

what Mr. *Joseph Hart* spake to be true, when he said, “Many *notional christians* may profess the doctrine of “the Gospel, and acknowledge, as well as argue in defence of God’s purpose according to *election*, &c. “and yet be so far from being true believers, as to deny “either directly or indirectly the Wisdom which is beyond their *reason*.” And, therefore, when professors are made *strict predestinarians* BY REASON, or by delusion, as the *Mahometans*, their end must be awful; although *like the Mahometans or Papists they may appear to die in triumph*. Indeed, how can persons *strongly deluded*, die otherwise than *apparently* happy under their delusion. In short, that gracious and experimental christian minister, Mr. *Joseph Hart*, who being dead, yet speaketh, justly observes, “It is a “*truth* of singular use and solid comfort to those, the eyes “of whose understanding are enlightened by the Spirit of “God to perceive it, that *religion* and *reason* are not only “widely different, but *directly contrary the one to the “other*.” As by religion, he says, “I mean the knowledge “of the true God, the right way of worshipping him here, “and the sure and certain means of enjoying him in “endless glory hereafter: so by reason I understand “the natural dictates of the human mind, whereby “every man in his fallen state is capable of making “*rational* deductions and argumentations, and so advancing himself by degrees, in what is generally “called knowledge.” Mr. *Hart* produces *four* particulars in proof, that these two principles, *religion* and *reason*, are diametrically opposite to each other; knowing, as he did by experience, that the dictates of reason were utterly repugnant to the principles of religion communicated to the believer by the revelation of God’s Spirit!<sup>a</sup>

May you, Reader, enjoy the faith of God’s elect, and be kept looking unto the Eternal Rock Christ, the *author* and the *finisher* of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God; (Heb. xii. 2,) for our Christ is the *beginning* and the *ending*, the FIRST and the LAST.

<sup>a</sup> See a Tract entitled, “The Unreasonableness of Religion,” by Mr. *Joseph Hart*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Who is the Image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. Col. i. 15, 16.*

*Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things, or among all, he might have the pre-eminence. Col. i. 18.*

THE Holy Scriptures are strictly true, and perfectly consistent: but in them are found many mysterious passages, which from the difficulties attending a translation of the Original Text, are not easily explained: for instance, there are several *Hebrew words* rendered *man*: *Angels* are sometimes in our Bibles called *men*, when they ought to have been called *persons*: then, ought we to allow *our reason* to sit in judgment upon obscure or mysterious passages? Ought we not rather to exercise our *faith* upon those *mysteries* which *reason* can never comprehend! And ought we not to compare spiritual things with spiritual things, that is, scripture with scripture, rather than arraign at the bar of our depraved reason those *seeming contradictions, which are only so* to the natural man, whose wisdom is from beneath, which is declared by the infallible author of all Holy Scripture, to be (*epigeios*) *earthly*, (*psuchikē*), *soul* or *INTELLECTUAL*, and (*daimoniōdēs*) *devilish!* (James iii. 15.) Those *seeming contradictions to reason* have no real inconsistencies in them, as have been repeatedly proved by spiritual writers, who, in obedience to God's command, "*answer not a human pre-existerian according to his folly, lest he also be like unto him:*" and who, at other times, "*answer a human pre-existerian according to*

“*his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.*” (Prov. xxvi. 4, 5.) Who would think of finding out God by depraved reason, except such a deluded creature as the human pre-existerian, who denies the Father and the Son, and who denies the procession of the Son and of the Spirit until *his reason fails him?* (C. F. i. 63, 64.) In every step this human pre-existerian hath taken to destroy the truth of the Revelation of God, he hath sunk deeper and deeper into error, as is evident from his making so many lies. To embrace an *error* is to believe a *lie*; and to *believe a lie is certain destruction.* (2 Thess. ii. 10—12.—Rev. xxi. 27.—xxii. 15.)

We are not to measure divine revelation, and divine conduct, by human lines: and he, who attempts to be *wise above* what is written, speaks not according to the oracles of God; but proves himself to be *ignorant below* what is written. The Star of Jacob is not to be discovered in *Gospel noon-day*, by the *darkened telescope* of human reason, nor can the true knowledge of God be obtained by all the power of practical philosophy. Many have been drowned in error, open profanity, despondency, despair, *delusion*, and perdition, by the *wisdom of those men, who prefer the words which man's wisdom teacheth, to the words which God the Holy Ghost teacheth.* In Revelation xxii. 18, 19, we read these words, “*I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, GOD shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*” Now, I will not enter into the proof, that these verses may be considered, not merely in reference to the *Book of Revelation*, but in reference to the whole word of God, *the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament*, at the end of which, in the wisdom of God, they are remarkably placed: but I may say, that as Mr. *John Stevens*, the *Perverter of I Am*, doth add to the word of God a *creation*, and a *commencement*, and a *duration of time*, with other *suppositions*, not therein revealed; and as Mr. *John*

*Stevens* doth take from the word of God the books of Kings, of Chronicles, &c., and *also perverts* many parts of Holy Writ; it is very evident that, "*Wisdom is too high for his depraved reason,* (Prov. xxiv. 7,) or he would "have believed *Jehovah possessed wisdom without acquiring it, or creating it.*"

Having premised these things, to prepare the Reader for further discoveries of the *cunning craftiness and subtilty of the serpent*. I proceed to notice the next attack, which the human pre-existerians make upon the pre-eternity of "the Christ of God;" because, the next Scripture which *Mr. Stevens* quotes, and then *perverts*, is Col. i. 15, &c., as follows, "*In the dear Son of the Father, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; WHO IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, THE FIRST BORN OF EVERY CREATURE; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body, the Church; WHO IS THE BEGINNING, the FIRST BORN from THE DEAD; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*" *Mr. Stevens* admits the person spoken of to be the Son of God, and truly God: for if he did not *sweeten the deadly food he had prepared for his young rooks*, they would not eat it: but having sweetened his poison with *this admission*, he then declares, "These words also plainly show that, the Apostle considered the Son of God to be a complex person, or God-man; for several things are spoken of him, which cannot be applied to a person wholly divine. Paul speaks *of his blood*, which shews he included the humanity in the agent he commended, as having created all things, and as continuing to sustain all things, and having the pre-eminence in all things. He also calls him *the image of the invisible God*, which cannot, as I think, be understood of him as merely a divine person. But this point I have fully discussed in a treatise which I published in 1803, entitled, *Help for the true disciples of Immanuel*. See Chapter vi. On the communicable Image of Elohim, p. 137.

The Reader will observe, Mr. Stevens says, "*Paul speaks of his blood.*" True, indeed, for the Apostle *was determined not to know any thing among men, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* And, therefore, he spoke of *Christ's blood*, which upon another occasion, the Apostle testified was *God's own blood.* But did ever any one, but a *fanatic*, suppose the Apostle testified, that the *Image of the Invisible God was the pattern of the toads, and of the bugs, and of the vipers, &c.?* And yet, Mr. Stevens, the *Perverter of I Am*, printed and published a book, in the year 1803, and to which book he refers, in which *book* he hath made the following statement, amongst other things, respecting "*the Image of the Invisible God.*" For therein, he says, "The word of God speaks not of the *invisible* image of the *invisible* God, but of the *visible* image of the *invisible*<sup>a</sup> God." (He. 137, 138.) "By the communicable Image of Elohim we are to understand the exalted *God-man, that holy thing*, which subsisted *in the eternal son of God* by covenant union from everlasting. This *wisdom Image*, (Prov. viii. 12, with Colos. i. 15,) *or pattern man brought forth in counsel, and set up in covenant* FROM EVERLASTING, "I understand to be the communicable Image of God, not *personally*, but *possessively*. It hath pleased the Father, that in him should *all fulness dwell*: of NATURE, grace, and glory, FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING. "Amen and Amen." First. ALL NATURE'S *fulness*.<sup>b</sup> (1) Natural life and being. (2) All *intellectual light* and *rationality*: all wisdom, understanding, and discretion concerning human life, and natural and moral things. Secondly. All fulness of grace also dwells in him as the head of the Church, and the Saviour of the body. Thirdly. All fulness of glory is in Christ-head. "This *mysterious man in God*, who is *styled Immanuel*, is *God's master-piece*, his first draught and PATTERN OF ALL THINGS. IN HIM WE SEE THE ORIGINAL: *the first born of every creature: and the first born among many brethren!*" (He. 138, 139.)

<sup>a</sup> Where does Mr. Stevens find in the Scriptures, that the *visibility* of a creature is the *Image* of the *invisibility* of God.

<sup>b</sup> The human pre-existerians may not believe, that Christ could be the head over all things without he had the NATURE of all things.

The Reader will observe, what a *blasphemous* description, Mr. Stevens has given us of *the Image of the invisible God*. He declares it to be THE PATTERN OF ALL THINGS, *without one single exception!* For all things include the *fish*, the *beasts*, the *birds*, the *reptiles*, &c., as well as the *nature* of men: so that Mr. Stevens' human pre-existerian Christ must have been what he calls him, viz. a MYSTERIOUS *man* in God; for he must have been so *mysterious* a *man* in God, as to be the *pattern* of *angels*, of *fish*, of *beasts*, of *birds*, of *reptiles*, &c., the first born of every creature, having the *nature of every creature from the highest order of angels to the meanest creature or vermin*. And as there are divers sorts of *flesh*, so he must have had the *flesh* of *fish*, the *flesh* of *birds*, the *flesh* of *beasts*, as well as the *flesh* of man. (1 Cor. xv. 39.) And as there are *celestial bodies* and *terrestrial bodies*, (1 Cor. xv. 40,) so he must have had a *celestial body* and a *terrestrial body!* And as there are *natural men* and *spiritual men*, so he must have been a *natural man* and a *spiritual man*; or he would not have been the *pattern of all things*; nor in him could Mr. Stevens have seen the *original*, the first born of *every* creature, &c. Mr. Stevens also says, the word of God speaks *not of the invisible*, but of the VISIBLE IMAGE of *the invisible God*. And as Mr. Stevens' *visible image of the invisible God* is the pattern of *visible reptiles*, *vermin*, &c., he may, perhaps, refer us in proof of the correctness of his *ideas* to the *idolatrous* nations. But did Mr. Stevens obtain his *blasphemous ideas* of the *visible Image of the invisible God* from the heathen? That he never obtained them from God's Bible is most certain! And if Mr. John Stevens had not assured us, that *he was no fanatic*, the *young rooks* might have suspected it? For he speaks in the year 1803, of *his mysterious man in God subsisting from everlasting*; which *subsistence from everlasting*, in the year 1813, he declares to be *ridiculous*; and that *no one in his right senses would talk of an eternal creature*, that is, of a *creature existing from everlasting!* Yet in the year 1803 he affirmed his belief in a creature existing from everlasting with *Amen* and *Amen*.<sup>a</sup> And therefore, I must again

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Stevens, in the year 1803, did not suppose *Amen* to signify a *nurse child*.

repeat, that if Mr. *John Stevens* had not assured us, that *he was no fanatic*, every one of his *young rooks* might have suspected it? Because in the year 1813, in what *he mis-calls* a Scriptural Display, he refers us to the Book he had published in the year 1803, even mentioning the *very* year when it was published, which was before *he preached those sermons at Boston*, which furnished Mr. *Barnard*, (Mr. *Stevens'* deacon) with those *ridiculous* human pre-existerian notions, which were printed in the Gospel Magazine in the year 1807. At that time, however, Mr. *Stevens* objected to his present notion of the SON OF GOD being alluded to as the Image of God, because he then declared him to be of the same immutable essence with the Father, and the Holy Spirit. And THAT IT COULD NOT HAVE REFERENCE TO THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD, &c. (He. 137, 138 ) But as evil men wax worse and worse, so Mr. *Stevens* has now a plain reason NONDESCRIPT TRI-UNE God creed: he even approves of Antichrist's creed, namely, that the Paternity and Filiation do not respect the Divine Nature, but the human nature of Christ: and to support this part of his creed, he has given up the pre-existence of the *human body*, in which he formerly believed, as well as the pre-existence of the *human soul* of Christ.

I shall not insult the Reader, by supposing it necessary to convince him of Mr. *John Stevens'* *profligate*, or *fanatical* interpretation of CHRIST the Image of the invisible God! I shall, therefore, pass on to the consideration of CHRIST as the *prōtotokos pasēs ktiseōs*, which is rendered in Col. i. 15, *the first born of every creature*; which I have before observed might be rendered the *chief born of every creature*, if *every creature* be understood in Col. i. 15, to mean only *mankind*, as in Col. i. 23: for otherwise, it never can be truly rendered the *first born of every creature*. But as the true interpretation of this Holy Scripture is of great importance, I shall divide the consideration of this subject, &c. in the following order.

First. Some preliminary observations, exposing human pre-existerian *sophistry* and *lies*; for as the human soul pre-existerian *doctrine* is the *leaven* of the Pharisees, we ought to be on our guard against it; in the Scriptures it is truly called the *leaven of hypocrisy*! A gracious

man remarked, "Our Lord compares the doctrine of the *Pharisees to leaven*. Why so? *because of its secret mixture with the wholesome bread.*" The Pharisees, like Mr. Stevens, did not make their bread *all of leaven*; for then, no professor of religion would have received it: but they mingled it skilfully, as Mr. *Stevens* does, and by that means, *both go down together*: our Lord therefore intimates, that as the Pharisees mixed their doctrine with some truths, so he would have us beware, lest, with the truths, we swallow the deadly leaven also.

Second. That our Lord Jesus Christ is not *every creature's first born*! Therefore, if the *Greek* word *prōtotokos* in Colosians i. 15, be read with the accent upon the *second syllable*, *pasēs ktiseōs*, in this Scripture, cannot mean *every creature* in an *unlimited sense*.

Third. If the *Greek* word *prōtotokos* in Colosians i. 15, be read with the accent upon the *third syllable*, then the description of Christ, the creator of all things, in this Scripture is strictly true and perfectly consistent.

Fourth. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the *archē prōtotokos of* and from the dead. Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5.

Fifth. That Christ is the *chief or first born* among many brethren; regard being had to the *prophecies* and to the *types* respecting Christ, for Christ declared all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him!

Sixth. That the *Greek* word *prōtotokos* with the accent upon the second syllable is applied to Christ as the *chief or first born* brought into the world, (Heb. i. 6,) for excellency of dignity and excellency of strength are characteristic of him, who was to be made the chief or *first born*, higher than the kings of the earth, (Psalm lxxxix. 27,) that among all, the *second* and *last* Adam might have the pre-eminence! Col. i. 18.

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“*ture* with the wholesome bread.” The Pharisees, like Mr. Stevens, did not make their bread *all of leaven*; for then, no professor of religion would have received it; but they mingled it skilfully, as Mr. *Stevens* does, and by that means, *both go down together*: our Lord therefore intimates, that as the Pharisees mixed their doctrine with some truths, so he would have us beware, lest, with the truths, we swallow the deadly leaven also.

1. That the *seed of the woman* should bruise the Serpent’s head is the *promise* revealed after the Adam fall transgression. That the *covenant* which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the *promise* of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of *promise*; but God gave it to Abraham by *promise*. (Gal. iii. 17, 18.) And therefore, it is written, that Abraham had *two* sons, the *one* (the *elder*) *by a bond-maid*, the other (the younger) *by a free woman*: but he (the *elder*) who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he (the *younger*) of the free-woman *was by promise*. Now we, brethren, as Isaac (the *younger*) *who was a type of Christ*, are the children of *promise*. (Gal. iv, 22, 23, 28,) for they, which are the children of the flesh, are not the children of God: *but the children of the PROMISE are counted for the SEED*. For this is the *word of promise*, at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac: for the children being not yet born, neither have done any good or evil, *that the PURPOSE of God, according to ELECTION, MIGHT STAND, not of works, but of Him that calleth*: It was said unto her, **THE ELDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER.** Rom. ix. 8—12. So that *the children of promise*, the younger, the *spiritual*, are God’s *first or chief born*.

All *mankind* in the order of *natural* generation are *of the man*; for man in the order of *natural* generation is *not of the woman*, but *by the woman*. (1 Cor. vi. 8, 12.) And in accordance with God’s revealed account of the order of *natural* generation, we find the *descendants* of Abraham, and of Jacob, &c., are spoken of, as *in, and*

also as coming out of, their loins. (Gen. xlv. 26. Exod. i 5. Heb. vii. 10.) But, although mankind, in the order of natural generation, is not of the woman, yet, we find it expressly revealed, that Christ was made of a woman, but the Virgin Mary's conception was supernatural: Christ was, therefore, the seed of the woman! And as Mary conceived without sin, so she brought forth without sorrow, as it is written, *before she travailed she brought forth, before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.* (Isaiah lxvi. 7.) And here I beg the Reader to remark, that every thing in the prediction is mysterious. That a *Virgin* should conceive; and that a *Virgin* should bring forth a Son, (Isaiah vii. 14,) so that the very prophecy implied what the fact proved, that it was without human means the virgin conceived: that when she was with child she was a virgin, and when she brought forth her Son she was a virgin, for she had known no man. (Luke i. 34. Matt. i. 15.) That the law which was a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things, did set forth, although imperfectly, the manner of Christ's coming forth, *holy, harmless, undefiled* and and separate from sinners, by the type, that every male (not a female) that openeth the womb should be called *Holy to the Lord.* (Luke ii. 32.) The seed, therefore, of the woman, was the seed of a virgin prefigured by the law, IN THE TYPE OF THE FIRST BORN MALE THAT OPENED THE WOMB! This leads me to observe, that the human pre-existerians' fanciful FIRST BORN among many brethren was, according to their fable, a man before he was the son of man, and a man before he was the first born that opened the womb; for they have either wittingly, or unwittingly, omitted to inform us WHOSE WOMB their fanciful first born opened at the beginning, or commencement of their supposed unknown time!

2. The human pre-existerians admit that the word *first born* is sometimes a figurative expression, as it is written, "I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born: *prōtotokos mou.* But Ephraim here, Mr. Stevens "says, does not mean the second son of Joseph, but the ten "tribes, and it may refer to the preferring of Ephraim "before Manassah, when the two brothers were pre-

“ sented to their grandfather for his blessing. (Gen. xlviii. 17—20.) And then he adds, It is a similar use of the term with that we before cited from Exod. iv. 22, 23. *Israel is my first born; but this figurative application of the term, by no means excludes the literal import, WHICH IS RATHER MAINTAINED THAN DENIED BY SUCH APPROPRIATION!*” (C.F. i. 21.) Here the Reader will observe, that Mr. *Stevens* either ignorantly or wilfully says, again, what is *untrue*, to support his *lying tradition*: for *Ephraim* in this chapter, (Jerem. xxxi.) *does not mean the ten tribes*, because the Lord speaks of gathering *Israel*, the *ten tribes* dispersed amongst the Gentiles, and says, *I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.* (Jerem. xxxi. 7—9.) The Lord therefore does not mean by *Ephraim* the *ten tribes*; for the house of *Israel* he calls the *ten tribes*, but he *prefers Ephraim to the rest of the ten tribes*, by giving to *Ephraim* the last of the tribes of *Israel*, the *pre-eminence*: for the Lord saith, “ *Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; EPHRAIM ALSO IS THE STRENGTH OF MINE HEAD.*” (Psalm lxi. 7.) Therefore, the Lord calls *Ephraim* his *first-born*. And afterwards, the Lord distinguishes *Israel* from the house of *Judah*, by saying, *Behold, I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.* (xxxi. 27, 31, 33.) And here it will be also observed, that Mr. *Stevens* was *conscious* he was telling a *falsehood*, for he admits the term *FIRST BORN* may refer to the preferring of *Ephraim* before *Manasseh*, which he calls a *figurative application of the term*; but he *craftily* avoids mentioning, how the *younger son* designated the *first-born* was a *figure* of the *first-born*! Was not the *Elder* or *first born son*, and the *male that opened the womb*, a *figurative* representation of that good thing which was to come? But it will be also observed, as *Manassah* was the elder, the first born son of *Joseph* *literally*, so this human pre-existerian was so impressed with the idea of *his* disciples being like *young rooks*, that he boldly asserts, what he had too much *cunning craftiness* to attempt to prove, namely, that the *figurative application of the term first-born* to the *younger son*, *RATHER MAINTAINED* than *denied* the *LITERAL import*. Indeed, he must have been a *fanatic* if he did not know, that he could not prove it: but from the well known

*subtilty* of this writer, it is certain, that if he could have proved that the *figurative application of the term first-born as regards Ephraim, rather maintained than denied* the literal import, he would have done so! But so incapable was he of proving it, that he admitted, “*it might refer to the preferring of Ephraim*” (the younger) “*before Manassah,*” the *literal first born*. Indeed his conscience was so alarmed *at what he had written*, on account of Ephraim the younger son being preferred before Manassah the elder son, that he afterwards endeavoured to *excuse himself*, by saying, “*As Ephraim is expressive of God’s ancient Jewish church, his son, which he called out of Egypt, and which he adopted for himself to be his first born; in distinction from the Gentiles who became his younger son,*”<sup>a</sup> “*what (said he) is all our author’s pother about Ephraim being called the first born WHEN HE WAS NOT SO?*” (C. F. i. 27.) Now, *Israel*, and not Ephraim, is called God’s son, which *he called out of Egypt!* But the prophet *Hosea* spake also of Christ. (Hosea xi. 1, Matt. ii. 15.) Then how could Ephraim be expressive of God’s ancient Jewish Church? Were not all the *twelve* tribes, which God called out of Egypt, called *Israel*, and also God’s *first born*? And if the *figurative application of the word first-born to Ephraim made the term first born literally true*, how could it be a term of *adoption*? It is therefore very evident, that whilst Mr. Stevens’ conscience *accused him*, he was deceiving himself.

3. Mr. Stevens asserts, that *the word prōtotokos, first born, is by a figure, used to denote the chief and lord of his brethren, or, of the children of his father; the LITERAL SENSE being the GROUND of the METAPHORICAL.* (C. F. i. 24.) Here, again, this human pre-existerian, with his

<sup>a</sup> The Reader will observe, that Mr. Stevens does not allow the *Elect Gentiles* to be God’s *first born*, for he calls the Jewish Church, God’s *first born*, and the *Elect Gentiles* he calls God’s *younger son!* But what saith the Scripture? The word of faith replies, *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:* (Rom. ix. 6,) *for he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; —but he is a Jew which is ONE INWARDLY;* because circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter. Therefore the *Elect Gentiles* are the true circumcision, Jews *inwardly*; and they are God’s *first born* as well as the elect Jews, and the calling of God’s Israel, his *first born* out of Egypt, mentioned in Exod. iv. 22, was typical of *Christ*, and of the whole Church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, Heb. xii. 23.

usual *cunning craftiness*, omits to prove what he knew could not be done, namely, that *prōtotokos* is by a *figure* or *metaphor*, used to denote the CHIEF BORN! To suppose it possible that Mr. *John Stevens* was ignorant, that *prōtos* must in some cases be LITERALLY rendered *chief*, and not *first*, would be as absurd as Mr. *Stevens'* *Verses* or *Rhymes* upon the Sonship of Christ; because, the Scriptures would not be *strictly true and perfectly consistent*, if the word *prōtos* was rendered *first*, instead of *chief* in the first Ep. of Tim. i. 15. Luke xix. 47, and elsewhere! Indeed, the *first-born daughter*, as *Merab* the daughter of King Saul, (1 Sam. xiv. 49,) was not the *chief* and *lord of her brethren* either literally or by figure, but *Jonathan*; for although *Jonathan* was not born *first*, yet *Jonathan* was *the chief born*: which is a complete answer to Mr. *Stevens'* false assertion, that *prōtotokos* is only by a figure used to denote the *chief*, the literal sense being the ground of the metaphorical. Indeed, Mr. *Stevens* must be grossly ignorant of the Scriptures, if he does not know, that the *first-born sons of Israel*, born after daughters, were always used *figuratively*, and not *literally* of the Church, who are born *from above*, or of the Spirit; because the female *born first*, although *literally* the *first-born*, was neither *literally* nor *figuratively* a type of Christ, *the first born among many brethren*. And as the *female born first* had not the *pre-eminence*, so *Merab*, Saul's daughter, was not the *chief* and *lord*: neither was the *chief* and *lord* ALWAYS the *first born son*, because *David* and *Solomon* the *youngest of their brethren*, were the *chief* and *lord of their brethren*. And here by way of remembrance, allow me to observe, that *David* and *Solomon*, the *youngest* of their brethren, were the *chief-born*, although not *born-first*: and that, *David* and *Solomon* were *types* of Christ.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> A Spiritual Writer observes respecting the FIRST-BORN, that "Excellency of Dignity," were his, no less than the "double portion of the inheritance." Four or five views may be briefly noticed here: namely, the *natural*, the *legal*, the *typical*, the *spiritual*, the *glorious* or *eternal* FIRST-BORN.

1st. The *natural* first-born. This I take to include every thing that was born *first*, in the order of time—whether of man or of beast; and whether *such* issue were male or female, a lamb, a kid, an ox, or an ass. And it is worthy of remark here, that the term "*First-born*" seems to

4. Mr. *Stevens* also declares, that, “for *Christ to be the first born* in Jehovah’s eternal purpose, can mean “no less than that he was decreed to be born, or enter “into being *first*, and whilst no other creature existed.”

have been first used in Holy Writ, and that no less than *four times*, in Gen. xix. 31, 37, of a *female* even of the elder daughter of *Lot*, whose issue were the *Moabites*!

All the *illegitimate*, as well as the *legitimate* issue of the human race, may put in their claim under *this* head!

2nd. The *legal* first-born. This embraces all the first-born *males*, under the *law*; and, of course, *Cain*, *Ishmael*, *Esau*, &c. Sad subjects, *these* to typify the LORD JESUS! *Eve*, evidently expected *Cain*, her first-born, was the promised seed—by her saying of him as she did, “I have “gotten a *man* the *very*, or *true* JEHOVAH”—as some read the Hebrew there, and hence she called his name *Cain*, i. e. “Possession,” or “the Inheritance.” *Cain*, however, was not the *promised seed* of the *woman*, but the *natural seed* of the *man*—even of the sinner *Adam*—and was begotten in *his* likeness after he had, by the fall, received that of *Satan’s*—“the “murderer from the beginning.” John i. 3—12. John viii. 44.

Here, also, the son of the “*hated*” wife, in *Deut. xxi. 15, 17*, is to be noticed as the legal first-born, he being born *first*, and so, by *law* entitled to the “double portion” of the *earthly* inheritance as the *caral* heir. The *spiritual* inheritance, however, is *not* of the *law*, but of *grace*: neither does it descend to the *legal*, but to the *spiritual* or *glorious* first-born, and all *his* seed!

3rd. The *typical* first-born. This was not the *natural*, nor the *legal* offspring before mentioned, as born *first* in the order of time, but frequently the second or other son, who had no *legal* right either to be called the *first born*, or to possess the *inheritance*, and yet, through a *gracious* right such possessed both.

In *Exod. iv. 22*, the LORD calls ISRAEL his first-born! In *Jer. xxxi. 9*. He acknowledges *not* MANASSEH, who was born *first*, but EPHRAIM to be *his* first-born. “And the *genealogy* (we are expressly informed) is *not* “to be reckoned after the *birth-right*.” (1 Chron. v. i.)

Divine *sovereignty* reigns in the choice of the *typical* first-born, not in the *natural* or *legal* one.

4th. The *spiritual* first-born. That which was *typical* did not shadow forth either the *legal* or the *natural* first-born, but that which is *spiritual* and *glorious*. Under this head we may surely notice all those persons who are “born again,” *not* of blood nor of flesh, nor of the will of man, “but of God.” Who are “begotten again, of *incorruptible seed* to an *incorruptible inheritance*.” It being the *second* or *spiritual* birth, and *not* the *first* or *natural* one, that fits for, and entitles to, the inheritance of heaven. All who are spiritually born being made “*kings* and *priests* unto “*GOD*,” heirs of *GOD*, and joint heirs with our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” And that according to the *election* of *grace*, not the affection of mere flesh and blood.

5th. The *glorious* first-born. And this is none other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST! “Who being (i. e. *existing* of *himself*) in the form of *GOD*, “thought it no robbery to be equal with *GOD*: but made himself of no re-

(C. F. i. 34.) Now this *Arian lie* is completely refuted by Jehovah's decree, that the *LAST shall be first*: and by the *revealed account of the creation*, which none but *depraved reasoners* reject, because *reasoners* do not believe all things in heaven, and in the earth, and in the sea, which existed in the days of Moses, were created in six days, although God hath said it! Neither do they believe, that Christ's humanity is a *new thing created in the earth*, although the Lord hath spoken it: for in *Christ* the *LAST Adam*, the *chief* or *first born* among many brethren, we see *JEHOVAH's eternal purpose fulfilled*, namely that the *last* shall be *chief* or *FIRST*, (Matt. xx. 16,) which, to use Mr. Stevens' style of argument, can mean no less than that *Christ* was decreed to be born in *Bethlehem*, or enter into human being last, and after the creation of all other creatures, in order, that the *last Adam* might be the *chief* or *first*. So the *last Adam* is the *FIRST BORN HOLY, HARMLESS, UNDEFILED, SEPARATE FROM SINNERS, MADE HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS*, that in all things, or (as it reads in the margin) *among all* he might have the *pre-eminence*. (Col. i. 18.) Indeed, Jehovah's *eternal purpose* has always been a stumbling stone to *men of reason and of wit*; for in their opinion it is an *absurdity* to believe, that *Christ* is the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world* in Jehovah's *eternal purpose*; because he was not actually slain until more than *four thousand years* after the *foundation of the world* was laid.

5. There is another human pre-existerian error, which I should not have noticed, if it had not been invented by Mr. Stevens, who sets up his *intellectuality* in opposition to Christ's *spirituality*! Mr. Stevens acknow-

“putation, and took upon him the form of a *servant*, and was made in the “likeness of men.”—(2 Phil. 6, 7.) Of whom JEHOVAH in vision said, “Also I will make HIM *first-born*, higher than the kings of the earth.” (Psalm lxxxix. 27,) the appointed “heir of all things,” (Heb. i. 2.) And to whom so pre-eminently belonged “the excellency of dignity,” and “the excellency of power,” unto whose foreseen image God's foreknown ones were pre-destinated to be conformed, “that he might be the *first-born* among many brethren.” (Rom. viii. 29) And who is expressly called “the *first-begotten* of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the “earth.” (Rev. i. 5.) “To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. “Amen.”

ledges, "*it is very true that our Lord has the PRE-EMINENCE in all things,*" but, he says, this is, because he is "THE FIRST BORN OF EVERY CREATURE:" "the *title*, he adds, is the "ground of the pre-eminence, and the latter follows the former." (C. F. i. 35.) In plain words, that the *title*, first born, is the ground of Christ's pre-eminence, and were it not for the *title*, Christ would not have the pre-eminence! Now this *absurd lie* may be his notion, which the human pre-existerians in common have of their began to be Jesus Christ, whose *title*, in their opinion, constitutes his pre-eminence: but this *Arian* notion of pre-eminence is very ridiculous, it is in accordance with Mr. Stevens' creature notion of pre-eminence, namely, the *absurd idea*, that the fish have the pre-eminence, because they were created before the birds, the beasts, and Adam! But the creed, or the faith of God's elect, is not founded in the opinion of Arians; but in the revelation and power of God! In the believer's creed, the Christ of God is personally PRE-EMINENT: he is not like Reuben, the first born of Jacob, UNSTABLE as water: and, therefore, the *title* is not the ground of Christ's pre-eminence; for the *title* is only a declaration of his personal pre-eminence, who is IMMUTABLE, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever; in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And, I may say, it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell that being so personally pre-eminent, he might have his right, as the last Adam, Jehovah from heaven, (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47,) the pre-eminence in or among all things.

6. Mr. Stevens says, "If the Holy Ghost saith, the Son of God is not the first created creature, the assertion must be somewhere in his word, and it became me to cite the passage, which I had not done." He then asks, "what could be my reason for keeping it back?" (C. F. i. 30.) To which I reply, my reason for keeping it back, if I had any, was a belief, that the Lord's awakened people are not so ignorant of the Scriptures, or of the Christ of God, as the Perverter of I Am; for he either is, or appears to be ignorant of God's Bible. Hath not the Holy Ghost testified in his word, that Christ's human nature is a NEW thing created in the earth? and hath he not expressly declared him to be the LAST



*Adam?* (Jerem. xxxi. 22. I Cor. xv. 45.) And as Christ is the **LAST Adam**, and is the **NEW thing** created *in the earth*, it is impossible for words more plainly to express, that Christ is *not the first created creature*; because the Scriptures are strictly true and perfectly consistent. And as the Holy Ghost doth testify that Christ is not the *first created creature*, but is the *last Adam*, and *the new thing created in the earth*, therefore, all the *human pre-existerians must be liars*: which Mr. Stevens must admit; for he says, the Scriptures are *perfectly consistent*; and *a testimony so authoritative goes further towards overthrowing his doctrine than any thing.* [C.F.i.30.] And I now call upon the human pre-existerians to produce *one* Scripture, where it is said, that Christ was Behemoth, or the *first created creature*, the archē, or beginning, of the ways of God, or of the things formed of God, for in Mr. Stevens' *revered Bible* we read, that *Behemoth is the beginning of the ways, or of the things formed of God.* And if the human pre-existerian doctrine be true, then, Christ must have been *Behemoth, the Great Beast which eateth grass like an ox*, because in Mr. Stevens' *revered Bible*, *Behemoth is declared to be, the beginning of the ways, or of the things formed of God.*

But can the human pre-existerians prove from Holy Scripture, that God ever created *a man without a body*? Mr. Stevens is well aware, that he cannot prove the creation of *a man without a body*, for he has been obliged to support his human pre-existerian *lie*, by the comparison of the existence of the souls of *dead men* who have *bodies* in the grave! But his *comparison* is as *sophistical* as it is *ridiculous*, for the *dead had, or have bodies*! But, according to Mr. Stevens' plain reason creed, his Christ without a body was existing in a state, like unto the *papistical* notion of a dead man in *purgatory, grieving and repenting*: (S. D. 125, 195,) so that, if Mr. Stevens be not a *fanatic*, he is something worse.<sup>a</sup> Here I must recall to the Reader's remembrance another

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Stevens says, that Enoch and Elijah were in heaven with *glorified bodies before Christ*. What, therefore, could induce him to *degrade* Christ; that he should adopt such a *ridiculous comparison*, and represent Christ as *the Image man standing in God*, and as like the souls of the *dead*, the *image of a corruptible man*, *grieving and repenting* as the *papists* represent the *dead in purgatory*, to support his *human soul pre-existerian lie*?

lie, which Mr. Stevens has ignorantly or wilfully made, namely, that “the Scriptures CONSTANTLY attribute his “(Christ’s) being BEGOTTEN AS TO HIS HUMANITY to the person “of the Father.” Whereas, the Scriptures expressly reveal the fact, the BEGETTING of Christ’s humanity to the Person of the Holy Ghost!! (Matt. i. 20.)

7. Before exposing more of the human pre-existerian lies, I now demand the human pre-existerians’ authority, for perverting the word *first-born* into *first created*? And I defy Mr. Stevens to produce one Scripture, where the Hebrew word *bekor*, or *bekorim*, or the Greek word *prō-tokos* is translated *first created*. He knows there is not one! And, as there is not one instance on record, by what authority does Mr. Stevens by his example encourage infidels, to pervert the plain and faithful testimony of the Holy Spirit to the Pre-eternity of the Christ of God, and that Christ was to take of the seed of Abraham, as he was to be made the *first-born* among many brethren? The Christ of God is not, therefore, an Arian’s, or a Sabellian’s Christ, namely, the first creature God created.

8. Mr. Stevens says, “the soul is 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.)

The word *intervenient* signifies, to come between persons and things, therefore the human soul, according to Mr. Stevens’ creed, came between the divine person and the body, so that God was *not immediately* incarnate. But, this is another lie of Mr. Stevens’ invention; for our God was *immediately incarnate*! Neither was he *excarnate* when his body was in the grave, when, as Mr. Stevens admits, there was no *intervenient* principle of intellectual kind to be the medium of union between divinity and corporeal substance. Indeed, Mr. Stevens says, his Lord Jesus Christ “was *excarnate*, when he left the cross and entered “Paradise, and *re-embodied*, when he left the Sepulchre.” (C. F. i. 4.) But, if this be true, namely, that his Lord Jesus Christ was *excarnate*, when he left the cross, then it must follow, that his Jesus Christ *excarnate* is not God’s Holy One: for the Holy Spirit expressly declares our

*Lord's body*, when in the grave, was *God's Holy One!* (Psalm xvi. Acts ii. 31.) Surely, there never was a more profligate doctrine than the *human soul pre-existerian tradition*, or a *lie* more *lief!*

9. Mr. *Stevens* admits, "that none *has been born holy* " besides Christ, but this, he has the *impudence* to say, has "nothing to do with the explaining the word *first born.*" (C. F. i. 32.) This is another *lie*, either *ignorantly* or *wilfully* concealed under the truth, *that none has been born holy but Christ*; for *Adam* was not *born*, but created *holy*. But, as *Adam* the *first man* was not *born*, but created *holy*, and as all *Adam's* children are *born unholy*, then the fact, namely, that Christ was the the *first-born holy*, has to do with the explaining the word *first-born*, when applied to Christ; for the *first-born male that opened the womb* was to be called *holy* to the Lord. (Luke ii. 23.) I hope the Reader will not overlook how *exceeding* SINFUL is the *human pre-existerian lie*.

10. The incarnation of Christ is called the coming of the fulness of time. To destroy this *record*, Mr. *Stevens* has had recourse to his usual subtilty and sophistry. He says, "We naturally inquire, where? Is his incarnation called *time* at all? If not, it can hardly " be the *fulness of time!* He was born *in the fulness of time*, " and had a *birth day as other children have*; but is there no " difference between a child's birth, and the day in which " it takes place?" (C. F. i. 32, 33.) Here, we have Mr. *Stevens'* admission of Christ's birth; *he had a birth day as other children have*. Then, was Christ's incarnation his *second* birth? According to Mr. *Stevens'* account it was Christ's *second* birth, when his Christ *lost all his ideas and faculties*, was *degenerated, and disanointed!* Here it will be observed, if Mr. *Stevens* be not a FANATIC, that notwithstanding all his *subtilty*, his argumentative statement destroys his *plain reason creed*; for he admits this was Christ's birth-day: therefore Christ could not be born before every other creature, unless this was his *second birth!* and if it was Christ's *second* birth, then Mr. *Stevens'* Christ was not born holy, but in the *degenerated* state of sin, which Mr. *Stevens* calls a *negative* thing. This, Reader, is a display of Mr. *Stevens'*

*plain reason creed!* Again, Mr. Stevens *absurdly* asks, “Is Christ’s incarnation *time* at all?” But who said it was? Again, Mr. Stevens says, “Christ was born in the *fulness* of time, and had a *birth-day* as other children have.” If this be Mr. Stevens’ interpretation of the coming of the FULNESS of time, are we to understand, he is so exceedingly ignorant, that he does not know the difference between the FULNESS (pleroma) of time, and time, that is to say, between an event which constitutes the *fulness* of time, and the time when that event took place? Is Mr. Stevens so ignorant as to suppose he can take any thing from, or add any thing to, *fulness*! If the *first-born* of Mary means Mary’s *first-born*, must not the FULNESS of time mean time’s *fulness*? Surely, as the coming of the FULNESS of time was the *incarnation of Christ*, so time without that *wonderful* event would be *empty*! For all creatures in the sight of God are likened to *nothing and vanity*. (Isa. xl. 17.) And was not that event, which constitutes the *fulness* of time, celebrated by the heavenly host with glory to God in the highest? Did not the living creatures worship *Christ incarnate*, saying, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was *to come*, and *is come*, and *is to come*: (Rev. iv. 8), for he is to come “*a second time* without sin unto salvation.” (Heb. ix. 28.) Mr. Stevens may despise the word PLEROMA, and strike it out of *his revered* Bible, but he cannot strike the *plerōma* of time out of God’s Bible, nor can he strike the PLEROMA of the Godhead out of Christ *bodily*!

II. The Holy Scriptures testify, forasmuch as the children *are* or *were* partakers of flesh and blood, Christ also himself took part of the same; for in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. The Apostle Paul in Rom. viii. 3, testifies, that God sent forth his Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*; and at the 29th verse he says, the predestinated brethren are to be conformed to the Image of the Son, that he MIGHT BE the *first-born* among many brethren. Upon which 29th verse, Mr. Stevens says, “Paul “*says nothing about his* (Christ’s) *incarnation in the Roman text here adduced*; and therefore none but eyes of silver “*can perceive any argument assigned for it therein*.” (C. F. i. 33.) But if this be Mr. Stevens’ opinion, are we to overlook the context? And are we not to understand by