

to Nicodemus on earth, he was at the same time in heaven! He was seen sleeping in a ship; and afterwards commanding the wind and the waves, and they obeyed him! At another time he was seen walking and treading upon the waves of the sea! (Matt. xiv. 24-26. Job ix. 8.) At the grave of Lazarus he wept, manifesting the compassion of his Godhead in the tears of his humanity; and afterwards, he displayed the Almightyness of His Power by raising Lazarus from the dead; for as the Father raiseth the dead, &c., so doth the Son! (John v. 21.) As the Son of man, he had no man for his father! As God the Son, he did not cease to be the Son by taking human nature into union with Himself. He became poor not by ceasing to be rich, but by taking human nature, a nature which required nourishment and support! He did not cease to be rich, when he became poor, for then, even in his poverty, he was so unsearchably rich, that *through his poverty we are made rich!* He was crucified in *weakness*, yet he did not then cease to be ALMIGHTY; for when *he was on the cross, he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it, or in himself.* (Col. ii. 14, 15.) The hypostatical union of his Godhead with his humanity was never dissolved! If any one should here enquire, *how can these things be?* The Scripture replies, it is the *Mystery of Faith,—the Mystery of Christ—*and the *Great Mystery of Godliness—*“*The hidden Mystery, which none of the Princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified THE LORD OF GLORY.*” (1 Cor. ii 7, 8.) How delightful should the *mystery of God manifest in the flesh*, be to every believer; since it is, and must be, the constant spring and basis of his eternal hope! *God manifest in the flesh* is Jehovah’s eternal purpose—its accomplishment is called the coming of the FULNESS of time: the *promise runs, I will make him the first born*; (Psalm lxxxix. 27,) the *first born MALE, HOLY, that opened the womb*: (Luke ii. 7, 23,) and as that event constituted the fulness of time, it is very evident, that time without it, would be *emptiness*. Then, Believer, as *God manifest in the flesh* is Jehovah’s eternal purpose, and is the coming of the *fulness* of time, let the greatness of this glo-

rious mystery be the beginning and the ending, the first and the last of all thy thoughts, works, and ways, “for  
 “we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver  
 “and gold from our vain conversation received by tradi-  
 “tion from our fathers. But with the precious blood  
 “of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without  
 “spot: *who is, and was, the ETERNAL and verily foreordained*  
 “*before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these*  
 “*last times for us, who by him do believe in God, that*  
 “*raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that*  
 “*our faith and hope might be in God!*” (1 Pet. i. 18—21.)

Lastly. *Immanuel, with us God, and God with us,* is our everlasting refuge. Whatever is experienced of it below, is an earnest, and token, of eternal glory. Here we follow the captain of our salvation through sufferings: *there, God himself will be our portion and inheritance for ever and ever.*

What a revolution in persons and things, says a spiritual writer, will the day of God exhibit in the sight of creatures in heaven, earth, and hell. . How many who shone gloriously here and had a name to live amongst men, will then be consigned to darkness everlasting! On the other hand, how many of the *foolish, weak, and base*, whom God chose from everlasting, and *who hate lying*, (Prov xii. 5. Isa. lxiii. 8.) will then sit on the most exalted thrones; who probably were scarce so much as noticed in the midst of the multitude of professors. But then, *shall their light rise in obscurity, and their darkness be as the noon day!* (Isaiah lviii. 10.)

It is one genuine mark of a true believer who trusts in the Lord with all his heart, that *he does not lean to his own understanding*, but *he seeks to please the Lord in all he does*, and *to submit to the Lord in all he suffers*: in these *three* respects, no carnal professor can possibly follow him. By means like these, O christian! art thou to prove it to thy conscience, that art thou *not thine own*, but the Lord's, and that Jehovah is thy inheritance. And the more thou art enabled to prove this comfortable truth, the more thou wilt see the unspeakable privilege and happiness of having *Jesus Christ in the flesh* for thy *portion*; for in him dwelleth, (as Beza justly observed)

not merely the fulness of the *divinity*, but of the **GOD-HEAD corporeally**, (*sōmatikōs*.) The more *foolish*, and *weak*, and *base*, thou art in thine own esteem, the more precious will *Jesus* be to thee. Wonderful will it appear to thee every day; that thou art in God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; (1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1 :) and that his *Spirit* dwells in thy body, for it is his temple; and that the Lord's portion should be his people, and *Jacob*,<sup>a</sup> (the *heel* Gen. iii. 15,) the *lot* of his inheritance: Yea, that *Jehovah God in Christ* should be the portion and inheritance of his people, and that thou, a fallen creature, should have such a distinguishing favour, when thousands no more hell deserving than thou art, are left, and treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath! Consider then, that thou art the Lord's, bought with a price; and that the **LORD** is thine inheritance, and thy portion for ever! Then, what an amazing union, and what an indissoluble nearness, subsists between *Him* and thee! *Christ in thee, and thou in Christ*. (Col. i. 2, 27.)

Amongst other blessed evidences of the Pre-eternity of Christ, we have the Holy Spirit's testimony of him as that **ETERNAL LIFE** which was *with the Father*, not from the Father, which **LIFE WAS MANIFESTED!** (1 John i. 1, 2.) God the Father from everlasting gave Christ, *that eternal life*, to the Church, for Christ is our life, our *eternal life*, *without beginning and without end*; and *our life is hid with Christ in God*, and *when Christ our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory*. (Col. iii. 3, 4.) In hope, therefore, of his appearing who is our life, we rejoice *in hope of ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH GOD, THAT CANNOT LIE, promised before the world began*.<sup>b</sup> (Titus i. 1, 2.) If

<sup>a</sup> Mr. *Cruden* says, the Hebrew name *Jacob*, signifies, "he that *supplants* or *undermines*; or the *heel*." The Hebrew name *Jacob* is formed by prefixing the Hebrew letter *yod* to the Hebrew word for *heel* in Gen. iii. 15.

<sup>b</sup> Amongst other Pre-existerian *blasphemies*, we find the human pre-existerians charging the God of truth with *lying*, because **HE** promised us *eternal life*, which, in their opinion, God could not give us, because *their Christ* is not *eternal*, and, as *their Christ* is not *eternal*, therefore, *with all the reason in the world*, they deny the *Pre-eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ*, "*the Christ of God*," (Luke ix. 20,) who is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Heb. xiii. 8.) Indeed, such is the human pre-existerian enmity to the *pre-eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ*,

Reader, thou hast such a good hope through grace, thou shalt never be confounded: for my *sheep*, says the Redeemer, *hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me: and I give unto them ETERNAL LIFE, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Our Lord has finished the work of redemption, HE is now *exalted in the flesh, and glorified in the earth,* (John xviii. 4, 5, Psalm xlvi. 10,) *with the glory which he had with the Father in Heaven, before the world was, the Father's own UNDERIVED GLORY!* And to Him every knee shall bow, and every eye shall see Him at his *appearing, for in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, DWELLING IN THE LIGHT WHICH NO MAN CAN APPROACH unto; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, NOR CAN SEE;* to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen! Having, therefore, a good hope through grace, let us be *looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the GREAT GOD, AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, who gave himself for us; for HE comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.* (Tit. ii. 13. 2 Thess. i. 10.) Therefore, *Asaph* truly said, "*Though my flesh and my heart fail; yet God is the strength of my heart, and my PORTION for ever.*"

that they call our Christ an *ideal Christ*, (P. 1st Let. 37.) And such is their enmity to man's *originality*, and to God *incarnate*, that they declare "*the human soul to be the medium of union between divinity and corporeal substance;*" (S. D. 181,) "*that it is INDECOROUS to speak of an infinite person in deity, being united to a body, WITHOUT ANY INTERVENIENT PRINCIPLE of intellectual kind.*" (S. D. 181.) So that the *soul*, in their plain reason creed, is the *medium, the intervenient principle* between *divinity* and the *body*; for *their God was first souled*, and it was the *soul* which was immediately *incarnate, or incorporated!* Thus they controvert the great *mystery of godliness*, God was manifested in the *flesh*, and the Spirit speaketh expressly, that some would depart from the faith of the great mystery, by *giving heed to seducing spirits and the doctrines of devils.* (1 Tim. iii. 16. iv. 1.)

## CHAPTER VII.

*These things saith the AMEN, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.*  
Rev. iii. 14.

DR. OWEN observes, "that the *Socinians* have laboured "to destroy the Scripture evidences of the **PRE-ETERNITY** "of *Christ*, and for that purpose they pervert the meaning of John i. 1.—vi. 62.—viii. 58, &c." As the *pre-eternity* of our **LORD JESUS** is an important article of the christian faith, so it is the stumbling-stone and rock of offence to all human pre-existerians, who are not such *fanatics* as to believe in the *pre-eternity* of a creature. The pseudo-trinitarian minister preaches the human pre-existence of a **JESUS CHRIST**; but the true trinitarian minister preaches the *pre-eternity* of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**. The *pseudo-trinitarian* craftily conceals his ignorance of, or his hatred to, "the **CHRIST OF GOD**," by asserting that *Dr. Hawker*, and other godly ministers, preached what the *Sabellians* call the pre-existence of **JESUS CHRIST**; namely, the pre-existence of a *Christ of man*, whereas *Dr. Hawker*, and others, preached the *pre-eternity* of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**; who in the *fulness* of time was made in the likeness of men. All *faithful* ministers preach "the **CHRIST OF GOD**," *who waxeth not old*; whereas the human pre-existerians preach a **CHRIST OF MAN'S INVENTION**, one *older* than **ADAM**! The human pre-existerians by asserting, that *Dr. Hawker* and other godly ministers preached the *human pre-existerian doctrine*, most *falsely* insinuate, that they believed in a *began-to-be JESUS CHRIST* as well as the *Sabellians*: which *falsehood*, the human pre-existerian ministers have induced many of their disciples to believe! But many of them are so ignorant, as not to know the difference between "the **CHRIST OF GOD**," and the **CHRIST OF MAN'S INVENTION**, or between the *pre-eternity* of the **CREATOR** and the pre-existence of a creature; for some of them believe, that **GOD** created all things by a creature! But by the phrase pre-existence,

in general use, is not meant the *Pre-eternity* of Jesus Christ, which Mr. Romaine preached from John viii. 24. "*If ye believe not I AM, ye shall die in your sins:*" for Mr. John Stevens, of Meard's Court, Soho, laments Mr. Romaine did so. (S. I. 19, 20.) Mr. Romaine revered God's Bible, he did not pervert I AM into *I was*: and from this glorious text, he established the pre-eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of *Glory*, in opposition to the pre-existence of a *began-to-be Jesus Christ of man's invention*, for Mr. Stevens says, our Lord Jesus Christ was not our LORD Jesus Christ until he had the *soul of a Jew*. (3 Let. 55.) Therefore the pre-eternity of Jesus Christ, "*the Christ of God,*" *who waxeth not old*, (Heb. i. 10, 11,) is an eternal line of separation between the true Trinitarians and the Sabellians, Arians, and all other human pre-existerians, whether they be Pharisees, Sadducees, or Herodians.

In the human pre-existerian writings and creed, the reader will meet with much *deceivableness of unrighteousness*. And I hope he will remember that my design in writing, was not to ridicule my fellow creatures, or to destroy men's lives, but to win souls to Christ. Allow me, therefore, to say, what none but the infidel will dispute; namely, that as Jehovah, by his very nature and essence is, and must be, infinite, and incomprehensible, there can be no other revelation of Him, but what he himself hath condescended to make! And as all the revelation Jehovah hath made of himself must be from himself, and so perfectly correct that there cannot be mixed with it the least shadow of error; so the whole of what he hath condescended to make known is contained in the Scriptures of eternal truth. This no regenerated man will deny; for he will not be so *dishonest* as to say, "*Turn to the Scriptures, and have done with all creeds that are not there expressed;*" and then set up human *imaginings*, and invent lies to support his *supposed reasonable notions*, or *pervert*, what he admits to be, *the only rule of our faith and obedience*. And here, I do earnestly entreat the reader to remember, that as Jehovah is, and ever will be, *incomprehensible* as to the mode of his existence, to all his creatures, it must inevitably follow, that the revelation which he hath made of him-

self, and the mode of his existence, must be *incomprehensible to human reason*: if it were not, it could not be a *true revelation of the incomprehensible Jehovah*. Every attempt therefore to solve the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, (Col. ii. 2,) is *impious* in the professor of christianity, and *impudent* in the avowed infidel: in the former it is *impious*, because *he is a professor* secretly opposing all he pretends to believe; and endeavouring to destroy their *peace*, who hold the *mystery of faith in pure conscience*, (1 Tim. iii. 9); but in the latter, it is *impudence from pride*; his *depraved reason*, or his own conscience, which *Dr. Watts* says, *is the best natural light with him*, "who will conscientiously kill the *saints, thinking he doeth God service.*" (John xvi. 2.) By which conscience some men are led into all the errors, and heresies, which abound in this *intellectual day, the age of reason*: but in men seducers the conscience is *seared!* (1 Tim. iv. 1.) Then, as the revelation of the *mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ* is, and must be *incomprehensible*, it must follow, that *all comprehensible or plain reason creeds are lies*. To all professors with a *plain reason creed*, the Holy Spirit by the prophet saith, *ye walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks ye have kindled. This ye shall have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow*, Isa. l. 11. And as no *lover or maker of a lie*, will be allowed to enter the heavenly city, we ought to withhold from all such characters the right hand of fellowship, because their consciences are seared, and *Christ hath no concord with Belial!*

The enlightened apostle not only admitted the *mystery of God* to be indisputably *great*: but the best account which *Plato*, a man of the most penetrating genius, and enlarged intellectuality, could give of the mystery of God was, that the *mind* could neither *comprehend, nor language express it!* Indeed we ought not to question it, when we consider there is not a particle of matter, or the simplest property in nature, which does not exceed the *comprehension* of our faculties, and elude our utmost investigation. And if all the reason in the world cannot comprehend, and all the wisdom in the world cannot define the essence of a grain of sand, or a *finite* blade of

grass, how shall all the reason in the world comprehend, and all the wisdom in the world find out the *infinite* God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as to the mode of their existence? or why the Son should be sent by the Father and the Spirit (Isaiah xlviii. 16.)? or why the Spirit should be sent by the Father and the Son? (John xiv. 26, xv. 26.); or why the Father is not said to be sent by the Son and the Spirit, but to come to, and make his abode with, all who love the Son and keep his words? John xiv. 23 But as these things are past finding out, and are only received as revealed by faith, there is upon record an answer to every *wherefore, why, and how*, such things can be in Luke x. 21, for Jesus rejoiced in *spirit*, and said, "*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: EVEN SO, FATHER: FOR SO IT SEEMED GOOD IN THY SIGHT.*"

It is never more easy to *stumble* than in the *dark*. And if men reject the *light of faith*, because it is a *mystery*, and choose rather to walk *in the darkness* of their own *depraved reason*; how is it possible for them to avoid stumbling at that stumbling-stone and rock of offence, the *essential Sonship of Christ*? It was the stumbling-stone to the Jews! They even crucified Christ for asserting it! Then how shall they escape, who *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh*? (Heb. vi. 6.) For it is written, he that *believeth not the Son shall not see life*, (he shall not come in sight of it); *but the wrath of God abideth on him*. (John iii. 36.)

How the *manhood* was taken into *personal union* and *oneness* with the essential Son of the Father, surpasses the investigation and capacity of finite beings. Nor is the explanation of this mysterious union needful to us: but only the *assuramce of the fact*. It is our business to *search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of Christ*. Does the Holy Spirit testify therein, that the *Sonship of Christ IS THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST*, (Eph. iv. 13,) in whom dwelleth all the *fulness* of the Godhead bodily? (Col. ii. 9.) Yes! And shall we question his testimony on account of the greatness of this



mystery? Surely not! He knows what he saith, if we do not! Will any say of the mysteries of Christ, that they are contrary to human reason? Let them recollect that men are fallen creatures; and that they reason from ignorance and unbelief: but our God is too wise to err: and when he speaks of things concerning himself, we should remember, he is the God of truth, and can neither lie, nor deceive!

The ministers of God the Holy Ghost's ordaining, preach the *pre-eternity* of Jesus Christ the Son of the Father in truth and love, because his human nature was *begotten* in Mary of the Holy Ghost! They are taught of God, and they know Jesus Christ is the same yesterday before all time, and to-day during the whole period of time, and for ever, when time shall be no longer. They know there is but one true Christ, "the Christ of God." (Luke ix. 20.) That it is eternal life to know him: and to be ignorant of him is *death*. To mistake his real and true character, is to put an *idol* in his place at once: it is setting up a *false Christ*, and rejecting the *only wise God* our Saviour. The human pre-existerians say *their* Christ of *man's* invention is God, and the heathens said the same of their *idols*. The pre-eternity of Jesus Christ is therefore the first and principal article of the christian faith; for the *Arians* and *Sabellians*, in common with all human pre-existerians, *deny* the *pre-eternity* of Jesus Christ! Many of them prophecy great things, and so did *Balaam*,\* nevertheless they all believe in a *began-to-be Jesus Christ*, they even avow that a person in the Trinity could not be our Lord Jesus Christ in any other sense, *than as a human soul was in a personal union with him!* In all their writings upon this subject they are found far from speaking according to God's word; they falsify it, and make it repeatedly void by their tradition! But an infallible author has declared, they do such things be-

\* It is worthy of notice, that the Hebrew word EL is the name of Christ. Mr. Serle says, some derive it from a root which implies *interposition, mediation, or intervention*: it is by the Jews rendered the strong and powerful God: it is the name of Christ recorded in *Isaiah* ix. 5, of whom, *Balaam in his time*, under the influence of the Spirit of prophecy, said, *El (God) is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of man, that he should repent: &c.* Numb. xxiii. 19.

*cause there is no light in them,* (Isa. viii. 20,) yet, like the Pharisees, whose *tradition* they believe, they say, they see, John ix. 41, 41. The old serpent's hatred to "the Christ of God," is as malignant as ever. He tried by the introduction of sin into our world, to frustrate the eternal purpose of God in the work of creation; and with an implacable enmity he opposes the *spiritual* seed of the woman, the great mystery of godliness. He has kept, and still keeps his servants actively employed in preaching *another Jesus*; because a counterfeit gospel has passed, and does still pass for *current coin* with Arians, Sabellians, and with all them who are ignorant of "THE CHRIST OF GOD," the quickening Spirit Head of the Spiritual Church of God.

As the apostle knew by divine revelation, so he believed through faith in the great mystery of godliness, God manifest *in the flesh*. It was so great a mystery, that the apostle admitted it so to be *without controversy*! And no one ever disputed the greatness of the mystery, but those who rejected it as an absurdity. It is also to be remarked, that amongst other evidences which the apostle gave of the greatness of this mystery was, that its *being a mystery* was not even disputed: *and it was even without controversy* a great mystery, that such a mystery was believed on in the world, for it was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the wise Greeks, as it is to the human pre-existerians who have set up an *intervenient human soul* as pre-existing for ages without a body, like a dead man, and afterwards as becoming the *medium of union* between *divinity* and *corporeal substance*. And when it is considered on the one hand, the greatness of Christ's humiliation, the mean and sorrowful appearance he made upon the earth, how he was sustained in his body by our common food, that women ministered to him of their substance, that he needed clothing, was exposed to weariness, and like the houseless poor he had not where to lay his head, and especially that he finally suffered a horrid and scandalous death, and on the other hand that men of reason reject all incomprehensible mysteries, is it not without controversy a great mystery, that such a mystery

should be believed by the *foolish*, the *weak*, and the *base*, whom God hath called, are chosen, and faithful?

Mr. *John Stevens* may look with contempt upon those persons as *foolish* and *weak*, who without controversy do believe in this great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; but nevertheless, though foolish and weak in themselves, they have an understanding given them to know him that is infinite in wisdom, eternal in fore-knowledge, and almighty in power. They have been convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin: they know it to be the greatest of evils; nevertheless, they are assured the serpent is not so wise as God, nor so powerful as Jehovah; that the entrance of sin into our world did not, and what is more, never can destroy Jehovah's purpose in creation! To suppose such a thing is to worship the devil as omnipotent. But the eyes of their understanding have been enlightened to see in God's purpose that event, which is declared to be the coming of the (*pleroma*) FULNESS of time, the revelation of Jehovah's glory and purpose in creation. In that event, they see the *wisdom* of God filling Satan's kingdom with *darkness*, the *humility* of Jehovah overthrowing the *pride* of the devil, and the *power* of God bruising the serpent's *head*, and destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. In that event, they also see the ineffable display and wonderful manifestation of God himself, as the God of all grace, wonderful in counsel, doing *wonderful* things. And as that event constitutes the FULNESS (*pleroma*) OF TIME, we may be certain, that time without that event which constitutes its FULNESS, would be empty! And therefore, we may truly say, that event (the fulness of time) constitutes every thing *in time*; for God is too wise to give a *beginning* to time, without he had the *end* of time also in view: for the *fulness of time*, which *constitutes* the *beginning*, must also constitute the *end of time*, namely, God's *purpose* in creation, the manifestation of himself *in the flesh*! And together with the manifestation of himself, we find the gathering of all his people in the FULNESS OF TIMES (plural) in *Christ*, is an event which cannot be frustrated; for *when the end cometh*, GOD WILL BE ALL IN ALL, (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.)

And this fact is unquestionable, and is without controversy admitted to be a great mystery, for *the Lord God of Israel visited us in our low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever!* (Luke i. 18. Psalm cxxxvi. 26.) Hence Jesus Christ is (*archē*) *the beginning and the ending*, and the *author and finisher* of the works of *creation, providence, and grace*. He is the *archē*, the author of the creation of God, because all things were created by *him*: he is also the *beginning and the ending* of the creation of God, because all things were created *by Him and for Him*. All things were created for *his glory*, the God of glory, (Rev. iv. 11,) *who appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia*. Acts vii. 2.

This truth includes the fact, that *eternal* foreknowledge, *unerring* wisdom, *infinite* humility, and *almighty* power, *great love, rich mercy, riches of grace, long suffering, &c.* would be displayed in the Great Mystery of Godliness, the *manifestation of God in the flesh*.

To believe these things, on account of the greatness of Jehovah's humiliation, is *contrary to sensual* reason, and to the *notions* of unregenerate men: nevertheless, multitudes of mankind have declared their faith in this great mystery, and have suffered martyrdom on account of it, confirming their testimony with their blood.

The belief of this great mystery is such a *miracle*, that nothing but Jehovah's almighty power could possibly have imparted it, or have maintained it from time to time, or that can do it from henceforth to the period when time shall be no longer.

If the heart could be reached by any outward proof, here is one absolutely unimpeachable, namely, that men have *without controversy* believed the great mystery of godliness, namely, God was manifest in the flesh. But the heart cannot thus be reached. It needs the same almighty power of God the Holy Ghost, which *begat* the human nature of Christ in the womb of a virgin, to *beget* faith in this great mystery in the heart of a *reasonable* man: and this miracle of grace is required to bring a man to the acknowledgment of the great mystery of God, which the church of God at large hath ever needed for its invincible support, and which it will continue to need to the end of

time. The *internal* operation only of the Spirit of Christ can render any outward testimonies of him effectual for spiritual life and salvation. And, if the outward testimonies of the gospel itself are only efficacious by that almighty power, which is promised to accompany them, what *saving* force can those testimonies be expected to have, which are not only without Christ, but against him in all his offices, and which directly oppose him whose name is Wonderful, who is the *mercy promised to our fathers*, (Luke i. 72,) the *mercy from everlasting to everlasting*, the mercy without beginning, and that endureth for ever! (Ps. ciii. 17, cxxxvi. throughout.)

It is no small part of the evil of sin, that men are covered with such gross darkness, that their reason opposes the revelation of the God of truth, the only true God, whom they know not, for they have not seen him at any time. Hence is that promise to the church in Christ; “*For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness shall cover the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee; and his glory shall be seen upon thee.*” (Isa. lx. 2.)

Philosophers have made great inquiries into, and have obtained many notions of, the Deity; and these notions they have adorned with great elegancy of speech. They saw the invisible things of God in the works of creation, and (*phaskontes einai sophoi*) *they boasted that they were wise*, as having all the reason in the world; but the Apostle says, *they became fools*, (Rom. i. 20—22,) and he assures us, that the world in its wisdom, that is, these men with all the reason in the world, by their wisdom knew not God; (1 Cor. i. 21,) and after that, *in the wisdom of God*, the world by wisdom knew not God, although they made a great profession to the contrary, *it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching the word of faith*, (Rom. x. 8,) *to save them that believe.*

With respect unto this universal darkness, the ignorance of the only true God, Christ is truly called *the light of men*, and the *light of the world*, because in and by him alone this darkness is dispelled; he is the **ESSENTIAL** God *confessedly*, and *declaratively*, *Jesus confessed*, and said, *I and the Father are one*, (John x. 30,) and he de-

clared, and said, *he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* (John xiv. 9.) And the Holy Spirit testifies to the truth thereof, and glorifies him manifestively, as the **GREAT GOD OUR SAVIOUR.** In the works of creation we see the invisible things of God, namely, his *eternal power and Godhead*, but in Christ we see God manifestively, as Jesus said, *he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* John xiv. 9.

The darkness in the minds of men, the ignorance of the only true God yet continues; for herein Satan erects his kingdom and his throne as the God of this world. And it may be truly said of Satan, he is the *great reasoner and questioner that rules* the minds of all those men who oppose the truth of divine revelation! And from him, as the father of *lies*, proceed all the heresies that abound amongst professors who *believe* in a Christ of *lying* men's invention, and reject *the Christ of God!* Luke ix. 20.

God was known under the Old Testament dispensation, by the revelation of his word, and the institution of his worship. This was the glory and privilege of Israel, as the Psalmist declares, "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any other nation." (Psalm cxlvii. 17, 28) The church then knew him under the *shadow of good things to come*, yet they did not comprehend so *clearly* as now, that glory which should afterward be revealed; for the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is *now* abolished!

The Lord our God in the *fulness* of time, pursuant to his promise, raised up unto them a prophet from the midst of them, of their brethren, like unto Moses, (Deut. xviii. 15. Acts iii. 22, 23,) according to all that they desired of the Lord their God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, "Let us not hear again the voice of the Lord our God, neither let us see this great fire any more, that we die not." It was not therefore the voice of a human soul, which the *lying* human pre-existerians say, they heard in Horeb, but the voice of the Lord their God, who promised to raise up a prophet like unto Moses, whom they were to hear, that they die not, and Christ is that prophet raised up from the midst of them, of their brethren, like unto

Moses; and he is also the Lord God of the prophets, whose voice, and not the voice of a human soul, the Israelites heard in Horeb, for he is able to speak to the heart! As the law came by Moses, so the grace and truth, which that cloudy dispensation shadowed forth, came by Jesus Christ; for Christ is the light, and in him there is no darkness at all. He calls unto us, saying, "Behold me, look unto me, and be ye saved, *"beside me there is no God, a just God and a Saviour."* (Isa. xlv.) Surely then, it is an important question, what think ye of "The Christ of God?"—"What do ye behold "in Him?" Do ye see him by *faith*, who is *invisible*, to be the *Image of the INVISIBLE GOD*? Do ye see him by *faith* to be the express Image of the Father's person? Yes, ye do, *if ye have the faith of God's elect*; so that ye have no need of Philip's request, "*Lord shew us the Father?*" because having seen him, ye have seen the Father also! (John xiv. 9.)

All that can be known of *God, or of Christ*, is by the revelation which came from heaven. The Bible gives us a plain, true, and perfect account of the Messiah; it contains all that man on earth need to know of him. The account is complete and infallible. Our business is to search the Scriptures, dependant on the Holy Spirit, who bears witness to the truth he hath revealed, and which he hath recorded in *his own Bible*, concerning *the Christ of God*. Does he speak such things as are far above all human comprehension? Shall we question his testimony on this account? Surely not: he knows what he saith, if we do not. God is wiser than man. Will any say of the revealed mysteries of Christ, that they are contrary to man's reason? True, they are so: because man's sin is the cause of man's ignorance, and man's ignorance is the cause of man's reasoning. Say not, therefore, how can these things be? They are, and must be true, because God hath spoken them.

Will Free-thinkers say, that they do not set aside the Scriptures; but they call in aid their reason in order to understand the mysteries therein revealed? The believer may reply, that *reason* is of no more use to explain those

mysteries, than a farthing candle is to see the sun; for the sun can never be seen but in its own light!

The reason of fallen men is strongly opposed to the goodness and greatness of Immanuel. Freethinkers object to the exalted character, and to the greatness of the Redeemer's humility, from pride; knowing, that if the Godhead constituted the pre-eminence of Christ *in all things*, then the creature man has nothing short of God to glory in; and this thought sinks proud man into dust! It compels him to acknowledge with Abraham his originality to be *dust and ashes*.<sup>a</sup> Satan would, if he could, destroy

<sup>a</sup> The English Reformers, bold in the defence of Truth, gave the following caution to their hearers, with their testimony to God's truth as to man's *originality*; which truth, human soul pre-existerians labour to destroy!

“The Holy Ghost, in writing the Holy Scripture, is in nothing more diligent, than to pull down man's *vain glory* and *pride*! which, of all vices, is most universally grafted in all mankind, *from the first infection* of our first father Adam. And therefore we read, in many places of Scripture, many notable lessons against this old rooted vice! to teach us the most commendable virtue of *humility*, how to *know ourselves*, and to *remember what we be of ourselves*. In the Book of Genesis, chap. iii. 19, ALMIGHTY GOD giveth us all a *name* in our great grandfather Adam, which ought to warn us all to consider what we be, whereof we be, from whence we came, &c. saying thus, ‘*In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou be turned again into the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: inasmuch as thou art dust, and into dust shalt thou be turned again.*’ Here, as it were in a glass, we may learn to know ourselves to be but *ground, earth, and ashes*; and that to *earth* and *ashes* we shall return. Also, the holy Patriarch Abraham did well remember this *name, dust, earth, and ashes*, appoiated and assigned by God to all mankind; and, therefore, he calleth himself by that name, when he maketh his earnest prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah. And we read that *Esther, Job, Jeremiah*, with other *holy men and women in the Old Testament*, did use *sackcloth*, and did cast *dust and ashes* upon their heads, when they bewailed their sinful living. They called and cried to God for help and mercy with such a ceremony of *sackcloth, dust, and ashes*, that thereby they might declare to the whole world, what an humble and lowly estimation they had of themselves, how well they remembered their *name* aforesaid, their *originality, dust, earth, and ashes*. It is not without great cause that the Scripture of God doth so many times call all men here in this world by this word, EARTH. *O thou earth, earth, earth, saith Jeremiah, hear the word of the LORD.* Jerem xxii 29. This is our *right name, earth, earth, earth*, pronounced by the Prophet, and sheweth what we be indeed, by whatsoever other style, title, or dignity, men do call us. Thus HE plainly named us, *who knoweth best, both what we be, whereof we are made, and what we ought of right to be called,*” &c. And HE called their name ADAM, in the day when they were created. Gen. v. 2. For the Lord God formed man of the *dust* of the ground, and



the *seed* of the woman by setting up a pre-existent creature, a began to be *human soul head*, in opposition to the *pre-eternal Quickening Spirit Head* of the Church of God! breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and *man became a living soul*. Gen. ii. 7. But the human pre-existerians, who labour to destroy God's testimony of man's originality, say, "*the scriptural descriptions of Christ's coming into the world is always expressed in some corporeal language, without the least mention of his taking a soul.*" (S. D. 184.) True, and what mention is there of our coming into the world, but in some corporeal language; and where is the mention of our taking a soul? Did Adam have a soul before he had a body? Surely not! And is it not most expressly revealed that Christ was made in all things like unto his brethren? Here, it is worthy of *remark*, that the human pre-existerians in their anxiety to destroy the truth of man's originality, have *unwittingly* given the *human body of Christ* PRE-EMINENCE over his *human soul*! This is so evident, that unless they laboured under a strong delusion, they must have known it. They say, "The doctrine of the existence of Jesus' human soul prior to his incarnation, may be derived from the scriptural descriptions of Christ's coming into the world, which is always expressed in some corporeal language, such as denotes his taking on him animal nature, a *body*, or *flesh*, without the least mention of taking a soul." (S. D. 184.) "He was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man. Now *shape* or *fashion* refer to the *body*, much rather than the soul." (S. D. 184.) "If he be to take on him the seed of Abraham, yet it is certain that the *human body* of Christ has a very proper and literal right to that name, rather than the soul, though the word *seed* may more frequently include both. In Heb. x, when God the Father sends his Son into the world, he is said to prepare a *body* for him, but not a human soul: *a body hast thou prepared me.*" (S. D. 184.) "That the seed of the woman, strictly speaking, denotes *that matter* of which our Lord's *body* was formed." (1 Let. 26.) Now, if what they have stated be not a lie, then that which is born of the *Spirit* must be only *flesh*, and *Christ*, according to Mr. *Stevens'* statement, *must be a liar*: and then, the *body prepared* must constitute the *man*, and the *blood* and the *body so prepared* must constitute the *essential* part of Christ's humanity; because, it is by the *offering* of the *body prepared* we are sanctified; and through his *blood* is the forgiveness of sin. (Heb. x. 12. Col. i. 14.) Therefore Christ's *body*, according to the human pre-existerians' *argument*, must be pre-eminent to his soul, for the *flesh* of Christ, and not the soul, is declared to be *meat* indeed: and the *blood* of Christ, and not the soul, is declared to be *drink* indeed.

But, blessed be God, the *word* body, in Heb. x. includes the whole human nature of Christ, as doth the *seed* of the woman, and the *seed* of Abraham; for his *flesh* is called the *veil*, and his *body* is called the temple: (John ii. 19—21, and Heb. x. 20,) and in proof thereof, the veil of the temple was rent in twain when Christ's soul and body were separated by death! Then, no one but a *fanatic* or a *freethinker*, ever questioned the *fact*, that the words *flesh*, and *flesh* and *blood*, and *body*, are used by the Holy Spirit to express Christ's human nature! The Christ of God *did not take the person of a man into union with his divine person*! But I must not omit noticing the remarkable silence observed by all the human pre-existerians, upon one portion of the Holy Scriptures relating to Christ's body; viz., that

Nothing shews man's vile depravity so much as the setting up of a Christ of man's invention in opposition to "*the Christ of God,*" in whom dwelleth all the fulness (*pleroma*) of the Godhead *bodily (somaticos) corporeally*. Some un-humbled creatures rest in the *truth*, who never *received the love of the truth*, (2 Thess. ii. 10,) as some rest in the form of godliness *without the power*: they neither hold the Head, nor the *mystery of faith* in a pure conscience; for they examine the *word of faith* by the standard of *human reason*, and *pervert* the word of faith to make it agreeable to their *sensual* notions: in so doing, they mix *lies and truth together*: and many such characters have *reasoned* themselves into *scepticism*. Error, if it appear *reasonable*, is by them esteemed harmless: and *that very sinful error* which is harmless in their esteem, is a *lie* of Satan's invention, founded in the *depravity* of human reason: for *reasoners* could never yet agree among themselves who the Saviour is: for the co-essential and co-eternal Son of the Father is called by them an *absurdity*! They prefer *reason* to *faith*; because, what is *reasonable* requires not faith to believe. What is *unreasonable*, such as the procession of the Son and of the Spirit they do not believe, because they have not the *Spirit of Faith*. (2 Cor. iv. 13.) Allow me, therefore, Reader, to put *four*, amongst other articles of the christian faith, which the human pre-existerians reject, in juxta position with their *plain reason creed*, that their cunningly devised fable may appear in its proper *freethinking form*.

the *body* of Christ is spoken of in the past tense, *as prepared ages before his birth in Bethlehem*. And also, that he is called the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*! Now as his *body* is spoken of as prepared ages before he was made of the Virgin, and as he is called the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, the human pre-existerians must admit that, according to *their argument*, his *body* must have pre-existed, and that he must have been slain from the foundation of the world, or they must *abandon* all their silly notions, for they say,

"What Christ was reputed, that Christ must have been,  
Or argument all must be vain;  
In God's estimation pure truth must be seen,  
Or who dares to trust him again!"—Rhy.

Then as Christ was reputed the *Lamb slain* from the foundation of the world, they must insist upon it as he was *so reputed, that he was so slain*: and as he could not have been slain without a body, and as a *body* prepared is spoken of *ages before* he was made of a woman, they must *believe*, that he *actually had a body* and was *slain*, or *their argument all must be vain*!

*Four of the Articles of the Christian Faith.*

1. The Eternal Christ of God, a Quickening Spirit, is the head of the Spiritual Church of God.

2. That the procession of the Son, and the procession of the Spirit, are *incomprehensible, but true*; (John viii. 42.—xv. 26,) and received by all Trinitarians *who hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.*

3. That Jehovah alone, God by Himself, and none else, created all things.

4. That WHOSOEVER loveth and maketh a lie shall not enter the heavenly city.

*The Human Pre-existerians' Creed.*

1. A began to be Jesus Christ, namely, a *human soul* without a body, is the Head of the Church of God.

2. That the procession of the Son, and of the Spirit are *absurd*, and are renounced by all human pre-existerians *until their reason fails them.* (C. F. i. 62, 63.)

3. That Jehovah alone did *not*, that God by Himself did *not*, create all things; for there was one else, namely, a *human soul.* (S. M. ii. 248.—E. S. 37.—1 Let. 39.)

4. That *the lovers and makers of the human pre-existerian lie shall enter the heavenly city.*

No one, who believes the God of truth is the Creator of all things, ought to be surprized that the human pre-existerians, who believe that God created all things *by a creature*, should endeavour with all freethinkers *to spoil us of the FAITH OF GOD'S elect, by philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men!* (Col. ii. 8.) Mr. Stevens well knows, his opposition to *the Christ of God* could not be maintained, but by *philosophy and vain deceit*, he, therefore, declares, (1) that *the account of the creation is Mosaic.* (P. 1st Let. 37,) that is to say, it is *Moses's account*, although the account of the *creation* was expressly revealed *by Jehovah* to Moses, as recorded in Exod. xx. 11. (2) *Mr. Stevens* also *falsely* asserts, “that *when the matter of which our world was created, is not revealed to us;*” (P. 1st Let. 37,) which is another proof either of his ignorance of the Scriptures, or of his falsehood, for it is expressly *revealed by Jehovah*, to have been *created on the first day*, for the *Hebrews words bera and eth*, in Gen. i. 1, signify *the creation of the substance*, which our translators included in the emphatic language, God **CREATED** *the heavens and the earth*, for the word **CREATED** doth evidently include *the matter*: it is not said, God *formed* the heavens and the *earth* out of any thing, as it is said, God *formed* man of the dust,<sup>a</sup> but

<sup>a</sup> The Lord our God said unto Adam, “*In the sweat of thy face shalt*

*bera Elohim*, God created the heavens and the earth! And if Mr. Stevens be not ignorant of the true meaning of the Hebrew word *bera*, created, he wilfully perverts it? Again. (3) Mr. Stevens says, "That the visible world was formed out of pre-existent matter, may be readily conceived—that the words under consideration, (Gen. i. 1,) do not demonstrate, that matter had no existence before God began to CREATE this visible world." (P. 1st. Let. 38.) To which I reply, that this visible world could not be created out of pre-existent matter, because TO CREATE signifies to form out of nothing; therefore the words under consideration do demonstrate that, which Mr. Stevens DENIES: and in further proof thereof, the Scripture saith, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were NOT MADE OF THINGS WHICH DO APPEAR,—and therefore this visible world was not created of pre-existent matter! Heb. ix. 3.

Again.—Mr. Stevens says, "there certainly is no absurdity, nor anything UNREASONABLE in allowing the world, where we dwell to have been formed LONG AFTER the commencement of time." (S. D. 203.) Reader, this is the Ashdod tongue of a depraved reasoner, for the faith of God's elect will not allow any thing respecting the creation of the world, or of time, for which it has not, "Thus saith the Lord." And, what saith the Scriptures, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; (Pet. iv. 11.) To the LAW and to the TESTIMONY: if they speak NOT according

"thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground, FOR OUT OF IT WAST THOU TAKEN; for dust thou art, AND UNTO DUST SHALT THOU RETURN." (Gen. iii. 19.) This solemn truth is confirmed by the Geologists, for they testify, that there are no antedeluvian organick remains of man to be found; whereas they have discovered organick remains of animals that existed before the flood. We have, therefore, in the testimony of the Geologists, a proof of the truth of God's own word, by the organick remains of animals: for man returns to dust pursuant to the sentence pronounced upon the fall. Would not freethinkers have questioned, if not have rejected, the truth of the Holy Scriptures, if there had been any antediluvian organick remains of man? Might they not say that man did not return to dust? And shall God's revealed account of the creation be questioned, because there are organick remains of animals in proof of the deluge, whilst there are none of man in proof of his return to dust, and in proof of the veracity of God? The Reader, however, should remember that the human pre-existerian Sadducees do not believe in the originality of man, nor in the resurrection of the dead, nor in the Holy Scriptures, for in their opinion, the soul constitutes the man.