

LETTER IV.

TO CLEMENT.



SUBJECT—THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST'S
HUMAN NATURE.

- “Was this notion defensible, it could never be desirable; but it has as little to support it, as it has to recommend it.”—HERVEY.*
- “Pre-existarians entirely mistake both the nature of the Scriptures, and the nature of man; what is LEVEL to THEIR apprehensions, MUST be right; what comports with THEIR NOTIONS, MUST be true.”*

MY EVER DEAR AND COURTEOUS CLEMENT,
To write or preach, at any time, or in any place, without regard to circumstances, or respect of persons, in defence of “THE TRUTH,” and in disproof and disapprobation of ERROR, let my liabilities for so doing be what they may, I am ever and most ready, it being my duty so to do; but, if one circumstance connected with the discharge of my duties, as a servant in the household of faith, is more calculated than another

“To turn duty into choice,”

it is that of having to do with brethren, especially when possessing official authority in the church, of whom it can be said, agreeable to the import of your name, that they are mild, good,

modest, merciful men; the more so, from its being the uniform character of church members in particular when occupying the office of **DEACONS**, that they are **OVERBEARING**, **SUPERCILIOUS**, and cruelly **UNJUST**; availing themselves of the *indigent* and *dependent* circumstances of their minister, to the end that they may, without control, tyrannise, like **LORD BROTHERS**, over both pastor and church; inso-much that not a few dissenting ministers, to my certain knowledge, have been awed into a *meek* and *peaceable* disposition of *quiet acquiescence* in life, and, at last, made their exits from a service of *terror* and *starvation*, by the medium of a **BROKEN HEART**, in a premature death. In *you*, however, it is my privilege and happiness to possess a brother and Christian deacon, whose uniform carriage and conduct to your minister, is the very reverse of their's, who yesterday were professing such unbounded devotedness to their minister's comforts, as to be ready to pluck out their right eyes, if it would render him the least service, whereas, to-day, because forsooth the very same, and acknowledged to be unaltered minister, happened without design, to advance either from the pulpit, or in private conversation, some undeniable truth of a lowering influence to their official pride, he is forthwith counted their enemy, and must be dealt with accordingly; being marked from that sad hour as a monster (although an angel of God just before) to be sacrificed at the shrine of their unrelenting displeasure. You are quite aware, my beloved friend, that I speak feelingly, because I speak experimentally. This, however, not being your case, Sir, you may satisfy yourself that my apparent neglect of your wishes, in which you

expressed a desire to have me take up my pen on the subject of PRE-EXISTARIANISM, has not arisen from a want of disposition to oblige my friend, in particular as I am of your opinion, that no error, existing in the Christian church, is more derogatory to the personal glory and official importance of our divine Immanuel, or more sportive with the solemn doctrine, of a trinity of persons in a unity of essence in the Deity, than is the sentiment already mentioned, on which account, no error can furnish the casuist with a fitter subject to explore for, and explode from, the Christian church. My non-compliance with your wishes, therefore, must not be ascribed to a want of incentive, any more than to a want of disposition, and much less to the difficulty of the undertaking, the whole scheme of Pre-existarianism being founded on, and supported by, either isolated texts of Scripture, or sophisticated reasonings, both of which, when brought into contact with *great plainness of speech*, and the *uniform* testimony of sacred Scripture, are not only as touchwood, and as tow, but

“Trifles light as air.”

The Rev. John Stevens having done his utmost, to obtain pre-eminent popularity among Pre-existarians, by writing, I was going to say, *so much*, but that would not have been true, for all that he has written on the subject, is but a little in point of substance, and that little having been repeated in almost every work that he has written, insomuch that in reading his letter to Mr. Reece, it was but reading his letters to Dr. Hawker, and in reading his letters to Dr. Hawker, it was but reading the Pre-existarian part of his Scripture display, &c. So also, in perusing his “Recollections,” I found myself reading

some scraps from the whole, each of which was so richly graced with direct contradictions, that in numberless instances, it was Stevens writing against John, and in return John writing against Stevens, insomuch, that instead of my being at liberty to say, Mr. Stevens wrote so *much*, I can only say, he wrote so *often*; but whether he wrote little, or much, *I was well satisfied*, from the air in which he wrote, *that he did not hesitate to conclude, that if HE* were not master of the subject, (either as a sophist or something else) the subject must go to the ground: in consequence of which, I had some thoughts of dropping him a few lines in the form of queries, leaving him to the consequences of giving answers, which must have proved fatal to his scheme, but, determined on being perfectly familiar with his "lucid reasonings," I again read, with unqualified attention, his letter to Mr. Reece; there, however, I found nothing to the point, but, as I before said, was to be found in his letters to Dr. Hawker, with this exception, that when he was debating the matter with the doctor, he dare not do it, whereas in controverting the point with Mr. Reece, for want of orthodoxy as a divine, he assumes the character and work of a philologist, and, reviewer like, instead of well weighing, and refuting the *divinity* of his opponent's work, he undertakes to teach his antagonist the formularies of grammar, holding up to public scorn a grammatical inaccuracy or two, of which a Johnson's pen was capable. This satisfied me, that Mr. Stevens's cause was a bad one, as must be the case, whenever an author siezes an opportunity to turn off his readers, attention from the DOCTRINE contended for by his opponent, to sport himself with a solitary error in syntax, or orthography; where-

fore, such being the conduct cherished by Mr. Stevens, and being conscious, in my own mind, that I was no linguist, I abandoned all thoughts of throwing my *puny* self into the *gigantic grasp* of a disputant, who would only *assume* the prowess of the *literati*, although, in reality he never was in circumstances, from his youth up, to obtain a commercial education. But, disgusted as I was, with Mr. Stevens's *illiterate* and *illiberal* manner of conducting himself towards two of the most worthy divines of the nineteenth century, I mean Dr. Hawker, and Mr. Reece, truth compels me to say, that I should have taken less notice of the circumstance in the present controversy, had not certain *soi disant* judges, who never knew the elements of their own tongue, for what learning can you expect to find in the head of a man milliner, or tradesman's clerk, and yet I say, such self styled linguists as these have labored with a deal of pedantry, not only to shut my mouth on the subject of Pre-existarianism, in the pulpit, but have even presumed to compel my belief of the erroneous dogma, on the assumed ground of Mr. Stevens's learning, which is a mere hoax palmed upon his pre-existent disciples, in the place and through abject want of Scripture orthodoxy. Nor was I less determined on cancelling my design of writing to Mr. Stevens, on the subject of Pre-existarianism, by reading that gentleman's letters to Dr. Hawker, for such truly were his sophisticated evasions, and artful drawbacks, from the most pointed appeals made to revelation, and the works of the Holy Ghost, by that able divine, that I could compare Mr. Stevens to no other than Ulysses himself, or, at least, to Erasmus, who, as Luther says, "ever like himself, with the greatest pertinacity, he takes care to be always evasive and ambiguous,"

For the truth of these remarks, so applicable to the late conductor of the Pre-existarian controversy in London, I have only to refer you to the controversy, as conducted by him, in his letters to Dr. Hawker, wherein, true Proleus like, he is one thing this minute, and the opposite directly after, so that like another far famed *fisherman*, he at last is detected in discussing the phantom of his own imagination, instead of the real rhombus. On no other system of conducting a controversy, would it have been possible to have heard Pre-existarianism supporting itself, by a reference to topics, as Utopian and foreign from the subject contended for, as is the difference between the zest of cayenne, and the white of an egg; for instance, what in the world have "young water-made Christians, promising sponsters, parochial churches, and pardoning priests," to do in defence of Pre-existarranism, It must be a lost cause, that stands in need of reeds and rushes to keep it from falling. Indeed such was the feeling produced in my mind, by reading the controversy, thus *learnedly* conducted by Mr. Stevens, against the most gentlemanly, urbane, and Christian Dr. Hawker, that I resolved to abandon all thoughts of ever taking up my pen with the design of addressing Mr. S. on the subject. But, subsequent to that determination, I was led to think, whether it was not a duty devolving upon me, to address a few lines to the Rev. John Baily on the topic, seeing, I am considered as that gentleman's *enemy*, and such I certainly am, if taking the favorite child, called Pre-existarianism, which he was pleased to introduce as a stranger unknown, for many years of ministerial usefulness in the pulpit, at Zoar. I say, if my taking this adopted *hydra* by the heels, and dashing out its brains

in the face of many, who once idolized it, constitutes me Mr. Baily's enemy, then, indeed, I am so, but, as for such conduct, I was ready to assign the most satisfactory reasons; I did think of inviting that gentleman's attention to the subject, requesting him, as he thought me so grossly erroneous, to set me right, if he were able; but when I was assured by those very individuals to whom Mr. Baily was looking up, as to his most confidential friends, that he was altogether incapable even of preaching a sermon explanatory of the sentiment he professed to espouse, I hesitated, until *his own deacons* repeated the evidence, which made me decide on withdrawing my purposes of consulting an individual, who, though of all men ought to be able to substantiate such a belief for sound orthodoxy, if such it could be proved, seeing he for so many years preached it down, to use his own words, as a "damnable error," and after all cried it up as a belief essential to a right understanding of the Scriptures. At the beginning of last spring, however, another reverend gentleman, a Pre-existarian, called at my house to show me a book he had been writing, and which he was desirous I should introduce, with a view to its readier sale among my friends, with which request I assured him I would readily comply, it being my uniform custom so to do, as many authors can attest, if, after I had read the work, I approved of its doctrines, to which he consented, with the promise to call again: now, the work herein referred to, did not profess to have Pre-existarianism for its subject, but when I came to examine its contents, I found that this heterodox sentiment was as cleverly entombed therein, as ever arsenic was enrolled in human food, for the purpose of poisoning rats; wherefore, having canvassed

every line of the book, I wrote the following note to its author.

“ Sir,

Having applied myself, with all good will, and Christian candor, to the perusal of your book, I must now be candid enough to inform you, that such is my antipathy to, and dread of, the poisonous tendency of what is called PRE-EXISTARIANISM, that I would sooner forfeit my life, than recommend to the notice of the godly, where I am pastor, a book, which *presumes* to advocate an error, so derogatory to the *glory* of Christ, the *truth* of revelation, and so *effectually destructive* of the peace of a Christian church, as is the *know-all** assumption, that our Lord’s human soul, as they call it, existed (themselves having never agreed about how long) before his body, which is a flat *denial* of revelation, which affirms, that he was in ‘ALL points made like unto his brethren.’ Wishing you may obtain mercy, to *renounce so great an error*, I will just add, that I do not believe, nor can you prove, that believers are under, what *you call, the moral law*, as the rule of life: neither do I, nor can I accord with you, in your *confused* representation of regeneration, which you affirm is ‘being born again;’ (see page 254) and yet, in page 246 you affirm, that the creature is entirely *passive* in the new birth, you *also†* affirm, that it is instantaneous. To such divinity I cannot give my approbation. I hope, when you write again, you will be settled about purchased possessions; believing me,

Your’s truly,
W. WILKS.”

* Pre-existarians assume, that none can understand the Bible but themselves.

† This word is substituted for the word again.

Now, dear Sir, to ease you of all suspense concerning why, and wherefore, the above note should have been introduced into the present work, I will inform you, that not many weeks after, I received a copy of the above returned, accompanied with the following note.

“ Mr. P’s. compliments to the Rev. W. Wilks, and wishes to know, if the Rev. W. Wilks has any desire to subject his communication to any qualifications, previous to its being committed to the press.”

To this note I quickly returned an unqualified negative, fully concluding (as I think the gentleman’s note authorized me to do) that I was going to catch it; for this therefore, I was for a long time on the look out; but whether the good divine thought better of it, or whether his Pre-existarian friends advised him not to make himself an additional Pre-existarian laughing-stock, I am not at liberty to say; of one thing I am certain, that is, I, for one, would never have gone so far, and after all, dodman like, shrivelled my suprecilious horns into obscurity again.

Thus far, my esteemed Clement, I thought good to write, explanatory of my hitherto non-compliance with your friendly wishes, though even now, it is by no means my design, and I do hope it will not be my fault, to be prolix in what I am about to offer to your candid, and impartial consideration, in disproof of a sentiment, which I am more than ever determined to oppose; that being, I am persuaded, the most direct way, by which I am likely to be convinced of my error, in case it *could* be proved that I am wrong, while it is equally conducive to establish my soul in a rooted and immoveable

belief, of that, which I am contending for, as the truth of God. Wherefore, to avoid the too common fault of prolixity, and, at the same time, not secure to myself the more objectionable evil, commonly attached to labored brevity, that is obscurity, I shall now request the favor of your attention more immediately to the subject which we are about to consider.

“When a divine person,” says the devoutly serious James Hervey, “is the subject of our consideration, then surely it becomes us, in a more especial manner, not to lean to our own understandings; but to whom, to what, shall we apply in order to find the satisfaction we seek? We have in the word of revelation an infallible oracle. To this let us inviolably adhere, however it may surpass our comprehension, or run counter to our fond prepossessions.” It being a divine person then, who is the object of my present consideration, I shall adhere, to the best of my ability, to this truly judicious hint and excellent axiom; wherefore, permit me to invite your attention specially, to the consideration of those Scriptures referred to by Pre-existarians, in support of their dogmatical assumption, accompanied with such irresistible arguments, as shall be in direct opposition to the possible existence of our Lord’s humanity, prior to his incarnation, will not fail to satisfy the orthodox into whose hands this letter may come, that the representation given of Pre-existarianism, by that able divine, Dr. Hawker, is truly scriptural; that is to say, “That the pre-existence of the soul of Christ, prior to his incarnation, is a *delusion* of the most *dreadful* kind, and *wholly* unfounded in the word of God; yea wholly unsupported by all revelation;” or, to use the words of the learned and truly religious Hurrion, “We shall

see that Paul did not plant it, Apollos did not water it, nor did God give it increase. It is planted by the *unreasonable* search of reason, watered by foolish pride, and ambitious desire gives it increase." To the law and to the testimony, therefore, I now beg your attention, which indeed I am the more disposed to do, from the persuasion, that it is not only the most direct way to refute and repel the arrogance of those who have daringly palmed the notion of Pre-existarianism on the Holy Scriptures, but it will prove the surest mean to dethrone the system, from the high toned superiority to which its advocates are always laying claim, as if no persons under the heavens were capable of speaking plainly from the Scriptures, in particular as preachers of the word, unless they expound those Scriptures which refer to the Son of God's existence prior to his incarnation, as containing the most pointed authority for receiving that truly Sabellian belief called the pre-existence of Christ's human soul : whereas, I will not fail to prove that the Scriptures referred to for this purpose are in direct opposition to such outrageous innovations of plain and positive records of divine truth; insomuch, that we shall be necessitated to say of the most robust Pre-existarian votaries, that "they rather make a noise than any thing else; and if IGNORANT QUIBLING could serve for accurate reasoning, their importance as disputants must certainly be felt," for

"Much of the soul they TALK, but all lawry."

Milton.

Insomuch, that the only plain and most intelligible statement to be found in their contentions, is, that the Maker of all things created the human nature of Jesus Christ backwards, forwards, the last part first, and the first part last,

and this luculent method was adopted for the purpose of his being "made in ALL THINGS LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN," which definite end was certainly accomplished, if Christ's manhood was in part CREATED, (as Pre-existarians teach us was the case) BEFORE any one of the ALL things, created by God, were *began to be created*; whereas the other part of his manhood was not made till, some say thousands, others it may be millions of years after; I say IF this was the way in which human beings in general were made, then indeed so far Christ was "made *like unto* his brethren," ONLY with this difference, when God made Adam, he very wisely gave him a body *first*, and then, *secondly*, breathed into him the life, by which he BECAME a living soul; whereas, when the Almighty gave existence to the manhood or human nature of our Lord, (as say Pre-existarians) the power of the Highest, by which Mary received power to conceive, did not cause to come into existence a material subsistence, which should subsequently be empowered by the medium of a wise, well ordered, and necessary process, to *become* (what *it was not before*) a living soul, as must have been the case, had Christ been made in all points "like unto his brethren." Such however I *repeat*, for the sake of making myself understood, was not the case, forasmuch that Pre-existarians teach us that Christ, AS MAN, had AN ACTUAL existence; "for," say they, "his soul is the principal part of his human nature," before he was made of a woman, so that when he was made of a woman, he DID NOT (*at least so they say*) RECEIVE (*as the Bible commands us to believe was the case*) a HUMAN EXISTENCE, but only a diminutive *addition* to a deficient subsistence, *created* BEFORE CREATION commenced, at least,

before *that* creation work begun, in which Jehovah, THE SON, (who was so constituted, not on the *ideal* principles of either eternal generation, or Pre-existarianism, but barely, and solely, by covenant arrangements) created ALL things; for Pre-existarians themselves, could never settle, even among themselves, what to do with, or where to obtain, either wit, or words to dispose of that palpable nonsense, which affirms, that by WISDOM mentioned in the eighth of Proverbs, we are to understand the human soul of Christ, by which human soul (which was at best in itself considered but a created existence) all things were created; on which assumption, the human soul of Christ, MUST either have *created itself*, or otherwise, by it ALL things *were not* created. Of this difficulty however, so palpably manifest in the scheme I am now opposing, Pre-existarian votaries cannot be prevailed upon to take sufficient notice, to free themselves from the just opprobrium of their system, being supported by legs which being lame, are not equal to uphold it from finally crumbling to the dust, as a dogma, which can but and indeed ought to be haled by all Sabellians, as a masterpiece of invention from the bottomless pit, designed to furnish them with a plausible excuse, the more so, from its coming to their service through the medium of *professed* Trinitarians, for their wicked rejection of Christ, as very God; Pre-existarianism being, most *positively*, the alone FOUNDATION on which that vile heresy can remain safe, from a total overthrow, among only rational believers of the Holy Scriptures. Of this I cannot fail to give the most satisfactory proof, in my different references to those texts of Holy Writ, from which Pre-existarians unsuccessfully attempt to palm their pretensions on the Christian church. Now

the first text of Scripture, Sir, to which I would beg your attention, is Gen. i. 26. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness, &c. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female, created he them." To this passage, Pre-existarians have directed the attention of the orthodox, for proof of what their votaries call, "the wholesome and most evident doctrine of the pre-existence of our Lord's MANHOOD," in other words, the doctrine of Jesus's "antiquity, as the MAN," whom they moreover affirm, "must have been REALLY MAN, from the beginning of Jehovah's way, and so LONG BEFORE HE WAS INCARNATED." "Yes," says Mr. Stevens, "our blessed Lord possessed a DERIVED EXISTENCE, AS MAN, before this world was made;" yea more than this, says another Pre-existarian, "if we shall suppose nothing of Christ existed before his incarnation but his *pure* Deity, then all the expressions concerning the love of God, and Christ, are void of truth, and propriety." Here, Sir, I might commence commentator, but I forbear, with the exception of making this remark. One argument urged by Pre-existarians, in defence of their heterogeneous effrontery, which their scheme offers to Deity, by making more of the creature than it does of the Creator, is this, "*that Pre-existarianism, if not supported by Scripture, must, nevertheless, be allowed to be a harmless thing, in comparison with other errors.*" This however is inadmissible, as might quickly be proved from the last quotation but one, but I suppose Pre-existarians think their scheme is supported by Scripture, at any rate they wish us to think so; but on what do they found their pretensions? Why, on the passage already inserted, in which we are told, that "God said

let us make man in our image, after our likeness," which IMAGE, and LIKENESS, after which the Divine Being was to make man, was not the image of GOD, as saith the Holy Ghost, and as the orthodox are wont to believe without doubt, or contention, no, it was "the creature nature or manhood of Christ's pre-existent soul!" Mr. Stevens, after inserting the words, "Let us make man, said Jehovah, Elohim, in our image, after our likeness," goes on to say, "here is the image MAN, with the triune God, and here we have the Great Three One, speaking of their image, in DISTINCTION FROM THEMSELVES, and calling it OUR image, OUR likeness; whereas, the poor blind and ignorant orthodox Trinitarian, "plain man" like, has been content to believe, that when God made man, "our first parents, the archetypal pair, the ROOT of mankind, the compendised world, and the fountain from whence all generations have streamed." Boston. I say the orthodox have been content to believe, that God did verily make man, not in the image of a creature nature, previously created, but in the very image of God, our unoriginated uncreated Maker; for, if the Holy Ghost means any thing, he means what he saith, and that is, "GOD created man in his own image, in the image of GOD, created he him," which declaration, as Dr. Gill says, "is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of as shewing man's superior glory and dignity to the rest of his creatures." Should it be asked, as no doubt it will, of what do I suppose God's IMAGE and LIKENESS, after, or in which man was created, consists? I can readily answer, not Jehovah's incommunicable, or as some would say, his essential image, or likeness, for that would have been equivalent with supposing, that he

created a god and not a man ; whereas, this was impossible. Jesus Christ himself, (I refer to his humanity) in his present glorified state, does not nor can he possess, the likeness of God, in this sense. The image or likeness of God, therefore, in which God made man, was his communicable likeness, which consisted in two things, man's intellectual image and likeness, in which he shone resplendent above all the creatures over whom he was made lord, or man's moral image, or likeness, the latter in particular, being the meaning of the Holy Ghost's words, where it is said, " God made man upright." But suppose we give in for a short space, and say as Pre-existarians say, that instead of man's being made, as Moses saith, in the image and likeness of God, that he was only created in the image and likeness of a pre-existing MAN, are we willing to abide by the consequences which must follow such an hypothesis ? Indeed we are not, we have too much regard for God's truth, and good sense. Let us make the experiment, the Holy Ghost saith, " And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him : male and female." Gen. i. 26, 27, to be compared with chap. ii. 7, v. 1, 2, Eccles. vii. 29 ; the whole of which are in direct opposition to the Pre-existarian assumption. The Holy Ghost in language, the import of which cannot be misunderstood, says, that " God said, let us make MAN," which saying, of necessity, supposes and authorizes, yea, compels us to believe, that to the moment of the Almighty's so saying,

no such a creature as man had received an existence; whereas Pre-existarians (suppose, is it possible they can suppose any such thing?) at any rate, they teach, that prior to God's so saying, there did exist, yes that God himself had made "A pre-existing MAN, the HUMANITY of Jesus Christ, who is the head of all things, EVEN AS MAN;" but whether it is proper for the faithful in Christ Jesus, to believe what Pre-existarians teach on this subject, or what the faithful God teaches, judge ye. Believe them both we cannot, we dare not, we will not. "God said let us make man," which supposes, and indeed declares, if the meaning of words have a voice, that to that period there existed no such a species of creature in God's creation as the creature man, the truth of which Pre-existarians deny. Well might the venerable Hawker affirm "that this chimera (Pre-existarianism) of the brain, is directly opposite to *all truth*, and is a daring heresy." The word MAN, whom God made in his own image, is to be understood in its most extensive sense, as grammarians teach, it being a noun without an article to limit it; on which account, on the strictest principles of literary correctness, it might have been rendered, let us make *mankind*. But if Pre-existarianism is true, mankind was made already, so that God, to have spoken Pre-existarianism, ought to have said, let us make *another* man, a *second* man; we did create one man before creation work began, now we will make a *second* man, in the *first* man's image; so that in future ages of the world, when generations to come shall read the history of their creation, and their high origin, it shall be said, "And God said, let us make *man* in the image and likeness of *man*; so in the image and likeness of man, did God make man." So also, when mankind became *fallen creatures*, it

shall not be said of man's fall, that therein, and thereby, he lost the *image* and *likeness* of his God his Maker, as is now taught by our Bible, but it shall be taught, that man when he fell, took the image and likeness of a *pre-existing* fellow man, a MAN that was created, before man's CREATORS said, "Let us create man in *our* image," &c. "The sentiment," says Dr. Hawker, "is absurd, and preposterous, I am still indeed at a loss to explain, how a doctrine, which forms so *prominent* a feature in the creed of the Sabellian, should be found among any of those who hold the faith once delivered to the saints. And as this long exploded, but now revived, error of the *Sabellian*, carries in its pestilential bosom, some of the most deadly poison, to the vitals of the true faith, &c. in my view, of *one* tenet belonging to the sect, I concluded the whole, and as such, deemed it what I still consider it to be, an awful heresy." To this spirited and just representation of the *scheme*, now under consideration, the venerable Hawker received the following reply, by way of *refutation*—"Here you freely declare pre-existence to be *directly* opposite to ALL truth. I DENY (*a true born and as commonly brought forth Pre-existarian argument*) your assertions, Sir, and it is presumed, (without any danger of subjecting my brain to any just charge of being chimerical) calling it a daring heresy, may alarm a few of your parishioners, who would be equally astonished, were they to be gravely told, that their being baptized had not made them Christians." You must excuse the digression Sir, but I cannot forbear remarking, that allowing there was no Bible, or Holy Spirit to prohibit, or prevent my believing Pre-existarianism, I should for ever desist therefrom, on account of the materials, and manner employed to support

it. "It is an hypothesis," says a great divine, "framed to make Scripture easy, and not drawn from it: whereas, I think the Scripture is to be the rule by which every hypothesis must be tried." Permit me then (but not without an apology for my digression) to invite your attention once more to the *pssagae* in Genesis, from which we set out. Let me ask then, suppose that such had been the case, that when "God said, let us make man," &c. there were standing by one of each class, from the lowest order of human beings, to the highest order of angels? I say would it have been possible for a single one of them (taking it for granted that they were all *compos mentis*) to have desisted from the natural, and necessary conclusion, that the genuine interpretation of "let us make man," was this, that although the Almighty had created, from the heaven and earth to the reptile that creepeth upon the earth, many different species, yet now, as the Lord's words plainly indicated, he was about to make or create a species or order of beings, which to that period, had neither in themselves, or their like received any kind of existence: the conclusion is natural, it is necessary, it is irresistible. This however could not have been the case, had there been in existence the created nature of man, or human nature, in any sense of the word whatever, prior to God's saying, "let us make man." Then must not Pre-existarians be *non compos mentis*, to carry their party prejudices to such unbounded lengths as they do, against the plainest, and best substantiated truth in the Book of Revelation? I need not fear the remotest liability, of being charged with immodest arrogance, from the meekest and best of men, (for such I know would not be the case) were I to defy a host of Pre-existarians, to

prove their *ipse dixit*, "that Christ, AS MAN, was brought forth in the heavenly world, and so existed, in his creature nature, long before he was incarnated." I defy therefore a host of Pre-existarians to prove this true, unless they first disprove the truth of the Holy Ghost's words, in 1 Cor. xv. 47, where God himself affirms, that the natural man, that is, Adam, was the FIRST man. This however can never be proved true, without proving that which Pre-existarians contend for false. "Howbeit," says the apostle "that WAS NOT FIRST which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and AFTERWARD," not before, "that which is spiritual." But this positive Scripture is roundly denied by our Pre-existarian votaries, the *latter*, yes in direct hostility to the testimony of God, they teach that Christ as MAN, was FIRST. "Then in what sense was he last? Why, with regard to Adam, as a *public head*, not as to his subsistence." Now if this is not an artful perversion of plain matter of fact, then I know not what is. The orthodox have been taught to believe, that Adam was the first man, as to subsistence, and that Christ was the second man, and that, because the SCRIPTURES assert it; here then is a paper war between Pre-existarians and the Holy Ghost.

To which of the hostilities shall we ascribe the victory? why, "Let God be true, and every man a liar," while I content myself with exclaiming, "O, that these plain thoughts might have an impartial consideration, and that PRE-EXISTARIANS may read dispassionately, and *not pertinaciously refuse to see*, when truth appears as the sun at noon!" I know Pre-existarians are adepts at twisting Scripture to serve their own purpose, but subtle as they are, they can never succeed sufficiently, to wrest the true sense of revelation

out of the hearts of the faithful, as inscribed therein, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Who but Pre-existarians would think of contending, that "when man is said to be *created in the image of God*, it refers to the *creature nature* of Christ, in union with Deity; for he alone is the **FIRST**, the *best*, and *most perfect image* of God." In reference to Christ's creature nature being the best and most perfect image of God, I will only answer that if Christ's creature nature, in any sense of the word, consists of a higher order, or quality, than the creature nature of Mary his mother, then, in fact, he could not have been made of the woman, for as Dr. Hawker in his letter to Mr. Stevens says, "How far an union of nature so remotely formed, as Pre-existarians say Christ's was, and so differently produced, could be suited to the feeling of *our infirmities*, remains with you to show. I could not reconcile it to myself, that under my soul travail, and soul exercises, he could enter into my feelings by **HIS OWN!** But as long as I look to Jesus; as God the Holy Ghost instructs me to look to him, as taking into union with the **GODHEAD** a nature both of soul and body, made of the same **MATERIALS** as my own; I feel a boldness to go to him at all times, &c. as one that not only *knows* as God but *feels* as man," &c. This however, was not the case, if Pre-existarianism is true, for instead of his being made at his incarnation, like unto us, bearing the image of the earthly, flesh of our flesh, we at our creation in Adam, were made like unto him in his creature likeness, with this exception, says the last quoted author, (Murray) he is the *best*, but how I ask will this agree with another pointed Scripture out of Paul's writings? I refer to Phil. ii. 7, in which we are taught to believe, that Christ at his incar-

nation "was made in the LIKENESS of men." Now this is preposterous and absurd; allowing that he had been "really a man" before Adam was created, and that when our first parents were made, they were made, not after the likeness of God but in the likeness of Christ, as a man, pre-existing, prior to the period of God's saying, "Let us make man." I dare Sir, you will be tired out with my tautology, but I dare not dispense with it, Pre-existarianism being designedly couched with such ambiguity and defended with so much sophistry, as to require it. Dr. More says, "that contradictions are to be excluded out of religion," and that we are to "reverence only such articles of religion, as are clear from contradictions and impossibility:" and so say I, and being regulated in divine matters by this rule, (allowing that I had not the light of revelation to go by) I must for ever, and that of necessity, abandon the Pre-existarian notion, as being no article in the religion of Jesus Christ, and therefore, excluded from all right of reverence from believers in Christ, for in no system that ever came under my notice, did I ever meet with more flagrant contradictions than in the Pre-existarian scheme. Its votaries talk at great random about Christ's humanity, and his manhood; these terms however had better be dropped, as being in direct opposition (at least as explained by Pre-existarians) to the legitimate meaning or sense uniformly implied by them. For instance, the spiritual in Christ have always been taught to consider the terms, Christ's humanity and manhood, to imply that his human nature was so perfectly like their own, in point of sameness, as to authorize their belief that his human nature was their own; which is the ground of their reciprocal community, the import

of the word being always the same, and denotes the species, order of beings, or class of nature, let who will inherit the nature expressed by it, insomuch that allowing, for argument's sake, that Christ, as "REALLY MAN", did exist before Adam or MANKIND was created, their natures must have been identically *the same*. This however, by Pre-existarians is sometimes allowed, although at other times ("alas the effect of precipitancy, preconception, and prejudice") it is flatly contradicted. For instance—says one, "All the natural and MORAL perfections, in the whole creation put together, are not equal to what the (that is as pre-existing BEFORE creation began,) creature nature of Christ is possessed of." Now what degree of sameness can be proved to exist between this representation of Christ's pre-existing manhood and the human nature of mankind as created in Adam, I must leave Pre-existarians to decide. In my opinion, there seems to have existed an infinite disparity between the two, I mean the pre-existing MAN and mankind in Adam. To me, however, it appears nonsense, the most preposterously absurd, to talk of the same nature, and it must have been the same, taking it for granted that it did exist as man before Adam, I say it must have been the very same nature in every sense of the word, for there are not two kinds of human natures; how absurd and contradictory must it be to talk, as Pre-existarians do, first asserting that it is the same, and anon describing it even in a moral point of view, the best and the *holiest* nature, so that all the MORAL perfections in the whole creation put together, are not equal in point of *moral*, that is to say primeval holiness, to the moral holiness of Christ's pre-existing manhood, whereas I always thought that Adam's moral

perfections, as he was made in the day of his creation, were equal to the moral perfections of his *Maker*, and that that was the import of his being made in the *image* and *holiness* of God, yes—

“ Man he made of angel form, erect,
To hold communion with the heavens above,
And on his soul impressed HIS IMAGE FAIR,
His own similitude of holiness,
Of virtue, truth, and love ; with reason high.

————— Thus man
Was made upright, MOST* MORAL, made and crowned
The king of all.”

Do not the following descriptions of Christ's pre-existing manhood clearly demonstrate the charge? “ The plain meaning,” says one, that is of Christ's pre-existence, as “ really man,” is this, he stood the brother of all the adopted seed in a *SAMENESS OF NATURE* ;” *a sameness of nature* ? and yet I warrant you, we are elsewhere taught to believe, that Christ *AS MAN*, (i. e. his *creature nature*,) was not only “ the *FIRST*” but “ the *BEST*, the *HOLIEST*, and *most perfect image of God*.”

But why, dear Clement, should I tire your patience, by adducing further proof in justification of our uniform belief, that Pre-existarianism ought not to be believed by the faithful in Christ Jesus, if it was for no other reason than that it is a scheme of palpable contradictions and glaring inconsistencies, insomuch that we have only to give Pre-existarians their own ropes of cobwebs, and they will eventually hang themselves. Mr. Murray for instance, in his explanations of Heb. i. 3, where the Holy Ghost teaches us to believe in Christ, as the brightness

* “ Most moral ;” this I have substituted for “ immortal.”

of his Father's glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE of his PERSON, "ridicules the idea derived herefrom, by the orthodox, in favor of Christ's PERSONAL Deity, declaring, that the term PERSON, when applied to the Trinity, is unscriptural," and the argument he uses to refute it is this, "*is there any propriety in saying a thing is the IMAGE OF ITSELF?*" I should think not indeed, and this is one reason why I refuse the Pre-existarian dogma, which teaches that when God made man, he did not make man in the image of God, but that God made man in the *image* and likeness of a pre-existing man, which amounts to neither more nor less than saying, that God made human nature in the image of itself, for there were but three images or likenesses, after which God could make man, (you must forgive my grammatical informality, in so frequently using the noun where the pronoun would sound less grating, the informality is designed) God's own image, as our Bibles teach us was the case, but which Pre-existarians deny, the image of angels, or the Pre-existarians' image, which was, as I before said, human nature, or mankind created in the image of mankind; so that the glory of man's primeval likeness was this, he was created like himself, and the extent of man's fall was this, he lost his own image or likeness. To this however it may and no doubt would be objected by certain Pre-existarians, that the image in which Adam was created was not the image of human nature, simply considered, any more than it was the image of God; what then? why the image and likeness in which Adam was created, was Christ in his pre-existing state, as God-man. Yes, I know we are told so, but without either proof or explanation.

“Observe thirdly,” says Mr. Allen, “how man was to be made—in our own image, after our own likeness, says God: now, by the *image* of God we are to understand the glory man, the Lord Jesus, who is God’s image, likeness, and glory, as the God-man taken into personal union, and set up from EVERLASTING to be the image and likeness of the Deity, &c. As such he was set up to be the covenant head, glory, and pattern of man’s creation.” This Pre-existarian testimony however, is as roundly denied by others; and well it might, for who would have thought of such a thing, as that Jesus Christ, as GOD-MAN Mediator, (for the latter of necessity is included in the former) I say who but Pre-existarians would have even thought of such a thing, as to say, the Lord Jesus, as God-man, was set up from everlasting as the covenant head, glory, and pattern of man’s natural creation. I have never read of such a thing in the word of God, as that Jesus Christ was the image, likeness, and therefore COVENANT HEAD of two creations, but of one only, but surely that was not the Adam creation, if it was, of which was Adam the covenant head, image, and likeness? I have always been taught to believe, that Christ was most certainly set up, and that not from the beginning of time; as Pre-existarians teach, but from eternity, and that as God-man Mediator, which cannot be separated; also as a covenant head, and glory man and pattern; but of what was he a pattern? why a pattern of that glorious elect, redeemed, spiritual, and NEW CREATION, which should as far outshine the image of God in which Adam was created, as spirituality outshines the most perfect morality. How ridiculously ignorant, or something worse, do Pre-existarians talk,

when they pretend, either that Adam was made in the new covenant likeness of Christ's spiritual glory, as the covenant head of his elect, and IN Christ from eternity glorified church ("Upon thy right hand did stand the queen (the church) in gold of Ophir,") or otherwise, that is when mankind fell in Adam they fell from, and lost the very image and likeness, which none but the queen, in the gold of Ophir ever possessed, that is, the likeness of the Lord Jesus, as the GLORY-MAN or covenant head of his everlastingly beloved bride, called the Lamb's wife. I spurn such Pre-existarian muck and dross from my feet, not daring to carry such dust of the heathen into the sanctuary of truth, praying, with all the vehemence of one traveling in birth for the defence of God's truth, and Christ's glory, "from such Pre-existarian poison good Lord deliver me;" for the more I think of it, and the further I go into it, the more am I of Dr. Hawker's opinion, that is, "that the pre-existence of the soul of Christ, prior to his incarnation, is *equally awful* with any thing that can be supposed, a *delusion* of the most *dreadful* kind, and *wholly* unfounded in the word of God; yea, wholly unsupported by all revelation!!" Nor was the Holy Ghost taught Hawker singular in his opinion of this Pre-existarian scheme, either as to its magnitude as an error, or the baneful tendency of its influence: for proof of this, I will do myself the pleasure (and I am sure you will be greatly delighted with them) of submitting to your consideration the following beautiful extracts. "Talk no more so vainly," says that hawk-eyed casuist Mr. Wales Horn, "of the *pre-existence* of his (Christ's) human soul! It has my strongest disapprobation, my implacable disdain; for could

it be once established as a fact, it would divest Christ of the whole of his mediatorial glory, by rendering the salvation of his people absolutely impossible! You are probably ready to exclaim, 'this is a strong and unjustifiable expression! If it is an error, as we are inclined to believe, surely it does not go to a complete annihilation of salvation; for many whom we know, and have reason to believe are good men, embrace and *defend it.*' That *good men*, subjects of grace, embrace and defend it is no refutation whatever of my assertion, for good men are very capable of embracing *error*, for a season, especially of such a metaphysical nature; and they imbibe it through a nullity of solid consideration and examination of its consequences, they receive it not from the Lord, for he is the *unerring* teacher of truth, but from the *plausible* sophistry of ingenious men." There never was a greater truth than this, "who are very likely to *impose* on the credulity of those who do not sufficiently *search* and *examine* the Sacred Scriptures for themselves with a firm and independent mind; but God, in his own time, will undeceive his dear elect. Consequently I shall abide in my assertion, and prove from the very plan of salvation itself, that the *pre-existent scheme* saps the very foundation of our hope, and nullifies our salvation! It will be granted, I am sure, by every subject of regenerating grace, who has felt the impression of the broad seal of redemption, by the power of the Holy Spirit, on his heart, that it was *essentially* necessary to salvation, for our bleeding surety to be **VERY MAN**, as **VERRY GOD**: "He took not upon him the nature of angels"—that would have been of no service to us—"He must in **ALL THINGS** *be made like unto his brethren*;" to take their place he must take their *nature*, in order to take their *sins*, and be made under the law, to bear its curse.

CONSEQUENTLY *if his human* soul pre-existed, it was very dissimilar to those of his brethren, which did not pre-exist, and that dissimilarity must unavoidably prove an immoveable prevention to his taking the very place of his people, which prevention nullifies salvation, by rendering the sacrifice of his soul for sin inefficacious." This is an irresistible argument, for he might as well have taken upon him the nature of angels, or any other nature, as to have taken a *soul*, or rather to have possessed, prior to the commencement of time,* a soul so dissimilar to the souls of his brethren! But blessed be God, we "have not so learned Christ:" we are well assured and perfectly satisfied that he was "one chosen *out of* the people," and not as Pre-existarians say before there were any; "a Lamb of the flock, flesh of our flesh, in all points like unto his brethren! *very man!* without even an iota of dissimilarity to his people! And that he hath offered his *soul* a sacrifice for our *souls*, and his *body* a sacrifice for our *bodies*, by that one offering perfecting his church for ever." Whereas as Mr. H. says in another part of his masterly work, "If his *human* soul pre-existed or existed before all worlds, before he was made or a woman, it could bear but little likeness to our souls; consequently could not suffer in our souls' stead. But blessings on the name of our incarnate God for ever! he was made" at one and the same time, not at two different periods, one thousands of years distant from the other, "as it behoved him, IN ALL THINGS, to be like to his

* The Pre-existarian fudge about time being anterior to the period when God laid the foundation of the world, is too childish to *merit* attention; nevertheless, if more important considerations will afford me an opportunity, I will notice that sophisticated department of the Pre-existarian scheme in its own order.

brethren ;” as Toplady has well expressed it—

“ He took up a life to be ABLE to die.”

“ The doctrine of a pre-existing humanity,” says the great Mr. Irving, “ is an old heresy in the church, and it is an error which still exists in the church, though in a LATENT form, yet not so *latent*,* but that I have had before me several tracts or short treatises, written to maintain it within these last few years, and likewise have conversed and argued with some men who are induced to hold it. The greater part seem to conceive of it as the form really existing, which the Son took into himself before the world was, quoting in support of it such passages as these. Prov. viii. 22, “ The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his work of old, I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the world was” Col. i. 15, “ Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, with Prov. iii. 14.” These and such other passages as set forth the CONSTITUTION of Christ, as the WORD, as the LOGOS, these people interpret of a *created humanity*, of a more refined order than that which he took of the

* Pre-existarianism is an error which has undergone a most wonderful alteration and modification for some years past; the species, however, is identically the same. No greater proof however need be given me of its being an egregious error, than the palpable fact, that modern writers on the subject dare not advocate it on the broad basis, and to the wide extent which marked its defence from the pen of older authors; whereas, TRUTH cannot be advocated on too broad a basis any more than it can be carried to too great an extent; for what is truth? Mr. Irving shall answer. “ Theology is not the knowledge of the word,” the written word he means, “ but of GOD THE WORD MADE FLESH.” Now, if what they said was the truth, why should Pre-existarians restrict the language of their fellows or themselves. When treating of it, truth cannot be brought forward too elaborately.

Virgin. They err, by making no difference between *word* and *deed*, *fiat* and *fact*. They err, by overlooking the difference between the purpose of God, included all in Christ, and foreordained in him, and that purpose, beginning to be effected in outward substance, when Christ took flesh of the virgin, to be completed in the dispensation of the fulness of time, when he shall have recapitulated into himself all things, both which are in heaven and on earth. There is no doubt, at least I have none, that the ROOT of this error is in the PRIDE of the NATURAL man, which will not stoop to believe, that the Son of God, that the Word, should be generated flesh, but would interpose a filmy something, a celestial essence of humanity, between the Godhead and the vile substance of the virgin: so that while there was an appearance of one thing to us, there might be in reality of another thing to him; that in this *pre-existent* humanity invested, he might not soil himself with sinful flesh; POOR SHIFTS, AND SUBSTITUTES OF CARNAL REASON, FOR TRUE SPIRITUAL REASON, WHOSE ACTION IS FAITH: and while I do not doubt that this pride of carnal reason, which will not admit that the eternal Son of God should *become* a man, and no worm, is the cause of all such error, I feel assured, that though no hypothesis be yet matured, at least within the church, at no distance of time we shall see an hypothesis like that of Marcion and Bourignon, &c.* matured

* "This Bourignon was an enthusiastic woman, who propagated, in Holland and the Low Countries, certain wild and heterodox tenets, (about the middle of the seventeenth century claiming the gift of prophecy, ascribing to Christ a twofold human nature, one of which was produced of Adam before the woman was formed, and the other born of the Virgin Mary. Marcion however, asserted, that Christ's humanity came down from heaven into the virgin, and through her, into the world, without partaking at all of her substance." Irving on the Human Nature of Christ.

among those CALLING THEMSELVES EVANGELICALS, who do so nauseate and repudiate the true doctrine, that Christ took his manhood of the substance of the virgin. Now I do give thanks to God, that amongst other things, he has enabled me to bear testimony against THIS ERROR, OF A PRE-EXISTENT HUMANITY—and not only so, but what is of more importance, to unfold the TRUE idea of which this is the FALSIFICATION. Now, concerning the time and manner of our Lord's receiving this reasonable soul, I believe it to have been at the same time, and after the same manner, in which the rest of the children receive it; in opposition to those who hold the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, or that it was made before the creatures, for the Son of God to possess, and unite himself to, and with it, and by it, to create all things visible and invisible, and afterwards to come in it, and join himself to the substance of the Virgin Mary. I hold with the orthodox church, that this is a pestilent error, which hath its origin in the confounding of a divine purpose with a divine act, and endeth in various evil consequences, which I shall in few words expose. With respect to its origin, that the Creator had himself, and his own appearing in creature form, fully and mainly in his eye, from the first beginning, and through the several actings of creation, there is, and can be no question, among those who meditate such matters, or read the Holy Scriptures—for example, the first chap. of Colossians, the first chap. of Hebrews, and the eighth chap. of the Proverbs. Every thing that hath been done by God, out of himself, was done in the contemplation and to the end of himself, becoming unto his creatures manifest in creature form, and that creature form was the form of

risen God, manhood ; but to suppose, that to the effecting of this purpose, it was necessary that the Creator should first create a human soul, in which and by which to create all things, is a gratuitous hypothesis, to represent a purpose by an act, and of the divine idea developing itself by sure and slow progression, and at length manifesting itself in the birth of Immanuel, the virgin's Son. Moreover, if the human soul of Christ, was thus, *before creation*, hypothetically united with the divinity of the Son, we have an inspiritual, before we have an incarnate God, we have God, in union with flesh, subsisting. Now this is to destroy the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and scheme of God, which represents the angels, and all creation hanging upon the lips of promise, and looking with faith, unto the *symbols* of the man about to be, and travelling with hope until the great end of all things should appear. Besides, it wholly destroys the continuity of things, and casts them back again upon themselves, to say that a soul, which had known and effected the creation, should pass into infantine ignorance, and childhood simplicity, and ascend through all the stages of a human life. Moreover, then creation hath not fallen wholly, for the pre-existent soul hath never found a fall : and, being united with the body of Christ, is still the creature in an unfallen state, and so the better half of the man Christ IS UNFALLEN and the other half of him IS FALLEN ! strange conjunction ! and heterogeneous mixture ! Believing therefore, and holding it to be a point of GREAT IMPORTANCE to believe, that the human soul of Christ came into him JUST AS THE HUMAN SOUL OF ANOTHER MAN, we proceed a little further," &c. &c. See Mr. Irving "on the Human Nature of Christ," I am afraid, dear Sir, that

you will think me barefacedly irregular as it regards my method, and I confess, I give you too much occasion to complain, but remember, I am only writing a letter to an intimate friend; were I composing a systematic essay, I should be compelled to act otherwise. The truth of the case is this, I thought so highly of the unanswerable attacks made on the Pre-existarian Hyena, by the very able divines and great scholars, from whose works I have taken the foregoing extracts, that I thought it wise, on my part, to grace my epistle by the insertion of them, and with them I might with a very good grace wind up my epistolary correspondence on the subject, there being no real cause, in point of necessity, for me to trouble, either you or myself; by a further defence of our own opinion, or in disproof of Pre-existarianism, at least, not till the advocates of the latter have overturned the faith of their hitherto unbeaten antagonists, as I have explained, proved, and defended it, in examination and exposition of the passage of Scripture already considered, not that I intend to withdraw my original purpose of examining any passage, claimed by our wily opponents in support of their unfounded hypothesis, no, I see no reason why I should back out from engaging in the controversy, to the utmost bounds to which it may demand our attention in proof of its verity. Permit me therefore, my beloved brother, to invite your attention once more, to the first chap. of Genesis, in particular, with a view to your considering the opinion of the great Theodore Beza, on the subject of man's creation, which being the hinge on which the controversy hangs, I am the more induced to *weigh* deliberately the important passage, supposed by Pre-existarians to sanction their incredible dogma, which is, that

Jesus Christ in his created nature, or to use their own words, "EVEN AS MAN, TRULY MAN," must have been "REALLY MAN," before the Mosaic *creation* began;" Beza however, seems to have apprehended the subject in a different light, and if a religious tenet, entirely free from self contradiction and the most glaring inconsistency, claims a greater right to being believed as God's truth, than the sentiment, which is popular for self contradiction and gross inconsistencies, we shall be at no loss to know who to believe in the present controversy, the great Beza or Pre-existarians; the statement of the latter has been given you. Mr. Beza however, on Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," says in his note of explanation, "first of all, and BEFORE THAT ANY CREATURE WAS, God made heaven and earth of nothing;" for proof of his exposition, he refers his readers first to Psa. xxxiii. 6, "By the WORD of the Lord were the heavens made;" &c.; and then secondly, to Psa. cxxxvi. 5, where the psalmist, speaking of God, says "which by WISDOM made the heavens," &c: from the whole of which, we are taught to believe, that by THE WORD and WISDOM, names exclusively belonging to Christ, Mr. Beza did not understand a pre-existing creature nature, but an official, or constituted character, forasmuch as the person sustaining those names, is said to have been MADE the WISDOM and WORD of God, which could not be said of him as God, essentially considered; although the person, thus designated, is very God, still those names do not refer to his nature as such, and much less can it refer to his human nature; for the WORD and WISDOM, called God by Moses, is said, and justly so too, by Mr. Beza, to have created the heaven and

earth before ANY CREATURE was made, especially the CREATURE MAN, who was the *last creature* that was made; so that after Mr. Beza had commented to the twenty-fifth verse, he then inserts the twenty-sixth, "FURTHERMORE, God said, let us make man in our own image, according to our likeness:" now, it is the first word in this passage I wish you to notice; for though it is neither the same word, nor the same part of speech that is made use of in later translations, it is to be preferred to the conjunction, *and* though in no way contradictory thereof. "FURTHERMORE, that is in addition to all the creatures or species of nature already created, now 'Let us make MAN,' a species that we have NOT yet made; for the word man, made use of in the verse now occupying our attention, means, as I have before proved, MANKIND, on which account it would be preposterous and absurd to interpret the CREATORS saying, in any other sense than that as the orthodox have ever been accustomed to do, that is, that God's saying, 'Let us make man,' was designed to teach, that there was no such A CLASS OF NATURE created prior to the period of God's so saying, as that of *mankind*. This, however, is denied by Pre-existarians, but as their denial of it is unaccompanied with the remotest *appearance of truth*, as an Anti-pre-existarian, I must conclude that Pre-existarians (to use the words of a very able writer) 'entirely mistake both the nature of the Scriptures and the nature of man. What is level to their apprehensions, *must* be right, what comports with their *notions*, *must* be true.'" Nor is it less true, that (to use the words of the same author) "was this notion *defensible*, it could never be desirable; but it has as little to support it as it has to recommend it." Insomuch, that could I

have my wish, only in one thing, at least that is my opinion, much more might be effected towards rescuing Pre-existarians from their truly unscriptural, and equally Sabellian error, than any thing I could offer, were I to write on the subject for twelve months to come; doubtless you will wish to know to what I refer, and I will as willingly tell you—it is this, I could earnestly wish that Pre-existarians (excuse my making so free with other authors' words) could be prevailed upon, “to turn their attention more closely to THEIR OWN SENTIMENT. I have often remarked they rather seem to CONTRADICT than to DISPROVE.” The truth of the latter needs no further proof than that which a perusal of their writings will afford; and though I could earnestly wish them to do the former, I have no hope that such will be the case while they persist in being “wiser in their own conceits than seven men that can render a reason.” Let them be redeemed from the influence of this foundation of all obstinacy, in parties hostile to plainly revealed truths, and I will answer for it “*their own sentiment*” shall be abhorred by them, and that for reasons the most potent and numerous. How ridiculous to argue, and yet be it remembered that Pre-existarians do, and will argue, in opposition to all conviction of its absurdity, that the pre-existent human soul of Christ (which by the by they will further insist on is “REALLY MAN”) was a creature, and yet by it, “*as the immediate agent,*” all creature existencies were created; only to their great mortification, the miserable hodge-podge, which they could never get over, even among themselves, is how this CREATURE, by whose “*immediate agency*” all creatures were made, could have been created anterior to creation having been began, vea. how could it, even as an im-

mediate agent, in the hand or under the control of a superior, have created *all* creatures, without having been the "immediate agent" of creating its own creature self.

"An instrument," says the late Mr. Robert Hall, of Arnsby, "if concerned at all, must have been employed either BEFORE or AFTER the PRODUCTION of being, for there was no medium. Not BEFORE; because, prior to creation, there was not ANY THING existing, for an instrument to ACT UPON, or to be EMPLOYED ABOUT; not after, because when a CREATURE DOES exist, it is too late for an INSTRUMENT to be employed in PRODUCING it." When Pre-existarians, therefore, have purged this chimera of their's from this glaring outrage against all truth, then indeed they will induce Christ's spiritual flock, of whom it is said, few as they are, "A stranger (that is to spiritual truth) will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know (approve) not the voice of strangers," to give them another hearing. Till then I am authorized, by one of their most learned doctors, not only to treat Pre-existarianism with irreverence, but to abandon it, as being no article in the religion of Jesus Christ. "Statements," says Mr. Hinton, "are consistent which are not contradictory. Few things can be more derogatory to a book than self-contradiction; such a fault would inevitably affect the intellectual, and might impugn the *moral* character of the writer; it would prove him, at all events, incompetent to instruct, and unworthy of confidence. The directions and the hopes derived from one part of it, might be cancelled by another, and the perplexities of our condition be increased by the professed kindness of our guide." See also Dr. More's Theological Works. Article, "Contradictions in Religion."

But, really Sir, it is high time for me to think of the error so fatal to the acceptance of authors with their readers, and of which I did not fail to warn myself when beginning this letter. I refer to the popular evil of undue prolixity. Now, to avoid this, I am resolved to wind up the subject for the present. This, however, I shall not do until I have submitted to your very courteous and impartial examination, the following REASONS, why I am more than ever determined to reject, with every expression of marked indignation, a tenet so derogatory to "the faith once delivered to the saints," as is the *ipse dixit* of Christ's having existed as "really man," not only anterior to his incarnation, but prior to the period when, as the Holy Ghost teacheth, God said, let us make human nature, mankind, or man, each word meaning the same thing. O yes, so great is my astonishment at the irreligious absurdity of this sentiment, that did I not know, from our Lord's own mouth, that for all manner of blasphemy against the Christ of God, men may obtain free and full forgiveness, I would not have believed it possible for any regenerate child of God (and even now I stagger at the thought) to have contended for such a blasphemous tenet as that of Pre-existarianism, nor am I at a loss to assign the most potent reasons for my so conceiving.

In the FIRST place, I offer my protest against, and determinately reject with abhorrence, the scheme advocated by my opponents, because it offers the most daring and awful insult to the SOVEREIGN SUPREMACY OF GOD. Yes, it raises the creature nature of man, and that in matters of infinite interest and eternal consequences, above the majesty, the uncreated

majesty of heaven and earth, whose greatest glory is his unrivalled and uncontrolled supremacy, as saith the Holy Ghost, "GOD is greater than MAN;" and as a proof of it, in particular as it regards his sovereign supremacy, it is added, "HE giveth NOT account of ANY of his matters." Whereas, Pre-existarians insist "that it was NECESSARY that the HUMAN SOUL of our Lord should have a pre-existence, in order to be a party in, and to give its consent to THE COVENANT of our salvation, in its hard and difficult conditions, respecting the atonement to be made for sin in the fulness of time." Now, one solitary article in the Christian religion is sufficient to disprove and overturn the futile sophism of this *mad-brained assumption*. What! was not Christ's human nature a part of the election of grace? and was not God's act of *choosing* from the rest of human nature, as eyed by omniscience, a covenant transaction? and was not the covenant, in which God, even by a Pre-existarian, is represented as saying,

" Christ be my first elect he said,
Then chose our souls in Christ our head."

What, I ask, was not this covenant, in which Christ was elected as the *head* of God's elect, the same covenant with that in which the redemption of the church, viewed as fallen, was provided? and was not this covenant, in which the elect of God were chosen to eternal glory, and in which also their redemption from the ruins of the fall was provided? What, I again ask, was not this covenant made from eternity? and if so, and no army of Pre-existarian enemies on earth can disprove the truth of it; such being the fact, then, that the covenant of salvation was from eternity, and that the human

nature of Christ was one individual portion of elect humanity, set apart by free and sovereign grace from the rest, that is from *reprobated* humanity; does not this disprove the fallacious whim of REASON, which insists that it was *necessary* that Christ's human nature should exist *anterior* to God's covenant settlements being decided upon, that he might be consulted, and that "*his voluntary consent to become incarnate and to suffer, might be obtained.*" And pray, Sir, what must have been the consequences? Why, first, Christ's human created nature must have been united to Deity prior to the making of the eternal covenant; and then, secondly, as the covenant was made, and all the engagements settled therein, not only in reference to the Father and the Holy Ghost, but also in reference to the Son's future sufferings from eternity, there necessarily must have been *an eternal creature*, yes, a "REAL MAN" from eternity. In this, therefore, man is made equal with God, so far as it respects the eternity of his nature.

Permit me, my dear brother, before I proceed with my own remarks, to lay before you the gigantic encounter of the invulnerable BRINE, with this pre-existent notion. "Once more," says Mr. Brine, "for I have not yet done with this VAIN CONCEIT, to suppose, as this writer* does, that the soul of Christ was a contracting party in the covenant of grace, and not his divine person, is to detract from his glory as a divine person, and is advancing his human soul into such dignity, as is by no means his due. May the good Lord eternally preserve me from lessening the glory of a precious Jesus, in his human nature, which ought ever to be dear to my soul! My heart cannot possibly bear the killing thought; and yet, with intre-

* Sackwell.

pidity I say, that it was a glory *peculiar to Christ in his divine person*, to contract with the other divine persons, the Father and the Holy Spirit, and that it was an honor infinitely too great for the human soul of Christ, to become a contracting party in the covenant of grace. The parties contracting were equal, as it was condecant and fit that they should be." And what reply do Pre-existarians make to all this incontrovertible logic? why they further inform us that "It was the *human soul* of Christ that endured all the weakness, poverty, and pain of his infant state, that sustained all the labors and fatigues of life, that felt the bitter reproaches of men, and the sufferings of a shameful and bloody death, as well as the buffetings of devils, and the painful inflictions of the justice of God. Surely then it seems requisite that the *soul* of Christ should give its ACTUAL free consent to this undertaking before his labors, pains, or sorrows began." WONDERFUL!!! And is it not equally wonderful, that by the very same system of "*lucid reasoning*," Pre-existarians should not have undertaken to prove, that the body of Christ also MUST have existed, anterior to the settlements of the ETERNAL COVENANT, in which that body was made equally ostensible, as an indispensable part of an efficient Redeemer, and one whole Christ, as was either the soul or deity of Christ?*" Then, why not insist on the

* We are positively forbidden to cut in sunder what God has joined together, and yet this crime is the most prominent feature in Pre-existarianism; its votaries are ever talking about, "Christ as *man*; *really man*, united to Deity before the foundation of the world," and yet from this pre-existent manhood, the body is excluded altogether; but where, I would know, do Pre-existarians get their authority, thus to mutilate, and hack asunder, what *nature* itself; or rather God himself, has rendered one? We read of the spirits, or souls OF JUST MEN made perfect, which is generally applied to the departed souls of men, but would it not be very in-

absolute necessity of our Lord's body having pre-existed, prior to the covenant in which it was argued, settled, and confirmed, even by an oath, that he should be the man, and that his body should be the BODY that should bear the sins, and with the sins, the punishment due to his people's sins? Surely, there must have been just as much need, that the body of Christ should have lived, "anterior to the covenant, to have given its *actual*, and *voluntary* consent to this undertaking, before his labours, pains, or sorrows began," as there was, for the soul; in particular, as the body was subjected in that very covenant, to both labors and pain, from which the soul was comparatively free. O, but "one cannot but think," say Pre-existarians, "it very congruous, and highly REASONABLE, that he who was to undergo so much for our sakes, should not be taken from his childhood in a *mere passive manner*, into this difficult and tremendous work, and afterwards, only give his consent to it, when he was grown up a man, upon a secret, divine intimation, that he was bound for this purpose." What sophisticated reasoning, to make use of as an argument, for the soul's pre-existing before creation, and yet deny the same of the Saviour's body. Nor is it less absurd, to add, that it was becoming "the justice of God, that Christ's human soul, which endured ALL (this is not true, for the body bore pains, almost exclusively its own) the pains, should WELL KNOW, beforehand, what the glorious work of mediation would cost him, and that he should voluntarily ACCEPT the PROPOSAL from the Father;" how monstrously

congruous, to read the passage thus, "To God the judge of all, and to the MEN or just MEN made perfect;" and yet, such a reading is perfectly congruous with both Scripture and good sense, if Pre-existarianism is true.

absurd to suppose, as this writer does, that a creature (a mere human creature) just come into existence, should be capacitated for foreknowing what Deity alone could apprehend; that is, what would be the nature, measure, and weight of suffering, falling to the lot of that individual, who should endure the ireful vengeance of infinite wrath, which would come upon the God-man, as the surety of God's church. Besides, who but the deluded followers of Pre-existarian teachers, would suffer themselves to be gulled by the preposterous parade, about Christ's human soul, "being taken from his childhood in a *mere passive manner*, into this difficult, and tremendous work, and afterwards, only give his consent?" Are not such reasoners partial? Why not one part of our Lord's human nature be passive under the hand of Deity, as well as the other? for whatever purposes it should please God to make use of it, although the work, for which Deity might make use of humanity, should subject our Lord's inferior nature to sufferings which could, in point of exquisite extremity, only be inflicted by God? It is infamy, the most infamous, to argue, as the whole host of Pre-existarian writers have done, that it was necessary for Deity to have the free, yes voluntary consent, of **MANHOOD**, (great man) on whose **PRESUMED FREEWILL**, God is to wait, to know, if this created man will give his "voluntary consent to **BECOME INCARNATE.**" *Man become incarnate?* in other words, man become, what he was before, i. e. man!! and yet this is the very human soul of Pre-existarianism. Once more, for as Mr. Brine says, "I have not yet done with this **VAIN CONCEIT.**" I have read in the hymn books of modern Calvinists, a grave ministerial petition, presented to great man, in which, in the

name of God, yes in God's stead, as they have piously assured their hearers was the case, I say I have heard such moderate divines invoke men dead in trespasses and sins, to

“ Go and tell the gracious Jesus,
If they will be saved, or not ;
Say poor sinner,
WILL YOU now be saved, or not ?
In his name are you ENTREATED,
To accept this act of grace,”

Ripps. Sol. Hist. 115.

Now, I thought this was awful to the extreme : but Pre-existarianism outdoes this, for that insists that Deity must wait, for the voluntary consent of manhood, before it could be decided whether there should be a covenant at all ; and consequently, whether God himself, could become a Saviour : for, as it was impossible for the deity of the Son to bring many sons and daughters to glory but by the assumption of human nature, by which alone he could BLEED and DIE, and that this human nature, must of necessity, be a party, whose voluntary consent must be obtained, before Deity could make a covenant ; so I say, this is making God to depend on man's *freewill*, not only in reference, to whether man will consent to be saved when a Saviour is provided, but even God himself is made to depend on man's voluntary consent, before the former can be covenantly constituted to redeem the latter. Nor is it less false and preposterous to assert, as Pre-existarians do, that “ the human soul, united to the divine nature at its *first creation*, was FULLY CAPACITATED for this amazing work of redemption ;” for such was not the case, unless the body of our Lord was superfluous : whereas, neither Christ's Godhead, nor his rational part, would have been of the least service, without the body ; for the object of redemption is the purg-

ing of the church from sin, with the full remission of the same, neither of which could have been obtained by the Godhead of Christ, in union to the human soul; on which account, there is just as much, yea more plausibility, in contending for the Deity's obtaining the consent of the body, as of the soul, preparatory to making the eternal covenant. But, it is farther argued, "*that the essence of God, is the same numerical essence, in all three personalities, and therefore, it can be but one conscious mind or spirit. Now can one single understanding and will make such a covenant as Scripture represents?*" The plain meaning of this sophistically ambiguous question, is this, is it possible, admitting that the essence, understanding and will of God are *one*, allowing at the same time, that there exists in the single essence of Deity, a trinity of personal subsistencies; is it possible, that such a Trinity of Persons, who are very one in essence, understanding, and will, can become covenanters among themselves, without the additional essence, understanding, and freewill of a human being? This, I think all will allow to be the fairest, and most just explanation of the Pre-existarian question; to which question they also want us ANTI-PRE-EXISTARIANS to say, NO, CERTAINLY NOT. This however we will not say, for we neither believe, indeed, we should never have thought it possible, for any man, calling himself a believer in God, to have even insinuated a conclusion, so derogatory to God, as a trinity of persons; for, first, supposing it to have been necessary that there should have been present the human soul of Christ, to the end, that Deity might ascertain, whether or no, it would consent to be a party in such a proffered covenant, in which Deity could do nothing, though existing in a trinity of persons, except man would volunteer to take his

part. Now allowing, for argument sake, that such had been the case, what would have been the consequence? why, that it would not have been the covenant of the Eternal Three, but the covenant of the Eternal Two; yes, two essences, two understandings, two wills, God's and man's; and as for the personal existences, peculiar to the Deity, they must have been lost in the *oneness* of the divine essence, understanding, and will; and this is the very essence, understanding, and will of SABELLIANISM, which was the cause of Dr. Hawker's including the whole of Sabellianism in the testimony he gave of Pre-existarianism, as a Sabellian heresy: all, and every item of Sabellianism, being included therein. Besides, in the above hypothesis about the oneness of the divine essence, understanding, and will, being a prevention to Deity becoming covenanters, without the actual presence of man's essence, and concurring will and understanding, I say, this wild hypothesis, of necessity makes it the covenant of God and company, God and man; *the former, from the necessary oneness of the divine essence, understanding and will, being incapacitated, and unimpowered to make such a covenant, without first finding such a party as a pre-existing man.* Much more might be said in disproof of this truly and justly to be despised heresy, but as I have said enough to *justify* and *establish* my FIRST REASON for rejecting, with disdain and abhorrence, the Pre-existarian scheme, on account of its offering the most awful insult to the sovereign supremacy of God, I shall conclude this part of my controversy, by giving you the authority offered us by Pre-existarians, in confirmation of this ideal notion. First of all, we are directed to Deut. xxix. 14 15, "Neither with you only, do I make this covenant, and this

oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him, that is not here with us this day." From this portion, we are told, "that the souls of the posterity of the Jews *were then* in being, though *not there* present, at the publication of the law: for the division of the COVENANTERS into absent and present, naturally implies that they *both are*," that is, that they both were then in actual existence, "though some here, some in other places;" from which Jewish tradition, by which they make void the true doctrine of God, it is first assumed, and then confirmed for Scripture truth, that the human soul of Christ must have been in actual being, as ONE of the COVENANTERS, at the making of the eternal covenant. I have no idea, that I should have taken the least notice of this specious pretention, had not Dr. More (in whose most potent Pre-existarian arguments I found it) been so repeatedly forced on the attention of Anti-pre-existarians, as the all but heavenly messenger of the Pre-existarian opinion. I have hardly read an author of any importance on the Pre-existarian side of the question, who has not attempted to force the stately ranks of the orthodox, by a trumped up defence, including the important *human authority*, by which it has been espoused, at the head of which, they have generously placed Dr. Henry More* for the rea-

* Mr Stevens, as a glaring proof of his want of *probity* as an author, has endeavored, and no doubt in many cases has succeeded, in persuading his readers, that MR. ROMAINE was a Pre-existarian. Such however was not the case, for although Mr. Romaine wrote a recommendatory preface to Mr. Allen's *Spiritual Magazine*, it was not as a Pre-existarian work, but as a spiritual work, in which Mr. Allen himself, has stabbed Pre-existarianism to the heart; so much so, that it must continue to bleed, as long as that work is in being. One of the sturdiest Pre-existarians that ever wrote in favor of the sentiment, was Mr. Elliot. Of this au-

son, as I should suppose, that that gentleman was a *consistent* Pre-existarian; inasmuch as he believed in the pre-existence of all human souls, from which he was empowered, by a greater appearance of consistency, to advocate the pre-existence of Christ's human soul; for if all souls pre-existed, his must, and in that case, he was so far made like unto his brethren. Whereas the more modern Pre-existarians, greatly to the prejudice of their system, have not had *nerve* enough to carry their notion to the same extent, to which it was carried by their boasted leader, whose last argument in favor of Pre-existarianism, is roundly, and proudly this; "To make all sure, they might have further alleged, for this opinion of the soul's pre-existence, that it was, at *least unreproved, if not approved of, by our Saviour himself.*" So much for the Pre-existarian argumentation of the champion, designated by Pre-existarians, "OUR GREAT DR. MORE." The foregoing position, urged by Pre-existarians, in favor of their belief of Christ's human soul having pre-existed, and that of necessity, as an ostensible party or covenanter, anterior to the making the eternal covenant; for though they will allow that such a covenant had occupied a thought in the mind of God, prior to the soul of Christ being created, still nothing could be decided upon, they will insist, until the soul should have given its "voluntary consent to become incarnate." I say this being the foundation, and in point of magnitude, I may say, the

thor however, modern Pre-existarians take no notice, because forsooth, he was so far an honest man, as to prove, that Pre-existarianism was the *sole, and exclusive foundation*, on which alone the rest of Mr. Elliot's Sabellian notions could be kept together, without falling away into nonentity. Now this Pre-existarian, Elliot's greatest antagonist, was that blessed man of God, Mr. Romaine, who was a sworn foe to Pre-existarianism.

greatest error marking the Pre-existarian controversy, it cannot fail to be a principal reason for my rejecting it. My prolixity, therefore, in attempting to show the fallacy thereof, will be easily accounted for, while I promise you, I am too sick of the nauseous poison, to detain you long on what follows. A SECOND REASON, therefore, why I nauseate, with contempt, this pre-existent scheme, is, because it undertakes to reduce an economy, God-like for its unfathomable and incomprehensible mysteries, plain and easy to “the curious genius, that has been accustomed to enter deep into the rational of things; that thinks it beneath a sagacious inquirer to credit, unless he can comprehend;” yes, it is this prominent ingredient in Pre-existarianism, that renders it so palatable to the taste of carnal reasoners; this is plain, from the recollection of the individuals who have been its chief patrons, and principal supporters, most of whom, have been so wedded to the schools, as to pay more deference to the wisdom of men, than to the foolishness of believing that which is *unfathomable*, and *incomprehensible* to the mind of sense. So that, instead of Pre-existarianism being recommended to the notice of the spiritual Christian, from the consideration of who have been its principal abettors, this is rather a reason, why the spiritual church should resent it; for what were Dr. Henry More, Grotius, Dr. Clarke, Burnet, &c. &c.? why they were sworn foes, up at arms against the doctrines of free grace; rigid Arminians, and Semi-Socinian writers, which accounts for Dr. Hawker’s description of them, as men “untaught of God the Holy Ghost, who have fallen into dreams of *their own imagination*, and ventured to propose, I know not what PHANTASY, of the pre-existence of the human soul of

Christ. I shudder while I think of it. Nothing can be more awful than such PRESUMPTUOUS REASONINGS of the mind of man." And although the names of regenerate individuals (a case which Dr. Hawker thought almost incredible, (see his letter to John Stevens) have been found amongst these Pre-existarian *reasoners* after the flesh, it has arisen more from a natural bias of mind towards the school of Freethinkers and Socinian reasoning, in favor of natural religion, than from an excessive measure of *spiritual mindedness*, as persons famed for setting at Jesus's feet, bedewed with the unctious grace of the Holy Ghost. To every thinking person therefore, individuals embracing and advocating the pre-existent notion, in whose heart there is reason to believe the work of grace is begun; I say such Pre-existarians must be just objects of pity, in the estimation of the spiritual church, their Pre-existarian notions having arisen from a constitutional propensity biasing their inclinations towards the religion of sense, which therefore, is their besetting sin, and not, as they would have us believe, a greater understanding than their fellows in the knowledge of Scripture wisdom. Had the latter been the case which must have arisen from a higher degree of spiritual mindedness, than is possessed by others, I am positive, that of all men living in the nineteenth century we should have had Dr. Hawker advocating the pre-existence of Christ's soul; for no man, either as a Christian, a preacher, or an author, equalled him in spirituality of mind, in the most intimate communion with the blessed Trinity, by faith in and daily intercourse with Jesus Christ. These considerations, in the estimation of some persons, may be regarded as trivial, but in my opinion, I confess they are of great import-

ance. The lamest writer, that ever took up a pen in defence of Pre-existarianism was Mr. John Allen, he had the least of any author I ever met with to offer in defence of it; whereas he was by far the most spiritual of any man belonging to the Pre-existarian tribe. On the contrary, Dr. Watts, from whose work in favor of Pre-existarianism, the principal part of both Mr. Murray's and Mr. John Stevens's Pre-existarian productions were almost word for word compiled; this man's works, who again was by far the greatest reasoner that ever adopted the Pre-existarian notion among good men, I say (excuse tautology) his writings are the most dry and insipid compositions that can be read in the Christian church; not the least measure of spirituality, or divine unction is to be found in a single page of the doctor's prose writing, ontology and the fitness of things was the doctors *forte*, a mere metaphysical and anti-scriptural system of fleshly reasoning; so that, in case the spiritual church had no Bible to guide and regulate their religious conclusions, and that some second standard of probable certainty were to be erected for the purpose of knowing, "what is truth?" I, for one, should say, show me the man whose writings, preachments, and parlor discourses, savor most of divine unction and true spirituality, arising from devout communion with Jesus, by the agency of the Holy Ghost at a throne of grace, apart from all religious science, falsely so called, (which some professing, have erred concerning the faith) and I will show you the divine, at whose lips, and from whose pen, we are most likely to obtain "the faith once delivered to the saints; the truth as it is in Jesus." For this however, I am most confident we should not have recourse to Pre-

existarianism, its chief recommendation, as stated by its respective votaries, being this; it is so rational, it is so *reasonable*; and this accounts for the palpable fact, that every modern author of the least note among Pre-existarians, have made use of the very same modifying process, with a view to reduce the most sublime mysteries contained in Holy Writ, to a plain, reasonable, and easy comprehension. Yes, "this doctrine," say they, "casts a surprising light upon many dark passages in the word of God; it does very NATURALLY and EASILY explain and reconcile difficult places, both of the Old and New Testament, which are very HARD to be accounted for any other way."

What a pity it was that the Apostle Peter was not a Pre-existarian, when he acknowledged, that "there were in his beloved brother Paul's epistles, some things (that is mysteries) HARD to be understood;" in that case, he could have made Paul's hard sayings soft, and his most mysterious doctrines might have been reduced down to such plainness, that the natural man might have fallen in love with them; for instance, when the Apostle Paul, Anti-pre-existarian like, delivered that HARD saying, or *mystery*, contained in Rom. ix. 5, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the *flesh*, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." I say, this unfathomable mystery could, by the Pre-existarian key, have been so explained, as to have become perfectly comprehensible to *human reason*, for as it respects Christ's coming in the flesh, the meaning of this is his human soul, which was created before*

* The more consistent Pre-existarians, who wrote as Pre-existarians, since Dr. Henry More, men, who were not ashamed

creation began, came down from heaven to be united to a human body, and thus, by the incarnation of the ancient manhood of the Saviour, according to its free and voluntary consent, at the organization of the eternal covenant; becoming incarnate, it was made flesh, (in other words, man became incarnate, and was made man) *very plain indeed*, so far as the mystery of the incarnation is involved, and as for his being called "God over all blessed for ever," that is "BECAUSE HE IS ONE WITH GOD BY SO INTIMATE A UNION;" very plain indeed, insomuch, that any Sabellian on earth could, nor would he flinch from preaching the same sermon, from the same text. Pre-existarians have made much ado about their having Dr. Watts in their ranks, on the other hand, the modern "high unity men," as they call themselves, I mean such men as the present Sabellians, Ward, and Kitson, with Mr. Evans, before his recantation of Pre-existarian Sabellianism, and others, have laid absolute claim to the doctor, as a believer and defender of their sentiments, nor dare I undertake, if my life depended upon it, to disprove the claims of either party, for although Mr. Murray complains, "that through a diffidence peculiar to the doctor's controversial writings, much of the force, energy, and evidence of truth contained in this (i. e. pre-

of their belief, it being much less contradictory, and more consistent with itself than is MODERN Pre-existarianism, I say Pre-existarians, of the old school, put a face on their defences, by insisting, that the Mosaic was not the ORIGINAL CREATION, and this ought to be granted by all Pre-existarians, for admitting, as they hold and teach (it matters not how many millions of years before) that Christ's creature nature, as "really man," was no part of the creation, whereat God said, "Let us make man," then, necessarily, there must have been a creation anterior to the Mosaic creation, in which *first* creation, "the *second* man" Jesus was made, whereas "the first man" Adam was made in the second creation!!

existarian) doctrine, is lost." I do not think the charge was merited, for no man ever pleaded harder for the pre-eminence of Pre-existarianism, over Anti-pre-existarianism, on the assumed ground, that the former made even the Saviour himself speak *plainly*, when without the Pre-existarian key, he would have spoken a great mystery, at least in the estimation of Pre-existarian and Socinian reasoners, than did Dr. Watts, insomuch, that the very Pre-existarian writers who have pretended to find fault with him, have not failed to borrow, wholesale, the doctor's defence of the sentiment—the truth of the case is this, Pre-existarian authors, who have compiled their own books chiefly from the Pre-existarian works of Dr. Watts, have pretended to find fault with Dr. Watts; the ground of their complaints however have been assumed, whereas the true cause of their complaints have been smothered. Dr. Watts was a Pre-existarian unmasked, whereas later writers, of any note, have conducted the controversy with more subtilty, keeping back part of the price, they have not suffered themselves, for policy's sake, to follow their own sentiments to their necessary consequences. The sentiment however is the same, whether its defenders are partial or impartial, in their propagation and statement of it, the very *acme* of which sentiment, as it regards its design and tendency, is to reduce gospel mysteries to a level with man's capacious powers and pride, as a REASONER. On this account, I for ever reject it, for I will not have a faith, or in other words, a creed, that will not kill reason, and stagger little faith; wherefore, away for ever, and eternally away, with all those cant phrases, urged as arguments by Pre-existarians, about "is it not more RATIONAL, certainly it is more EASY to understand those

Scriptures, which speak of God's talking with Abraham, his wrestling with Jacob, the Word's being made flesh, that this should be explained of Christ's human soul." On the contrary, "that the divine person of our Lord, who is *equal with* God the Father, should immediately animate a human* body to visit Abraham, and tarry with him some hours under a tree, while his wife made cakes, and dressed the flesh of a calf for God to eat, IS NOT EASY to believe." I should like to ask these poor decrepid and wretchedly lame Pre-existarian REASONERS, in defence of a creed EASY to be understood, whether it is not a truth according to godliness, that the greatest, and most sublime truth in the great mystery of godliness, is the most hard and difficult to be believed? But shall we deny, and make light of it on that account? Shall we repudiate it from our hearts, and Christian belief, because it is not EASY to be believed? Is it EASY to believe, that the very same individual person, begotten without a father, conceived from the substance and very nature of a totally depraved, and sinful mother, can be a HOLY person? and that that individual person is very God, and very man? Is this EASY to believe? Is it EASY to believe how God, who knows the end of all his works from the beginning, should resolve on engaging in a work, the end of which he then knew, would be the inevitable damnation, and eternal burning of countless millions of rational beings in hell fire? Is it EASY to believe, how God could give assistance to two children, by one and the self-same mother, one of which

* He might assume, and make use of a human form, without the existence of either human body, or soul pre-existing, which indeed, was the case in every instance of his appearing to the ancient Hebrews.

was from eternity reprobated to everlasting torments, as the object of God's hatred, while the other was elected to obtain everlasting happiness in God, as the object of his love? Surely, it is quite as EASY to believe, that the glorious person who with the CONDESCENSION OF A GOD, could dwell in the burning bush; speak with Manoah; talk with Gideon; tarry with Abraham; it matters not how long, nor how familiar, was what Abraham called him VERY JEHOVAH, VERY GOD, IN THE PERSON OF THE SON, let what will be considered in reference to any transaction which took place, or any action or speech, of which he was the subject. I say, this is all quite as EASY to believe, as it is to believe, that very God in the person of the Holy Ghost, with all his infinite greatness, should make the vile bodies of the militant saints, temples to dwell in; does God, in the person of the Holy Ghost, make use of an intermediate human soul, in order to his dwelling and speaking in the saints? "*It is not you, saith the Saviour, but the Holy Ghost speaking in you.*" I foresee the reply that will be made to these HARD truths, as much as if I had a host of Pre-existarians at my elbow, and what is it? Why the old thing over again, "how can these things be!!" And what is my answer? Why, that poor carnally minded Nicodemus will never be dead, while a single Pre-existarian teacher is to be found alive—well but—well but what? Why, "Is it not beneath the grandeur, DECENCY and dignity, of the supreme Majesty of Heaven; can it be thought that the eternal Godhead, in the person of the Son, as some say, should talk so familiarly with *Gideon*, and let *Gideon* use such a familiar way of talking with

God, as is recorded, Judges vi. 11—24?"* Query. Was it beneath the grandeur, decency, and dignity of the supreme Majesty of Heaven? Can it be thought, that the eternal Godhead, in the person of the Son, as some say, should, as saith the Holy Ghost by anticipation, have delights with the sons of men in his constituted covenant character, as set up from eternity, before there were any sons of men to enjoy actual delight with? if this is not too hard, and too deeply tinged with unfathomable mysteries of the eternal Godhead, in the person of the Son, becoming the everlasting Father of his children elect, who were so from eternity, then indeed, it will be quite worthy God in the person of the Son; yes worthy his grandeur, *decency* and dignity, as the supreme Majesty of Heaven, to manifest those delights as occasion might serve, and that in the most condescending and familiar manner, till his delights, with his eternally delighted in sons of men, should be consummated, by the eternal Godhead, in the person of the Son coming FROM HEAVEN, to dwell in his people's delighted in nature, as it should be derived by him, through the power of the Holy Ghost, from the very substance of the woman's very fallen nature, the truth of which, depending on the help of God's grace, I will never renounce, although a host of

* A noted Deist addressing a poor laborer, said, "well John they say you worship Jesus Christ as God: how great is he and how little?" "He is so GREAT, (replied the humble man,) that the *heaven* OF heavens cannot contain HIM; and so LITTLE, that he condescends to DWELL WITH ME: his love, which I now feel makes me happy. Here is an instance of a Holy Ghost taught soul NOT thinking "it beneath the grandeur, decency and dignity of the supreme Majesty of Heaven, the Eternal Godhead in the person of the Son" "not merely consenting to visit ABRAHAM and tarry with him some hours," but deigning to dwell with a poor finite guilty hell meriting worm.

reasoning Pre-existarian Sabellians should object, as aforesaid. "How these things can be, is not EASY to believe" I am of Dr. Owen's belief, where he contends, that "herein consists the excellency of faith, above all other powers, and acts of the soul, that it *receives, assents unto, and rests* in things in their own nature absolutely incomprehensible. Yes the more sublime and glorious the things are which we believe, the more inaccessible are they unto *sense and reason.*" Wherefore I hasten on to remark, that A THIRD REASON for my disbelief, and rejection of Pre-existarianism is this—IT offers violence, and endeavors to wrest, that is twist, the true and genuine meaning of the word of God, to make the Scriptures speak the language of Pre-existarianism, manifesting the most determinate purpose to hold together the paralyzed members of the poor palsied pre-existent creature, by stratagems, as cunning as they are injurious, to the prosperity and interests of the Christian church. No argument will be needed on my part in proof of this charge, the Scriptures shall speak for themselves; for instance, in Gen. i. 26, we are told, that man was made in the image of God. Now by the image of God, as Pre-existarians contend we are to understand, the pre-existing man, or human soul of Jesus Christ; for say they, "the human nature of *Christ* is the image of the invisible God the Father." otherwise they further insist, that is, if by *Christ's* being the express image of the Father's person, we refer to his divine nature, "it amounts to no more, than saying, the *divine nature* is the *image* of the *divine nature.*" Murray. Now if this is not wresting the Scriptures to serve a servile purpose, I know not what is; but as the passage in the first of Genesis has been considered by us before, I beg leave barely

to refer to such passages as those in Gen. xviii. 2, xxxii. 24, Judges vi. 1—11, with Zech. i. 8, with many others, in which the eternal Godhead, in the person of the Son, is absolutely CALLED A MAN, from which Pre-existarians have contended, that the person thus called, must, of necessity, at that very time, have been human nature or "real man." This however is a forced construction of the word, for admitting for a moment, that his being called a man, proved that he was really in possession, not of the appearance, or form but of *essential human nature*, then, of necessity, on a parity of reasoning, when he was called an angel, as was frequently the case, the name by which he was so called, must not refer, either to appearance or office, but to the *essential nature* of angels, in which case, admitting at the same time, that he is allowed to be God, then of course, he was possessed of *three essential natures!* besides, in the first passage, Gen. xviii. 2, there are THREE MEN said to have appeared to Abraham, each of them *spoke, stood, ate, &c.* Now if the epithet MEN, which is strenuously contended for by Pre-existarians, in reference to the same noun, only in the singular number, as applied to the promised Messiah, is indicative of ESSENTIAL NATURE, and not appearance, then of necessity, they were three *very human beings, really men, or human souls*, that for wise ends, suffered themselves to be detained by Abraham; but such wresting of Scriptures, to serve human prejudices and support a crude chaos of Babel-building fantasies, this I say, is abominable and not to be consented to with quiet and hardened indifference towards Christ's truth, by those whose duty it is to contend, and contend earnestly too, for the faith once delivered to the saints. The next passage is Prov. viii. 28,

"I was set up from EVERLASTING, from the beginning," but as this last word occurs again, in John i. 1, I shall only take notice of the first sentence, "*I was set up from everlasting.*" From this passage we are taught to believe, I mean by Pre-exitastrian authorities, and that oftentimes with much low witted irony, for they seem indeed to think with the satirical Horace, that

"RIDICULE shall frequently prevail,
And cut the knot; when graver reasons fail."

Yes, we are ironically told, that by the setting up of the person mentioned in this passage, we are not to understand "a set up God," the meaning of which is, in graver words, we are not to understand the Holy Ghost, as speaking of the personal Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, as set up from eternity by the Father, in his covenantly constituted character of WISDOM, in which was involved every other relative and covenant character and office responsibility; covenantly undertaken, by one, who, generally for distinction sake, is called the second person in the Trinity, or essential Godhead. No, we are not to believe, that this setting up is to be believed of this from eternity to eternity, "God over all blessed for ever" person in the Godhead, but we must believe it, of the created human soul, which first of all received a created existence, and was then consulted and waited upon, by its CREATORS to know, if it would, or would not, "voluntarily of its own freewill, consent to become incarnate, undertake the labor and bear the pains and sorrows which would fall to the lot of the soul, whose *death* and *blood*, must redeem, and purge from sin, guilt, pollution, and hell, the millions of millions of human beings, whom DEITY HAD OR HAD NOT, (I must leave Pre-ex-

istarians themselves, they alone being involved either way, to give the answer) prior to this consultation, absolutely decreed should come into a holy existence, and afterwards fall into sin, and to prove this farrago of nonsense, we are further informed, that by this human soul's being set up from *everlasting*, we are not to understand from eternity, but from the beginning of time, from which we are left to conclude, that the covenant in which the redemption of God's elect was decided upon, was a time, and not an eternal covenant; this they are obliged to allow, for to deny this, and yet contend, that Deity could not have this covenant ratified, although "such a thing had certainly passed in the divine mind, both as it respects its plan, and its projects;" still, as the covenant could not be made till there was a human soul, who would be an ostensible party in the contract, and which human creature alone, could be set up, for it was "unbecoming, and beneath the *decency* and dignity of Christ's Godhead, as the Majesty of Heaven, thus to be set up," seeing I say, that this human creature must have been present, to be consulted as an ostensible contracting party ("it being the human soul that must have all the humiliation; for Deity itself cannot be said to humble itself") at the making of the covenant, either that covenant is a time covenant, or the human soul of Christ is an eternal creature. Now which way shall it be? Was the covenant, that is God's covenant of grace, in which Christ as wisdom mentioned by Solomon, was also, that is by the same covenant transactions, constituted the "EVERLASTING FATHER" of his eternally elected seed or federal race, I say was that covenant made from eternity, and if so, and I will defy Pre-existarians to negative the truth of it, I say, then seeing that it was from eternity, and that the human soul

of Christ was a "*voluntary coenanter* then existing, as a *human creature, a man,*" must not that human soul be an *eternal creature?* decidedly it must; so that there was a man, a human creature, existing with God, anterior to the eternal covenant of grace being made, "for it was not GOD-HEAD, in the *covenant character of the Son set up,*" no it was a human soul, yes it is repeatedly insisted upon, by Pre-existarians, that "*his inferior nature ONLY* could be SET UP." Again, "If he was *really* SET UP, as the Scriptures literally declare, he must have been *really man* from *everlasting*, from the beginning, or ever the earth was;" then must he not, of necessity, have been an eternal creature? I can see no alternative. I am aware, however, that modern Pre-existarians are truly *ashamed* of the conclusion, but how will they evade the force of conclusions, which necessarily follow *their own* sentiments and predications? In answer to this appeal, a late writer, sorely chagrined by having this *point* in the Pre-existarian controversy urged by his opponent, begs his reader to consult the modern Pre-existarian authorities, Murray, and Stevens; I have done so, and what answer have I obtained? Do they allow of the conclusion? the former does most positively, by insisting, that the human soul of Christ must have been created anterior to his being consulted, as a party contracting in the covenant, he refuses however to follow up his assertions to their necessary consequences. Mr. Stevens however, having studiously availed himself of the benefit derivable from his Pre-existarian fellow's palpable and barefaced errors, cautiously endeavors to slip out of his opponent's grasp, by being *silent* on the turning point, which must decide the dispute about Christ's being an eternal creature, as a contract-

ing party in the eternal covenant, and endeavors to change the face of the question, from the eternal covenant to the beginning of time, not daring to give a direct and positive opinion on the point: whereas, on this point, other Pre-existarian authorities have dwelt so largely, as to prove beyond all contradiction, that Christ must, as a creature, have been from eternity. Of this barefaced and preposterously absurd, although unavoidable consequence, Mr. Stevens is so manifestly ashamed, that he is actually driven, by dire necessity, to adopt an error equally as absurd, and eventually ruinous to the Pre-existarian scheme, for "EXISTING," he says, "BEFORE THIS CREATION, WILL NEVER PROVE *any* ONE TO BE ETERNAL." Existing before THIS creation, that is the creation of which Moses gives an account in the book of Genesis. Now, from whence Mr. Stevens adopted this subterfuge, I am quite aware, (for, as of the greatest part of his writings, as every man of reading must be aware, so it must be said of this, "Alas, master! for it was borrowed") I will give you the author's own words—"That the *Mosaic* WAS NOT THE ORIGINAL CREATION OF ALL THINGS, all but men," such as the present race of Anti-pre-existarian divines, "of the *most contracted* sentiments, will readily enough conceive."

"It is the opinion of the generality of writers, who look no farther than to the letter of the Mosaic history, *that the whole frame of nature* comes within the compass of the six days' creation, consequently they must hold, that till about six thousand years ago, the Deity existed alone,* reigning over an absolute void, without

* And so thought Dr. Watts, prior to his becoming a Pre-existarian; or why say—

either world or inhabitants. But, as the contrary opinion may be fairly deduced from many passages in Scripture, so it is much more agreeable to our justest apprehensions of the divine nature to suppose, that the fountain of power and goodness had created worlds, and communicated being to many orders of creatures, long before our earth, or its inhabitants had an existence. Agreeably to which, our learned and ingenious Brocklesby had before observed, that the original creation was anti-Mosaical; i. e. was not God's *original* creation, but a secondary creation."* Now seeing that Mr. Stevens, as an author, is ambiguous and sophistically dark, always reserving a part of his real sentiments in obscurity, I should have been left in comparative conjecture, in reference to his real meaning, about Christ's human soul, which, being no more than a creature, and therefore a part of God's creation, existing before *this* creation, had I not been acquainted with the theological writings of such authors as Mr. Berrow and others, popular for their belief of a pre-existent scheme of some sort or other. Now however, I understand Mr. Stevens *plainly*, as believing with his fellow Pre-existarians, that **THIS** creation was preceded by another creation; so that *time* did not commence with *this* creation, but with an antecedent: so that, notwithstanding Christ was, in his pre-existing humanity, no more than a mere creature, and therefore a part of God's creation, yet was he no part of *this* creation; in fact, according to Pre-existarianism,

"Glory to God the Trinity,
Whose Name has mysteries unknown,
In essence one, in Persons Three,
A social nature, yet ALONE."

* Capel Berrow on the pre-existence of all human souls.

he could not be, for all *this* creation, of which Moses gives an account, was created, not by Deity, apart from all human agency whatever, as we believe to have been the case; no, but "Christ's created, or human nature, was *the immediate agent* by which *all* the creatures and species, or orders of beings, were created in *this* creation;" insomuch that man, that is Adam, being created by the immediate agency of Christ, as God's creature, there was one creature creating another, a pre-existing man making a sub-existing man; so that the *first* creation was, as I should suppose, God's creation, independent of all creature agency; whereas **THIS** creation was God's produce, in conjunction with, and of course depending on, the "*immediate agency*" of the human creature called the pre-existing man, who received his created existence (that he might have the pre-eminence in all things, and be in *all* points made like unto his brethren) without human agency in the creation that stands opposed to *this* creation, of which creation also (I mean the first) Christ's manhood was the first produce of God's power, in connexion with which, time also received its beginning. Here however comes in a difficulty which I shall want the skill of a Pre-existarian to cope with; I will give you Mr. Stevens's own words, where he teaches his disciples, that because Christ is called the head of all things to the church, (what mutilating of Scripture) "Therefore, he must be the head of time;" by the head of time he means the beginning of time; "for," says he, "with his *begotten nature* time commenced." To this absurdity, I will first reply, by an extract from the writings of the great Mr. Brine. "The notion of the pre-existence of the soul of Christ, or of its existing before the creation of the world, is re-

pugnant to Scripture. *That* opinion is as certainly false, as it is true that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." If there was, before creation, a limited duration, that duration must have *commencement*, and was *measurable*, though not measured, and divided into its parts by any regular motion of body, as I have before observed; and *that* instant, at which we must necessarily stop in our conceptions concerning it, was the beginning, and not *that* instant wherein God's act of creation was put forth; and therefore, if this notion is true, what Moses affirms *must be false*, and *God did not* "in the beginning create the heavens and the earth," but *after* the beginning; and how long after, it seems is not knowable: *perhaps millions of ages*. Into such absurdities will some men run, in order to support their misconceptions of things, or a darling opinion, which they have happened to embrace. "How forcible are right words."

Now, dear Sir, is not this beautiful extract, a masterly refutation of the Pre existarian assumption which precedes it? Here, however, I should like to ask Mr. Stevens a question; it is this, *Is time the production of God's power?* What is time; a nonentity or a subsistence? What part of speech is it—a noun, a substantive, a thing? it is. Then must not this anti-nonentity; this real being; this noun substantive: this thing; have received a given existence from God, the Creator of all existences, in common with, and as an individual part of the ALL things of which God is said to be the Creator? undoubtedly; for an uncreated existence is an existence peculiar to God alone; besides, that which never had a creation being, can never cease to be, whereas time, in common

with all created existences, shall cease to be. Here then, is a nut for Pre-existarians to crack. It is this—seeing the Creator of all things regarded special order in the works of creation, inasmuch as that each individual thing, or created existence, received being at a time; I want to know, which created existence received being from the hand of God first? the thing called Christ's pre-existing soul, or the thing called time? This question is designed to distinguish and keep apart two separate existences, too uniformly, and in the Pre-existarian controversy, intentionally confounded together as one and the self same individual produce of the Creator's creating power. Which then, I demand, received existence first—time, or Christ's pre-existing soul? If the latter, then, of necessity, beyond all controversy, Pre-existarians must contend for "an eternal creature." It is of no moment to me, whether Pre-existarians allow time to have commenced at the beginning of *this* creation, or antecedent thereto; wherefore should they, to avoid the shame of arguing in favor of such a chimera as that of an eternal creature, say, *time* was the firstborn of God? then, of necessity, down falls all their system in favor of Christ's created nature being the *firstborn* of God's work as a Creator. And that no one will be so daring, as to contend that the period of Christ's creature nature being created, and the birth of time, were commensurate, in other words, that God created two things at once, I cannot conceive possible; for, on this scale, the argument in favor of Christ's soul being the *first* creature existence, must fall to the ground with equal velocity and force: yes, it must rebound back, as an arrow of death on its propagator.

The next thing therefore, to which I would invite your attention, is the profusion of absurdity, marking the writings of Pre-existarians, to the end that they may dispose of the insurmountable difficulty which stares them in the face, in reference to the *datum*, of "*Wisdom's* being *set up*;" the text says, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Now as Pre-existarians will not expound this, of a *character*, but of a *nature*, they insist that it was the very human soul of Christ, as "*really man*," that was thus set up, it being impossible, say they, for Deity to be set up. Yes, I confess it is impossible for God to be set up, as it regards either the essence or the personalities of the divine nature and existence, their being set up in that respect being as impossible as that they could have been exalted, both being essential to their personal and essential unoriginated, and infinitely self-existing being. This acknowledgment however by no means renders it impossible for a divine person to be set up, set apart or exalted, in a covenant character existence; which is the true Scriptural meaning of the Holy Ghost, when he speaks of the eternal God, in the person of the Son, being SET UP from everlasting," &c. in the covenant characters of WISDOM, SON, WORD; while, in point of relationship to God's elect church, the same Person in the Godhead was from everlasting: set up in the relative and covenant characters of everlasting Father, Husband, Brother, and in reference to the last, he is called the firstborn among many brethren; he being, according to covenant order, the first, and therefore with propriety, the Elder Brother of God's elect children. The same might be said of his names, as Prophet, Priest, and King, which

relate more particularly to his services in management of, and rule over his people, as the second new or spiritual creation, in opposition to the natural, or Mosaic creation; of which spiritual creation, the Son of God was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was: whereas Adam, the head of the Mosaic creation, was not set up as the head, or lord of the natural creation, till *after* the earth was. It is derogatory to the constitution of the everlasting covenant to insist, as Pre-existarians do, that WISDOM, who was set up from everlasting, means the human soul of Christ, and not the Godhead of Christ: nor does the most plain, and positive Scripture testimony, fail to furnish us with doctrine directly opposed to, and in contradiction of, such an assumption. In the 14th verse of the eighth chapter of Proverbs, WISDOM says, "I AM UNDERSTANDING." Now in this declaration two things are incontrovertibly true, the first is in reference to who it is that calls himself Understanding, not a creature, not a pre-existing man, but the glorious Majesty of Heaven; the Eternal Godhead; in the person and character of the Son; Wisdom; the Word, &c.; of whom the Holy Ghost testifies, that "GOD said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM:" and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, "I AM, hath sent me unto you." Exo. iii. 14. And this is confirmed, by what the eternal; incomprehensible; unoriginated self-existing person, in the character of Wisdom, declares himself TO BE; that is, "UNDERSTANDING." Now who, uninfluenced by those enemies to all truth, called preconceived opinions, party prejudice or sectarian importance, would ever dream of ascribing that to the human soul of Christ (at best a mere creature, which once was not) which belongs exclu-

sively to *Deity* itself. To this however it will be archly replied, "it would not *sound well* to say, Jehovah was acquired, begotten, brought forth, and *set up*;" no I know, and freely confess, it would not, in the Pre-existarian sense of the words, for they insist that Wisdom's being *acquired, begotten, brought forth and set up*, must mean to give an essential existence; that is, an existence of nature, which was not before, and not an *existence* of covenant character, or *adopted* relationship; whereas, the latter is the true meaning of the Holy Ghost, in reference to the unoriginated, self-existing, eternal Godhead of the Son, being begotten, acquired, brought forth, and set up: that is, *into* a covenant existence, and in this existence, the PERSON in the Trinity thus introduced into a *new* modus, form, and kind of existence, is heard to say, in support of his unchanged glory and dignity, as very God; "I AM UNDERSTANDING. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice," and at the same time, in *acknowledgment* of his *derived* existence, into which he had been begotten, acquired, brought forth, and set up by the Father, he said also, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old, I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was: when there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water, when he prepared the heavens, I was there." In what sense? Why not in reference to his essential existence as very Deity, for that he must have been, to have been really God; in what sense then was *he there*? Why, as very God, in a new form of existence; yes, I will say in a secondary, the meaning of which is, in COVENANT existence, in which covenant character, and new mode of existence, the WHOLE HUMAN

NATURE (not as Pre-existarians insist a non-essential part of it) was *verity* included, *only* by way of *prolepsis*, in opposition to actual existence, this being reserved till the fulness of time. I am quite aware, that this is flatly denied by Pre-existarians, for although they first acknowledge, that "the whole discourse is to be understood of his Person," (in which his Godhead must be included, and therefore, his Godhead as an essential, yea, principal nature in his covenant character, must have been *set up*, yet determined to keep their eyes on one object, that is pre-existing humanity, its votaries afterwards affirm, that is, after they have allowed that the whole person must have been included) "as to the agent speaking, (that is in Pro. viii. 23) yet, in the speech, he that is the speaker speaks distinctly (exclusively) of his begotten humanity." With what propriety did the ever memorable Anti-pre-existarian, Hawker, exclaim with astonishment, "*Do you indeed carry your notions of this pre-existence of the human soul of Christ to such an extravagant height?*"* But suppose Sir, that we were to admit, for a moment only, that it was the *creature nature*, the manhood of Christ, a part, or to use our opponent's words, "in distinction from the Godhead of Christ, that was *set up*," "would not that prove, to an incontrovertible demonstration, that this created nature must have been an eternal creature? most assuredly it must, for the text says, that Wisdom was set up from EVERLASTING. Now, that this word *from, everlasting*, means from eternity, is too great a fact to admit of proof; indeed Pre-existarians themselves, establish the fact, although they are barefaced enough, to contradict the same when dire necessity urges, that they

* Hawker against Stevens.

must either give up their whole scheme, or stick to it, regardless of either conscience or revelation, by denying, that the word everlasting, mentioned in Prov. viii. 23, means from eternity; wherefore, rather than give up the former, they will deny the latter, and how do they set about it? Why they first *alter* the text, and then endeavor to defend the assumption, founded thereon. Mr. Stevens, for instance, writes I know not how many pages, followed by a Pre-existarian splutter, in reference "to two learned critics in the Hebrew tongue," with his *learned* citations about "*Oulam, and Moulam,*" to prove,—to prove what? Why, what no schoolboy can be ignorant of, which is, that the word *everlasting*, so repeatedly mentioned in the Bible, does not in every place mean from *eternity*. Who, I should like to know, ever insinuated that it did? But this, by the by, is not what we want Pre-existarians to prove, oh no, we want them to prove, (for who are they) that their *ipse dixit* should be substituted for "*thus saith the Lord;*" wherefore, I call upon them to prove, that the word EVERLASTING, mentioned in Prov. viii. 23, does *not* mean from ETERNITY. In the mean time let me ask them a few plain questions; first, was "WISDOM, the everlasting Father" of God's elect family from eternity, in the same federal relationship, as Adam was the federal father of the human race from the period of his being *set up*, in a public, and not merely in an individual existence, in the garden of Eden. Secondly, was Christ, as the elder brother, or first acquired and brought forth of "the elect," their elder brother from eternity? Thirdly, was Christ, who is called "our life," yea "the true God, AND ETERNAL LIFE," our life from eternity? Fourthly, was "Wisdom, or the Son," who was appointed heir of all things, *made* heir of all things, from eter-

ny? Fifthly, did the **WORD**, who was made flesh, and whose glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, the disciples beheld, I say, did the **WORD** possess that glory from eternity? Sixthly, was Christ, mentioned in Isaiah iv. 21, as "God's Elect," his Elect from eternity? The same may be asked of the Scripture, where he is called the chosen of God; that is, was he so from eternity? Finally is it not said in Ephes. i. 6, That "God hath made us accepted **IN** the beloved;" now were we accepted in him from *eternity*? I might add that in I Cor. i. 30, the militant saints are said to be **IN** Christ, "who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Now were the Corinthians, with all saints **IN** Christ, and was Christ made unto them, this fourfold blessing, from *eternity*? Now all that I want from Pre-existarians, is, a direct and positive answer, either **YES**, or **NO**, to these eight questions. Should they say **NO**, they will deny the whole body of Revelation; should they say **YES**, then I have only to ask them another question, and that is, did all these covenant transactions on the part of God, in the eternal settlements of his eternal love, wherewith he blessed his chosen people, precede, or take place, prior to **WISDOM**'s being **SET UP** as the **BEGINNING** of God's ways? Really Sir, I did not intend to be so prolix in my examination of Prov. viii. 23, but, I think you will give me credit, for having established two great points of doctrine therefrom, both of which must be the overthrow of Pre-existarianism. The first is, that it was the very Godhead of Jesus Christ that was *set up*, in the character of Wisdom; and secondly, that he was set up from **ETERNITY**; and therefore, the human soul of Christ, as a pre-existing man, in his real man-

hood, or newly created human soul, could not be meant, otherwise; that creature must have been an eternal creature, which is *eternal nonsense*; the whole of which I might establish from Mr. Stevens's books, in favor of Pre-existarianism. Yes, this solitary consideration will do it; *HE not only allows, but affirms, that the relative characters of Father and Son, are of equal date.* Note Sir, not the unoriginated, uncreated *nature*, or divine essence of the Father and Son, no, this is not the question, but the relative, or in other words, the covenant or *set up* characters of the Father and Son, are of equal date; wherefore, we have only to prove, that the Father's covenant, or adopted character, was from *eternity*, and that will prove the Son, *AS A SON*, to have been eternal too. This therefore, being a granted fact, the following high toned Pre-existarian sentiment must be a falsehood. "Our Lord's *HUMAN SOUL, BEING BEGOTTEN*, in union with his divine person, by God the Father, is the *REASON* of his whole person being called, the *Son of God.*" Now the next passage of Holy Writ laid claim to by Pre-existarians, to which I must invite your attention, is John i. 1, 2. From this precious Scripture, Pre-existarians want us to believe, that the *WORD*, as the *Son of God*, is here called, being a covenant name, that therefore, the human soul must have been created as a pre-existent man, for it is said, that "the *WORD* was with God, in the beginning," and when we ask them what they mean, they further inform us, that they do assert and teach, that the word "beginning," means the birth or commencement of time. Now we do not wonder at their giving us this answer, for dare they allow that it was prior to the birth or commencement of time, it would

disprove at once two things, which they are so solicitous to establish; the first is, that Christ's human soul did exist at the period, when God, in the person of Christ, was covenantly made the Word; although at the same time we are told, that the human soul of Christ was not an eternal creature; but this Pre-existarian exposition of this noble portion of Holy Writ, we both reject and detest, and that for two reasons; first, it teaches that the WORD, was not the Word from eternity; and secondly, it insists, that God's people were chosen in Christ, prior to the second person in the Godhead, being made, by covenant transactions, the Word. Otherwise, the choice or election of God's people, was a *time* act, for in the 2 Thes. ii. 13, the apostle says, "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, BECAUSE, God hath from the BEGINNING, CHOSEN you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Here then let me ask, does not this text speak of God's people, as the objects of his love, and the objects of his discriminating choice? it does. Then on the back of this, let me ask, is God's love to his people, and the election of them to obtain salvation commensurate, in point of datum or period? doubtless. Then, as Jer. xxxi. 3, indeed, all the Bible assures us, that God loved his people from eternity, must he not have chosen them in their covenantly, constituted, and set up head from eternity? Wherefore the phrase, from the beginning, both in this text, and in John i. 2, mean, from eternity, consequently the WORD being WITH God from the beginning, that is, from eternity, is a positive denial of the Pre-existarian assumption which teaches us, that by the WORD is meant the human soul of Christ, pre-existing *in*

union with the divine person of our Lord, from the birth of time. Pre-existarians therefore are not those men, who turn the world upside down; but those, who would, if they were cunning enough, turn the Scriptures upside down; making void the truth of God, to establish their fleshly tradition; or why rant as they do, in their forced exposition of John i. 14, where we are told, that "the Word was made flesh;" from which testimony of the Spirit, the spiritual church have been taught to believe, that God came down from heaven, in the person of the eternal Son, to take human nature, called flesh, into actual union with his divine nature, which as we have further believed, was not united, prior to the period of the incarnation. The whole of this faith however once delivered to the saints, Pre-existarians deny, and endeavor to overturn, by insisting, that the doctrine of the incarnation amounted to no more than this, it was a human soul which became infixed into the virgin's body, to the end, that it might be united to a human body, and as for its being said, that God became incarnate, that is owing to the union of the pre-existing soul with the divine nature; the human soul, or pre-existing man, being called God, for the reason before given; "viz. BECAUSE he is one with God, by so intimate a union," (Watts) while another Pre-existarian lord, informs us, that when John said, Jesus Christ came in the flesh, he meant the *body* and *not* the soul, and this is certainly true, if it was his *human soul that came down from heaven, and not his Godhead*; but both are equally preposterous, for who does not know, were they but faithful enough to confess it, that the word flesh, means human nature, both soul and body. I do not say so in reference to every passage of the Bible, where the word flesh oc-

curs, but I will say so in reference to Christ's taking our flesh, or Deity's becoming incarnate. The Apostle Paul settles it, at any rate in my opinion, he for ever settles this part of the controversy, in saying, "VERILY he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Now the words, *nature* and *seed*, are synonymous, the latter as much including a *wholy* nature, as the former; otherwise, when God promises his spiritual Jacob, his Christ, as he does in Isa. xlv. 3, "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed;" I say, if the soul is not included, then it must be their bodies only, that God's spirit would be poured upon. So also, when godly parents pray that the Lord Jehovah will pour his spirit on *their seed*, all that is meant is this, they pray for God's grace to rest on their children's bodies; but who, besides the wildest madman, would suffer himself to be proselyted by such religious frenzy? "But"—but what why, is it not said in Heb. x. 5, "A BODY hast thou prepared me," It is; but what of that; why, are we not authorized to conclude therefrom that the *soul* was excepted? I know that Pre-existarians presumptuously assume such a conclusion, but their so doing, is as criminally unjust, as it is fallaciously futile, for if this conclusion be just, then necessarily, it will not be unjust, if we thus *dispose* of the rational part of Christ's human nature in every Scripture where his body only is specified. The apostle saith, "Know ye not that your BODY is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" But to exempt (as we must do on the Pre-existarian method of explaining Scripture) the *soul* from this text, *because* forsooth, the *body* only is mentioned, would be to do violence, both to the text and its con-

nexion; for as Dr. Gill observes, "the Holy Spirit in regeneration, and sanctification, when he begins the good work of grace on a man, takes possession of his whole person, soul and body, and dwells therein, as in his temple;" and this is confirmed by the following verse, "for ye are bought with a price;" now surely the soul was not excluded from this purchase, but verily it must have been the case, if the soul is not included in the phrase made use of in the preceding verse; the following words however, prove the truth of Dr. Gill's observation, which is, that although the *body only* is mentioned, both body and soul are meant, for saith the apostle, "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." In Paul's first epistle to the Thesalonians, the v. chap. and 23. verse he says, "I pray God, your whole spirit and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Whereas in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. vii. 34, he only makes *mention* of body, and spirit, but are we authorized to conclude therefrom, that the apostle or rather, the Holy Ghost, had no reference to the soul? if so, then on a parity of reasoning, whenever the *soul* is mentioned in Holy Writ, and not the body, it matters not how evident it is, that the body is included, it being to support a party prejudice; we are at liberty to exempt the body, as not being referred to in the text; such a conclusion however, would be ridiculous, and though drawn from their own ridiculous interpretations, or rather designed misconstructions of Scripture, Pre-existarians themselves would not like to abide by its consequences; besides, what reader of the Scriptures is there, who is not prepared to prove, especially in reference to Christ's human nature

as a spiritual sacrifice sacredly devoted to endure the fire of God's burning wrath, as the antitypical burnt offering, that both his soul and body, as one perfect human nature, was included. See Heb. x. 9, 10. "Then said he, lo, I come, to do thy will O God. By the which will, we are sanctified through the offering of the BODY of Jesus Christ once for all." Now how mischievously monstrous must it be to exempt the soul from being included, and therefore meant, on the ground, that the BODY only is mentioned; whereas, the *whole human nature* is meant. This however *ought* and *must* be denied, if the whole human nature of our Lord is not mean in verse the fifth, as Pre-existarians unblushingly insist, because forsooth, the *body* only is named by the Holy Ghost. I freely confess, as I have before hinted, that Mr. John Allen is the lamest Pre-existarian author that ever I met with, and the only way in which I can account for it, is, that he is certainly the most spiritual, and less sophisticated; in fact, he dealt too much in the language of undisguised simplicity, and too little in metaphysical subtleties, to merit the name of a Pre-existarian author; this has long been my opinion of Mr. Allen, in which I am the more confirmed, by reading his spiritual expositions of Psalm xl. 6, with Heb. x. 5, in which, he decidedly expounds the passages of the whole human nature of Christ, and not of his BODY only, as do Pre-existarians possessed of less integrity towards the word of God. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened;" &c. that is to hearken to the will of his Heavenly Father, TO BECOME MAN, &c. &c. which last phrase proves, that his becoming man, was prospective, which is a flat denial of Pre-existarianism; for that affirms, that he was

really man ; not merely before David wrote this, in prospect of God's eternal Son *becoming* man, but it may be, as Mr. Brine says, millions of ages before this world had an existence. Again on Heb. x. 5. " But a body hast thou prepared me," Mr. Allen remarks, " But, that an offering equal to the offence might be made to thee, thou, in thy infinite wisdom and good pleasure, and in mercy to the church, hast by an extraordinary operation of the Holy Ghost, prepared a true human body, animated with a human soul, and so formed, a *proper human nature* ;" then a soul without a body, any more than a body, prepared without a soul, would not have been a *proper human nature* ; and consequently, not human nature at all, " that I *might* unite it to myself, and thereby dignify it with infinite worth, to render it available for a complete atonement ;" from which exposition, it is plain, that the divine nature, or Godhead of our Lord, was not united to human nature prior to the incarnation, and this is abundantly confirmed, by the following consideration, viz. in Heb. x. 10. Our Lord's *body* is said, to have been made an offering for sin ; whereas in Isa. liii. 10, his *soul* is said to have been an offering for sin ; from which two passages, it is palpably evident, that both soul and body are meant by the Holy Ghost in each Scripture. So that when Peter says, " who his own self bare our sins, in his own BODY," his soul must be included, both together being but one proper human nature ; wherefore it is added in Isaiah, where his soul *only* is mentioned as an offering for sin, " HE shall bear their iniquities ;" whereas, had the soul only been meant, the pronoun he should have been substituted for the word *it*. My advice therefore to Pre-existarians is this, whenever they snatch at a passage of

Scripture in support of their volatile scepticism where one part only of our Lord's humanity is actually named, I say, let them first *deny* that his whole nature is intended, and then prove, if they are able, both from Scripture and sound argument that their *denial* is just; giving us illustration, and proof also, that their interpretation is the *only* true one, so that when it is said, "A *body* hast thou prepared me," they may be prepared to deny* and disprove that his whole human nature is meant; and the same when it is said, "Thou shalt make his *soul* an offering for sin," that his body is excepted, and the same may be said of the word *flesh*, which we believe means his whole human nature, so that when we read that "the Word was made flesh, we understand that the Eternal Godhead in the person of the Son, who was from eternity set up in the covenant character of *Wisdom*, and the *Word*, became flesh, by taking at his incarnation a nature which he had not before, which was the nature, the whole nature of man; which is the evident meaning of John i. 14, "And the Word was made flesh," that is, as says the late Mr. Davies, "the divine person of the Word existing from eternity," yes *as the Word*, let Pre-existarians deny it if they will, they cannot disprove the truth of it, "takes humanity and becomes a person in complex nature, both divine and human;" and the apostle both confirms and explains it, (see Gal. iv. 4) "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Now who needs to speculate, about whether the word *flesh*, as

* "THAT SPIRIT WHICH DIVIDETH CHRIST, IS NOT OF GOD." Davies. Now this Pre-existarianism does to perfection, which made Dr. Hawker say, "What kind of Mediator God AND PART OF A MAN constitutes, I know not."

meant by the Holy Ghost, in John i. 14, means the *whole* of our Lord's human nature, or only a diminutive part of it; it is for the latter that Pre-existarians contend, but could that be proved true, it would not fail to prove also, that the testimony of the Holy Ghost is a lie, for he testifieth, that the divine person of our Lord, as some would say, and very justly so, passed by the nature of angels, but took ON him the nature of men, but admitting, as Pre-existarians contend, that the Deity of Christ took on him man's very nature, and became a created man, before angels were in existence, it not only assumes that God made man's nature prior to the creation of angels, but it proves also, that there was no angelic nature, either to pass by, or for the eternal Son of God to take hold of, whereas it is to the love and condescension of our Lord, as very God, that the apostle refers, and in what does it consist? Why, not in taking on him the holy nature of angels, nor yet the unfallen nature of man, in its primeval, that is, created purity, as made in the image of God; for, had that been the case, it could not have been the seed of Abraham, for it must have been prior to Abraham's existence, but it refers to the substance of man's fallen nature, as made out of the very and whole essence of Mary's nature, which consisted of both body and soul. Mr. Stevens, in his letter to Dr. Hawker, says, "You affirm, that it is expressly said, the Son of God assumed OUR NATURE AT HIS INCARNATION; but I really do not know where you find it expressly declared:" now is not this a most bare-faced insinuation, that the Son of God did not assume our nature at his incarnation, although I confess it is founded on God's truth, in case it can be proved from one single passage in Holy Writ,

that our Lord assumed our nature, before it was our's, but then what would become of these express declarations, the **WORD** was made flesh; the meaning of which is, our whole human nature. "Hast thou the eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth." Now in these words the terms *flesh* and *man*, are evidently synonymous, nor can any Pre-existarian on earth disprove the truth of what I am going to say, which is this, had John i. 14 been rendered "And the Word was made *man*, and dwelt among us," the meaning, in every sense of the word, would have been expressly the same as that the Word was made *flesh*; this however would not be the case, dare we allow for one moment, that the **WORD** was "really man," before he was made flesh. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." No, says Pre-existarianism, the **BODY** of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," for the body only is derived from the woman. How true it is, "that he who can swallow such palpable contradictions, must be a person of no *common* discernment." There are several other passages, to which I should gladly invite your attention, but if I do, I can only stop to give this hydra monster, with which I am encountering, a word and a blow, and then, leave it to its perishable shifts—for instance, John xvii. 5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was." From these words we are gravely told, "it seems plain, that Christ **PARTED** with some glory, which he had in heaven, when he came down to finish the work which God gave him to do on earth; and he prays to be restored to it again." It would have been very creditable to their reputation, although a certain overthrow to their system, had Pre-ex-

istarians ventured on an exposition of this passage, from the solitary consideration, of what glory it was for which the Son of God prayed to be glorified; it did not refer to the circumstance certainly of his soul having had a union existence with our Lord's divine person, for that glory could not be *parted* with; wherefore, admitting that our Lord's soul did pre-exist, which by the by is not true, it could have possessed no inherent glory, essential to its own proper nature; its glory let it have been what it might, must have been derived from union to our Lord's Godhead, on which account, as long as the union continued, the glory could not have been *parted* with; wherefore, according to Pre-existarianism, we are to believe, that when the soul became *incarnate*, as they say it did from a pre-existing state, it was disunited from our Lord's divine nature, and thus parted with all its pre-existing union glory. I confess that this is a novel discovery, and therefore, no wonder that it should afford such romantic sport in the Pre-existarian school; besides, it is quite a key to many dark and ambiguous sayings, to be met with in the writings of Pre-existarian authors, such as those which talk about "*the soul becoming incarnate, it being the soul of Christ, and not the Godhead of Christ, that is said to have come down from heaven,*" and the soul that is said to have gone up, where it was before; for Pre-existarians, true born Sabelians like, make nothing of applying those passages of Scripture, which speak of GOD'S coming down, and GOD'S being gone up, with a shout, to what they call, the *incarnation of Christ's human soul*, and to its going up again from whence it came; and though it is said, that "God is gone up," &c. it only means, the soul which is so called, BECAUSE IT IS ONE WITH

GOD, BY SO INTIMATE A UNION." This union however, must have been dissolved when the "*soul became incarnate,*" and therefore when it was about to be offered to God, as a sacrifice for sin, it prayed to have this pre-existent glory restored, but who, my beloved reader, can refrain from dropping a tear of sympathy, and grief, on account of the Saviour's poor *body*, for although that was forced to utter the prayer which the soul dictated, yet it could neither have part nor lot in the glory prayed for; because—because! hear O heavens! give ear O earth! because it did not pre-exist in union with the divine nature, before the world was. Wherefore our Lord's poor body, not pre-existing, it could have no glory "*to part with,*" and consequently no glory to pray for, the glory prayed for, being as we are informed, "some glory that had been parted with, by the soul at the incarnation." Pray Sir, do not forget the good Welsh parson's saying, viz. that "*that spirit, which divideth Christ, is not of God.*" But suppose Sir, that you and I were called to visit one of our brethren, dying in the Lord, (for "blessed are the dead that die in the Lord") and that, on entering his room, and approaching his bed, we heard him exclaim, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" would such a prayer be either incongruous to, or incompatible with, the Holy Scriptures? unless we explained it as having reference to the dying man's soul, having pre-existed before the world was. The thought is ridiculous, and not less so, when applied to our Lord's thus praying. Are not God's elect, and Christ among the rest, as the Elder Brother of them, said to have been glorified from eternity *with himself*; that is by his becoming *their* God

in covenant relationship, in which covenant, he blessed them with all spiritual blessings, constituting them, in common union, with each other; Christ the head, and those who are his, the members; the power of God, the wisdom of God, the holiness of God; insomuch, that their *glory* was perfect, because God had glorified them with his own glory, or comeliness. So that "this is the NAME wherewith HE shall be called, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." The glory therefore which our Lord prayed for, was that, wherewith from eternity, God had by a covenant, ordered in all things and sure, glorified his Son, for the enjoyment and full manifestation of, and introduction to, the Saviour earnestly prayed. To this however, it will be objected, "that such an exposition, would tend to support the ANTINOMIAN language of our justification from eternity." Nor will I deny the fact; at any rate, till Pre-existarians can urge a better argument in objection to this exposition, I shall be at liberty to support it, uncontrolled. Mr. Allen, in his *Spiritual Magazine*, says "PETER calls Christ elect, precious; for, as head and members are conceived together in the womb of nature, so Christ, as the head, and his church, as members, were conceived together in the womb of election." Perhaps this will be objected to by some of our *moderate* Calvinistic, Pre-existarian votaries, as tending to support the Antinomian language of eternal justification; well, be it so, that will not disprove the fact. The next passage to which I would invite your attention is Rom. viii. 29. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Persons advocating the pre-existent scheme, have endeavored to make their unsavory notion palatable to popular taste, by the

assumption, that the belief of it, is essential to a profitable reading, and right understanding of the Scriptures; yes preachers of this pre-existing glory, have affirmed, that they neither enjoyed, nor understood the Scriptures, although they had been preaching from them to others for years, till they became Pre-existarians, on which account I think they ought to have designated their dogma, "Scripture reading made EASY, by the carnal reasonings of Pre-existarians." But when I have inquired of them, what they meant by Christ's pre-existing, they have informed me, that they referred to his having been, not only the first man, but the first creature, that ever God created; and when I have demanded proof, they have exclaimed, "why the apostle saith, He is the firstborn among many brethren;" but to deduce a notion like that advocated, by Pre-existarians, which affirms, that he was the first among all God's creatures, from the apostle's words, is only, "to darken counsel by *words without knowledge.*" The apostle speaks of his being "the firstborn among *many brethren,*" evidently referring to the covenant of grace, that is of election, in which Christ, in point of order, is the firstborn of God's everlasting family.

" Christ BE my FIRST elect he said,
Then chose our souls in Christ their head."

But then this referred to a whole Christ, whereas the pre-existent notion only advocates the pre-existence of part of a man; but let Pre-existarians consult the extract already inserted from Allen's Magazine, and that will furnish them with the true spiritual, and primary meaning, of Christ's being the firstborn among many brethren, although other important considerations are connected with it—for instance, it gives him the pre-eminence among many brethren. Gen. xlix. 3. It implies his right of prerogative to

rule over, and receive homage from his elect brethren; in which sense, he was Joseph's anti-type; see also, Phil. ii. 9—11. It also includes his separation from his brethren, to do God's work; for the firstborn was to be devoted exclusively to God's service. John xvii. 19. Again it indicates the state of humiliation, sorrow, and suffering into which he was introduced (no man suffered as he did, he was, in the strictest sense of the word, *the firstborn*), that is, *the chief*, among his poor brethren. Job xviii. 13, Isa. xiv. 30. It also teaches his right of priesthood, which devolved on the firstborn of a family. He was the minister of God's family. It also explains his being heir of all things, which originated in his being the firstborn among many brethren. Isaiah liii. 12. Heb. i. 2. Now surely we are not so "hardly bestead, and hungry," as to be obliged to believe Pre-existarianism, in order to our either enjoying, or understanding the meaning of God's word, where the blessed Jesus is represented, as "God's only begotten Son, the firstborn among many brethren." The firstborn from the dead, or "the beginning of the creation of God; the latter text, in particular, is mightily played upon by Pre-existarians, in support of Christ's soul having existed from before the creation of this world. But, on this point I should like to ask them one single question, and that is, of *what creation* is Christ the beginning? Not of **THIS** creation, of which we have an account in the first chapter of Genesis; of what creation then? Why of God's spiritual creation; for the church is said to be created anew in Christ Jesus, as God's workmanship. Well then, in what sense is Christ the beginning of this creation? Why, in the same sense as the foundation is the beginning of a house. Nor do I hesitate to

deny, as very falsehood, the assumption which applies this name to Christ's human soul; affirming, that Deity could not be *made* the beginning of the creation of God; but if the Godhead in the person of the Son was not made by covenant transactions the beginning of the creation of God, then where is the *eternal priority, omnipotent strength, the unchanging immutability, and everlasting continuance of that creation*, of which Christ is the beginning; that which *commenced with time, shall end with time*, and that of which the Godhead is not a principal part, is unworthy so important a place as the foundation of the creation of God. It proves therefore the priority of the church's existence, as chosen to a union existence with the very **GODHEAD** of Christ; "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh **ALL** things after the counsel of his own will." It shows the pre-eminence of Christ in all things; for, as the foundation of the building is that upon which the house depends for safety, so is Christ, as the beginning of the creation of God, the church's whole dependance. He is the head, the root, the foundation, the *eternal life* of his people, called the creation of God, of which Christ being the beginning, he must also be the **CHIEF** or **PRINCIPAL** part in this spiritual creation. "The fear of the Lord is the *beginning*," that is the main, or chief, or most preferable and important part "of knowledge;" yes, "Wisdom is the *principal* thing;" for what is the church without Christ? I do not mean as a human soul, beginning to be when time began to exist; no, I mean as the beginning of the creation of God, whose "goings forth," as the beginning of

the creation of God, "have been from of old, from EVERLASTING." See Mic. v. 2. Yes, in him according to the priority of his eternal existence as the firstborn among many brethren, in him they had their covenant existence from eternity; in him they lived, moved, and had an active existence from eternity; in him they were elected, justified, sanctified, and accepted of God the Father from eternity. Yes, this was all possible, all matter of fact, although the Son of God never took human nature into actual union with his divine person, until he descended into the lowest parts of virgin earth, where he was curiously wrought, according to the secret workings of the Holy Ghost, whereby God became flesh; yes, DEITY, very Deity, inhabited humanity, and tabernacled IN MAN; HE

"Wrapped his GODHEAD in a veil
Of OUR INFERIOR clay."

Oh yes, and blessed be his name,

My GOD, my CREATOR, from heaven came down,
To take up a nature though loved as his own,
Had lain, vile as Enosh, its true fallen name,
Until its Creator incarnate became.

"Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up, far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Therefore, he that descended must have been the very Godhead itself, in the person of the covenantly constituted Word, or Logos; for the psalmist says, "GOD IS GONE UP with a shout." All

this however, is blasphemously ascribed by Pre-existarians to a pre-existent creature, senselessly called the human soul of Christ. I will give you their own words—"When we consider the frequency of these expressions, Christ's *coming down from heaven, coming from the Father, and coming into this world, they seem to bear a plain and just antithesis to his departing from the world, his returning to the Father, and his ascending into heaven, which are mentioned at the same time.* Now, all these latter expressions are evidently understood by every reader concerning the human nature of Christ, and give us good ground to infer, that the *former* expressions concerning his *descent from heaven*, should be attributed to his *human nature too.*" O, what a barefaced denial is this of GOD's coming down from heaven; but what then is to be done with those Scriptures, which so frequently represent the Deity as "*coming down from heaven to visit the affairs of men?*" O, these representations, "when used concerning God, must be interpreted *figuratively*, because it is manifest the LITERAL SENSE CANNOT BE TRUE."* Then of course Psal. xlvii. 5, "GOD IS GONE UP WITH

* It is said of l—rs that they have need of good memories, from their great liability to self-contradiction, which being once discovered, their word is no longer to be confided in as truth; and the same may be said of Pre-existarians, whose self-contradictions are more numerous than graeeful. Mr. Stevens, for instance, denies the *absolute* descent of *absolute* Godhead, and says, "*That GOD's coming down from heaven cannot be literally true.*" This however is predicated in reference to the Godhead of Christ; and yet when writing in defence of the personal Godhead of the Holy Spirit, Mr. Stevens absolutely contends, that "*HE who dwells in the saints as his own temple is the LIVING GOD, but the Holy Ghost dwells in his saints as his own temple, therefore the Holy Ghost is the living God.*" Now then if this be true, and true it is, then why not on the same principle believe, that the very Godhead of the Son came down and dwelt, in the most absolute and literal sense of the words, in the virgin's womb.

A SHOUT," must be interpreted *figuratively*; also it being morally impossible for God to have gone up, or ascended, unless GOD, VERY GOD, had *really, actually, and positively* come down, or descended. And that very Godhead did thus descend, is so plainly revealed in John iii. 13, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is IN HEAVEN." Now the only way in which Pre-existarians can dispose of the Anti-pre-existarian evidence contained in this text, is twofold; first, by calling in question the evidence this text contains in favor of the Saviour's divinity. "I doubt," says Dr. Watts, from whose Pre-existarian views most modern authors of this sentiment have compiled their tracts; "I doubt, whether this text will certainly prove Christ's divinity; and whether it may not more directly refer to his *pre-existent soul*." But how is this, at best, even among its propagators, questionable hypothesis to be established, seeing the text predicates in the most positive language, that the Son of Man was both IN HEAVEN and ON EARTH at the very same time? Why, says Dr. More, and his Pre-existarian Arminian friend Grotius, "That is, whose *mind and conversation is there*, though his personal and visible presence be here on earth." Dr. Watts however, with his pupils Murray and Stevens, terribly abashed at Dr. More's pertinacious rejection of the true sense of the text, have undertaken to make the sense, as they presumptuously assume, quite plain, by finding fault with the translation of it, which they have taken the liberty to teach us, should be rendered, "The Son of Man who *was* in heaven," and not as our translators have rendered it; and

what is still worse, Dr. Watts, to make this alteration stand good, insists that "Beza himself inclines to construe this word, 'who is in heaven,' into the word, 'who *was* in heaven;'" whereas nothing can be more false, for Beza's reading of the text is word for word like our English translation, accompanied with this beautiful note—"That which is proper to the divinity of Christ is here spoken of a whole Christ, to give us to understand that he is but one person, wherein two natures are united." Again, "whereas he is said to have *come down from heaven*, that *must* be understood of his Godhead, and the manner of his conception," &c. Wherefore for persons, as says Mr. Hervey, "when hard drove for argument, to begin to invalidate our translation, seems to be a most empty and jejune insinuation." Yes, such innovations on the good word of God, serve rather to injure the cause they are designed to assist, than to invalidate the writings assumed to be erroneous. I pity the cause that needs such support, not forgetting to remind its abettors, that, "A man in the threatening deep may catch at, and even take hold of, a *straw*, that may be floating on the surface, and nevertheless be drowned with the straw in his hand."

Indeed, dear Sir, I did not design extending my letter to half its present length; and yet, even now numberless reasons and considerations are crowding themselves on my attention, as arguments the most irresistible, against my ever consenting to, and belief of, this pre-existent scheme; but being determined on coming to a close as soon as possible, I forbear to insert a formal recitation of them; the sentiment must be, of necessity, a source of unequalled grief to the children of God, could it be proved true;

for, as Dr. Hawker says, "I should feel distressed in the idea of Christ having a pre-existent human soul, when I have all along been taught, of God the Holy Ghost, to take comfort in that Scripture, which beginning with one of the sweet names of Christ—*Verily*—tells the church how the Son of God manifested his love to his people, in taking **THEIR NATURE** in preference to that of angels, '*For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*' But the beauty and glory of this Scripture is *lost*, if the **SON of GOD**, in choosing to take upon him the seed of Abraham, took only a *body without a soul.*" The nature of angels and men too widely differ, ever to allow of a similarity of feeling, much less of a oneness of nature, but the species marking the existence of men and angels, is not to be compared with the difference that must of necessity exist between Christ's human soul and body, and therefore between him and ourselves, admitting for a moment, that Pre-existarianism is true, the Holy Ghost, in words full of grace and full of truth, says, "**WHEN** the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his **SON, MADE OF A WOMAN, made under the law.**" This however Pre-existarians so far deny, as to insist that "*his soul cannot here be meant*, for that could not be made of the Virgin Mary." Now this error, yea this lie, for whatsoever is not of the truth is a lie, and that from the Devil, nor can there be a greater falsehood than that which denies Scripture: now the Scripture saith, that Christ's human nature was made in all points like unto his brethren; this however is flatly contradicted by the assertion which says, his soul could not be made of the woman, for it is beyond all controversy that our's are, for to every species of being God gave the power of pro-

creation after the similitude of its own order, not barely in reference to one part of the nature propagated, as conceived by the feminine gender, but as it respects the whole nature, every class of beings, and much more man, unaided from any source but that which simple nature provides, must have received from God, at the period of its first creation, inherent power to conceive its own species, whether of a simple or compound nature; and till this can be proved fabulous, Pre-existarianism can never be true. The Holy Ghost giving Mary power to conceive seed, was at any rate equal to, and in every respect commensurate with, any power that might have been received by her, or that is in ordinary conceptions received by the natural medium of generation; whereas were it true, either of the Virgin Mary, or any other woman, from the existence of Eve down to the present day, that they only received power to conceive an animal nature, the horrible and disgusting result must be, that human beings have the generative power only, of begetting, and conceiving a brute nature; which brute nature, conceived and shapen in sin, is subsequently supplied with a *human* soul; at least, it is ridiculously called a human soul by Pre-existarians, although they insist it is no part of its *reputed* parent's (for it can be nothing more) essential nature; according to this wild, this anti-physical, and anti-Christian hypothesis, one of these monstrous errors must be embraced, either the belief of all souls having pre-existed in a state of unholiness and crime, which on every occasion of the human species conceiving a gross animal nature, one or more (as the occasion may demand, as in the case of twins) of these pre-existing lapsed souls come down to be entombed, not in a spe-

cies, or quality of nature like its own, but in a nature entirely bestial, both of which being associated in a sort of local affinity, are designated human, otherwise it must be believed, that on every occasion of the human species conceiving seed, the conceived nature in embryo, the nature of which is wholly animal, and therefore not human, becomes perfected by its being supplied from some source, foreign from its mother's nature, as a *compound*, and on that account only, truly human, with a soul, by which supply, the nature in embryo, becomes what it was not by ordinary generation and conception, that is, a compound being; yes, this is the barefacedly ridiculous hypothesis advocated by Pre-existarians. Here however an important consideration presents itself, that is to say, if, as Pre-existarians affirm was the case, Abraham did not beget, in other words gender his son Isaac's compound, in other words *whole* nature, both soul and body; from what source was the body of Isaac supplied with a soul? Its parent's nature, it is true, was *compound*, in which consisted its humanity? But according to Pre-existarianism, this essentially *one* human nature, or human essence, which to be human must also include compound properties, was in point of procreation, vastly inferior to every other species of created nature; not merely from the reptile, but from the mineral and vegetable world, to the highest order of simple animal nature; for all classes of nature, save man, possessed an innate, and native power of procreation after his own express and perfect nature, without the least diminution of either quality, or quantity. Whereas man, poor man, could only procreate his own species, so far as it referred to his animal, his bestial nature, for "the seed of the woman," we are in-

formed, "strictly speaking, denotes *that matter* of which our Lord's *body* was formed" and of Abraham we are told, that *he begat Isaac's body only*. Now then admitting that this is truth, there is one thing of which we want to be informed, and that is, from whence are the *animal* bodies, procreated by *human* parents, supplied with souls? whether or no they are supplied, is not the question, for this generated *animal nature*, from *human seed*,* is allowed to be *human* when born, a human soul having been "*infixd*," that is fastened into the body prior to its being born. Otherwise we are further informed "God must make one soul out of, or from another. But had the virgin two souls, or only one? If only one, either Christ took a whole soul of her, or only *part of a soul*. If the former, that is, if he took a whole soul, then his mother had no soul after his birth; and if he only took part of her soul, then he had not one soul at all, only a piece of one; and his mother, by having a son, must have been deprived, of at least, half of her immortal part!" This Sir is a *bona fide* specimen of Mr. Stevens's boasted of "lucid reasoning;" a ludicrous substitute for what is in reality, a specimen of Pre-existarian luckless luctation, or unhappy struggle. Poor man, I wonder he was not so far consistent, as to carry on his lucid reasonings as applicable to the virgin's body also, for in that case, he might have argued, that God's making our Lord's body from the body of Mary, must indicate, either that the woman

* Huntingdon once said, that God never set a goat to beget a sheep. The language, and the object designed by it, is characteristic of William, and therefore perfectly humorous, but had Huntingdon been a Pre-existarian, he would have been necessitated to preach, not that God sets a goat to beget a sheep, but that he sets a human being to beget, and procreate, a nature, as foreign from his own, as is the commonest on earth.

“ had two bodies, or only one, if only one, either Christ took *a whole body* of her, or only a *part of a body*. If the former that is, if he took a whole *body*, then his mother, had no *body* after his birth; and if he only took part of her *body*, then he had not one *body* at all, only a *piece* of one, and his mother, by having a son, must have been deprived of, at least, half of her *mortal part*.” But I wonder whether Pre-existarians ever weighed, during the moments of lucid reasoning, from their too uniform state of metaphysical lunacy, the origin of our first parents’ individual existence; and if they have, what they think of the wide difference between the way in which each received an individual existence as *human* beings, the one was created from sources, from whence *one simple*, and for ever after indivisible compound nature (as it respects essence though quite eligible to a division into personal existences) was formed, and this new formed nature, was called man, in the singular number, which referred to oneness of essence and individual existence; but in the same verse, Gen. i. 27, that individual human nature is called, *them*, indicative of the property of sexes, which that nature inherited, and also of the personal existences to which they were ordained; for male and female *created* he them. Here then comes the important question; did God take the *whole* personal existence of our first mother *from Adam’s essence as a human being*, in which description of species his whole compound nature must be included, that alone constituting him a human being; in other words, did the woman, prior to her receiving an individual existence, possess the specific nature which she had after her separation? Now that this question must be answered in the affirmative, needs no argument to prove; nature,

science and religion, all combining to aver, that the woman's whole nature derived its personal existence from the compound nature of Adam. "For Adam said and she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Wherefore, what blindness, hardness of heart, and pertinacity of conduct, must their's be, who would insist that all subsequent human beings, as Abel and Cain, did not receive their whole compound nature from their progenitors, although their mother's individual, or personal humanity, or compound nature, was wholly from Adam. But let us follow our inquiries, and ask, admitting that Isaac's *body* only was derived from the seed in which its personal existence originated, from whence had he his soul? why not from the compound nature of his parents, for only one property, in that one human essence, is empowered to generate its like, at least so teach Pre-existarians; well then, from whence had he his soul? from the Devil, from angels, from chance, or from God? Not from the former, is allowed, then he must have had it from the latter; but on what principle? from a store of pre-existent human souls ready made, as they shall be called for, to be "*infix'd*" into human bodies, or is it from the circumstance, that God is continually creating human souls, as men beget human bodies to receive them? One of these two wonderfals it must be; let Pre-existarians answer which. Of one thing I am well satisfied, and that is, that John Stevens, as well as Dr. More, believe in the pre-existence of all souls, only the former does not openly avow his sentiment to the full; for it is all one sentiment. I have drawn this conclusion of Mr. Stevens from his own writings, for notwithstanding the sentiment is, as much as possible, huddled up into an ambiguity of ex-

pression, it is nevertheless evident, to such as are thoroughly conversant with the controversy. But waving this, as a non-essential in the argument, I should be glad to be informed, whether God, in furnishing each animal body conceived by ordinary generation, with an immortal addition, part, or soul, sends a holy soul, or a lapsed soul into each of these bodily existencies? if the latter, which is the sentiment of Dr. More, Grotius, and hundreds beside, how can men who wish to be called Anti-Infidels, be in reality any thing but very Infidels; seeing the most prominent truth in the Bible contradicts such a notion; on the other hand, that is, believing that modern Pre-existarians do not believe in the pre-existence of, and already prepared store of, lapsed, that is, fallen souls, but that God is creating souls as he may have a demand for them; or even supposing, for I wish to give my enemy sea room, that all the human souls ever designed to inhabit animal bodies to the end of time, were created from eternity, or from the beginning of time, is it so, that the Almighty is sending forth continually, a species of *holy unpolluted innocent spirits, to be infixed* or fastened into polluted bodies, depraved with crime, and obnoxious to everlasting burnings? and yet to such horrible conclusions as these, do Pre-existarians necessarily lead us. Nor is it less grievous, or a whit less ridiculous, to read of the hacking and mutilating work carried on by Pre-existarians, in reference to the Saviour's growing in knowledge, which they admit, refers to the rational, and not to the animal part of our Lord's humanity; both Mr. Murray and Mr. Stevens, from their uniform source, that is, Dr. Watts's work on pre-existence, having introduced such a farrago of inconsistent superfluities, concerning great mental characters having become novitiated into a state

of infantine idiocy, insomuch that all former ideas, however glorious or extensive, became extinct. In the process of time, however, and by the help of circumstances, they recovered their lost ideas, and therefore, from this time they grew in knowledge, and this was the case with the Saviour, who though; it might have been for ten thousand times ten thousand millions of ages before this world, that he had been acquiring ideas of things that were, are, or are to be; so that at the making of the eternal covenant, when called upon to know, if it would be a party in the contract, this human soul, could even then, tell what was the nature, weight, and measure, to a fraction, that suffering, pain, and sorrow, should amount, to which should be due to the sins of God's elect; and yet, when it came into the body, made of the woman, it sank from this height of *infinite* knowledge, possessed by a *finite* creature, into a state of infantine idiocy; from this however in the course of time it began to recover itself, and recollect what it had, through the failure of a good memory, let slip, insomuch, that the text ought to have been, "And Jesus *recovered his memory, as he grew in age*, and in favor with God and man." O "but if we shall suppose nothing of Christ existed before his incarnation but his pure Deity, then ALL the expressions concerning the love of God, and Christ, *are void of truth and propriety.*" Truly, if these flashes of sophistry do not compel the reader to nauseate the scheme designed to be recommended by them, I know not what will. "Besides," it is further argued, "this doctrine sheds a new glory upon the *satisfaction and astonishment* of Christ, as it renders him so much *fitter* to undertake that great, glorious, and dreadful work!" Who could have thought it, not

only the love of a triune God, as revealed in Scripture, must depend, in point of the truth and propriety of it, on the circumstance of Christ's soul having pre-existed, but we are told also, that by this same circumstance, Christ was so much the **FITTER** to undertake the work of atoning for sin, for "the more glorious **WE** make **HIS** **CREATED** **NATURE**, the *more fit* he was to become surety for sinners, and his life was the more *valuable sacrifice* to redeem millions of souls, and a *fitter price* to ransom multitudes from death:" and adds this author, "why may not the reader be so charitable as to say, that it paves the way for the **ARIANS** to come to orthodox sentiments, concerning the Deity of Christ? since it removes their greatest objection against **OURS**," that is the Pre-existarian "faith in that particular," unquestionably so, by words of wanton Sabellianism, which disposes of all those difficulties, which have ever been an occasion of offence to the wisdom of freethinking Arians. Besides, there is no sect on earth that ever did make the eternal creature, which they as well as Sabellians, believe pre-existed prior to the incarnation, so glorious as do the Arians, consequently they have only to believe with Pre-existarian Sabellians, which is, that it was God by union, and then they will be able to embrace, *in words* at any rate, the doctrine of the vicarious atonement; the life of the sacrifice being proportionably valuable, as the *creature nature* of the sacrifice was glorious. "The adversaries of Christ's divinity," says the late Robert Hall, of Arnby, "being conscious, that the Scriptures treat of a plurality of persons employed in creation, &c., and lest the artful manner of treating the argument, respecting person and essence should not block up the way leading to the

divine," not pre-existing creature, "glories of Jesus, have invented another stumblingblock, to render the path of faith in Christ's divinity quite impassable, which is, the pre-existence of Christ's soul. It is acknowledged, some have maintained this sentiment without any *designed* injury to the doctrine of the Trinity. But it is equally evident, that some of the most virulent enemies to Christ's divine personality, find it IMPOSSIBLE to give their scheme of opposition, even the APPEARANCE of consistency, but as AIDED by the aforesaid hypothesis; therefore *great* pains have been taken to render it PLAUSIBLE; in consequence of which, it has proved a stumblingblock to some." Ideed it has; we have on record in the history of the once most orthodox churches, as well as in many public characters still living, the most sorrowful proof of the ravages made on the doctrine of the Trinity, or the divine personality of the Son, and Holy Ghost, in distinction from the person of the Father, by the introduction of Pre-existarianism. The time was, when Dr. Watts was the most orthodox in his opinions on the doctrine of the Trinity, yes, he was wont not only to profess it himself, but he taught others to believe it and to sing it, too.

" Glory to GOD the TRINITY,
Whose NAME has MYSTERIES unknown,
In ESSENCE ONE, in PERSONS THREE,
A SOCIAL nature, yet alone."

All this time however he was not a Pre-existarian, but when afterwards, he became one, although for a time he attempted to hold fast his Trinitarian views, yet when *reason* takes the place of *faith*, the religion of believing what is incomprehensible, (yea at open war with reason) must give place to the religion of sense; this was the doc-

tor's case, so that soon after he became a Pre-existarian, he began to reason on those Scriptures, which he had previously been assured referred to our Lord's pre-existence as God, and therefore, contained the most demonstrative evidence in favor of Anti-arianism; but reason getting the master of him, he soon began to say it is not "condecant according to the fitness of things, to apply those Scriptures to our Lord, as denoting his Godhead, but as having reference to his human soul, as pre-existent before the world was," insomuch, that four or five Scriptures, which contain the most incontrovertible arguments on the part of Trinitarians, against Arians, and Sabellians, have been, and are to this day, no obstacles at all, to the Sabellian belief, could they be proved true in the sense put upon them by Pre-existarians. First, Prov. viii. 23. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Now take away the Pre-existarian sense put upon this text, and the whole Sabellian system immediately crumbles to dust; the setter up, and the set up, being evidently two distinct persons, and therefore clearly prove, the eternity and personal Godhead of Christ, as equal to the person of the Father who set him up. Again John i. 1. "IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Here then Sabellianism must fall like Dagon before the ark, was it not held up, by Pre-existarians teaching them, that "the term Logos, or Word, means the *soul of Christ* united to *Deity*, which soul, at the incarnation, was made flesh." "Oh yes, thank you. Oh I am greatly obliged to you. Now I can see why the Word is called God. Now I see how the Word was with God, that is, the pre-existent soul was with God, and the union of it with God, is the

cause of its being called God, and so, that, although when that human soul became incarnate, it is said, the Word was made flesh, in reality it was only the soul that came down, and took a body, so that in truth, it was not pre-existing Godhead that came down to be made flesh; no, that could not be, it is not reasonable; for although the pre-existent Word with God is called God manifest in the flesh, that must be understood, as when God in the Scriptures is represented as descending to visit man, that is, *figuratively*. But then what shall we do with John iii. 13. ‘Even the Son of Man which is in heaven.’ Surely this is a stab to our cause, as Sabellians, from which we shall never rise.” “O yes,” say, Pre-existarians, “you must alter the text, by rendering it, who *was* in heaven, or else say, he was there in his mind and conversation.” Yes, Dr. Watts himself, before he became a Pre-existarian, in a work which you yourself made me a present of on the Divinity of Christ, brings this very text in proof, to use his own words, “the OMNIPRESENCE of Christ as God.” “What has been said before,” says he, “concerning the appearances of Christ, as the Angel of the Covenant to the patriarchs, makes it evident, that the JEHOVAH on earth, who had been a little before talking with *Abraham* about the destruction of *Sodom*, was our Lord Jesus Christ. And since there is but one *Jehovah*, he must be the same with *Jehovah* in heaven; and this is further confirmed by a parallel text, (John iii. 13.) “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is IN HEAVEN.” Now had the doctor stuck to this testimony, he might have defied the possibility of success on the part of Sabellians; whereas afterwards, poor man, when he

disposed of the religion of *faith*, for the beauties of *sense*, first becoming a Pre-existarian, he alters the meaning of both Gen. xviii. and John iii. declaring of the latter, that it did not contain valid proof of our Lord's divinity; for the translation should have been *was*, and not *is*, in heaven. Nor have Mr. Murray, or Mr. Stevens, failed to adopt his opinion, and his method of expression, not only on that most able text against Sabellianism in John iii. 13, but also on those illustrious passages, Zec. xiii. 7. "Awake O sword, against MY FELLOW." Now who can be God the Father's *fellow*, equal, &c. but the Son? And that, not in reference to his *inferior* nature, but in reference to his very *Godhead*, for "to whom will ye liken God?" not unto man surely, for the Saviour himself in reference to his manhood said, "My Father is *greater* than I;" and yet Pre-existarians aver, that by God's fellow, that is equal, mentioned by Zechariah, the human soul of Christ is meant. So also in 2 Cor. viii. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he *was* rich, yet for your sakes he became poor," &c. Now in this text we have, unless Pre-existarianism can be proved true, such evidence for the pre-existence of Christ as God, as to overthrow Sabellianism with one word, i. e. who *was*; for in Rev. i. 8, we have the very word, in connexion with others, to prove that Jesus Christ is "THE ALMIGHTY." Pre-existarians however, with insulting bravado, insist that it does not refer to Christ's deity, but to his pre-existent soul, for "to talk of Christ, as GOD, becoming poor, is just as incongruous as to talk of very Jehovah staying for several hours with Abraham, conversing about Sodom, which is beneath the Majesty of Heaven, and contrary to *reason*, wherefore it must have been the soul of

Christ, that was rich, and that became poor, to make the poor rich," and the same may be said say they of Phil. ii 6. But, really Sir, I am heartily sick of following Pre-existarians through the many labyrinths of their more than ever manifest Sabellian scheme, that I sicken at the thought, especially of hearing these words *Sabellianized*, "Who being in the FORM of God, thought it not robbery to be EQUAL with God," *i. e.* his human soul. "Those," says Dr. Watts, "who will read with an impartial eye, what *Dr. Whitby* has written on this text, will be ready to believe it signifies, that Christ did not think equality with God to be seized as a thing to be assumed *by him*. he did not think proper to appear like God," &c. But the blasphemy is too horrid to repeat, not that I wonder at it, for what would not that Arminian hypocrite utter against Christ, with a view to making more of man than God. O, but "that this text is most *naturally* interpreted, concerning *the pre-existent soul of Christ*, and its humiliation, and not concerning the abasement of the *divine nature*, will appear, if we attend to these things. A great and pious writer of this age has observed, that we never find the *divine nature*, or Godhead, propounded to us, as an example of *self denial or humility* in all the Bible, therefore it must be some inferior nature, or Christ's *human soul* that is proposed as an example of humility," &c. Most marvellous, how these Pre-existarians hobble along the road with one another's crutches. Then, of course, as it is Christ's human soul, that made itself of no reputation, so also it must have been no robbery in *Christ's human soul* to think itself equal with God, and thereby Pre-existarians will certainly prove the great humility of Christ's human soul, while all human souls to whom *that humble crea-*

ture was to be an example, must go and do likewise; thinking it no robbery to think themselves equal with God. A mighty deal of self denial in this *thought* to be sure; to me however it looks like self aggrandizement, it being impossible for a human soul possessed of the creature glories of an *Arian's* Christ, or *Sabellian's* constituted God, to think more of itself, than that of being EQUAL WITH GOD. God forbid, that ever either you or I should be the subject of such Pre-existarian humility, and self denial. And as for the Godhead not being a pattern of humility and self denial, this is most certainly in characteristic unison with the rest of the Pre-existarian scheme, but it is a very fudge, for who in their senses would talk of the *nature* of the Godhead, being propounded to us as an example for any; whereas the conduct of the Godhead, in the person, character, and conduct of the Father, is propounded to us, as an example for Christian perfection! but what that Christian perfection would consist of, that was destitute of humility, and self denial, I must leave others to decide upon. See Mat. v. 48. The fact is this; till Pre-existarians can produce interpretations of the most sublime portions of God's word, far different to the expositions given us of the Scriptures just examined, they must not be angry with us, if we continue to be ANTI-PRE-EXISTARIANS to the end of our pilgrimage. The more so, from the consideration that these present interpretations of Scripture, greatly tend, and except great grace prevent, must at last, end in the awful act of repudiating from "the faith once delivered to the saints," the foundation article contained therein; and then good bye to all the rest, for what good they are as matters of faith. Neither the love of God; the covenant

of God; or any thing revealed by God, is worth a *rusty nail* if *Sabellianism* is true; wherefore, as I have proved again and again, that PRE-EXISTARIANISM is the foundation of Sabellianism, pray beware of Pre-existarianism. Some of the greatest divines of the eighteenth and present century, who fell foully into the sin of denying the personality of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, apart from the Father's person, were introduced thereto by first believing Pre-existarianism, nor would they have denied the doctrine of the Trinity, had they not first become Pre-existarians; Dr. Watts is an awful instance of it. I am got too far in my letter, Sir, to allow of my even offering to palliate the subject with my opponents, or I dare say, not a few of them will be surprised at the daring manner in which I have ventured to attack this heterogeneous and hydra headed scheme. I have very much displeased them already, by my repeated attacks on this sentiment in the pulpit; this letter therefore, if possible, will render me a thousandfold more the object of their unforgiving and inveterate displeasure. Well be it so; had I my work to perform over again, I should not conceive it possible to find language sufficiently expressive of my increasing detestation of a sentiment which has for its object, and if suffered to reign, will secure in its end, the supplanting of a faith, which makes Deity, that is GOD, three persons in one indivisible essence, the Alpha and Omega of the eternal covenant, ALL and ALL, and every creature nature, however circumstantially glorious, NOTHING AT ALL. Wherefore I conclude, by observing in the language of my favorite Hervey, where he says, "Should I see whole sects, or whole churches, in a glaring error, such as I can prove from Scripture to be palpably wrong, and

of pernicious tendency, I would make no scruple to remonstrate, dissent, and ENTER MY PROTEST."

Wherefore such, and if possible, something worse being the character and tendency of the sectarian error, withstood. exposed and rebutted in this letter, I cannot refrain from adding in the language of our brother Irving, that " I do give thanks to God, that amongst other things, he has enabled me to bear testimony against this error, of a *pre-existent humanity*." An error indeed! an error that strikes at the very root, and tends to invalidate, as far as the meaning of words will effect it, the grand doctrine of our Lord's incarnation; for to become incarnate, is to become human. Now if our Lord's person was both divine and human from before the foundation of the world, it was altogether impossible that his divine person should *become* so four thousand years after the world was made, wherefore either his person *was not*, actually and really made up of two very natures, called Godhead and manhood, from his being set up in the character of WISDOM, or otherwise he DID NOT BECOME MAN, when the Scriptures say he did. That he was, in his covenant character considered, as a being constituted of a complex nature, I own, but then, that was by way of *prolepsis*, and not in reality; as it is written, " he calleth things which *are not, as though they were*." Again he is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: these however are texts of Scripture that I never once met with in all the Pre-existarian books that I ever read, and why not? why, for this good reason, it would have overthrown their reasonings against what they sarcastically call, a set up nonentity, that is a mediator between God and man, in whose

covenant character, two natures, as making one Christ, were included from eternity, “ according to THE PURPOSE of him who worketh all things AFTER the counsel of his own will;” which will and counsel, being as certain as though it was fulfilled, is represented in many instances, as though it were really fulfilled; so that Christ is represented, as being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, while the Son of God is called the man at God’s right hand; yea the *Son of Man*, which even Pre-existarians themselves must allow was not the case, but as viewed in God’s decree or covenant purpose, the Son of man being peculiarly applicable, so far it is a matter of fact, to his being made flesh, born of a woman; and seeing this speech of positived esignation, the import of which being altogether impossible but by anticipation, is made use of by God in reference to his death, &c. Why not be content with the same conclusions in reference to our Lord’s whole human nature? The fact is, Pre-existarians argue as the most resolute materialists do, making it out, that the nature which the eternal Son of God took hold of, or into union with his divine person at the incarnation, consisted of nothing but matter, and not matter and spirit; which two properties alone, can make a human nature; this however they deny, saying, that God the Son, did not take a human soul, with a body at the incarnation, which in fact does away, could it be proved true, with the work of regeneration, for admitting that either *our* souls or Christ’s soul, were transmigrated from God, into our bodies, then they could have been no part of our fallen nature; and if no part of our fallen nature, they could never become the subjects of regeneration, or the Spirit’s work; it being *fallen human nature* exclusively, that can

become regenerated; wherefore, to one of these two errors, all Pre-existarians must give their consent, either that all souls pre-existed in a lapsed state, as was contended for by Dr. More, and all consistent Pre-existarians, or otherwise, that the Almighty is continually creating holy human souls, and transmitting them to unholy bodies: and then what follows—why that *unfallen* souls are sent to dwell in *fallen* flesh and blood bodies, preparatory to their being sent to hell, so that the unfallen soul of Cain, admitting that he lived till the year 500 A. M. will have been in hell from the time of his death, to the time of the second resurrection, at least six thousand five hundred years, during which term of years, his *fallen* body, into which his *unfallen* soul was infixed, has been free from suffering. Now should it be replied, “that God is neither creating souls daily, or rather, every minute in the day, nor did they pre-exist in an anti-Mosaic creation;” then, from whence and what source have human souls their existence? not immediately from God, as holy subsistences; not from a pre-existent lapsed state; nor are they derived, *though confessed to be human souls*, from human generation, and therefore are not fallen souls. I say, and demand to know, *from whence then are they sent* into our bodies? To this just demand, which I have a right to make, before I become a Pre-existarian, I may look, and look again, and after all, look in vain for an answer; Pre-existarians being too proud to *acknowledge* that they have no answer to give, but that which would for ever set the matter at rest; by proving for certainty, the truth of what Dr. Hawker insisted on; which was, that it was “a mere chimera of the brain.” But lest it should be thought that I arrogate too much to myself, and

depend too much on my own opinion, I beg leave to subjoin the following masterly extracts, in answer to the *unscriptural assumption*, "That children derive nothing, from their parents, but a body; and that their souls come immediately from God, who continually creates, and emits into bodies, spirits, at the beck of every fornicator and adulterer." but that this is an error, the most awful, will appear by what follows; "*inattention and prejudice,*" says our author, "can veil the plainest truths. *First.* It is said, that God rested on the seventh day from ALL his works of creation, Gen. ii. 3. But upon this "Pre-existarian" scheme, he is hourly creating new souls. *Second.* All living creatures after their kind received power to propagate their species in its whole nature, and it does not appear why beasts should be more privileged than man in this respect. *Third.* When God blessed our first parents, and bade them be fruitful and multiply, he addressed himself to the soul, as well as to the body, which, without the soul, can neither receive, nor execute a command; therefore, by the force of this divine blessing, and appointment, the *whole man* can multiply, and the soul may light the flame of life, under proper circumstances, as one taper can light another. All agree, that under God, we receive life from our parents; and if life, then certainly our spirit, which is the principle of life, and without which the body is nothing but a lump of refined clay, Gen. xvi. 26. *Fifth.* The *regeneration* of our souls is insisted upon by our Lord, as absolutely necessary; and if they are to be regenerated, it follows, that they were first *generated*. *Sixth.* The Scripture informs us, that fallen Adam begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; Gen. v. 3, but had he generated only a

body without a soul, he would have been the father of a corpse, and not of a man, for what is a man but an *embodied* spirit. "To this however it will be objected," that God is the father of the spirits of all flesh, and that, the spirit returns to God who gave it, and therefore the soul is not propagated, but immediately created. "But," says a great Anti-pre-existarian authority, "it is also written, that Job and David were fearfully and wonderfully made, and fashioned *by the hands of God in their mothers' wombs!* Job. x. 8, Psa. cxxxix. 4, &c. and that we are the offspring of him, who made of one blood all nations of men." If you think these Scriptures prove that Job, David, and *all nations of men*, had their bodies from God, without the instrumentality of any parents, I will agree, that the passages you quote, prove also, that we have our souls immediately from God; nevertheless, I do not deny, that the Lord is peculiarly "the father of the spirits of all flesh," because "he breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life; and *gave him the spirit*, by which *he became*, immediately and every other man mediately, *a living soul.*" Gen. ii. 7. Here however an objection must be anticipated, which is, that "this hypothesis affects the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; for if the spirit is generated with the body, it will perish with it;" to this objection we are furnished with this undeniable answer, chaff is, in some respects, to the wheat, what the body is to the soul; it is formed, and subsists awhile with it, but would you conclude from thence, that the wheat cannot subsist, when the chaff is destroyed, you know the contrary; though wheat and chaff are material substances, growing from the *same* source. How much more can the soul subsist in a separate state, after the corruption of the body, seeing it

is of a nature so diametrically opposite to flesh and blood. But let us suppose for a moment only, that it is a matter of fact, and not falsehood, that man is incapable of propagating his own compound species, and that God is continually creating souls for children's bodies, as often as an *animal* nature is begotten or conceived by *human* parents, must it not be evident, not only that the souls thus continually and immediately created by God, must be pure, un-fallen and sinless souls; but would it not also disprove with a stroke, the notion of Christ's soul having pre-existed? seeing the Scripture saith, that the human nature of Christ was in *all points made like unto his brethren*, which cannot be true on the Pre-existarian hypothesis. Let it be proved therefore, that when Elisabeth conceived, and bred her child, John Baptist, that she only conceived a nature of gross matter, which was subsequently supplied by God's immediate creation with a *holy pure un-fallen* spiritual subsistence; and I will prove also, that when Mary conceived seed, she only conceived a nature of gross matter, which was subsequently supplied, *by an immediate creation act of God*, with an *un-fallen*, spiritual subsistence, on which hypothesis there will be an end to the belief of modern Pre-existarianism, except among those who being Christians of sense, and not of faith, are ever protesting, that because **THEY CANNOT SEE HOW** Christ can have the pre-eminence in *all things*,* except his soul pre-

* Dr. Watts, who is certainly the most uniform Pre-existarian that ever I met with of the modern school, carries his notion of Christ's pre-eminence so far, as to insist, "That God loves the human nature of CHRIST BETTER than he does any other creature;" but if such be the senses in which Christ has the pre-eminence in all things, then, why not be consistent, and insist, that

existed before his people's, therefore they will be Pre-existarians; and just so, Socinians will not believe that Christ is God, although the Scripture saith most positively that he is so, because *they cannot see* how he can be God, seeing he himself saith, "My Father is greater than I;" while the Anti-Trinitarians will not believe in the Scripture testimony of the Trinity, because *they cannot see* how there can be a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, without there being three Gods; so that of this *sensitive trio of SEEING*, but (not believing) Christians, it may be said, "And these *three* agree in one, "*That this doctrine is exactly agreeable to reason,*" for

" Whatever contradicts *our sense*
We hate to see, and never *can believe.*"

But not to be borne down by Pre-existarian authorities, let us consider what *reason*, of which they make so much boast, has to say against such a notion as that which insists, "*That God daily creates human souls, which immediately are united into bodies, that generation hath prepared for them.*" Will reason, I say, be for or against such a notion? Does it compete with God's character, as made known to us in revelation? for to this I must cleave; to affirm that God, who is love, and justice itself, puts pure and immaculate souls into unholy and impure bodies, and then consigns the souls thus involuntarily infixed into sinful bodies, over to everlasting torments, as unfallen spirits. Does reason defend such an hypothesis, as that which insists, that as soon as we are born, yea, and in the

his whole human nature, both body and soul, pre-existed, whereas the bodies of Enoch and Elijah existed in heaven before Christ's body received birth on earth.

womb, we are obnoxious to eternal wrath and torments, *if our souls are then immediately created out of nothing?* “Aye, but the first of our order, our general head and representative, sinned, *and we in him;*” indeed, but surely this does not agree with the notion of the soul being immediately created for the bodies generated; revelation has pronounced all flesh guilty before God; but this can have no reference to man’s principal part, I mean his soul, if our souls were not in Adam when he fell as much as were our bodies: for if my soul was then created, when my body was generated, what was Adam to my soul, who sinned above five thousand years before I, that is my soul, came out of *nothing?* If he represented me, I must have been in his loins, both body and soul; but I was not, according to the Pre-existarian doctrine; for my soul owns no father but God, its *immediate* progenitor. No, says Mr. Stevens, “the soul of Christ WAS NOT made of the woman, but was begotten of the Father, into the union it now retains, before the rest of the creatures were called into being. On the other hand, if the Son of God did take a *human soul* upon him, or the whole complex nature of man, at the same time, it is a wonder that there should not be any ONE Scripture, neither in the Old nor New Testament, which should give *such a hint* to us, that he then took a *reasonable soul* as well as a body; or should tell us, at least, that he expressly *assumed human nature*, which might include both flesh and spirit.” Now this is a solemnly awful insinuation, that the Scriptures do not so much as hint to us, that the Son of God did take a whole human nature at his incarnation. To which I need only answer, that unless he did take a whole nature, then in fact,

he did not become man at the incarnation, nor is this all, but all those Scriptures are false which teach us to believe, that Christ, in reference to his whole human nature, is the seed of the woman, being made of a woman, made under the law; whereas if our Lord's human soul was excepted, then in fact, was his soul *no part* of fallen humanity, and if no part of fallen humanity, then was he only part of a man at best: for that all human nature fell, that is, both soul and body, is beyond the power of all Infidels to disprove; besides, as Dr. Hawker says, "What kind of a Mediator, God, and PART OF A MAN constitutes, I know not." O how important is the advice given us by another late and excellent divine belonging to the established church, "Observe, then," says he, "that when priests, or public instructors of any kind, are unacquainted with CHRIST INCARNATE, and CHRIST EXALTED, it is the duty of those who are seekers of Christ, to turn aside from them, and to follow the directions contained in the sacred Scriptures."

Wishing you, my dear reader, to go and do likewise, I now submit to your consideration my objections to the pompous pretensions advocated by modern Pre-existarians, who, as one says of a similar sect, "rather believe *themselves* than the gospel;" which, as another writer says, is the cause of "the horrible confusion which immediately ensues, as soon as human reason gets into the chair, and falls a judging supernatural things;" whereas, "in supernatural things faith succeeds in the place of reason, and stands upon the infallible truth, which is a much surer foundation than reason can afford."

But I forbear to trespass further on the

patience of my friend; nor need I offer further apology for my undesigned prolixity, than saying, the subtle reasonings and evasive shifts of my opponents made it unavoidable; wherefore,

Now permit me to subscribe myself,

My ever dear Clement,

Your's most affectionately,

WASHINGTON WILKS.

“ O strange delusion! awful error vile,
 The produce foul of Beelzebub's design
 Against Jehovah, and Jehovah's Christ.
 But know proud fiend, with all thine art,
 Thou shalt not keep to aid thee in the war
 One ransom'd soul; and if by dint of guile,
 Thou hast deluded some to serve awhile,
 E'en these shall prove at last they are not thine,
 And join the armies of the living God.
*This specious lie enwrapped in Scripture garb,
 Deceives at first the artless simple saint,
 But soon as opened by the spirit's light,
 Displays a venomous and vip'rous beast,
 Whose poisonous venom strikes the root of truth;
 Who feign would make Jehovah man's machine,
 And bids him ask his creature if he may
 Without offending it, assume its form.
 Was ever insolence so daring grown?
 Methinks the saints must nauseate the thought,
 And turn disgusted from the impious cheat.”*