have made them impatient under the yoke of ordinances to which they were ſubjected ; for after the Chriſtian faith came into full ſplendour, mankind could be no longer under the tuition of ſuch a ſchoolmaſter as the law, which “ had only a sh*adow* of good things; and ſo far from their reality, not even the very *image* of them @@\*.” Through theſe ſhadows, however, the jews, aided by the clearer light of prophecy, though it too shone in a dark place, might have ſeen enough of God’s plan of redemption to make them ac­knowledge Jeſus of Nazareth, when he came among them working miracles of mercy, for the Messiah so long promiſed to their forefathers, and in whom it was repeatedly ſaid, that all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.

While ſuch care was taken to prepare the descendants of Abraham ſor the coming of the Prince of Peace, we muſt not ſuppoſe that God was a reſpecter of perſons, and that the rest of the world was totally neglected. The diſperſion of the ten tribes certainly contributed to ſpread the knowledge of the true God among the eaſtern nations. The ſubſequent captivity of the tribes of Judah and Ben­jamin muſt have confirmed that knowledge in the great em­pires of Babylon and Persia ; and that particular providence of God which afterwards led Ptolemy Philadelphus to have the Jewiſh ſcriptures tranſlated into the Greek language, laid the divine oracles open to the ſtudy of every accompliſhed ſcholar. At laſt, when the arms of Rome had con­quered the civilized world, and rendered Judea a province of the empire ; when Auguſtus had given peace to that empire, and men were at leiſure to cultivate the arts and ſciences ; when the different ſects of philoſophers had by their deputations whetted each others underſtandings ſo that none of them was diſpoſed to ſubmit to an impoſture ; and when the police of the Roman government was ſuch that intelligence of every thing important was quickly transmitted from the moſt diſtant provinces to the capital of the empire ; “ when that fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons,” and be reſtored to that inheritance of which the forfeiture introduced the ſeveral diſpenſations of revealed religion into the world.

Sect. V. V*iew of Theology, more peculiarly Christian.*

Mankind being trained by various diſpenſations of providence for the reception of that seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed, and the time fixed by the Jewiſh prophets for his coming being arrived, “ a meſſenger was ſent before his face to prepare his way before him by preaching the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of sins.” This meſſenger was John the Baptiſt, a very ex­traordinary man, and the greateſt of all the prophets. His birth was miraculous, the ſcene of his miniſtry the wilderneſs, his manners auſtere, and his preaching upright, with­out respect of perſons. He frankly told his audience that he was not the Meſſiah, that the Meſſiah would ſoon appear among them, that “he was mightier than himſelf, and that he would baptiſe them with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire.”

Mightier indeed he was ; for though born of a woman the Messiah was not the ſon of a human father ; and though living for the firſt thirty years of his life in obſcurity and poverty, he was the lineal deſcendant of David, and heir to the throne of Iſrael. But the dignity of his human deſcent, great as it was, vaniſhes from conſideration when compared with the glory which he had with his Father before the world was. The Jewiſh diſpenſation was given by the mi­niſtry of Moſes, and illuſtrated by ſubſequent revelations vouchſafed to the prophets ; the immediate author of the Chriſtian religion is the λογοςor second perſon of the bleſſed Trinity, of whom St John declares, that “ he was in the beginning with God, and was God ; that all things were made by him ; and that without him was not any thing made that was made.” We have already proved that in the one Godhead there is a Trinity of perſons ; and that the is one of the three, is apparent from theſe words of the apoſtle, and from many other paſſages of ſacred ſcripture. Thus he is called the Lord of hosts himſelf; the first and the last, beſides whom there is no God ; the most high God ; God bleſſed for ever ; the mighty God, the everlasting Father, Jehovah our righteouſneſs ; and the only wise God our Saviour @@(C). This great Being, as the ſame apoſtle aſſures us, was made fleſh, and dwelt among men ; not that the divine nature was or could be changed into humanity, for God is immutable, the ſame Almighty and incomprehensible Spirit yeſterday, to-day, and forever ; but the word or second perſon in the godhead, aſſuming a human soul and body into a perſonal union with himſelf, dwelt upon earth as a man, veiling his divinity under mortal fleſh. Hence he is ſaid elſewhere to have been “ manifeſted in the fleſh,” and “ to have taken upon him the nature of man ;” phraſes of the ſame import with that which aſſerts “ the Word to have been made fleſh.”

This incarnation of the Son of God is perhaps the greateſt myſtery of the Chriſtian faith, and that to which ancient and modern heretics have urged the moſt plauſible objec­tions. The doctrine of the Trinity is indeed equally incomprehensible ; but the nature of God and the mode of his ſubſiſtence, as revealed in ſcripture, no man, who thinks, can be ſurpriſed that he does not comprehend ; for a reve­lation which ſhould teach nothing myſterious on ſuch a ſubject would be as incredible and as uſeleſs as another which

@@@[m]\* Heb. L. I.

cap. II. 19. Hujus tamen vere admirandæ fidei, atque Evangelicæ ſupparis, in hiſtoria Abrahami nec volam, nec veſtigium reperias. Præterea floruerunt ſingulis aæculis in populo Judaico Viri Dei ac Prophetæ cælitus edocti, quos, inter tot arcana ipsis patefacta, mysticum hunc legis ſenſum penitus ignorasse, nihilque de futura vita intellexiſſe, nemo pru­dens suspicabitur. Cum autem nefas fit vel cogitasse, Viros optimos sapientiam, qua ipsi pollebant, aliis invidiſſe, cre­dendum omnino est, eos, sicubi *idoneos invenerint Auditores,* evolvisse iis obtecta in lege myſteria, ſinguliſque tantum aperuisse, quantum captus ipsorum et utilitatis ratio ferebat. In publicis autem concionibus Prophetæ ac Sapientes ita loquebantar, ut nec in contemptum adducerent arcana sanctioris disciplinæ, et tamen Auditorem attentum ad investigandi sollicitudinem excitarent. Atque hinc natum arbitratur maximus Grotius discrimen antiquitus inter Judæos cele­bratum, scriptæ legis, et legis oralis, quam et קבלח i. e. παgάδοσιν seu *Traditionem* vocant ; utramque dicentes a Mose profectam : non quod res aliæ fuerint in traditione quam in lege scripta ; sed quod ea quæ in lege scripta occultius con­tinebantur, studiosis indagatoribus enodaret accuratior interpretatio. *Harmonia Apostolica,* Dissert. post. cap. 10.

@@@(C) Iſaiah viii. 13, 14. compared with I Peter ii. 7, 8 ; Iſaiah vi. 5. compared with John xii. 41; Iſaiah xliv, 6. com­pared with Revelation xxii. 13. ; Pſalm lxxviii. 36. compared with I Corinthians x. 9. Romans ix. 5. Iſaiah ix. 6. Jere­miah xxiii. 6. Jude.