

THE
DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

ESSENTIAL TO THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION:

A TREATISE
ON THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN FRENCH.

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LONDON:
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

1838.

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

THE doctrine of our Lord's eternal Divinity having been, on different grounds, the object of long and violent opposition, many learned, ingenious, and able pens have been engaged in defence of that capital truth. Few, however, have repelled the adversary with those powers of genius, and that force of argument, which were employed by Dr. Abbadie in composing this admirable treatise. Far from contenting himself with dogmatical assertions, and equally far from amusing his readers with curious metaphysical speculations on the grand subject of his inquiries, he has recourse to the testimony of GOD, to that revelation which JEHOVAH has

made of himself in the Bible, and to those deductions from it, which are natural, clear, and conclusive. Thus he proves that Christ is a **DIVINE PERSON**, and equal with the Father, without pretending to know, or attempting to investigate, the **MODUS** of his Divine Personality. In regard to the *former*, he firmly believes that the Scripture is full, explicit, peremptory; in reference to the *latter*, he considers the sacred canon as entirely silent; and to dispute what Eternal Veracity asserts, because it is above the power of reason to comprehend, or to endeavour to discover what God has not revealed of himself, he looks upon as irrational, presumptuous, and highly criminal.

The sentiments and views of our author, in this respect, are well expressed by another celebrated writer, who says, “ I freely grant, that, had I consulted my own reason only, I could not have discovered some mysteries of the gospel. Nevertheless, when I think on the grandeur of God, when I cast my eyes on that vast Ocean, when I consider that immense **ALL**, nothing astonishes me, nothing stumbles me,

nothing seems to me inadmissible, how incomprehensible soever it may be. When the subject is Divine, I am ready to believe all, to admit all, to receive all; provided I be convinced that it is God himself who speaks to me; or any one on his part. After this I am no more astonished that there are three distinct Persons in one Divine Essence; one God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost. Either religion must tell us nothing about God, or what it tells us must be beyond our capacities; and, in discovering even the borders of this immense Ocean, it must needs exhibit a vast extent in which our feeble eyes are lost. But what surprises me, what stumbles me, what frightens me, is to see a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the Supreme Being, oppose that Intelligence who sitteth at the helm of the world, question what he affirms, dispute what he determines, appeal from his decisions, and, even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are beyond his capacity. Enter into thy nothingness, mortal creature! What

madness animates thee! How durst thou pretend—thou, who art but a point, thou, whose essence is but an atom—to measure thyself with the Supreme Being; with him who fills heaven and earth; with Him whom heaven, the heaven of heavens, cannot contain. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?”*

The great principle which the author aims to establish in the following work, is, that the Deity of Jesus Christ is *essential* to the Christian religion. In pursuance of this design he shows, If Jesus, the Son of God, be not of the same essence with his Father, that the Mohammedan religion is preferable to Christianity, and Christ inferior to Mohammed; † that the

* M. Saurin's *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 78, 79. Robinson's translation.

† It may be proper here to observe, that some of the Socinians have not been ashamed to avow a considerable degree of regard for the character and cause of Mohammed. Witness their famous address to Ameth Ben Ameth, ambassador from the emperor of Fez and Morocco, to Charles II.,

sanhedrim did an act of justice in causing Jesus to be put to death for blasphemy; that he and his apostles have led us into a complicated and

king of Great Britain. "We," say they to his excellency, "as your NEAREST FELLOW-CHAMPIONS for those truths;" [that is, truths in which none but they agree with the Mohammedans;] "we who, with our Unitarian brethren, were in all ages exercised to defend with our pens the faith of one Supreme God, (without personalities or pluralities,) AS HE HATH RAISED YOUR MOHAMMED TO DO THE SAME with the sword, as a scourge on those IDOLIZING CHRISTIANS; we do, FOR THE VINDICATION OF YOUR LAWMAKER'S GLORY, strive to prove that such faults and irregularities," [as are found in the Koran,] "not cohering with the fashion of the rest of the Alcoran building, nor with the undoubted sayings of your prophet, nor with the gospel of Christ, (whereof Mohammed would have himself to be but a preacher,) were foisted into the scattered papers found after Mohammed's death, of which in truth the Alcoran was made up: it being otherwise impossible that a man of THAT JUDGMENT, THAT HATH PROVED ITSELF IN OTHER THINGS SO CONSPICUOUSLY, should be guilty of so many and frequent repugnancies, as are to be seen in those writings and laws that are now-a-days given out under his name: We do, then, endeavour to clear by whom, and in what time, such alterations were made in the first setting out of the Alcoran." See the whole address in Leslie's *Socinian Controversy Disc.* Pref. p. 3—13. Thus careful were these gentlemen to purge the Koran of everything supposititious, and thus tender of its author's honour.

Another Socinian writer represents Mohammed as having "no other design but to restore the belief of the unity of God, which," says he, "at that time was extirpated among the eastern Christians, by the doctrines of the Trinity and

pernicious error ; that there is no agreement between the Old and the New Testament ; and, that neither the ancient Jewish, nor the Christian religion, is attended with sufficient criteria to distinguish it from imposture. In proving that these are the necessary consequences of the Socinian and Arian systems, and in answering the principal objections of his opponents, he discovers such fertility of invention, originality of thought, and strength of reasoning powers, as comparatively few enjoy. The generality of writers on this very interesting subject, do little more than collect and retail the thoughts of others, which they express in a different style and method. Not so Dr. Abbadie. For the

incarnation." And informs us, that "Mohammed meant not that his religion should be esteemed a *new* religion, but only the restitution of the *true intent* of the Christian religion ; that the Mohammedan learned men call themselves the *true disciples* of the Messiah, or Christ ; intimating thereby, that Christians are apostates from the MOST ESSENTIAL PARTS of the doctrine of the Messiah ; that Mohammedanism has prevailed so greatly, not by force and the sword, but by that one truth in the Alcoran, the *unity* of God," that is, as well in *Person* as in *Essence*. And then he represents the Tartars as acting more rationally, in embracing what he calls, "the *more plausible* sect of Mohammed, than they would have done in receiving the Christian faith of the Trinity, incarnation," &c. Leslie, p. 28.

reader of this masterly performance, if not possessed of uncommon penetration, is entertained with ideas entirely new, as well as with arguments irrefragably strong, in every section, and in almost every chapter ; so that, if he love the adorable JESUS, and “ rejoice in his highness,” he finds himself instructed, amazed, and delighted.

Though the book be exceedingly scarce, and, at this time, very little known in England, the abilities of the writer and the merit of the treatise have received the most honourable testimonies from various pens. Abbé Houteville, for instance, when speaking of our author’s work, *On the truth of the Christian Religion*, of which elaborate performance this is generally reckoned the *third* volume, says, “ The most shining of those treatises in defence of the Christian religion, which were published by the Protestants, is that written by M. Abbadie. The favourable reception it met with, the praises it received, almost without example, immediately after its publication, and the universal approbation it still meets with, render it unne-

cessary for me to join my commendations, which would add so little to the merit of so great an author. In the first part he combats the Atheists, in the second the Deists, and the Socinians in the third.* Voltaire, also, who cannot be suspected of a predilection for Abbadie, on account of his writing in defence of revealed truth, informs us, that “he was celebrated for his Treatise on the Christian Religion.”† And the Rev. Mr. Venn thus recommends the work: “It is a book in the highest form for reputation in all the Protestant countries abroad: a book in which the horrid absurdities of all, who, under pretence of being *more rational* in religion, reject the counsel of God, are exposed in a most masterly manner.”‡ Such is the character of the author among those who know his abilities, and such the esteem which this performance of his has obtained.

The style of the English translation, which,

* Article Abbadie, *New and General Biographical Dictionary*. Note.

† Age of Lewis xiv. vol. ii. p. 274.

‡ *Exam. of Dr. Priestley's Address on the Lord's Supper*, p. 22, 23. Note.

on account of its many inaccuracies, represented the work to great disadvantage, the editor has attempted to correct; and, where it did not affect the argument, he has abridged the book, that the size and price of it might be reduced. He has also taken the liberty, in some places, of throwing in an additional thought, with a view either to elucidate the author's meaning, or to enforce his argument.

How far his endeavours to render the book more generally known, and the translation of it more agreeable, may obtain the approbation of the religious public, he cannot pretend to say. He is not, however, without a pleasing persuasion, that many will read the work with delight and profit; that many who "love our LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity," will rejoice to see his Divine dignity so well defended against the insinuating artifices of pernicious error, and the bold attacks of open blasphemy. And it is his ardent prayer, that GOD OUR SAVIOUR, to whom the author dedicates the work,* would condescend to use it as a mean

* See the paragraph which concludes the work.

of his own glory, and of the church's good. To Him, therefore, "WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER," it is once more commended.

GOODMAN'S FIELDS ;

Jan. 1, 1777.



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