατρος*, which express the intimate connexion between the Father and the Son—as well as from the drift of the whole passage. The design of the apostle, no doubt, was, to recommend the gospel by shewing the excellence of Christ, its author. Now, supposing, that, by *ὁ μονογενης*, we are to understand Christ, not under the character of the *word made flesh*, but merely as a man, or even as a man preternaturally brought into the world, how was this description to promote the writer's end? Did it follow, be-

cause Christ was a man like other men, or even a man miraculously conceived and born, that his instructions were to be preferred to those of Moses and of John the Baptist ?

## NOTE O. (p. 25.)

*An intelligent nature*, i. e. endowed with λογος, *reason*. (See STORR's *observations on the analogy and syntax of the Hebrew language*. Tübingen, 1779. p. 79.) [The other meanings are derived from the abstract λογος, in the sense of *speech*.]

## NOTE P. (p. 26.)

“Ο θειος τοπος και η ιερα χωρα πληρης ΑΣΩΜΑΤΩΝ εστι. ΨΥΧΑΙ· δε εισιν αθανατοι οι ΛΟΓΟΙ ουτοι.” (Περι τας Θεοπεμπτας ειναι τας ενεργας. PHILO's *works*, Hoeschel's ed. p. 584.) This passage is certainly not subject to the doubts suggested by *Cramer*, in his commentary. (p. 223.) See also PHILO, *περι αποικιας*, p. 415. A. and p. 583. A.

## NOTE Q. (p. 27.)

The appropriateness of the phrase, εν αρχη ην, as descriptive of Christ, to the design of the apostle, is sufficiently apparent from this consideration ; that *antemundane* (which is equivalent to *eternal*) existence is never ascribed in the Old Testament, to any but Jehovah. (See ZACHARIA'S *Bibl. Theologie*, P. I. p. 252, &c.) But the apostle seems also to have had in view the Cerinthians, who denied the eternity of Christ. For it is very probable, that Cerinthus held the *emanation* of spirits from the Deity ; and it is a fact, that all who held that doctrine, in any form whatever, agreed in the belief, that the spirits so emanating could not be eternal. This inference may be deduced from the very idea of *emanation*, as well as from historical testimony.

## NOTE R. (p. 27.)

*Crellius*, upon mere conjecture, reads ΘΕΟΥ, instead of ΘΕΟΣ. (See *Initium Evangelii S. Johannis Apostoli restitutum per L. M. Artemonium.*) *Bahrdt*, in his *Neuesten Offenbarungen*, proposes to read ΘΕΟΣ ἦν ΚΑΙ ὁ λόγος.

## NOTE S. (p. 27.)

It cannot be supposed, that the absence of the article implies inferiority; for it is omitted, also, in the sixth and eighteenth verses of this chapter, where, as Unitarians themselves admit, the Supreme God is spoken of. (See *Artemonii Init. Evan. Johann.* p. 342.)

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It is worthy of observation, that *Crellius* assigns the very fact mentioned in the text, as a reason why the scriptures nowhere explicitly apply the title *God* to Christ, or rather, why the language of the scriptures ought never to be understood as making such an application. "The higher Christ was held by the sacred writers to be elevated above all other Gods except the Father, the more necessary was it to avoid the application of this name to him, lest he should be mistaken for the Supreme God. For as Christ, while upon earth, was invested with almost omnipotent control over all created things, if the scriptures had expressly called him God, or had not uniformly contra-distinguished him from God, they would have given men a pretext for regarding him as the most high God himself." *Init. Ev. Joh.* p. 295.

## NOTE T. (p. 28.)

*S. Crellius* interprets the tenth verse, thus: *The world, which was about to perish, on account of the sins of Adam*

and his posterity, was delivered from destruction by this life and light—a new period being fixed for the term of its duration. (*Init. Ev. Joh.* p. 541. See also pp. 450, 603.) Upon this, I would observe, in the first place, that the sense attached to *γινεσθαι* is wholly unauthorized by usage; and secondly, that the hypothesis assumed as the basis of the interpretation, is wholly incapable of proof, by scriptural arguments, or any other. For who can believe, in the absence of all historical and physical indications of the fact, that, at the time of Christ's appearing, the world was just relapsing into Chaos?

## NOTE U. (p. 28.)

*Εγχετρο*, in the tenth verse, is supposed by FAUSTUS SOCI-  
NUS—(*Explicat. primæ partis primi capituli Evangelis-  
tæ Johannis.* Bibl. Fratr. Polon. vol. I. p. 81, &c.) JONAS  
SCHLICHTING, (*Commentar. Posthum.* vol. I. p. 9.) LEWIS  
WOLZOGEN, (*Works*, p. 724.) and others—to mean the re-  
formation effected by the gospel, in the character of men.

## NOTE V. (p. 28.)

This appears to be admitted by Faustus Socinus and his followers, who, to justify their novel explanation of *γινεσθαι*, use no argument but this, that the Hebrew writers (whom those of the New Testament imitated) habitually employ *simple* for *compound* terms, and that the analogous word *κτισθαι*, is sometimes used, even in the New Testament, in the sense contended for. (See *Bibl. Fratr. Polon.* ubi supra.)

## NOTE W. (p. 28.)

“The word *παντα*,” says *Socinus*, “is not to be understood so strictly as to mean the *world* or *universe*, but should be considered as denoting the *gospel*, then just pub-

lished and espoused; as if John had said:—This new state of *divine and spiritual things*, which we see produced around us, and throughout the world, is effected solely by the gospel of Christ, and is to be ascribed to the power and agency of Christ." (*Bibl. Fratr. Polon.* Vol. I. p. 80.)

So, also, *Schlichting*: "By *παντα* he means *all things pertaining to the gospel*—the new creation which had then just taken place." (*Comm. Posthum.* Vol. I. p. 6.)

In accordance with these sentiments, *Sam. Crellius* thus paraphrases the third verse: *All things that were necessary for salvation, and for the propagation of the gospel, were accomplished by the second Adam. Nor was he a mere passive instrument, a mere machine, in the performance of the work. Nothing that was done, was done without his consent, approbation, and authority.* (*Init. Ev. Joh.* p. 538.) It is very surprising that *Crellius* did not apply to this verse the same hypothesis, by which he explained the tenth.

NOTE X. (p. 29.)

The connexion between the members of the sentence evidently requires, that the *κοσμος* mentioned first, should be understood as comprehending those called *κοσμος* afterwards. If his meaning had been, that a part of mankind were reformed by Christ, and the remainder not, he could scarcely have expressed it more obscurely and absurdly.

It seems scarcely necessary to observe, that *γνω* is to be understood in the sense of the Hebrew *יָדַע* as denoting, not mere knowledge or intellectual apprehension, but knowledge in union with affection, so as to include the idea of confidence and veneration. (See *Job xvii. 3.*)

NOTE Y. (p. 29.)

The word *δια*, in the third verse, cannot be translated *for, for the sake of, on account of*, for two reasons: first, it



is in construction with the genitive—secondly, it is in opposition to the preposition, *χρησ.* There can be no doubt, therefore, that, when used in reference to the creation, it denotes an *efficient* cause, but whether a *principal* or *secondary* one, will be seen in the sequel.

## NOTE Z. (p. 29.)

The *Racovian Catechism*, (Q. 135,) assumes gratuitously, that the apostle had in view, not the *inherent*, but only the *derived* or *hereditary* dignity of Christ.

## NOTE AA. (p. 29.)

If the supposition were allowable, that among those to whom this Epistle was addressed, there were some who imagined, that one or more of the highest class of angels shared the government of the universe with God, and even took part in the creation, at the same time ascribing to Christ the rank of an inferior angel or that of a mere man, a new light would be thrown upon some parts of the Epistle. (Heb. i. 2, 7, 10; ii. 5—8, 14—17.) But whatever may be thought of this conjecture, it is unquestionably very probable, that Paul had reference in both these chapters, to those who paid more respect to the Mosaic Law, as having been revealed through the agency of angels.

N. B. It is certain, that Philo describes his *λογος προσβουτατος*, whom he also calls the *first-begotten Son*, and the *Archangel*, as having been the *instrument* [*οργανον*] of the Deity in the creation, and his *vice-gerent* in governing the universe. Now, if we suppose that Paul designed to oppugn this doctrine, (a popular one, perhaps,) how pertinent and apt do his words appear. (Heb. i. 5; ii. 5.) He declares Christ to be the *only-begotten* Son of God, sets him in opposition to the angels, who are ministering spirits, and

even describes him as Creator, in the very same words in which Jehovah is so described in the Old Testament.

(See PHILO, Περὶ γεωργίας, p. 195. ed. Hoeschel. ΤΙΣ ὁ τῶν θείων πραγμάτων κληρονομος, p. 509, and Νομῶν ἱερῶν ἀλληγορίαι, Book II. p. 79.)

NOTE BB. (p. 30.)

This difficulty is eluded by Michaelis, who, instead of angels, understands by οὐρανοὶ the *elements* and the *celestial ether*. (*Erklärung des Briefs an die Hebräer.*) But I think he has involved himself in one no less perplexing. For it cannot be supposed, that Paul would have attempted to demonstrate Christ's supremacy by showing his superiority to the inanimate creation; unless it can also be supposed that there were some among the Hebrew Christians foolish or mad enough to rank the elements above the Son of God.

NOTE CC. (p. 31.)

The Racovian Catechism (Q. 135) assumes that only what is said respecting *the dissolution* of the material universe has reference to Christ, and that the meaning of the passage is, that God will destroy the heavens and the earth by means of Christ. If this be the case, we must either suppose, that the person addressed is abruptly changed in the twelfth verse, or understand the word ἐλιξείς as implying the *instrumentality* of Christ in folding up the heavens, &c. Both suppositions, and especially the first, break the natural connexion of verses 10—12. To the latter there is this additional objection, that it wants conformity with the apostle's purpose of proving Christ's pre-eminence above the angels. For how could the Jews be expected to infer the inferiority of the latter, (who were themselves ministering spirits, and agents in many signal changes in the economy of the universe,) from the fact, that Christ was to be employed as

an instrument in the destruction of the world? There is certainly no contrast exhibited in these expressions: *God merely uses angels as his ministers; but by Christ he will destroy the world*; since the office here assigned to Christ could itself be only ministerial.

NOTE DD. (p. 31.)

The author of an English article\* in *Der Britische Theologe*—(Vol. IV. Halle, 1781, p. 204,) maintains, that all the expressions borrowed from the 102d Psalm have reference solely to the Father, and are introduced for the purpose of demonstrating the dignity of Christ, by showing the transcendent glory of the being, from whom Christ's glory was derived—or to prove the endless duration of Christ's kingdom from the eternity and immutability of God. If either supposition be admitted, the language of the apostle becomes exceedingly obscure, and his reasoning altogether frivolous. Would any one who had formed no pre-conceived opinion, ever gather from the context, that the author's drift was such as is supposed? Or would any one infer, from the fact of Christ's receiving certain honors from the Father, that he was above the angels? Or does it follow, because he is God's prime minister, that he is to be preferred to all his other ministers? Nor do I perceive how the endless duration of Christ's kingdom can be any more inferred from the eternity of God, than the endless duration of heaven and earth. And it is the more improbable that Paul would have employed this wretched argument, because, in this same passage, he explicitly asserts the mutability of the visible creation; and, in another place, (Cor. xv. 24,) teaches clearly that the mediatorial kingdom of the Son itself, will, in the end, be surrendered to the Father.

\* Perhaps Priestley.

## NOTE EE. (p. 31.)

If Paul did indeed consider Christ to be the Most High God, he was certainly at liberty to transfer to him all that is said in the Old Testament of God. I would observe, in passing, that in the sixth verse, Paul appears to have borrowed the words of the Old Testament, for the purpose of describing what succeeded the resurrection: and I should be disposed to interpret the fifth verse, on a similar principle, by comparing it with Luke iii. 22, and Matt. xvii. 5, did not the words *καὶ παλιν* forbid such an exposition.

## NOTE FF. (p. 31.)

*Zacharia* is of opinion, that the words borrowed from the 102d Psalm, have reference, remotely, not immediately, to Christ, and are introduced for the purpose of admonishing the reader, that none but the Creator of the world could be its Sovereign Governor. This doctrine is substantially coincident with our's, but I doubt whether the words borrowed from the Psalmist are at all apropos to the supposed design. (See *Zach. Bibl. Th.* P. I. p. 459.)

## NOTE GG. (p. 32.)

Even admitting this interpretation, the essence of our argument is unimpaired. It does not follow, because the Father laid the foundations of the earth *by*, or *by means of*, Christ, that the words *την γην* &c., must be understood of a new creation, physical or moral.

*Θεμελιεν* properly signifies *to lay the foundations* of an edifice, and, in a secondary sense, to erect the superstructure. In both senses, God is said to have founded the earth. See the Septuagint Version of Ps. xxiv. 2; lxxxix. 11; civ. 5; cxix. 90. Job xxxviii. 4; Prov. iii. 19. Isa. xlviii. 13; li. 13. Zechariah, xii. 1.

## NOTE HH. (p. 32.)

For example, ποιειν τον ουρανον και την γην, Gen. i. 1. Exod. xx. 2; xxxi. 17. Nehem. ix. 6. Ps. xcvi. 5; cxxi. 2; cxxiv. 8; cxxxiv. 3; &c. To which may be added such as these: ετοιμαζειν, κτιζειν τον ουρανον και την γην; καταβολη (θεμελιωσις) κοσμου. (Heb. iv. 3. &c.)

## NOTE II. (p. 32.)

Those who consider the language of Isaiah in certain passages, (lxv. 17; li. 16,) as militating against our conclusions, should recollect, that, in one case, the words **וַיִּשְׂרַח** and **וַיִּשְׂרַח** are expressly added; and, that in the other, the words **לְנֹטַע**, &c., may (if genuine) be understood in reference to the original creation. (See *Doederlein*, and *Walther*, on the passage.) But even admitting, that in Isa. li. 16, the prophet has reference to some universal change of an extraordinary nature, the adoption of that meaning, in the case before us, is forbidden by the context. For suppose, that the import of the words, *Την γην εδμελιωσας*, is nothing more than this—*Thou hast produced some extraordinary change*—what becomes of the antithesis between these words and those which follow, *Αυτοι απολυνται*, &c.? I might also mention the violent construction necessary to make *αρχη* mean the origin of the gospel dispensation.

## NOTE JJ. (p. 32.)

To the considerations suggested in the text, may be added this,—that if mention were made of the Messiah as a mere man, it could not possibly be said, in any sense, that the world was made *for him*.

## NOTE KK. (p. 32.)

See (in the Septuagint Version) Deut. ii. 7; iv. 28; xvi. 15; xxiv. 19; xxvii. 15; xxx. 9; xxxi. 29. 1 Kings xvi.



7. 2 Kings xix. 18. 2 Chron. xxxii. 19; xxxiv. 25. Job i. 10; x. 3; xiv. 15. Ps. viii. 6; ix. 16; xxviii. 5; xc. 17; xcii. 4; cxi. 7; cxv. 4; cxxxv. 15; cxxxviii. 8. Isai. ii. 6; v. 12; xvii. 8; xxxvii. 19; lx. 21; lxiv. 8. Jer. i. 16; xlv. 8. Lam. iii. 64; iv. 2. Hos. xiv. 4. Hagg. ii. 15, 18.

As to what Grotius says, in his note on the tenth verse, with respect to  $\gamma\text{-}הַי$ , having, in Hebrew and Chaldee, the sense of *propter*, I cannot imagine how that should determine the meaning of the phrase in question.

It should be added, that in every case where any thing is called the *εργον* of a person, with which he is only morally concerned, some action is always implied on his part, which has contributed to the effect. An act done *for* a person not yet in existence, and, of course, not yet acting, is certainly never called his *work*. Those, therefore, who deny Christ's pre-existence, must, at the same time, either deny what the apostle, in the tenth verse, explicitly asserts, or abandon all the ordinary usages of speech. Those on the other hand, who admit his pre-existence, must also admit, that our interpretation is simpler, and does less violence to language, than that proposed by Grotius.

NOTE LL. (p. 33.)

It has never yet been shown, that  $\kappa\tau\iota\zeta\epsilon\iota\omega$  and  $\kappa\tau\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , by themselves, are ever used by Paul to denote this new creation. See STORR *über den Zweck der Evangelisch. Gesch. Johann. p.* 434.

NOTE MM. (p. 33.)

*W. A. Teller*, in his Dictionary of the New Testament, attempts to justify this forced interpretation, by quotations from Philo, and from Paul himself; but in my opinion very unsuccessfully. From a sentence in Philo's treatise  $\Pi\epsilon\pi\tau\iota$  Mov-

αρχιας, where he says, that the universe is the sanctuary of the Deity, and the heavens his most sacred shrine, Teller strangely infers, that the Jews were accustomed to employ the word ουρανός in the sense of *shrine* or *temple*.\* We should have a strange vocabulary of Greek and Hebrew meanings, if we received the reveries of Philo as authority. Another passage, which he cites, is, that in the treatise Περὶ Γίγαντων, where he distributes men into three classes—*men of the earth* (της γης,) *men of heaven* (του ουρανου,) and *men of God*, (του Θεου,)—those of earth being such as are engrossed in sensual enjoyments, those of heaven, such as are absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge, &c. Now, in this passage, he does not even hint at the distinction between Jews and Gentiles; and yet Teller brings it forward to prove, that τα εν τοις ουρανοις και τα επι της γης expresses that distinction. How little support this interpretation has from other Jewish writers, has been clearly shewn by the learned Koppe. (N. T. Vol. I. Eph. i. 10.)

The passage from Paul's own writings, upon which Teller chiefly insists, is Eph. i. 10, which he explains as Schoettgen and Locke had done before him, but upon very untenable grounds. The word ανακεφαλαιωσθαι is always used in reference to persons, not to things. (See *Raphelius*.) The inference is, therefore, fair, that ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι, should be so interpreted, as to give this meaning to the sentence. *All things that are to be performed in these latter times, in heaven and on earth, are committed to Christ, and to him alone.* But that τα επι της γης, in Col. i. 20, will not bear the same interpretation, is apparent from the context.

\* Το μεν ανωτατω και προς αληθειαν ιερου Θεου τον συμπαντα κοσμον ειναι; ΝΕΩΝ μεν εχοντα αγιωτατου της των οντων εδριας μερος ΟΥΡΑΝΟΝ, αναθηματα δε της αστρας. (L. II. p. 820.) He might as well have inferred from this passage that the Jews used αστρες and αναθηματα as synonyms.

At least, there is nothing in the context, which would lead us to understand the Gentiles and the Jews, by the phrases there employed. Whereas, if we suppose them to denote some new relation between Christ and the men and angels subjected to his power, all is coherent and perspicuous. (See STORR'S *Dissert. in Epist. ad Coloss.* P. I. Tub. 1786, p. 14.)

To return to the passage more immediately before us, we cannot suppose *κτισις* to be limited, in its application, to the Jews and Gentiles, on account of what immediately follows:—*τα ορατα και τα αορατα* &c. For it is surely not allowable to extend the first expression to the Jews and Gentiles generally, and restrict those which follow to the Gentile kings and magistrates. Can any one suppose, that Paul would have called Caligula or Tiberius *α καινη κτισις*?

NOTE NN. (p. 33.)

It is well known that the Jews, and especially the Essenes, against whom Paul seems to argue chiefly in the second chapter, went to a ridiculous excess, in discussing and determining the names and ranks of the different angels. There is no doubt, therefore, that, in using the expressions *ειτε θρονου ειτε κυριοτητες*, he had reference to these speculations, not, however, as recognizing their subtle and minute distinctions, but for the purpose of inculcating the sentiment, that all the angels, of whatever rank or order, even the highest of the heavenly hosts, owed their origin to Christ.

NOTE OO. (p. 33.)

The speculations of S. Crellius respecting the past and future influence of Christ's appearance on the condition of the angels, are too frivolous for refutation. (See *Init. Ev. Johann.* pp. 594. 606.) I shall only observe, that the preterite form of the verb, as used by Paul, (*εκτισται*), is in

the way of that interpretation; and that the sense which he attaches to the word *κτισίς*, is as much at variance with the usage of the language, as his supposititious change in the angelic hosts with the doctrines of the Bible.

## NOTE PP. (p. 34.)

In the Septuagint there is, so far as I know, not a single passage where *κτιζεiv* can be proved to have this meaning. The Hebrew *ברא*, to which *κτιζεiv* corresponds, when used absolutely, *signifies the causing of a thing to be, which before was not*. So the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, are said to have been *הברא* or *εκτισθαι*. (Ps. cxlviii. 5; xxxiii. 9. Gen. i. 3; lxxxix. 12. 47. Deut. iv. 32,) where the meaning evidently is, that, by the will of God, they began to be. The same may be said of the words *ברא* and *κτιζεiv*, in Jer. xxxi. 12. Numbers xvi. 30. Isaiah lxv. 17. There are some instances, however, in which the ordinary meaning is not appropriate; as in Isaiah xlv. 7. Ps. ciii. 30, in which latter case, *κτισθησονται* being put in opposition to *εκλειψασι και εις τον χεν αυτων επιστρεψουσιν*, (v. 29,) shews that a new creation or regeneration is implied: Even from these, therefore, it cannot be inferred, that *κτιζεσθαι* ever means a mere change from one state to another.

It may be added, that, in the apocrypha, *κτιζεiv* is very frequently used to denote *creation* in the proper sense, but never in the sense of *change*. (See 3 Esdras, vi. 13. Wisd. i. 14; ii. 23, &c.)

## NOTE QQ. (p. 34.)

It ought not to pass unnoticed, that throughout the Bible Jehovah is no where more explicately described as the Creator.

## NOTE RR. (p. 35.)

*Of whatever rank or order*—The apostle appears to have made use of these expressions for the purpose of correcting

their excessive veneration for the angels, and dissuading them from the *angel-worship*, mentioned in the second chapter, (v. 18.)

NOTE SS. (p. 36.)

e. g. Matt. iv. 10. Mark xii. 29. John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 4. That the God mentioned in these passages, is the same as the Jehovah of the Old Testament, may be seen by comparing Matt. iv. 10, with Deuteronomy vi. 13.—Luke xx. 37, 38, with Exodus iii. 6, 16; vi. 2; and John viii. 41, 42, with John xvii. 3,

NOTE TT. (p. 36.)

That this is the sense in which Christ is called the Creator of the World, may be gathered from the facts, that the creation is every where, in scripture, described to be God's bringing into being, solely by his own authority and will, that which before was non-existent; and secondly, that the forms of expression used in the Old Testament, in reference to Jehovah, as being the Creator, are used by Paul in reference to Christ. (See Genesis i. 3. Ps. cxlviii. 5; xxxiii. 9. Hebrews xi. 3.)

Some even of those who maintain, that the world was not created out of nothing, but formed of pre-existent matter, admit, that the power exercised in disposing and arranging that pre-existent matter, is the highest that can be conceived. Their hypothesis, however, appears to me untenable; for I cannot consider the idea of necessary self-existence as compatible with that of mutability. (See *Fragmentarische Beyträge zur Bestimmung und Deduction des Begriffs und Grundsatzes der Causalität und zur Grundlegung der Nat. Theologie. Leips. 1788. IV. Fragm. 2.*)

NOTE UU. (p. 36.)

See a *Demonstration of the being and attributes of God*, by SAMUEL CLARKE, Lond. 1706, § XI:—and *Physico-*



*theology, or a demonstration of the being and attributes of God, from the works of Nature, by W. Derham, Lond. 1714.* Even *Harwood* seems to ascribe infinite power and goodness to the Creator. (See *HARWOOD'S four Essays, &c.*) See also *LAMBERT'S Anlage zur architektonik, II. B. p. 553,* and *Sulzer's Vermischte phil. Schriften, 1773, p. 337, &c.*

## NOTE VV. (p. 37.)

Let necessary, independent, and eternal existence be represented by the letter E, and infinite power, intelligence, and goodness, by the letter P. Now the very notion of a *necessary nature* implies the existence of some necessary and most intimate connexion between P and E. And, however you may define the nature of the connexion, one conclusion will inevitably result, viz. that P and E cannot exist apart. For if you suppose, that E is a consequence of P, you must, of course, suppose, that where P is, E must be. On the contrary, if you suppose, that P is included or involved in E, you must, in like manner suppose, that where E is, P must be. This being the case, it is as clear, from the principles of logical deduction, that *of any nature in which E is inherent, P must be an incommunicable attribute,*—as it is, that all rectangular triangles possess the property demonstrated in the theorem of Pythagoras. The reasoning will hold good, if you suppose the connexion between P and E to be such that they bear a common relation to a third property X, likewise pertaining to the Divine nature.

*Kant* and some others hold, in opposition to *Descartes* and *Leibnitz*, that *existence* has no separate reality, apart from *existing things*. Those who maintain this doctrine, (which appears to be the true one,) must either admit that the necessary existence of God supposes infinite perfection

or deny it. If they deny it, they destroy the very notion of a *necessary nature*. If they admit it, how can they believe in the existence of a being infinitely perfect, numerically different from God, and dependent on him?

NOTE WW. (p. 37.)

Genesis ii. 2, (compared with Exodus xx. 11.) Isaiah xliv. 24. Jeremiah x. 12. Ps. viii. 4. cii. 26, &c.

The language of all these passages is such that the writers cannot be supposed to mean a mediate act of the Deity, or one performed by proxy.

NOTE XX. (p. 38.)

On the supposition, that the world was created by an inferior being, how shall we account for the singular ignorance in which the early Jews were kept of this important fact? This circumstance is the more remarkable, because it appears to have been intended by the Deity to accommodate his system of government and instruction to the national propensity of his people towards polytheism, so far as it could be so accommodated, without abandoning the truth. Nor is it a sufficient reason, that the revelation of this fact would have led them into absolute idolatry. For it is well known that the Mosaic Law recognised sacrifices and other rites, very similar to those in use among the heathen.

NOTE YY. (p. 38.)

Apropos to this subject are the words of Lessing, in the following passage from his *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, (1789, p. 29.) "An elementary book for the use of children, may without impropriety, pass over in silence any particular branch of the science or art upon which it treats. But it is not at all allowable, that it should contain

any thing which has a tendency to throw obstacles in the way of the child's mastering those branches of the subject thus withheld. It should rather studiously open all avenues by which such knowledge is accessible, and any work of the kind, which has a tendency to divert the reader from those avenues altogether, or to make him resort to them later than he otherwise would, is not merely incomplete, but essentially defective."

## NOTE ZZ. (p. 38.)

That the apostle is speaking of the Supreme Being, is apparent from the context; (v. 17, 18, 25;) and is conceded by all commentators with whom I am acquainted.

## NOTE AAA. (p. 39.)

It will not be irrelevant to transcribe here a paragraph from *Cranz's* history of Greenland, illustrative of the apostles' doctrine. The historian represents an unenlightened Greenlander, reasoning as follows: "I have often thought that a Kajac with its appurtenances could not possibly be self-existent, but must be the product of human skill and labor, and apt to be spoiled by the ignorance of him who attempts to make them. Now the most diminutive bird is more complicated than the best Kajac, nor is any man capable of making one. But man himself is more complicated and artificial in his structure than all other animals. By whom then was he made? He is generated by his parents and they again by theirs. But whence came the first men of all? They sprang from the earth. But why do men no longer spring from the earth? and what can be the origin of the earth itself, the sea, the sun, the moon, the stars? There must of necessity be some one, who is the maker of all these, who has always been, and can never cease to be. He must be inconceivably more powerful and wise than the wisest

man. He must also be good, because all that he has made is so good and profitable and even necessary for our welfare."

NOTE BBB. (p. 39.)

I freely admit, that the words of Paul are not to be so strictly understood, as to apply the language of the nineteenth and succeeding verses to all the Gentiles collectively and individually; but, at the same time, I deny, that he has reference exclusively to their philosophers.

NOTE CCC. (p. 40.)

*Clarke* himself admits, that "the bare use of the prepositions is not indeed, of itself, a sufficient foundation for these distinctions. For  $\delta\iota'$  is used also of the Father, Rom. xi. 36, and Heb. ii. 10, of the son, Col. i. 16. BY or IN him were all things created." He adds, however, that "when they are used in express contradistinction to each other, as in that passage now cited, 1 Cor. viii. 6, they cannot but very much strengthen an interpretation grounded at the same on other texts and upon the whole tenor of Scripture." (See the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, p. 90.) That this last is a mere assumption, is evident from what we have already said, respecting the unity of the Creator, and will be shewn more clearly in the second section.

NOTE DDD. (p. 40.)

See the passages quoted by Storr (über den Zweck, &c. p. 457,) to which may be added Matthew xii. 24, 28, where  $\epsilon\nu$ , though not convertible with  $\upsilon\pi\omicron$ , plainly denotes a principal efficient cause. I cannot, therefore, agree with Kleuker in supposing, that the phrase  $\epsilon\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\ \epsilon\kappa\tau\iota\sigma\theta\eta\ \tau\alpha\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha$  is borrowed from the cabalistic system, and signifies, that *all things were created in him and with him*, or in other words, that he

contains within himself το πληρωμα παντων των κτισθεντων, *the fulness of all created things*. The improbability of this hypothesis is clear, from the scriptural account of the creation and of the Creator; besides which, the historical evidence is wholly inconclusive. Nor is this deficiency of proof at all supplied by the arguments of *Kleuker*, in his book called *Johannes, Petrus, und Paulus als Cristologen betrachtet* (Riga. 1775, p. 223,) or in that lately published, *über die Natur und den Ursprung der Emanationslehre bey den Kabbalisten*. I am especially incredulous, with respect to the cabalistic origin of the apostle's phraseology in Col. ii. 9. Acts xvii. 28. Rom. viii. 20. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 15. James i. 17. John i. (See *KLEUKER über die natur, &c.* p. 77.) Any further discussion of this point, however, would be foreign from my subject.

## NOTE EEE. (p. 40.)

It may be, that the apostle, in the passages referred to, had in view the opinion, that the world was made by some distinguished angel; and in order to refute it, first asserts, that the world was made *δία τῆς λογίας*, *by means of the Son*, (not by means of angels); and afterwards, affirms expressly, that the Son is far superior to angels, who are only God's ministering spirits, and is just as truly the Creator as *Jehovah* himself.

I cannot venture with the learend *Griesbach*, to change the reading (*δι' αὐτοῦ*) in the verse before us<sup>o</sup> upon mere conjecture. And as to explaining *αιωνος* to mean *dispensations*, it cannot be reconciled with Heb. xi. 3. See *GRIESBACH'S Progr. de mundo a patre condito per Christum*, 1781; and *MICHAELIS' Erklärung des Briefes an die Hebräer*, P. I. Heb. i. 1.

## NOTE FFF. (p. 41.)

This inference is strikingly confirmed by the language which Paul uses, Rom. i. 25, in reference to the Creator,



and Rom. ix. 5, in reference to Christ. On this point, however, I have nothing to add to what has been already said by NOESELT, (*opusc. fasc. I.* 1st ed. p. 158,) and KOPPE, (N. T. Vol. IV. p. 194.)

NOTE GGG. (p. 41.)

Εγω ΕΝ τω πατρι, και ὁ πατηρ ΕΝ εμοι, ὁ πατηρ ὁ ΕΝ εμοι μενων. That these expressions do not indicate a mere *resemblance* or *similitude*, is evident from those used in connexion with them, *I speak not of myself—he doeth the works*; while their connexion with what goes before (*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*,) proves clearly, that they must mean something more than that inspiration which was common to the prophets and apostles.

NOTE HHH. (p. 42.)

*Faustus Socinus* interprets the words *πριν Αβρααμ γενεσθαι εγω ειμι* thus: *before Abraham is become Abraham*—i. e. the father of many nations—*I am already the Messiah*, (See the *works of F. Socinus*: p. 379, and 504.) This interpretation is so evidently forced and repugnant to the context, that one cannot help wondering at the value set upon it by Socinus himself. In the passage of his works last cited, he goes so far as to say: “I have reason to think, that the person who first proposed it, [*Lælius Socinus*] obtained it, by fervent prayer, from Christ himself.” This at least I will venture to assert, that among the many revelations made to that individual, of things unknown to his contemporaries, there is nothing more truly divine than this interpretation.”

The hypothesis, that *εγω ειμι* has reference solely to the decree of God, is equally at variance with the context. (See *WHITBY'S Commentary* on the passage; *LIMBORCH'S Christian Theology*, Amst. 1735, p. 100. *WEISMANN'S*

*Specimina rabulismi exegetici partis Socinianæ.* Tub. 1731. *Storr*, über den Zweck, &c. p. 425.

## NOTE III. (p. 43.)

*Steinbart*, at all times too prolific in fanciful conjectures upon sacred subjects, maintains (in his *Syst. der reinen Philosophie oder Glückseligkeitslehre des Christenthums*, 3d ed. p. 273) that the words of Christ himself, discussed above, were used for the purpose of accommodating his language to the pythagorico-platonic notions of the Greek Jews. It follows of course, that Christ must have addressed himself solely to *Greek Jews*, or else that John must have fabricated the speeches, which he puts in his master's mouth. I am by no means prepared, however, to show such profound respect to *Steinbart's* authority, as to rank his conjectures, in relation to events which occurred in the first century, above the testimony of most credible contemporary witnesses.

## NOTE JJJ. (p. 43.)

Hence, we may readily infer, what judgment should be formed respecting the rule of interpretation which is assumed as an axiom, not proved, in the tenth page of the little work called *Kurze Revision der wichtigsten Christlichen Religionslehren in Aphorismen*, 1875.

[END OF SECTION FIRST.]