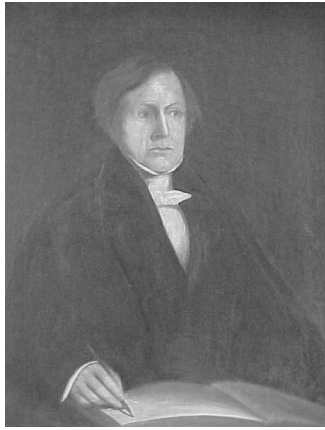


The
WORKS

OF THE



REV. ALEXANDER CARSON, LL.D.

VOLUME FIRST

DUBLIN

WILLIAM CARSON, GRAFTON-STREET.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

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1847

MISCELLANEOUS

TREATISES

BY
ALEXANDER CARSON, LL.D.

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The Publishers of Dr. Carson's works are at length enabled to give to their Subscribers and the public, the first volume of the series. They regret that it could not be issued sooner. The delay, however, was unavoidable, being in consequence of the great difficulty experienced in reading the manuscripts.

They deem it due to the author to state here, that the greater number of the papers appearing in the present volume are printed from the original manuscripts, which were not prepared by him for publication. Had he been spared to revise them, they would probably have been much improved.

The publishers have only further to say, that they have used every means in their power of ascertaining the exact phraseology of the Author in the manuscripts of the papers hitherto unpublished. In this they feel confident they have, on the whole, succeeded. Some words, however, could not be made out with perfect accuracy; and, in relation to these they can only hope no serious mistake has occurred.

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DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT,
SET FORTH IN
AN ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC,
ON THE
NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE GOSPEL.

Brethren—Of all the subjects that solicit the attention of mankind, the way of acceptance with God is the most important. On this point there can be but one sentiment among all who believe in the existence of God and the accountableness of man. On this truth as a first principle the philosophic writer joins hands with the enthusiast, the free-thinker with the superstitious devotee. Thomas Payne could not, in this article of faith, dissent from Peter the hermit; nor Franklin from Lorenzo Dow. If there is really a God, and if man is accountable to God for his conduct; if there is a judgment and a future world, that our chief concern ought to be to find acceptance in his sight and obtain a happy immortality, is as clear as the light of heaven. Compared with this, all sublunary concerns dwindle into insignificance.

If the way of acceptance with God be the most important concern of man, there is nothing in which we can so eminently show our love to the human race, as in our endeavours to point out to them what we consider truth on this momentous subject. If we have reason to believe that some views of this question are injurious to those that hold them; much more, if we consider such views infinitely and eternally injurious; if we have reason to believe that any of our brethren of mankind have views of this matter that will be, if unchanged, infinitely and eternally injurious to them; much

more, if we believe that the bulk of mankind appear to have such pernicious views, it would be cruelty and murder to conceal our sentiments. If we believe that we have discovered the true way of acceptance with God; if we believe that all of the human race, without the exception of the most vile and guilty, shall have acceptance and eternal favour with God, if they come to him in this way, the love of our fellow-men will irresistibly oblige us to proclaim the glad news as publicly and as extensively as possible. Can we love men and not warn them of the ways that lead into eternal ruin? Can we love them and not wish to point out to them the way that leads to eternal life?

There is nothing more offensive to men, than to dispute their dogmas in religion. Even in the smallest matters connected with this subject, men feel hurt with opposition. To question the truth of their religious opinions, is to insult them; but to suspect that these opinions are dangerous, is to hate them. The most phlegmatic, in such circumstances, will take fire. There is nothing more unreasonable. Why should I be offended with my neighbour for endeavouring to convince me that I am in error, even although I clearly perceive that the error is in himself? He is acting a friendly part by me, when he endeavours to make me believe his own creed. Can he more effectually show his concern for me than by discovering earnestness to bring me to receive the salvation on which himself depends? For this reason, I have always thought that they who believe that there is no salvation but in their own church, if there be any such persons, ought not to be exposed to the reproach of being enemies of those whom they adjudge to perdition. They may hold such a sentiment, and yet be far from wishing damnation to any. On the contrary, if they really entertain such an opinion, it is an expression of love to mankind to declare it. They are, no doubt, accountable to God for such an opinion; but as it respects their fellow-men they are blameless. If my neighbour tells me that I

cannot be saved except I yield subjection to the church to which he belongs, I do not believe him, because I am taught otherwise by the Scriptures ; but I am not angry with him: for if he believes me to be in danger of damnation, it is kind in him to tell me so. Charity of sentiment is a phrase ever acceptable from the pulpit and from the press; but it is an abuse of language: for charity is not a matter of opinion, but of feeling. A man may love his son, yet believe that he has transgressed the laws of the nation, and that he will be hanged for his crime. Only let our judges and juries act on the trial of culprits as men wish us to do with respect to the transgressors of the laws of God, and there will be an end to the order and peace of society. In the trial of criminals, they must proceed according to evidence; and, though the condemnation of their fellow men must be exceedingly painful to them, they must declare guilt when they find it, and adjudge to death those to whom the law awards that awful doom. With reason and sympathy, no doubt, will a jury bring in the verdict— guilty; with an aching heart and a voice that indicates the feelings of humanity, will the judge pronounce the awful sentence. In like manner, we may love and compassionate those, of whom, when we judge according to the Scriptures, we cannot hope well.

Christians in all ages have been taxed as haters of mankind, because they hold forth the doctrine of the New Testament, that teaches, that all who reject the gospel will perish for ever. However different in their dogmas are the various systems of religious sects, they generally keep up good neighbourhood by allowing that though they dispute on earth they shall all meet in heaven. But Christians cannot bandy compliments with the world at the expense of truth. Christ says, "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned;" and they dare neither modify this declaration nor conceal it. It may be expected, then, that they will meet with the united abhorrence of all the sects into which the professors of Christianity are divided. Accordingly we find that this has ever been

the case. By the great Roman historians Suetonius and Tacitus, they are held forth as a most malignant set of men. The latter of these writers, speaking of the burning of Rome, with which the Christians were charged, declares that they were innocent of this crime; but that they were guilty of hating the human race. There is no professor of Christianity who will not allow that this historian has misrepresented the first Christians; and that they were distinguished in the most eminent degree for love to mankind and zeal for their salvation. But let the philosopher investigate the probable cause that induced the historian to charge them with the crime of hating the human race, and he will find that this can be ascribed to no other source than that which I have mentioned. The heathens believed that the Christians hated the human race, because the Christians maintained that all "who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

The number of those who received the gospel bore no proportion to those who still worshipped idols. According, then, to the doctrine of this new sect, the greatest part of the human race was devoted to eternal misery. Judging, then, upon their own principles, the conclusion drawn by those historians, the conclusion that Christians were haters of mankind was unavoidable. As they did not themselves receive the gospel, they could not have considered it as a revelation from God. But if it was a religion formed by men, it would be justly chargeable with manifesting hatred to the human race, as dooming a great proportion of them to misery. Pythagoras and Plato, and all the founders and adherent disciples of the different systems of philosophy then in vogue, were praised or blamed according to men's views of their peculiar dogmas, because their respective systems were either invented by themselves, or adopted as most agreeable to their own minds, and not received as revelation. To those, then, that received the religion of Jesus Christ in the same

light, it was impossible but Christians would appear as the most malignant enemies of mankind. The same charge has been continued against Christians throughout every age. Those who resolutely adhere to the obvious import of the declarations of Scripture with respect to the salvation of men, are always considered as a malignant set of men who wish the everlasting misery of the human race. Though the Scriptures are allowed to contain a revelation from God, yet their import is evaded by forced interpretations, and all who will not acquiesce in those are branded for a want of charity. "What they believe is charged upon Christians as what they wish.

I am, then, fully aware of the offence that my sentiments on this subject are likely to give to the generality of my readers. They will consider me as a narrow-minded man, illiberal and uncharitable, arrogantly condemning my fellow-creatures, and unnecessarily and audaciously attempting to hurl the thunderbolts of the Almighty. Why should I presume to devote to destruction every one that differs from me in my views of the gospel? Do I suppose that there are no Christians but of my own sect? Brethren, I cannot hope to escape the censure that Christians have ever received; but I do hope to convince every rational, dispassionate reader, who will weigh what I say, of the unfairness of this charge, however much he may differ from me with respect to the way of salvation. Whether my sentiments on this subject be well or ill founded—whether they are the ghastly and horrible phantoms of superstition, or the result of irresistible evidence—there is no reason to judge that I wish damnation to those whose views I consider to lead to that awful doom. I may believe this with respect to those who are dearest to me upon earth. My views on this subject I have received from the Scriptures. If they are contained there, I am not to blame for adopting them; if they are not contained there, I am assured that I have not been led into the error by disregard to the happiness of mankind—much less by any malignant pleasure in their misery. I declare most solemnly that I

love the whole human race, and that salvation is the worst I wish to the worst of my enemies. I take God to witness, that instead of finding pleasure in the damnation of my fellow-creatures, I have great and continual sorrow in heart for my brethren of the human race, and especially for those who are more immediately my flesh and my blood. I cannot think of the damnation of any creature without horror. But what can I do? If the Scriptures are the word of God, and if they really sanction my sentiments, the only way in which I can manifest my love to mankind, is to publish my sentiments. That my sentiments are really in the Scriptures I am most confident. The evidence appears to me quite irresistible. As long as it does so, it is impossible for me to judge otherwise. "It is not in our power," says a great philosopher, "to judge as we will. The judgment is carried along necessarily by the evidence, real or visionary, which appears to us at the time." Now, this evidence I am willing to submit to the investigation of my brethren of mankind. I expose it to the most rigid scrutiny. I challenge the philosopher and the critic to employ the severest rules of their respective arts to test the validity of my reasoning and the legitimacy of my interpretations of Scripture. I found nothing on any inward light. I disclaim all the suggestions of enthusiasm. I build solely on what is written in the books that are generally allowed to be a revelation from God. I require not in my readers any fanatical state of mind to enable them to comprehend my arguments and perceive the legitimacy of my conclusions. In examining any religious subject, I am conscious of using my mental powers as closely as in weighing the proof of a mathematical proposition. The nature of the evidence is different; but the conclusions are drawn by an equally rational process from their respective first principles.

Before we join issue upon this great question, it is necessary to lay down the first principles. Without acknowledged first principles (it is an established maxim in philosophy) it is impossible to proceed

a step in reasoning. If there are no common truths, there is no foundation to support arguments on either side, and we could never arrive at a conclusion. All those with whom I reason must agree with me in my first principles, or the grounds of reasoning,—and in my reasoning I must never advance any thing that is not legitimately founded on these acknowledged first principles. The first principles I shall lay down are only two; and these will be readily granted to me by a great proportion of the professors of Christianity; indeed, by all that can consistently profess Christianity. First, I lay it down as an acknowledged truth, that the Bible is the word of God, or that the Scriptures were delivered by men inspired by God. If it is not God who speaks in them, there is no reason to call them a revelation from God. If any parts of them are uninspired, they are like the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, whose toes were partly of iron and partly of clay ; no solid conclusion can be drawn from them. Secondly, I lay it down as an acknowledged first principle, that the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the same rules as any other composition in the same circumstances. If God gave a revelation to men, we may be assured that he would speak in the language of men. If the Scriptures are not to be understood in their plain sense, as any other writings in like circumstances, they are not a revelation. If other rules of criticism are employed to ascertain the meaning of the Scriptures, it is impossible to determine what is their genuine meaning. I shall, therefore, take it for granted that the writings of God are to be understood according to the same rules as the writings of men.

It is generally understood that the word gospel, denotes good news. In what this news consists is fully explained throughout the Scriptures, in all its import, and is frequently summed up in a single sentence. The angel that appeared to the astonished shepherds at Bethlehem expressed the substance of the gospel in the following words: "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a

Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The import of this gospel may be exhibited in the following propositions, or particulars, which are all largely taught throughout the word of God :—

1st. The whole human race are guilty, and on that account exposed to the wrath of God—Rom. iii. 9 ; Eph. ii. 1, 12; Col. i. 21; ii. 13.

2nd. There has been made a full atonement for sin, by the death of Christ on the cross. There is no acceptance with God for any of this race, but through the atonement, and it extends to the chief of sinners.

3rd. There is no way of being interested in this atonement, but by faith.

4th. Faith in the atonement of Christ, or the belief of the gospel, effectually changes the mind, pursuits, and conduct: or the gospel effectually changes the mind, pursuits, and conduct of all that receive it.

5th. The Scriptures teach that this plan of salvation, though the wisdom of God is foolishness with men ; that human wisdom never could have discovered it; and that even when discovered, human wisdom rejects it as folly and weakness.

6th. The most dreadful punishments are denounced against all who reject this gospel* or the gospel denounces the most dreadful punishments against all who reject it, and against all the workers of iniquity.—Rom. i. 18; ii. 8, 9; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

7th. The gospel promises endless and undeniable glory and happiness to believers.

It shall be the object of the following address to my fellow-men to confirm each of these propositions in order, and then call their attention to the importance of attending to the gospel.

SECTION 1.
THE SCRIPTURES DECLARE THAT ALL MEN ARE
GUILTY BEFORE GOD.

The first thing to which I shall call the attention of my readers is the awful truth taught in Scripture, that all the race of Adam are guilty before God, and, consequently, that none of them can, by any works of their own, find acceptance with God. Almost every page of Scripture bears testimony to this truth. The whole scheme of revelation takes it for granted. The plan of salvation taught in the Scriptures could have no place upon any other supposition. Jesus Christ came into the world to save that which was lost. Were we not exposed to danger, there could be no salvation. The Lord declared to the Pharisees that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. This imports that there are none righteous, for he came to call all men to repentance. He called to all men to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. We read, Mark, i. 14, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel." "When the twelve went out, they preached that men should repent"—Mark vi. 12. In Acts xvii. 30, we learn that God "now commandeth all men to repent." When our Lord, therefore, tells the Pharisees that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, he insinuates to them, that their pretensions to righteousness were unfounded. They considered themselves as just before God, and despised gross sinners; but our Lord always in addressing them, shows them that he considered their situation as worse than that of those whom they despised. Publicans and sinners shall go into the kingdom of God before you. What a list of woes does he denounce against them—Matt. xxiii. The Lord Jesus Christ teaches most explicitly in the beginning of the 13th chapter of Luke, that all men need repentance, and,

consequently, are guilty; and that their guilt is such, that except they repent, they shall perish. "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Men are apt to think that extraordinary deaths are a sign of peculiar wickedness, and that none are in danger of God's displeasure but the grossly wicked. Our Lord, however, testifies to all that heard him, that except they should repent, they should all perish—perish, not as the unhappy persons referred to, by an untimely death, but with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.'

Let us hear the parable, also, which the Lord addressed to those who supposed that they were righteous. It is of the more weight upon this point, that the persons to whom it was immediately addressed did not suppose themselves possessed of natural and perfect righteousness. The Pharisees did not found their pretensions in being wholly without sin, but in the efficacy of their religious observances and attainments to give them such a righteousness as would procure them acceptance with God. When they sinned, they cleansed away their sin by their religious rites. If, then, such a righteousness is denied them by the Lord, much more an original, spotless righteousness, that deserves no punishment from a holy and just God. Yet this righteousness, the parable teaches, no man possesses. "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves, that they were righteous and despised others."—Luke xviii. 9. Now, let all the philosophers, and pretenders to virtue read this parable, and discover in it their condemnation. If they allow any

use in the gospel, it is for the ignorant and the uncultivated. Men of science and of education have no need of it, at least, not so much need of it.

They trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others. But all their arrogant pretensions to virtue and moral worth will avail them nothing before the tribunal of the heart-searching God. He who needs not that any should testify of man, because he himself knows what is in man, hath leveled all their towering hopes, and placed the proud, self-righteous Pharisees in the same condemnation with publicans and sinners, so much the object of the others' contempt. Have our philosophers and our men of virtue greater pretensions to holiness, or moral worth, than the Pharisees who performed so many works, as a ground of hope, and who were so very zealous for the interests of religion? Our moral writers in their systems of philosophy, in their treatises on education, and almost in all their works, discover the most ardent zeal for the interests of virtue. Their efforts appear to be zealously directed to guard the innocence and promote the virtue of youth. The world may look upon this as an evidence of righteousness in the authors, and would think it a hard thing even to insinuate a doubt that such persons would not find acceptance with God. Consider the religious attainments or the zeal of the Scribes and Pharisees; and in our Lord's treatment of them, learn the treatment that all our men, who trust in their moral worth, shall meet with, when they come before Jesus in judgment.

They were zealous to promote religion and virtue, and would confess sin and love to make a convert; but when he was made, though they might boast of his religious attainments, and of his moral worth, our Lord testifies that he was ten-fold more the child of hell than themselves. In different ages, the names and forms of those things that men suppose efficacious in procuring their acceptance with God, vary, according to the prevailing systems of religion and

philosophy; but in all ages, and in all countries, they are substantially the same, whether they are denominated virtue, moral worth, good works, righteousness, religion, holiness, or piety. Whatever of this kind is rested upon for justification before God, is a foundation of sand, and shall assuredly disappoint expectations in the day of trial. To all who trust in such things, I recommend the consideration of what our Lord says on another occasion to the Pharisees—"Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."—Luke xvi. 15. Let not, then, the virtuous man boast of his moral worth; let him not exult in the goodness of his heart.

There is One who knows his heart better than he does himself; and the same testifies that these things that are highly prized by men, and dignified with lovely names, are nothing but an abomination with God. Could there be in this kind of righteousness a more perfect example of virtue, and even of piety and religious attainments, than we find in the rich young man that came to Jesus? There is not a wise man, nor scribe, nor disputer of this world, however different their sentiments from one another, but would have sent him to heaven with an abundant entrance; yet, mark the reception our Lord gave him, with all his sincerity, with all his religion, with all his humility, with all his piety; nay more—with all his reverence for Jesus himself. Mark x. 17—"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Could such humble piety fail of acceptance?—on his knees! A man rejected on his knees in prayer! Why, the world would say a man was mad, who could doubt, that a man, who was in the habit of praying to God for salvation, might, after all, be condemned.

What piety is here—what reverence for the divine teacher !— Good Master! Yet all this did not please the Lord, whom he ignorantly addressed. He was, indeed, good; but he knew that though this young man called him good, he was ignorant of his character, and did not know the reason why he was entitled to the epithet, good. The young man considered him as indeed a teacher sent from God, but did not know him to be the Son of God. Our Lord therefore replies— "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God." Had the young man known the character of Jesus, he could have replied—" Truth, Lord, there is none good but God; yet thou art good, for thou art the Son of God."

But our Lord's answer shows that the young man meant, by this word, a compliment to Jesus as a religious teacher; and in this verse we are taught how very improper are all those titles of reverence that human wisdom and superstitious piety have bestowed upon religious teachers. Such titles are due to God alone. Many, still, hail Jesus by the title of Master, Lord, Saviour, Redeemer, who, like this young man, are ignorant of his character as the Son of God; and while they bestow upon him all the epithets that the Scriptures apply to him, and which are properly applicable to none but God, they yet deny him to be God. Many men give him all these titles, and confess him to deserve them, in their proper sense, who yet are as ignorant as the others of the true character of God as manifested in him.

The addresses of all such are nothing but empty and useless adulation. Jesus will reject them in the day of trial. But let us attend to the sincerity of this young man—a young man of fortune, inquiring about the way of salvation with the utmost earnestness. A Daniel—a Daniel in Babylon. Could the most narrow-minded bigot deny salvation to such a devout youth? Here is sincerity—here is the perfection of sincerity; he is willing to do any thing reasonable, and more, surely, God cannot require. Yet, with all his piety, correctness, and sincerity, he is rejected. What think ye of this, ye

who substitute sincerity for perfection? If you reply, that he was not perfectly sincere, as he did not comply with Christ's injunction, I answer again, that this is a trial to which few are put; and if none have the proper sincerity, but such as comply with this injunction, I dare say there will never one of these sincere people enter the kingdom of God. If the sincerity of this young man does not come up to the theological standard, that standard is above the attainments of human virtue, at least ordinary human virtue. If a rich young man would now-adays only attend church with tolerable regularity, speak honourably of religion, and give freely to pious and charitable uses, the most stubborn divine could not refuse to transmit him safe to heaven. But if, in addition to this, he should make particular and earnest inquiries about salvation, even the most rigidly righteous sects would hail him as a Josiah, and all others would think him mad.

The gravest philosophical divines would recommend to his friends to try what effect amusement and exercise, and a change of air might have upon him. This young man, like all our pretenders to virtue and righteousness, thought to obtain heaven by works. Jesus, therefore, upon their plan, gave him the standard of working, and the standard to which the works of all who seek salvation by the deeds of the law must be properly confined, or by law they never can have eternal life. When our Lord ran over the commandments, this young man replied with confidence, that he had performed them all. Like all others who trust in their keeping of the laws of God, he had very inadequate views of their nature and extent. From this ignorance it is, that any man ever hopes for life, by yielding personal obedience to the law of God. The pride of the virtuous man is altogether founded on this; and were he to understand the real purity, extent, and perfection of the divine law, all his proud pretensions would fall. "I have seen an end of all perfection," says the Psalmist; "but as for thy commandment it is exceeding broad." Man first moulds the

law of God to his own supposed duty and taste, before ever he has hopes of living by the keeping of it. The virtue of the philosopher is no more to the demands of the law of God, than the most paltry brass is to the purest gold and diamonds. Here, then, is a person who, in his own opinion, had kept the commandments of God. All these, says he, have I done from my youth up; yet he is not accepted. Learn from this, then, all ye sons of pride, that your boast of virtue will fail you when the Lord shall lay righteousness to the line, &c. Have you fairer pretensions for heaven than this rich, young man? If such a person could be found amongst us, what would the world think of him? A man who had been religious from his youth, exerting his strength in keeping the commandments of God, at a time of life others spend in debauchery and riot; what would our newspapers have said of him had he died? Would the heaven of heavens have been good enough for him?

They would have raised him higher than the seventh heaven of Mahomet. God would have, in a manner, been honoured by having him for a companion; they would have thrown him on the justice and not on the mercy of God; yet into heaven he did not enter. He was not worthy of the lowest place there, although he had obtained the highest place of moral worth, virtue, and excellence, among men. How long, ye men of virtue, will you honour God by your moral worth! How long will ye vaunt before him of your moral excellence! How long will ye deceive yourselves! How long will ye reject the light, and continue blind in the midst of day! How long will ye shut your eyes against the light of divine truth, that, in every page of Scripture, testifies against you! Ye are wise, ye are virtuous; but if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness! Can any of our virtuous and wise sages—can any of our religious devotees—can any of our preachers of sincerity and good works, bear a comparison with this young man? If he has failed, on his knees with humble supplication, to gain eternal life, though he had

the good works of all his former life, in such a measure, that he himself thought sufficient to recommend his application, shall heaven be now stormed by the virtue of the philosopher, the sincere though imperfect good works of the divine, or the austerities and mortifications enjoined by superstition? In the failure of this youth read your doom, all ye who expect eternal life by works of any kind. The manner in which the Lord tried him, proved that he was not righteous, and that all his fair expectations would be disappointed. He thought he loved God and man, while the trial proved that he loved neither, as he ought to love them. For, though it is not the duty of Christians to give all to the poor, it is still their duty to part with all, if obedience to the Lord's commandments require it, yea, and their life also.

When the Lord Jesus called Paul, he informed him that he was about to send him to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Here we have the character of the whole Gentile world. They are all as ignorant of the true character of God, and of the way of acceptance with him, as blind men are ignorant of the true nature of the objects of sight—"to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light." Yet there were then, as well as now, boasting philosophers, who gloried in their knowledge, who professed to teach the chief good, and the chief happiness of man. There were before this many great sages, to this very day received and renowned, and many flourishing schools of philosophy, and innumerable disciples, solely directed to the study of virtue, knowledge, and happiness. The boast of virtue and of knowledge was as frequent and as loud as it is now. Indeed, philosophy appears to have been then still more assuming and vain-glorious, in proportion as it had less of real knowledge. It is, then, out of thorough ignorance of the state and pretensions of the heathen world, that many people now suppose that such descriptions do not

suit human nature in general—that they are not applicable to the nations of the world that have professed Christianity, and that they are solely applicable to heathens. Philosophers now speak more rationally of God, in some measure illuminated by the light they hate and affect to despise; but with respect to the scripture character of God, in the knowledge of which the apostles were sent to instruct the world, the present philosophers are generally as blind as the ancient sages. They have never yet seen how he is a just God, yet a Saviour of guilty sinners. It is on account of their ignorance of this, that the Gentiles are denominated blind; when this is removed, their eyes are opened. In the full sense, then, of the apostle's words, this character is as suitable to the Hutchinsons, the Smiths, the Reids, as to Zeno, Epicurus, Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle. Those who are acquainted with the writings of the ancient philosophers, know well that these illustrious sages discover the utmost zeal for the virtue and happiness of mankind; and those who are acquainted with the writings of modern philosophers, know well that the latter hold the others in the highest admiration, as teachers of truth and virtue. They venerate them as the lights and guides of the heathen world, and consider their systems as being merely defective, not as radically wrong.

The greatest of our writers on moral science consider the substance of duty and virtue to have been taught in all the systems of the ancients; not only do they compliment the stern virtue of the stoics, but so averse are they to condemn any of the illustrious fraternity, they are willing even to make Epicurus himself a coadjutor in the great cause of virtue. This will appear to any who read Mr. Stewart's "Life of Dr. Reid," and Ferguson's "Account of the Systems of the Ancient Philosophers." Our modern philosophers do then, themselves, testify, that they are the children of the ancient sages, not only by doing their works, but by approving their doctrines. Consequently, the ancient and the modern philosophers

do fall under the same condemnation. Socrates himself, who is honoured as the great philosophical martyr, was a mere idolater in fact, and is here classed among those who are blind. These sages who boasted of their virtue, and who professed to be able to teach the way of attaining to perfect goodness and perfect happiness, were themselves, as well as the rest of the world, under the power of darkness. They who talked of setting men free from the slavery of the passions, and of vice, were the slaves of sin and of Satan, for the whole Gentile world is here represented as under the power of Satan. This language is, indeed, exceedingly unpalatable to the pride of knowledge and of virtue.

No wonder that, with their own ingenuity, seconded by that of Satan, to whom they are slaves, they should succeed in explaining such passages in such a sense, as to save the honour of their craft. But with all their ingenuity, they cannot consistently hold this to be the Word of God, and maintain the honour of philosophy, either ancient or modern. The Gentiles are, without exception, here described as the blind slaves of Satan. There is no way of delivering the philosopher from the common disgrace and misery. Modern systems of virtue, and ancient, are not only in reality substantially the same, but the authors of them own this, and are even found to praise it. If, then, the systems of the ancient schools were darkness, and if their authors were under the power of Satan, Satan still reigns in the schools of philosophy, and darkness, infernal darkness, still covers the chair of wisdom. Even the divines who love to strut in the gown of the philosopher, and affect his phrases and his airs, are forced to censure the ancient sages, and instead of adopting the bold language of Scripture, that pronounces the wisdom of this world to be folly, they speak of the insufficiency of the systems of the ancient philosophers.

To justify the introduction of Christianity, they show us that the methods of the ancient sages failed, and gravely give us many

reasons for their want of success. But they chiefly throw the blame upon the practical accommodations of the sages; and while they seem to confess that their doctrines were tolerably good, and fit to guide the world to virtue and happiness, yet these doctrines had not their proper effect, for want of being acted upon by their authors. Such is the modesty of these divines—such their deference to the philosophers, that, had the lives of the sages been any way agreeable to their doctrines, they would scarcely know how to apologize for the coming of Christ, and the sending out of the apostles. But the Scriptures assure us, not only that the philosophers themselves were the slaves of Satan, but that their systems were darkness, and that by their wisdom they knew not God. Let me, then, entreat my countrymen to weigh well this passage of the divine word, in which the whole world is represented as under darkness and the power of Satan. If the language be harsh, it is the language of God—the language of the Judge before whom we shall all stand. It will be vain to plead innocence, if he has already pronounced the sentence of guilty; rather look to the way of deliverance, and of complete salvation, that the end of this verse points out. The violent opposition to this way, of the wise men of this world, instead of causing you to doubt its truth, is the strongest confirmation of it. For how great must be that darkness that is not dispelled by so clear light! How strong are the chains of Satan—how great is his power, when he can hold them—when all the light and evidence of revelation is labouring ineffectually to set them free!

The apostle Paul teaches us (Ephes. iv. 17—19) what was the character of all Gentiles, except such as had received the Gospel—"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto

lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness." Moral writers may draw a beautiful picture of the virtues of many heathens, and may, out of their excessive complaisance, or, rather, their secret hatred of Christianity, exalt them to the highest seats of moral excellence and intellectual attainments. But He who knew the heathen world, testifies by this apostle, that the Gentiles walked in the vanity of their mind; and every one who knows the sages, knows that this characteristic is not so suitable to any as it is to them. He testifies that their understanding was darkened and alienated from the life of God, through their ignorance and blindness, notwithstanding all modern boasts of their piety and virtue. He testifies that they had, in general, given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness; and from this even their sages and their men of virtue cannot be excepted, as well because the Scriptures include them, and also because of the history of their private lives.

In the same epistle, Paul assures us that the same things are applicable to the former state of those who had received Christianity. Lest it should be supposed that all the virtuous and wise part of the world had received Christianity, and, therefore, were not included in such general censures, he informs us that those who then believed were formerly nothing better than the rest. Chap. ii. 1, 3—"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein, in time past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Instead of any of them being virtuous and holy, they were all dead in trespasses and sins. How great is the moral depravity of man, when it is called death! Here it is plainly asserted, that this moral death as much incapacitated them

from doing the works of God, and living unto him, as natural death incapacitates men from doing the works of the living. How exceedingly offensive is this doctrine to the philosopher, to the Scribe, and to the Pharisee. All men of virtue, of every name and sect, of every age and nation, the learned and the illiterate, all repudiate such representations.

They cannot submit to receive even God's testimony, when he declares that all men are dead in trespasses and sins; yet let men take it as they will, this is here asserted, and asserted so fully, and in such a variety of phrase, that it is utterly impossible to explain it away with any colour of plausibility; the ingenuity even of Satan would be baffled in giving a solution to this difficulty, that could bear the examination of common understanding. All men are represented as being dead in sins, in which they walked according to the course of the world. This teaches us what the course of this world is. It is now, and ever has been, in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. All men are represented as walking according to the prince of the power of the air. This prince is said to be the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, and in the end of the third verse, is expressed in language as harsh and offensive to the men of virtue, as it is possible to choose. Even Christians are said to have been, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. Could language more plainly assert that all men are not only guilty before God, but that without some way of reconciliation, they must be the objects of punishment! What say you to this, such of you, ye philosophers, as profess to believe the Scriptures? Are men, indeed, dead in sin—are they the children of wrath? Renounce your systems, or renounce your profession of Christianity.

That the Jews are under the same guilt and condemnation, we have seen clearly from our Lord's treatment of the most righteous among them. He not only condemns the Sadducees, a kind of infidels, but with still more marked disapprobation he condemned

the Scribes and Pharisees, the most religious people of their nation. It is said that the Jews had a proverb, that if but two men were to be saved, one of them would be a Pharisee and another a Scribe. But we see how very different is the judgment of God from that of men. Though the character of the Pharisees and Scribes was outwardly righteous, it was inwardly alienation to God. May not this teach us that all the pretensions to virtue among men now, notwithstanding the praises of them by their fellow-men, are as void of that principle which can alone render them acceptable to God. But that the highest pretensions to righteousness among the Jews—even among the Jews so highly privileged—were unfounded, we see from the account given of himself by Paul. This man—so long a pattern of moral excellence and of the highest religious attainments, according to the views of men—confesses himself the chief of sinners, as soon as

his eyes were opened to perceive the truth of the gospel. When Paul failed in establishing his own righteousness, no man, to the end of the world, can ever possibly hope to succeed. His failure stands as an everlasting proof that there is no possibility of finding acceptance with God, through our own righteousness. Let us listen to his own account of his former character, and then see in what light he considers this character, when he came to the knowledge of Christ. Phil. iii. 4—" Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more; circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Many of the Jewish false teachers boasted of their righteousness, which they derived from an attentive observance of the rites of the law of Moses, which chiefly referred to the body. Their hopes of eternal life were founded on their high attainments in religion and their

relation to Abraham. The Apostle is afraid lest some of the believers might be led astray by their plausible discourses; and, to demonstrate the folly of their pretensions, he exhibits those which he could himself boast, according to the righteousness that was in the law. Though he was ever distinguished as a Jew, and an adherent of the sect of the Pharisees, the strictest in that age; though his zeal exceeded any thing of which we have read ; and though, with respect to the righteousness of the law, he was blameless, yet he now finds no source of hope in all these distinctions. He counts them all but loss. Here, then, we have a man, virtuous and well-educated from his earliest youth (for he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel), professing the very religion that God himself enjoined by Moses, distinguished even among the Pharisees for religion, and zealous beyond all his countrymen, yet as soon as he is brought to the knowledge of Christ he renounces all hope from the things in which he formerly trusted and gloried.

What once was gain is now loss. What, then, is deficient in this character, according to the doctrines either of the philosopher or the divine? He employed his faculties assiduously, and he was not conscious of being misled in his inquiries after truth. No man ever appeared more thoroughly convinced of the truth of his opinions than Paul. His sincerity in his opposition to Christ cannot be questioned. If he was deficient in good works or religious observances and attainments, who will ever come up to the standard? Is such a man, then, to be viewed as a sinner? Is it to be supposed that such a man deserves punishment from God? Is a man of this character a child of wrath? Is he in danger of everlasting perdition? One thing is certain, that a man of such a character now, whether he be a Jew, or Gentile, Christian, or Mahometan, Pagan or infidel—all philosophers and men of candour, liberality and charity, of all denominations, would admit into the first place in paradise. But if he professed the Christian religion, and adhered to any of the

orthodox sects, even the most surly sectarian would exalt him among the worthies. I can see nothing he wants that almost any of the popular systems of religion requires, except the profession of Christianity; and before the publication of Christianity they must admit the law of Moses was sufficient. In fact, some divines not only have perceived this, but are found to admit that Saul of Tarsus was a good man, and that had he died before he became a Christian he must have been saved. Indeed, to be consistent, they cannot maintain any thing else; for a better man void of the knowledge of Christ will never be found by them. If they cannot contrive, then, to save Saul while he remained in unbelief, they will in vain struggle to save any other of their virtuous men and sincere worshippers of God. If Paul, a Jew, is lost, all virtuous men, all— even the most zealous cultivators of religion void of the knowledge of the gospel— shall perish. It is not wonderful, then, that they have laboured hard to save persecuting Saul; for their own salvation depends on the success of their efforts.

But have they succeeded? No; the confession of Paul himself, upon this very point, will cover them with eternal confusion. Instead of considering himself as a good man, with all his attainments and distinctions, he considers himself as a monument of sin and of mercy. Though he was formerly so very religious in his own eyes, and in the estimation of men, yet, in the account he gives of himself afterwards, he confesses that he was "a blasphemers, and a persecutor, and injurious." He declares that he was Drought to the knowledge of Jesus, not as a reward for his former sincerity in opposition to him, but by mercy. His hope is not in his works or sincerity, but that "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Notwithstanding his virtue, his morality, his religious attainments, his zeal, his sincerity, he confesses himself to have been the chief of sinners. Nor was this confession a mere hypocritical confession of

over-strained humility, as some are willing to suppose it. Were it such, it would be cant and hypocrisy; which, indeed, may be exemplified among some of the professors of religion, but which is unworthy of a servant of Jesus, who ought to speak as he thinks in his heart. It is the language of truth and soberness. Nor is it hard to discover the reason why Paul considered himself the chief of sinners; though he was not addicted to any of the grosser vices, though he was eminently virtuous and religious, he was above all others full of enmity to the truth of God. Sin is the alienation of the heart from God, or is alienation from God; and whatever discovers most enmity to God is the most sinful. According to this standard, there is not in the human race to be found a greater sinner than the virtuous, the religious, the zealous, the sincere worshipper of God, Saul of Tarsus, when vice, adultery, drunkenness, stealing, and all the vile catalogue of gross sins do not discover so much hatred to God's character as opposition to the truth in which it is revealed.

Even the unnatural sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the lascivious excesses of Tyre and Sidon, are not so sinful as the opposition of the gospel. And though this is a bold truth, we are not afraid to declare it; for Jesus has himself testified that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for those who have heard his gospel and rejected it. Consider this, ye philosophers, ye men of virtue, who reject the gospel, and rest your hopes on your moral worth. That worth does not exceed the worth of unbelieving Paul. Consider this, ye millions who are resting on the orthodoxy of your creed, the strictness of your sect, the value of your religious attainments, the quality of your works, the sincerity of your obedience. Are ye equal to Paul in any of these? Consider this, ye tens of millions who are trusting to your church and your obedience to its laws. Taking for granted that your church is the very church that God hath appointed, was not Paul a member of the church of Israel, so highly favoured of

God? And was not Paul a Pharisee, and therefore not only observant of all the laws enjoined by Moses, but also of all the traditions of the elders. Consider this, ye religious people, who set yourselves to oppose the gospel of Christ, to speak against his laws and institutions, and to revile, belie, and persecute his people. When Saul spake against Jesus, he did not think he was speaking against God; yet now he confesses himself a blasphemer on that account. With a pious mouth he might utter his reproaches of the doctrines, and ordinances, and lives of this new sect. But now he is full of shame for his former conduct towards the people of Christ. What, then, is your situation, ye who invent or circulate lies against the servants of Christ, who ridicule his ordinances and persecute his people? You laugh at their singularity, and at their queer practice; you keep your consciences at rest by representing to yourselves that God is not the object of your ridicule: nor did Paul think he was blaspheming when he spake against Christ and his people; but know, assuredly, that if you speak against, reproach, or ridicule Christ's people, for doing what Christ has commanded them, your laugh is not properly against them, but against him.

Listen to his own words, "He that persecutes you persecutes me," &c. You make yourselves merry with the silly anecdotes of scandal against Christians, ye enliven your table by telling of their singularities; but your doom is coming—it is certain. Woe unto you who laugh now, for you shall weep and mourn. The treatment you give to those who serve Jesus, is the treatment you would have given to himself had you been on earth. Many of you who are distinguished for impartiality of principle and religious practice, are exceedingly zealous against the true gospel. Your gospel is not Paul's gospel; this you scruple not to vilify and calumniate as baneful and pernicious error. With all your pretensions you shall be found greater sinners than the inhabitants of Sodom. To have a righteousness that will find acceptance with God, and free us from

condemnation, it is necessary to keep perfectly the whole law of God. If we fail in this, it is evident we are transgressors, and can no longer look for life by law. If there be any way of salvation, it is self-evident that it cannot be by the law which we have broken. Our Lord plainly teaches this to the rich young man who wished for life by his works—"thou knowest the commandments"—Mark x. 19. If thou wilt have life by thy works, the keeping of the commandments is the work required.

Now, let us examine the extent of these commandments, according to the interpretation of Jesus himself, that we may judge of the pretensions of those who hope for life by the keeping of the law of God. The substance of all the commandments is contained in these words: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—Matt. xxii. 37, 39. Now, where is the man that can hold up his face to God, and challenge life on these terms? Where is the man that can boast of perfect love to God, and perfect love to man? Our Lord observes, "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;" that is, all the duties enjoined in all the Scriptures are summed up in these. Obedience to anything required by any part of the word of God, is nothing but obedience to these. It is evident, then, that whoever will enter into life by working, must perfectly, and fully, yield obedience to everything required in the word of God. The smallest failure in the least important matter, is a breach of the whole law; and whoever is guilty of it, cannot look for life; cannot avoid the condemnation of the law. "For whosoever," says the apostle James, "shall keep the whole law, and yet, offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Not that he is by the breach of one particular law, guilty of a breach of all the laws distinctively; not that by one sin he is as guilty as by many; but by one transgression he is as really a breaker of the whole law, as if he

had broken all its commandments. The law is one, though it contains many commandments; the breach of any one of these commandments is a breach of the whole law, and, consequently, subjects the transgressor to the penalty of the law; "for he that said, do not commit adultery, said, also, do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet, if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law"—James ii. 10, 11. How, then, can any man look for life by the keeping of a law that he hath broken. Instead of saving him, it will condemn him as a transgressor. The law, instead of contributing to save sinners, stands in the way of their salvation. If they are saved, it must be either at the expense of law, which would be unjust, or by providing some other way of satisfying the claims of law, for which the law does not itself provide.

On the appearing of our Lord, lest expectations should be formed that he would abolish or relax the law to accommodate it to the weakness of man, he, in the strongest terms, denies such an intention; "think not," says he, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." And, then, to show the extent of the law, he shows that it reaches to the thoughts and desires of the heart. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"—Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28. Philosophers have taught that power and duty are commensurate; that a man cannot be

bound to do more than he has ability to do, and, consequently, that he is not worthy of condemnation for failure, in anything, which is beyond the reach of the present state of man; that though an insolvent debtor is bound to pay his creditor, so soon as his ability returns, yet, so long as he remains insolvent, he cannot be bound in duty to pay what he has not. In the first place, taking the validity of this reasoning for granted, what follows from it, consistently with the Scriptures before us, is not, that men are not worthy of condemnation for every transgression of law, and for every deficiency, but that man in his present state, is still able, perfectly, to keep the law of God. For whatever be the moral power of man, it is evident that these Scriptures enjoin on him the keeping of the whole law, in order to life, and sentence him to condemnation for any breach. When the young man demanded how much good works was necessary in order to have a title to eternal life, we see our Lord did not take any thing from the extent of it, or relax its demands.

He gave him the whole law for his standard; and that standard he explains as implying perfect love to God and perfect love to man, as including all the particular commands scattered throughout all the Scriptures. He declares again, that a jot or tittle should not pass from the law, but that it must be fulfilled in its utmost extent, and, in that extent, it reaches to the thoughts and desires of the heart. Without then entering into the philosophical question of the extent of moral power, we may prove to these philosophers, if they acknowledge the Scriptures, that whatever is the extent of their power, they are fully, and perfectly, to keep the law of God, if they would enter into life by their works. Any, the smallest transgression or omission, will defeat their claims. If there is any thing in their heart, or conduct, morally amiss, there is no provision for it in the law, they are subject to condemnation; and, surely, the more so, if they personally possess full moral power to do everything that God can require, and avoid everything that he forbids. What will any of these philosophers do

with any shortcoming, with any omission, with any, the most trifling miscarriage? If they are saved, notwithstanding such things, it is not by law they are saved, but against law. It must be by such things being overlooked or forgiven. But this is contrary to these Scriptures, that show that the whole law must be perfectly kept that any may enter into life by it. The philosopher says, God can require nothing of us but what we are able to perform: God requires of us to keep his law fully and perfectly, and shows us that any breach is condemnation. If, then, the philosopher does not do all that God requires, he has nothing but condemnation to look for; and, as he says, he has moral power sufficient to do it, he has not even the excuse of inability. Yet, I believe, the most sober philosophers do not pretend to be perfect, they seem to allow that man is a being of imperfect wisdom and virtue. There is, then, an inconsistency in these philosophers entering life by the law, and acknowledging imperfection in virtue.

They, doubtless, expect to live by what they do well, and to have mercy for what they do amiss, but this is contrary to the Scriptures; and some of these philosophers acknowledge the Scriptures. Perfect conformity to the law is required, to enjoy life by the law. The Scriptures speak of mercy, but it is not mercy coming in to make up the deficiencies, and forgive the slips, or failures of the virtuous, but mercy extending through Christ to the chief of sinners. Besides, their philosophy cannot inform them that there is forgiveness for any breach of duty. If it teaches them that they shall have acceptance with God by doing their duty, it cannot inform them that there is pardon for the omission or breach of practicable duty. When it speaks so it borrows from Scripture, but misunderstands and perverts what it borrows. So much upon the supposition that man has at present the power to do all that is his duty. But it is a fact, and evident from Scripture, that man, since the fall, has not that power. Whatever may be the way of vindicating the

conduct of God for requiring more from fallen man than he is able to perform, the judge of all the earth will do righteously, though we, short-sighted mortals, may not be able to see through his secret plans. It is not our province either to accuse him or to vindicate him, but implicitly to credit his word. He giveth no account of his matters; he stands not at the tribunal of men. Daring worms, though they often bring him to their judgment seat, and arraign and condemn him for his conduct, shall be fully answered from his tribunal, and receive the reward of their temerity and presumption. Without pretending to fathom this inscrutable subject, we may observe, that man's want of power is his sin. That he is unable to pay God, because he is unwilling to pay him. That he cannot do his duty acceptably to him, because he hates him. From the whole tenor of Scripture, we learn that man's inability is his sin; that though he is born in sin, he is charged with all the guilt of the conduct which he prefers in such circumstances. How this is so, is beyond the comprehension of man ; and men only show their arrogance and folly, as well by replying for God, as by arraigning him.

A thousand other things in the works and ways of God are not to be accounted for more than this; these philosophers themselves cannot deny, but man is the worse by his connexion with Adam. Whence does he derive these acknowledged imperfections of his nature? Whence is derived all the evils of his present state? Now, if it is acknowledged that the offence of Adam has subjected us to suffering here, how can it be proved that it may not subject us to suffering hereafter? If it be just to make me suffer one half hour for the fault of another, it cannot be proved to be unjust to make me suffer to any length of duration according to the desert of the offence. We see from other things mentioned in Scripture, the sovereignty of God in charging the offence of our first parents on their descendants. Eve's daughters had no more hand in her sin, than her sons; yet, females to the end of the world, have peculiar miseries

on account of their mother, Eve, being first in the transgression. It may be said, is this just? I reply, it is declared to be so in Scripture. If the Scriptures are the word of God, we must receive the account. In like manner do I reply to the other question.. The Scriptures plainly teach that the whole human race have been ruined by Adam's fall. I cannot give any other reason for it, than that

God has said it. It is more rational to deny the Scriptures, than to deny their plain meaning. Now, what can more clearly teach the injury the human race has received from Adam's first sin than the following Scriptures— Rom. v. 15, &c. With respect to the assertion of Doctor Reid, that insolvency frees the debtor till his ability returns. I observe, though it may be wise in human laws to free an insolvent debtor, yet, he is not free in the law of God. Not only does the injury still remain, but the inability is sinful, because it is voluntary. Our inability to pay God is voluntary. We do not wish to pay him, because we do not love him. Let any debtor be in the same state with respect to his creditor, and the philosophers themselves will condemn him. If the debtor, willingly, continues his inability ; if he hates his creditor and does not wish to pay him, they will not approve of him. Such are the characteristics of the moral inability of man; he hates God, he cannot serve him, because he does not wish to serve him.

If philosophers have endeavoured to rid themselves of the debt by denying its extent, theologians have attempted the same thing by alleging that what is above our ability has been paid by Christ; for philosophers and divines, though, like the Sadducees and Pharisees, they may dispute among themselves, generally agree in their opposition to the truth, and by very different routes arrive at last at the same place. Christ, say the theologians, has lowered the demands of the law, and, now, accepts sincere, though imperfect, obedience, instead of complete conformity. This, as we shall afterwards see, is utterly inconsistent with the gospel and the work of Christ; and we

have already seen that it is inconsistent with the law and the declarations of Scripture, with respect to salvation by the law. These Scriptures fully declare that whosoever will enter into life must keep the commandments, not imperfectly, though sincerely, but keep them in their utmost extent, with all the soul, heart, and mind. This way, then, of freeing men from the demands of the law, is opposed both to law and gospel.

That the law, the just and holy, and perfect law of God, was not given by him with the expectation that any of the human race would be justified by it, but that on the contrary, it was given that by it the opposition of the mind of man to God's will and his enmity to him might be more fully proved in order to the condemnation of man, is clearly taught by the apostle Paul— Rom. vii. 5, &c. In this passage we see also that the law condemns men for desiring any thing contrary to it. "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shall not covet," that is, I would not have known that the desire of any thing forbidden by the law is sin. Where, then, is the man who can say that he has never desired any thing contrary to the pure and holy law of God? Who can stand justified in this way? yet a sinful desire is condemnation. This view of the law convinced Paul of sin, and brought him under the sentence of death, "The commandment ordained to life, I found to be unto death."

Let philosophers and all men who speak of the moral worth of human nature, attentively consult the latter part of this chapter, and if they impartially use their understanding, I am confident they must perceive a vast difference between Paul's sentiments on this subject and their own. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal; sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that

in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but I sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin"—Rom. vii. 14—25. Now, I speak not of the natural and necessary meaning of the words and phrases separately.

Without appealing to the particular decisions of the critical art, I appeal to the common understanding of learned and unlearned, to declare what is the general scope of this reasoning. Does it not evidently represent human nature as utterly sinful, and as utterly unable, not merely to keep God's law perfectly, but unable to do anything agreeable to it? How different is the general tone of the apostle's doctrine on this point, from that of the philosophers and moral writers? The sentiments of these parties so far from being by any mode of interpretation consonant to each other, are as opposite as the poles. How is it then, ye philosophers, ye scribes, ye disputers of this world, how is it that you can at all profess Christianity? surely, half the penetration that any of you possesses, would, on another subject, enable you to perceive that no two of you differ so much from one another as you all differ from Paul. How can you excuse Paul for his bold and unqualified condemnation of man? How can you brook his strong and offensive language? Though some of you may admit the fall in a qualified sense; though you may occasionally drop a concession about the injuries sustained by that

event, yet you all speak of the moral worth of man, and instead of denominating him absolutely vicious, you choose rather the softer term, imperfect in wisdom and virtue. You speak of your virtuous man acting in such a manner, and as from this being confident of the approbation of his maker. Now, ye fools and blind, how is it that you cannot perceive the difference between your systems, and the apostle's doctrine? Instead of moral worth, the apostle represents all men by nature as sold under sin. Speaking of himself as a natural man, and viewed* without respect to the change effected on him by the truth, he says, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal; sold under sin." Yes, this great apostle; this man whom the philosopher must recognize as virtuous from his youth; this man that the most popular theological systems must consider as religious from his cradle; this man that all must acknowledge as now a most eminent Christian, nothing behind the chief of the

apostles; even this man at the very time of writing these words, when he considers what he is in himself, confesses that he is sold under sin. What a difference between this man of wisdom, and the wise men of the Stoics. The Stoical wise man, seated on the proud eminence of perfect wisdom and virtue, disdains to be a debtor even to God, and, secure in the possession of his fancied elevated attainments, defies the assaults of gods and men; even the thunderbolts of Jupiter, that terrify the vulgar crowd, he despises. His happiness consists in his wisdom and virtue; for these he is indebted to none but himself; it is not then in the power of the father of the gods to dispossess him of his happiness. Now, how pusillanimous and abject are the sentiments of the apostle, compared with the sublimity of those of the philosopher? The Stoic would have considered the apostle's confession as the most unmanly whining; instead of acknowledging either sin or imperfection, he would have braved the right hand of Jupiter, and boasted of being able to retain his happiness in the ruin of worlds. Now, though

modern philosophers do generally confess that the sentiments of the Stoics are overstrained; though they have considerably lowered the tone of the boastings of the wise and virtuous man; yet the Stoical wise man is still the object of their admiration, and their wise man differs from him only in the inferiority of his pretensions. Let us hear the most rational, the most modest, the most humble, and unassuming of all philosophers—Doctor Reid. Ye philosophers, I ask you this question, is there any modern system of philosophy that can put the confession of Paul into the mouth of the most imperfect of virtuous men? In what view could a philosopher consistently say, that any wise and virtuous man is sold under sin? According to their systems, in what view can this be true of the apostle, either now as one of the most eminent servants of God, or formerly, as one of the most virtuous, sincere, and religious men?

With the most fearless confidence, ye philosophers, do I charge you with inconsistency, in admitting the Scriptures to be the word of God; you might as well attempt to harmonize the characters of God and the devil, as to harmonize your systems with the apostle's doctrine. No two systems of the many that have been given to ascertain in what virtue consists, are as different from one another as all these systems are from the Bible. Whether philosophers place virtue and wisdom in sympathy or benevolence, utility, or the will of the magistrate, or in acting agreeably to the dictates of conscience, all agree in this, that man by the proper use of his own faculties may arrive at such degrees of wisdom and virtue as raise him to the most elevated rank, and secure the approbation, and reward of his maker. Can this be denied to be common to the systems of Haller, and Hume, and Hutchinson, and Smith, and Reid, and the authors of every philosophical system of the human mind that has obtained any name in the world? If so, am I rash in asserting in the most unqualified manner, that all these systems are fundamentally erroneous ; and am I rash in saying, that either our philosophers are

not judges of human nature, or that our apostles were not? Where is the philosopher who would not be ashamed to talk of himself as the apostle did; such representations of human nature would hurt his delicate sensibilities for the honour of virtue. To attempt to utter such phrases, as sold under sin, would absolutely choke him. Though there is no eminent philosopher with whom I am acquainted who spoke so modestly of the pretensions of human virtue as Doctor Reid; though he can preserve his gravity and his temper in reasoning through hundreds of pages against all the madness and extravagance of those philosophers who denied the creation of the world; yet when he comes to speak of those who deprived men of all pretensions to merit, his venerable old face kindles into a blaze; yet this venerable philosopher, instead of considering himself at variance with the apostles, is even solicitous to introduce an observation in favour of Christianity.

Like almost no other philosopher he speaks frequently of Jesus and the apostles, and he never speaks of them or the Scriptures but with the utmost reverence. He frequently adopts the Scripture phraseology, supports his reasoning sometimes by Scripture authority, and quotes large portions from the Scriptures. After all, agreeably to this philosopher's views, how could the apostle say, "That which I do, I allow not; for what I would that do I not; but what I hate that do I." Could Dr. Reid have adopted this language to confess his sentiments of himself? How much less could he have adopted the still more humbling language, "For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not," &c.? Surely, then, our wise men are at variance with the Scriptures. It behooves them, instead of exerting themselves to prove Christianity, to overturn its authority before they attempt to establish their own systems. The wisdom of this world cannot consist with the wisdom of God. Either the doctrine of the Apostles or the systems of the

philosophers must fall. Could the authors or abettors of any of the philosophical systems say, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"? The phrase, in my flesh, as may be seen by tracing it through the New Testament, imports in me by nature. The apostle's meaning, then, evidently is, there is naturally in me nothing good. Yes, ye philosophers, this most eminent Christian confesses that there was nothing in himself good, yet ye make the virtue of your virtuous man to be in himself, and to be his own proper production. It is the foundation of his merit, and of his expectation of reward. You suppose men capable of such degrees of virtue, by the proper exercise of their natural talents, as render them worthy of the attention, approbation, and reward of God. The Stoics could see no object more worthy of the attention of the greatest of their gods, than a just or virtuous man struggling under adversity. If the tone of modern philosophers is a little lowered (and in some it is not lowered), they still think that the virtuous man may throw himself on the justice rather than on the mercy of his Maker. I beseech all men to compare their views of themselves and of human nature with those of the apostle expressed in this passage. Certainly the great bulk of the world have not as humbling sentiments of their own state as the Apostle had of his. Let them think with themselves, then, whether the error is with him or with them.

But, if we wish to know the apostle's mind upon this important subject, let us examine the three first chapters of this epistle to the Romans, where he professedly set himself to prove, from fact and from the Old Testament Scriptures, the very point which I am now proving. To show that there is no possibility of salvation to any of the human race by works of law, he proves that all the world is become guilty before God. His meaning depends not upon single expressions or phrases, capable of being softened or otherwise understood. The whole scope and intention of his professed subject unambiguously holds forth his sentiments. He there, as obviously

and as avowedly proves, the universal guilt and condemnation of men, as I am now attempting to prove these. In the first chapter he declares that in the gospel the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. He shows that those nations who have not been favoured with the light of revelation are without excuse; for the works of God sufficiently declare his eternal power and Godhead. He declares that with professions of wisdom they became fools; and from the worship of God turned away to the most abject idolatry. For this cause, he assures us, God gave them over to the commission of abominations, that will for ever be the disgrace of human nature. Shall our philosophers boast of the virtuous propensities of our nature, when the wisest and most polished nations in the world, (at a time when ethical philosophy was the study and the boast of many sects with innumerable disciples,) have been given over to crimes so contrary to nature that they are almost incredible, and so abominable that they cannot be named—shall we hear of the virtues of human nature, when we know from history, and more authentically from Scripture, that men in general were devoted to these foul practices? Kings, statesmen, philosophers, orators, poets unblushingly speak of them as men devoted to these abominations. Virgil, the poet—that for virtuous sentiment is the boast even of the modern friends of virtue—unblushingly celebrates the unnatural passion, and pollutes his pages with imagery of his favourite lays. According to the testimony of historians, this abomination was quite common. Several of the Roman emperors were given to it. Socrates himself has been charged with it; and the defences of his friends do not appear entirely satisfactory.

The apostle informs us that "even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness,

maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them." Now this is the picture of human nature in general. He is not referring to the character of individuals; but, by stating the general character of men, he shows that they are all under condemnation. He next proceeds, in the second chapter, to bring the Jews under" the same condemnation; and concludes, in the third, that Jews and Gentiles were guilty before God. "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous; no, not one.

There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good; no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Here we have the apostle's interpretation, with respect to the application and intent of the portions of the Old Testament that condemn the human race. He is careful to prevent the Jew from supposing that such passages apply only to heathens, or some very wicked people.

What the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; consequently this character must affix to all the Jews as well as to all the Gentiles. Now the end that the law has in view in giving this testimony is, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. But ye philosophers and ye Scribes, it seems that your mouths will not even yet be stopped. That you will still reply against the law and the prophets, against Christ and the apostles.

The latter testify that all are guilty; you as flatly assert the contrary. I call upon all who are acquainted with the various writings on moral philosophy to consider whether the mouths of the sages are yet stopped—whether they do not still speak great swelling words of vanity—whether they do not still consider man on a good footing, and speak of his obtaining happiness here and hereafter by the proper use of his active powers. Are the mouths of the divines all stopped—do they not at this day as generally oppose this doctrine of the apostle as the Scribes and Pharisees did of old? Ask them if all the world is become guilty before God. They may not so flatly deny the guilt of human nature as the philosophers, but most of them will explain and soften in such a manner, as to represent man still in a tolerably secure state. If he does these things, and avoids those, he may still live, notwithstanding any injury he has received by the fall. If he has fallen, he is not so much damaged but that he may raise himself, if he properly exerts his remaining strength, or, with due attention, employs the help offered to him. But every modification of this kind is contrary to the apostle's conclusion from the guilt of men. The guilt of all men is such as utterly to prevent their justification by law. "Therefore," says the apostle, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

What, then, can any man reply in defence of human nature, upon the supposition that the Scriptures are the word of God? It is

utterly impossible to screen men from the sentence of condemnation, and at the same time acknowledge the inspiration of the Bible. What, then, do we think of the question so much agitated among philosophers, whether there is more virtue or vice in the world? If the Scriptures have authority, the question is decided at once. Yet of all the train of philosophers, there are none so bold as to decide against man, except a few of the most impious and atheistical cast.

Notwithstanding the testimony of Scripture is so obviously against them, the great band of Christian philosophers seem, with one voice, to determine in favour of the virtue of man, and seem to think that the vindication of God requires this determination, as well as the honour and interest of human nature. Moral evil will appear greater or less according to the standard by which we judge, and the light in which we consider actions. But even with all our partiality for human nature, it is impossible for us not to acknowledge that moral evil has a most extensive sway in the hearts and lives of men. If we see so much of it, how great and extensive must it appear to the Searcher of hearts, who judges by his perfect law? If an apostle has testified that there is no good thing in himself by nature, how ridiculous is it for philosophers, professing deference to the writings of the apostles, to occupy themselves in attempting to prove, contrary to experience, contrary to the doctrine of the apostles, that there is in the world more moral good than evil? Before they sit down to this work, ought they not, consistently, to throw off the authority of Scripture?

But that the world is guilty before God, is not only evident from scripture and observation; it is also clear from viewing the present state of man, with respect to happiness. It is obvious to the slightest observation, that the human race is miserable, amidst all its mirth and dissipation. Men are seeking happiness from the enjoyment of earthly things, according to their various desires and appetites, but

happiness they do not find. From the highest to the lowest, there is something that mars their peace and enjoyment. Those things that vulgar eyes may view as evidence of the happiness of the great, are only so many ways to drive away sorrow or reflection. Even in laughter, says Solomon, there is sorrow; and intemperate mirth is known often to conceal an aching heart. True happiness is to be found in God alone; and it will ever be impossible that it can be found by any of his enemies. Notwithstanding He sends his rain upon the just, and upon the unjust, and often heaps the good things of this world on his enemies, they still find something that prevents their complete happiness in the enjoyment of them. Haman is a proof that all the honour of the first prince of the greatest king in the world is rendered unconsolatory to its possessor, by the most trivial circumstance.

The vulgar sometimes consider that they who drive in glitter and pomp enjoy a sort of heaven upon the earth, not knowing that sometimes varnish covers greater misery than even the meanest of the vulgar endures. Philosophers, with the exception of a few of a sceptical cast, teach us that there is more happiness than misery in the world; and they have been at immense pains to overturn the arguments that Mr. Hume has advanced for the opposite side of the question, from war, pestilence, sickness, famine, poverty, and the like. They have contrived to make men tolerably happy, notwithstanding all these accidents of life* Not only do they find happiness for our poor in the midst of their poverty and labour, but even for the wicked savage, roaming about in quest of his prey. Without questioning at present the accuracy of their accounts, with respect to the happiness of men in general, I would only ask, is the happiness they enjoy a happiness worthy of rational nature? Is it a happiness suitable to the powers and capacities of man? Does it appear to befit his original grand distinction? The sweep-chimney may be happy in the midst of his soot and nastiness; the gipsey may

be happy in the toils and profits of his art; that is, each may be insensible to his misery; but is their happiness a happiness suitable to the dignity of man—the lord of the lower world? The drunken tradesman may be happy, on Saturday night, spending the earnings of the week, while his wife and children are in want at home. The intemperate citizen, or statesman, may be happy in enjoying the juice of the grape; but is this the happiness of man, possessing such noble talents? If it is happiness, it is the happiness of the madman, with his crown of straw. Whatever may be said with respect to the happiness of the bulk of men, applies only to their insensibility, and it is not so much happiness as stupor. Even the constant laborious employments that necessarily occupy the time of by far the greater part of men, are inconsistent with the proper exercise and happiness of rational nature.

Who is it can seriously say, that man was at first sent into the world to drudge and slave for a few years in the most ignoble employments, and leave the world, without almost being conscious of the noble powers of soul that he possesses? Not only the employments of a few or of the crowd, but even the employments of almost all classes of men, seem unworthy of the original dignity of our nature, and the high faculties that we still in some measure possess. If labour diverts the talents of the poor from every noble occupation, why do not the rich spend their time in the cultivation of their rational nature, and in pursuits worthy of them? But if the vulgar are ignorant, the rich are frivolous; and, instead of employing their time in noble purposes, it is generally employed in vain show, or the pursuit of gold, power, honour, or pleasure. When we take a view of the employments and pursuits of men in general, the world appears rather to be a bedlam than a paradise. In such circumstances, how foolish is it for men to endeavour to justify themselves against the conclusions of Scripture! How useless to appeal from the testimony of God to the evidence of fact! The whole face of the

world—the whole circumstances of men, as well as the clear view of Scripture, pronounce man to be guilty. The unanimous verdict from every source of evidence is, guilty. If there is hope, that hope must be not from innocence, but from mercy.

**SECTION 2. THE SCRIPTURES TEACH— DECLARE THAT
THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS AN ATONEMENT FOR SIN;
THAT IT IS THE ONLY ATONEMENT, AND THAT IT IS
AN ATONEMENT FOR THE CHIEF OF SINNERS.**

In such a state of guilt and misery is placed the whole human race! It is a melancholy truth indeed; but if the Scriptures are the word of God, it is a truth altogether incontestable. Instead, then, of disputing the divine testimony, let us inquire from the same authority, whether there be any way of escape. Is the fate of fallen man as hopeless as that of fallen angels? The Scriptures decisively answer this question—there is a way of escape from guilt. and misery. God, who, in his sovereignty, has reserved the sinning angels in everlasting chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day, has, in his mercy, provided a way of salvation for sinners of the race of Adam. (This way of salvation is the most stupendous monument of divine wisdom, and power, and truth, and justice, and mercy, and sovereignty, that ever was exhibited in the world.) He hath provided a Saviour, who, by his death, has made atonement for sin, and through whom all his people have the gift of eternal life. The whole scope of revelation, from the first intimation given to our first parents to the end of the New Testament, bears witness to this plan of salvation, as well as to the guilt of man. The law of Moses presents it to us in a thousand different ways, and its numerous rites have no meaning or propriety distinct from these truths. If man is not guilty, and if the blood of Christ is not a propitiation for sin, the law of Moses is a cumbersome burden of useless and empty ceremonies. But instead of taking so wide a range, I shall at present content myself with submitting a few passages from the New

Testament, to the consideration of my fellow-sinners, as being amply sufficient to prove this grand doctrine.

When the Father sent his Son into the world, he introduced him with this testimony—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." We are here directed to Jesus as the only way to God. When the Father testifies that he is well pleased in his beloved Son, he intimates that he is well pleased with his undertaking—that he is well pleased to accept his life as a sacrifice for sin, in lieu of the eternal punishment of the sinner; that the work which Jesus was about to accomplish, was such as fully satisfied his justice, and honoured his whole character. That he is well pleased with his Son, in any other view than as the sinner's substitute, would be no information worthy of being communicated. In all other respects, if Jesus was the beloved Son of God, he could not be otherwise than pleasing to him. But when he comes to execute the great work which he had undertaken for man's salvation, the Father's testimony, that he is well pleased in him, gives us every assurance that he will accept his sacrifice, and, for its sake, deliver the guilty sinner. The Father enjoins us to hear him; we are then bound to believe all that he taught personally or by his apostles. Let us hear, then, his own testimony, with respect to his errand into the world. "The Son of Man," he says, "came to save that which was lost." And how does he save the lost? By giving his life to redeem them. "The Son of Man," he says, "came to give his life a ransom for many."—Matt. xx. 28. Is there any one at a loss to know what is meant by a ransom? Do not the most illiterate know that it is a price given to recover any thing that is alienated or in slavery? Can any thing, then, be more clear than that the life of Jesus was given as a ransom for sinners?

When the Lord Jesus was instituting his supper, he said of the bread, "This is my body, which is broken for you; and of the cup, this is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many for the

remission of sins." So, then, his body was broken for sinners, and his blood was shed for the remission of the sins of many. Does this need any comment? Could any man wishing to adopt the clearest phraseology to express the fact, that Christ's death is an atonement for sin, select more definite, more explicit language?

To the same purpose is the testimony of the apostles. "But when the fulness of the 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."—Gal iv. 4, 5. The Son of God was made of a woman, made under the law, for the very purpose of redeeming them that were under the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."—Gal iii. 13. This passage informs us how he redeemed us from the curse of the law, namely, by being himself made a curse for us. "Forasmuch as ye know," says Peter, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot."—1 Peter i. * 18, 19. Here the price of the redemption of a sinner is contrasted with that which is usually given to redeem other slaves. The precious blood of Christ, the ransom of the sinner, is contrasted with the silver and gold, the ransom of the captives taken in war. That the blood of Christ was an atonement, is intimated by the expression, "as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot."

The song of the redeemed, recorded, Rev. v. 9, triumphantly attributes man's salvation to the sacrifice of Christ —" And they sung a new song saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Can any words of mine more clearly assert, that the blood of Christ is the price of the redemption of all that are saved from among the nations of the earth? The following passage from Paul's

epistle to the Ephesians, is clear upon this point, beyond the possibility of plausible evasion :—" Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."—L 5—7. Redemption through the blood of Christ is the same as the forgiveness of sins. Christ saves us, then, by giving a price for us, not by teaching us the way to happiness, giving us good example, and dying to confirm his testimony. His death not only teaches us to avoid sin, but through it we have the forgiveness of our sins. To the same purpose is the following language—" Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—Col. i. 12—14. Here we have fully brought to view the state from which believers are delivered—subjection to the power of darkness; the way of their deliverance— redemption; the price of the redemption—the blood of Christ. The meaning of redemption, explained by another phrase—the forgiveness of sins.

The apostle Paul after having in the first part of the epistle to the Romans, brought in the whole human race guilty before God; and having asserted in the strongest terms the impossibility of justification by works of law, then proceeds to show the way in which guilty sinners are made just—Rom. iii. 21—24. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus." What a clear and even guarded declaration of salvation through the blood of Christ is here! The law requires perfect righteousness; such a righteousness none of the children of men could give it. Here, then, is a righteousness that is perfect. It is the righteousness of God, for it was the wisdom and power of God provided it. Many a scheme of righteousness has been devised by man, but the atonement of Christ is God's plan of righteousness. All the schemes of righteousness invented by man are founded on law, but God's scheme of righteousness is without law. Though it satisfies the law, yet the law contains no provision for it.

It is altogether beyond the law. The substitution of Christ as a sacrifice, while it honours the law, is a sovereign constitution of the great law-giver. This righteousness though generally overlooked or despised by the Jewish nation, and even the most religious Scribes and Pharisees, was yet witnessed both by the law and the prophets; for Jesus is the substance of the law and the prophets, as well as of the New Testament, or as well as of the doctrine of the apostles. That there might be no doubt with respect to the righteousness which he meant, or that there might be no pretext for evasion, he says, "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." As if there was not yet enough said, he continues, "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." God's people are justified, not by their own innocence, or their own works, but freely by his favour. This favour, though it comes freely to them, yet comes through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. How Christ redeemed them is still further explained: "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which

believeth in Jesus." We are here taught that the blood of Christ is a propitiation, and that the righteousness effected by the shedding of it, is for the remission of sins. Now, what is a propitiation? Let any examine the idea attached to the word in the Jewish rites, and they will more fully see its import here. The blood shed for the transgressors of the law of Moses was a propitiation, averting God's displeasure for the breach of his law, and rendering him again propitious to them.

This typically taught the averting of the divine displeasure from the sinner, by the sacrifice of Christ. To this there is here an allusion. Jesus is our propitiation. Those who go to God through Jesus' blood, are accepted; his displeasure is averted from them, and he is, from being an enemy to them, rendered the most kind friend. The apostle John speaks of Jesus as a propitiation," And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"—John ii. 1, 2. Here the people of God are directed to plead the atonement of the sacrifice of Christ for the pardon of their sins. They have constantly need of having recourse to this atonement. Sometimes they may forget their hope, and act unworthily of their name. When this is the case, they are to return to God, in the same way in which they were first received. They are to approach him through the advocacy of Christ. The reason they are directed to come in this way is, that he is the propitiation for the sins of those who believe. And lest it might be thought that this expression taught that his propitiation extended only to those who now believed, he added, "also for those of the whole world." He is a propitiation for the sins of all in the whole world, in all ages, who receive God's testimony with respect to him.

The same apostle beautifully celebrates the love of God manifested to sinful men by thus giving his son to die for them. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God

sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins" —1 John iv. 9> 10. God's sending of his son into the world, was the effect of pure love. The purpose of his being sent into the world, was that believers might live through him. If so, they could not have obtained life by themselves. The love of God was not excited towards us by our love to him, but was love without any thing in the object to merit it.

This is also forcibly and strongly confessed—Rom. v. 6—10. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man, some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Christ died for the ungodly. The sense in which he died for us is clearly seen, if there were any doubt about the matter, from the illustration. If some would dare to die for a good man, that good man must be in danger of death. He who dies for him, dies not to save him from any trivial disaster. Not to teach him any virtuous lesson, (for if he would not receive instruction without such a confirmation, he could not be a good man,) but to save him from death. Christ is here said to have died for us, not to confirm the virtuous lessons which he taught his disciples, but to justify us by his blood. Not to teach us to save ourselves, but to save us from wrath to come. By the death of Christ, they who were enemies to God are reconciled to him. The end of that death, then, is not the confirmation of doctrine, but the reconciliation of enemies.

That the end of the mission of Christ was not merely to teach good precepts, but by death to recover sinners to God is fully

expressed—2 Cor. v. 18—21. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here it is asserted that God has reconciled believers to himself by Jesus Christ, and that in this grand plan of reconciliation, the sins of the reconciled enemies are not imputed to them. They obtain acceptance with God, not as innocent or just in themselves, but as not being charged with their sins which are charged upon Christ. The apostle declares that Jesus was made sin for us, or considered in the account of God as guilty of all the sins of his people, though personally he was free from sin. This he submitted to, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; that is, that in him we might have that perfect righteousness which pleases God.

The following passage shows us that it is the death of Christ which not only presents us unblameable before God, but, also, that it is this alone that subdues the enmity of our hearts to God :—" And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight"—Col. i. 20—22. God is here said to have made peace between himself and his enemies through the blood of the cross of Christ. If, then, peace was made, there must have been previous hostility; and if peace was made through the blood of the cross of Christ, the shedding of that

blood was intended to atone to God for sinners, and to destroy the enmity of our hearts to him. How then does this consist with the views of those who consider Christ's death no atonement, and man's salvation as not needing one? Did ever we hear of two nations making peace, between whom there was no previous cause for hostility? Did ever we hear of peace being made by sacrifices on the one side, if those sacrifices were not to satisfy the other? Men are enemies to God by wicked works. They perceive that the Scripture character of God makes him terrible to them as sinners. They hate him, because they have injured him, and perceive no way of being restored to his favour. When they perceive the atonement made by the death of Christ, they behold God's great love and a foundation for hope.

They see a way in which, though guilty, they can be saved, and can now bear the true character of God, because they have discovered how he can be just, yet the justifier of the ungodly. From being enemies, this makes them God's friends; they love him, because he first loved them, and gave his only begotten son to be a propitiation for their sins. They are then reconciled in the body of his flesh through death. The knowledge of the death of Jesus as an atonement for sin, kills their enmity to God. Though sinners, they are through his death presented "holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight." Much the same view is given of this matter in Eph. ii. 13-16—" But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." The death of Christ abolished the law, which was the cause of hatred between the Jews and other

nations; and believers of Jews and Gentiles are now made friends by the cross. By this, both are reconciled to God, as well as to each other, by having their enmity to him slain thereby.

The epistle to the Hebrews explains the testimony that the Mosaic rites bore to Jesus. Among other things, it shows us how, as our great High Priest, he made reconciliation for our sins, not as the Jewish high priests by their shadowy sacrifices, but by offering himself upon the cross to atone for our sins by his blood; "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."—Heb. ii. 16—17. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."—Heb. ix. 11-15. Here it is evident, that the atonement made under the law by the priests, through the blood of goats and calves, was typical of that made by Christ through his own blood. Through this atonement he has obtained eternal redemption for us. The efficacy of the blood of Christ is argued from the efficacy of the Jewish rites in cleansing from ceremonial uncleanness. If there be any meaning in language, Jesus Christ is represented in this passage

as a true and proper sacrifice, and that through this the conscience of the believer is purged from all the sins of which he is guilty. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" If this does not teach the doctrine of the atonement by the blood of Christ, I despair of being able to express it in words that would convey that meaning. Sins, or dead works, are the works of men that are totally alienated by nature from God. From these dead works the conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ, the spotless Lamb of God. "He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."—v. 26. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."—v. 28. If this language does not teach that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice, that he bore the sins of his people, and that by doing so he cleansed them, what phraseology will express this meaning?

There can be nothing more evident from the New Testament than that Christ is the substance of all the Jewish sacrifices; and that the only value of them was their reference to him. The whole Mosaic phraseology is adopted by the apostles, with relation to the atonement of Christ. He is ushered into the world, by his harbinger, John the Baptist, with these words, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." This is the true Lamb of God, of which all the lambs offered in sacrifice were merely types. God himself provided this Lamb, to take away the sins of his people. "Christ, our Passover," says Paul, "is sacrificed for us."—1 Cor. v. 7. From the use of the Passover at its first institution, we may learn the use of Christ to his people; for he is their Passover. As the children of Israel were saved from death by the blood of the pascal lamb, when the destroying angel passed through Egypt and slew all the first-born of the Egyptians; so by the blood of Christ, our Passover, all who believe are saved from eternal destruction.

When Peter was examined before the Jewish council, with respect to the curing of the lame man, he boldly testified, that there is salvation in no other way than through the name of Jesus. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—Acts iv. 11-12. The builders, the Jewish priests, rejected Jesus, as unfit for a place in the temple of God; but he is the corner foundation stone in the building of God. The whole edifice rests on him. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is already laid, even Jesus Christ. Let those builders, then, who now reject Christ as their foundation, reflect on the blindness of the Jewish wisdom. They may allege that they do not reject Christ, as they acknowledge him to be a teacher sent from God, but they may find that many of his enemies admitted this when he was upon earth Mat. xxii. 16.

Many were convinced of this who were not his disciples, and who, not understanding his character, had no benefit from him.—John xii. 42 The rich young man who came to him to know what he should do to obtain eternal life, acknowledged him as a teacher sent from God, and would have followed his advice, if the duty had not been so hard.—Mat. xix. 16, &c. The body of the people, at one time, were so fully convinced that he was the Messiah, that they would have taken and forcibly made him a king; yet when he refused to accommodate himself to their views of the character of the Messiah, they called out for his crucifixion. When they understood that he claimed divine honours as the Son of God, they said that he was a blasphemer. Had he gone out and headed the Jewish nation in a revolt from the Roman government, there would have been scarcely an individual of that people who would not have repaired to his standard. He told them that they should die in their sins, because they would not believe that he was the Messiah; yet

the only reason why they would not admit that he was the Messiah was, that he would not restore the kingdom to Israel, according to their expectations. Ye, then, who receive Jesus, as a teacher sent from God, and speak of him sometimes under the Scripture names, as being in some qualified or figurative sense a Saviour or Redeemer, who yet reject him as a sacrifice for sin, submit for a moment to compare your pretensions to be disciples of Jesus, with those of the Jewish multitude, who would have made Christ a king. In what does your Christianity exceed theirs? They afterwards rejected him, simply because his character was not that of the Messiah of whom they had formed expectations; and you receive him because you think that he claimed no divine honours, and pretended to be merely a teacher sent from God. You both equally reject the Christ of God; and you have no better title to the name of Christians than the Jews had at the moment they were crying out crucify him, crucify him; he is worthy of death, because being a man he maketh himself God.

You think that they belied him, and that he had no such pretensions; but would not you judge him worthy of death upon the supposition that he really claimed the character of a divine personage? Well, then, if the Christ of God be found in Scripture to make himself equal with God, you call him a blasphemer and an impostor; and such a Christ is not the object whom you compliment with the Scripture names and epithets. But, my fellow-mortals, if there be truth in the testimony of the Apostle—"There is not salvation in any other: there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved"—if so, what will become of you? You think me uncharitable, because I tell you that I do not believe that you can be saved, unless you believe in Christ, according to the Scripture character of him; but I cannot think otherwise, as long as I credit the New Testament. If you can be saved in your way, then the Apostles are all liars. I must either

renounce the Scriptures, or believe that there is no salvation to those who reject the atonement of Christ. It gives me no pleasure to think this with respect to the fate of any created being; but if there be evidence that such is the truth, the mind must submit to that evidence. If it appears hard, let me examine the evidence upon which the authority of Scripture rests; for if once this is established, we ought to receive it as it is, and not make it what we would. I have always thought, that they who reject the Scriptures, because they give such views of God and man, act more rationally than they who receive the Scriptures as a revelation from God and yet deny that they teach such views. The forced constructions, the unnatural figures, by the help of which they endeavour to force the Scriptures to consent or at least to silence, cannot give complete satisfaction to any mind that is both strong and impartial, and appear to me as being equally irrational with the rules by which Origen contrived to make Moses teach all the philosophy of Plato. Let me, therefore, in the bonds of love, earnestly address such persons in the language of Paul in the synagogue of Antioch—" Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached, unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."—Acts xiii. 38-41. Here, my fellow-sinners, is forgiveness preached unto you through Christ. Do not think, by denying the debt to escape the payment. If you submit not to Jesus, you must pay your accounts every farthing, or suffer the just punishment due to your deserts. By what law is it that you expect to be justified? Have you any that will answer the purpose better than the law of Moses? Yet you may see here that there is no possibility of being justified by that law. Beware, then, ye

despisers of the atonement of Christ, lest the language of the prophets be fulfilled in you as it was in the Jews ; you do not believe on the work that God has declared to you in his Word, that Jesus finished on the Cross. It appears to you folly and weakness, but you shall yet find that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men. If the Scriptures be true, dreadful beyond all conception is your situation. Fly, then, from the wrath to come ; believe on him whom you have hitherto despised and rejected. If Jesus be really God, how shall you stand in his presence at the judgment? If his death hath made atonement for sin, how shall you escape, who have not only neglected but despised and ridiculed this great salvation? You call yourselves rational Christians; pardon me if I make so free as to tell you that, however rational you may suppose your sentiments, it is highly irrational to pretend to take those sentiments out of the Bible. If the Scriptures be true, it is rational to understand them in their obvious meaning. It is the height of fanaticism to endeavour to reconcile the sentiments you hold with the doctrine of the apostles. I venture all my reputation as a scholar on the fact that it is contrary to all the rules of rational criticism to explain words, phrases, idioms, and expressions, as you are obliged to do, in harmonizing the Scriptures - with your theories. I maintain that the figures which you employ to explain the apostles are not figures used by any good writers upon any subject; that your criticisms are founded on inaccurate views of some of the fundamental principles that operate in the formation and construction of languages. I pledge myself to make good this charge against the greatest of you—even your patriarch, Dr. Priestly. The Scriptures are not a mould of elegance; yet the language of the vulgar, as well as that of the most polished, proceeds according to settled principles founded in human nature. Your doctrines, as taken from the Scriptures, overturn these principles, and in this are as contrary to common sense, as they are to revelation. Those figures

which you employ to wrest the Scriptures to countenance your views, are as much instruments of violence as the rack of the Inquisition. The evidence brought in, in both these ways, ought to be rejected as the effect of compulsion. Innumerable expressions in the New Testament assert the divine majesty of Jesus of Nazareth, and declare his death to be an atonement for sin. Even when you have them on the wheel, it is with the utmost difficulty that you can get them to prevaricate. You suppose the apostles to use figures that never were used in the language of men—figures that would not be employed even in bedlam. I beseech you, then, to examine this subject with a view to the principles of interpretation which you have been in the habit of employing. I am confident in saying, that if you impartially employ the respectable talents which many of you possess, you will be constrained to renounce the Scriptures or your present views. There is no one grants more cheerfully than I, that there are among you men of the first parts— of the most eminent attainments both in literature and science; that many of you are in the highest degree respectable in character, and exemplary for conscientiousness in viewing, and adhering to, principle. I respect the man who boldly declares his sentiments without pusillanimous dread of the vulgar cry of heterodoxy. I applaud the man who, like some of you—like Theophilus Linsey—has scorned the emoluments and honours gained by the sacrifice of principle. The illustrious men who, like Priestly, extended the histories of science and literature, are the objects of my admiration. My friends who profess those sentiments, I most sincerely and affectionately love; but neither my respect nor my love can induce me to think better of their state before God than God himself has declared it to be. Nay, my love to mankind, and especially to those that are my kindred, constrains me to beseech them to fly from the wrath to come. Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.

But without regard to the direct evidence from Scripture of the divinity and atonement of Christ, the whole complexion of the apostolical doctrine is in opposition to your views. Say, my friends, could you, who are teachers, adopt the words of the Apostle Paul, and declare to your congregations, that you "have determined to know nothing among them but Christ Jesus and him crucified?" Is Christ Jesus, in every point of view —literal or figurative—in the language of angels or men, the burden of your doctrine? Whether he is God, or man only, surely you cannot say that the preaching of him as crucified is the great object of your ministrations? I know you speak very respectfully of him, and do not refuse him the epithets that the Scripture confers on him, but can you, in any sense, say, "the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified—to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to us, that are saved, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God?" Are you in the habit of declaring to your people Phil. iii. 8? Can you look up to God and with a good conscience say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ?" Leaving out of view altogether what the apostles taught with respect to the person and work of Christ, do you speak as much about him as they evidently did? Are the cold, dry, compliments which you occasionally pay him, at all akin to those fervid, those energetic, those affectionate addresses and apostrophes of the apostles? We see the apostles enraptured with the love of Christ; and, whatever be the subject on which they treat, delighting to leave their road and return to take a view of him. But when you meet, you pass him with a complaisant salute ; and, from the audacity of your air, seem to think that he is as much obliged to you for your nod, as you are to him for any good offices he has done you as the Messenger of God. No, my friends, you do not follow the apostles; your Christ is not the Christ with whom Paul was so enraptured;

your dignified devotion denominates that of the apostles idolatry or enthusiasm.

In endeavouring to get rid of the evidence of the atonement, and of the other truths involved in this, great stress is laid upon the authority of reason. It is alleged that they are contrary to our natural views of the character of God. Whatever strength or plausibility there may be in these allegations, when urged by an infidel, they have no authority when brought by one who acknowledges the Scriptures to be the word of God. In ascertaining the meaning of a book or passage, we must be guided by the common rules of language, and not by our views of the truth or untruth of the doctrine it contains. An infidel may allege—"Your Bible contains views contradictory to my reason, and, therefore, I reject it. I cannot believe that man is in such a wretched state of sin and misery as that book represents. I cannot think it just that Adam's posterity should be morally injured by his misconduct; nor do I think that God would condemn any creature, however guilty, to everlasting torment." When he speaks thus, however inconclusive we may consider his arguments, we must meet him on this ground, and acknowledge that he reasons consistently. We must show him that there is strength of evidence from innumerable sources to establish the divine authority of the Scriptures beyond any reasonable doubt; and that this being the case, it doth not become us, poor weak creatures, to contend in wisdom with Him, whose ways are above our ways, and whose counsels are inscrutable. The views of human nature which are given in Scripture, may also be confirmed by arguments from impartial observation. But when a man who acknowledges the Scriptures to be the word of God, brings these arguments to convince us that the above views are not taught in Scripture, no writer who knows his business will meet him on that ground. Whether they are rational or irrational, they are the views taught in Scripture; and no man who refuses to admit them, can consistently

hold the Scriptures to be from God. Without taking any notice of such arguments, we may urge the opponent either to renounce the Scriptures, or to renounce his views. The conduct of the opposers of the above views, is similar to that of a man expecting a great legacy, who, when he hears the will of his friend read, without having his expectations fulfilled, instead of supposing the will to be a forgery, attempts to make it speak as he pleases, contrary to its obvious meaning. With respect to the way of acceptance with God, there is no difference between the infidel and those who reject the atonement; the only difference is, that the latter is not only equally in error, but is also inconsistent, and exposes himself naked to the assaults both of the infidel and the believer.

But there are many who plead for the atonement of Christ, who, in effect, deny it, as well as its open opposers. They suppose that it is a conditional atonement, of efficacy only to those who comply with certain terms. It is evident, however, that a conditional atonement is no atonement in the proper sense of the word; for an atonement must expiate the sins atoned for, just as a payment cancels a debt. Where, then, there has been an actual atonement made, the sins atoned for never can be punished again, more than a debt once paid can be charged a second time. It would be unjust in God to charge the debt to the account of man that was fully paid by man's surety. It may be alleged that one man may pay another man's debts upon certain conditions; and that if those conditions are not fulfilled, the debt will be still chargeable upon the debtor. But it is evident that, in such a case, the surety either does not actually pay the debt till the conditions are fulfilled, or if he has conditionally paid it, he is refunded before it is chargeable upon the debtor. In every such case, the debt is not really paid. But Jesus has paid the debt. He has already made atonement; and if they for whom he died are not absolved, the debt is charged a second time. He can never be refunded. His blood has been shed; and there is no possibility that

what he suffered can be now either more or less. They, then, who suspend the efficacy of the atonement of Christ upon conditions to be complied with by man, in effect deny that atonement has been truly made.—Romans x. 4. People of this opinion consider Christ's death as making the salvation of sinners merely possible. The deficiency of the merit of our works for obtaining a place in heaven, is made up by the righteousness of Christ. But it is not only unscriptural to say that man merits heaven by working, it is also unscriptural to say that Christ paid a price for heaven. He paid a price for sinners; but heaven is a gift. He bought them from misery; but happiness is bestowed through him freely.

Since, then, , Jesus has made atonement for sin, how greatly do ye also err, my brethren, who endeavour to avert the divine displeasure, by imposing on yourselves expiatory sufferings for your sins! If all the ceremonial of the Jews—if all the blood shed by them from year to year—all the purifications which they constantly practised—all their acts of abstinence and self-denial, could not atone for their transgressions, is it possible that any thing you may inflict on yourselves, will be of any avail to wash away your sins? Men have ever been prone under all religions to endeavour to avoid suffering in a future world, by voluntarily submitting to suffer in this. The heathens have been famous for the rigour of their discipline. They have been known, not only to impose the most painful punishments on themselves, but also in cases of great extremity to offer the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls. The Amorites, and many other nations, sacrificed their children to their gods. The Jews, who should have been better taught, learned this abominable lesson from their neighbours, and often in the time of their calamities, instead of returning to the God of Israel, in whom alone there is salvation, they sought help from the gods of the nations by the sacrifice of their children. In like manner to this day, whatever form the religion of the nations may assume, there is still,

with many, a hope of averting future evil, by voluntarily submitting to present suffering. In Christian countries, as they are called, men may not sacrifice the seed of their bodies; but when they attempt by any degree of suffering, or by charity, to propitiate the mercy of God; they stand on the same foundation; their hope is the same with that of the ancient heathens. Every expedient of this kind implies ignorance of the atonement of Christ; for if Christ has made atonement, what necessity is there for any other? It implies ignorance of the character of God, and of the demerit of sin; for if nothing but the blood of Christ could wash away sin, what presumption is it to suppose that we can in any manner wash it away ourselves? If a man, when he has offended God, attempts to reconcile himself to him, by making reparation for his offence, does he not overlook and despise that great work finished on the cross, through which alone sinners are reconciled to God, and sins are washed away? Brethren, be not deceived. Those things have a show of wisdom, but they are opposed to the wise plan of God. It may appear unreasonable to suppose that men should finally perish, after all the rigorous mortifications and punishments to which they have submitted; but Paul assures us that though a man should give his body to be burned, and had not that love of God and man which flows from the belief of the atonement of Christ, it should profit him nothing. How many mortifications did the Scribes and Pharisees make their disciples submit to, and yet our Lord testifies to the world, that unless their righteousness should exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven? Here our Lord sentences the whole sect to destruction, even the most religious sect that existed at the time he was upon earth. How vain is it for any of you, my friends, to attempt to expiate your offences against the divine law! Hear the language of Micah on this opinion. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt

offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?"—Micah vi. 6, 7. Come to God through the atonement of Jesus, and all your sins shall be blotted out. You are now labouring and are heavy laden, your yoke is insupportable, and your toil will never be compensated by fruit; come to Jesus, and you shall find rest to your souls. In his perfect work, your consciences will be at peace; you will be delivered from the weight of guilt that now oppresses you, and which, if you come not to Jesus, will shortly sink you down to hell; you will be delivered from the galling yoke of men, and enter into the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free. Instead of the timid and servile spirit of a grovelling superstition, you will then come into the presence of God with the confidence of children. Instead of imposing on yourselves the rigorous discipline that you imagine will reconcile you to your hard master, you will cheerfully run in the way of Christ's commandments, and submit to the most painful sacrifices with triumph, buoyed up with the expectation of the exceeding weight of glory that is before you. Your imagination, instead of being continually haunted by the whips and scorpions of a ghastly superstition, will be elevated, and ennobled, and delighted, with the contemplation of the future glory of the children of God.

The gospel that proclaims salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ is distinguished from every religious system of man, by holding out salvation to the guiltiest of the human race, through faith in the blood of the Redeemer. This is so contrary to the wisdom of this world, that almost all the systems of the Christian religion, formed by man, overlook, or oppose, this distinguishing feature of the religion of the Bible. Even the most vehement of violent defenders of systematic orthodoxy seem in some measure ashamed of this sentiment, and are careful to guard it by some necessary

limitation against the bad tendency that it might have from the unguarded representations of the apostle. The world says, this sentiment gives a sanction to sin; and to declare it to sinners, encourages them to sin, with the hope of impunity. To guard the religion of Jesus Christ from this sinful imputation, some have been led to qualify the apostolical declarations, and limit the Scriptural examples in such a manner, as to hide or obscure this glorious, this divine feature of the gospel of Christ. Let us, then, for a moment examine the subject from the oracles of truth, and decide on it from their unbiased testimony. We shall find that not only general declarations, but many facts, teach this sentiment in a manner not to be gainsaid with plausibility. The doctrine is in itself so opposed to human wisdom, so offensive to the pride of self-righteousness, so incredible to the despair of the self-condemned, that we often meet with it in the New Testament exhibited in the strongest colours. During our Lord's ministry, there was nothing in his conduct so offensive to the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, as his attention to publicans and sinners, and such characters as the general sentiments of mankind considered as abandoned beyond the expectation of reformation. He was often attacked by them on this account, and some of his finest parables were delivered by him for the express purpose of confounding them. The following quotation is a beautiful example of this—Matt. ix. 10—13. "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Here our Lord appeals to common sense for the propriety of his conduct in associating with the vile characters that

were so offensive to those self-righteous men. It is only as sinners that men need the Saviour; and as the more dangerous a man's disease, the greater need has he of a physician, so the greater are a man's sins, the greater is his need of a Saviour—(No man would think of saying to a physician, "Sir, you need not visit that man, for he is in a very dangerous disease.")

The fact recorded in the following passage shows how extremely offensive this doctrine is to the proud self-righteous religionist, and the parable gives him an irresistible answer—Luke vii. 36—47. "And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, this man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath

anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." We see from this, that the mercy of the Redeemer extended to this vile prostitute; and, that his conduct is vindicated even out of the mouth of him who blamed it. This Pharisee might in reality have more guilt to forgive than the woman, though her conduct was more vile in the estimation of men; but taking it for granted that he had little to forgive, and that he was really forgiven that little, it was still proper that the greatest sinners should also be forgiven, through him who was to die. The haughty Pharisee who had little to forgive, as he imagined, received not Jesus as a Saviour, but behaved to him with cold civility as a guest. But the woman who had been a vile sinner, shows the deepest marks of contrition, humility, and love. No scene could be more interesting. No conduct more simply and properly express the feelings of a converted sinner, saved through grace. Yes, and we still perceive the same striking difference between the Pharisees of this day, who from the religion of the country profess their faith in Jesus, and the sinners that are really saved by him. The former treat him with civility, pay him many compliments, and express in the hollow forms of insincerity, their great obligations to him; but in the midst of all their professions, they obtrude the value of their own important services, and expect acceptance, rather from justice, than from mercy. See yon proud Pharisee approaching Jesus! with what an air of sanctity and self-confidence does he advance! he bows most profoundly, and expresses his compliments in all the words of majesty found in a folio dictionary, and thanks him for innumerable favours. But listen! what is the substance of all these forms? It is this. "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men." But, mark the approach of the poor sinner who has found relief from the atonement of Christ. He comes with humility, but, yet, with confidence; neither detailing bombastic compliments, nor whiningly endeavouring to

ingratiate himself by the natural or painful acts of obeisance. He beholds the prince of life seated on his throne; he sees the sceptre of mercy stretched out to pardon him, and he approaches with reverence and the fervour of love. He views himself as vile, but in the Saviour he has all he needs to purify and adorn him.

The fine parables contained in Luke xv., all speak the same language; they were all intended to put to silence and shame the Pharisees and Scribes who murmured, because Jesus received sinners. They teach us that though our men of virtue and moral worth, as well as our self-righteous Christians, were really what they pretend to be, God's conduct in justifying the ungodly, through the atonement of Christ, would be justifiable, would not be liable to exception. Even the prodigal who has squandered away all his moral worth is received by the merciful father.

But the fact with respect to the salvation of Paul, is beyond all others to the point, for proof that the greatest sinners may be saved through the atonement of Christ. The other examples show that those sinners may be saved who are vilest according to the estimation of men. This example shews that sinners may be saved who are most sinful, even in the estimation of God. The salvation of Paul was intended to serve this very purpose 1 Tim. i. 12—16. Jesus not only came to save sinners, but even the chief of sinners—the very chief of his enemies. Here, then, my fellow-sinners, here is a refuge for the guilty. Here is mercy for the most violent and determined rebel. When kings pardon rebels, they generally except the heads of the conspiracy, for an example to deter others from such crimes. But God does not except from pardon the leaders of rebellion against him. He proclaims mercy to the chief of them, returning through the atonement; and, here, he has actually chosen the chief of them, that by conferring mercy upon him, the most violent of his enemies, in every age, might find encouragement to return to their allegiance through the death of Christ. It is this, my

friends, that makes me trouble you on the present occasion. It is this that gives me encouragement to address the most violent and determined enemies of the cross of Christ. Though you have spoken against him, preached against him, written against him, you have not blasphemed him more than Paul did. Nay, though you have persecuted his people, and even put them to death, Paul did so, and many were saved who had joined in crucifying the Lord of Glory himself. I entreat you, then, fellow-sinners, no longer to trample on the blood of the Son of God; lay down the weapons of your rebellion, and be reconciled to God through his son. The blood that he shed is sufficient to wash away all your sins, even your blasphemies against himself. There is not only no safety in your system, but there is not in it any rational peace. You cannot but see that the obvious meaning of the words of Scripture teach the guilt and condemnation of man, and the substitution and atonement of Christ. You take it for granted that the unreasonableness of the sentiment referred to, and the rationality of your scheme, make it proper to understand the words in a figurative or loose sense. You will not submit to the plain meaning of Scripture, because you think this absurd. I have already observed that this conduct is not rational, and that to act consistently, you ought to reject the Scriptures. But upon the supposition that the Scriptures are true, your views are not calculated to give peace to any candid mind that really reflects on the Scriptures, and seriously looks forward to a future judgment. A mind sensibly alive to every thing that concerns the eternal interests of man cannot but find uneasiness lest the opposite sentiments should be true. There must, I am convinced, from the constitution of man, be some uneasiness lest the obvious meaning of Scripture may be the true meaning. There must surely be now and again some secret misgivings of heart, lest the Son of God should on the judgment seat really be found a divine personage, and lest his blood should be the only atonement for the guilty. It cannot be completely

satisfactory to any person holding the views I oppose, really in earnest about salvation, that the Scriptures are got to consent to their views with such reluctance,—that so much force should be every where necessary to compel their assent or their silence. I am confident that many having these sentiments have little, if any, anxiety about their future welfare; but I am speaking, now, of reflecting men. And is it possible that such should have no anxiety lest the Scriptures should speak out against them at last? Have they no fear that these witnesses whose words they have perverted, will be heard in their obvious meaning at the bar of God? Are they prepared to evade the sentence of the great judge by their quibbles on words, or their figures of an unnatural rhetoric? Surely, they cannot say that their method of understanding Scripture is the common way in which the language of men is understood. Surely, they will not say that there is not some ground from the obvious meaning of Scripture for the sentiments which they oppose. But considering the immense stake at issue, this itself must be a distressing thing. Were I in possession of a great estate to which another had claims, founded on the meaning of some law deeds, I should be uneasy according to the value of the estate, and the plausibility of the opposite evidence. But if the obvious meaning of law were against me, I would not be kept in peace, even by seeing justice and common sense on my side. How, then, can that man have rational peace that stakes eternal happiness on the solidity of rhetorical figures to set aside the obvious meaning of words? You cannot think so of my views. Even, according to your own sentiments, there is no such danger to be apprehended from them, should they be erroneous. Though you call them absurd and, perhaps, impious, yet you do not suppose that they endanger my salvation. Though You should be right, I am not condemned; but if I am right, your damnation is certain—your misery is horrible. I am far from saying, that such considerations should induce men t(j

submit to anything without evidence; what I say is, that such considerations should induce men to examine and weigh well the nature and degrees of the evidence upon which they hazard so immense a prize. Is it rational to suspend yourselves over a gulf of unfathomable misery upon the feeble, brittle cords of tropes and figures? Among men, whose laws must ever be defective, courts of equity are sometimes appointed to relieve from the rigour of law; but in your case, as perfect equity is supposed in all cases to proceed through law, you must mitigate the harsh meaning of law, by imposing an equitable interpretation. My fellow-sinners, what are you doing? You cannot succeed. You are fighting against God. You are bankrupts to an immense amount, yet you vainly think to keep up your credit, partly by denying the debt, and partly by passing bills, for which in the end you will not be able to make provision. You will fail, and terrible must be the fall of those who have despised so much mercy. You have proudly, and even disdainfully, refused to submit to the plan of recovery which the Lord hath declared to you. How, then, shall you escape the damnation of hell? Fellow-men, I am no enthusiast; I am neither myself frightened at phantoms, nor do I wish to frighten others. In deciding thus, I exercise the powers of my mind as deliberately, and as legitimately, as when I examine the evidence of one of the propositions of Euclid. I defy the most learned of you to harmonize the language of Scripture and your systems. You reject the Christ of God. You have arrogantly said, "we will not have this man to reign over us;" listen, then to the closing words: "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."—Luke xix. 27.

And, ye vile sinners, let me speak also to you of this great salvation. As Jesus saves the chief of sinners, I am not discouraged from addressing the most profligate amongst you. In the days of our Lord, publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before the

self-righteous Pharisees—that no flesh should glory in his presence. All the schemes of religion invented by men, keep you at a great distance; and some of them make your situation absolutely hopeless. But in the gospel of Jesus Christ salvation is brought nigh to the guilty. The proud Pharisee says to you, "Stand off, for I am holier than thou: touch me not, for thou art a vile sinner." But Jesus says to you, Come to me, "for the Son of Man was sent to save that which was lost—the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick—there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance, even if such persons were really to be found. Come to me thou undone prodigal. Welcome, my lost son. I have paid thy debts, and have for thee a rich inheritance." What boundless mercy and grace are discovered here! The wretches that are viewed as a disgrace even to human nature, and arrogantly despised and condemned by those under the same condemnation, are invited to share the favour of the Lord of heaven and earth! The King saith to his servants, "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage."—Matt. xxii. 9. Can you fear, then, poor wretches, to accept the invitation? Are you, after the express declaration of the King's pleasure, still afraid that you will not be welcome? Is there untruth with the Lord? Hath he made a declaration which he has no intention to fulfil? But you think your sins are too great and too numerous for God to forgive. Though you acknowledge the atonement of Christ, and that others may be saved by it, yet your sins have particular aggravations; your crimes are of such a nature that you cannot look for mercy. Do you not thus make God a liar? Hath he not said again and again, that all who come to him by Jesus shall be saved? Doth not Jesus say, he that cometh unto the Father by Me, he shall in no wise cast out? Do you think that Christ is a liar? He says that the Father will cast out none that comes to him through his Son; you fear that he would cast you out, even though

you were thus to come. What an affront do you thus put upon the Father and the Son! You say, you are very great sinners. This is the very reason you ought to come to Jesus; for the whole need not a physician, but the sick. If you had no sin, you would have no need of a Saviour; and if the Lord has made no exceptions with respect to the magnitude of your sins, you ought to make none. Listen to the language of the apostle to those who were guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus—"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins."—Acts ii. 38. He had expressly charged them with the crucifixion of Christ; but does he except from pardon even the chief instigators of the mob, who cried out crucify him, crucify him? Repent, says he, every one of you. On another occasion, after addressing the house of Israel as guilty of the death of Christ, he calls them without exception to repent, that their sins might be blotted out.—Acts iii. 12-19. Are your sins greater than those of all the murderers of the Lord? Does not Paul tell you that Jesus died for the chief of sinners; and that he the chief of sinners was saved for an example to encourage the chief of sinners to rest on the atonement of Jesus without hesitation? What, then, is in the nature of your crimes that shuts against you the door of mercy? After all that these Scriptures say, do you still hesitate—still fear that you cannot be saved? The reason is, you do not fully credit the Scriptures. Say what you will to the contrary, you do not believe God, else you would trust in his word. You make him a liar, because he declares that the death of Jesus saves the chief of sinners; and you are afraid to take his word for it. This, then, is a more heinous sin than all your other sins. He that believes the report of God, sets to his seal that God is true; but he that believeth it not, makes him a liar. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."—John iii. 18. You are afraid to rest upon the atonement, because you do not perceive its greatness and

glory. You do not perceive that by this, the law is not only satisfied but honoured, that Justice has no more demands, and that through the death of Christ sins are really blotted out. Say what you will, then, about believing in Christ, and about the efficacy of his atonement, you understand nothing about the matter. If a friend assures a debtor that he has paid his debts, any degree of fear in the latter must arise from a want of confidence in the word of the former. If he believes him, he shall have joy instead of fear. Jesus has assured us that he has made atonement for sin, and that every one who believes this shall be saved. Whoever fears to rest on this atonement, fears to take the word of God.

You may flatter yourselves that your confessions, and scruples, and fears of this nature indicate your humility and the deep sense you have of your own unworthiness. But they rather indicate the low opinion you have formed of the character and atonement of Jesus. They indicate that you do not suppose his work as perfect as the Scriptures represent it. They indicate dissatisfaction with God's plan of salvation, and distrust of his word. Instead of having views sufficiently* extensive with respect to your* guilt, they are infinitely short of the reality. Your seeming humility is but pride; for you cannot stoop to receive so great a favour from God. Instead of honouring God's justice, you affront all his attributes. You disparage his power, his wisdom, his truth, his mercy, and even his justice you refuse to receive as shining super eminently in the plan of salvation by the atonement. You think that Jesus is a physician who can cure such patients as are not dangerously ill, but that there are some incurable diseases which baffle his skill. Nothing affronts a medical man more than to doubt of his professional talents. They who consider any sins too great for the blood of Jesus to cleanse, disbelieve the gospel, and impiously affront the Saviour and Physician of souls. Nothing displeases God so much as unbelief; because nothing affronts him so much. It absolutely robs him of his

character. Jesus was much displeased even with the imperfection of the faith of the man who came to him saying, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus pointedly replied, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The poor man was convinced of the sinfulness of his unbelief, and cried out, with tears—" Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."— Mark ix. 22-24. But to the man who strongly expressed his confidence in his power, at the same time that he hinted that he might not be willing, the Lord expressed no dissatisfaction, but pointedly approved of the strength of his faith. "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," said the leper. "I will be thou clean," said the Lord. Do not vainly flatter yourselves that, sinners as you look upon yourselves to be, you are at least very humble sinners: bad as you are, you have this good about you, that you are sensible of your sins. There is pride in your very humility; and the greatest of all your sins you are so totally ignorant of that you seem to glory in it—your unbelief. The spirit of God convinces the world of sin, because they believed not on him who was sent—your mind is so much at enmity with God's plan of salvation, that you cannot discern its efficacy—you are so arrogantly self-sufficient, instead of being humble, that the plan which God has adopted, approved, and accepted, for the justification of guilty sinners, you have rejected, as insufficient for the purpose. Is this humility? Is it humility in you to think that you know better about these things than He does? Is it humility in you to pretend that you have deeper views of the exceeding sinfulness of sin than He himself has? Your humility is the height of arrogance and presumption; it is, in effect, atheism, because it denies the perfection of the attributes of the great Jehovah. Your sins, indeed, are great. I do not address you because I think they are fewer or less aggravated than you think them; but because the Scriptures assure me that the most numerous and the most aggravated sins are not beyond the efficacy of the blood of atonement. I address you not to

convince you that your sins are less heinous than you view them; but to convince you that they are a thousand times more heinous than you have yet conceived. The sins that you dwell upon and confess may, indeed, be great; but your unbelief and rejection of Christ is the greatest of all your sins. What you look upon as unpardonable have all been pardoned in thousands; but what you persist in, is declared to be unpardonable, if not abandoned. You think nothing of the sin of unbelief; but this will for ever exclude you from the mansions of glory, and doom you to a place of everlasting torment. Come, then, sinners—poor and wretched—come to Jesus. The Scriptures assure us that he both can make you clean, and that he is willing to do so. View the mercy of the Saviour—man says to you stand off; God says, come near. Yes, my brethren, though many of your fellow sinners would think their religious associations disgraced by you, even when changed; God invites you to approach him as you are, and promises, through the atonement, to wash and renew you. Despise not so much mercy. With confidence rest your hand upon the head of the victim that hath borne the sins of men. He shall bear them far away. They shall never condemn you, for if you present yourselves to God, through the atonement, the blood of Jesus Christ hath expiated your sins and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

There can be nothing more offensive to those who value themselves upon their religion, or their virtue, than such views of the atonement. They cannot bear a doctrine that looks with such a benign aspect upon vile sinners, and places the man of high moral attainments upon the same level with the adulterer and the drunkard. They affect to consider such representations as an advocating of sin. I have seen a pamphlet, published in London, which attempts to account for the enormities and abominable excesses of that great and wicked city from the doctrine preached to the common people about salvation through the death of Christ. In whatever way the doctrine

of the Cross may be exhibited in London, I am confident that all who represent it in such a light as to encourage sin, and all who view it in that light, bear false witness, and understand it not. But there is no perversion that any men make of this doctrine will prevent me from fully stating the mind of Christ on this subject. In addition to the declarations and facts already noticed, I call the attention of such objectors to one or two other passages that must silence them, if they at all respect the authority of Scripture—"Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them."—Col. iii. 5-7. Here we see that the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse were persons who had formerly walked in a course of the vilest sins. The Apostle Peter, in the following passage, considers all the believers to whom he wrote as having formerly lived in a course of excess and abomination not to be exceeded by any thing we can witness in the lowest of our mob.

"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot speaking evil of you."—1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. What say you to the character of these persons, ye men of virtue and ye men of piety? Shall such vile wretches, who were a disgrace to human nature, obtain the same salvation with you, who from your infancy have been nurtured in habits of early piety? If this doctrine of the Apostle does not lead to the encouragement of sin, why do you charge this upon the same doctrine now? Why are you so offended with those who declare to the vilest sinners that there is salvation in Christ? Read the black catalogue of crimes contained in the following list, and reflect that of the worst of them some of the Corinthian saints

were formerly guilty—1 Cor. vi. 9-11. Even those guilty of unnatural sins are here said to be justified in the name of the Lord* Jesus. Who is it now, proud Pharisee, whose sins are too great for the blood of Jesus to wash out? Dare you now say that they encourage sin who represent the atonement as extending to the chief of sinners? Yes, as long as you are yourselves blind to the truth, you will revile the ways of the Lord. Is it strange that you should do so now, when even to our Lord personally it was said publicly, "who is this that speaketh blasphemies?" But know ye, that "for all the hard speeches which ye have spoken against him," you shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.

But the glory of the atonement shines still more illustriously in its efficacy to save sinners, at the very point of death, from the very gates of hell. Worldly systems of religion can give no hope to sinners grown old in wickedness; but the gospel speaks to the soul, hovering, as it were, on the lips of the dying sinner. Philosophy can give no comfort to the pillow of the dying man, without long-formed habits of virtue; and without time for good works to give efficacy to repentance, worldly religion dare not speak with any confidence to the dying sinner. But with the utmost confidence the gospel calls to the departing spirit to look to Jesus on the cross and be saved. This doctrine casts the utmost discredit on the pretensions of philosophic virtue, and is, therefore, abhorred by every man who thinks that future happiness must be the reward of a course of difficult and self-denying discipline. This view coincides with none of the systems of human wisdom, which make future happiness the issue of a virtuous life, according to the fitness, nature, or reason of things. It is no less displeasing to the austere religionist, who has laid up vast treasures for his salvation from his early or long-formed religious habits, his piety, his mortifications. He either says directly, that a death-bed repentance will never carry a man to heaven; or qualifies it, in such a manner, as to leave it at a great uncertainty. He speaks of a day of

grace, after which there is no hope; and the best he has to say to the dying sinner is, that though the Scriptures do not contain any comfort for him, he may with some hope be left to what he calls the uncovenanted mercies of God. His meaning, perhaps, is, when put into intelligible language, that though there is no salvation for such a person from the Scriptures, God may after all be better than his word. The wretch then ought not altogether to despair.

Some go even much farther. I have seen a person that pretends from Scripture, and the nature of things, to shew the absolute impossibility of the salvation of a sinner on a death-bed. But in opposition both to the philosopher and the religionist, let us hear the testimony of God, whose foolishness is wiser than men, and whose weakness is stronger than men. Let us turn to the parable in the beginning of the twentieth chapter of Matthew, which will for ever confound the pretensions of self-righteousness, and hold forth salvation to the dying sinner. What say you to this ye devout philosophers, who are engaged in earning future happiness by sublime acts and habits of virtue? What think you of this ye religionists, who have been labouring, and toiling, and persisting, and struggling to earn the wages of everlasting life. Will, the man who has been called at the eleventh hour obtain heaven as well as you? yes; and when you are excluded, for persons who grudge the salvation of others, shall never enter into that kingdom: "The last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." But even granting that such persons were to obtain heaven by their labour, our Lord shows from this parable that, as a sovereign, he was free to give life to those who had not thus laboured: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" And, why, proud philosopher; why, self-righteous Pharisee; why dost thou grudge salvation to the dying sinner through the atonement of Jesus? May he not do with his own as he pleases? You think that there is no time for such a person to do a portion of

good works that are of sufficient value to atone for what he has done amiss, and to merit heaven. But Jesus has made atonement for sin, and heaven is not to be got by desert, but is given as a free gift through Jesus. Justice can claim no more than it already received in the death of Christ; and what is there to prevent God from extending his boundless grace, and conferring the richest of his blessings upon the dying sinner? Let us turn now to the case of the dying thief on the cross. What stock of merit had this disturber of the peace of society laid up for his salvation? Was he preparing himself for grace by prowling on the industry of his fellowmen, and imbruing his hands in their blood if they resisted? What time had he for performing good works, even after his faith in the Saviour of the guilty? But even this wretch was not beyond the reach of mercy; even his crimes were not too great, nor too long persisted in, for the blood of Jesus to wash out. Though he could have no pretensions to merit, either before or after his faith in Jesus, he cries in the agonies of the cross, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." His faith in Jesus was confirmed neither by his past character, nor by the consideration that he had now no time for performing good works. Even when the arrows of death were in his heart, he looked on the Saviour and was saved, through the death which he was then accomplishing at Jerusalem. Our Lord's reply is full of mercy, full of consolation to all in like circumstances, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

In what a different strain, ye self-righteous religionists, would you have answered this dying thief? When you go to the cell of the prisoner, or the scaffold of the culprit, do you speak as Jesus did to the thief on the cross? If you give him any hope, it is not from the efficacy of the atonement, but from the efficacy of the tears of repentance, and his prayers, and the prayers of other people for him. Perhaps you will venture to say, that as there is short time, the usual essentials of salvation shall be dispensed with, and that mercy,

seeing the incapacity of the culprit, will diminish something of the rigour of justice. Soldiers sometimes say, that there is allowance made for people who die on short warning. But the gospel declares salvation to such a person on the same footing with the judge by whom he is condemned, and declares at the same time, that God is both just and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus. The gospel speaks to the wretch not in a faltering voice, not in a hesitating, ambiguous manner. It speaks openly, plainly and boldly, in a firm tone: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." While the austere countenance of worldly religion looks away from the culprit as unable to help him, the gospel glances on him with an inviting smile. It returns him an answer of peace, while the other can either give no answer, or no decisive answer, as it merely replies to his prayer, poor wretch! thou hast no virtuous habits; thou hast no moral excellence, and thy approaching death cuts away every opportunity of acquiring such; if there is any possibility of thy salvation, it must be from the unrevealed mercies of God. But the reply of Jesus is, "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Yes, dying sinners, should this reach you on your deathbeds, look to the blood of the cross. It is despised by the wise man; it is thought weak and insufficient, by the righteous men of this world, but it is the power of God to save the guilty through faith. Ye criminals, under the sentence of death, should this reach you in your dungeon, look to the Saviour of the thief on the cross. You die justly, as a sacrifice to the injured laws of the land, but if you believe in Jesus, his death as a sacrifice atones for your trespasses against the broken laws of God. You have no time to do good works, either for atonement or for earning heaven, but Jesus has by one work atoned for sin, and to all who rest upon this work, the Father freely gives eternal life. You say it is now too late. Too late! Why is it too late? If the work was to be done by you it would be too late, though you lived the age of Methuselah to perform it; but as the

work has been finished by Jesus, it is not too late to rest on it as long as you are in this world. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. As long as you live, so long is it not too late to trust in the name of the Saviour of the guilty. Yes, though you have already mounted the scaffold, though the rope were already round your neck, and you were ascending the ladder from which you are about to be hurled into eternity, the Scriptures declare to you, that if you believe in the Lord Jesus you shall be saved. Come, then, poor culprit, there is no hope for you in this world. The religion of this world gives you no hope for the next; come to Jesus, and you shall find rest. He shall receive you, though all others have rejected you. He is a physician who can cure, and who glories in saving those who are given up by the spiritual physicians of this world. You are now about to come before the throne of God. He is just and terrible; but look to that throne through the blood of the cross, and justice ceases to frown, the terrors of the Almighty are turned away from you. Fear not to launch into eternity; thou art vile, but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Thou art filthy, but it shall make thee whiter than the snow.

Why dost thou redden, man of virtue? Why dost thou suffer thy choler to rise, cool philosopher? Why dost thou stamp and rage, and revile and blaspheme, and grind thy teeth, thou man of piety? Oh! I perceive the reason of your indignation. I calumniate human nature; I would damn the human race; I sanction sin; I make God unjust, unmerciful, and every way unreasonable. Remember, grave philosopher, the postulates of my reasoning. Advert to the principles that thou hast granted me in the beginning. The Scriptures thou hast acknowledged to be the word of God, and that they are not a revelation, if they are not to be understood in their grammatical meaning. Let not thy choler rise, then, philosopher, if I reason fearlessly from these principles, and deduce from them the legitimate consequences. Do not be angry; I am not answerable for

these consequences, let them be good or bad, provided they are fairly drawn. Shew me, then, that they are not fairly drawn, and I will reverse them. But if they are legitimately drawn, thy wrath is directed towards the author of the book from which I reason, and not against me. Do, then, gentle philosopher, do, then, I beseech thee, keep thy temper. Thou art noted for gravity and the coldness of wisdom. Thou canst coolly reply to Atheists, and Sceptics, and philosophical fanatics; why, then, dost thou lose thy philosophical gravity, when thou reasonest with the maintainers of the offensive doctrine of the gospel? Thy icy constitution is not warmed in even the torrid zone. Thou canst reply without passion to all the reasons of thy fellow philosophers. Without the least discomposure thou repellst the arguments of those who deny the existence of matter, and mind, and with a world of labour, thou dost prove to us that we really exist, and that other things exist besides ourselves; why, then, dost thou suffer thy temper to be ruffled when thou advertest to the doctrine of the cross? If it be folly, some of the mad systems of thy crazy friends can match it. But over the one thou throwest thy garment to hide its nakedness. Thou endeavourest to expose the other. Thou dost laugh, indeed, but thy laugh is not the laugh of real joy, the sadness of thy countenance shews that thou art not at ease. Thou deniest the guilt of men, and rejectest the atonement of Christ, but thy ingenuity is not able to prove, even to thyself, that both things are not taught in Scripture.

SECTION 3. FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE WAY OF BEING INTERESTED IN HIS ATONEMENT.

Having proved the universal guilt of human nature and the atonement of Christ, I shall now proceed to show the way in which guilty sinners are interested in this atonement. Though the Scriptures are both full and clear upon this point, it is disputed even more than any of the preceding points. Many who acknowledge an atonement as necessary for the guilt of man, differ widely from the Scriptures with respect to the way in which it becomes effectual for the sins of every individual. They differ also considerably from one another in solving this question. All their theories, however, agree in this, that something is to be done on the part of the sinner, in order to entitle him to the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. In this sentiment there is every gradation from the feeblest first existing effort on the part of the sinner to the fullest dependence on good works. Each variety in this climax has been denominated from the first, or most distinguished defender of it; and systematic orthodoxy has refuted them all, by piecemeal, under their several technical appellations. The Scriptures differ from them all, in totally excluding works of every kind as the means of being interested in Christ's death; and refute them all under one, in most strongly and explicitly representing faith as the only medium. I shall not be obliged, then, to discriminate these varieties and appreciate the degree of their difference from the truth. Whether they are small or great deviations from the gospel; whether they be called Arminianism, or Pelagianism, or Baxterianism; they are all disproved if I establish that the Scriptures ascribe salvation solely to faith in the atonement, and that they assert that the smallest deviation from this is another gospel, and not that preached by the apostles. Let us begin with the

third chapter of Romans, already more than once referred to:—"Even the righteousness of - God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

In this passage the Apostle not only establishes the guilt of man and the atonement of Christ, but also clearly asserts that faith is the medium through which sinners are interested in the work of Christ. The righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe. God is said to be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He shows us that the plan of salvation excludes boasting; but that this could not be done by any scheme that required any thing on the part of man. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law ?—of works? Nay; but by the law of faith." Salvation by faith excludes boasting; and this is the only way in which it could be excluded. Were any degree of works of law necessary to entitle the sinner to an interest in the atonement of Christ, it would lay a foundation for the sinner to boast—he could say that he had performed that which entitled him to salvation. The Apostle concludes in the strongest and most pointed manner; not only ascribing justification to faith (which implies that it is ascribable to nothing else), but explicitly asserting that a man is justified without works of law altogether. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." This is the case both with respect to Jews and Gentiles. "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith and

uncircumcision through faith." The Apostle next anticipates an objection that was likely to rise in the mind of the Jews, with respect to the justification of Abraham. In their ignorance, they supposed that Abraham was justified, in some measure at least, by circumcision; otherwise, of what advantage was it to him or to his seed? But he shows, from the very history of Abraham, or from the very account of the justification of Abraham, that this is by faith and not by works, "What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."—iv. 1-3. Abraham, then, we see was justified by believing God, and his justification is the pattern of ours. The Apostle, therefore, reasons from it in the next verse—"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Can any thing be more explicit? Can any thing be more directly on the point? Salvation must be given gratuitously, that no flesh may glory in God's presence. But the reward of the man that worketh, the Apostle says, is not of grace, but of debt. Works, therefore, of no kind can be necessary to give a title to the atonement of Christ, or the favour of God. How strong and pointed is the language! In what a marked manner is it opposed to all the theories of self-righteous men!—"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The justified sinner worketh not in any way, at any time, for the righteousness that justifies him. He believes on him that justifieth the ungodly. What a bold expression. Even systematic orthodoxy falters when uttering the language and does not mention it without a qualification. God, says Paul, justifies the ungodly. Systematic orthodoxy, instructed in this instance by the wisdom of this world, says, that though they

have been ungodly formerly they are godly before they are justified; or that though they are ungodly in one sense they are godly in another. They are in some measure made good by the Spirit of God before they are justified by faith; but Paul roundly asserts that they are justified in every sense as ungodly. They are in no sense considered as godly till they are justified by faith.

Now the faith of this man who believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, and not his works, is counted to him for righteousness. The Apostle confirms this from the language of David—" Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."—Rom. iv. 6—8. David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom their sins are forgiven or not imputed. From the application of the Apostle, we see that he understands the not imputing of sin as being the same with imputing righteousness. Orthodoxy sometimes speaks of sins being pardoned by the death of Christ, and heaven being purchased by the righteousness of his life; but when a man's sins are pardoned by being atoned for, or not imputed to him by being imputed to another, he becomes instantly righteous. For what is righteousness but a being free of every charge? To say, then, that a man's sins are not imputed, is the same as to say, that righteousness is imputed to him; they who are thus made righteous have eternal life freely bestowed upon them. This is not a fancy or refinement of man; but the doctrine of the spirit of God. Now, as the Apostle observes, David speaks not of the blessedness of the man who is made blessed by working; but of the blessedness of the man who becomes blessed by having his sins not imputed. The Apostle goes on further to show, from Abraham's history, that circumcision could have had no influence upon his justification, as he was justified by faith before he was circumcised. Circumcision did not make him righteous. It

was a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness may be imputed to them also. He asserts that salvation is of faith, that it might be by grace. Had men been justified by the blood of Christ by any work of their own, however inconsiderable, salvation could not have been altogether of grace. He goes on to show the strength and excellency of the faith of Abraham; and concludes by assuring us that "it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." If the Apostle knew any thing of the matter, righteousness will be imputed to all who believe in him who raised up Christ from the dead.

In the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth chapter of this epistle, the apostle shows us the reason why the nation of Israel obtained not that righteousness that is acceptable to God, or that justifies before God; because they sought it not by faith but by the works of the law. On the other hand, the Gentiles, who were making no pretensions to the service of the true God, obtained that righteousness through faith. "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone: As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to

establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."—Rom. ix. 30—x. 1—4. Righteousness through the atonement of Jesus, who was a stumbling-stone to the Jews, is here called the righteousness of faith. All who seek righteousness in any other way miss their object. It is taught in this passage not only that the atonement of Christ is the only righteousness of God's people; but also that this becomes righteousness to them by believing in it. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

To show that there is nothing necessary to salvation, but faith in the atonement of Christ, is the scope of the epistle to the Galatians. It appears that some who had professed to receive the gospel, had taught that the observance of circumcision and the laws of Moses was necessary, as well as faith in Christ. From the attachment of the Jews to their ancient laws, this opinion was very seducing, and the Galatian churches appear to have been in the greatest danger of being corrupted by it. The apostle, then, earnestly labours to guard them against this error. He shows them that reliance upon works of law was, in every degree, inconsistent with salvation through the faith of Christ. He boldly declares, not only that the observance of the law of Moses is not the way of being just before God, but that to make any part of this law necessary to salvation, is to renounce the gospel. Now, though the attachment to the Mosaic economy was peculiar to the Jews, there is the same propensity in men of all nations, under the name of Christianity, to introduce their favourite sentiments. In those countries where Christianity is the national religion, prejudice, or interest, or conviction, has induced the generality of people to assume the Christian name. But as long as they remain ignorant of the Gospel, they will mix the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God; rather, they will accommodate the revelation of God to their own views. Thus, under the name of

Christianity, we have all opinions, from that which makes the smallest addition to the work of Christ, to that which overlooks that work altogether. Let us see, then, the answer that the apostle gives to them all, in the answer that he gives to this Jewish corruption of Christianity—"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."—Gal. ii. 16. Here the apostle argues against the observance of circumcision as essential to salvation, from the fact that salvation is by faith in Christ, and not by works of law. If the justification of the sinner is by faith in Christ, and not by works of law, it follows that the observance of circumcision, or any part of the Mosaic law, is not necessary. Consequently, they who do not rest by faith on the atonement for their whole salvation, must be disappointed; for any reliance upon law implies a belief that salvation is not through faith in Christ. Can any thing be more clearly asserted than it is here, that Christians are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ? Can any thing be more clear, than that works of every kind are excluded from having any efficacy in justification? He adverts, also, in the next chapter to the example of Abraham, which he considers as the pattern of the justification of all his people—"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is

evident; for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but, the man that doeth them shall live in them."—ver. 6-12. In the justification of Abraham, the Scriptures predicted the way in which God would justify the heathen. Though the Jews so much mistook their law, the Old Testament itself taught not that men would be justified by works of the law, but that " the just by faith should live." "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."—Ver. 22—24. But not only is no work of law necessary, either as a requisite to obtain an interest in the atonement of Christ, or as co-operating with it, but any work of law done for this purpose implies disbelief of the Gospel. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."—v. 2—4. He does not say merely that it is useless to be circumcised—that it is useless to do any work with a view of depending on it in addition to the work of Christ, but he declares that if they receive circumcision with these views, Christ will profit them nothing. The smallest reliance on law makes men debtors to do the whole law. We must either receive salvation altogether through faith in the work of Christ, or by our own works earn it, giving perfect obedience to the law. Here, then, is the clearest demonstration of the danger of all these systems, that make good works in any measure necessary to justification. Whatever place they may give to the work of Christ in theory, they virtually renounce it, when they add to it any works of their own, or seek an interest in it, in any other way than by faith.

Paul himself had a vast capital stock of his own righteousness, the earnings of much hard labour; but instead of finding any account in it, as co-operating with the faith of Christ, he counts it all but loss Phil. iii. 7—9. His righteousness is now in the atonement of Christ, and his interest in that righteousness is by faith; the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ— the righteousness which is of God by faith.

After declaring to the Ephesian Christians the wretched state of human nature, he assures them that they were saved from this state by grace, through faith. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of your selves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."—ii. 8, 9. He assures Timothy that the Scriptures are able to make him wise unto salvation, not by teaching him what he is to do to obtain an interest in Christ, but by faith, which is in Christ Jesus.— 2 Tim. iii. 15.

To the Philippian gaoler, inquiring the way of salvation, he replies :—" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—Acts xvi. 31. In receiving his commission, he was informed by his Master, that the Gentiles " should receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith in Christ."—Acts xxvi. 18. By faith Noah is said to "become an heir of the righteousness which is by faith." —Heb. xi. 7.

Our Lord himself clearly taught this truth during his personal ministry. The following passage distinctly shows that faith in the atonement which he was to make upon the cross, is the way to escape condemnation. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on

him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."—John iii. 14—18. We are taught here that the brazen serpent, elevated upon a pole, for the view of the children of Israel who were stung by the serpents in the wilderness, was a type of the Messiah. Jesus, who himself knew no sin, was made a sin-offering for his people. He was raised on the cross, that all the ends of the earth might look at him and be saved. The Israelites, stung by the serpents, were saved, not by the power of medicine, but by the typical likeness of a serpent. In like manner, sinners are cured of the sting of sin, not by any works or devices of their own, but by the death of Him who was typified by the serpent. The medium through which the Israelites received their cure, was not any ceremonies or difficult exertions of their own, but merely their looking at the brazen serpent on the pole. As soon as they looked on the serpent, from any part of the camp, they were immediately made whole. In like manner, our Lord teaches us here, whosoever believeth on him, as elevated on the cross, accomplishing salvation for the guilty, shall be saved. Sinners, then, are interested in his death, not by any works of their own, but by believing. Whatever human pride may allege to the contrary, this is the only way of escaping condemnation. "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already."

On another occasion Jesus exhibits himself in his death as the antitype of the manna that supported the children of Israel in the wilderness, and the believing in him as an atonement, as the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood.—John vi. 32—58. We see from this passage, that to believe on him is the same as to eat his flesh and to drink his blood, as he is the bread 'of life. Now to the eating of this flesh, and drinking of this blood, is ascribed eternal life.

But as some make works the condition or means of obtaining an interest in the death of Christ, so others, not being able to deny that salvation is ascribed to faith, have explained faith in such a manner, as to make itself a work. "The faith," says Dr. M'Knight, "by which men under the new covenant are justified, consists in a sincere disposition to believe what God hath made known." Again, "faith does not consist in the belief of particular doctrines, but in such an earnest desire to know and to do the will of God, as leads them conscientiously to use such means as they have for gaining the knowledge of his will, and for doing it when found." "Abraham's faith," he says, "consisted in an habitual disposition to believe and obey God." Now, there cannot be a more gross abuse of language than this. Whatever is the truth that men must believe for salvation, their faith in that truth implies nothing but their belief of it, or their conviction of its truth. He might as well have said that faith in the propositions of Euclid's Elements does not consist in the belief of them, but in an earnest desire to know and believe them. How ridiculous does this appear when applied to any other subject? And is the word of God the only subject on which it is lawful for wise men to play the fool? Must words here lose their proper meaning, and receive significations that are perfectly absurd with respect to every thing else? The faith of any thing is neither more nor less than the belief of it; and the belief of any thing is the conviction that the mind has of its truth, and implies no disposition about it, either good or bad. He who believes the atonement of Jesus Christ, has indeed a disposition to know and obey his will; but this disposition is not indicated in his faith, but grows out of it.

It is also well known that the ancient writers, in greatest celebrity for orthodoxy, have represented saving faith to be, not belief in the efficacy of the atonement to do away the sins of all who believe in it, but a belief with respect to every individual, that Christ died for himself in particular. This opinion they appear to have been

led into from a desire to guard the gospel from abuse. As in this country the generality of people profess to believe in the atonement, it would have had in their estimation the appearance of sanctioning the Christianity of the world in general, to allow that the belief of the gospel is saving faith. The nature of this address will not allow me to enter into a minute refutation of either of these opinions. My design in this work is not to unravel sophistry and hunt critical evasion from every hiding place, but to address the conscience of my readers, and lay before them the palpable meaning of the testimony of God. The latter of these opinions has been of late fully and most satisfactorily refuted by different writers: the former, from the celebrity of the author, deserves more attention than it has yet received. Not that it is not in itself palpably absurd, but, because, the author has contrived by his application of some other Scriptures, and his strong assertions of the gratuitousness of salvation, to make his doctrine plausible. All that I shall say in answer to both will be to show from a few passages of Scripture, that faith in Jesus Christ is belief in his atonement as a sufficient ransom for the most guilty, or, in other words, that the belief of the gospel is saving faith. If I succeed in this, the sinner will have set before him the way to heaven. If he discerns this, he will not be turned out of it by the wisdom of men. If he reject this way, he may quiet his conscience while he walks in the by-paths of error, by alleging the guidance of a different interpretation.

In giving the commission to the apostles the Lord Jesus Christ declares, that the belief of it is eternal life.—Mark xvi. 15, 16. Preach the gospel;—he that believeth shall be saved. Is there any obscurity here with respect to the thing to be believed for eternal life? Is not this necessarily found in the expression, publish the glad tidings of salvation to all the world, he that believeth those tidings shall be saved. Can any other passage be necessary to convince any one who submits with deference to the word of God? Our Lord did

not say to the apostles, "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth that I died for himself, in particular, shall be saved." Now, what is the gospel? The answer to this will shew us, what is the truth to the belief of which is attached eternal life. It is the good news with respect to the atonement of Christ. Let us hear the apostle Paul's account of this gospel:—1 Cor. xv. 1—4. What, then, is the gospel that the apostle preached, that the Corinthian Christians received, and in which they stood ; yea, more, by which they were saved? It is neither more nor less, than that Christ died for the sins of his people, that he was buried and rose again. This standing on record, is it not astonishing that systematic orthodoxy has had the effrontery to say, that the belief of this gospel is not enough for salvation ; that in addition to this, men must believe their own interest in the death of Christ, in order to entitle them to the benefit of it? What the apostle calls the gospel is, "that Christ died for our sins." As he is addressing believers, the word our, must refer to believers only. The thing, then, that a man believes for eternal life is, that Christ died for the »sins of all believers, even of all that believed on him before and since his death, and of all that shall believe on him to the end of the world. A man has no need to puzzle, or torment himself with inquiries in the first instance, whether he be included among those for whom Christ died. As he died for all that believe, as soon as a sinner is conscious that he believes the gospel, he has the same ground to believe that Christ died for him, as that he died at all. But this belief of his own interest in Christ's death* is not the faith that saves him, but it is founded on that faith. He believes that he died for him, because he believes that he died for all that believe the gospel. Were a company of men, possessing each a vast capital, to establish a fund for the purpose of relieving those in debt, and to publish in the newspapers that every one should have his debt paid, who should believe in the existence and sufficiency of such a fund, any particular debtor would have

reason to count upon his interest in that fund, if he were conscious that he really believed the report about it. In proportion to the strength of his faith in the report, would be his peace and joy on account of his own particular interest in it. His name is not expressed in the report, but as he believes the report, it is included. The apostle here most explicitly asserts that the persons addressed should be saved by the gospel, if they would keep it in memory, unless they had believed in vain, that is, unless they had been deceiving themselves, and had been believing the gospel in some false view. Can any thing be more opposite than the doctrine of the apostle, and that of systematic orthodoxy on this point?—or what a difference between the apostle and our orthodox divines on this great question! Instead of declaring to sinners that they shall be saved through the belief of the gospel, and to saints that they shall be saved by keeping the gospel in memory, the latter think they cannot sufficiently undervalue the faith that the apostle values so highly. They show the most studied disrespect to the apostles' doctrine, and stigmatize it with the appellation of historical faith. Saving faith they make some thing very different. It is not that Christ died for all that believe, but that Christ died for them in particular. Now, what warrant have they for calling upon all men to believe that Christ died for each of them in particular? These persons do not believe that this is a truth. They hold with the Scriptures that Christ died for none, but for those who shall eventually be saved. What inconsistency, then, is there in calling upon all men to believe a thing that with respect to most of them is a lie? Can it be the duty of men to believe what is not true? Can their believing a lie, make it a truth? All men are called on in Scripture to believe the gospel, but there is no instance in Scripture in which all men

are called upon to believe that Christ died for them. All men, possessed of natural understanding, who have heard the gospel and have not received it, shall be condemned for unbelief. He that believeth not shall be damned. But shall a man be damned for not believing that which is not true? When an unbeliever shall come before the judgment-seat, can he be condemned for not believing that Christ died for him, seeing Christ did not die for him, and the Scriptures did not say that he died for him? Will it be inconsistently replied, that if he had believed that Christ died for him, then he would have died for him? Is not this supposing that he is a believer? But it never can be true of any that shall eventually perish, that Christ died for them, nor can it be duty for such to believe that he died for them. Consequently, it is not sin in them not to believe that he died for them. But all unbelievers shall be condemned, because they believed not the gospel; because they believed not the record that God gave of his son, —and this is the record that God hath given to us, (believers), eternal life, and this life is in his son. This is a truth—a truth declared to them, and by the rejection of this truth, they are in the utmost guilt.—A like account have we of the gospel in the first epistle to Timothy, i. 15. "This is a faithful saying, &c." the saying that is to be believed for salvation, and which is worthy of all acceptation is, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save the chief of sinners. This is the saying, that every one is bound to believe who hears it. This is the saying that is worthy of being received, and for the rejection of which they shall be condemned. The report, then, that Jesus died for all who believe in his atonement is the gospel, and the belief of this gospel is eternal life.

As this fact is of great importance to the comfort of the Christian, as well as to the sinner enquiring the way of salvation, I shall adduce a few other passages. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."—1 John v. 1. Can any thing exceed the decisiveness of this testimony? The Apostle does not say, that

whosoever believeth that Jesus died for him in particular is born of God; but that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." This is the very faith of which our systematic divines speak so contemptuously. The man who believeth even the fact that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. They may degradingly call this historical faith; but the Holy Spirit designates it as the faith by which we are born of God. The divines tell us that many believe that Jesus is the Christ, who, notwithstanding, have no interest in him; but the Apostle John tells us that all who believe this are born of God. Which of the two, then, shall we believe? It will, no doubt, be replied to this, that multitudes sincerely believe that Jesus is the Christ, who yet evidently show that they are not born of God. But surely we are never at liberty to solve a difficulty by contradicting the obvious, the necessary meaning of Scripture. If we find that, notwithstanding this divine assertion, there are many who not only say that they believe that Jesus is the Christ, but that there is every reason to believe them sincere, who yet do not evidence that they are born of God, instead of directly giving the lie to the divine Spirit, we ought to suppose that there may be something implied in believing that Jesus is the Christ, which they have not perceived, and therefore have not believed. I readily acknowledge that the great bulk of those called Christians sincerely believe that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth and that this person is the Messiah. How, then, shall I free myself from contradicting the Apostle? Nothing more easy to those who are acquainted with the phraseology of Scripture. To believe that Jesus is the Christ, implies proper views of the character of the Christ of God. If the Scriptures give one view of his character, and if a man hold a different view, then, however sincere he may be in believing that Jesus is the Christ, he does not believe the Scripture truth. The Christ in whom he believes is not the Christ of God. In the Scripture sense of the word, he does not believe that Jesus is the Christ. If, then, a man says, "I believe that Jesus is the

Christ," before we are assured of his being born of God, we must know what are his views of the character of the Messiah. If these differ from that of him of whom the Scriptures testify, we are warranted to say, notwithstanding all his professions, that he doth not so much as believe that Jesus is the Christ. But it may be said, that there are some who give an account of the character and work of Christ which no man can reject as unscriptural who yet show by their lives that they are not born of God. What will we say with respect to them? Why we will say, that however we may not be able to discover any error in their views of Christ, however scriptural their words may be, yet an error, a fundamentally important error, there must be in their views of Christ, else they would be born of God. Though we may not be able to point out what is amiss in their faith, God will have no difficulty in detecting it. In the day of judgment, notwithstanding the vast multitudes living in sin and professing to believe that Jesus is the Christ, he will have no difficulty in defending the truth and consistency of this declaration, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." But instead of solving the difficulty in this manner, divines have chosen to contradict the testimony of the Spirit, or, which is the same, to explain it into a different thing, rather than confess that they were not competent judges of the agreement between the understanding of a man and the word of God. They could not allow that it is possible that error could be in the mind without being discovered by their sagacity.

That this is the true way of solving this difficulty, may be seen from other instances of apparent inconsistency in declarations of Scripture. Paul asked King Agrippa if he believed the Scriptures. Without waiting a reply, he said—I know that thou believest; but Jesus says to the Jews, had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. Here Jesus asserts, that all who rejected him disbelieved the writings of Moses; yet Paul takes it for

granted, that Agrippa—and, consequently, the generality of the Jewish nation—believed the Scriptures. Is there, then, a real inconsistency between these assertions? By no means. Both the assertions are true. Agrippa believed the Scriptures; that is, he believed that the Scriptures were a divine revelation, yet he did not believe the Scriptures, because he did not understand their meaning. The meaning in which he understood them was not their true meaning, consequently he did not believe them. The Jews who rejected Christ believed the Scriptures; that is, they believed them to be a revelation from God, but not understanding them they did not believe them. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (says the Apostle Paul) and thou shalt be saved." "Nevertheless (says John, xii. 42, 43) among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Whosoever will not confess him, these he will not confess; they who believe shall be saved. In what view, then, is it said that such persons believed in Jesus? Like many others, from his astonishing works they believed that he was the Messiah; but being ignorant of his character, they did not believe in him in the usual sense of that word. Had they really understood his character, they would not only have submitted to be put out of the synagogue, but to be put to death for his sake. In this view, also, it is said that one class of the hearers of the gospel believe for a time. They believe something about Christ, and therefore profess and rejoice in his name; but they must be ignorant of some essential part of his character, as the atonement for the guilty, else they would endure to the end through all the persecutions that assail them. In like manner the multitude who took Jesus and would have made him a king, did so, in consequence of believing that he was the Messiah; but that Messiah, we see, they considered as a great temporal prince instead of a Saviour of guilty sinners. They did not, therefore, so much as

believe that Jesus is the Christ. In the same view Simon Magus believed; but his views afterwards discovered that he was ignorant of the character of him in whom he professed to believe. Many, also, in every age appear to believe, but, by falling away, discover that they never really believed that Jesus is the Christ. With respect to all such persons the answer from the Scripture is easy—They understand not what they profess to believe, consequently what they believe is not the saving truth.

The faith that overcometh the world is surely saving faith; and this faith consisteth in believing that Jesus is the Son of God. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ?— 1 John v. 5. Shall we believe the divines, then, when they tell us that a man may believe this and yet live in sin? Unbelief is said to make God a liar. Faith, then, must consist in believing something that God hath testified in the Scriptures. But God hath not testified to any man, individually, that Christ died for him. Faith, therefore, does not consist in believing this 1 John v. 8-11. It is evident that the not believing of God refers to his testimony spoken of in the preceding verse. Now that testimony is not that he died for such and such persons by name, but that he died for those who believe. This is the record of God, that God hath given to us—to us who believe—eternal life; and this life is in his Son.

What was the confession of Peter when our Lord pronounced him blessed on that account? Matt. xvi. 16, 17. Many men do confess or record that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who are enemies to the Christ of God; but to make this confession, understanding the words in their Scriptural import, is more than man is able to teach us. How shameful is it in the divines to assert, in opposition to Christ, that men may confess this, in the true Scriptural meaning of the word, and yet may not have been taught of the Father?

When the eunuch wished to be baptized, Philip replies, Acts viii. 37. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," What was he to believe with all his heart? Was it that Christ died for himself? No; the answer of the eunuch showed that he understood the question in another sense: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That he understood the question is admitted by Philip, for he immediately baptized him.

What it is a man is to believe for salvation, may be seen from the following passage.—Romans x. 4—.11. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Do we not see from this, that to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, understanding the phrase in its just import, is saving faith? The only way in which the divines can contrive to silence the testimony of the Scriptures is, by making a distinction between the belief of the head and the belief of the heart. The latter they call saving, the former they call speculative; the latter includes good affections, the former nothing but the understanding. I need not spend time in showing that this is a mere unscriptural experiment. Any one who will take the trouble to look through the Scriptures will see, that in them the heart is taken for the understanding. See

Romans x. 4—11. But there is no occasion to establish this by the authority of other passages; even this passage itself will show it. The distinction is not between the faith of the head and the faith of the heart, but between genuine faith, and the confession of that faith. To believe with the heart is really to believe, and not to believe with good affections, for there are no affections in belief. How often do we hear people saying, "I believe in my heart," when they mean more strongly to express the reality of their belief? Would any child, when he hears that phrase, ever think that the person was distinguishing a heart-belief from a head-belief? But divines are often more childish than children. Does not the apostle himself explain his meaning when he tells us, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made"? Does not this show that he opposes the heart to the mouth. If a man does not confess Jesus, he does not believe in him; therefore, the confession of the mouth is here joined with the belief of the mind. But whatever be the difference between the faith of head and heart, do we not see here that to believe and confess that God raised Christ from the dead is salvation? The truth to be believed is, not that Christ died for them in particular, but that God raised Christ from the dead. The word of faith which the apostles preached, declared, "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved"—v. 9. Why, then, do the divines tell sinners that they may believe and confess this, yet not be saved? The belief of this truth, Paul denominates believing unto righteousness; that is, a man becomes righteous by believing that God raised his son from the dead. The divines denominate this historical faith, and warn us against trusting to it.

The following passage, in which the Lord declares to the Scribes and Pharisees the reason why he alleged that they should die in their sins, clearly shows us that saving faith consists in believing

that Jesus is the Christ—John viii. 24. Their unbelief and condemnation were, that they believed not that Jesus was the Messiah. He did not declare to them that they would die in their sins, because they did not believe that he was to die for each of them in particular. It is evident that the whole drift of Christ's testimony was, that he was the Christ. This is what the Jews rejected, and this is what he urged upon them. "Who art thou," said they, "and Jesus saith unto them, even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." The denial of this was his great controversy with the world. (It was faith in the testimony of Christ that gave Paul confidence in prospect of the future judgment.—2 Tim. i. 12). When Jesus began his public ministry, he called upon men to repent and believe the gospel, not to repent and believe that they had each a personal interest in the Messiah. This we have seen he continually held forth to the world as the faith that could save them, and this he charged his apostles to preach as saving faith. This the apostles everywhere declared, assuring every one who believed their testimony about Jesus that they would be saved. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," says the apostle Paul to the jailor at Philippi, "and thou shalt be saved." Now, what is the import of believing on the Lord Jesus? It is evidently that the testimony of the apostles about Jesus was true. Did the apostle know when he uttered these words, that Christ died for the jailor? Many a thousand he called upon to believe in the Lord Jesus, for whom the Lord died not. To believe in a person, is to believe him to be what he is reported to be, what he professes to be, or that what he asserts is true. To believe in Christ is, in substance, the same as to believe him. The difference consists not in the thing believed, but in the testifiers. To believe Christ, imports that he himself is the testifier. To believe in Christ, includes the testimony of himself, of the Father, of the Spirit, and of the apostles. To believe Christ, imports the belief that the testimony which he gave of himself, as being the Messiah, is true. To believe

in Christ, imports the belief of the same truth, without respect to the testifier. There is a further shade of distinction between these phrases. To believe a person respects his testimony only, whether that testimony regards himself or others: to believe in a person may include not only belief in his testimony, but belief in his pretensions to power. Of a person who pretends to foretell future events, we say the people believe him, or believe in him; but of a person who pretends to work miracles, we say the people believe in him, that is, they believe that he works miracles. If we say, as we may say, that the people believe the latter, we mean that they believe his testimony with respect to his power of working miracles. But whatever shades of difference are in the phrases, there is not a shade of difference in their import with respect to the testimony believed, either with respect to Christ, or with respect to any other. With respect to Christ, their import is perfectly coincident. We believe him, when we believe his testimony; and as that testimony respects his own power to save sinners, it is the same as to believe in him. Paul, therefore, expresses his faith by the phrase, believing Christ, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." What he elsewhere terms believing in Christ, he here terms believing him. On another occasion, instead of saying believing God, he says, believing on God.—Romans iv. 5. To believe on him that justifies the ungodly, evidently means, to believe the testimony of him who asserts his power and will to justify even ungodly sinners, a thing that to human wisdom is incredible. Other passages make it further evident, that these phrases, applied to Christ, amount to the same thing.—John vi. 28—30. When the multitude asked him what works they should do for favour with God, the Lord told them, that the only way in which they would be rendered acceptable to God was, by believing on him whom he had sent. By their answer they show us, in what sense they understood the phrase. What sign shewest thou that we

may believe thee. To believe on him, then, and to believe him, are the same in substance. He said again, "He that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not." When they murmured at his testimony, he testified further, and added, "but there are some of you that believe not." What did they not believe? Can it be any thing but the testimony which he was delivering? When the multitude took offence and departed from Jesus, he asked his disciples if they would also go. They replied, "Lord, to whom should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." What, then, the multitude were offended at, and rejected to their condemnation; what the disciples received as their salvation, was, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord said to Martha,—John xi. 25, 26, 27. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." We see, then, that his expression, "believeth in me," she understands to mean, believing that he is the Christ. She expresses her belief or faith in him, by declaring whom she considered him to be. In a passage already quoted—Romans x. 11, the apostle Paul confirms his declaration, that if a man believes that God raised up Jesus, he should be saved, by the Scripture that says, "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." If the apostolical proof is to the purpose, the phrase believe on Jesus, imports believing the testimony about him. To believe in, or on Christ, is, therefore, the same as to believe the divine testimony with respect to Christ; and as eternal life is everywhere promised to those who believe in Christ, it is, therefore, promised to all who believe the divine testimony with respect to his character and work. "He that believeth on me," says Jesus, "hath

everlasting life."—John vi. 47. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."—John iii. 14—18. To believe on him, is here made the same as belief in his name. Now to believe in his name, must import to believe that there is salvation in his work—to believe in his character as he is revealed the Saviour of the guilty.

That the belief of the apostolical testimony is saving faith, is further evident from those passages of Scripture that ascribe salvation to the knowledge of God, or of the truth. The knowledge of God, and of the truth, amount to the same thing. The saving truth is, that the Father gave his son to be a propitiation for the sins of his people. The knowledge of God consists in knowing this truth. They alone know God who know his character as it is manifested in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Now, eternal life is ascribed to this knowledge as well as to faith, because all who know this truth believe it, and none know it who are not taught of God. Therefore says our Lord to his disciples, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "This is eternal life to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." If, then, the knowing of the truth be eternal life, the belief of it must be the same.

The belief of the gospel, then—or the belief that the sacrifice of Jesus is a sufficient atonement for the sins of all who receive it—is saving faith. In this way alone sinners are to be directed to heaven. As there is no other sacrifice for sin, so there is no other way of obtaining an interest in this sacrifice than by crediting the testimony

of God with respect to it. If the Scriptures are to be relied on, I am confident that I have proved this position, though I have quoted but a small part of the passages that bear on this point. And, if this be true, how many millions of those called Christians are, under the name of the religion of Christ, leading in the way to destruction! I have no pleasure in denouncing wrath against the human race; but, taking the Bible for the Word of God, what can I say? Is the way I have pointed out the usual way that the various sects of the Christian name are directed to happiness? Do the generality even of those who profess in one way or other to rely on Christ, take this way of being interested in his work? In applying this part of the subject, I shall avoid hurting the feelings of any by pointing expressly at particular sects; but I cannot avoid charging the consciences of my readers to take God's way rather than that of man. Do any religious teachers know better than the apostles what is the way to heaven? Are religious teachers to be believed rather than the Scriptures? If the Scriptures are not to be credited, then the authority of religious teachers of all denominations must fall. If the Scriptures are not true, then the institution of religious teachers of every kind is a forgery of priestcraft. What higher credentials can religious teachers plead than the Word of God? Even under the Old Testament dispensation, when the religious teachers were appointed in a peculiar manner by God, it was said, " To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not agreeable to this word, it is because there is no light in them." If the Israelites were commanded to attend to the Scriptures rather than their teachers, and to follow the former in every instance in which their teachers differed from them, is it possible that, under the clearer light of the New Testament revelation, teachers should have an authority paramount to the Scriptures? Though they were commanded to seek the law from the priests' lips; yet if their priests did not speak agreeable to the law they were commanded not to receive it. In what point of view did our Lord consider the traditions

of the Jewish elders? Did he not say to the Scribes and Pharisees "In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Ye make void the law of God by your traditions?" Did he excuse the errors of the multitude, because they were instructed in these errors by their religious teachers? Did he not tell those teachers that they would neither themselves enter the kingdom of God nor suffer others to enter? Will he not on the day of judgment say the same thing to all religious teachers that teach contrary to the Bible, and to all led astray by them? Why, then, ye millions called Christians, do you not read the word of God and attend to what he says on this subject? You must answer for yourselves; for the Scriptures say, every one of us must give an account of himself unto God. Ought you not, then, to judge for yourselves? While the Scriptures declare to you that the only way to obtain an interest in the atonement of Christ is to believe it, will you believe any man who tells you, that you are entitled to the merit of his blood, when you perform what your church enjoins upon you? Will you believe those who tell you that compliance with any rules or ceremonies is necessary in order to have the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, when the apostle Paul assures the Galatians that to receive even circumcision, as necessary to salvation, made them debtors to do the whole law. "I testify (says he) to every one that is circumcised, that Christ shall profit him nothing." Will you, then, in opposition to the Apostle, make any thing but faith in Christ necessary to obtain an interest in his work? If the Apostle Paul called the Judaizing system another gospel, because it made something else necessary besides faith in the work of Christ, what sort of a gospel is it that makes innumerable observances necessary as well as this work? If he denounces woe to all that preach such a gospel, even though it were an angel from heaven, what woes will be the portion of those who teach that the faith of Paul's gospel is not sufficient, and enjoin human inventions as essential to salvation? Do you believe the

Scriptures? open them and read Gal. i. 6-9 Does not this flash the lightning of God into your faces, you who receive your religion from men? Can you rest your souls upon a gospel that is denounced as accursed by the apostles of God? You speak well of Jesus—you call your religion his gospel;—but the apostle declares that any human invention joined with the gospel as being essential to salvation, is another gospel, and that all who receive it are under the curse of the law of God. "Christ," says he, "is become of no effect to you, whoever of you are justified by the law ye are fallen from grace." Now, these people did not in words renounce dependence on the sacrifice of Christ, for in that case it would have been of no use to inform them that Christ would be of no effect to them. They only made circumcision necessary as well as faith in Christ. This system the Apostle considers as teaching justification by the law; because if any works of law are mixed with faith in the work of Christ, there is no true faith at all. If, then, Christ would profit them nothing, who taught justification even by the law of Moses, will he profit those who seek to justify themselves by laws of their own invention? I call upon you, my fellowmortals, to exercise your understandings, as rational creatures. If the Word of God is truth and life, your system is error and death. If the Word of God is not to be relied on, let it be rejected, and all institutions that claim to be founded on it. If you refuse to acknowledge the Scriptures as the standard of truth, there is no common ground upon which we can reason. To make the Scriptures subject to the authoritative explanation of men, is to deny the authority of Scripture altogether.

Oh, then, my friends, come to Christ. You are weary and heavy laden with the vast number and weight of your religious observances. You are toiling, and sweating, and suffering for salvation. But you never can succeed in this track. You are on the wrong path, and though you should travel with ever such perseverance and patience, you must at last find disappointment, in

issuing into the abodes of misery instead of the mansions of bliss. Come to Jesus and you will find rest to your souls. By faith in his atonement, you will find complete peace of conscience. His yoke is easy and his burthen is light; for in his way of salvation the work is done altogether by himself. The mistaken Jews were laden with the burthen, placed on their shoulders by their religious teachers, in order to their salvation. But the Lord commands them to cast away this insupportable and useless load, and to rest on him. Why will you, then, continue to groan under the burthen of painful religious observances placed on your shoulders by your teachers? They will profit you nothing. The work that pleases God has been finished by Christ;—believe in it and you shall find rest to your souls.

Now are you, my friends, better guides, who, fervent in zeal for the salvation of mankind, direct them to obtain an interest in Christ by forsaking their sins, doing good works, and struggling with God in prayer? I have no doubt of your sincerity; but as little doubt have I of the sincerity of those whom I last addressed, who, you think, are so far astray. I believe both classes are in earnest, and I blame neither for acting according to their views; but both are condemned, because they do not submit to what is taught in the Word of God. Of both of you it may be said, as Paul said of the Jews (Rom. x. 1-13). You are in earnest; but are you more in earnest than the Jews were? Were they astray? As sure as they were astray, so sure are you astray; for, though there is a difference in the works in which you trust, you agree with the Jews in establishing your own righteousness, and rejecting that righteousness which comes to the ungodly by believing that God raised Jesus from the dead. Is it possible, that these pious, these zealous, these righteous Jews can be in any danger of condemnation? If there is truth in the words of Jesus, they died in their sins, if they persisted in their views. You may think it impossible that, after all your mortifying observances, and labours, and good deeds, and prayers, you should at last come

short of heaven. But will Jesus be more tolerant to your errors than he was to the errors of his kinsmen according to the flesh? Were there any people on earth more celebrated for their piety and religious attainments than the Pharisees? yet the Lord denounces them to destruction. Now, my friends, though I respect your intentions, I cannot avoid declaring to you that your religious scheme is in opposition to the gospel. You direct men to come to God by forsaking their sins, by performing good works, and especially by prayer. But the Scriptures show that men forsake their sins by believing in Jesus, and not that they come to believe in Jesus by forsaking their sins. The Scriptures teach that men perform good works as the fruits of their faith, and not as an introduction to faith. The Scriptures teach that believers pray out of faith, and not that sinners are to pray to obtain faith. Your scheme, then, does not lead the sinner to Christ; but it leads him away from Christ, and forbids him Christ's presence till he has done what he never can do, till he come to Christ by believing his gospel for his salvation. The gospel says to the chief of sinners, believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved. But you say to such sinners, stand off from Jesus, till you have become in some measure good. The gospel says that belief in the atonement is the way of obtaining an interest in that atonement; you say that there are other conditions of obtaining an interest in that work. You tell men to pray for salvation; the gospel tells men to believe the gospel for salvation. If, then, the gospel be true, your scheme of religion is not true. There is much seeming piety in directing sinners to pray for salvation, and there would be much impiety in directing them to curse for salvation, but the former is as truly unscriptural as the latter. The former is even more dangerous; for no one will be deceived by the advice that would recommend cursing as the way of obtaining salvation: but men in general are ready to be deceived with the direction to pray for salvation. It is thought even impious to deny this. What better can a poor sinner do

than to pray for salvation? What other thing can he do? Indeed he cannot do this. He cannot pray to God more than he can keep the whole law of God, till he believe in God; for without faith it is impossible to please God. The prayer of the wicked is an abomination with God. Peter, therefore, does not enjoin prayer on Simon Magus, but in connection with the command to repent, which supposes faith. You command the sinner to do an impossibility. You might as well enjoin him to remove mountains. What, then, you reply, would I have a sinner to do? According to my doctrine, he cannot believe till God opens the eyes of his understanding; he cannot do good works till he believes. Is he not, then, to pray for this faith? Is he justifiable to remain in his present state? I answer he is not justifiable to remain in his present state. It is his first duty to believe. His inability to believe results from his unwillingness to believe. You will not, says Christ, come unto me, that you may have life. As long as he is in this state, the Scriptures keep the gospel before him; charge him to believe it; condemn him if he believes it not; and, unconnected with belief, neither enjoin him to pray nor to do any thing else. Faith is the first step; and we are not warranted, if this is not complied with, to pass on to other things. If faith is necessary to acceptable prayer, is it not absurd to direct sinners to pray for acceptable faith? The Scriptures assure us that faith is the gift of God; they assure us, nevertheless, that the want of it is man's sin. How it is beyond man's power, and yet his duty, is not for me, by metaphysical arguments, to establish. I leave this to him from whom I have learned it. It is palpably obvious from Scripture. Those who acknowledge Scripture are bound to receive it as well as I; those who reject it cannot consistently acknowledge the Scriptures to be the Word of God. The direction to pray for faith supposes a willingness in the sinner to believe, which the Scriptures deny. It supposes, also, some spiritual life and ability in the sinner; which is altogether unscriptural. The reason men do not come to the light is,

because their deeds are evil; therefore, they hate the light. If a man were to say to a teacher of natural philosophy, sir, I would wish to believe Sir Isaac Newton's theory of the motions of the heavenly bodies, but I cannot believe it. I cannot believe that the earth moves round the sun, and that the sun does not move round the earth, &c, &c. Would the professor gravely say to him—my friend, it is very true you cannot believe this yet, but pray that you may be enabled to believe it? No, he would direct him to understand' it, and he could not but believe it. Just so with the gospel; whoever understands it will believe it. A man might as well be supposed to be able to comprehend all the observations of Euclid without yielding his assent to his propositions, as to understand the gospel without believing it. If a man will say he would wish to believe, let him be told that he does not yet understand it. State it to him, and press him to receive it.

**SECTION 4. FAITH IN THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST, OR
THE BELIEF OF THE GOSPEL, EFFECTUALLY
CHANGES THE MIND, PURSUITS, AND CONDUCT; OR
THE GOSPEL EFFECTUALLY CHANGES THE MIND,
PURSUITS, AND CONDUCT OF ALL THAT RECEIVE IT.**

It has ever been the charge of the enemies of the Gospel, that it is unfriendly to good works. In this accusation the nominal Christian agrees with the infidel, and differs from him only in endeavouring inconsistently to hold the truth of revelation, while he makes a gospel more effectual, in his view, to produce a holy life. The lives and even the sentiments of some that profess to be saved by grace through the righteousness of Christ, may tend to confirm them in their views of the effects of the Gospel. But whether we attend to the nature of the Gospel itself, or the apostolical declarations with respect to the genuine and necessary effects of the belief of it, we shall find this charge totally without foundation. So far from it being true, that salvation, through the belief of the atonement of Christ, encourages sin, it is the only way in which men ever will be turned to the service of God from their wicked works. Neither, therefore, do they who bring this accusation understand the Gospel; nor do they understand it, who, professing to believe it, consider it as giving indulgence to them in their sins. With respect to both these, damnation is just, for they have both made God a liar, inasmuch as they have not believed the record that God hath given of his Son. The god of this world hath blinded their eyes, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine into them. We shall, therefore, show, in this section, both from the nature of the Gospel, and from the apostolical declarations, that it effectually changes the mind, pursuits, and conduct of all that receive it.

The change that the belief of the truth produces on the mind is so great, that it is called, in Scripture, a being born again, or a being born of the Word of God. Of this change, Jesus discourses to Nicodemus.—John iii. 1—8. Nicodemus, from the first, considered Jesus as a teacher sent from God, and, from his address, seems to have thought that this acknowledgment was all that was necessary to become his disciple; but the Lord informed him, that "except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." This birth, in the course of the conversation, he informed him is a spiritual birth—"born of water and of the Spirit"—importing, as I apprehend, a being changed, through the means of the truth represented in baptism, by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

That this change is really produced by the belief of the truth, is clear from 1 Peter i. 23, where it is called "a being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God:" "and this is the word which, by the Gospel, is preached unto you." This great change, then, is produced on the mind by the Eternal Spirit, through the Gospel. Among those that hold the doctrine of the new birth of Christians, there are two opposite and equally dangerous errors, both, however, abundantly refuted by the passages alluded to, without reference to innumerable others in the holy Scriptures. One very -numerous class insist strongly on the necessity of a spiritual birth; but they teach that the Spirit effects it often independently of the word of truth, and before the truth is known, or has ever been heard. This opinion leads to enthusiasm, and gives no proper criterion between the teachings of the Spirit, and the extravagant ravings of a wild imagination. But the scriptural view of the birth and teachings of the Spirit gives no refuge for the extravagancies of fancy that have so much disgraced the profession of Christianity in the estimation of the infidel and philosopher. When it is held forth that the Spirit teaches by the word, and nothing but what is contained in the word, the enthusiast has no cover, the reviler has no

just handle to mock, and the Christian has a security from the imposition of his own imagination, and the imagination of others. Another class, but a very small one, hold that, in the new birth, there is no agency of the Spirit distinct from the word, and that the word itself produces this change. This contradicts our Lord's account of the matter, which says, that believers are born of " water and of the Spirit." It contradicts the apostle Peter's account, for he says, in the verse preceding the one already quoted, that they had obeyed the truth through the Spirit. The latter class speak much more confusedly and inconsistently than the former. In attempting to hold the Scripture language, they are inclined to say that the Spirit is in the word, or that the word is the Spirit; that is, the soldier is the sword, and the sword is the soldier. But the word of God says that the word is not the Spirit, but the sword of the Spirit. And in the passage quoted from Peter, the truth is what they obeyed, and their obedience was produced through the Spirit. If there is anything distinct, the truth mentioned here is distinct from the Spirit, through which they obeyed that truth. I have never seen this sentiment in print, but the abettors of it seem to admit principles that overturn their system. I believe they have admitted the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners, and many other things which, if admitted, effectually overturn their views. I am sure some of them did at first admit such principles, and hold such contradictory opinions, that there was no possibility of reasoning with' them. For when a person either does not see, or will not admit, the necessary tendency of his views, argument is at an end; but I predicted at the time that they would either give up their views, or go further, and probably before this they have done the latter. I have no design to canvass this opinion at present: I barely notice it, that if this address falls into the hands of any of those persons, some of whom I formerly loved and esteemed much for the truth's sake, that then appeared to dwell in them, they may be induced to reconsider this subject. I grant that

some may be so entangled in the reasonings of men, that they may hold the truth, and yet hold things inconsistent with it. But I am constrained to declare, that I consider all who follow up these principles as fallen from the truth. When they are pursued to their proper issue, they will make man's salvation ultimately of himself. I pray God that he may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Though the two classes mentioned hold opposite errors, yet they have a common foundation. The one teaches that though the new birth is the work of God, yet that it may be obtained by the exertions and prayers of the sinner; and since, according to the doctrine of the other, there is no divine influence necessary to produce this change by the word, if the word produces it in one, and not in another, the difference must be in the persons. According to both systems the converted man may glory in himself. In opposition to every thing of this kind, the apostle declares, that God's plan of salvation excludes boasting, and calls upon him that glories, to glory in the Lord.

This change produced on the minds of believers by the Spirit through the gospel, is seen in their views of God, of themselves, and of their fellow-men. All men ignorant of the gospel hate the just and holy God of the Scriptures. Philosophers may discourse with much correctness with respect to the being and attributes of God, and express great devotion 'towards the character of him whom they point out as the object of worship. But this god is but an idol. He is no more the just and terrible God of Moses, who will not clear the guilty, than the Jupiter of the ancient Greeks and Romans. This may easily be seen by presenting to these venerable sages the true character of God. Even their accustomed philosophic gravity forsakes them, and all their boasted self-command cannot keep them from blaspheming, storming, and grinding their teeth. The same thing is true with respect to the most devout religionists of all denominations. They all, no less than the most abandoned profligate,

hate that God who has manifested himself to the world through Jesus Christ. The god that each of them loves, has attributes suitable to their views of their own character. Now, as soon as men believe the truth, they love God, because they now apprehend him in his true character. Formerly, they could not love a great and holy God, because they did not see how a just and holy God could love them. Now they see that God is perfectly just, while he forgives them. We love him, says the apostle John, because he first loved us. Though they may have formerly not only acknowledged the existence of God, but may have even verbally assented to what the Scriptures say about him, yet now they, for the first time, come to know God, and to conceive of him according to Scripture.

The belief of the gospel changes also the views that men have of themselves. However abandoned is a man's character, he does not consider it so bad as the Scriptures represent the character even of the least guilty. He never views his case as hopeless, but with all his sins thinks he may still get to heaven. If this is the case with the most profligate, the sober, virtuous, and devout, will have no hesitation in resting in the goodness of their character before God. But as soon as they believe the truth, they have other views of themselves. Paul, who while an unbeliever was blameless with respect to the righteousness that was in the law, confessed himself to be not only worthless, but the chief of sinners, when he received the truth. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," "sinners of whom I am chief."

Believers also are changed in their minds with respect to their fellow-creatures. It is the testimony of Jesus that sinners will do good to those that do good to them ; but it is also the testimony of Jesus, by his apostles, that men are hateful and hating one another. Human feeling may induce men to wish well to their race, when there is no interference of self-interest; but the smallest occasion of this kind will discover the native malignity of the human heart. They

must, indeed, be very superficial or very prejudiced observers, who do not see that men, in general, live in malice and envy. The strongest ties of blood are rarely sufficient to withstand any degree of clashing interests. But how great and visible is the change produced by the faith of the gospel! The believer loves all mankind, not excepting even the greatest of his enemies. Paul declares that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow for the state of his brethren according to the flesh; yet these brethren were' thirsting for his blood. In the presence of the council by which he was tried, and of a large assembly by whom he was accused, he exclaimed, in reply to Agrippa, "Would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether, such as I am, except these bonds." The best of his blessings he wished to the worst of his enemies without any of his trials. With what earnestness of affection he loved all the friends of the Lord Jesus, every page of his epistles bears testimony. What a change was this! And such a change do all Christians experience. In their unbelief they have hated the servants of Jesus, but "they have purified their souls in obeying the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren."

The pursuits and happiness of believers are also changed. Formerly they pursued happiness in the pleasures, honours, or riches, of this world; now they seek for happiness beyond the grave. They seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, trusting that all other things shall be added unto them. Their conversation is in heaven, from whence, also, they look for the Saviour. They abhor the things in which they formerly took delight, and delight in what they formerly abhorred. I delight in the law of God, says the apostle, in the inner man. Many things in the commandments of Jesus Christ are so disagreeable to flesh and blood, that they are called cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye; yet the Christian not only acquiesces, but finds pleasure in yielding obedience to Christ in such things. He still has a corrupt

nature to struggle against, but his delight is decidedly in the law of his God. Formerly he may have pursued the riches of this world, but now his riches lie in heaven. Zacchaeus, it would appear, had heaped up treasures in his unbelief, even by oppression; but the enlargement of his mind is seen from his declaration immediately upon receiving the truth. "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." The first Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods—"knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."—Heb. x. 34. If in time past the believer pursued the glory of this world, he now seeks for glory, honour, and immortality. Heavenly glory is so much the object of his pursuit, that he not only foregoes earthly glory, but takes patiently the reproaches of Christ, which are more bitter than death. He even rejoices that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake. This great change upon the mind and pursuits of Christians the Scriptures ascribe altogether to the Spirit of God, through the instrumentality of the gospel. Peter testifies that God purified the hearts of the gentiles, as well as of the Jews by faith. "God made choice among us, that the gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."—Acts xv. 7—9. In his letter to the Jewish Christians of the dispersion, he takes it for granted, that they had "purified their souls in obeying the truth." "Whatsoever," says the apostle John, "is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." What this faith is, he informs us in the next verse: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."—1 John v. 4, 5.

The conduct of Christians is also entirely changed both with respect to the sins in which they formerly lived, and their obedience

to the most self-denying of the commands of Jesus. The most profligate characters become sober, righteous, and temperate.—Titus ii. 11. What an infamous list have we,—1 Cor. vi. 11. "Such were some of you," says the apostle, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified;" they were now made holy, separated from their ungodly courses, and set apart to the service of God. The Christians to whom Peter wrote, formerly walked in lasciviousness, &c.—1 Peter iv. 3,4. But they had now abandoned these courses, as their former companions thought it strange that they ran not with them to the same excess of riot, and spoke evil of them on that account.

Let those who acknowledge the authority of Scripture, yet charge the doctrine of salvation by faith in the atonement with leading to lasciviousness, attend to the apostle Paul's anticipation and refutation of this objection. In the first five chapters he proves the universal guilt of man, and the riches of grace in the way of redemption through the blood of Christ. The objection that presents itself to the mind of all who understand not the apostle's doctrine is, that if this be true, then we may live on in sin; for the more we sin the more divine grace will be glorified in forgiving us. The apostle states the objection in its full force, and shows that it has no foundation in truth.—Rom* vi. 1—23. The apostle here shows that such an objection is inconsistent with the nature of the truth believed, as well as with the service into which men are introduced by faith in Christ. If there is any solidity in the apostle's reasoning, the gospel has no such tendency. Let me now ask those who continue to bring this objection against the apostolical doctrine what they think of his refutation. If it is inspired, it must be conclusive. It is not possible to state the position of salvation by grace through faith in the atonement more clearly or more strongly than he has done in the preceding part of the epistle. The objection anticipated by the apostle is the very same that is still insisted on; if his reply is not satisfactory, there is no higher authority.

From the nature of the gospel and of the hope believers have through it, the apostle John shows that faith in Christ is not only inconsistent with living in sin, but that it purifies the heart.—1 John iii. 3. If then, a man does not abandon his sins, he evidently possesses not the hope that the apostles and other Christians possessed. If he lives in sin, let him profess what he may, he has not the hope of the gospel. The apostle then goes on to show, that a believer's living in sin is inconsistent with the design of Christ's coming.—4, 5. If Christ was manifested to take away or bear our sins, there cannot be a more powerful reason why we should forsake sin. If even the rich grace and mercy of God could not reach us till our sins are removed by the death of Christ, shall we live in that which is so offensive to God? They must be greatly displeasing to God, if mercy could not save us without having them atoned for. If, then, they are so exceedingly displeasing to God, can any person continue in them after believing that Christ came to bear them? A believer, even were he assured of impunity, would not indulge in that which he knows his God so much hates. "In him (the apostle adds) is no sin." If, then, we hope to be like him hereafter, it is natural for us to desire to be like him now. But if any should choose to say, that he would like to take the benefit of Christ's atonement, yet continue in sin, the proper reply to him is, that he does not so much as believe in the atonement—"whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."—6. To abide in Christ is to continue in the faith of the gospel. If, then, any who make profession of this faith give themselves up to sin, they have renounced the faith, they abide not in him. To see him, means to perceive his character, or to see him as he is revealed in the Scriptures; for the greater part of his disciples have not seen him on earth. To know him, means the effect of this perception. The man whom I accurately perceive, I know; but if my perception has been inaccurate or partial, I may mistake some other person for him.

Just so, if I have perceived thoroughly the character of Christ, I will know him; and if a thousand characters with his name were presented to me in his stead I would reject them all as impostors. If I so have seen and known Christ, I will not continue in sin; "for whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." Let divines, then, tell me what they may about the possibility of seeing him and knowing him without being truly converted from sin to holiness, I will believe the apostle rather than them all. Should any man attempt to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, by saying that he might with safety indulge in sin, since Christ has died, let him be informed he hath not seen Jesus, neither hath he known him. This apostle, though he attributes all to the belief that Jesus is the Christ, yet, instead of disparaging good works, gives men's works as the criterion of their being the children of God, or the children of the devil.—7—10. Can any thing be better calculated to expose the vain hopes of those who pretend to speak of hope in Christ while they live in sin, or to refute the specious objections of the enemies of salvation by grace through faith in the atonement.

But the belief of the truth not only induces men to give up their beloved sins, it also produces obedience to the most self-denying commandments. Believers not only refrain from the sins to which they have been addicted, they also perform the works that Jesus enjoins. The apostle Paul, speaking of the word of the truth of the gospel which had come to the Colossians, asserts that it brings forth fruit in them and in all others in the world who receive it. Col. 1-6—"Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." Ye are my disciples, says Christ, if ye do whatsoever I command you, this is the law of God that ye keep his commandments. "He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Now, the commandments of Jesus are every thing that he requires or forbids.

People who are accustomed to boast of good works, generally confine that appellation to the great duties of the law that are still in some measure taught by the light of nature, and principally to a few social duties. Such persons have as great a dislike to the good works of Scripture, as they have to the salvation of Scripture. Scripture good works take in the whole range of duties enjoined by the authority of Jesus, and embrace his institutions and the confession of the most obnoxious part of his doctrines as well as those duties that some are fond of talking of as the only good works. The love of God, which is the first great commandment, and the substance of all that relate to God, requires that obedience be given to every thing without exception that God commands. The "Christian, then, shows his good works, not only by prayer to God and speaking well of him, by love and mercy to men, but also by taking up his cross and following Christ through good and bad report. He confesses Jesus and his words before men, though they revile him and hate him on that account. In writing this address, it sometimes strikes across my mind that it will be painful to present to the world what I am sure the world will not approve. I foresee every objection that will be made to my views, and anticipate the many severe censures that I am likely to receive. Were I to consult flesh and blood, I would either not write at all, or I would soften down my views to render them less objectionable. But I believe the gospel, I take up my cross, and follow my master. Should I, from the fear of men or love of their favour, either avoid writing any thing that I thought might be useful, or hide any part of the truth, I could no longer call myself a Christian nor have good hope through grace. My brethren, you talk of good works; but I declare it would be less painful to me to make a pilgrimage to Mecca or Jerusalem than encounter all the odium that I already endure, and that this address is calculated to increase. Should I give way to my natural disposition, I would wish to stand well with the philosophers and the men of learning, the very men

upon whom I am obliged often to be most severe. Were I to write against the existence of God, and even of men, I should not provoke an angry reply from one of them; but when I profess the foolish gospel of Christ, I must be a fool. And better for me to be a fool for a while than to be everlastingly a miserable fool; for if any man will be wise, the apostle asserts that he must become a fool in this world.

The faith of the gospel also produces obedience, with respect to the observance of all Christ's institutions. I readily allow that Christians may be ignorant of these institutions, and that, in this case, they cannot show their love to Jesus by doing what they do not perceive to be his commandments. The most enlightened Christian may be ignorant of some things; and the generality of Christians are ignorant of many. With respect to his institutions, few Christians appear to have any correct views at all. Some ordinances they do not see at all; and others, while they retain the name, they do not understand, and, consequently, do not observe aright. But, with respect to all the commandments of Jesus, every believer yields obedience as far as he knows. If a man perceives any thing to be a command of Jesus, and, out of worldly views avoids obeying it, he has no just pretensions to the character of a Christian. If he says he knows him and keepeth not his commandments, he is a liar and the truth is not in him. My friends, this is the reason why I observe some of those ordinances that are looked upon to be ridiculous. This is the reason why I observe the baptism, the Lord's supper, &c, of the apostles, and not the ordinances of men that have got these names. This is the reason why the laugh of this world cannot drive me from doing these things that they tell me are so hurtful to me and to my cause. I know I would be better thought of, and be more successful, were I to take the advices of this nature, that are frequently good-naturedly, and even kindly given me. But my business is to obey Jesus, and leave my character and my success in his hands. I am sure that many people sincerely feel for me, and that they give their

advice with the best intention; but I must inform such friends, that I pursue the present line of conduct, not because it is in my wisdom best calculated to serve me, and promote the cause in which I embarked, but because I know that Jesus has enjoined it. I persist in doing these things, not because I am blind to the consequences that they must have with respect to my character and interest in the world, but knowing the worst result. I persist in obedience to my Lord, hoping that when he shall appear I shall be like him, when I shall see him as he is.

Such, then, is the morality or good works of the Scriptures; and to such morality, they that boast most of morality will have as great objections as they have to the doctrine of salvation through grace. It is, therefore, not unusual for believers to hear it objected to their views that they tend to encourage licentiousness, and at other times be accused by the same people as being self-righteous and over-strict. In their undistinguishing zeal against the truth, men urge the most inconsistent arguments. John the Baptist lived in an abstemious manner, and was, therefore, accused by the Jews as being possessed with a demon. Jesus came eating and drinking, like other people, and was accused as a wine-bibber and a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners. I have piped with you, says Jesus, and ye have not danced; I have mourned, and ye have not lamented.

It is, therefore, most unjustly that the gospel is charged with countenancing sin ;—it teaches all who receive it to live soberly, righteously, &c. But the true origin of this charge is not a conviction that the gospel encourages sin, but an antipathy against it, because it does not promise life to the good works of men. The believer encounters the most dangerous services without reserving his fortune, fame, or even life; he submits to the most humiliating and self-denying duties; but, after all, he counts himself an unprofitable servant. Instead of looking on God as his debtor, he is convinced that in all things he comes short. After teaching the necessity of

forgiveness to the utmost extent—a thing most opposed to human nature—the Lord Jesus informs his disciples that after they have done all this they have nothing to boast.—Luke xvii. 7—10. In what a different light would philosophy or worldly religion have taught them to consider their works!

Such a change does the gospel invariably produce upon all who believe it: and such a change never was produced by any other system. The pursuits of philosophy may divert the mind from those of revelation, and may give it a disrelish for the vulgar pleasures of the illiterate; but instead of changing the mind to the love of the true God and humble views of human nature, 'they increase pride and enmity to God. The philosopher may charge the pleasures of the foxhunter as equally gross with that of his dogs; but he has no less disgust at the pleasures of the Christian life. He may speak of virtue; but his virtue is not obedience to the commands of Jesus. He inculcates benevolence; but his benevolence hates the servants of Christ. The religion that is taught by the wisdom of this world is not more successful in producing such a change. Whatever views are given up or received by it, the same determined hatred of the character of God remains. Whatever it may profess of the corruption and guilt of human nature and of salvation by grace, it will ultimately glory in some self-performance.

With respect to influence upon the conduct, philosophy itself has no great pretensions. It scarcely hopes to extend its influence over any but a few secluded speculatists enamoured of the beauty of virtue and of philosophic disquisition. To curb the violent passions that rage in society, its warmest admirers must confess its inadequacy. Its soft, calm, voice cannot be heard in a crowd; its refined sentiments can neither be felt nor understood by the vulgar bulk of mankind. It speaks to the statesman, but with no great confidence of being heard; ambition and self-interest drown its voice. To change such characters as are mentioned, 1 Cor. vi. 11, it

has no pretensions. To avow such a power would savour of fanaticism. If virtuous habits are not early formed, it is next to impossible to form them at a later period. Especially if evil habits are contracted, nothing but a length of time and a course of rigorous discipline could at all appear efficacious in the eye of philosophy. Success, in the most favourable circumstances, would be problematical. The changes of which we read in the New Testament, visible immediately on the belief of the truth, are viewed by it as the extravagance of fanaticism. Some forms of religion that have a considerable portion of Scriptural truth, mixed with the wisdom of this world, especially when urged by enthusiasm, have an effect in producing very great changes in the lives of the most wicked men. The consciences of men testify against them; and when they are suitably addressed they are ready to lend their aid to reformation. Such changes, however, will often be like the washing of the swine; and they will always be like the man out of whom the demon departed—he will return with seven worse than himself. If he is externally reformed, he will be in his mind more an enemy to God. Thus our Lord says of the converts of the Pharisees, they would compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he was made he was tenfold more the child of hell than before. Notwithstanding any external change made upon him, and by becoming a Pharisee such a change must be made, instead of being made better he was made worse.

**SECTION 5. THIS PLAN OF SALVATION IS THE WISDOM
AND POWER OF GOD, BUT IS FOLLY AND WEAKNESS
IN THE ESTIMATION OF HUMAN WISDOM.**

The salvation of sinners through the atonement of Jesus Christ, is the most illustrious display of the divine character that ever was manifested to the world. There is no other plan of salvation that has obtained a vogue among men that harmonizes the perfections of God. All human schemes of religion save the sinner at the expense of some part of the divine character. The blood of the cross alone, adjusts the different and seemingly opposite claims of the divine attributes. Every divine perfection is shown here in its utmost glory. The astonishing love and mercy of God are seen in the expensive sacrifice, with which he purchased his enemies from destruction. (Nothing is a greater instance of mercy among men than to be able to forgive.) The Scriptures consider the gift of Christ as the greatest instance of love that ever was exhibited.—Romans v. 6—8 ; viii. 32; 1 John iv. 8—10. His mercy not only prompted him to forgive his enemies, but his love prompted him to redeem them at such an immense expense. Let those, therefore, who know this love and mercy, value them according to the depth of misery from which they have rescued them, and the value of that sacrifice by which they were redeemed. The truth of God with respect to all the declarations of vengeance for sin, denounced in the Scriptures, is clearly manifested. The world is ready to allege that God will not be as severe as he has said, and many hope for salvation upon that very ground. But the truth of God is fully vindicated in taking vengeance for sin by the death of Christ, and all men are warned of the certainty of punishment on the workers of iniquity. If such things have been done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry. The

awful justice of God appears here in the most terrible point of view. What can more clearly show the divine justice, than when man was to be saved from the ruin of his sins, justice must be satisfied by the death of the Son of God! Had it been possible to forgive sins without a full compensation to the claims of justice, surely the plan of salvation, through the cross, would never have been executed. If God could relax justice, would he not have relaxed it in the case of his innocent son, when suffering in the room of sinners? Shall the sinner himself, who dies in his sins, ever escape from justice, when Jesus who suffered for the sins of others, drank the cup to the very dregs? The torment of hell does not exhibit the justice of God in so strong a point of view as the suffering of Christ. Those punished in hell, never satisfy justice; but justice was fully satisfied in the death of Christ.

The sovereignty of God is also seen in this glorious work. Many people who speak of the atonement, seem to think that the salvation of man flows as a matter of course from Christ's living a life of perfect obedience to the law, and his dying under its curse. Salvation flows with the utmost certainty, and in the strictest justice from the atonement of Christ, but Christ's work is imputed to us (not as a matter of course), in God's sovereignty. The law itself made no provision for its being fulfilled, or satisfied by any but men themselves. It was by a sovereign, divine constitution, that God accepted the sacrifice of Christ in room of the eternal punishment of the guilty. It is of God's sovereignty that he accepts reparation, not from the injurious person, but from another in his stead. He might have insisted that the persons who injured him, should personally suffer his vengeance. The father, therefore, sent his son into the world, testifying that he was well pleased in him, that he was willing to take him in the room of the guilty, and accept his sacrifice, instead of the punishment of the transgressors themselves. That the work of Jesus was accepted by him, he has testified by raising him

from the dead. The sovereignty of God is also seen in this plan, as it respects those for whom he gave his son. The greater part of those who profess the atonement, cannot bear the thought that it was not made for every individual of the human race. But if it was not merited by any, he might, as a sovereign, give his son for all, or some, or none, as seemed good in his sight. If it was merited, salvation is not of grace, but of debt. To charge God with partiality in having mercy upon some of his enemies and leaving others to perish, denies his sovereignty, and supposes merit in those who are overlooked. If all are without merit and righteously obnoxious to divine wrath, the deliverance of some, and the punishment of others, is not partiality, but sovereignty. May he not with greater reason be accused of partiality for overlooking all the angels that fell, and delivering them, &c.? Why did he save sinners of Adam's race, and leave all the sinning angels to perish? Because it was his sovereign pleasure. It is not my business to justify God, for he scorns to give any account of his matters. But whoever denies the sovereignty of God, denies the character of the true God. If there is any thing plainly taught in Scripture, it is that the sacrifice of Christ was made for those only who shall eventually be saved by it. If the wisdom of men cannot reconcile this with their views of what is right, let them be prepared to dispute the matter with the Almighty in the day of judgment.

But the wisdom and power that have adjusted the claims of these various attributes in the salvation of man, are the most astonishing thing in this glorious transaction. These are so truly divine, so far beyond the conception of men, that so far from being able to discover the plan by which all the perfections of God could be harmonized in the salvation of the guilty, men cannot understand it, even after it has been declared, till they are taught of God. Instead, therefore, of admiring the divine wisdom and power in effecting salvation by a plan of such a character, they have generally

treated this plan as folly and weakness. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But as soon as the Lord opens the understanding of any to perceive the way in which a guilty man may stand as just before God, they will perceive that to be the grandest display of power and wisdom which formerly they rejected as the ravings of enthusiasm, or perhaps acknowledged in words without understanding it. In the atonement of Jesus, mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. Mercy steps forward to save the sinner, but it saves him in such a way that the truth of God's denunciations of wrath against men's sins remains inviolate. It is impossible for God to lie, and no scheme, whose success depends upon the expectation that God will recede a tittle from what he has said, can ever be successful. Peace is proclaimed between God and man, but it is not a peace dishonourable to the righteousness of God. Justice is fully satisfied, and the law, instead of being relaxed in its demands, is magnified and made honourable.' In the atonement, justice and the law have received full and perfect satisfaction, which they never will do even in the punishment of the ruined. The punishments of the wicked are declared to be eternal, consequently justice never will be satisfied. But Jesus has given a full and adequate price for the sins of his people. By his one sacrifice, he has redeemed them from all iniquity. The law and justice have no further demands. Nay, justice is engaged for the salvation of all for whom Christ died. For as Christ has paid the debt, and as his payment has been accepted by the Father, it would not be just that any should perish whose debts he paid. Therefore, they who believe in Jesus may have confidence in the justice of God as well as in his mercy. They are both equally engaged for their complete salvation. I believe it has been said that such a man as Doctor Price might look for future happiness, not only from the mercy, but also from the justice of God. The words are true

with respect to every Christian; but not in the sense in which they were applied. For, looking to the justice of God, through their own works, there are none of the corrupt race of Adam have any thing to expect but wrath; looking to that justice through the atonement, they may have confidence of salvation. The apostle John, therefore, saith, that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them. Faithful and just to forgive sins! What a strange confession! Was ever such language heard with respect to a human tribunal? It is usual to appeal to mercy for the forgiveness of sins; but what convicted criminal ever yet appealed to the justice of his judge? The justice of the judge requires him to award the appointed punishment to the transgressor of the law. He may feel sorrow in delivering the sentence, but justice requires him to proceed. If the criminal looks for escape, it is by sheltering himself under mercy. Royal clemency may interfere between him and the sentence of justice awarded by the judge; but if it does, it is always at the expense of justice. If mercy triumphs, justice lies prostrate, weeping in the dust. The necessary interpretation of all human laws makes it desirable that the chief magistrate in every country should possess a power of rescuing the criminal from the award of law, and if judiciously exercised, it is useful. But there is no imperfection in the laws of God. To admit that there could exist any case that ought to be excepted from the punishment denounced against transgression, is to arraign the justice and wisdom of the legislator. The just wages of sin, of every sin, is death. How, then, can the sinner look to the faithfulness and justice of God? In the atonement of Christ, and in this way alone. There is no other plan of salvation under heaven, can make these words intelligible; no other plan of salvation can engage justice on the side of the sinner. God is faithful to forgive believers their sins, when they confess them, because he has pledged himself to forgive them. He is just to do so, because, as he has accepted the payment of their surety, his justice requires that he should forgive

the sinner whose debt has been paid. What wisdom there is in this view of the salvation of the guilty ! what power in effecting a plan by which the divine attribute that mainly stood in opposition to the salvation of the guilty should be the guarantee of its complete accomplishment! Justice, instead of denouncing wrath, secures freedom from punishment! How silly does the wisdom of human schemes of salvation appear, when compared with this, by those capable of discerning the difference? In general, salvation is expected from a sort of confusion between mercy and justice. It is not all mercy, for there must be a certain portion of good works to entitle the claimant to the benefit of mercy. It is not all justice, for the most distinguished for good works generally acknowledge some failings and imperfections, which require mercy. The prodigal and the virtuous sage differ only in the degree of mercy required for their salvation. While men in general may require a considerably greater proportion of mercy than of justice on their trial, some eminent patriarchs may look to the justice as much as to the mercy of God. Whatever diversity of opinions there may be among men upon this subject, all human schemes agree in delivering men from strict justice by the interference of mercy. In none of them is God completely merciful or completely just. In God's plan of salvation, he is boundlessly merciful and boundlessly just. God's salvation is all mercy, is all justice. It is all mercy, because man himself does nothing for his salvation; he yields justice not the slightest remuneration. It is all justice, because not a single sin of all the sins of Christ's people is pardoned without being atoned for. Here, then, sinners, here is a plan of salvation on which you may safely rely. This scheme will rescue you from misery, not by defeating the claims of justice, but by showing justice satisfied, and engaged on the side of the believer. In vain do you expect that God's mercy will ever reach you in any other way. In vain you hope that the claims of justice will be relaxed in order to deliver sinners from the wrath due

to their sins. If God is just, no sin can ever pass without punishment. Divine justice must receive all that is due to it, or offenders must abide under the sentence of condemnation, and suffer through eternity, as this suffering can never liquidate the debt. The full compensation that justice has received in the salvation of believers, loudly proclaims to the world that no sin shall ever escape punishment. All the sins of men that have not been punished in the death of Christ, shall be punished in the authors of them. The justice of God remains unsullied by the interposition of mercy, and is glorified in the sacrifice that it has received for the offences of Christ's children. It will claim reparation in the day of judgment from all the workers of iniquity.

It is the wisdom of this glorious plan of salvation that explains those seemingly paradoxical expressions that are often met in the Scriptures, and which are explicable upon no other plan. In the character which Jehovah gives of himself to Moses, he ascribes to himself attributes that, to appearance, are so opposite to each other, that all who do not understand the Gospel are obliged to make an interpolation before they can make the words either consistent or intelligible.—Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Now, this is the name or character of the true God, by which he' distinguishes himself from every thing that has been called God among men. But how does the former part of it consist with the latter? How can so many attributes of mercy be reconciled with his by no means clearing the guilty? Can he be merciful in any degree when he does not clear the guilty? Are there any that need mercy but the guilty? Can it be true that he will not clear the guilty, and yet that he is merciful and gracious? Is there not a contradiction, when he says, "forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty"? In utter despair of being able to solve this difficulty, those who have not understood God's plan of salvation have generally quoted the passage with the addition of the word impenitently, before guilty. But God does not

say that he does not clear the impenitently guilty, but that he does by no means clear the guilty. He clears no description of the guilty. How, then, is any sinner saved? All who understand the atonement can readily give an answer. The blood of Jesus blots out the sins of believers, as if they never were committed. He has taken them wholly on himself, and fully accounted for them to the Father. In themselves, the children of God are guilty sinners; but, considered with respect to their connexion with Christ, they are as innocent as Adam from the hands of his Creator. Though wholly polluted in their nature, they are in the eye of justice as spotless as angels. When, therefore, they come before God, they approach as guilty sinners in themselves; yet, through the blood of atonement they look for acceptance, as being rendered perfectly clear. They enter heaven with a defiance to all their enemies, to allege any thing against them. Believers are, therefore, said to be justified, yea, the ungodly are said to be justified by faith. To justify, means to clear of some charge that has been alleged. It is a forensic word, used in courts when the accused persons are cleared of the charges laid against them; but even as a common word, it is perfectly understood in this sense. When a person is accused of any thing of which he is innocent, all men know what he means when he says that he can justify himself. They understand that he asserts his complete innocence of what is alleged against him. How, then, can this term be applied to sinful men? Can any be justified before God? Are there any completely innocent of all charges? Yes; all Christ's children, though guilty in themselves, are innocent in him. They stand before God without spot. Therefore, the Scriptures assure us that believers, "in the body of his flesh, through death, are presented holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight." —Col. i. 22. In this view the apostle Paul exclaims, Romans viii. 33, 34—" Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea

rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Should Satan be permitted in the day of judgment to vent all his malice, he would not be able to charge God's conduct with injustice in the pardoning of the guilty. He does not pardon them, but in a way in which he justifies them. He will prove them clear of all sin before all the assembled worlds. Believers have committed innumerable sins; but who can say that they ought to be condemned on that account, seeing Christ has died? If he by his death hath atoned for their sins, they are righteously cleared of them—they are justified^ What wisdom, then, appears from the expression "believeth in him that justifies the ungodly"—Romans iv. 5—9. This wisdom is so astonishing, that even some of God's people choose rather to explain this phrase by the wisdom of this world than by the wisdom of God. Justify the ungodly! What an incongruity in the terms! Though the ungodly should be forgiven, how can they be justified, or cleared of sin, as righteous persons? They are ungodly, considered in their own character; but they are just as having their sins blotted out by the blood of Christ. The expression, however, is so bold, that even some of God's children falter in uttering the words. Believers, they say, were ungodly, but they have been changed by divine energy, and are justified as godly persons. But this is the wisdom of man. It is not said that the justified person was ungodly before he was justified, but that God justifies the ungodly. There must, then, be a point of view in which they are ungodly, even at the time in which they are justified. The change of character produced by faith, is not at all considered in the justification of the sinner by faith. What renders them acceptable to God is, not their change of character, but the work by the belief of which they are changed. They are acceptable, therefore, before they are changed. They are justified by Christ's blood—Romans v. 9, not by any view of their own character. If all Christians clearly perceived this, there would be no need of such straining as some of

them have been obliged to use in accommodating—Romans iv. 5. They would perceive that though immediately changed by faith, so that they are evidently godly persons, yet, that considered in themselves, and in the character in which they are justified, they are ungodly. If it is not their changing, but their faith in the blood of Christ makes them just, then they must be ungodly persons in the character in which they are justified.

As some conceive that believers are considered as in some measure godly before they are justified, so others conceive that the justification of a person does not mean his being entirely cleared of sin, but his being upon the v(hole a good man. This error originates from the same source with the other, for if a man is justified as being in some measure godly, he is justified no further than as he is godly. But the justification of a believer consists in his being entirely freed, even as a guilty sinner, from all that justice can allege against him. Who can bring any thing to his charge? The sins of believers are not imputed to them, as they have been already imputed to Christ 2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Romans iv. 8.

If, then, God does not impute sin to the believer, he is completely clear; not, however, as having committed no sin, but as not being charged with it. The apostle, therefore, speaks of the very conscience being purged from sin by the blood of Christ.—Hebrews ix. 13, 14. All believers must be every day conscious of sin, but their consciences are purged from sin by the blood of . Christ. They obtain such, confidence through Christ, that at the same moment that they consider themselves vile and most deserving of punishment, they can look with pleasure to the judgment-seat 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

This plan of salvation makes the utmost confidence compatible with the utmost humility. Indeed, in proportion as confidence of this kind increases, in the same proportion will humility increase. The confidence of the believer is not in his own character, but in the work of Christ- The more he understands this, the more clearly he

will see his own vileness, and the stronger grounds of confidence. All human schemes of salvation increase confidence by increasing self-conceit. The wisdom of God's plan alone unites confidence and humility, and makes them grow up together. The believer grows more confident of salvation by discovering more fully the glory and excellency of the work of Christ. The more he studies this, he will see the more reason to have unbounded confidence in the atonement of Jesus. This confidence is not founded upon his views of his own character, yet as the character is a test of his faith, the fruit of righteousness appearing and abounding in his life is an assurance to him that he has believed to salvation.—2 Peter i. 4—11. The confidence of a believer from the fruits of righteousness appearing in his life, does not interfere with his confidence in the atonement, but confirms it. The former is a confirmation that the latter is well founded. the atonement of Christ that believers receive their inheritance as well as their pardon.—Acts xxvi. 18. There is certainly a distinction between justification and glorification, and it cannot be said to be impossible for men to have been cleansed of their sins, without being made heirs of such an exceeding weight of glory as is promised to the followers of Christ. All that a completely righteous man can ask is the happiness of Adam in his state of innocence. But with what is possible we have no concern; we know who has said, whom he justified them he also glorified. He hath saved his people from their sins, that he might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards them in Christ Jesus.—Eph. ii. 7. Though pardon does not necessarily imply glory, this is no reason why glory must be purchased. The pardoned are glorified to show forth the riches of divine grace.

But if believers are saved by being justified, or brought in clear in judgment, how is it that they are said to be pardoned? Can a just man need pardon? Or can one that needs pardon be justified? How can the same person be both justified and pardoned? Yet the

Scriptures assert both of every believer. There must be a view, then, in which they are both applicable. A believer is completely righteous as he stands in Jesus Christ. His sins are not imputed, being imputed to his surety. In this sense, therefore, he is justified. But in himself he is a sinner, and is saved by being pardoned. His salvation is pardon, because though his debts are paid, payment has been provided by him to whom the debt was due. Therefore, though in the judgment the law will have no demands on the believer, so that he shall be accounted perfectly righteous, yet as he has become righteous in the eye of the law by having his sins counted to another, the sovereign constitution that appointed this salvation, is grace or pardon. Notwithstanding the debt has been fully paid in one sense, it has been freely and fully pardoned, forgiven in another. If the Father sent his Son into the world to make atonement for the sins of his people, if the Son died for this purpose, the salvation effected by his death is free pardon to the sinner, yet full justice to the law. What wisdom, therefore, shines in the atonement! In it, alone, we see the harmony of apparently contradictory language. In it we see that a man is both righteous and a sinner; that a debt is paid, yet forgiven. Not, however, in the same point of view, for the wisdom of God consists not in reconciling real contradictions, but in showing a way of harmonizing all the divine attributes, whose claims appear irreconcilable to the wisdom of men. To understand this wisdom is eternal life. Flesh and blood cannot reveal it, but Christ's Father who is in heaven.

Justification is sometimes explained as being pardon. But though justification and pardon have the same issue, they are not the same thing. Indeed they are so different in their nature, that though they are both applicable to the same person, they are not applicable in the same point of view, for it is impossible that in the same point of view the same man can be both innocent and guilty; both a just man and needing pardon. Justification applies to the believer with

respect to the claims of law, and he is justified in law, because, according to the sovereign will of God, another has taken his place who has completely satisfied justice. In the estimation of law he is spotless as the throne of God. Pardon applies to the believer, not with respect to law, but with respect to the author of the law. The law does not pardon; it knows neither relaxation nor pardon. But the author of the law pardons the transgressions of his law, in his own people, by providing an atonement to law, adequate to their offences. It is pardon in him, because he hath himself provided for the payment of the debt; it is not pardon in the law, because the debt is paid and the law satisfied. Pardon respects the claims of mercy; justification those of justice. The one respects the believer as completely sinful; the other respects him as completely righteous. So different then are justification and pardon, though they both express the same salvation. Mercy calls for the pardon of the sinner, justice calls for his punishment; love and wisdom adjust their opposite claims, giving pardon to mercy and punishment to justice, in such a way that the sinner is both pardoned and justified. Here then is wisdom altogether amazing. Man's salvation is of pure grace or favour, without any degree of merit on the part of man, or any regard to his conformity to law, yet this grace operates in such a manner that the pardoned sinner may exclaim before the universe, who shall lay any thing to my charge? At the same moment he looks up to God as a guilty sinner, and . yet looks to the tribunal of God as a completely righteous person. Though he is polluted in himself, yet in Christ he is whiter than the snow. He prays for pardon at the same moment that he considers himself as owing nothing to justice. This is a thing that the wisdom of this world cannot receive. It looks to mercy, and wishes it to save at the expense of justice. When it looks to justice, it contemplates not the righteousness of the believer through faith, but the excellency of personal character. It dare not hope that mercy would do all, nor that justice can be completely

satisfied. It hopes that mercy will dispense with what justice has not received. Divine wisdom unites mercy and justice in the salvation of the believer.

Some hold such an idea of the righteousness that entitles the believer to heaven, as is injurious to the character of God. It attends indeed to the demands of justice, but lessens the glory of the riches of divine grace. The death of Christ is supposed to do away the guilt of the believer's sins, and his life of active obedience to the law is supposed to be for the purpose of meriting heaven. Now, if this makes God merciful in giving his Son for these purposes, it reflects on his grace, by representing him as giving happiness by purchase. Why does he require any purchase for heaven? If the sins of his people are removed by the atonement of Christ, what is there to prevent him from giving heaven to them freely? And heaven he does give to them freely. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Jesus had not to live a life of obedience to the law in order to merit heaven for his people, for the Father gives this freely to all those whose sins are remitted by the death of his Son. Had the obedience of Christ's life been the purchase of the glory of his children, God would have required a price for that which he might have given freely. For, what is to prevent him from freely glorifying those who are cleansed of their sins? If, then, he requires a purchase for that which might be given freely, the glory of his grace is tarnished. The holy life of Jesus was absolutely necessary, that he might be a lamb without spot in his sacrifice for our sins. But it is through his sacrifice alone believers are justified, and being thus justified, eternal life is freely bestowed on them as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. It is by faith in The transcendence of the divine wisdom and power appears in this scheme, not merely from harmonizing the attributes of God in man's salvation, but also in making those things that were naturally calculated to affront God and ruin man, turn to God's greater glory and man's greater

happiness. That sin is an affront to the divine character, and an affront that no wisdom but that of God could devise a way of wiping off, is clear from the opinion of Satan. His wisdom, though exceedingly great, could give him no conception of the way that sin could turn out to the glory of God. Had he thought so, he never could have tempted our first parents. But by the introduction of sin there was opened a field for the greatest display of the glory of God that ever was made. Had not sin entered into the world, there would have been no opportunity of displaying mercy consistently with justice, and glorifying the holiness of God at the same time with his grace. The believer's final happiness is also increased by the fall. However divines may speculate about what would have been ultimately the portion of the human race had they abode in innocence, all that Adam could expect was a happy life in this world. But by the entrance of sin, those who are saved, are raised to heavenly glory. Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded.—See Rom. v. The happiness of the believer is then greater than that of Adam in innocence, by an inconceivable degree. That these effects should flow from the death of Christ is so wonderful, that no wisdom could devise the plan but that of God. Even the wisdom of Satan could not perceive it, else he would not have instigated Judas to betray him, nor the Jews to crucify the Lord of glory. What can be a greater evidence of power and wisdom than the making the wisest and most powerful schemes of an enemy, not only without effect, but to defeat their purpose, and bring about what they even intended to prevent. Such is the wisdom and power of God in the plan of redemption. All the wisdom and power of Satan, and all his principalities and powers, have been exerted not merely in vain, but have been made to forward the cause they were intended to defeat. The plan, also, which God has employed to secure the obedience of his people, discovers his wonderful power and wisdom. The belief of this atonement is the apparently weak and

foolish, but in reality the wise and powerful, means of making men live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Almighty power and infinite wisdom are seen daily in the success of this despised means. The plan of salvation, therefore, is every where in Scripture extolled as the most illustrious display of divine power and wisdom. Of this salvation the apostle Paul writes thus: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."— Eph. iii. 8-11. We see from this that the plan of salvation manifests the manifold wisdom of God to the highest orders of created intelligences.

The doctrine of the atonement the same apostle calls the power of God and the wisdom of God—1 Cor. i. 18—24. It manifests the almighty power of God, in doing that which to human wisdom appears impossible; it manifests infinite wisdom in contriving a plan that gives the utmost limit to all the divine attributes, and harmonizes them in their opposite claims. The news of this plan was announced by the angels with an ascription of glory to God; and throughout all the New Testament it is considered as displaying his glory more than all his other works. There is wisdom and power in the creation and formation of the heavens and the earth; but there is greater wisdom and power in the redemption of sinners by the blood of Christ. The wisdom of the plan of redemption is so far beyond the reach of man's sagacity, that the apostle Paul, quoting from Isaiah, declares that no conception of it had ever entered into the human mind 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. Nothing like it was ever seen or heard of, or

conceived among men. It was not known even to the apostles but by the revelation of the Spirit; and, to enable even them to understand the things revealed by the Spirit, it was necessary for them to receive the Spirit of God. "Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."—ver. 12. Though these things are clearly revealed in the Scriptures, they still remain unknown to men till the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto them. It was the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she received the things spoken by Paul. The wisdom of God in the plan of salvation is so much out of the reach of human wisdom, that men overlook it in its plainest declarations. Instead of submitting to it, the human mind either rejects it or endeavours to accommodate it to the wisdom of men. Though, therefore, the light shineth in darkness, yet the darkness comprehendeth it not—does not perceive it. The true reason why men do not understand the gospel, is not because it is a deep and intricate system that requires uncommon reach of intellect to grasp, and uncommon study to comprehend it. It is because the mind does not relish the wisdom of God. It considers God's plan foolish and weak. It judges that to be impossible which God's wisdom shows to have been effected, namely, that sinners can be saved in a way that will give to all the divine attributes the utmost extent of their claims. Therefore it devises a plan by the compromise of these claims. From this it follows, that the more a man values himself upon his wisdom, the greater opposition will he manifest to the gospel.

This view of the matter is fully confirmed by the Scriptures. The wise, the learned, and the powerful, instead of lending their powers to enlighten the stupid multitude in the doctrine of the Cross, were themselves more virulent enemies to it than even the vulgar. Speaking on this subject, the apostle most passionately exclaims, "Where is the wise," &c.

Here we perceive the utmost contempt thrown upon that which is most highly valued among men. We see the light in which God considers the arrogant pretensions of the wisdom of this world. Instead of being able to discover the true character of God, it was an enemy to it when discovered. The apostle challenges the wise men of both Jews and Greeks to come forward with their schemes of religion. "The wise," alludes to the Grecian philosophers who at first dignified themselves with this title. Come forward, then, ye boasted sons of wisdom. Come forward Socrates, and Plato, and Pythagoras. Come forward, ye whole tribes of renowned Grecian sages. Long have you talked of wisdom and virtue; many have been your disputes upon this subject. All of you professed to teach the world how to attain to wisdom and happiness; but what have you done? Have you found out the way to heaven? Have you discovered the plan by which guilty sinners may have access to a just and holy God? Have you known the true God? Your brethren at this day speak many fine things to your praise, extol your virtues, and extenuate or hide your errors. But in what estimation does God hold your wisdom? What does he say of your boasted wisdom? He tells us that the world by wisdom know not God 1 Cor. i. 21. Yes, Socrates, and Plato, and Pythagoras, and all ye wise men, you know not God. Whatever value modern philosophers may ascribe to your discourses, God says you were fools. They may tell us that your systems needed some additions and subtractions to make them unexceptionable; but the apostle Paul tells us that God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world. Jesus did not come to give the finishing touch to your systems of philosophy, but he came to destroy your wisdom and all the works of the devil. You were exhibited for hundreds of years in Greece and Rome, filling the world with your noise. But it has been an exhibition of your folly. God has destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

"The Scribe," or the wise man of the Jews, was at an equal distance from the wisdom of God. Though the Jewish teachers enjoyed the advantage of the Old Testament, they, in general, were as ignorant of God's salvation as were the heathen philosophers. Instead of pointing to the death of the Messiah as a sacrifice for sin, they taught their votaries to depend on the law of Moses, and traditions of human invention. When Jesus came, they were, therefore, so far from being the first to receive him, that they were his most bitter persecutors. Through the influence of the priests and Scribes, the death of Jesus was accomplished. But what a change has taken place in modern times upon the philosophers and Scribes and disputers of this world! Their ancestors were all in arms to oppose the pretensions of Christ; but they are generally ranged in the ranks of Christianity. Yes, our philosophers are as generally Christians, as the ancient philosophers were enemies to Christianity. The Scribes, priests, and doctors now call as loudly in favour of Christ, as the ancient ones called for his crucifixion. Some of the disputers of this world still show their freedom from prejudice, by considering the religion of Jesus to be an imposture; but far the greater number of them have enlisted themselves in the good cause. What is it that could have produced such a change? Great as this change may at first sight appear, it is in nothing but the name and some variety of form. The doctrine of our modern philosophers is as hostile to that of Christ as the doctrine of Zeno or Epicurus. That there is no essential difference, the most eminent modern philosophers are found to assert. The doctrine of the ancient schools they consider not as fundamentally wrong, but only as defective in some things, and redundant in others. Trace the Christian philosopher through his scheme, and you will find him trudging to heaven by virtue. He speaks well of Jesus, and will even condescend to quote from the Scriptures some of the most unexceptionable passages; but let not this deceive you. State to him the doctrine of salvation through the

Cross, and he will either reject it with disdain, or will so modify and explain it, before he receives it, that his Christianity is nothing better than Atheism.

The Scribes of all denominations are generally on the same foundation with their predecessors. They may vary the forms of their religion, and incorporate into it as much of the phraseology and institutions of Christ as it will bear; but still their doctrine is essentially the same with that of the Scribes of old. The ancient Scribes taught their disciples to rest on the law of Moses and the traditions of the elders; the only change the modern Scribes have attempted is in the things that are to be done in order to gain eternal life. While some of them direct to the attainment of high degrees of virtue, others superstitiously enjoin a number of vain ceremonies as the only passport to heaven.

How much, then, do men err by leaning on human wisdom for instruction in the things of God! Men naturally look for instruction with respect to the way to heaven from those men that are supposed fittest to instruct in other things. They cannot suppose that the wise men of this world could be astray in their views of the way of salvation. One of the strongest prejudices against the gospel arose from this circumstance in the days of our Lord. "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? but this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." We still find the same objection. If the gospel was really what we represent it to be, it is asked, would not the wise men of this world see it as well as we? Are not learned men fit to know the difference between truth and error? Did learned men receive Christ himself? Did the Jewish priests and rulers acknowledge him as their Lord? Is not the apostle's reasoning in the beginning of the first epistle to the Corinthians a sufficient answer to this? Let men, there

fore, everywhere attend to the word of God, and judge for themselves. Though all the wise men of this world should reject the

gospel, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Though wise men think it below their attention, the angels themselves desire to look into it.

SECTION 6. THE GOSPEL DENOUNCETH WRATH AGAINST ALL WHO REJECT IT, AND AGAINST ALL THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY.

The proclamation of mercy through the atonement of the Son of God is called the gospel or good news, because it announces deliverance from condemnation, and eternal life to all who believe it. But it implies and denounces tidings of a very opposite nature to all who reject it, and in general to all the workers of iniquity. If it proclaims life to all who receive it, there is implied in this that death is the portion of all who neglect it. This truth necessarily implied in the gospel, is, in the New Testament, held forward to view in the most awful and striking manner. Many think that all modes of Christianity are equally safe. What is called a good moral life, is with them everything. If this is effected, it is not material what is man's belief. Others, on the contrary, shelter themselves under a profession of Christianity, and fondly hope that there is a sort of general impunity in sin, on account of the death of Christ. In opposition to the views of both these classes, the gospel denounceth wrath against all who do not receive it, and against all evil workers.

To show that my sentiments on this subject are not the forebodings of a timorous and gloomy superstition, I shall lay before my readers the foundation on which they are built. Men who are accustomed to bandy compliments with each other to avoid offence by their jarring religious systems, may consider me very uncharitable. Notwithstanding all their differences, they speak of their common Christianity, and never hint a doubt of their all meeting in heaven. My views are not of this supple, accommodating cast; and that they are built on the word of God, I will have little

trouble in showing. If, then, there is a want of charity in the sentiments, let the blame rest where it ought to rest.

In the commission that our Lord gives to the apostles, he asserts as expressly, that they who believe not the gospel shall be damned, as that they who believe it shall be saved. —Mark xvi. 16. What the gospel is I have already shown, and that any deviation from the apostle's views of the foundation of a sinner's hope is another gospel, I have also shown. If, then, there is any dependance to be placed in the word of God, damnation is the portion of all who hold, for the gospel, sentiments different from those of the apostle. Instead of all different views on this subject being equally safe; instead of considering them all as common Christianity, there is none of them Christianity but that one which agrees with the word of God, and against all others condemnation is denounced. What think you of this, ye who value yourselves on the liberality of your sentiments? What think you of this, ye who make the belief or rejection of a truth a matter of so trifling consideration? Here is a truth, the rejection of which is perdition in hell to both soul and body for ever. You say that it is no matter what a man believes, if he is moral in his conduct. Speaking of systems of faith the poet says,

"HIS CAN'T BE WRONG WHOSE LIFE IS IN THE RIGHT."

From what I showed in another part of this work, there is a sense in which these words are true. I have proved from Scripture that nothing but the faith of the gospel can produce a really good moral life. But in the sense of the poet the words are a contradiction to the Scriptures. The poet pronounces that man to be in a state of safety, to whom Jesus denounces damnation. Hut this is not more the doctrine of the licentious poet than of the grave divine. There are few from among any class of writers who would have the hardihood to throw out a suspicion that any sober-living man could be condemned for an error in his religious sentiments. But let God be true and all men liars. God says, he that believeth not the gospel

shall be damned; and in defiance of all the rage of the world I will proclaim the truth as loud and as far as I can. I will proclaim it, not to condemn my flesh and my blood, but to save them, if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.

Though it appears a light thing to many what views we entertain of the character of Jesus, yet he himself assures us, "that he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."—John iii. 18. They may allege their love of truth, and their zeal for good works as the reason why they will not submit to what the Scriptures, in their obvious import, speak of him and his work, but he himself ascribes their conduct to motives of a different kind, even to hatred of truth and a consciousness of evil. "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."—verses 19—21. Whatever specious appearances those works may have in the eyes of men, they are not the works of God; and they will not learn the Scriptures, because they testify that those works on which they rely, are not such as the word of God approves. Let men say what they will with respect to their rejection of the gospel plan of salvation, their objections are all founded in their disaffection to truth and holiness. They boast of their love of truth, and of virtue, but if we are to believe Jesus, they hate the light because their deeds are evil; they reject redemption through the blood of Christ, because it condemns their works as not being wrought in God, and denounceth wrath against that for which they expect reward. Thus the Scribes and Pharisees, with all their righteousness, were condemned by Jesus, and they would not come to him because he

testified to them that their works could not find them acceptance with God. The world hated him because he testified of it that it was evil. We shall not, therefore, look for any other reason to which we may ascribe the rejection of the atonement in modern times. That men who reject it may be very good members of society, and have an uncommon degree of that which is usually denominated virtue and even of piety, we shall readily confess, but if the Scriptures are the word of God "they love darkness rather than light because their works are evil. They hate the light and will not come to it lest their deeds should be reproved." Their truth is not the knowledge of the true God. Their virtue is not obedience to his will. Their piety has not him for its object. Faith as it respects the nature and causes of things, is ardently loved by the philosopher; it is even idolized by him. The servant of God has pleasure in making himself acquainted with the works of God. But this knowledge is the very god of the philosopher. To this idol he offers the incense of his continual praises. To him he dedicates his time and talents. But truth as it respects the character of God, is not loved naturally by any of the race of Adam. In their pursuits of truth they lend all their efforts to oppose the truth of God. In the day of judgment, then, it will be no apology for them to allege, "Lord, Lord, have we not loved truth, have we not spent all our time in the pursuit of it?" The searcher of hearts will be at no loss to justify what he has said here, and to show them that with all their love of truth, they hated the light, they hated the truth of God.

The virtue of the rejectors of the atonement will not abide the test better. The virtue of the philosopher, so far from consisting in obedience to the will of God, is independent of the will of God, and would be equally obligatory, were there no God. But whatever may be man's system with respect to the nature of virtue, it is not the love of God and of men which alone is worthy of the approbation of God. Many of such virtuous people may allege their benevolence and

their other good deeds, but they will not be able to allege that they ever performed a single action from love to the true God, or to any of his servants, because they were such. Of all the thousands that they may have expended in charity, they have never given a cup of cold water to a disciple, because that he was a disciple. Nor will the fervent piety of the enemies of the gospel be ascribed in the day of judgment to a more honourable source. With all its devoutness, or notwithstanding its devout aspect, it hates the light because it is evil. It is not directed to the true God. It bows to an idol, and renders its worship and service to a god who will be satisfied with its performances, giving future happiness as its reward. In vain then shall they allege in the day of judgment "Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drank at thy table, have we not been very pious people, and very punctual in our religious observances?" He will answer, "depart from me I know you not ye workers of iniquity." So then all who reject the gospel shall perish without excuse. They reject the light because they are evil.

The condemnation of all who reject the gospel, and of all who are ignorant of God, is denounced in the following passage in language so terrible and decisive that nothing but the blindness and the hardness of the heart can defy it—"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels; in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."—2 Thess. i. 7—9. If this is the word of God, Jesus shall one day appear in the most terrible majesty taking vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is important in knowing God may readily be learned from the character which he gives of himself to others, and from the manifestation of him to the world in the person and character of Jesus Christ his son. To know

this God is eternal life, and vengeance is here denounced against all that know him not. The wisdom of this world has taught that if we worship and obey sincerely that which we consider to be God, the true God will accept the worship and service as alone to himself. God himself declares that they who know him not shall be punished.

Choose, then, my readers, whether you will believe the testimony of God, or the opinions of men. To obey the gospel, is to believe the gospel. The gospel charges all who hear it, to believe its report, they, then, who believe it, obey it. It indeed enjoins on all its believers, obedience to the laws of Christ, but this is not what is called obedience to the gospel. The apostle Paul informs us that he received the favour of the apostolical office "for obedience to the faith among all nations."—Rom. i. 5, that is, to be the instrument of bringing men of all nations to believe the gospel. He tells us also that the gospel "is made manifest"—Rom. xvi. 26. All, then, who do not receive this gospel shall be punished, and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. If there is meaning in words, all who do not believe in the atonement of Jesus Christ shall suffer the punishment of eternal fire. There are ways which sophistry has invented to soften and limit the harshness of this and similar expressions. It is not my business at present to reply to them. But to any man who takes the Bible as it stands, they need no reply. Be warned, my friends, fly from the wrath to come. Your sophistical criticism will be an unavailing cover from the vengeance of eternal fire.

Not only against those who in words reject salvation through the atonement, is wrath denounced; they who neglect it while in words they may profess it, or turn away from it after having received it, are involved in the same condemnation. An inspired writer speaking to those who had apparently received the gospel, writes thus: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"—Heb. ii. 1-3.

Let those who reject or neglect the gospel learn from this, that God is in earnest in what he declares in the Scriptures. It is astonishing to perceive how insensible such people are, when they read or hear the awful denunciations that the Scriptures hurl against them. They certainly cannot believe that God is in earnest, or they could not be so unmoved. Their dependance cannot arise from the confidence that their evasions of the plain meaning of Scripture are agreeable to the common use of language. They do not so much detach themselves from God by their criticisms as from man. In reality they do not believe that God will execute upon any the terrible vengeance threatened in his word. Let, then, men learn from this that he is in earnest. How punctual was God in executing the threatened punishment upon all the violators of the law of Moses, even in the most trivial cases, where the sin was not in the thing done, but solely in the- doing what was forbidden? If then every transgression received the awarded punishment, how shall any escape who neglect the gospel? It is utterly impossible, then, the neglecters of the gospel shall escape the punishment that the Scriptures denounce against them. Are you, then, my brethren, who neglect, or despise this gospel, prepared to give an answer to this question? How shall you escape? If it is a matter of little or no importance what views men have of it, how is the neglect of it of such detriment? Are any of those things which now occupy your attention of equal importance? Many of you love knowledge with the most ardent affection, and in the pursuit of it encounter labour, fatigue, and difficulties; but this knowledge which is eternal life, the want of which is everlasting destruction, you neglect or despise. If

there is truth in the word of God, unless you repent you shall perish. If you neglect this great salvation there is no way of escape.

If there is one class who have such confidence in their own character and in their views of the character of God, that they fear not the future vengeance, although they reject the atonement, or modify it so as to make it another gospel, there is another who seem to think of the death of Christ as procuring a sort of general amnesty, and are therefore fearless though they persist in iniquity. In consequence of this, even those most notorious for wickedness assume the Christian name, and dream of safety through the death of Christ. We have cursing Christians, and drinking Christians, and covetous Christians, and lascivious Christians, and Christians addicted to every species of profligacy. If their hopes are well founded, the gospel would indeed be liable to the charge which is frequently brought against it. Instead of teaching men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, it would then teach them to indulge with impunity in every enormity. But as I have already shown that the tendency of the gospel is the very reverse of this, producing good fruits in all that receive it, so I shall now show that it denounces wrath against all the workers of iniquity.

In the following passage, after showing the plan of salvation proclaimed in the gospel, the apostle shows also that the same gospel denounces wrath against every species of evil. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them."—Rom. i. 16-19- Let all who revile the plan of salvation

through faith in the atonement, as an encouragement to sin, attend to this awful denunciation. The doctrine that denounces this wrath, is the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is that good news that declares that sinners are saved from punishment by the belief of the report that contains this declaration. It is that gospel that makes sinners righteous without works, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Yet, though it makes the ungodly righteous by faith, it gives no countenance to those who continue in sin, On the contrary, it reveals the wrath of God from heaven against them. How long will you, then, daring sinners— how long will you provoke God by blasphemously calumniating his gospel? Will you persist in charging it with consequences which it abhors? Like the false witnesses who accused Jesus, you pervert his words, and charge them with a meaning which they do not bear. You say the doctrine of salvation through faith gives a licence to sin; the gospel that declares this doctrine says, on the contrary, that wrath is revealed from heaven against all sin. Let those also who hope for impunity by the death of Christ, though they persist in sin, attend to this declaration. You acknowledge that you are bad, and very bad, but you hope for mercy for Christ's sake. Do you hope that God will lie? Do you believe the Scriptures? If this passage is the word of God, how can you be saved, persisting in sin? If the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, as, according to your own confession, you are ungodly and unrighteous, how shall you escape? God's mercy through Christ saves the ungodly and the unrighteous; but such as receive God's report of this mercy are changed by the power of his Spirit, through the truth which they believe. They are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. There is nothing for you in the Scriptures but wrath. Christ's death has atoned for the sins only of such as believe in him; and all who believe in him are sanctified

through the truth. Christ's death will then only aggravate your condemnation. For this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and you have loved darkness rather than light, because your deeds are evil. It will be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you. You have heard the proclamation of mercy, and the denunciation of wrath against sin, yet you make that very proclamation a pretence for continuing in sin. Your damnation then is just. Look, then, look, my friends, to the blood of Jesus, believe the gospel, and turn from your iniquities. It is your ignorance of the gospel that makes you cherish these vain hopes. A condemned criminal may as well expect mercy from the sentence of his condemnation, as for you to expect mercy for the sake of Christ, while you persist in your sins. Unless you change your minds, you shall perish: you shall perish as sure as the Scriptures are the word of God. Some of you may be deceiving yourselves, by your regularity, or your general deportment. You may think there is no great fear of your condemnation, as you are not guilty of those sins that are generally accounted the most enormous. If you drink more than you ought to do, you do not swear, nor commit other excesses. If you swear, you have no harm in your minds, and you are free from other evils that appear to you more heinous. But, my friends, attend to this declaration of God: "For the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Wrath, you see, is here said to be revealed, not only against some enormous sins, but against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Eternal condemnation is the award of the smallest sin. You will reply, how then dost thou expect to be saved? Art thou guilty of no sin? I have many times answered this question in the course of this work, and will briefly reply to it again. The wages of every sin is death; but, for all that believe, Jesus has received that wages: though, then, the least of the sins of his people would be sufficient for their

condemnation, yet all their sins shall not condemn them. Though they are daily conscious of evil in themselves, yet they allow it not. It is not their delight, but their sorrow. You love sin, and avoid it, in the instances in which you do avoid it, only for fear of punishment. The believer avoids it, not merely for this reason, but also because he knows God hates it. If, then, it is true that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, what shall become of the great bulk of the world? Is there indulgence to no sins? Will nothing be overlooked? Turn you, then, turn you, ye millions that bear the Christian name, turn you from your refuges of lies, and fly for refuge to the hope that is set before you in the gospel. It is in the atonement of Jesus alone, you can find what will screen you in the day of God's vengeance. His blood only can wash away all your sins. Can anything further be necessary to show you that the gospel denounces wrath to the workers of iniquity? I shall, without any particular application, merely refer to a few of those passages which contain a specification of some of those works, against the workers of which the Scriptures denounce punishment.—1 Cor. vi. 9-10; Gal. v. 19-21; Eph. v. 3-6; Rev. xxi. 8; Mat. xxv. 24-30-41.

If these are the irrevocable statutes of God, what a dreadful calendar shall there be on the day of judgment? Men and brethren, is it so, that vengeance is denounced against all persons of such characters? Ye thousands, then, that bear one or other of these characters, will you not awake from your sleep? Will you inconsistently profess to believe the Scriptures, yet hope for impunity? What way have you prepared to escape the punishment denounced against you? What answer are you prepared to make to your Judge? Are you able to arrest judgment? Can you contend with the arm of Omnipotence? Do you hope that God will not execute the sentence which his word has denounced? Do you expect that, at least, you will then repent, and that God will surely hear your

prayers and have compassion on your tears? You think he will never drive into destruction miserable creatures crying for mercy. But listen to his own word—Mat. xiii. 41, 42, 49, 50. Did he compassionate the poor foolish virgins who knocked for admission after the door was shut? Did he hear their prayers? No; he replies—Mat. xxv. 10—12. In vain, then, you hope for compassion on the day of judgment. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. There is mercy now for all that look to the blood of Jesus Christ. But in that day, he will lay righteousness to the line, &c. How inconsistent are the objections of men against the gospel of Christ. Many who have thought that the doctrine of salvation through faith in the atonement, without respect to works of law, is an encouragement to sin, would, I doubt not, be as ready to say that this is too strict. The same persons will at one time revile the gospel as giving a sanction to sin, and at another, as unreasonably severe, making no allowances for the frailty of humanity. Their plan of salvation is neither by the righteousness of faith, nor by the perfect righteousness of works, but by as much good works as each thinks that himself possesses. It is God's wisdom alone that clears the sinner, yet condemns all sin; that saves solely by the work of another, yet produces good works in those who are saved; that denounces punishment against all sin, yet rescues the guilty from punishment..

SECTION 7. A SURVEY OF THE FUTURE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS THE GOSPEL PROMISES UNBOUNDED HAPPINESS TO BELIEVERS.

The profession of the gospel subjects men to many peculiar hardships. All who follow Jesus are hated, ridiculed, and slandered. They are accounted the offscourings of all things—scarcely entitled to the common privileges of humanity. Even in countries where universal liberty of conscience is guaranteed by the laws, they suffer persecution in various ways, according to the divine declaration—"Yea all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Enlightened views of policy may screen them in some countries from the rack, the scaffold and the prison ; but in all countries they are hated for Christ's sake, and violence will sometimes overstep law to do them injury. In all ages, in all countries, it is true that "the world knoweth us not because it knew him not." "Ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The Christian must in his measure be conformed to his Master, who was perfected through sufferings, and who bore the insults and injuries of the world that lieth in the wicked one. "Whosoever, then, will be his disciple must take up his cross and follow him. He must encounter trials of the most painful and mortifying kind; and submit to be accounted a fool for Christ's sake. He must not regard property, relations, life, character, when they stand in the way of obedience to his heavenly Master. No man can be Christ's disciple who will not obey him at the risk of every thing dear on earth.

Is not, then, the service of Jesus the most insupportable slavery? Are not Christians the most wretched among the wretched inhabitants of this earth? No; the hope "laid up for them in heaven, of which they have heard in the word of the truth of the gospel,"

makes Christ's service as light as air. Amidst all their sufferings, they are the only happy people on earth. They know that their "light affliction is but for a moment, and that it worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while they look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Are they called to suffer persecution? They "endure as seeing him who is invisible." Are they called to suffer loss of property? They are resigned; for they "look for a better and more enduring substance." If they have but little of this world, "they look for a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." Are they objects of scorn and infamy? They rejoice that their names are written in heaven, that they shall be acknowledged and honoured by Jesus, before his Father, his angels, and the whole world. When men cast out their names as evil, and think them unworthy of their society, they are the companions of God and the heirs of his kingdom. Are they tempted by the prospect of earthly honours and riches? Like Moses, they would refuse a throne at the expense of the least of their Lord's commandments. They "choose rather to suffer affliction as the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world: for they have respect to the recompense of the reward." If their hopes were confined to this world, of all men living they would, indeed, be the most miserable; for, though the temperance, industry, and the other virtues of the Christian life exempt them from many of the evils to which others are exposed, yet the peculiar trials to which they are subject would be more than a counterpoise to this. The greater part of their present happiness consists in the anticipation of their future glory.

Nothing but these high hopes could make them bear up under the contempt of the world. Though "sorrowful, yet in these respects they are always rejoicing." They know that "in due time they will

reap, if they faint not." Through faith in the divine promise with respect to the glorious inheritance of the saints, they have sometimes joyfully borne all that the invention of man could employ to increase their torment. "They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy): They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." How shocking to human nature is the bare recital of this! Yet the hopes of the Christian not only enable him to bear all this with patience, when strengthened by the spirit of the truth, but cause him in the midst of all to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

To cherish the hope of believers, and make them patient and cheerful under the trials of life—to excite the attention of others to the glorious gospel of God our Saviour, that I may provoke them to emulation, and thus be the happy means of saving some of them (Rom. xi. 14)—I shall attempt a survey of the heavenly inheritance, and show from the Scriptures the outlines of the map of the land of promise. From these oracles of God only can we learn any thing on this subject. Human ingenuity is here forbidden to employ its inventions.

In their accounts of heaven and hell, the wisdom of men has thought it useful to allure and frighten by the creation of fancy. This has produced the fancies of superstition and the reveries of enthusiasm. My object is not to make a momentary impression by a glowing picture, but by presenting, in a clear point of view, the testimony of the Holy' Spirit, scattered through the Scriptures, to nourish the faith of the Christian and elevate his hopes. Pagans have a heaven, Mahometans have a heaven, philosophers have a heaven, and enthusiasts of all kinds have a heaven, in which they are

indulged in their favourite gratifications. My heaven shall be the heaven of the Scriptures. I shall not drink a favourite beverage out of the skulls of my enemies, nor rove in quest of the fattest game in company with the Pagan. I shall not indulge in more refined luxury in the paradise of Mahomet, nor shall I enter into learned conversations with the philosopher about the system of the universe, delighted to unveil the mysteries of nature, inscrutable to the present state of our faculties. As little shall I indulge in the seeming wisdom of theological conjecture, and attempt to reveal what God has kept secret. I shall barely point to what God has declared; and, after the example of the apostles, reason on the import of it. For every thing that can be fairly deduced from Scripture is Scriptural truth. Our Lord himself quoted Scripture not always with verbal exactness, but substantially. The indirect import of every expression is as much its genuine meaning as the direct object which it is used to express.

We shall first take a view of one or two passages that speak of the future glory of the bodies of believers. In reasoning, in his first epistle to the Corinthian church, on the subject of the resurrection, Paul takes occasion to give us some agreeable information with respect to the change of the body. To the question—"How are the dead raised, and with what bodies do they come?"—he replies in the following language—"Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of

the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." —1 Cor. xv. 36-44. What a difference, then, are we, from these words, taught to expect between the present and the future state of the bodies of believers! In one view, the body that rises is the same that died; in another, it is different. The identity of person in all men, from their birth to their death, is universally believed; yet, in the end of that period, there may not be a particle of the matter that composed them at its commencement. We need not, then, puzzle ourselves by an attempt to accommodate philosophy with Scripture on this subject, when philosophy cannot show a reason why it agrees with common sense. The proudest philosopher on earth cannot give a reason why he believes himself to be the same person to-day that he was yesterday ; yet he cannot but believe this truth. The body of the man who dies at the age of an hundred years is the same that he had when an infant, yet there is not a common particle of matter in their composition. How, then, can they be the same? Infidelity has exerted its ingenuity to show the impossibility of the resurrection of the same identical body. The dead body of one man is converted into vegetables, or being eaten by fishes, becomes a part of their substance; these again being eaten by other men become a part of their body. Ye fools, you do err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God. Learn from the apostle that identity of the particles of matter is not necessary to identity of person. "Thou sowest not that which shall be, but bare grain," which dies, and God gives it a body according to its nature. If ye despise the apostles, ask common sense; she will tell you that the infant and the man of age are the same person. Let it be observed, however, that this is an illustration merely of a single point. It is designed to show that perfect identity of the particles of matter is not necessary to the

identity of person; and that the corruption and gross matter of the body will have no part in the risen body of the saints. It was this view of the resurrection that gave such offence to the wise men of those times. Celsus considers the resurrection of a vile, corrupted, corpse as an abominable doctrine, and a thing neither to be expected nor to be desired. But the apostle replies to this idea that none of the grossness, evil, corruption, or infirmity of the body will have place in the believer after his resurrection. To extend the illustration further, and make the example coincident with the subject illustrated in every point, would overthrow the doctrine of the resurrection altogether. In the corn that springs up from the grain that is sown, there is, properly, no resurrection ;—the grain in the ear is not in any sense the same with that which died under the clod. The one is merely produced from the other. Now, though this admirably illustrates the apostle's doctrine in the point for which he brought it, yet it will extend no farther; for the body that rises is, in some sense, the very body that dies. The whole phraseology employed about the resurrection implies this. The very word resurrection implies it; for if it is not the same, it is not a resurrection. It is said, also, that he shall change our vile body, and fashion it like to his glorious body. The present body, then, is merely to be changed: it is this that is to be refashioned. This corruptible, it is said, shall put on incorruption, &c. So, then, the corruptible is to be changed into incorruption.

The supposition, that personal identity consists in consciousness, is monstrously absurd. What does it mean? Is it that a man is what he is, because he is conscious of this? The proof or evidence of any truth is not the truth which it proves. Besides, consciousness respects the present operations of the mind. We cannot be conscious this moment with respect to any thing past. We may be conscious that we do remember any thing; but this is not a consciousness of the thing remembered. It is not from consciousness that we know that we are the same persons to-day that we were

yesterday. Agreeably to the doctrine we are here opposing, it is admitted that if a person could have the same consciousness transferred to different bodies he would be the same person in them all. But is it not absurd, beyond the usual bounds even of philosophical phrensy, to suppose that a man may have an infallible knowledge that one body is the very same with another body. It cannot be in any such wild sense that the resurrection body will be the same with the present body; for, in the phraseology already quoted, it is implied, that it is the vile body that dies that shall be changed into a glorious body. Such language will not admit that another body will become the same, by having the same consciousness affixed to it.

Doctor M'Knight's views on this part of the subject are far from being worthy of reception. He seems to make the sameness of the body to consist in similarity; than which there cannot be a greater absurdity. God could make one man so perfectly like another that no being could distinguish the difference, yet surely these would not be the same. Let us hear himself:—

"If these members," says he, "are to be of similar form and use with the members and organs of our present body, it will really be the same body, whether its flesh be made of the matter which composed the body laid in the grave or of any other matter." According to this doctrine, two eggs are now the same, because they are perfectly similar in their appearance and uses. Two ploughs may be very like each other, and they are for the same use ; yet I doubt if a man were to take his neighbour's plough, alleging that it was like his own, the judge would sentence him to prison for his logic.

He observes, also, that our present body is accounted the same in all the different stages of life, on account of similarity. It is not on account of similarity that the body is still considered the same. There is certainly little likeness between the infant and the shrivelled old man.

He says again—" Although the numerical body is not raised, yet the body is truly raised; because what is raised, being united to the soul, there will arise in the man thus completed a consciousness of his identity, by which he will be sensible of the justice of the retribution which is made to him for his deeds." How can there be a consciousness that one body really is another that it resembles? Were one soul to pass through a thousand bodies, it surely could not make any two of these the same? But how can he speak of raising the body, according to this view? We might as properly say that Adam was raised from the dead when he was created, as that our bodies shall be raised out of the graves, if the raised bodies are not the same with the bodies laid in the grave. The truth is, there is something in this beyond our depth. This is among the innumerable things with respect to God that our present faculties cannot reach. One thing is certain, if the body laid in the grave is not raised there is no resurrection.

There is nothing more contemptible than the vain efforts of philosophy, labouring to make things possible to the Almighty. I have almost as much pleasure in the foul language of Celsus reprobating the doctrine of a resurrection, as in the fanatical theories of those who strain to assist in accomplishing it.

Christian, your business is not to speculate on this glorious subject, but to receive your views of it from the only source of truth. While the philosopher is amusing himself, and fools like himself, with sublimely nonsensical discussions about personal identity, let it be your business to endeavour to ascertain the import of every part of the divine testimony, with respect to the resurrection of the body; and as you succeed in this, nourish your soul with the heavenly knowledge. The documents of Scripture are not for the entertainment of philosophical curiosity, but for invigorating our hopes of heavenly things. A child listens to stories of enchanted castles, merely for the gratification of its imagination : an emigrant

listens to the account of the country of his destination for information and consolation.

With all the infirmities of our present bodies, we cannot but be attached to them. We have a pleasure in thinking that our souls will meet them again to part no more. We cannot reconcile ourselves to the thought that other bodies should be substituted in their place. I thought it therefore of some importance to show the Christian that philosophy is not entitled to disturb his amiable prepossessions. Whatever difference may be between his present and his future body, they are identically the same; for it is "this mortal that shall put on immortality."

Here then is consolation against the rottenness and filth of the grave. It is sown a corruptible body, but it is raised incorruptible. The infirmities and loathsome diseases to which it is now subject, will be known no more for ever. Poor loathsome Lazarus, look at this word. Meditate and rejoice. That vile carcase will rise out of the grave purer than the stars of heaven, never again subject to decay. Philosophers, and even some theologians, talk of death as the debt of nature, a tribute which of necessity man must have paid for his existence. Death in the estimation of these orthodox Atheists is not the wages of man's first sin. But there is no more reason to think that the nature of things would have terminated Adam's life, than that it could have made him at first. Neither life nor death comes by nature as a cause, but by the will of God. As surely then as the race of Adam is mortal, according to the divine threatening, so surely will all that believe in Jesus rise incorruptible.

Let the Christian learn also from this passage, that his body "which is sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory." By inflicting death on the body, the maker of it has remarkably dishonoured it. All the pomp of funeral obsequies, all the glaring ornaments of the grave, cannot hide its dishonour. What can adorn a mass of the most offensive putrefaction? What marks of respect can give dignity to

corruption? Though men should worship the corpse it bears the indelible impression of disgrace from God. Who can ennoble him who is degraded by the sovereign of Heaven? Who can efface the stigma imprinted by his hand? But God himself will restore the bodies of his people from this state of dishonour, for they "shall be raised in glory." Not only will the dishonour of death be removed, but glory inconceivably great will be given to the body. To be restored to the dignity from which Adam fell, and have bodies as perfect as his in a state of innocence would be an object of high importance. But this is nothing to the hopes of a Christian. His body is to be "raised in glory," which implies that it will be perfectly glorious. Poor citizens of Zion, look on the glorious body of the resurrection, and be cheerful with your tattered garments. While the pampered children of luxury shall be driven away into shame and everlasting contempt, you will shine in glory. Look here, ye great ones of this world, and see the vanity of earthly splendour. What is your glory compared with that of the meanest of the saints of God? Listen then to that gospel that has brought salvation to all men, rich and poor, mighty and mean. Believe the glad news that publishes salvation to the guiltiest of men through the atonement of Jesus.

Our attention is next called in this passage of Scripture, to the increase of the power of the risen body. "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." Death not only shows the weakness of man in his contest with God, which he foolishly commenced by eating the forbidden fruit, but it also deprives him of all the powers that the body possessed. Nothing but a total want of power makes him resign himself to the grave. Every effort of life is exerted to ward off death. All the energies of the body have forsaken it in the grave. But "it shall be raised in power." From this we are warranted to expect, that the risen body of the saints will be capable of wonderful exertion. What may be the employments that will give pleasurable scope to its powers, we are not informed; but as this is one of its attributes, that

there will be such we need not doubt. Its strength will be equal to every occasion of employing it, and it will not weary in exertion.

I have not yet formed a sufficiently precise idea of what is meant by the phrase spiritual body. "By an animal body," says Doctor M'Knight, "the Greek commentators understood, a body to the animation of which the presence of an animal soul is necessary: and by a spiritual body, a body of so fine a contexture, that it will be supported merely by the presence of one rational spirit." Perhaps the term spiritual may be employed to designate the uncommon refinement and purity of the risen body in distinction from the grossness of its present state. Body it is true, can never be spirit, yet spiritual may have been chosen as the only word adequate to give an idea of the transcendently pure substance of the resurrection body.

The apostle informs us, Phil. iii. 21, that it is the constant object of the expectation of Christians to have their bodies made like the body of the Son of God at his coming: "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Our present body, is here called the body of our humiliation. It is now in a state of degradation, bearing the dishonour of sin, and subject to innumerable evils. There are badges of meanness in the human body, that majesty cannot efface. But we look for the Saviour from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, to transform or refashion our mean body, that it may be made conformable to his own glorious body.

Another beautiful passage we have to the same purpose, 1 John iii. 2. "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." What a glorious discovery have we here! After all that has been revealed with respect to future glory "it hath not yet been manifested what we shall be." From this we are warranted to exalt our conceptions of our future

glory, by every thing said on that subject in the word of God, and after all to believe that the glory of the kingdom has not yet been discovered. Language could not in our present state convey to us an adequate conception of the glory that Christ has provided for his people. But though a full discovery and conception of that glory is reserved till the time of possession, yet enough is revealed to nourish our hopes. Though the nature and modes of heavenly glory are not manifested and could not be conceived at present, yet a standard is given by which we may measure its greatness. The arithmetician can calculate sums of which he has no conception. The philosopher can demonstrate truths the possibility of which is beyond his comprehension. In like manner the Christian may from the Scriptures be convinced that the reward that awaits him is exceedingly great, without being able to form an adequate conception of its nature. And what can give us a higher idea of the greatness of the glory of our future bodies than the assurance that "when Jesus shall appear we shall be like him?" If Almighty power could give a perfectly glorious body, such has undoubtedly been given to the glorified Redeemer. And is it true, my fellow-Christians, that we shall have bodies like his? Can our utmost wishes go farther? Though the glory of Jesus is not yet manifested, yet we know that it is infinitely great. If our mean body is to be refashioned into the likeness of his glorious body, it is not possible to raise our expectations too high. Away, wild fancy, away, ye flights of enthusiasm. Stern reason, examine this conclusion, by thy most rigid rules.

So much for the conviction of our understanding; let us a moment gratify our imagination with a glance at the anticipated glory of Christ's body in his transfiguration. "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain a part; and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the

light." Hide your heads, ye children of pride. Compared to this, what is your beauty, your ornaments, your pomp? Where is the glory of the majesty of this world! Where is the lustre of your purple, the brilliancy of your diamonds, the glare of your burnished gold? Look here, ye vain things of fashion; what is your frippery compared to this? Why such arrogance in that brow? That mean cottager whom you despise, will have a body like that of the Son of God on the throne of his glory.

Followers of Jesus, amidst the reproach of the cross lift up your eyes to view this glorious prospect. Revive your drooping spirits by looking at the glorious body of Jesus. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." At his coming "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father." What object in nature is so glorious as the sun? Who can look on the brightness of his beams? Who can measure the extent and the distance of his shining? Such shall be your glory, ye servants of the Lord, who despise the glory of this world, through faith in his word. Look up to that heaven studded with stars. See these bright orbs darting flames. This is but a faint image of your glory. "They that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

That the future happiness of the saints is exceedingly great, we may learn from the contrast between this and their present calamities. The Apostle Paul asserts that our light afflictions, work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory. He says also; "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Now we know that the sufferings of God's people in this world are in themselves heavy afflictions, and to some grievously heavy. If, then, the afflictions of the most afflicted among the saints, are light contrasted with their future happiness, how great must that happiness be!

It is sometimes said that existence even in misery is a thing desirable. I cannot think so. It is said that a short time of pleasure is an equivalent for a long time of preceding pain. On the contrary I think that a slight and short pain, is a dear price for a long time of exquisite pleasure. It is true, indeed, rather than go out of existence, we are willing to submit to great sufferings. But this results from a natural horror we have at nonexistence, and not from a conviction of the value of simple being. In my opinion, there are so many evils attached to human nature in its present state of degradation and sin that without a view to future existence in glory, existence in this life is not an object of rational desire. I have never admired the wisdom of some sages, who have left this world professing that they were happy. Their happiness, in my opinion, was the result of the blindness of their minds with respect to the real state of human nature. Their happiness is the happiness of insanity. It is an insensibility to the misery of their situation, and a misconception of the true dignity of man. All men in one way or other, are miserable, and any happiness they enjoy is a happiness not suited to their rational nature. But the Christian has peculiar sufferings, which nothing but the hope of being acquitted at the bar of God, and of reigning with Jesus could make him patiently endure. If, then, these sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them, that glory must indeed be great.

We may be assisted in estimating the future glory of Christians, by the relation which they are said to bear to God, and the titles bestowed on them from that connexion. They are called the children and heirs of God. It is not possible for the Almighty God to invest created beings with higher honour. Had the utmost exertion of infinite power been put forth in the creation of any being, could he have been made worthy of higher honour than this? There is a sense in which Adam, when created, was the son of God: there is a sense in which men are still the sons of God, as being created by him. But

it is not as the objects of his creation that the saints are called his children. It is as they are born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, that testifies of the atonement of Jesus. He hath begotten us again to a hope of life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. We are his children as we are the brethren of his only begotten Son. The passages that mention this title, show that it is the utmost dignity. "Behold," says John, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." This title, therefore, we enjoy in a sense in which it is not due to the highest angel in heaven. We are connected through our participation with Jesus, in a relation to God, that no other created beings can boast. As the brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are nearly related to the throne of heaven. This sets us, beyond comparison, above the highest of the angels of God. These are the servants, but they are not the brethren of Jesus. In the sense in which we claim the title, they are not the sons of God. Nor are they ever called his heirs—a title which belongs exclusively to his redeemed from among the children of men, as his children through Jesus Christ.

Children of God, what a transporting view does this give you of your dignity? Compared with you, what are the descendants of kings? Ye base things of this world, you are the high-born sons of God. Even in heaven, among created beings, you have no superiors. What amazing love hath the Father thus bestowed upon us, in advancing us from wretchedness to the highest dignity? Oh, how besotted are we ever to forget this high relation! Why do we not exult with ecstatic joy? Why are not our hearts for ever in heaven? Why are we led astray by the allurements of the vain things of this world? Why are we tempted by any earthly honours? Why do we ever sigh on account of the reproach of the cross, or regret the loss of the honour that cometh from men? Why are we heavy on account

of our present afflictions? Why are we at any time ready to be ashamed of such a glorious connexion? Why should we be ashamed of obedience to such of his commandments as are offensive to the world? Why do we not glory in being reproached for manifesting love to such a Father? We despise a man who disgraces high descent by mean sentiments or habits. What a disgrace in any of the children of God, to manifest a low attachment to this world, or any of its vanities! The son of a nobleman, who should manifest a low taste for the sports of the vulgar, who should be found associating with the scurf of society, instead of attending to the high concerns of his country, would be justly the contempt of all men. And what are you, my fellow Christians, when you turn aside from the truth, and mix in the follies of men? It would not be so inconsistent in the heir of a throne, to associate with a company of strolling gipsies, as for you to join with the world in their sentiments, interests, and ways. You are the sons of the King of kings: be ye therefore holy, for he is holy. "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Ah, my brethren, why will you, by your misconduct, bring a reproach on the name of Jesus? Why will you give occasion to men to speak evil of the way of truth? Why will you stumble the world by your inconsistencies, and thus counteract the gospel of Christ? Ah, shame, shame! Is this the return for so much love, for so much honour? Walk worthy of the Lord, or renounce his name.

As children of God, they are heirs of all things. Instead of glorying in being the disciples of eminent men. Paul informs the Corinthians, these very men were made eminent on their account, and given to them for their service. He goes farther, and tells them that all things, both in this world and in the world to come, are theirs: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death,

or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Even this world is theirs. Though they actually possess little of its wealth or power, yet he that rules the rulers of the world, makes all things subserve his own cause, and contribute to the ultimate good of his people. Even in their persecutions, their enemies are ministers to them of good. They suffer, not from the indifference or weakness of their heavenly Father, but that they may be made perfect like their great head. Shall the Duke of Wellington regret the strife of nations, through which he is placed at the head of the children of renown? Shall the Christian not rejoice when he is called to suffer for Christ's sake, knowing that his reward will be great in heaven? Death itself, as well as life, serves these heirs of God. It is the vestibule of glory. To die is their great gain. Their greatest enemy is constrained to serve them. Things present, and things to come, all, all, are theirs.

This relation, and the consequences of it, are exhibited, Gal. iv. 6—" And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." As the sons of God, Christians in this state of minority enjoy the first-fruits of the Spirit of God. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This gives them a filial boldness and confidence in approaching God through the atonement of his Son. Now the above passage infers, that they are heirs because they are sons. If so, this relation cannot be ascribed in any figurative sense, as it is to angels; for though they are his children by creation, they are not therefore his heirs. They must be sons in a sense that connects them to God as nearly as children are related to parents. If sons, then heirs. Their sonship is a real relation, and, consequently, they are superior to all created beings.

In the epistle to the Romans, the apostle teaches the same thing. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of

God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—viii. 14-17.

Now we may estimate the greatness of our inheritance by the riches of him of whom we are heirs. Here reason goes infinitely beyond imagination. The latter can form a conception of but a trifle out of the inexhaustible treasures furnished by the former. What inconceivable glory, what boundless bliss, must be the portion of those whom God dignifies with the titles of sons and heirs'. They are said to be even co-heirs with Christ: to participate in the inheritance of him who now rules the universe, and is the heir of all things! Let us turn to a passage that exhibits the extent of this inheritance of Christ. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Here we find that all the various orders of angels, called principalities, thrones, dominions, powers, were created by Christ, and for him. He is then the Lord of angels. Now if we are joint-heirs with him, we must share with him in his dominion over the bright angelic hosts. This is a bold thought, but it is demonstratively the result of Scripture language. No mathematical corollary was ever deduced from a proposition with more convincing certainty, than this is deducible from the word of God. Without the most explicit evidence from Scripture, to put men in such a situation, I acknowledge, would be the most frantic fanaticism. But I fear not the charge of enthusiasm, I fear not the common opinion, I found on the testimony of God. I point the hopes of Christians to dominion over all created beings. But I have not consulted a wild imagination

in drawing a picture of my heaven. I look full in the face of the philosopher, and sternly say, Dare you question this reasoning? Without overturning the Scriptures, you cannot deny my conclusion. All enthusiastic flights I despise, I abhor. They are the delusions of the prince of darkness, assuming the appearance of an angel of light. The joys they communicate are like the joys of dreams or drunkenness. They end in misery, or disappointment. But shall we fear to proclaim our mighty destination, which we learn from the word of truth, lest that pretended sages should ascribe our views to the heat of our imagination? No, no, my fellow-Christians, let us freely give over fanaticism to the devil and his philosophers, whom it may serve. We have no need of it. The charter of our privileges is more extensive than the warmest imagination could ever have represented them. No man would ever have conceived such a destination for any of the human race. It must be from God; for it is so far above the expectations of man, that though it is most expressly revealed, most Christians are still unacquainted with the fulness of its extent. They fear to touch the sceptre that rules over angels and archangels.

Come, then, my brethren, let us again, for a moment, pause and rejoice. From this commanding eminence take a view of the regions of the promised land. Behold all the hierarchies of heaven under your sceptre. Behold your thrones next to the throne of God. Is any joy so rational as yours? Moderation here is madness. Are you raised from infinite misery to the highest dignities of heaven? What bounds, then, should you set to your exultation? It is not possible to exceed. But let us always walk worthy of such dignity. "Receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve him with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." Let our hearts at all times overflow with gratitude to him through whom we arrive at this eminence. If Jesus has bought us by his blood, and raised us by his favour to share his dominions,

as one with himself, how ought we to love him? Let us account his reproach our highest glory. Let us rejoice to be accounted worthy to suffer shame for his sake. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made Us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

Nor let it appear absurd, though it is wonderful, that human nature should be raised above the angelic. If the Son of God condescended to take this nature upon him, is it incredible that he should raise it to the highest dignity? Indeed, in the person of Christ, human nature has already been set at the head of all created existences; and, as his people are one with himself, the members of his body, it is impossible that they should not reign with him over all worlds. "To him that overcometh," says Jesus, "will I grant to sit on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne." If they are to sit on the throne of Christ, who sits on the throne of God, what order of beings shall not be under their sceptre? Is it evident that two and two make four? Not more so than that the import of this phraseology raises the ransomed of the Lord over Cherubim and Seraphim. Here, my fellow-Christians, is scope for ambition. Here we may indulge that principle without blame. Men have sometimes varnished sin by giving dignified appellations to some of the worst principles of depraved human nature. But this we may call, without offence, a noble ambition. The glory to which we are urged by the historian is abomination in the estimation of God. But here is glory which it is duty to pursue—glory worthy of the most persevering exertions. The love of power is, perhaps, the strongest principle in human nature. There is no crime at which men will stop in the pursuit of this object. No labour will fatigue, no difficulties will discourage, no dangers frighten, no pleasures draw aside, no deprivations appear painful. But for every one who succeeds, there are a thousand that fail of success. And of those who

are successful in part, or for a time, few continue successful, or succeed in all things according to their wishes. The principle is, therefore, seldom, if ever, fully gratified. But although all the pursuers of power should obtain their object, and possess it till death, what is its real value? Saints, your power will be great beyond conception, and stable as the throne of God. Look here, great Napoleon. Here is power worthy of ambition. Thou hast lost this world; believe in the Son of God, and reign over all the dominions in heaven.

How wonderful do the power and wisdom of God appear in this view of the glory of the saints! How astonishing that creatures that had sunk themselves into the depth of sin and misery, that had degraded their nature in some respects lower than the brutes, should be elevated to such a pitch of dignity! These are God's doings, and they are wonderful in our eyes. Well might the apostle say, that "now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." How childish, how petty do the contentions of rival statesmen appear to the man who has his eye fixed on this power! The thrones of this world are but the chief seats in a bee hive. Tell me, ye restless children of ambition, have you any thing in view to compare with the object of the hope of the meanest Christian?

There appears to be sufficient evidence, that after the destruction of the world at the last day, the heavens and the earth will be renovated in favour of the saints, as a part of their glorious inheritance. After declaring the dissolution of the heavens and the earth in most awful terms, Peter assures us of this, in the following language:—"Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." There is no more reason to interpret the renovation of the heavens and earth in a figurative way, than to do the same with respect to the resurrection. The language is as literal in its import as it is literally

true that God made the world. I hope I need not insult common sense to take up time in proving this. The very subject is introduced in answer to those who shall deride the expectations of Christians with respect to this great event. Now, the new heavens and the new earth are said to be looked for by Christians. If so, they must be for a possession to them. Christians are looking for the new heavens and the new earth according to promise. This also implies that the possession will be theirs. Whatever the promise may be, it is to them. M'Knight supposes that it is the promise to Abraham that his seed of all nations should possess the world. Whatever may be said of this, it is certain that "the restitution of all things God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts iii. 21. Righteousness, also, is said to dwell in these new heavens and this new earth; they must, therefore, be the habitation of beings capable of serving God.

There are innumerable reasons why this portion of Scripture cannot apply to that state of things on earth called the Millennium. Those who wish to see some of these, may consult M'Knight's note on 2 Pet. iii. 13. They who have no human theory in their mind, will need no argument to convince them that this whole scene concludes the existence of this world, and commences the unchangeable state of men. Whatever the Millennium may be, this has no respect to it. I mention no argument but one. This new earth and these new heavens are promised in place of those that shall be dissolved; therefore they must be literally the heavens and the earth.

I am not certain but this may be the true interpretation of our Lord's promise in these words:—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." That this cannot apply to any supposed time when the people of God shall enjoy all temporal power, is clear from the circumstance that all the meek are to have this inheritance. I will not deny that there is a sense in which the children of God now

possess the world; but the possession here spoken of is future. It is not, they do inherit—they shall inherit.

Should any be inclined to translate the above passage thus—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land," and understand the promise to respect the land of Canaan as a type of the heavenly inheritance, I am not much averse to their view. The proof of the point which I am establishing does not need the aid of any other passage; and I would rather have the true meaning of any part of the Word of God than a thousand arguments to support a favourite theory.

The frenzy of some enthusiasts with respect to the right of Christians to seize civil power in every country, and a misapplication of the Scriptures that speak against worldly mindedness, have contributed to make the heirs of God undervalue this part of their grant. But the earth was originally a valuable possession to man; and the new earth may be no contemptible addition to our territories. Almighty power may make it a glorious residence. Besides its real value, we have all for it the tender partialities of a native country. With ecstatic joy shall we behold this dear earth when it shall no more suffer the curse of sin—when storms and scorching heats, and rains, and frosts, shall be known no more for ever.

"THERE EVERLASTING SPRING ABIDES,
AND NEVER WITHERING FLOWERS."

Christian! hast thou little of this world at present? Be contented; thine is the reversion of the earth for ever. How long does the husbandman wait for the harvest? In due time thou shalt reap, if thou shalt not faint under thy trials.

But it seems the astronomer will not give us the fixed stars, as included in the heavens, which are to be our possession. They are already occupied, and the inhabitants are of too much importance to be disturbed by the revolutions of our earth. They must be as much

above the dignity of man as one of those immense globes is greater than this mole hill inhabited by us. The divine also, to retain the countenance of the philosopher, is willing, in his great complaisance, to renounce claim to this vast territory; and that he may do this with a good grace, he has contrived to have the stars made before the world. In my "View of the Day of Judgment," I have conversed with those gentlemen, and I flatter myself I have compelled them to surrender their stolen treasures to the proper owners. If, in the present essay, I have proved that redeemed men shall be raised above all the angels of God, it will readily be admitted that they have no superiors in the fixed stars. Fools! Superiors to those who are one with Jesus! Superiors to the children and heirs of God! Vain philosophy, how long wilt thou deceive the children of pride? Calculate the size of those immense globes, measure their amazing distances, improve thy glasses so as to discover that millions and millions lie in the milky-way, like shot in a bushel, thou hast provided so many flambeaus in honour of the day of judgment. Compared with that event, the burning of the largest of the heavenly orbs is no more than that of a tar barrel on a coronation.

Christians, let us take advantage of the discoveries of the astronomer. He has ascertained, with the utmost certainty, that, through the immense fields of ether, there roll, at immeasurable distances from each other, worlds, above the powers of calculation. Let us, therefore, employ him to survey this part of our estate; but let us receive his accounts only so far as he has actually applied the chain. What he really proves is a communication from God; but his conjectures are the fumes of drunkenness. If he has succeeded in rendering it probable that all the heavenly bodies are inhabited, he has so far extended our future sway. If in Jesus we shall reign over angels, the inhabitants of the stars are not likely to scorn subjection. Come up with me, then, my fellow-Christians—come up, my

fellow-Christians of every sect—ascend with me to the top of this mountain, that we may get another view of the happy country. Here is a large and beautiful tract of territory. We are to reign over all yon fiery orbs. Righteousness is said to dwell in the new heavens as well as in the new earth; therefore, these shining globes are to be our residence, as well as the earth and the heaven of heavens.

Should it be asked, how can the saints dwell in heaven, in the stars, and on the earth, I am not solicitous to give a reply. It is my business to show the import of Scripture language, and leave it to almighty power and infinite wisdom to accomplish what this teaches us to expect. We are not at present capable of understanding the manner of the existence of the saints in glory. It is not wisdom, but madness, to reason on this subject from the present state of the body. If God tells me that the saints shall inherit all worlds, I am satisfied that the event will correspond to the declaration, although I cannot comprehend the way in which this will take place. I leave this, with the utmost confidence, to him that will raise my own body. His ways in all things confound the wisdom of the wise. I can even at present conceive it possible for the glorified body of a saint to pass with almost instantaneous rapidity to the most distant worlds in their wide dominions. Why may not the immortal spiritual body pass from one place to another with the rapidity of light? Could not almighty power convey me to the remotest of the fixed stars in the same time that my eye darts across that vast extent? The body is to be raised in power, and a celerity exceeding that of lightning may be one of its properties. Why, then, shall we encumber ourselves with any difficulties that Almighty power can remove.? How long will men err, "not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God"? The eye might be made to see, and the ear to hear, at the distance of t he remotest of the works of God. We might converse with a brother in a different planet, with the same facility as if he were close by our side. Why, then, will we limit the Almighty, or refuse

to receive what he has told us, till we know the way in which he will accomplish what he has promised? Let us take the full benefit of our charter, confident that God will make good all he has given us reason to expect.

The above views appear to be confirmed by the representation exhibited to the apostle John. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and the four

and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." —Rev. v. 6-12. Whatever view be adopted with respect to the distinctive application of the terms beasts, or living creatures, and elders, their acclamations declare them to be the redeemed from among the children of men. Now, they are nearer the throne of the Lamb, and more intimately connected with him, than the angels, who, in an outer circle, join in praising him that was slain. The Lamb was in the midst of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders. The angels were, indeed, round about the throne, but they were more

distant; for they were round about the living creatures and the elders. These redeemed sinners were made kings and priests unto God; and their expectation was to reign on earth. We ought, it is true, to be cautious in reasoning from this book, and to beware of applying literally, what is spoken figuratively. A point that is attempted to be made out from this part of the word of God, without having any countenance from the rest of the Scriptures, is, indeed, suspicious. But the unforced import of the above representation, may be confidently received as a confirmation of what the unfigured Scriptures have plainly and fully established.

With respect to the nature of the glory of the heaven of heavens, the Scriptures do not appear to afford much precise and specific information. It would appear in general, from the book of Revelation, that the chief employment and happiness of the saints consist in the praises of their ever blessed Redeemer. On earth, though they have not seen him, they love him above all things. But in heaven, their happiness is perfected in the perfect love of him.

The representation of the new Jerusalem is evidently figurative, and, therefore, we are not warranted to say, that any of the specific objects mentioned in this description actually exist.. We ought not to conceive heaven as being really a city, with such walls, gates, pavement, &c. This representation has no doubt an important meaning, but this importance would be infinitely diminished by supposing that it is a literal description. A city thus built would be the most glorious that the imagination could conceive to be made of earthly materials. But it is but a faint figure of the glory of the true Heaven.

Some have thought that the risen body will not possess any powers of sensation. With respect to sight and hearing, this is manifestly false. How much of the pleasure of the heavenly inhabitants consists in the sweet and loud songs of praise to God and the Lamb? And for what is all the glory of heaven, if not to gratify

the eye? Light is the most glorious object on earth, and the enjoyment of the light of heaven appears to be among the most eminent felicities.

The angels of heaven are called angels of light— 2 Cor. xi. 14 —as distinguished from the angels that kept not their first love, who are reserved in chains of everlasting darkness to the judgment of the great day. Now, it appears to me, that the former are so called, from the light in which they dwell, rather than from their knowledge, or from the nature of their works, as M'Knight understands the passage. It would be difficult to point out a distinguishing ignorance in the fallen spirits, and angels of light would be a very indefinite and distant expression to denote that they are continually employed in promoting truth and virtue. Believers may be distinguished from the children of this world, as the children of light, because they are enlightened in that great truth of which the others are ignorant.

God is also said to dwell in light—" who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." —1 Tim vi. 16. This light is so exceedingly glorious that no man in his present state can approach it. But the time will come when even the eyes of the saints will be able to bear that light, for "they shall see God." "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God," but the glorious spiritual bodies of the saints will enjoy it. What must be the brilliancy of the light of heaven when a glance of it now overpowers any of the human race ?" At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

And when we were all fallen to the earth," &c Acts xxvi. 13, 14. "And when I could not see for the glory that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me," &c Acts xxii. 11.

Some have supposed that God will never be visible, and that the promise that we shall see God, means only that we shall see the light

in which he dwells. It is dangerous to advance too far on such a subject. But I am not willing even here to limit Scripture language by our views of possibility. That one spirit may have a perception of another corresponding to what we call visible, is surely not only possible but certain. If so, why may not our spirits have such a perception of God? And that it is impossible for the glorified eye of the saint to have a perception of God, is more than I will say. Let it suffice us that "we shall see God." Let us leave the manner of this to himself. "Take heed," says Christ, "that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."— Mat. xviii. 10. And if angels behold the face of God, \ it will not be impossible for us. To behold his face must imply to view him in his glory ; we need not therefore confound ourselves by any subtle inquiries about the way of seeing a spirit. God is every where: it is possible to make us sensible of his presence, whatever part of space we may at any time occupy. This is an unfathomable subject, but though it represses arrogant inquiries beyond what is written, it opens up a bound less field of expectation to our future state. Having such a God as a Father, what may we not expect?

There is nothing in the state of the future world, about which Christians seem more interested, than the question whether they will know each other. It is a consoling thought that relatives and friends shall meet again and have peculiar satisfaction in each other's society. There is, perhaps, little enough evidence to prove this point, but a very little is sufficient in a matter so agreeable to our wishes. I am not sure that the peculiar affection for kindred will exist in the future world. What our Lord says, in reply to the Sadducees, with respect to husbands and wives, appears to be against this view. "They neither marry nor are given in marriage," and the seven husbands, were they all in heaven, appear to have no disagreeable feelings from a situation that would have been a hell upon earth. Yet

if any one can show from Scripture that relations will still retain that peculiar love for each other, I am very willing to believe it. We must not, however, wrest Scripture, even for this amiable purpose, the most harmless, certainly, for which the word of God was ever perverted. One thing I think is certain : we must lose that peculiar love with respect to our relatives and friends who shall go into everlasting punishment. Were our affection to be as it is now, all the glories in heaven could not make us happy. What an agony is it now to think of the damnation of a parent or child! Christians have continual heaviness of heart on account of their brethren of mankind. Who can think of the Scripture denunciations against the wicked—who can read the accounts of the torments of hell, without feelings of the keenest sorrow? If so, how can they think of the perdition of those for whom they could lay down their lives? This part of our frame must therefore be altered. We must perfectly accord with the will of God in all that he does, and not only submit but approve. Of this we can now have no conception.

But the personal knowledge of each other is independent of this. That the saints may not only recognize each other as formerly acquainted, but that they may personally know every one of the innumerable multitude is no extravagant opinion. The nature of their intercourse, and the happiness of their society seem to require this. Yet, perhaps, the passages usually alleged to prove this are not perfectly decisive. The apostles knew Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration; but it must be observed that the apostles were still themselves in the flesh, and that this might have been learned from the conversation, or some intimation by Jesus. Certainly it was not from recognizing their persons; for with Moses and Elijah, they had no previous acquaintance. Moses was not in the body, but being clothed with his house from heaven, it is likely he had his personal likeness, as nearly as the state of glory would admit. If this passage proves any thing on the subject, it is that the

glorified persons of the saints impress all that behold them with the knowledge of them.

Dives knew Abraham and Lazarus, but this is a parable, and the nature of it required this circumstance, . independent of any indirect intention to prove personal recognition of each other in a future state. However, this knowledge I do not question. Adam, from an intuitive knowledge of the nature and properties of the various animals, could give names to them before he could have had any actual acquaintance with them. The glorified saints will possess knowledge and every other attribute and perfection of their nature in a degree infinitely above Adam in a state of innocence.

It has been conjectured that the bodies of infants will be all raised at full size. It may be so, but we ought not to form an opinion without evidence. It is worse than idle to conjecture on these subjects. Such conjectures gradually assume the rank of subordinate truths, and give people a habit of thinking that there is some other way of becoming acquainted with the things of God, than through the word of his truth; they also lead away from what the Scripture teaches on any subject. The usual descriptions of heaven borrow more from the conjectures of divines, and the fictions of poets, than from the word of God. If my account of the future inheritance of the saints be fairly deduced from Scripture, the most important provinces of the land of promise have been either undiscovered, or little cultivated. The heaven of a carnal fancy has been substituted in its place. How different is the heaven of the Scriptures from the sublime blasphemy of Milton! God and his Son, instead of being represented in their proper character, are like Jupiter and Mercury improved a little by reading the Scriptures. The conversations put into the mouth of the divine persons are impious and degrading, formed on the manner of Homer, and not founded in the divine declarations. His heaven has its sumptuous banquets, its dances, and its gorgeous palaces. The inhabitants have their night and their

sleep. The angels on guard in the garden of Eden have their military weapons and their sports like the soldiers of Cyrus. Christian, this is not your heaven. The sure word of God gives thee hopes that the fancy of poets could never have imagined.

Both our benignity and our sense of sublimity . will be gratified by the innumerable multitudes of the heavenly assembly. There is nothing a Christian more delights in, than in bringing others to a participation of the same inestimable blessings. It must then be a most grateful thing to behold the countless myriads of the redeemed. In addition to this, a large assembly is a very grand object, and elevates the mind with sublime sensations. A vast multitude, even of devils, would be a spectacle of sublime horror. How transporting must be the sight of the innumerable company around the throne of God !" After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."—Rev. vii. 9. Let us add to this the countless thousands of angels, and we shall have an assembly vast beyond conception. "And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels, round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."

All these hosts of angels and men are to be engaged in praising the Lamb, with a loud voice. Here then will be the sublimity of sound in perfection. How grand, how dreadful is the shout of an army rushing to battle! The manly voice even of an individual, in giving the word of command to an army, on a day of review, has much sublimity. What, then, shall be the loud shout of all the inhabitants of heaven! These thousands of thousands of angels said with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The whole company of the redeemed are represented

as "crying with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

The glorious appearance of the angels will also, no doubt, add considerably to the felicity of the redeemed. The Scriptures every where represent these as glorious beings, excellent in beauty and in might. Their power may be seen from some of the commissions which they have been employed in executing, as recorded in the Old Testament; and from the representations of them in the book of Revelation. They are called the mighty angels of Christ—2 Thes. 1—7, or the angels of his might, through whose amazing prowess the power of Jesus is manifested. Jesus is said also to come in the[^] glory of the angels. The appearance of the angel at his tomb was so terribly grand that the guards shook and became as dead men. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." What a glorious spectacle to behold all the thousands of thousands of these mighty spirits!

Redeemed sinners are said to be the inheritance of God. This affords us another standard by which we may estimate their future glory. All beings are God's property; there is nothing in existence which he does not fully possess. When, therefore, the saints are called his inheritance, it implies that they are his in a peculiar sense, and that he values them above every thing else. Indeed it imports that all other things compared with them are trifling in his view. It is the principal property that is the heritage. In the parable the father says to the elder son, "all that I have is thine," yet he was giving some valuable effects to his returning prodigal. Abraham also is said to have given "all that he had to Isaac," yet "unto the sons of the

concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from his son." Now what a view does this give us of the future glory of the saints! Must not the angels be exceedingly valuable in the estimation of God? If then the saints are distinguished as God's heritage, they must be infinitely more valuable in his estimation than the angels of his might. Well then might the apostle pray for the Christians at Ephesus: "that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Here we see that even after men have the eyes of their understanding opened to know the saving truth, it is necessary for their growth and consolation, to have them more and more enlightened to discern the hope of their calling. Many Christians do not know so much as may be learned on this subject from the Scriptures. Indeed it is a subject than can never be exhausted, for from the grounds of estimation given in the word of God, we may continually be advancing in more distinct conceptions of the greatness of our future glory.

h Some indeed suppose the word inheritance here means the inheritance that God has prepared for the saints. But this sense the phraseology will not bear. His inheritance surely is not that which he gives to another, but that which belongs to himself. Besides it is not an inheritance for the saints but in the saints. But whether it is their inheritance or his inheritance, it comes to the same thing in effect. The riches of this glory is displayed in the saints. According as God has glory in the saints, they themselves must be glorious; just as the glory of a king is exhibited in the glory of his attendants. The riches of the master are seen in the costly liveries of the servants. We learn also from . another passage, that redeemed sinners are God's heritage—" Neither as being lords over God's heritage."— 1 Pet. v. 3. This is quite consonant to the relation that

Israel bore to God, which was typical of the relation of . his people of all kindreds. Israel was God's heritage, of which figure his

inheritance in the saints is the truth. If, then, God holds them in so high estimation, what bounds can be set to their glory?

The glory of the future condition of the saints may also be estimated from the love of Christ towards them. Of this immensely great love we have the fullest proof in his humiliation and death. Read the history of Jesus; witness the degradation and infamy of the Son of God, behold him an outcast from society, and at last a willing sacrifice for our sins, even while enemies, and then let us ask ourselves what is the extent of his love? It is beyond all description, and even beyond conception. If he loved us so while enemies, what will he not confer on us as friends and brethren? Paul bowed his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying "that being rooted and grounded in love," the Ephesian Christians, "might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God." — Eph. iii. 17-19. If, then, it is a matter of such importance to know this love; if the real extent of it is beyond knowledge; what is likely to be the height of glory to which they will be advanced?

The Apostle Paul reasons exactly in this manner from the Father's gift of Christ to die for our sins. Instead of describing the nature of future glory, to which human language would be inadequate, and which in our present state we could not understand, he gives us a standard by which its greatness may be estimated. By an irrefragable argument he demonstrates to us that it is great beyond all limits. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Come here, now, thou proud son of science; try this reasoning by thy most rigid logic. Has any mathematical demonstration clearer or more convincing evidence? Dost thou pot repeat with admiration the account of the ancient philosopher, who, overwhelmed with joy

from accidentally discovering the solution of a philosophical question, ran naked from the bath, crying aloud like a madman " I have found it, I have found it?" Now pray, sir, if the discovery of a philosophical truth excites such ecstatic pleasure, shall not the followers of Jesus be permitted to express with warmth, the ardour of their feelings on discovering that they are destined to so much glory? Why, then, that sarcastic leer? Why those derisive appellations for Christians? No more of your petulance; the knowledge of Jesus is the noblest of the sciences.

Come here, now, my despised fellow Christians, come here, poor simpletons. There are not many " wise men" among you; you are not in general capable of weighing the evidence of deep philosophical reasoning. But a very little even of common sense will be sufficient for my purpose. Tell me, have you as much understanding as to perceive, that if a person is willing to give another that which he accounts incomparably the most valuable of all his possessions, he must be willing to give other things of less value? Do you perceive that if a man would be willing to give his son to die for another, he could not be unwilling to give his property for like purposes? Now this is all the knowledge that is necessary to enable you to feel the weight of the apostle's reasoning. If God gave his Son to die for us, there is of course nothing that he will withhold from us, that can contribute to make us happy. He has nothing so great as what he has already given. When he sets us at the head of all the hosts of heaven, he gives us nothing so expensive, as what he gave in the death of his Son. Were there a world for every particle of sand in the earth; were each of these peopled with beings as high as the highest archangel before the throne of God, the gift of all would be nothing to the gift of Christ. If then "he has given us his Son, shall he not also with him freely give us all things"? Now, Mr. Sage, what is your heaven compared with ours? Your conceptions are low and grovelling. Your imaginary future happiness in contemplating

with perfect comprehension the beauty of abstract truth, and of the laws of the universe, is little better than that of wandering through the groves of Academus, searching after the causes of things. It is only a mere exalted earthly happiness, suited to your taste. It is unreasonable for you to laugh at the Indian who anticipates with delight his future happiness in pursuing without weariness the game of well stocked forests. Why shall he not be indulged in creating a heaven to his taste as well as the philosopher?

And ye infidel Christians, ye men of merit, who intend to storm heaven by your arrogant virtue, what is your paradise compared with that of the ransomed of the Lord? You tell us of the reward due to a moral life, and are not afraid to throw yourselves on the justice of God as well as his mercy. Now, gentlemen, taking your own account of yourselves, and of the value of your morality, to be altogether true, tell me what sort of a heaven are you entitled to expect? Sell your virtue at the highest price, what is it worth? And on your system you can expect no more than its value. Let all your imperfections and frailties go to the account of your nature; let all your slips (for you have no sins, that would be an enthusiastic word) find shelter in the divine mercy; let your whole stock of virtue come forward without deduction; how much does it merit? Have you the impudence, even on this footing, to claim a higher happiness than that of an earthly paradise? I maintain, gentlemen, with the utmost confidence, that no being can bring its Creator under an obligation by good conduct, to give it a more elevated rank, or more exalted enjoyments. I do so altogether independent of Scripture. It is the light of heaven in every man's understanding, had all men the candour to attend to its manifestation. I go further, I maintain that though justice would forbid the punishment of an innocent being, it would not be unjust in the Creator to annihilate the noblest and most innocent works of his hands. Shall I build and throw down at my pleasure, and shall the Lord of the universe be forced to continue in

existence, every thing that he has made? But you are moral beings. And what of your morality? What of the morality of archangels? Can you do any thing beyond the ability of the nature which he has given you? What have you that you have not received? Having done all, you are still unprofitable servants. You have done nothing but what was your duty to do. But God, you say, has promised future happiness to your good works. Well, then, take that heaven; but dare you expect the exalted rank that I have proved the Scriptures assign to those who are saved, not by their virtue but by the blood of Christ? Had Adam never sinned, he might have lived happily for ever on earth, but a better portion he had no title to claim. God might have elevated him, it is true; for what cannot he do? But that he actually would have done so, as the just recompense of his virtue, is one of the dreams of those who are skilled in the science of conjectural theology. No, gentlemen, the meanest of those bought with the blood of Christ, will have glory that innocent Adam would not have dared to expect. It is alone through our glorious connexion with the Son of God, that we are raised above all the thrones in heaven.

Come, now, wild enthusiasm, show us your heaven. Have you discovered any thing to be compared with what the Scriptures reveal with respect to the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light? I hear your voice; your words are lofty and flow with rapidity; but I understand not your meaning. It is all mysticism and Bacchanalian fervour; your ecstasies are the drunkenness of satanic delusion. Away, away, cease your canting; I can bear no more.

Let us try another mode of demonstrating this important proposition, that in various ways we may produce the same result, and confirm the doctrine. The following passage affords another process that leads to the same consequence—"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his

grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." Here it is asserted, that in Christ believers are already raised up to sit in heavenly places, that throughout eternity God may show to all intelligent beings the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards them through Christ Jesus. If, then, God intends to make a display of the riches of his favour towards us, how glorious must be the exhibition! When the Monarch of the Universe, the God of power and of wisdom, declares his purpose of showing how much he loves his people, the utmost stretch of imagination will in vain struggle to form even a slight conception of their glory. All the thrones of heaven will be filled with wonder, when they will behold in their glory, the men whom their king delights to honour.

The reward of the saints is frequently exhibited with very animating effect, under the figure of the crowns of the victors in the Grecian games, and of the conquerors who obtain a triumph on their return to their country. In these games the greatest men of the times entered as competitors for the glory of victory, and even kings thought themselves honoured by obtaining the prize. The victor was rewarded with a crown of leaves, and was received with unbounded honour by the vast multitudes assembled from all parts of Greece. Now, after all the self-denial of their former lives and unwearied diligence in preparatory exercises; after all the toils, dangers, and sufferings in the arduous struggle, they thought this crown of leaves a rich recompense. It raised them upon a pinnacle of glory, to be viewed with admiration by all countries. Yet, as the apostle says, they had in prospect only a corruptible crown; we have in our view an incorruptible crown. Their crown was the greatest the world could bestow, but it was fading, and is already withered many a hundred years. The crown of the Christian flourishes on his head with unfading freshness, and will bloom through eternity. Its glory will be witnessed not by the people only of one age, but by all the principalities in heaven. What a noble excitement to ambition!

Such are the high prospects of the believers of the gospel. Can the proudest of the children of men boast of equal pretensions? Speak, ye thrones of this world, tell us the glory of your dignity. Is it comparable to that of the meanest saint in heaven? Speak ye of being born of the mighty of many generations? No more; the Christian is a son and heir of God. Boast ye of your vast dominions and the power of your empires? Be silent; the Christian is to reign with Christ over all worlds.

Ye conquerors, come forward with all your dazzling glories, that we may view your honours in contrast with those of the Christian. You have triumphed, and now inherit a deathless name. The history of nations is the record of your exploits; the children of all countries are familiar with your names; learning, and genius, and power unite in raising your temples, and burning incense on your altars. And what can the imagination conceive more glorious on earth? Thrones and kingdoms could not purchase the glory of Wellington. Illustrious man! when we speak of worldly glory thou standest at the head of the human race. Compared with thine, the glory of kings is but a vulgar glory. Who would not rather enjoy the glories of thy name than sway the most powerful sceptre in the world? Every age produces a multitude of kings, but ages pass away without conferring thy fame on an individual of the human race; yet all this honour is fading, the glory of the most obscure of the children of God is infinitely to be preferred. The Christian conqueror is to sit down on the throne of Christ, as he has conquered and sat down upon the throne of his Father.

Ye men of letters, ye philosophers, ye proud sons of science, what say you? Come forward now, with all your claims to immortality. Many a late night hast thou studied, thou pale expectant of glory; many a huge volume hast thou turned over. When others are enjoying the pleasures of the world, or of rest, thou art unwearied in thy closet. Thou despisest toil, for thou dost dream of

nothing but immortality. The fever of emulation boils in thy blood, and urges thee to take the lead of all competitors. Thou hast made many an important discovery, thou hast written many a profound and learned volume, thou art known over many a country, and thou shalt be known and praised while learning and science remain in the world. I see thy soul swelling as thou lookest down through the long series of coming ages; with delight and rapture dost thou hear thy name pronounced with admiration from the lips of the learned many centuries hence. Awake from thy dream, thou fool! Let the fever abate in thy blood; thou art left far behind. Thy knowledge is not to be compared with that of the most illiterate Christian. He knows God: he understands the wisdom of God in the plan of salvation. What are all thy paltry discoveries to this? His name is written in heaven, and shall be illustrious after the sun and moon have ceased to shine. If thou shalt be conspicuous, it will be only as a monument of folly. "With a disdainful soul thou overlookest the gospel and the believers of it, or speakest of them only to express thy contempt. To designate them thou employest every epithet that indicates the excess of weakness and folly. Zealots, bigots, enthusiasts, fanatics, madmen, are some of the degrading appellations thou bestowest upon the children of God. Wise man! thyself art the fool. Thou art taking common pebbles for diamonds. Like the idiot, thou hast put a crown of straw upon thy head, and thou dost look as lofty as if it were gold.

Princes, nobles, statesmen, conquerors, philosophers, and wise men of all descriptions, what folly or enthusiasm can you find in this gospel? If men are sinners, what better way can you discover to save sinners, and honour every attribute of God? If the Scriptures are true, can any of you show that this is not the doctrine of the Scriptures, according to their obvious meaning? If this is the gospel, can any thing be of equal importance with it? Is there any enthusiasm in avoiding the wrath of God threatened against all the

workers of iniquity? Is there any enthusiasm or folly in obeying the commandments of God, however ridiculous they may appear in the eyes of men? Is there any enthusiasm in preferring the glory of heaven to the glory of this world? Men and brethren, we are not that abject kind of wretches which you are in the habit of considering us. We have higher views than yourselves. You think that from the turn of our weak, despicable, enthusiastic souls, we are inclined to religious extravagance; and that we show melancholy or fanaticism according to the temperament of our minds. But we act upon the firmest principles according to the severest rules of right reason. We prefer a greater distant enjoyment to a smaller present one. Can reason, can philosophy prove this to be extravagance or folly? What, then, is the difference between us? Is not this the candid lesson of philosophy? She would have us to seek happiness by her dictates. But if she speaks contrary to the Scriptures, we will not hear her. Scripture is founded upon evidence equally satisfactory with that upon which philosophy herself is founded, though not of the same kind; and Scripture, as well as common sense, commands us to believe God rather than men. Yea, let God be true and all men liars. But has not philosophy struck her colours to Scripture. Those philosophers with whom I reason have all been found to acknowledge the paramount authority of revelation. Philosophy, then, cannot drive us from our fast stronghold, nor even rationally attempt to do it, as long as she herself pretends subjection to the word of God. As long as she recognizes the authority of this, we will meet her only on the ground of the true import of Scripture. We will meet her here, and we will beat her for ever, though she should summon to her aid all the ingenuity of Satan. When she professedly renounces her allegiance to Scripture, we will meet her also without fear. We will show her that the word of God stands upon evidence that she cannot overturn—evidence as convincing as that of which she herself boasts. No longer, then, ye sons of pride, no longer claim

to yourselves the exclusive possession of reason and truth. Reason and truth are altogether on our side. Your doctrines are erroneous, your conduct is irrational. Is it rational to reject the counsel of God? Is it rational to listen to the dictates of your own wisdom, and turn away from hearing the wisdom of God? Is it rational to venture fearlessly into eternity, with such a weight of evidence against you? Is it rational to prefer the honour that cometh from men to that honour that cometh from God? Is it rational to prefer the unsatisfying pleasures of sin for a season, to the sublime pleasures of eternity? We are not guided by a wanton fancy. Our expectations rest on the unalterable word of God. Our heaven is not a vision of a crazy imagination. It is not the invention of any hair-brained fanatic. Fanatics there are in the world, the disgrace of common sense as well as religion. But we deny all kindred to them. They are taught by the same spirit that has taught the philosopher, the spirit of error and delusion, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. But Christians have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is of God, that they may know the things that are freely given to them of God. That Spirit teaches them in no other way than by the word of God. Be witnesses against yourselves, ye men of this world, that your accusation against us is unfounded. Do you account him a fool, who buys the reversion of an estate? Do you account him a fool, who submits to labour, and toil, and anxiety of mind, and deprivation in many ways, for the sake of securing a comfortable independence for his old age, or for his children? And are we fools because we will submit to many grievances, and deny ourselves many gratifications for the sake of that kingdom which we confidently expect? How many of you think it wise to give away annually a part of your property, even for the feeble chance of winning more? Is it then folly in God's children to give all, if he requires all, rather than miss the prize which they have in view,

rather than lose the immensely glorious kingdom which we have seen the Scriptures promise to all who follow Jesus?

You deceive yourselves, my brethren, when you suppose that we shun the pleasures of the world, because we have not naturally as strong a relish for them as other people. We have all the propensities of human nature, often in all their strength. It is the most difficult part of our warfare to resist these corrupt propensities. We decline the path of honour in which you so ardently tread, not because our souls are so abject that they do not feel the fascinating power of human glory, but because a more noble kind of glory has been presented to our view. If miners in seeking for coal, or tin, or brass, find gold or diamonds, shall they not give up their original pursuit, and employ themselves solely in gathering the unexpected treasure? And shall it be thought strange that Christians, who, like other men, in the times of their ignorance, have employed themselves in seeking the things of this world, shall, upon finding the pearl of great price, sell all they have and buy it? Upon discovering the mine of gold or diamonds, shall they not despise the trash of this world? No, gentlemen, we are not men of abject minds; we are men of more elevated sentiments, of more refined taste, of more ardent ambition, than you are. We cease to contend with you for the honours of this world, as we have ceased to struggle for superiority in the amusements of children. While you are spending your time in contending for toys, we are fighting for everlasting glory. Your contest is then much misplaced. We have no reason to be ashamed of our hopes. We blush not, then, when you laugh; we feel no inferiority when you disdain. We look with pity upon the proudest monarch in Europe, who is ignorant of the gospel. We esteem the knowledge of all the philosophers in the world as despicable, when compared with that which is professed by the meanest of ourselves. If any of us have lowered our rank on account of obedience to Christ, we feel no sentiments of degradation. We estimate our

importance by the value and honour of our inheritance. Though not wanting in the proper expressions of deference to rank and power, the consideration of our own dignity, as the children of God, preserves us from that overwhelming sense of inferiority, which usually embarrasses, sinks, and confounds others in the presence of the great ones of this world; and from those mean submissions, that abject adulation, to which few of the human race will not submit, to secure the attainment of some favourite object. While they call the fear of God an abject spirit, and the belief of future wrath to the neglecters of the gospel, the humours of a timid superstition, they will fawn, and cringe, and truckle to any great man who can serve their purpose. They live regardless of God, but they mould their sentiments and conduct in conformity to those of their patron.

But what is there abject in the fear of God? Is it pusillanimity to fear him who hath power to destroy both soul and body in hell? Is it magnanimity to defy the arm of Omnipotence? If the Scriptures are true, I have proved that woe unutterable shall be the portion of the neglecters of the gospel, and of all the workers of iniquity. Shall men, then, profess to believe the Scriptures, and have the hardihood to despise their threatenings? Shall they have the impudence to tell us, that we are raising spectres to haunt the imagination of the feeble-minded, when we put men in mind of the future punishment of the wicked? Shall their frigid lessons on the dignity, beauty, and utility of virtue, be received as the effects of wisdom, while the declarations of the vengeance of the Almighty on his enemies must not be heard? We shrink not then from the attack of the sage, we deride his weapons as utterly feeble. Notwithstanding all the ingenious apologies they can make for the misconduct of man; notwithstanding all their speculations on the divine attributes, if they acknowledge the Scriptures to be the word of God, a very child could confute them, when they attempt to screen the sinner from the wrath of God.

To you especially, my dear relations and friends, do I commend the gospel. With much solicitude for your salvation, I warn you to flee from the wrath to come. I feel commiseration for the state of the whole human race. Knowing the terror of the Lord, I would endeavour to persuade men; but how can I think of the eternal damnation of those who are so dear to me on earth? Yet I cannot hide it from myself, that you must all perish, if you neglect this great salvation. That hereditary religion, that sound of orthodoxy, and decency of conduct, in which so many trust, will be found a refuge of lies in the day of God. Are you standing before God, on the atonement of Jesus? Have you taken up the cross to follow him through good and bad report? Have you peace with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you waiting for his Son from heaven? Are you looking unto the coming of the day of God? If not, it is in vain you talk of Christ. In vain, you say, Lord, Lord, if you do not the things that he says. He will reply to you, I never knew you, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. Many of you, I am sure, pity me, but I have no need of your pity. I seek for glory, and honour and immortality; you think people may be good enough, without going such lengths. Christ tells me otherwise, and surely he knows more of this matter than you do. He tells me "ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you." He assures me that unless I take up my cross, and follow him, I cannot be his disciple, and that I am not to withhold my all, my very life, if he calls for it. If, then, your religion teaches you to serve God and Mammon, it will without doubt fail you in the end; your wisdom will prove folly. What saith the Scripture?—1 Cor. iii. 18. Why will you then lose the invaluable prize for the sake of any prospects the world can afford you? Is it worse to bear the cross for a few years than to bear the vengeance of the Almighty for ever? Are you so attached to Sodom that you will perish with it, rather than leave it? Remember the overthrow of the cities of the plain, which are set forth for an example, suffering the

vengeance of eternal fire. If God so punished them, how much more dreadfully will he punish those who have rejected his gospel. It will be more tolerable for Tyre, and Sidon, and Gomorrah, than for you, if you receive not the truth. How, then, can I forget your situation? I see you on the brink of a precipice, ready to plunge into eternity, yet many of you as careless as men asleep, about the one thing needful. Night and day you are on my mind. I can fully enter into the feelings of the apostle when he says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," &c—Rom. ix. 1-3.

To you, my Christian brethren, would I speak a few words before I close. You have seen the importance of the gospel; be not then ashamed of it, but, feeling for others, publish it all around. Will you stand idle, and multitudes perishing every where around you? 'Let each occupy his talent. Remember the fate of him who hid his in the earth. When man reviles, remember Jesus approves. Let it be deeply engraven on your memory what Jesus says to his disciples "Whosoever shall be ashamed," &c.

Brethren let us all love one another. Let no difference of opinion about any matter alienate our affection. Let neither name nor party keep us from loving all who appear to be born of the incorruptible seed of the word. To our Master every one of us stands or falls. We are not the judges of one another. While, then, we faithfully contend for any part of truth, let us not cease to love all who love Jesus. Brethren, let us walk worthy of the gospel; let us not mar its progress by our lives. Let us not rest until we have already gained the victory, but "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—Heb. xii, 1.

REMARKS ON THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."—John v. 28, 29.

The general resurrection is among the most awful and interesting scenes that can occupy the contemplation of man. According as it is viewed by hope, or by fear, it is calculated to yield the most transporting joy, or the most pungent pain. If we understand the way in which God is just, and the justifier of the ungodly; if we know the way in which a guilty creature may approach with confidence, the tribunal of the God of the whole earth; if we have a well-founded hope of enjoying the kingdom prepared for the ransomed of the Lord, no subject can yield sweeter consolation to the mind, than the prospect of rising from the ruins of mortality. Nature revolts against the thought of dissolution: it is with reluctance that the soul is separated from its dearest companion; and without abhorrence we cannot contemplate the corruption and loathsomeness of the grave. Nothing but the hope of finally triumphing over death, can make the prospect of dissolution, and the gloom of the mansions of the dead, agreeable, or even tolerable, to a thinking mind. To view death as the debt of nature, and the terms on which we received existence, can yield no real, no substantial consolation to a dying man. But how grateful to the mind, to turn from viewing the rottenness of the grave, and the worms that are about to devour the body, to the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory; when this corruptible

shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality!

But, on the other hand, to those who are ignorant of God, whose consciences testify against them as evildoers, how insupportable is the view of the resurrection of the dead? No longer shall the graves be able to hide their bodies. These must awake from the rest of death, to suffer the punishment of transgression. They shall live, only to endure merited wrath. They may now put the evil day far from them, but it will at last overtake them as travail doth a woman with child. The crimes which they may have concealed from men, will now meet them in all their guilt; they will be unable to hide themselves or their deeds from the eye of Him who shall judge the living and the dead.

Yet such is the blindness of the human mind, that men often succeed in turning away their eyes from beholding that awful scene. The various occupations and incidents of life so engross them, that it is seldom thoughts of so gloomy and disagreeable a nature are allowed to present themselves. In health and prosperity men are carried down the streams of pleasure, and from the various amusements which they have contrived to kill time, they are secured from the frequent intrusion of serious reflections. In acute distress, or the bustle of business, the present feelings occupy the mind; or if adversity should force them to perceive the vanity of earthly things, and obtrude eternity upon their thoughts, they find relief in the delusions of false hope, and false views of their own situation and character. All is not right, it will be acknowledged, but the partiality with which men are inclined to view their own conduct, will discover some good qualities to counterbalance what is amiss, which, with their incorrect views of the justice and mercy of God, soothe them in the prospect of appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ. Nothing more fully evinces the awful situation of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, than the torpor and stupidity of the

human mind in view of this solemn appearance before the Searcher of Hearts. Were not men totally dead in sin, they could not manifest such insensibility and unconcern about things of such infinite importance. While they are awake to espy and avert the most distant temporal danger, and to secure every prospect of temporal happiness to themselves and their latest posterity, they are little affected with that most terrible of all truths, the appearance before God, and the eternal misery of the wicked. This could not be so, were not men dead, utterly dead, in trespasses and sins.

Not only do many who profess their belief in a resurrection, live in a great measure unaffected by it; there are some who fortify their hearts against the day of God, by denying this truth, or making it a subject of ridicule. Not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God, they raise objections from philosophical principles, which at once tend to foster their pride, and harden them in their delusion. Arrogantly pretending to judge of the power and operations of God, from their own narrow views of his works, they have concluded that there can be no resurrection, as the particles of the bodies of certain individuals, may have formed part of innumerable other bodies. "But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."—1 Cor xv. 35-38.

No less lamentable, though less shocking, is the situation of those who speak with pleasure of the resurrection of the dead, and anticipate with seeming delight the reward which they expect for their works, who yet are ignorant of the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ, and have their hopes founded on false views of God and of themselves. The apostle Paul declares himself peculiarly affected with the situation of such

Romans x. 1—3. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." How pitiable is the ease of those, who, from a hope of escaping eternal wrath, and of obtaining eternal glory, deny themselves the gratifications of the flesh (on which their whole souls are nevertheless set), submit to the most rigorous and painful mortifications, and seem totally engrossed with zeal for God, and are yet strangers to the new and living way to the Father!

But how awful is the situation of those, who, with seeming transport, resign their bodies to the grave, while they obstinately continue to reject the atonement, and to deny the Scripture-character of our Lord Jesus Christ! What desperate hardness of heart, what blindness and stupidity of mind, does this discover in man! In what spiritual darkness must the human understanding be buried, when men can profess to rejoice in the life manifested in the Scriptures, while they atheistically deny him who is the Author of that life! The wretch who will curse God and die, is not more blind than he who, while he praises the God whom his own wicked heart faith formed, manifests determined enmity against the God of the Scriptures.

What inconsistencies are discovered in the human mind? With ardent curiosity men endeavour to discover the origin and early state of nations; and trace with eager attention the various steps of their progress from rudeness to refinement, while the volume that contains the true account of the primitive, present, and future state of man lies neglected. A nation emerging from barbarism to civilization, is supposed an object worthy of the most attentive contemplation; while the resurrection of the whole inhabitants of the earth, is a truth which possesses little attraction. The discovery of an island, and the description of its inhabitants, more powerfully

interest the generality of mankind, than the account of the resurrection of man, and his future destiny through eternity.

A new source of commerce and riches seems more inviting than the glory and treasures of the heavenly Jerusalem; yet surely in itself, as a subject of mere curiosity, the resurrection of the human race is the grandest that can employ the contemplation of man. What an astonishing scene, when the Lord Jesus shall appear in the heavens, with all his mighty angels, in all the majesty of the God and Judge of the earth! He shouts, and his voice reaches to the ends of the world, penetrates into the depths of the earth and of the sea, and calls to life and judgment the ashes of the dead. They that are in their graves, they that have slept for thousands of years in the arms of death, shall hear his voice and come forth. View the millions of mankind, that have lived since the creation of the world, all rising out of the earth, and presenting themselves before the tribunal of God. The earth that now swells with the dead bodies of her children, shall open to deliver her charge. The grave shall surrender its captives. What an interesting sight, to behold all the myriads of human creatures, that the successive ages of time have ushered into existence! Come forth, ye men of renown, ye conquerors, ye men of glory, who, to gratify ambition, have so often desolated the earth, and drenched her with the blood of her children. Come forth, that you may drink the oceans of blood that you have shed in wantonness. Let the Judge hear the grounds of your quarrels, the cause of your cruelty. What avails it with him, to allege the glory of your name and of your country? Shall the cloak of public interest, with which you have covered your abominable designs, hide from him the true motives by which you were actuated? You have lived and died for glory; come now and receive from him, who is the God of glory, that which your crimes have merited. Instead of glory, you shall be covered with shame and everlasting contempt.

Ye sons of pleasure, who lived wanton on the earth, whose heart cheered you in the days of your youth, and walked in the ways of your hearts, and in the sight of your eyes, now shall you know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. For your fornication, your uncleanness, your inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, your drunkenness, and debauchery, the wrath of God cometh upon you.

Ye servants of mammon, come forth—call now to your god in whom you trusted; let him deliver you, seeing you faithfully served him. "Cry aloud, for he is a god! either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." Having in your lifetime received your good things, and despised the heavenly inheritance, you shall be for ever excluded therefrom, and have your portion with the devil and his angels.

Ye sober, devout, religious formalists, who denied the power of godliness, and, ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish your own righteousness, how shall you stand in the presence of Him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and who looketh on the heart? Your good deeds, that were done that they might be seen of men, secured you your reward—your alms and your prayers, which had for their object the quieting of your consciences, fatally succeeded; but when weighed in the balance, you will be found wanting, for in as much as you did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, because they were so, saith the Judge, you did it not to me.

How different the judgment of God from that of man! All that is dignified and held up to public admiration, by the pen of the historian, shall be covered with infamy in that day. The warrior, the statesman, the patriot, the philosopher, and the sage, these envied names, to which all earthly honours are consecrated, shall then yield up their all—their triumphs. The name of the righteous alone—a

name which now is held in contempt—shall be truly glorious in that day. Shame and confusion of face shall be the everlasting portion of all who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sinners, who have so often heard and neglected the voice of Jesus speaking in the Scriptures, how shall you bear to hear it. when it calls you to judgment? When he spoke in mercy, you refused to hear; you must now hear him when he speaks in wrath. By his gospel he is now calling on the sons of men, without exception, to believe and be saved. Then he shall call those who have neglected his salvation, to receive the reward of unbelief and unrighteousness. Instead of those gentle words of love and mercy, that invite the guilty to pardon and happiness, the Judge shall pronounce their sentence of eternal condemnation, and remit them to the place of torment. "Take them, angels, bind them hand and foot, and cast them into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Such having despised and neglected his mercy, he "also will laugh at their calamity; he will mock when their fear cometh."

What an awful meeting for the enemies of Jesus who have laboured with all zeal and embittered enmity to oppose the dignity of his person! They would not have the man, Christ Jesus, to reign over them; but now they must submit to him as Judge. They made him altogether such an one as themselves, and have refused to honour him, as they pretended to honour the Father. Now they must behold him clothed in divine majesty, and able to frown them into the place of torment. At that time, though reluctantly, they must confess him. The condition of rebels who have strenuously opposed the just authority of their sovereign, but who have now been brought in chains into his presence, affords but a faint emblem of the dreadful situation of such deluded men. They rejected his claims to divine honour, though the works of almighty power which he performed attested that what he spoke was true, and though the

Father fully confirmed all he had said, when he raised him from the dead. How, then, shall they look him in the face? Where shall they hide themselves? In vain shall they call upon the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them, and to hide them from the presence of the Lamb ; the great day of his wrath being come, and that man whom they denied as being the true God, shall overtake them with vengeance, though they hide themselves in the depths of the ocean.

Let us attend for a moment to the rule of judgment. "They that have done good, shall come forth to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." By their works shall men be tried. In vain, you workers of iniquity, do you seek in yourselves the supposed marks of grace. In vain, ye sober religionists, do you comfort yourselves with the workings of a deluded mind. In vain do you substitute a Pharisaical face, in the room of obedience to the laws of Christ. The covetous man and the extortioner, the lover of the praise of men and of earthly honour, may assume, and in some instances maintain, a religious profession, and be able to enumerate their happy symptoms, amidst all their failings, defects, and spots; but the righteous Judge declares, that they who have done evil, let their feelings have been what they might, shall come forth to everlasting condemnation. The cautious orthodoxy of unfruitful speculators in religion, may suppose that this is laying too great a stress upon character, and that to represent matters in this unguarded way, is calculated to countenance the advocates of salvation by works: but these are the words of Jesus; this is a document published by Him who shall sit in the awful judgment. Let none presume to direct men to another criterion of character. By their works alone can men prove that they have believed the gospel. "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father (saith Jesus) who is in heaven. This is the love of God that ye keep his commandments—ye are my disciples if ye do whatsoever I

command you—he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

But who are they that do good? Are they such as act according to a standard which they themselves hate erected, for the criterion of conduct? Ye, who trust to your own works, pervert not the Scriptures to your own destruction. Eternal life shall indeed be given to them that do good: but the doing of good is not the price of the reward, but the standard and measure by which the extent of the reward is determined. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ: the doing of good is the fruit and evidence of believing the truth that justifies the ungodly. Jesus has made the doing of good the criterion of character; because this is the characteristic of all his disciples, and of none besides. None but such as believe in him can do any thing good in the sight of God, the carnal mind being enmity against God; therefore, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. To do good, is to do what Jesus commanded out of love to him and respect for his authority. To do good is to obey God; this none do but such as receive his testimony with respect to his Son Jesus .Christ. This being the Father's commandment that men believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.—1 John iii. 23. The heart of man being naturally unclean, there naturally flows from it, evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, blasphemies, &c., till the same is purified. This is only done by faith (Acts xv. 9), or by men obeying the truth through the Spirit (1 Peter i. 22); and thenceforward the issues of life correspond to the purified source from which they flow—" A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things, whilst an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things." This takes place as naturally and necessarily as a good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a corrupt or a bad tree bringeth forth bad fruit. Every tree is known by his fruit. Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? Even so a good tree

cannot bring forth bad fruit, or a bad tree good fruit. Wherefore, by their fruits shall men be known.

Those who seek the shelter of such passages as these, because they are externally decent and sober in their conduct; because they are good members of society, and have been distinguished for many actions in themselves good; shall be driven from their refuge of lies when the Judge shall determine the true motives of their conduct. The motive is essential in determining the nature of an action. Things in themselves good may be performed from such motives as will stamp the action to be sinful, and instead of meriting reward, to be deserving of indignation. Ploughing is a duty ; but the ploughing of the wicked .is sin. The sum of the morality of the Scriptures, is the love of God and man. Many in their account of morality altogether overlook what respects God, and consider what respects man merely from the action, without reference to the motive. But the Scriptures suppose that we might give our bodies to be burned through zeal, and all our substance to feed the poor, yet neither love God nor man. Good works, in the sense of Scripture, are neither the hollow morality of some, nor the servile acts of voluntary humility of others. They are works which Jesus requires performed, because he requires them. Those who in this way give but a cup of cold water, shall not lose their reward; while, from a different principle, they might give all their goods to feed the poor, and not be profited. Let those, then, who know Jesus walk in all his commandments and ordinances, for this is the criterion of character. Let sinners believe in him; for this is the only way that they can bring forth good fruit and stand in the day of retribution. It is a faithful saying that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and they alone are righteous who believe it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

III.

A VIEW OF THE OF JUDGMENT: AS DELINEATED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

My soul! take a view of the awful transactions of that day, which closes the duration of this world, and assembles the children of Adam for judgment. The spectacle is glorious, but terrible: it gratifies the taste, while it excites to diligence. Art thou enraptured with the grand and the awful in the works of creation? Dost thou feast with delight on the rugged, but venerable majesty of the mountain? Dost thou delight to look on the face of heaven, when bespangled with its fiery orbs? Thou lookest on the ocean, and art pleasingly overwhelmed with the conception of so vast a collection of waters. Thou viewest it in a storm, and art transported. When the angry waves lash the sounding shores; when, with repeated shocks, they threaten to drive the towering rocks from their foundations, and the white spray rises aloft, sprinkling the shepherd on his distant hill, thou sayest, it is grand! Rage on, proud waves, ye are the ministers of God: proclaim to mankind the terror of his power!

Dost thou feel, my soul, an awful and gloomy pleasure from the hoarse roaring of the wind? Dost thou not fancy that thou hearest the angry voice of God? Yon hollow and dismal groans put thee in mind of the impending ruin of his enemies.

Dost thou look, my soul, with pleasure on the lightning, and hear with awful satisfaction the voice of thunder? When it rumbles through the clouds with a hoarse and horrible groaning; when the mountains are shaken by its noise, and the heavens themselves seem to crash by its fury, dost thou say, here is sublimity?

Come away, my soul; turn from these grand objects, to one that is infinitely more grand. Advance to the contemplation of an object which the men of this world view with horror, or dare not view at all. Come, view the judgment of the great day of God Almighty. It is a scene of terror indeed; but it has no terrors for the friends of Jesus Christ. Who shall lay anything to the charge of those for whom he died?

On that memorable day in which our Lord ascended from the midst of his disciples, it was notified to them by two angels, that he would again descend upon the earth: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus that is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts i. 9-11.

Both our Lord and his apostles have given signs of the approach of that day, and have foretold a number of events that must take place before it. But the exact time of his coming, Jesus has not declared; nor "was this any of those things which he had in charge from the Father to make known to his people. After speaking of the signs of his coming, he adds, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The Scriptures, however, furnish us with some interesting descriptions of the terror and glory of his appearance, and contain a number of scattered hints of the procedure and transactions of the day of judgment. In examining these, the first thing that strikes us is, the suddenness and unexpectedness of his coming. This circumstance adds greatly to its terror, and is, in many places, emphatically held out to view. Our Lord compares his coming to the lightning, than which nothing perceivable by the senses flies with greater rapidity:

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." No man will have time to advertise his friend of this event, after it takes place. He will not appear in one country before another, but, as a flash of lightning crosses from east to west, in the twinkling of an eye, so shall the Lord appear to all nations at the same instant.

It may be asked, how can he be seen by all nations at the same time? At the instant he is descried in any one part of the earth, must he not be invisible to every other? Especially, when he appears to the nations on this side of the globe, how can he be seen by those on the other? Let his descent be ever so rapid, must he not either make a circuit round the globe, or have all the inhabitants of the earth gathered into one place, before he can be visible to them all? To those who make these objections, I reply, in the words of our Lord, on another subject—"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Upon this subject, and, in general, upon everything that relates to the world to come, men have found a great many difficulties; and have invented a great many solutions, which are founded on the notion, that the operations of God must be conducted in some way analogous to those of men; and that the present laws that regulate the phenomena of nature, must always exist. The laws of vision, for instance, that now regulate and limit our powers of sight, are supposed to continue for ever. But, in reality, there would be nothing more wonderful in our seeing round the globe, or to its centre, through all the dense materials of which it is composed; or in our seeing the minutest objects in the fixed stars, than in our seeing an object within a few yards' distance. The greatest philosopher on earth cannot give a reason why we see at all. He may trace the laws of vision; he may tell us of the rays of light coming from the object to the eye—entering the eye in such a direction, And forming a picture on the bottom of it; he may tell «8 of the impression communicated to the brain by the optic nerve: but

here he must stop. Why this would make the object perceivable to the mind, is beyond his skill. Here he is as ignorant as the savage or as the beast. If you ask him why he sees with his eye, rather than with his mouth, he can give no reason, but that it is the will of God. If, then, it altogether depends on the will of God, that we see with our eyes at the proper distance, could not God as easily make objects visible to us without eyes, or make us, with the eyes which we have, behold objects most perfectly, all round the globe? Might we not read a volume placed at the remotest of the fixed stars, or perceive what is going on in heaven itself? Stephen saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

We can, in no instance, judge of the extent of the powers of perception, in our future state of existence, from the present laws by which they are regulated and limited. Let us, then, in ascertaining from the Scriptures the mind of God on this subject, beware of limiting the power of God, by our weak conceptions of possibility. Let us not avoid the obvious meaning of his word, on account of any inconsistency between this and the established laws of nature. Nature is but the order of his operations; and though it is unchangeable by us, it is not so to him. Let us not make any bold conjectures, to reconcile our own views of possibility with his authoritative declarations. That all will see him in his descent, previous to their being gathered before his tribunal, is clear from many passages of Scripture, and, therefore, not to be questioned on account of any difficulties from the laws of nature. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Here all the tribes of the earth are represented as beholding the coming of the judge. The next verse gives an account of the gathering of the saints, as subsequent to this. Jesus says to the high-priest, and those that sat with him, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right

hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." John also declares, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; and they also who pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, amen." Jesus Christ, therefore, in his descent from heaven, will be seen by every individual of the human race. What a terrible appearance must this be to his enemies! Whither shall they fly from his presence? Look up, thou bold infidel; behold him whom thou wouldst not have to reign over thee: yon sight will cure thine unbelief. Behold the despised Nazarene in the midst of his heavenly legions. David Hume, what seest thou? Illustrious septic, dost thou still doubt?

Degenerate sons of Abraham, look up to yon cloud that carries to the work of vengeance, him whom ye crucified as an impostor. Yonder comes the God whom ye blasphemed as an associate with the Devil. O, unhappy man! Proud son of science, lift up thine eye from the volume of nature, and behold this singular phenomenon. There appears nothing in the cross worthy of thy attention; thy system of virtue needs no atonement for guilty men; thy philosophy accounts for all things, without any instructions from the Galilean, or his unlettered fishermen. Come, now, gather all your volumes of wisdom, and show the Judge, from the necessary relations and fitness of things, that it is improper for him to condemn his enemies. Appeal from his tribunal altogether, and refuse to be tried by any other standard, but that which thou hast established for thyself.

Yet his coming will not only be suddenly and simultaneously visible to all men, it will also be unexpected. The world will be surprised in the midst of the greatest security, earnestly intent on the concerns of this life. We are taught this, by the destruction of the world by the flood. Our Lord illustrates the circumstances of his second coming, by this example: "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and

giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Notwithstanding that Noah, the preacher of righteousness, through the long-suffering of God, continued to warn them during the time that the ark was preparing, they were as ignorant of the matter as the dead. They knew not till the flood came.

We are taught the same thing, by the parable of the ten virgins: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered, and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."—Matt. xxv. 1—13. How awful will be that midnight cry to all that are not furnished with oil? Vain the expectation of being assisted by others, or of importunity in crying for mercy. The door of mercy will then be shut for ever.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, is said to be for an example to those that shall live ungodly. All wicked nations are not, like Sodom, cut off by temporal judgments; but all wicked men will assuredly suffer a similar catastrophe. The Lord will unexpectedly

come upon them, and hurl them to the abodes of misery, where they will suffer the vengeance of everlasting fire. Look at the people of Sodom, on the evening before their destruction. Consider their employments and pleasures. How secure! how little suspicious of ruin! Even they that were warned remained ignorant of the dreadful event, till the moment it commenced: "And the men said unto Lot, hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out and spoke unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get ye out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city; but he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law."— Gen. xix. 12-14. But how dreadfully were they convinced in the morning! What an awakening out of sleep!" The sun was risen upon the earth, when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew these cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." Thus terribly and unexpectedly will the Lord descend to the judgment of the great day.

Our Lord and his apostles illustrate this circumstance, by the unexpectedness of a robber entering a house in the gloom and silence of night: "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."—1 Thess. v. 2.

From the similitude of the thief in the night, and the midnight cry, some have imagined that Christ will come by night to increase the surprise and horror. But this opinion forgets, that while it is midnight in one place, it is noon at another. Besides, the similitudes teach no such thing. The cry of the coming of the bridegroom is at

midnight, not to show that the Lord will come at midnight; but, that he will come upon men as unexpectedly, as suddenly, as one coming at that unseasonable hour. The like may be said with respect to the similitude. of the thief. Figures suppose resemblance; but this way of explaining them would confound the principal object with the similitude, and make that apply literally, which is meant to apply only figuratively.

It may be asked, do these passages teach that the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly to the people of God then living? The slumbering of the virgins certainly appears to insinuate, that Christ's disciples who will be on earth at his coming, will not be sufficiently vigilant: on any other view, I cannot see why the wise virgins should be represented as sleeping, as well as the foolish. In some instances, the completeness of the parable requires circumstances to be introduced, which have nothing to correspond to them in the subject to be illustrated. But that is not the case here. The virgins thus waiting for the bridegroom, might all have remained awake, or part might have watched, though the rest had slept. It manifested disrespect to the bridegroom, for any of the party expecting him, to sleep, or even to feel an inclination to it. This part of the parable, then, is certainly designed to be significant. Ye disciples of Jesus, too often ye verify this part of the representation. Awake, and with lamps in your hands, be always looking out. Be not only furnished with oil, but stand ready to hail him. Be ashamed of your lethargy. Why are ye drowsy? Is it a slight honour to be bidden to the marriage of the great King?

O! foolish virgins, how tremendous is that midnight summons! What wild confusion will fill your souls at the sudden cry, "Go ye out to meet him." What stupefaction is in sin! Man sports, with unconcern, on the very brink of endless misery. From schemes of aggrandizement, of pleasure, or of folly, he will be hurried before the judgment-seat.

Let us now take a view of the passages of Scripture in which the transactions of that glorious day are described. In some respects it might be better to present, in one connected view, all the facts in their order, as far as this can be collected from the Scriptures, and to quote no more of each passage than what should bear upon the point in hand. But as my object is not to argue, but to point to the sources of gratification afforded to the mind by this subject, I judge it more profitable, to take every passage in detail, that in all the varied lights in which the Holy Spirit brings this before us, we may leisurely examine and admire. We shall thus have an unbroken view of each of these divine drawings, while in the one, we can note the things that are untouched in the other.

Our Lord himself gives a solemn and striking view of the judgment, which is recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on his left hand, Depart from

me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Let us here pause for a moment, to contemplate this solemn scene. Jesus will come in his glory. And what will be the glory of him, whom the Father delighteth to honour? Of him, who glorified the Father, and all the divine perfections, by the redemption of guilty sinners? In his retinue will be all the angels of heaven. What an august assembly! How glorious a spectacle! How grand the appearance of Jesus and his company, when they burst through the heavens, and become visible to men! O, my soul! do not flag; sink not under the difficulties of the Christian life; endure to the end, and thou shalt share his glory. Keep this prospect continually before thee, and despise the laugh of fools.

Let us now turn our eyes to our Lord, seated on the throne of judgment, and to the innumerable multitudes assembled before him. It is "the throne of his glory." If so, what imagination can form an adequate conception of its lustre? Compared to this, the gorgeous thrones of the kings of the earth are no better than the seats of beggars by the wayside. O, ye sovereigns of the world, submit yourselves to this King of kings. Your true glory consists not in sumptuous palaces, gorgeous thrones, or humble prostrations of your subjects. Know that your highest honour is to be the ministers of this great King. Jesus has given you your thrones, and they are upheld by his providence. O, how will you stand before his throne, if

ye have rejected his gospel, despised his authority, and persecuted - his people? Believe in him, that you may sit down with him upon his throne, as he has sat down upon the throne of his Father.

Let us reflect a moment on the immensity of the assembly standing before the throne of judgment: "Before him shall be gathered all nations." What an appearance would the inhabitants of this island make, if they were all assembled in one place! But if all the generations that ever have inhabited this island were assembled, the multitude would be immense. What, then, shall be the multitude, when all the inhabitants of all the islands, and continents of the earth, of all generations, shall stand before God? Let no impenitent sinner hope to escape in this crowd, through the ignorance or inattention of the Judge. Not the slightest mistake will he make with respect to the character of one of the whole multitude. The Judge is the Searcher of Hearts, therefore fit for his office. "He will separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Sinners, your doom will then be irreversible: ye shall go into everlasting punishment.

We may also notice the importance which the Judge will attach to works of love to his disciples. These are exhibited as the criterion of judgment. All his followers who have had opportunity to manifest their disposition, will be characterised by offices of love to the brethren of their Lord. The atonement of Christ has washed away their sins; faith in the testimony of God, with respect to that atonement, has justified them before him, and disposed them to do his will. His new commandment is, that his disciples shall love one another; therefore, whoever love not Christ's people, are not his disciples. Think of this, you that hate them, because they are his; that mock them, because they do the things which he hath enjoined on them; that persecute them, because they will not renounce his authority, and do what he has forbidden.

Nor will there be found in all the multitude of the wicked, an individual who hath given so much as a cup of cold water to one of his disciples, out of love to his master. "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."—Mat. x. 42. As none of the wicked can be rewarded, none of them have ever given the smallest favour to a disciple for Christ's sake. It is not merely humanity, sympathy, and that sort of universal benevolence, to which some are fond of reducing the whole of duty; much less is it the value of the things given, that Christ will look to in the judgment. It is the distinguishing love of his people that he requires. Many persons distinguished for general philanthropy, dislike Christ's people. Many perform works of charity, merely from the feelings of their nature. If a man should give all his goods to feed the poor, and were not possessed of that love to Christ and his people that flows from faith in his atonement, it would profit him nothing.—1 Cor. xiii. 3. Indeed, none more vehemently hate Christ's people, than those who mean to storm heaven by their pretensions of universal benevolence. Trajan and Antoninus are among the persecutors of Christians; while some of the beastly emperors suffered them to escape.

Some interesting particulars relative to the judgment may be learned from one of Christ's parables: "And as they heard these things, he added, and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said, therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these

servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow; wherefore, then, gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, that unto every one who hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But these, mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."—Luke xix. 11-27.

From this we learn, that among his professed servants, there are many who have very unworthy views of his character, and, consequently, have never truly served him. All their evasions and excuses on that day shall be vain. The high and glorious character of Christians, that they have in this world unjustly arrogated, shall be taken away, and they will be punished as wicked servants, who have aggravated their guilt by an abuse of their opportunities. His profession shall avail him nothing. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mat. xxv. 30.

This parable holds out the greatest encouragement to Christian exertion. Our works bring us not into favour with God; but they are immensely profitable, as the criterion in the distribution of rewards. Being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, we can no more boast in our lives, than we can boast in atoning for our sins. But greater encouragement for good works need not be desired, than that without them we prove ourselves to be the enemies of Christ; and that in proportion to them, we shall receive our reward. He that increased his pound to ten, was made ruler over ten cities; he that had got five, was set over five cities. Can there be a greater stimulus to activity in trade, than the certain prospect of succeeding according to exertion, without being marred by accidents, or any untoward events? What an elevating view! Why do we not strain every nerve in the work of Christ? All our other labours will be without advantage in a few years. Our labours in the work of Christ are of eternal advantage. Here is scope for our ambition. Here we may enlarge our territories, and extend our dominions without the injury of others. The works of a momentary life, have an influence on eternity. Ye conquerors, who subject nations to your dominion, let me fight with all efforts, that my future kingdom may be glorious! What a lesson does this parable read to Jews, infidels, and all that will not have Jesus to reign over them! Many have boldly sent that message after him, and glory in refusing subjection to his authority. On that day, they must account before assembled worlds. Will any apology avail? Will Christ sustain any of those excuses that men are sometimes ready to make for one another? Will ye talk of your sincerity? Will ye allege the virtue, the integrity, the benevolence of your conduct? All excuse will be equally vain. "Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

There is a sense in which the poet's language is just—

"HE CAN'T BE WRONG, WHOSE LIFE IS IN THE RIGHT."

But in the sense of the author, it is an awful delusion. There is no man, whose life is worthy of the Gospel, but the man who is born again, through the belief of the truth. But in the partial eye of man, there may be many things that appear to have a proud demand on the justice of heaven, that in the day of judgment will be discovered to be hollow and unsound.

What a striking difference between the doctrine of Jesus, and the decisions of philosopher s! I am acquainted with no system of moral philosophy, that is not radically as hostile to the Gospel, as the writings of Bolingbroke or Paine. They all treat of man, of duty, and of merit, upon the supposition that human virtue may challenge the prize of a happy immortal life. Nay more, the pulpit is often the echo of the schools; and the advantage of revealed religion above natural, is, that it assures the virtuous man of a happy immortal life, of which the latter gave probable hopes. How many systems of duty leave the atonement of Christ altogether out of view? How unlike to this is the Gospel? How harshly do those words grate on the ear of the wisdom of this world: "He that believeth, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned!"

Instead, then, of being a trivial thing, what opinions we entertain with respect to divine truth, let all men know, that greater enmity to God is discovered in men's sentiments, than in their immoral lives. Saul of Tarsus was a virtuous and a religious man, in the sense of the world, from his earliest youth; yet it was not the publicans and harlots, but himself, as the determined opposer of Jesus, that he designated the chief of sinners. The sober unbeliever must go down to perdition in company with the beastly sensualist. Except they repent, they shall both perish everlastingly.

We have a most animating and sublime account of the coming of our Lord, in the end of the fourth chapter of the first epistle to the Thessalonians: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For

this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This description presents to our imagination the glorious Lord in his descent upon the earth, with some of the most striking circumstances of that grand and terrible appearance. The Thessalonian churches are assured, that the dead will not be forgotten in that day more than the living. Them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him to heaven, on his return from judgment. Nor will the believers who are alive at the coming of Jesus, be taken to heaven a moment before their brethren who are in the grave. They will both be taken up together to meet their Lord.

The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. The word that corresponds in the original to the English word shout, is derived from one that signifies to exhort, to incite, to command; and is applied to denote the shout of soldiers engaging in battle, to encourage each other, and to intimidate the enemy. It is also used to denote the cry of rowers inciting each other's ardour in their laborious work; and the shout of charioteers inciting their horses. It is, therefore, generally understood in this place to refer to the acclamations of the angelic hosts, accompanying their Lord to judgment. I think there is every reason to understand it in this sense; but not, perhaps, to the exclusion of the voice of Jesus himself, who will lead these heavenly legions. Whether or not the shout of Jesus be included in this term here, we know with certainty, that his voice, at this time, will be heard by all. By his mighty call, he will raise the dead from the bowels of the earth, and from the bottom of the seas. To those who were amazed at his speaking of raising the dead, while

on earth, he says, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."—John v. 28.

We learn from this, that as the worlds were made by his word, so by his word the dead will be made alive. When on earth, he said with authority, "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead man heard his voice and obeyed. In like manner, as he descends to judgment, he will awake the dead with his mighty call.

The next thing to which our attention is called in this description, is the voice of an archangel. Doctor M'Knight supposes, that as John the Baptist was sent before Jesus to cry, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight," so an archangel will proclaim his advent, and call the living to prepare for judgment. But whether the archangel will have any thing to utter different from the angelic hosts, and if so, what this may be, is not revealed, and therefore cannot be dis

covered. As this voice is distinctly mentioned, there is no doubt but it will be distinguished in some way.

We are next presented with the trumpet of God. The voice of Jesus raising the dead, the grand angelic acclamation, the shout of the archangel, and the sound of the trumpet, will commence the awful proceedings of that day. We learn expressly from 1 Cor. xv. 52, that the sounding of this trumpet will be a signal for the dead to rise, and the living to be changed.

Let us now pause a moment, to contemplate the different objects in this awful representation. Look up and behold the son of God in his glory, bursting the heavens, and accompanied by all the angels of God. Hear his voice, that extends round the globe, penetrates the grave, and raises the dead. Listen to the shoutings of yon terrible army hastening to execute vengeance on the enemies of

God. Terrible is the shout of a multitude. How terrible, how sublime the shout of the countless hosts of God! What words are those that proceed from the tremendous voice of yon flaming archangel? Ye mighty ministers of mercy and of vengeance, this day affords glorious scope for your zeal.

Ye children of men, listen to the sound of the trumpet of God. Its tones are solemn and loud. If the people of Israel trembled at the sound of the trumpet at Sinai, how much more terrible is the trumpet of judgment! Ye conquerors, whose trumpets have stunned the hearts of trembling nations, hear yon tremendous blast; it summons you to account for the seas of blood which you have shed. Ye sons of blood, ye murderers of the human race, come forth to judgment: you have waded to power and glory through the blood of your fellow-creatures; you have flattered yourselves with the hopes of deathless fame. This trumpet ushers in the day of retribution. Great Julius, behold your slaughtered millions rise up in judgment against you! Come forth, thou Macedonian madman, behold all the nations of your proud conquests! The day of vengeance is come, the groans of a bleeding world speak your sentence. Come forth, all ye other restless sons of renown; down with these accursed laurels; yield up that glory which was purchased by murdered millions. Blow, mighty angel, blow! How long shall the children of God sleep in "the dark and the narrow house?" When shall they arise from their loathsome bed? When shall they be invested with their glorious immortal bodies?

It is usually supposed, that the words, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," import that the bodies of dead believers will be raised before those of the wicked, or before the living will be changed. "But the dead in Christ," says Mr. Scott, "shall rise first, and he rendered incorruptible, even before their brethren be changed that never died." "In this passage," says Doctor M'Knight, "the apostle teaches that the dead in Christ shall be raised before the living are

changed." As appears to me, there is no such thing taught here. "The dead in Christ shall rise first," does not mean that the dead will be raised before the living will be changed; but that the dead will be raised before the living will be taken away to meet the Lord. The living saints will not prevent or anticipate the dead; that is, they will not be taken to heaven before them. Nor shall the dead a moment anticipate the living. In the same instant, the one will be changed, and the other raised. It is evident that the apostle is not speaking about the priority of the time of raising the dead with respect to the change of the living, but with respect to the ascent of the living. Immediately after the word First, he adds, "then we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Besides, this notion is directly contrary to 1 Cor. xv. 52, in which we are taught, that both the change of the living and the raising of the dead will take place at the sounding of the trumpet, even in a moment, or the twinkling of an eye. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: (for the trumpet shall sound) and [or, both] the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Here then it is evident, that the dead saints will be raised, and the living changed, precisely at the same time; and that time is to be at the sound of the trumpet, and its duration no more than the twinkling of an eye. The resurrection then will take place before Christ descends, even as soon as the trumpet begins to sound. Thus every eye of the human race will see him as he comes. There is no reason, with Doctor M'Knight, to make the trumpet of God the same as the voice of Christ, spoken of, John v. 25. The trumpet being sounded by Christ's command, does not make it the voice of Christ. The real voice of Christ will be heard as distinctly when he calls the dead to life, as when he called Lazarus from the grave. Doctor M'Knight supposes also, that the trumpet will sound a second time, for the changing of the living, after the raising of the dead; in which account the second sounding

is called the last trumpet. But it is called the last trumpet, not with respect to different soundings of the same trumpet, but with reference to the time of its sounding at the last day. A second sounding would not be a second trumpet. Besides, his scheme would need a third sounding for raising the wicked. But he has strangely overlooked the circumstance, that the dead are raised, as well as the living are changed, after this last trumpet, even according to his own translation. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for it shall sound; and then the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Here both the raising of the dead, and changing of the living, are represented as following the last trumpet. The same writer observes, that the expression, "The dead in Christ shall rise first," demonstrates, that the wicked are not to be raised at the same time with the righteous. This is very lame demonstration. The import and reference of this expression I have shown already. If the apostle is not speaking of a priority of raising the dead saints, with respect to the change of the living, much less with respect to the resurrection of the wicked. He is not speaking at all of unbelievers; and this writer makes the same assertion. He strenuously contends, that this passage does not respect the resurrection of the wicked, lest it should mar a favourite theory of his, that the bodies of unbelievers are not to be raised immortal or imperishable, but that they will be totally burned up in the fire that consumes the world. I shall at present take no notice of this theory, as it does not respect my subject.

That the wicked will not be raised at the same time with the righteous, he endeavours also to prove from 1 Cor. xv. 23. Every man is to be raised in his proper band. But it is evident that this expression, let it be translated as it will, refers not to the righteous and the wicked. It respects Christ and his people: "Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." The wicked are not in any of these bands or divisions. This writer, however, is

not to be considered as holding the opinion, that the resurrection of the righteous will any considerable time precede that of the wicked. He seems to make it merely a matter of form. "Between the resurrection of the righteous," says he, "and their being caught up, the living are to be changed; as is implied in their not anticipating them who are asleep. Also, the wicked are to be raised after the change has passed on the living." But there is no foundation for this opinion in those passages, and it is positively contradicted by others. In John v. 28, both the righteous and the wicked are represented as hearing the voice of Jesus, and coming both together out of the graves. The parable of the virgins also supposes, that both the foolish and the wise hear the cry, "Go ye out to meet him," at the same instant. Therefore, the dead, whether righteous or wicked, are to be raised, and the living saints are to be changed at the same moment.

The instantaneous resurrection of the dead, and changing of the living, give us a noble idea of Almighty power. How confounding is the thought of innumerable millions of rotten carcasses all rising to life, and standing on the earth in the twinkling of an eye! How glorious the change from corruption to heavenly brilliancy!

When the dead saints are raised, and the living changed, they will both be taken up together on clouds to meet the Lord in the air. "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord." Some have supposed, that the saints shall ascend to meet their Lord, by the activity of their new spiritual bodies. I think there is no reason to question, that the glorified bodies of the saints will possess locomotive powers, of which we have now no conception. Nevertheless, the phraseology of the passage evidently implies, that the saints will be snatched up from the earth, to meet the Lord, by some external force. What this will be, is clear from Mat. xxiv. 31: "And he shall send his angels with a

great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." After such declarations, it is worse than foolish to speculate. As the saints are to meet the Lord in his descent, the last quoted passage imports, that some of the angels that accompany him, will be sent before, to assemble and bring forward his people. The instrumentality of the angels is also to be employed in bringing forward the wicked to judgment. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just." Mat. xiii. 41-49. These passages prove also, that the resurrection of the wicked will take place at the same time with that of the righteous. The wicked are to be severed at the resurrection from among the just, and before the gathering of the elect. Mat. xxiv. 29, 30. All the tribes of the earth are represented as mourning, when they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. No speculations can be permitted to contradict this distinct and repeated testimony. Doctor M'Knight is of opinion, that the event referred to, 1 Thess. iv. 17, is subsequent to the judgment. It appears clear to me, that it is previous to it. The phraseology is suitable to the meeting of the Lord only. What the common version renders meet, he translates join, but without authority, without propriety. It imports strictly to meet from opposite directions, as travellers on the highway, and is so used in the New Testament. Even his own translations forbid his interpretation. To join the Lord, cannot be applied to those who have been with him all the time of the judgment. The things that are said to be joined, must have been previously separated.

"From this verse it appears," says the same writer, "that at the judgment, Christ will fix his seat in the air." I perceive no foundation for this observation, whether the passage is understood to

apply to the meeting of the Lord before the judgment, or the accompanying of him after it. I draw a different inference from the mention of the place of meeting. When they are said to meet or join in the air, it imports, that previously they were not in the air. That Christ will descend to the earth, I think is implied in the general phraseology of Scripture that speaks of his coming again; but whether his throne of judgment will be fixed in the air or on the earth, I find no materials upon which to found an opinion. Some have gone so far as to point out the particular spot of earth on which his tribunal will be fixed. This is the worst species of novel writing. It teaches Christians to indulge opinions, founded not on his word, but on the vain conjectures of human wisdom. Such theories are like those of the philosophers, with respect to the seat of the soul and the formation of ideas.

On the throne in clouds, Doctor M'Knight thus observes: "In Scripture, multitudes of angels are called clouds, Mat. xxiv. 30, wherefore, caught up in clouds, may signify, caught up by the ministry of angels." Angels can never be called clouds. In the passage referred to, the term clouds has its proper meaning. The Lord will indeed come with his angels, but he will also descend upon the clouds. "Clouds, likewise," says the author, "signify great multitudes of people. —Heb. xii. 1. According to this sense, the meaning will be, caught up in great numbers at once." Nor does the term clouds, signify great multitudes of people. The author confounds the signification and the figurative application of words. A cloud may, metaphorically, signify a multitude of any kind. A cloud of witnesses, is a multitude of witnesses; but cloud, without any words to show its figurative application, has always its proper meaning. According to the author's mode of criticising, the phraseology ought not to be a cloud of witnesses, but clouds. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great clouds, let us, &c." Such principles of criticism, have darkened the

Scriptures and perplexed every controversy. What is it the Scriptures will not say in this way of applying their language?

We have another very awful description of the coming of Jesus, in 2 Thess. i. 7-10. "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

The heavens at present contain the Lord Jesus, and hide him from the sight both of his friends and enemies. But on that day, he will be revealed for the admiration of the one, and the punishment of the other. The angels, in the midst of whom he is to descend, are here called the angels of his might. They are the mighty ministers, who now are employed in executing various purposes of mercy or of judgment, and who will then be employed in assembling men for trial, and executing the dreadful sentence. What a mighty host! How glorious, how terrible the appearance of a single angel, at the tomb of this same Jesus!" And behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him, the keepers did shake and became as dead men." How glorious then, and how terrible will be the whole host of angels on the great day of the Lord! The phrase flaming fire, is by some connected with the preceding context, and by others with the succeeding. If we understand the passage with the latter, it imports, that Jesus will inflict punishment on the wicked with flaming fire; and thus, does not respect his own appearance. I am inclined to connect it with the preceding context, as referring to the dreadful appearance of Christ

surrounded with flaming fire. The appearance of the Lord on mount Sinai, was accompanied with fire, and not less dreadful, surely, will be his appearance for judgment. Indeed, in most other circumstances, the description of these two events is resemblant: "And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud: so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire, on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel."—Ex. xix. 16-18. xxiv. 17.

Upon whom is the Lord to execute vengeance on that day? Is it merely upon the most enormous sinners? No, but upon all that know not God, and obey not the Gospel. None shall escape but those who have believed God's testimony, with respect to the atonement of his Son. This, and the dreadful nature of the punishment, which occupy so much of this portion of Scripture, are not to the present purpose. But can we pass it without noticing, that it denounces wrath against the great body of mankind. If this is a hard saying, let Jesus answer for it. That infernal sectarian spirit that causes some to delight in dealing damnation to all who do not adopt their peculiarities, I reject, I abhor. All the sons of Adam are my brethren; but I cannot but believe the plain import of God's declarations. I dare not quarrel with the divine procedure. That philanthropy that hopes contrary to God's declaration, is Atheism. "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned."

It appears from Scripture, that the fallen angels also will stand on that day before the judgment-seat of Christ. The Apostle Peter

speaks of the angels that sinned, as being cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.— 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude expresses the same thing. The Scriptures also teach, that the saints are to be admitted to join the Lord in the judgment of wicked men and angels. Doctor M'Knight, however, warmly controverts this common opinion, but I think, without being able to overturn the foundation on which it rests. The passage on which this opinion is built, is to be found in the beginning of the sixth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "Do ye not know, that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not, that we shall judge angels?" The expression, "the saints shall judge the world," he thus paraphrases: "Do ye not know, that the inspired teachers among you, judge the world by the laws of the gospel which they promulgate?" But this interpretation is altogether wild. The term saints, is appropriated to believers in general, and can never be employed to designate inspired teachers. He observes in a note: "this name, though common to all who believed in the true God, is sometimes appropriated to the spiritual men in the Christian church, who were inspired with the knowledge of the Gospel."—Col. i. 26. But the passage on which he rests his proof, has not the least intention of giving him its countenance. The mystery formerly hidden, now manifest to the saints, is the gospel which is made known to all the saints.

On the words, "judge the world," he observes: "Here St. Paul told the Corinthians, that agreeably to Christ's promise to the apostles, Mat. xix. 28, they were at that time actually judging or ruling the world by the laws of the Gospel which they preached to the world." But the Apostles cannot be meant here: it is expressly asserted of the Corinthian believers, "and if the world shall be judged by you." The world then we see, is to be judged by the Corinthian saints as well as the Apostles; besides, this interpretation destroys the argument. How does the fact, that the apostles are now

judging the world by their doctrine, prove that the Corinthians should settle their own disputes among themselves? We apostles, declare the judgment-of the world; therefore, ye believers, may judge of the temporal concerns among yourselves. Is this argument? That it is not inspired men who are meant, is clear from the fourth verse: "If then ye have judgments pertaining to things of this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." Surely inspired men could -not be of this number. The opinion that this direction refers to the lowest order of what he calls spiritual men, is so exceedingly ridiculous, as not to merit refutation. The least esteemed in the church, must be the least esteemed of all, and not of a certain class in the church.

With respect to Mat. xix, 28, it does not appear to import, that the doctrine of the apostles now judges the world. The apostles are now testifying to the world of Jesus. If men believe not, this word will condemn them at the last day. But this passage appears to refer to the personal observation of the apostles on the day of judgment "In the resurrection, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This author's objections to the opinion, that the saints will join with their Lord in the judgment, are contained in the following extract: "With respect to the idea which many entertain, of the saints being Christ's assessors when he judges the world, I observe, that it is repugnant to all the accounts given of the general judgment; and particularly to our Lord's own account of that great event, Mat. xxv. where the righteous are represented as all standing before his tribunal along with the wicked, and as receiving their sentence at the same time with them." I apprehend, there is not the slightest repugnancy between this opinion and those accounts. Though the righteous are to stand before the Lord along with the wicked, yet, the former being judged first and acquitted, may join in the judgment of wicked men and angels. He adds, "besides, for what

purpose are the saints to be Christ's assessors at the judgment? Is it to give him counsel? or only to assent to the sentences he will pass on the wicked? Surely not the former, and for the latter, why should their assent be necessary, more than the assent of the holy angels?" In reply, I ask, why is there a day of judgment? Why will Christ permit his people to reign with him? Why has he made them one with himself? Are we entitled to ask a reason, before we admit God's plain declarations? Will any one who knows the dignity to which Christ has exalted our nature, ask why believers shall be set above angels? If they are with their Lord, why should they not sit with him? For the confession of his word, they have been condemned by the world. Many of them have stood before kings and rulers for his sake, and all of them have been hated and despised by all men, for professing their confidence of salvation, through faith, in his name, and for walking in his commandments. In that day, things will be reversed. Kings, and" conquerors, and statesmen, and philosophers, must stand before Christ and his followers. Those who have honoured Jesus, he will honour. Yes, ye proud sons of science, ye must stand before poor Joseph, the London simpleton. This is a glorious promise, and therefore not lightly to be given up. Is it no encouragement to bear the reproaches, the mockings, the calumnies of the world, that we are to be admitted to a seat with Christ in the judgment of this great day? Now we weep, but then shall we laugh; but woe unto you who laugh now, for ye shall mourn. The expression, "do ye not know that we shall judge angels?" this author paraphrases thus: "do ye not know that we declare the judgment of the evil angels?" Was ever gloss more violent and absurd? Judging the angels, is only declaring that they shall be judged. To relate a fact, is then the same thing as to perform it; besides, what argument is in the words in this interpretation? We apostles declare, that the evil angels shall be judged, therefore, you Christians in Corinth, have a right to settle your own disputes about the affairs of this

world, without going to law. Again, if it is the apostles who are said to judge angels by their declaration, it is the apostles who have a right to judge the things pertaining to this life; for both assertions respect the same persons. "If we judge angels, how much more, &c." This, therefore, would speak nothing of the duty of Christians to settle their disputes without going to law, the subject which the apostle was treating. In no sense are the evil angels re-judged by the apostles; nor will the apostolical writings be the standard by which they are to be judged. The apostles, as far as I have yet learned, do not even declare by what sins the fallen angels have rendered themselves obnoxious to judgment. Theologians, however, have happily supplied this curious piece of information. It was well known to Milton.

We learn from the Apostle Peter, that in the day of judgment, the earth and the heavens also will be destroyed by fire. By the Word of God, the heavens and the earth were first made: "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."—2 Pet. iii. 7. He gives us a tremendous description of this destruction, in the following words: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

What are we to understand by the heavens that are to be burned? Doctor M'Knight supposes, that it is merely our atmosphere. In my opinion, it includes also all the heavenly bodies. It is true, that the atmosphere is called heaven (Gen. i. 8.); but here, the term is not heaven, but heavens; which includes the atmosphere and starry firmament, in contradistinction from which, the glorious place of the Divine presence is called the third heaven. The latter

cannot be included; therefore, the term, heavens, must apply to the first and second heavens.

Science, contemplating the number, magnitude, and distance of the fixed stars, derides the simplicity of the illiterate fisherman, who represents the catastrophe of our insignificant planet, as involving the ruin of so many systems and worlds. She has discovered, that these sparkling globes are scattered in countless multitudes throughout the immense regions within her view; that each of them is a sun, the centre of a system, round which other worlds, with myriads of inhabitants, are revolving. Shall all those immense orbs, with all their inhabitants, probably more respectable than man, perish at the destruction of this molehill that we inhabit? No, no; the discordance of the Scriptures with the sublime doctrines of philosophy, and the discoveries of astronomy, shows that the writers were ignorant impostors. Impudent sorceress! how dare you assume such a tone? By what evidence do you justify your arrogant pretensions? Presumest thou to confront the best evidence of testimony with thy vain conjectures? Thou art an impostor; thou art falsely called Science. All the discoveries of the true owner of that name, are to the honour of the Lord of the Scriptures. Thou sayest thou hast discovered that the stars are numerous beyond conception, immense in size and distance. Well, madam, so much the more glory to Jehovah; so much more extent to the dominions of his redeemed people. Thou sayest that the planets of our system are inhabited as well as the earth, and that round the stars there are worlds thickly peopled. Stop, Mrs. Impudence, thou sayest more than thou canst prove; true science believes nothing without evidence. All thy discoveries can prove no more than that from analogy it is probable they are inhabited. The man of God has no objection that there should be innumerable millions of worlds, all the residence of happy creatures; but he is not a philosopher more than a Christian, who founds belief on conjecture. If a single clear passage of the Word of

God was inconsistent with the opinion that the heavenly bodies are inhabited, I would contemptuously reject that opinion, and sternly look defiance into the face of all the astronomers on the earth. But I see nothing in the most extravagant guesses of astronomy, were they even true, that forbids us to believe with the Scriptures, that all the stars of heaven will be burned in the general conflagration. This earth is infinitely more important than any world, as the residence of man. Human nature is exalted, not merely above that of the stellar inhabitants, but above that of every created being. Even in heaven man will have no superior but God. The meanest of Christ's people, as one with himself, must reign over all creatures. The glasses of the astronomer cannot discover to him the glory of the person and works of Jesus Christ, which the most illiterate Christian has discovered in the book of God. Ignorant of the high destinies of the ransomed of the Lord, he stumbles at the comparative importance of this world in the accounts of Scripture, . after he has been viewing the bright worlds dispersed through the immense fields of ether.

Theologians who wish to keep in the good graces of both Science and Scripture, are ever endeavouring to mediate between these rivals. Many a stretch they make to reconcile their discordant claims. Philosophy is haughty, and must be flattered and soothed into reconciliation. The Scriptures are pliant and submissive, and must soften and explain. Many a fine figure has been invented to give a philosophical turn to the dictates of inspiration. On this subject, divines have made the Scriptures acknowledge to philosophy, not only that the stars are not to be burned with the earth, but that they were not made at the creation of the world. "In all probability," says Doctor M'Knight, "Moses, in his history, describes the creation of our planetary system only. For though (Gen. i. 16,) he says, 'God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, he made the stars also.' The words, he made, found in the latter clause, are not in the

original. Taylor, therefore, thinks the translation should be, the lesser light to rule the night with the stars—that is, jointly with the stars, they having been made long before; for it is the opinion of many, that the stars are much more ancient than the earth, and shall remain after it is destroyed." A philosopher would have said at once, without ceremony, that this account shows Moses to have been an ignorant impostor; but a commentator can do the business more respectfully. The translation may be altered. It may; but never can be justly made to say anything different from ours. Literally it is, "and the stars." The elliptical words are necessarily supplied from the connection, and can be no other than he made.

This passage affords other evidence that the stars will be burned in the day of judgment. Parkhurst produces satisfactory authority, that the word translated elements, denotes also the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars; and many circumstances in this connexion incline me so to understand it here.

1. The only other sense in which the word could be used here, is that of first principles. But if that were its meaning, I think it would have been applied also to the earth as well as the heavens. Would the apostle speak of the first principles of the atmosphere, and not of those of the earth? Estius, indeed, understands the word as denoting the elements of which this terraqueous globe is compassed; but this cannot be its signification. Would the apostle first speak of the dissolution of the elements, or first principles of the earth, and afterwards of the burning of the earth? The elements of the earth by burning shall be dissolved, and the earth shall be burned, would be intolerable. M'Knight is of opinion, that in this verse the apostle is speaking of the electrical matter, the sulphureous vapours, the clouds, and whatever else floats in the air, together with the air itself. But these are not the elements of the atmosphere in any sense; nor do I think that the apostle would bring forward, as a thing

striking and terrible, the mere chemical dissolution of the atmosphere.

2. There are no elements in the atmosphere, according to the ancient chemistry. The ancients counted earth, air, fire, and water, the first principles of all bodies. In the atmosphere there are different kinds of air; but ancient philosophy was ignorant of this. Now, if the apostle had been speaking of first principles, he would have used the word in its received acceptation, and would not have spoken of the elements of the atmosphere.

3. It is not said that the heavens and the earth shall be dissolved into their elements, but that the elements themselves shall be dissolved. Now, a thing may be dissolved into its elements; but elements are not dissolvent. Almighty power might annihilate the very elements of all things; but this would not be dissolving them. However, matter is not to be annihilated, but, by burning, to be dissolved.

4. The word melt will apply to the heavenly bodies, not to air or elements; the decomposition of air is not melting. We would not say, that water is melted by boiling, much less that air is melted into its first principles.

5. The phraseology of the passage agrees best with this interpretation. It is said, that the earth and the works therein shall be burned. If the earth be burned, the works on it will be burned of course; but for emphasis, this is pleonastically expressed. A thing that is implied, is distinctly presented to the mind, to deepen the impression, and increase the awfulness of the description. In like manner, the term heavens includes the heavenly bodies; but the image presented to the imagination is rendered more grand and impressive by specification. M'Knight makes the term heavens signify the atmosphere, and elements signify the atmosphere, with the vapours, &c., suspended in it. This is pleonasm of the worst kind

—".the atmosphere shall be dissolved by burning, and the atmosphere with its vapours, &c., shall be also dissolved.

So then, astronomers, you will not be able to save the grand objects of your contemplation from this general conflagration. Pursue your discoveries with ardour; every new star added to the list will augment the splendour of this magnificent illumination.

Let us now pause and contemplate this wonderful spectacle. Behold the flames that issue from innumerable millions of worlds. Hear the terrible noise of the burning heavens, thundering into dissolution. You giddy throng, come out from your gay assemblies to view those dreadful concomitants of your perdition. How many brilliant lustres are lighted up in the great assembly to which you are called! This day commences the complete misery of all that know not God, and obey not the gospel. This terrible scene is only the porch to hell.

From the circumstance of the time of the judgment being called a day, it would be rash, absolutely to limit it to the duration of one of our days; yet this term, so frequently applied to it, appears inconsistent with the supposition, that it will have a duration of any considerable time. Some have thought that it shall last a thousand years; and as the multiplicity of business seems to them to demand such a length of time, they have contrived to find it in the Word of God: "One day is to the Lord as a thousand years." This passage, however, cannot bear on the point at all. Whatever be its import, it does not say that one day is a thousand years, much less does it say that the day of the Lord is a thousand years. It is called the last day; and this seems plainly to import, that it is the last of those days allotted to this world. It is called the day of the Lord, and the day of Christ, because all the other days of this world, since the fall, have been given to man. He has been permitted to work all iniquity, as if there were no God to rule over him. But this will be the day of God,

in which he will have to account for all his works of unrighteousness.

To many it appears absurd, that the judgment should be transacted in a very short space of time. Were the trials to proceed as in our courts, ten thousand years would be insufficient to finish them. To expedite the business, Doctor M'Knight has contrived to discriminate the righteous from the wicked at the general judgment, not by any formal inquiry into the character and actions of each individual, but by the kind of body in which each will appear. But this would not be a judgment. The dress of a culprit is not his trial. Besides, it is mere hypothesis, against which also many passages of Scripture seem to militate. Indeed, almost every passage that refers to the subject, seems to take for granted, that particular crimes will be charged. For every idle word, men shall give account. The dead are said to be judged out of the things written in the books; and though this be figurative, it still implies particular investigation.

How, then, can this be done in a moderate space of time? All I would reply is, that what is impossible with man, is possible with God. He can make us perceive at once a million of facts, as easily as we now perceive one, according to our present constitution. The trial of each individual of the whole human race might be going on at the same time; the whole might be perceived by all, and the business might be finished, not in a day, but in an hour. Men err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God. Instead of receiving the plain testimony of the Word of God, they spend their time in reconciling apparent inconsistencies by their own vain speculations. Upon every point we should ask, what saith the Scriptures? When we have found its answer, let us receive it, however improbable in the estimation of human wisdom.

Disciples of Jesus Christ, let this great day be much in your contemplations. Cherish your hearts with the prospects it presents. While this is before you, the concerns of this world will appear

trifling, and your sorrows will be mitigated. To the world it may appear as a dream, but to you it is a comforting reality. This will be your day, as well as that of your Lord. You are now the fools, but on that day you will appear to have been wise. Remember that it is one of the characteristics of a Christian, "to love his appearing." All who are taught by the gospel, are "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ." They who hate him may dread his coming; but the loving, faithful bride must rejoice in the coming of the bridegroom. Fly round, then, ye sluggish years; complete the destined period of this world's duration. Time, roll on, roll on; haste, make way for the coming of our Lord. O! when shall we behold on earth his lovely countenance?

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY OF GOD.

The wise men of this world have laboured to make themselves ignorant of things known to every child, and have pretended to fathom the deep things of God. While they have doubted and even denied the existence of the world, they have dared to soar in regions of impious conjecture far beyond the reach of the human faculties. They have arrived at the utmost verge of the opposite extremes of madness. Some have denied all certainty of knowledge, and others have presumed to guess at the manner of the existence and knowledge of the incomprehensible Jehovah. Rejecting the knowledge divinely afforded them, they speculate on the secrets of inscrutable wisdom.

The character of the God of the universe, even as discoverable by the light of reason, is invested with attributes which the highest human intellect in vain attempts to comprehend. Our assent is commanded as perfectly as by mathematical axioms, yet our mind recoils at the result of its own operations. We not only cannot but admit that such things are so, but we see the contrary to be absurd, contradictory, and impossible. At the same time when we attempt to contemplate the truth which forces itself on our belief, we are utterly confounded; we find it to be altogether beyond the grasp of the human mind.

That God is immense and eternal is admitted by every one who believes in his existence. Indeed immensity and eternity are attributes essential to the nature of God. To question this is to doubt his existence, for whatever is limited in time or place cannot be a perfect Being. If there was a time when God was not, then he must

either have been the author of his own being, or he must have been produced by some other cause. Both of these suppositions are absurd. It is impossible that any thing could be the cause of its own existence, and nothing can be supposed to be before him, as the cause of his Being. However far we trace back the cause of created existence, we must at last come to a cause that is uncaused, or the great First-Cause of all things. If then there is a God, he must be eternal. But that there is a God is as clear as there is a world. As something now exists, there must have been something previously existing to confer that existence. Nothing cannot create something. This is the necessary conclusion of reason. It is also the dictate of inspiration. The Apostle Paul shews that the Gentile world was without excuse. For the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

That God is immense is equally clear from the light of reason. If there be a place where God is not, then in that place it may be said there is no God. If his presence is bounded then he is an imperfect Being, which is inconsistent with our idea of God. On this supposition he is not as great even as the human mind could conceive him to be, for whatever admits of limits might be greater. And if God's presence admits of limits there is actually something greater. Space admits of no limits, and if God fills not the immensity of space, space is greater than God, which is absurd.

Let us then try to contemplate a Being immense and eternal, and we shall find that we may as well try to look on the meridian sun with the naked eye. Is there any thing in the revealed character of God more beyond the grasp of human intellect? When once an Almighty and an all-wise Being is supposed to exist, we have no difficulty in conceiving how he could make every thing that is in the universe, and every thing we can suppose possible? But how can we conceive of a Being existing from eternity? Our minds can go back, and back, and back, one step after another, until we arrive at the

utmost limit of any given time, but still at last we come to a point where we must stop, and when we examine that point it is as far from eternity as where we started. When we have gone back as far as the mind can reach, still there is an eternity behind us undiminished by any thing we have taken from it. To form an idea of a being without a beginning is a task no less difficult than the creation of a world. We have no difficulty in conceiving that Almighty power may do any thing, but whence is the origin of power? How can we conceive power without an engine? A child will admit that God hath made all things, and this relieves his mind from its labour in conceiving how they began to exist. But he cannot stop here, the thought, how God began to exist himself, suggests itself to his mind, presses on him, and overwhelms him. When he is told that God never began to exist, he may stop his inquiries, but he has received no light that can satisfy reason. He is delivered from his perplexity only by ceasing to think on the subject. He receives the report just on the same evidence that the Christian believes what the Scriptures testify of the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He can no more conceive how God never began to exist, than he can conceive how one God subsists in three persons. And the child is put on a level with the greatest philosopher on this subject. The perplexing question about the unoriginating existence of God that occurs to the child is perpetually presenting itself to the mind of every man that thinks. The only way to get relief from it is to cease to listen to it. In matters within the comprehension of the human mind, difficulties will be gradually overcome by labour and study. But here to labour and study is to increase our perplexity. Too much study of this point, would literally make a man mad.

Should any man be inclined to deliver himself from these confounding thoughts, by taking refuge in atheism, even here they will pursue him and give him no rest. Even although it were granted that there is no God, still there is an eternity and immensity. To

suppose that there was a time before time is a contradiction. The mind of man perceives that the eternity of time is a necessary truth, the reverse of which is absurd and impossible. Though it cannot fathom eternity, it must entertain it. It is not clearer that there is time now, than that time never had a beginning. O eternity, thou irresistible, yet most inconceivable thought! Thy existence is as clear as the light of heaven, thy nature is as dark as chaos. The mind of man can neither throw thee off nor bear thy weight.

And space, where are thy limits? That which bounds the greatest conceivable extension is space; when our imagination has travelled to the utmost bounds of its conception, space lies on the other side, and is then only beginning. No man can set bounds to space in his own mind. That it is immense is as clear as that it has the smallest expansion. The mind is convinced as fully, that there is space without end, as that there is space between the eye and the horizon. Yet who can comprehend boundless space? Who can think of extension that never comes to an end? We can conceive the existence of worlds, and of extension beyond all the powers of calculation, but still the mind must have some place to stop. It wistfully looks out for a resting place, but like the dove from the ark, it can find none. There is space beyond its utmost conceptions. ,

Vain man, when thou canst not fathom things that thou seest not, yet admit, why wilt thou cavil with any thing in the revealed account of the divine character? Wilt thou never cease to be a fool, by a desire to show thy wisdom. Puny intellect, thou wilt receive nothing that thou canst not comprehend, yet there is nothing in the divine character, that is not above thy feeble comprehension! —Let the Christian learn in all things to submit implicitly to what God teaches. Let him not vainly as well as impiously try to explain what is inexplicable to man. That God says so, should satisfy the believer.

THE
TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL
DEMONSTRATED FROM
THE CHARACTER OF GOD
MANIFESTED IN THE ATONEMENT.

IN A
LETTER TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil."—Jesus.

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."—Paul.

"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."—Jesus.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

If the truth of the gospel is evident from a consideration of the attributes of God, manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is a thing of the utmost importance. It places the evidence of Christianity upon ground higher than even Christians themselves have generally dared to rest it. It invests it not only with the highest kind of what has been called moral certainty, but ranks it among self-evident truths. Christianity stands upon prophecy, upon the most unimpeachable

testimony, upon the most stupendous miracles. But, distinguished from every other truth not discoverable by the light of nature, it stands also on the ground of its own intrinsic evidence. It is at once a self-evident truth and a revelation. The very impossibility of its being discovered by the light of nature, is self-evidence of its truth.

The truth of the Scriptures has often been proved from their internal evidence, in the most triumphant manner. An examination of this kind will afford an accumulation of evidence, to which there will be no end; and will afford increased satisfaction in every step of the progress. This may be called a kind of self-evidence. But my argument is not of this kind. It respects solely the view of the character of God; and from the nature and harmony of the divine attributes, professes to demonstrate the truth of the gospel. Without reference to any external source of evidence, I maintain that a true perception of the gospel, will afford self-evidence of its truth. There is not a demonstration in Euclid's Elements clearer to my mind, than the truth of the gospel, independently of all external proof. Christianity, as appears to me, claims attention, not only as resting on moral evidence—evidence that in all other things is accounted sufficient, though of a different kind from that on which the sciences rest; but also as resting on that kind of evidence that has always been accounted the highest—when the truth of the thing asserted is manifest in the very assertion.

In asserting that the truth of the gospel is manifest from itself, I am borne out by the Scriptures themselves. It is called light, and Jesus Christ calls himself the light of the world. His appearing is predicted as the rising of the sun of righteousness; and the universal spreading of his gospel is represented under the figure of that great fountain of natural light diffusing his beams over every part of the earth. Now light necessarily proves itself, and needs nothing to manifest it. It serves to discover other objects of sight, but needs nothing to discover itself. The apostle therefore says, whatever doth

make manifest is light. Our Lord himself, though he appeals to his works as proof of his mission, yet declares the self-evidence of the truth to be the condemnation of unbelievers. "This is the condemnation," says he, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." It may be asked, if the gospel is self-evident, why do not all men believe it? Jesus in the above passage supplies the answer. They shut their eyes against it, because they love darkness rather than light, their works being evil. The Apostle Paul also declares that if this gospel be hid, it is hid to them only who are blinded by Satan. Were any man so constituted as to hate light, so as never to be induced to open his eyes, he might till his death remain in ignorance of the sun as being the fountain of light. A blind man has no self-evidence of the existence of light: he believes it on testimony. Man by nature is spiritually blind, and the only difference between a blind man and a spiritually blind sinner, is, that the former is unwillingly blind, the latter willingly and wickedly. The sinner is blind because he hates the light. If, according to the supposition of an ancient philosopher, a number of men had been all their lives kept in a cavern, they could have no evidence, except from testimony, of the existence of the sun; but the moment of their coming into light, they would behold the sun, and could not but believe that he exists, and is what they perceive him to be. Just so with sinners and the light of the gospel. They are all blinded by natural aversion to the truth; and though the light of the sun of righteousness shines around them with intense clearness, they do not discover it, because that darkness covers their eyes. The light shines in darkness, but the darkness comprehends or perceives it not. But the moment that God opens their eyes, they behold the light of the gospel, and cannot but believe that it is real.

But this objection will not be made by any one acquainted with the history of theology or science. Popery stands on the ruins of self-evident and even necessary truth. Every Roman Catholic in the

world must hold his religion by resisting the right of axioms. Ancient philosophy, from its very cradle, trampled on the light of nature, and founded some of its distinguishing principles on the ruins of common sense. The sceptical philosophy of Mr. Hume rested on a foundation self-evidently false. Such known facts, then, ought to prevent any one from being surprised that the gospel is self-evident, yet misunderstood and rejected by the bulk of the world.

That the gospel is self-evident, is evident from the words of the commission to preach it over the world. He that believes it shall be saved, he that believes not shall be condemned. This makes it condemnation for every man to hear the gospel and not believe it. Now it cannot be truly believed but upon evidence, nor can unbelief be criminal, if evidence is wanting. Suppose a man who had never heard of Jesus, comes into an assembly of Christians, and hears the gospel for the first and last time, dying in unbelief before he leaves the house—is this man's unbelief condemnation? It is so, if the language of the commission is true. If so, there must be evidence of its own truth in the gospel itself, for this man has no opportunity of consulting any other of all the evidences of Christianity. He cannot be justly condemned for not yielding to evidences altogether inaccessible to him. The testimony of the preacher is not a ground of evidence, for to a man unacquainted with the gospel, it is nothing better than the testimony of a preacher of Mahometanism. How is such a man to judge between the testimony of him who preaches Paul's gospel, and that of those who preach another gospel? It must then be the evidence of the truth contained in the gospel itself, that will be the ground of condemnation. If he has heard of the just God and the Saviour, of the union and harmony of justice and mercy in the salvation of sinners by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, he has heard a thing that never could have suggested itself to the human mind. Nothing but criminal blindness can prevent him from perceiving, in some measure, the evidence, importance, and glory of

the truth. He will see that such a salvation, and nothing but such a salvation, is suitable to himself, and available for his redemption.

Indeed it is on this ground that the gospel is generally received. Christians in general have received the truth, not from a long previous examination of evidences, but from the scriptural declarations in which it is contained, either read or preached. When the mind is opened to perceive the true nature of the gospel, it brings light and conviction with it. They are afterwards charmed, and edified, and confirmed in their most holy faith, by investigating, according to their opportunities, the various sources of the evidence of their religion. Even when men have been brought to a knowledge of the gospel, after professedly searching for the pearl of great price, in the evidences of Christianity, their minds have been opened to perceive the evidence that it has in its own nature. As long as the mind is blind to this, conviction of the truth of Christianity, from other evidences, is not the faith of the gospel. It is a belief that the thing believed is true, but as the thing revealed is not understood, it is not properly the belief of the thing itself. Many a learned and useful defence of the gospel has come from the pen of those who do not understand it. Many a poor uneducated man knows almost nothing of the evidence of Christianity but what he finds in itself.

This subject peculiarly solicits the attention of ministers of the gospel. The substance of my view is that the gospel is a manifestation of the divine character, and that in that character there is self-evidence of its truth. If so the gospel is never preached except the character of God, as the just God and the Saviour, is exhibited. To omit noticing that pious rant, that frothy declamation, that extravagant fanaticism, and all those effusions of feeling, which are poured from the pulpit under the name of the gospel; many discourses may be both true and important, which afford not a sinner any view that will enlighten him to salvation. He who preaches the gospel must exhibit the Saviour as a divine personage, making full

atonement for sin. Without showing the character of Jesus, to speak of salvation by him in the most correct and decided terms, fails of fully preaching the gospel. To men who do not know Jesus as a divine personage a call to believe in him, will not give a sufficient ground of hope. It is necessary to show them who this Jesus is. Without this, the phrase, believe in Jesus, will no more enlighten than the phrase, believe in Mahomet. There is no charm in the name. It is the character of him who is named the Lord Jesus, that makes his name the ground of the hope of his people. In preaching the gospel, therefore, the preacher ought to be careful, at one time or other, to state the ground of the hope of a sinner, in such a way as, by showing the divine character, there may be in his doctrine evidence of its own truth.

It is not intended by this that nothing but the gospel, in the strict sense, should be the subject of discourse. In most men there is an unhappy propensity to extremes; and when an error is seen on one side, the usual way taken to avoid it, is to run as far as possible to the other. Disgusted with the silly or dangerous substitutions for the gospel that are often found in the pulpit, some can bear nothing but what they call a simple statement of the truth. Every thing else is unnecessary, and even to reason from the truth, or demonstrate with sinners, is, in their estimation, merely human. Such persons have got only a flying view of truth. They have indeed discerned that some people have decked her with ornaments which are not natural, but much of her native dress they have not beheld. Instead of allowing her to sit for her picture, they have dismissed her with a mere glance, and represent her from their imagination. To teach and to preach, though they belong to the same office, are very different things. Every scriptural truth is to have its place, and every argument and motive that can affect the human mind, are to be employed by the Christian teacher. Reason and scriptural example have abundantly consecrated this procedure. Nothing but ignorance and

fanaticism can look out for objections. But in all the diversified topics of public religious instruction, the gospel itself ought ever to be remembered, both with a view to the salvation of sinners, and the edification of those who have already believed.

This view of the gospel, however, peculiarly encourages Christians to unremitting and illimitable study of the truth itself. As it is the knowledge of the divine character, it is not a thing to be fully learned at once, so as to be incapable of increase. Though the least degree of it is salvation, yet the progress to be made from the first believing is altogether incalculable. Were an ignorant savage to die the moment after he believes the truth, he has that knowledge which is connected with salvation; yet how little does he know! Ignorant of every thing in the book of God, but the saving truth itself, and knowing that truth in a very small measure, yet he knows something of the way of coming before God, with acceptance through the great atonement. He has a glimpse of that plan of salvation that represents God as just, yet a Saviour. His hope towards God is not from his own righteousness, but through our Lord Jesus Christ. But what a difference between his knowledge of the divine character, and that of an apostle!

If there is a progress in the Christian's knowledge of the gospel itself, every step in that progress, he must get rid of a proportional degree of ignorance and error. This proves then that perfect uniformity of view, much less of language, even with respect to the gospel itself, is not to be expected among Christians. According to their respective progress, there will be a difference, whether expressed or not. As far as Christians are taught of God, they will agree. But even in the gospel they are not all equally taught of God. And even in the things in which they are taught of God, there is a colouring taken from human teaching; and the language adopted from a sect or peculiar circumstances, may continue to be used when the mind is more correctly taught by the Holy Spirit. Nothing, then,

is farther from my wish than to be understood as dooming to damnation all who are not prepared to adopt the whole of my views on this subject; that arrogance that makes a god and a saviour of its clear views, that confines salvation to a mode of expressing faith, that looks with contempt on the body of Christians, as a sort of pious infidels, that seems to delight in the fewness of the saved, finds no sanction from the Scriptures, and originates in the pride of human nature, not in godly zeal for the truth. When a man seems anxious to find out something in the faith of professing Christians at which to cavil, when he strains their language to condemn them, there is no ground to suppose that he is influenced by love. Keeping clear therefore of a censorious spirit, I would wish to impress Christians with the importance of my views of the subject. They have no sectarian tendency, but address themselves to the candour of all denominations of Christians. The strength, the beauty the glory of Christianity will appear in proportion as it is viewed in this light.

If this is a valid mode of defending the gospel, it is of peculiar importance at the present moment, in the controversies of Protestants with the Church of Borne. To show the necessity of the authority and infallibility of their Church, Roman Catholics cast discredit on the general evidence of the Scriptures, and undervalue their internal marks of truth. They pretend that there is no solid reason for receiving them as the word of God, except the authority of the Church. This is the invariable way in which they proceed in their reasonings with Protestants, from the most learned of them to the most illiterate. They attempt to throw every thing loose, in order to convince their antagonists that the authority of an infallible living tribunal is indispensable. Protestants who are not aware of the artifice, are apt to think that Roman Catholics are generally infidels, whereas in truth, this is only a stratagem of war, which they have learned not from the deists but from the priests. They receive the Scriptures as they do every part of their system, not from their

proper evidence, but on the words of their clergy. By this mode of defence, they often confound their adversary, or evade his attacks. The most illiterate and weak person may bring forward this allegation, but the most sensible Protestant may not at all times be able to avail himself of all the sources that supply arguments for the authenticity of the Scriptures. Now in this situation the ground of defence taken in this tract is capable of being understood by Christians in general, and of being instantly and effectually applied on any emergency. The most illiterate Christian may successfully contend against the most learned opposer, in proving the truths of the gospel from its own peculiar nature. It makes a discovery of God that proves it to come from God. The divine glory so shines on the face of Jesus Christ, as to prove him to be the Sun of Righteousness.

LETTER TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

Sir—Your late conspicuous opposition to the Scriptures, has induced me to suggest to you a few thoughts on the evidence of the gospel. Though I consider you a most determined enemy to Jesus, my Lord, my hope, and my glory, you shall from me meet with none of that illiberal abuse, with which you are sometimes treated. I view you on the verge of eternal misery, and would gladly be the means of showing you the refuge of the guilty. Jesus died for his enemies; and Richard Carlile cannot be more hostile to the doctrine of the cross, than was Saul of Tarsus. Jesus has the hearts of all men in his hands; and should he open your eyes, your rebellion would be instantly subdued, and, instead of reviling his word, your language would be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It could not, then, serve my purpose, to undervalue your understanding, or endeavour to bring your motives into suspicion. Should you even die in blaspheming the truth, a Christian has no disposition to revile you. From my soul I pity the man who loses both worlds by his error.

Permit me then, sir, to bespeak your candid attention to what I shall submit. You must grant that to determine correctly on this subject, is a matter of the utmost importance. If the gospel is true, eternal damnation is the inevitable doom of all who believe it not. It is not then the part of a rational man, to neglect to examine its pretensions, or to reject it on slight consideration. To enter on the investigation of the subject, determined to oppose, manifests the highest temerity. Yet, sir, permit me to observe, that in the writings of all the infidels with which I am acquainted, there is a total want of candid discussion. Their rancorous hatred of the God of the Scriptures, urges them to endeavour to prove them untrue.

Yet there is a timid acquiescence in the truth of Christianity as little to be approved. Many declaimers against infidelity cry out, "Why rob us of our pleasing hopes, even though vain? Why awake us from our dreams of future felicity? Let us enjoy our consoling delusions. It is cruel to deprive us of the only alleviation of human misery." This is not the language of any man who understands the evidence of the gospel: it is not the language of reason. The belief of imposture can never be useful: to expose imposture cannot be criminal. If the Scriptures are a forgery, let them, by candid reasoning, be proved to be such. The God of truth cannot need the assistance of lies in the management of his empire.

It is not my intention to undertake a defence of Christianity from all the sources of its evidences. No truth ever communicated to the world, recommends itself by such a variety of means of proof. Each of these is worthy of full exhibition by those who have leisure for the task. But of all proofs, the most satisfactory to a Christian are found in the Scriptures themselves. These are open to the inspection of all, and level to the meanest capacity. I shall not, however, attempt to exhibit the general evidence that appears in the Scriptures, attesting their divine original. Even this branch of the subject would require volumes to do it justice. I shall confine myself to a single point. I undertake to prove the gospel to be true, from its own nature. I maintain that the way of salvation which it proclaims, gives such a character of God, as to demonstrate its own truth; and that, were it to be found in an island, without any other testimony, it is entitled to acceptance with the fullest confidence. Those who should reject it, even in these circumstances, would reject it to their own just condemnation. No man who candidly examines the witness now at the bar, and discerns the import of his testimony, can withhold his conviction, that said witness is acquainted with the true God, and commissioned to declare him to the world.

All the attributes of the divine character are displayed in the Scriptures in a manner infinitely more glorious than the representations of them by the wisest of the human race. Granting that the ancient philosophers had some glimmerings of the unity, power, and immensity of God, they never gave the slightest hint for the illustration of those divine attributes which most concern the happiness of man. The God that philosophy now boasts, has been principally stolen from the Scriptures. But we need not rest anything on what (it appears from their writings) philosophers did not know. We are warranted in asserting, that the Scriptures give views of the divine character, perfectly rational, yet utterly unattainable from a view of the works of creation. Not only were some parts of the divine character previously unknown; they are still to be seen in no other light than that of the gospel. On the knowledge of these attributes depends the happiness of man. I shall begin with justice.

THE JUSTICE OF GOD

The infinite justice of God is to be seen in no other view than in the redemption of sinners through the atonement. No other plan of salvation has ever attempted to show God to be perfectly just. Every system, so far as it admits guilt in men, must view God as deficient in justice, if he saves them. Now, if all the human race are finally to be happy without atonement to justice, God must be unjust in proportion to the aggregate amount of human guilt. Do you believe yourself to be in any measure guilty before God? How do you expect to free yourself from your guilt? Do you believe that the good you have done will compensate for the evil? Granting that your whole life had been a course of the highest virtue, with a single slight exception, all your goodness could not make amends for that single exception. I do not now speak from the authority of the Scriptures; I speak from reason. Is not the author of your existence entitled to your perfect obedience? Can you do more than your duty? When you have done all, are you not an unprofitable servant? The best actions have nothing to spare for the covering of the sin. Would this pay a debt to any earthly creditor? Should any one produce to you nine good shillings with one bad one, would you accept it in payment for ten shillings? Should this person urge that as there were so many good shillings, and but a single bad one, you ought to receive the latter for the sake of the former, would you not think him either a knave or a fool? And will you venture to meet God on similar ground? You hope to escape punishment though you are not sinless; your God then is unjust.' But, perhaps you will say, that as God is merciful as well as just, mercy will temper justice, and make it abate something of its demands. Granting for a moment that this is the case, I say again, your God is unjust. So far as his mercy bears

down his justice, there is an inconsistency and opposition in his attributes, and the former robs the latter of its right. Your God is at war with himself, and the quarrel among his attributes can be settled only by compromise. Will you say, that temporary punishment on yourself, either here or hereafter, will atone for your guilt? Where do you learn this? Is it a self-evident truth? But granting it to be true, if your God exacts full punishment from all, he is a God without mercy. The God of the Scriptures is the only God who is perfectly just, while he has mercy upon sinners. Now, sir, I in treat you to consider how illustriously justice shines in the salvation of guilty men through the atonement made by the blood of Jesus Christ. Every scheme of salvation devised by human wisdom, leaves the sinner in arrear to justice. The claims of this divine attribute are never perfectly respected. Here is a plan of salvation that gives infinite justice all its own. Instead of derogating from justice, the redemption of sinners by Christ has magnified the law and made it honourable. The eternal damnation of all mankind would not have done such honour to the law of God, nor have rendered his justice so illustrious. In the atonement of Christ, justice has a full compensation, which it never could have had in the punishment of the sinner himself. They who shall suffer for their sins, shall never have paid off the debt. What can be more honourable to the law of God, than that nothing less than the blood of his own Son could free from the wrath due to the breach of it? The infinitely worthy sacrifice gave justice a full remuneration. Here is justice in perfection. What a solid ground of confidence does this give to a Christian! He depends not more on mercy than on justice and truth. The Scriptures declare that God is faithful and just to forgive the sins of believers. The righteousness of a Christian is better than that of the highest angel in heaven. It is the righteousness of the Son of God. Clear views of the divine character give a sinner the utmost confidence in the presence of God. Who shall lay anything to the

charge of God's elect? It is God himself who clears them. Who is he that condemneth? Christ hath died. His blood takes away all the guilt of all who believe in him. The most hardened enemy of God and his people, will not be able to allege in the day of judgment, that in the salvation of sinners, God has remitted a tittle of his justice. There will not be found a spot on the whole ransomed of the Lord. So far from tarnishing justice, the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, was necessary for the perfect manifestation of this attribute. In no other way could the infinitude of justice have been seen. It is the highest practical exhibition that infinite power could possibly give of infinite justice. Had sin never existed, divine justice would have wanted its most perfect manifestation. In vain should we turn our eyes to the heavens and the earth for the discovery of this attribute. In vain should we search for it in the book of providence, that records the acts of God's government of the world. Some twinklings of it may be seen, but they are scarcely visible from the glare of human crime. Even in hell itself justice shines not with such lustre, as in the atonement of sin by the blood of a divine personage.

Now, sir, you say that the Scriptures are a forgery. Here is a divine attribute which they display in perfection, which never was discovered by any of the human race. Here is a divine attribute, which no other scheme of salvation but that taught in the Scriptures can represent in infinite perfection. Will you say, that a number of illiterate fishermen have discovered that, which, from the foundation of the world, has lain hid from the wisest of the children of men? Nay, to this hour it lies hid from the wisest of men, who, through the pride of their wisdom, will not submit to the wisdom of God. This discovery is still unknown to multitudes who have in their hands the volumes that contain it. Not only infidels, but the great body of those who call themselves Christians, still restrict the divine justice, and make the salvation of sinners the result of the victory of mercy. What, then, should bring to the minds of the apostles a view of

justice so sublime, so perfect, so astonishing, so far from the common way of thinking? What should lead them to discover what the willful blindness of others will not suffer them to perceive, even when discovered? If all men but the apostles, and those who receive their testimony, consider justice as standing in the way of the salvation of the guilty, and find it necessary to limit and mitigate this divine attribute, before they can indulge hope before God, it is demonstrably certain that this view never was originally suggested by man. Even granting that this view of the divine justice is false, and that the philosophical or common view of that attribute is just, I maintain, that this is a more sublime conception than the others; and if God's justice were such, he would be more perfect and glorious than he is without it. If the imperfectly just God be the true God, here is a theory of divine justice that could render God infinitely more perfect than he is. Here is a plan that removes all the limitations of this attribute. But that cannot possibly be a true view of a divine attribute that represents it as capable of additional perfection. Shall it be possible to conceive a view of justice more excellent than that which belongs to the true God? The God of the Scriptures is so just, that no sin ever will be committed without being visited with adequate punishment; that neither angel nor man shall ever dwell in his presence, tarnished with the slightest impurity. If your God be the true God, he is much inferior to this; for if he suffers the world to escape punishment, he is obliged to lay aside justice, and become like the gods of Epicurus. The justice of the God of the Scriptures is vindicated by the blood of a divine person: the justice of your God is affronted without receiving any compensation. Can there be a question which of these is the true God? Here is justice in perfection; here is justice utterly beyond human invention; here is justice essentially different from the natural views of that divine attribute entertained by savage and sage; here is a just God, though a Saviour of men. Sir, it is not more clear

to me that there is a God, than that this is the true God. It is as clear as the light of heaven, that this character of God has come from himself. It would be more reasonable to ascribe the Newtonian philosophy to an idiot, than the origin of this conception to the human mind.

THE MERCY OF GOD

Let us next attend to mercy. However fond men may be of giving this attribute a prominent place in the divine character, yet no human scheme of salvation has ever admitted it in a perfect degree. Men, in general, have no more idea of infinite mercy in God, than they have of infinite justice. They consider the salvation of sinners as owing neither to justice nor mercy in perfection and in harmony, but to the claims of both as mitigated by opposition. A salvation wholly of justice, they fear; a salvation wholly of mercy, they disdain. But the salvation of the gospel is of infinite mercy, as well as of infinite justice. The mercy of God is unmixed mercy. The Scriptures declare salvation wholly of grace, without works of any kind, or in any degree, as necessary for its reception. It is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ. Since the foundation of the world, no man untaught by God ever looked for salvation in this way. Human wisdom, in the learned and in the ignorant, in the civilized and in the barbarous, invariably expects that salvation will not be given without something on the part of the sinner himself, to merit such a favour. The grace of God is not considered to consist in giving for nothing, but in giving at an under-value. The great blessing of pardon is given for something done by the sinner, which, in itself, is not of adequate value. Men, according to their view of their own character, vary in the degree of mercy and of merit thought requisite to their salvation. But without some degree of merit to recommend him, no man will venture his trust on mercy. The most abandoned profligate on the street, reeling and foaming out blasphemy, must be saved by some kind of goodness in himself as well as mercy in God. On the very gallows he has some fancied merit to avert the divine

vengeance due to a life of rapine and murder. Unless he has believed God's testimony about his Son, he dare no more trust wholly to mercy than to unmixed justice. Now, sir, were the gospel a forgery, would not the mercy of God be represented in it agreeably to the common views of that attribute? I hold it to be a self-evident truth, that if the mercy of God in the Scriptures is of a peculiar kind, that never suggested itself to the mind of man in any age or country, it cannot be looked upon as an invention of man. But it is not only mercy of a peculiar kind—it is the only kind of mercy that is worthy of God. It is pure mercy. A divine attribute must be without alloy. Here then, sir, is a thing the most wonderful. Have unlettered impostors brought to view a divine attribute, of the true nature of which all men, in all ages, have been ignorant?—an attribute that all men speak of, and to discover the true nature of which, is every man's greatest interest. For though this view of the divine character was discovered by none of the human race, yet, when perceived, it recommends itself as perfect wisdom. When the eye of reason perceives it, conviction is absolutely irresistible. It is impossible to perceive God without knowing that he is God. Men who have never seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, may be imposed on with false gods; but, after they have seen the true God, the infinite glory of his perfections intuitively convinces them of its existence. The King of heaven has only to show himself to men, to thwart the pretensions of all usurpers. Yes, if Mr. Richard Carlile perceived the glory of the character which God has revealed of himself, he would admire and love the God that now he hates. He would confess that he never knew God before. He would count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. If he will not perceive this glory, it must be owing to the shutting of his eyes against the light. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not: lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the

image of God, should shine unto them." If he does not discern Christ's doctrine, it is because he cannot bear to hear it with a proper mind.

The mercy of God in the Scriptures is not only pure, it is also perfect. It extends to the chief of sinners. It receives at the last moment the most hateful of his enemies, through the belief of the truth. The thief on the cross found mercy on the very brink of eternity. Saul of Tarsus, the greatest enemy of Jesus, was delivered by this mercy, at a time when, with a heart full of enmity, he was hastening to destroy the disciples. The hands of the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost were reeking with the blood through which they found mercy. These facts, while they call on the chief of sinners to believe in Jesus for salvation, serve to distinguish the Divine mercy from all the views of it ever suggested or entertained by the wisdom of man. Instead of owing its origin to the contrivance of man, human wisdom has ever been ashamed of this view of the Divine mercy. The illustrious facts above cited, are by many professed Christians kept in the back ground, or represented as a sort of anomaly in the Divine conduct. Men dread the scowl of philosophy, and are apprehensive lest such representations of mercy should give encouragement to sin. So opposed are we naturally to this view of the Divine character, that men use the utmost ingenuity to reconcile the Scriptures to human merit. They either give no encouragement to great sinners to turn to God through the belief of the truth, or they speak on this subject with a faltering voice. When a man is on the brink of eternity, they are indeed unwilling to give him up to despair; yet they are afraid to give him hope through mercy, if he has been a very great sinner, lest they should endanger the interests of morality, and encourage others to continue in sin. Now, if the wisdom of man universally puts limits to the Divine mercy, the view of God's character that represents this attribute as perfect, cannot be from man.

But Divine mercy is not only perfect, it is also sovereign. It not only extends to the chief of sinners, but, from among sinners, it takes one and leaves another, without any other reason than the will of God. Nay, it often selects the one that human mercy would overlook, and overlooks the one that human mercy would select. It chose persecuting Saul, and overlooked the rich young man who professed to come for instruction. It saved many of the publicans and sinners, while it overlooked many who boasted of their religious attainments. Now this is mercy truly sovereign, and mercy which no man will ever cordially admit, whose high thoughts are not brought down by the word and Spirit of God. Nothing is more offensive to the world than this view of the Divine character. It is well known, that many who acknowledge this as a religious sentiment, are found to revolt at it in heart. Men will make God as accountable to them for the exercise of his mercy, as they are accountable to him in the exercise of his justice. They will not allow him to condemn or pardon the guilty as he pleases. He is not permitted to select a vile sinner, nor is he allowed to condemn those of a moderate character. Men therefore do not make God perfectly sovereign, therefore they do not make him truly God. If all men are guilty and worthy of punishment, which most who are called Christians admit, a sovereign God may punish all. If his mercy cannot save one, and pass by another, he is no sovereign. Here, then, is an attribute of God necessary to the Divine perfection, which human wisdom, so far from discovering, cannot admit. Shall we say that it was the invention of men?

But, granting that the apostles were capable of such a forgery, would impostors forge a character of their God, which they must know would be displeasing to the world? What object could impostors have but to advance their temporal interests by gaining disciples? How could they expect to do this by presenting to them a God whom they hate? Such is our natural opposition to this attribute

of God, that many deny it as it respects men, who admit it as it respects angels. They admit that the fallen angels are left in misery without mercy; and that, without any superior claims to regard, God sent his Son to redeem men. They will not allow God to choose among sinners, though they grant that he chose men rather than angels.

Indeed, I am sensible, that, to many called Christians, this whole view of mercy will be as disagreeable as your infidelity, and that your God will be more popular than mine. "Were my object to please men. I would represent God as extending mercy to all that deserve mercy, and would scarcely pronounce the damnation even of the infidel. Since, then, the sovereignty of God is displeasing to the world, I conclude, as from an axiom, that it is not an invention of impostors; and, since it is necessary to the perfection of the Divine character, the book that discovers it must be a revelation from God.

I entreat you also, sir, to consider the peculiar aspect of this sovereign mercy. There is a weak and wicked partiality which the gods of all nations are supposed to have for their favourite countries. This partiality the Jews supposed that the God of Israel had for them. In this confidence, they considered themselves safe in doing the sins for which they knew the other nations of the world would be punished. This sort of partiality many think that God will have towards the professors of Christianity, while he will more rigorously look to the conduct of infidels. While they drink, and swear, and lie, and cheat, without any dread of the Divine displeasure, they see the wrath of God coming on Mr. Carlile. Indeed, there is a sectarian god, who winks at the sins of zealots of a favourite party; but this is not the sovereignly merciful Lord God of the Scriptures: it is an idol of man's own creation, and the damnation of its deluded votaries is expressly declared by the true God. One of his ambassadors replies to them at large, in the beginning of the epistle to the Romans—"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things,

and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ?"—Rom. ii. 3. Though the God of the Scriptures selects one sinner as an object of mercy, and leaves another, not more criminal, to perish, he declares that

there is no respect of persons with him Rom. ii. 11.

God's free mercy leads him to choose a sinner, without respect to his previous character; and his sovereign mercy to choose one rather than another: but neither the freedom nor sovereignty of mercy will cover any persisting in sin. All who receive this free, sovereign mercy, are taught to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—Tit. ii. 12-15. All, then, who encourage themselves in sin, from a hope of the Divine partiality in their favour, prove themselves ignorant of the true nature of God's sovereign mercy, and discover themselves to be mere hypocrites. The same gospel that reveals mercy, free sovereign mercy, reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Now, sir, if all men naturally view themselves as so entitled to the favour of their gods, that they may safely do what is condemnation to others, is it not self-evident, that, had the apostles been impostors, they would have given the same view of their God? While he would have frowned on the crimes of others, he would have looked with an indulgent eye on the vices of his friends. All people accommodate the character of their gods to their own wants. The character given of God in the Scriptures has been altered, to make it suitable to the professors of Christianity. Does not this incontestibly prove, that the Scriptures were not made by man? Had

they been an imposture of man, their God would have been like the gods of human creation.

THE WISDOM OF GOD

The wisdom of God is the next of his attributes to which I take the liberty of calling your attention. This appears in a blaze of light in the harmonizing of attributes necessary to the Divine perfection, yet by all men, untaught by the Scriptures, thought irreconcilable. The plan of salvation by Jesus Christ gives scope for the perfect operation of both justice and mercy, attributes which no other scheme of salvation can harmonize. Their claims are in themselves opposite, and, except on the gospel plan, really irreconcilable. If salvation is by perfect justice, how can it be in any measure by mercy? If it is altogether of mercy, how can it be in any measure by justice? Especially how can it be of infinite justice and of infinite mercy? If justice has all its own, how can mercy give all? If mercy gives all, how can justice receive its due? What mercy is there in cancelling debts that are fully paid? What justice can there be in free pardon? This is a question the solution of which is easy to the Christian, but by all others will remain unsolved for ever. The salvation of the believer is perfect justice, because his sin is fully punished in Christ, infinitely worthy as a Divine person: it is perfect mercy, because that punishment was suffered, not by the sinner himself, but by his Divine Substitute, sovereignly appointed. It is thus that the Scriptures speak of the believer as both justified and pardoned—words, in themselves, irreconcilable in any other way. To justify, is to acquit, as being free from guilt: to pardon, is to freely forgive the person proved to be guilty. Believers are in different respects both guilty and innocent, pardoned and cleared. They are cleared of all sin, because their Substitute hath taken it away; yet this is, in another light, pardon, because the Substitute was

a Divine person, freely given for sinners. Here is wisdom truly divine. It is not indeed the wisdom of this world ; it is not like the speculations of philosophy: but to all whose eyes are not shut against it, through their enmity to God, there is an overwhelming glory in it that delights and amazes the soul. The more clearly it is understood, the more it astonishes. It commands the admiration of angels, though it is the scorn of the perverted intellect of rebellious men. Read all the treatises of all the wise men who have written on the Being and Attributes of God. Do you find any thing in their views of Divine wisdom like this? Which of them has a God perfectly just, and perfectly merciful? Could the intellect of an angel suggest any other way of harmonizing these attributes? You say the gospel is an imposture. What! Impostors forge such a God as this! Tell me that the heavens and the earth are not the work of God, but a forgery of some impostors. There is wisdom in the formation of the heavens and the earth, but in all the works of heaven and earth there is not such wisdom as is displayed in that glorious plan of salvation that harmonizes infinite justice with infinite mercy.

Human wisdom has never even attempted to reconcile these attributes. Its only aim is to produce hope, and to promote virtue, by modifying and opposing them. Mercy obliges justice to wink at the salvation of the imperfectly virtuous, and justice forbids mercy to stretch out her hand to the utterly vicious. Thus they continually oppose each other. Mercy, indeed, must have precedency, and the claims of justice on many urgent occasions are thwarted. The glory of the Divine character, instead of being made to consist in the perfection and harmony of God's attributes, is made to consist in the victory of mercy in a struggle with justice. This is the god of the savage and of the sage, of the virtuous and of the vicious. This is the god of the wisdom of this world. But the Scriptures give us a God free of these imperfections. If there is a God, this is the true God.

The wisdom of God shines also in a wonderful manner in the mercy of the atonement. The exercise of mercy, as a human attribute, always, in some measure, gives encouragement to trespass. In proportion as there is a facility of obtaining mercy, will men be emboldened to violate law. Valuable as this prerogative is in our Sovereign, it is necessarily accompanied with this disadvantage. Accordingly, the more effectually to prevent forgery, there have been few instances of the pardon of this crime. I believe the highest interest has failed in procuring it from a very merciful king. Men naturally entertain the same views of the Divine mercy, and in proportion as they think God to be merciful, have the hopes of committing sin with impunity. The most wicked men accordingly shelter themselves under the Divine mercy, even while they continue in wickedness. God is merciful, is the refuge of the bulk of mankind, and their encouragement to disobey the God of mercy. That this is also the opinion of many of the advocates of Christianity, with regard to the tendency of Divine mercy, is clear, from their efforts to guard and limit it. They do not like to represent it with a very favourable aspect to the chief of sinners. nor are they fond of making it hang over the pillow of aged sinners. If the thief on the cross found mercy, the Saviour was then personally present, and the peculiar circumstances of that case can never again occur.* They fear lest such views of mercy should encourage others to sin, with a prospect of pardon in their last moments. And, with their views of mercy, they are right in their conclusions. If Divine mercy were like human mercy all those dreaded consequences would flow from it. Their error lies in their views of the Divine mercy. Human mercy necessarily encourages to transgress; but the mercy revealed in the atonement is the strongest guard against sin. No man who really understands the mercy of God discovered in the salvation of Jesus Christ can live in sin. Though there is a free pardon to the sinner, this cost nothing less than the life of the Son of God. If sin is

such a thing that it could not be forgiven without the punishment of a Divine person, it is demonstrably evident that it is most hateful to God; and that any person who loves it, and continues in it, cannot escape the Divine wrath. If God spared not his own Son, when he stood in the room of sinners, shall any man expect to commit sin with impunity? Every man who believes that Some writers, whose general views of the Divine character are sound and strong, have inadvertently and inconsistently fallen into the use of this exceptionable phraseology, from a mistaken desire of vindicating the gospel against abuse. A little reflection on the Scriptural declarations on this point, ought, I think, to convince such persons that such limitations tarnish the glory of the gospel, destroy its grace, and drive to despair thousands to whom the word of God exhibits a free salvation. Surely no sinner was ever saved in any other way than the thief on the cross, and the persecuting Saul of Tarsus. The latter declares himself to be an instance of infinite mercy, not designed to be solitary, an example to give confidence to the most guilty, who in all future time should believe in Jesus. While, therefore, I am very far from denouncing as enemies of the gospel, t all such as have been led to the adoption of such language, I cannot but press on all Christians the great importance of accurate views of this subject.

Jesus died by sin, considers himself as having died with him; and having this dreadful lesson before his eyes, he is effectually deterred from living in sin. In this view, sin appears no light matter. If any man professing to be saved by the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, encourages himself to sin, with the hopes of impunity, he proves that he understands not this Divine attribute, and that he has no part in the salvation of the gospel. How can they who have died by sin, live any longer therein? Is it possible that any man should perceive the mercy of God in the gift of his Son, and his infinite hatred of sin, yet continue in that, on account of which the

Father punished his Son without mercy? If Jesus drank the cup to the dregs, shall the hypocrite be suffered to escape? Men, therefore, who fear the consequences of exhibiting Divine mercy in all its freedom and fulness, err through not knowing the Scriptures, and by confounding the mercy of man with the mercy of God. When the king pardons a guilty man, justice bleeds; but when God pardons a sinner, justice has all its own. The broken law is more honoured in the atonement made by the Divine Substitute, than in the punishment of the transgressor himself. No king could safely imitate the Divine mercy. Were he to save enormously guilty criminals, the common sense of mankind would revolt, the authority of law would be disrespected, and the total subversion of manners would follow. But God pardons the murderers of his own Son, without the slightest imputation on his justice, without injury to his law, without encouragement to transgression. Nay, God's hatred of the sin of the murderers of his Son, is more seen in the death of that Son for such sinners, than in the punishment of such of these murderers as are now in hell. Were a judge to free an insolvent debtor, his mercy would be unjust; but were he to free him by paying his debt, mercy and justice meet. If among a number of housebreakers there were one who, at the hazard of his life, had prevented his associates from murdering a family, and another who exerted every effort for their destruction, the common sense of mankind would be shocked, should a king pardon the latter, and suffer the former to perish for his crime. This would, indeed, be a monstrously bad action, and calculated by its example to endanger society. But God might save the guiltier of the two, and suffer the less guilty to die in his sins, without the slightest imputation on the tendency of his mercy. They are both guilty, therefore both may justly suffer, in proportion to their guilt. Should Divine mercy choose to snatch the guiltier from destruction, the blood of the Son of God has sufficiently avenged justice.

Now, sir, as human mercy necessarily encourages crime, and as all men naturally entertain the same views of the Divine mercy, would not every religious system of human invention give the same representation of this attribute, and guard accordingly against its supposed tendency? Has not this actually been done even by the advocates of Christianity? Were the gospel a device of man, its mercy would be the mercy of man. Is not this an axiom? But as the mercy revealed in the atonement, is not only of a peculiar kind, supposed by those who do not understand it to give encouragement to sinners, but is in reality the strongest guard against it, shall we suppose that this is the invention of imposture? Here is amazing wisdom. Mercy to the chief of sinners, mercy at the last breath of life, yet mercy that effectually induces all who receive it to forsake sin! Shall this wisdom be ascribed to men totally unacquainted with philosophical speculation, when all the philosophers in all ages of the world have been unable to find it by their wisdom? when it lies hid from most of them, even when before their eyes, and while they profess faith in the books that make the revelation? Shall impostors be the authors of a view of Divine mercy that gives no shelter to sin?

The wisdom of God shines also illustriously in the gospel, by causing sin, which in itself is dishonourable to God, to redound to his glory. By tempting our first parents to sin, Satan meant to dishonour God, and mar his purpose. But God hath made the introduction of sin the means of the manifestation of his glory. The redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary for the full display of the Divine character. In no other way could his attributes have been practically exhibited. In this way God showed himself to the world. The person and work of Jesus Christ revealed God to mankind. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined into the hearts of men, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The glory of God is seen in its highest exhibition in the person and work of his

Son. The heavens indeed declare his glory, but the gospel manifests a work more glorious than the creation. Can any thing be more wonderful than this? Sin, the most hateful and apparently injurious thing to God, has served to manifest his glory! Could such a thought ever have entered the mind of man? Even when revealed, it remains hid to many. The salvation of the gospel, is considered by many who profess it, as a kind of after thought in God, the best possible reparation of an evil not capable of being entirely mended. Whence then could come the thought, that the entrance of sin was necessary to show God to be what he is?

The wisdom of God is also seen in the event of sin with respect to the redeemed. So far from ruining them according to its natural tendency, it has issued in their infinitely greater happiness and glory. They are not restored to a happy life in an earthly paradise, but by being united unto God through Jesus, they are raised above all worlds, and shall reign with him for ever. As Jesus has overcome, and is set down on his Father's throne, they also shall sit down with him on his throne. Here is wisdom. The efforts of Satan to plunge men into the misery of hell, have issued in the raising of millions of them to the throne of God. Did ever such a thought originate with man? Compared with this, the loftiest conceptions of Plato dwindle into utter insignificance.

This scheme of salvation manifests the Divine wisdom also, in as much as it harmonizes confidence and humility; the former necessary for the peace of the Christian, the latter essential to a just sense of his own character. Yet these two things are in themselves inconsistent, and according to all other views of salvation, the one decreases by the increase of the other. If a man has a low opinion of his own merit, he can have little hope: if he has great confidence, he can possess little humility. "I do not see," said one, "why such a man as Dr. Price, should not confide on the justice of the Deity as well as on his mercy." The high moral attainments of the sage come

impudently to the bar of the Almighty, and demand a reward from justice. According to the view of the person who made use of this language, there was no scope for humility in this case. Now, the same is the tendency of the confidence of the devotee, and of confidence arising from every species of religious attainments. How very inconsistent this is with the real situation of man, is abundantly obvious, even independent of revelation. Had Dr. Price been as pure as the throne of God, I defy reason to say, that God would have done him any injustice, had he annihilated him. A sinless being, indeed, justice cannot punish, but a sovereign God may take away that which he freely gave. His wisdom is a security against caprice: but let not angels dare to make God their debtor. The thought would hurl them into hell. But if there were any speck of sin in the philosopher, (and every man not blinded by the influence of the god of this world, must know him to be a sinner,) instead of confiding in justice, it is impossible in himself even to meet its claims. My reason tells me, that ten thousand years of uninterrupted virtue cannot cover a single offence. On this point view the glory of the gospel plan of salvation It unites the utmost confidence with the greatest humility. Nay, humility is increased with the increase of confidence. A Christian is never so humble, as when he perceives most clearly the ground of confidence in the work of Christ. If the earth were on fire under his feet, were the heavens melting over his head, were the red right hand of justice stretched out to take vengeance on iniquity, clearly perceiving this character of God, he would possess his soul in peace. He would triumph in the view of the bar of God, yet, at the same moment would be clothed with humility in proportion to his confidence. He has no confidence in his own attainments: he sees himself utterly unworthy. He can indeed confide in justice as well as in mercy, but he has a Divine righteousness to meet Divine justice. The apostle Paul exclaims, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" yet in the

same letter he declares, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Here then is the harmony of contraries. Shall this wonderful depth of wisdom be ascribed to man, when all men but those taught by the apostles, consider these two things incompatible? Tell the world that you have great confidence of salvation, and every man will immediately reply, "Then you must have a very high opinion of yourself." If, then, the gospel reveals a plan which gives the utmost confidence, not only without encouraging self-conceit, but in necessary union with the deepest humility, I conclude as from an axiom, that the gospel is from God.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

The love of God is an attribute which shines most illustriously in the atonement. To die for a friend, is the highest instance of love among mankind—an instance scarcely found. But God commended his love to men, in that, while they were yet sinners, Christ died for them. Among all the ransomed of the Lord, there is not one who is not naturally an enemy to him. There is not one of the human race who does not hate this God, till he perceives his love in the atonement. You, sir, can need no proof from me that you hate the God of the Scriptures. Even this God of love you hate to such a degree, that you are willing to make yourself a sacrifice to defame him. You, no doubt, love your own god, but he is an idol: he is the creation of your own fancy. You love your god even for his imperfections. The God of the Scriptures you hate, even for the perfection of his character. How enormous must be the hatred of Mr. Paine and you to this God, when you find debauchery in the holy records of the incarnation? To him that believes in a being of , almighty power, is there anything more incredible in the manner of the Saviour's conception, than in the ordinary production of man? Yet, how does the malignity of your heart manifest itself, with regard to this amazing instance of the infinite love and condescension of God! Now, had the Scriptures been the work of man, would they have represented that the love of God was such, that he gave his Son to suffer for such men as you? Would they ever speak of mercy to such enemies? Yet, thou blasphemous of the God of love, thou enemy of the incarnate Jehovah, to you does the gospel proclaim mercy. The blood that you have trampled on, was shed for such enemies. Should God change your mind to the acknowledgment of the truth, after all your blasphemies, you should stand without spot before him in love,

and reign with Jesus over all worlds. Here is love beyond anything that could ever have entered into the mind of man. So far from being the authors of such a view of divine love, men cannot credit it when revealed in the Scriptures. Multitudes even of those called Christians, would hesitate in making the divine love extend to you. Some of them would grudge you such mercy. Surely, then, such a view of the love of God must have come from heaven. It has no feature of the offspring of man. Now, sir, I entreat you to consider what is your guilt if this gospel is true. What must be your condemnation if you persist in opposing this God of love? If an infinitely just- God will punish sin as it deserves, what must be the punishment of the man who counteracts the purposes of infinite love, and labours with such zeal for the damnation of mankind!

Again, and again, I entreat you, sir, to contemplate the love of God in the gift of his Son. This is the greatest possible instance that infinite love could give of itself. The gift of ten thousand worlds would have been nothing to this. God, even the infinite Jehovah, had nothing greater to give. Could the thought of such amazing love have originated in the mind of man!

But the most amazing thing, with respect to this attribute, is the way in which the love of God can extend to sinners. Love is a perfection, when there is an object worthy of the affection. It may then be reasonably inferred that God loves whatever is lovely; but it may with great certainty be inferred, that whatever is unamiable displeases him. Reason, then, could never point out a way in which sinners could be a proper object of the divine love; on the contrary, it declares, that they are objects worthy of his hatred. How is it, then, that God loves sinners, who, in themselves, are infinitely unworthy of his love, and infinitely worthy of his hatred? Here the Scriptures make a discovery which reason could never have found out. They show us that God loves sinners; and they show us a way in which sinners are perfectly worthy of the divine love. They do not bring to

light a doctrine contrary to the fair deductions of reason, with regard to the proper objects of God's love: they do not tell us that God loves what reason tells us he ought to hate. We could not believe them were they to make such a report; but they tell us that God loves sinners; and that his wisdom has exhibited a way in which he has made them worthy of his love. In the death of Christ, the sins of his people are cancelled, and in their Substitute they are as innocent as if they never had sinned; as they are united to Christ, and as his righteousness becomes theirs, they are more worthy of the Divine love, than they were in their original innocence. Nay, as that righteousness is the righteousness of God, and as they become one with him who is a divine person, they are infinitely worthy of infinite love. Thus the Scriptures discover a way in which sinners are more worthy of Divine love than the angels that never fell; more worthy than they could have been in their original creation, had they been placed in the highest possible rank of created existence. Could such a thought have ever originated with man? Is there any thing like this in all the wisdom of the wise men of this world? Is such a glorious discovery the invention of imposture? The man who can think so, is a miracle of obstinacy or stupidity. Could any thing but divine wisdom discover a plan in which persons worthy of infinite hatred, became worthy of infinite love? It is still true that God hates sinners in themselves, and all who are not viewed by him in the Lord Jesus Christ, will for ever continue so. From eternity he loved his people, because from eternity he viewed them in union with his Son, their infinitely worthy Substitute.

THE TRINITY.

The Scriptural representations of a distinction of persons in the Godhead, appear to me to afford evidence of their truth. Had the Scriptures been an imposture, I see no reason why their author would have incumbered himself with such a view, even had it in any way been presented to his mind. The history of the reception of this doctrine, as respects those who profess Christianity, supports me in asserting that it is not the offspring of human ingenuity: so great is the aversion to it, entertained by the pride of reason, that in opposition to the plainest and most numerous declarations of a book received as the Word of God, many find no such thing in the Scriptures. They cannot find a single decisive passage in all the Bible, to warrant the belief that Jesus Christ possesses supreme Godhead. Notwithstanding all that is taught on this point, by the writers whom they consider as giving a revelation from God, Jesus Christ is nothing but a mere man or an angel. If human wisdom exerts itself so violently to pervert what is so plainly written on the subject, it cannot be charged as having written it.

Again, even when the Divine nature of Jesus Christ is not denied, the apparent foolishness of the personal distinction in the Godhead, has been so felt, that various theories have been forced on the Scriptures compelling them to renounce this doctrine, and to admit that nothing more is meant than different characters, names, office, &c Surely, then, had the Scriptures been the production of man, there was no motive to lead to such an exhibition of the Divine nature. There is every inducement to avoid it.

There is still additional evidence of the same thing from the conduct even of those who believe the above doctrine. Let any

candid man compare what the Scriptures teach on this subject, and the manner in which they teach it, with the writings and decrees of men in favour of the same doctrine, and he must be convinced of the characteristic difference. The one is evidently the wisdom of man, and the other is evidently the wisdom of God. In this tract I suggest, rather than exhaust proof. But after a leisurely and full examination of the simple statements of Scripture on this point, and the indirect way in which it is brought forward, in contrast with the scholastic subtleties, the bold definitions, and blasphemous illustrations that human wisdom have employed to recommend this doctrine, it is impossible that candour can refuse to admit that the former are of God. Had the doctrine of a distinction in the Godhead been an invention of man, it would have been taught in the style of human wisdom.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

The atonement manifests also God's infinite holiness, and hatred of sin. How hateful must sin be to God when he punished it even to its utmost desert in the person of his own Son? Can infidelity, can philosophy, produce any such proof of God's displeasure at sin? Did ever any philosopher conceive a God so holy as to punish every sin to its utmost desert? No, the god of philosophy is very moderate in his hatred of sin, and makes many allowances for human infirmity. He must accommodate himself to the necessities of his worshippers, otherwise, like Saturn, he will be dethroned. As human nature is bankrupt, he must give an acquittance for a reasonable composition: as men have such passions, he must indulge them in some occasional deviations from duty. He is like a good-natured old man, who himself has no relish for folly, but indulgently winks at the levities and indiscretions of youth. This, Sir, I suppose is your god, and it is not strange that you should love him. But the infinitely holy God of the Scriptures has revealed his wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Affliction and anguish are denounced as the portion of every one that doth evil. The smallest violation of the Divine law subjects to the curse. Every sin of men and angels will be visited with punishment. Divine holiness is unsullied in the pardon of the sin of believers, nay, it is rendered infinitely more illustrious in the death of Christ. Now, sir, is an infinitely holy God the God of impostors? No, sir, he is the dread of the wise and virtuous, and cannot therefore be the delight of men who could have no refuge from his vengeance. If the highest human virtue dare not meet such a God, how could deceivers escape his wrath? Here is an infinitely holy God, yet such a God is naturally the aversion of all

men. It is, then, a self evident truth that this character of God came from himself.

CONCLUSION.

Such, sir, are some of the attributes of the God of the Scriptures. What is your god to this God? Here is a God who must be the true God, because he is perfect in every attribute. That cannot be the true God, a greater than whom it is possible to conceive. That cannot be God, whose attributes are capable of additional perfection. Now, the god of the wisdom of this world is imperfect in many of his attributes, and I have here shown one infinitely perfect. Can it, then, be a question which of these is the true God? Shall imposture and ignorance invent an infinitely perfect God, while wisdom and virtue fail? Shall I give up my God, the harmony of whose attributes secures my salvation, for yours, who cannot look upon me with an eye of pity, without being at war with himself?

Then, sir, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. In it alone the character of the true God is manifested to the world. I cannot read a page of the Scriptures without seeing proofs that they are not the work of man ; but the character of God manifested in the atonement, independent of all other proofs, demonstrates the truth of the gospel. It is intrinsically light. It is utterly impossible to understand it, and not believe it. It is impossible to see God, and not believe him to be God; but here God is seen. He that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father. The glory of God shines in his face. The view of this perfect character overwhelms the soul with evidence irresistible as the light of heaven. A man may as well look upon the sun, and yet be uncertain whether he sees that luminary, as discern the harmony and infinite perfection of this character, and doubt whether this is the true God. This is the reason why the gospel is called light in the Scriptures. This is the reason that the knowledge

of God is represented as amounting to the same thing with the belief of it. It cannot be known without being credited. The plan of salvation here revealed not only harmonizes the Divine attributes, but appears absolutely necessary for the practical illustration of the Divine character. Had sin never entered, mercy could have had no scope, justice could have had neither operation nor adequate reparation; love would have wanted an opportunity of manifesting its infinite perfection; sovereignty would have been totally hid; holiness could not have been seen in the same strong light. Without the atonement, God could not have been seen in all the glory of his perfect character. It is not an after-thought to repair an evil that could not have been prevented; it is the only light in which the lustre of the Divine character could appear.

If, then, the knowledge of God is the noblest branch of philosophy, the gospel is the most noble science in the world. Here alone is to be found the knowledge of the true God. Philosophers, as well as infidels, are in the habit of looking on Christians with contempt. It is the contempt of the rustic for the Copernican system. The weakest and most illiterate Christian knows more of the most excellent of all sciences, than the greatest philosopher who is ignorant of the gospel. The Christian is the only man on earth who knows God. "For the preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

A LETTER
TO THE
EMPEROR NAPOLEON.

SOVEREIGN OF ELBA,
ON THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL SUBJECTS.

Sire—There is something painful to the feelings of a generous mind, in the contemplation of the fall of the great. Though, in addressing you, I cannot conceal from you that, with the rest of my countrymen, I rejoice that your excessive power has ceased to threaten the liberties of mankind, I yet feel the most sincere sympathy for your situation. The pen that can insult the misfortunes of fallen majesty shall never move in my hand. Being no stranger to the principles of human nature that actuate the minds of men in the pursuit of glory, I can conceive the anguish of disappointment. From my soul, I compassionate the man who, from the first place of power and of glory in the world, is reduced to the sovereignty of a small island.

In the day of your power, many nations vied with each other in extolling your political talents, as surpassing those of all kings and of all statesmen; and in raising monuments to your military achievements, as more glorious than those of all preceding conquerors. In your present situation, when all tongues and pens are employed in vilifying your talents, or in reproaching your character, you shall hear nothing from me that I would not have said, had I been admitted into your presence, when your nod swayed Europe. I have chosen to address you now, because there is less to call off your attention from what I shall have the honour to submit to your

majesty's consideration. In your career of glory, when schemes of ambition, and aggrandizement of your empire filled your mind, I could have had no hope of obtaining a hearing. I address you now, because as you have lost a glorious throne, you may, perhaps, attend to me, while I point out to your majesty how you may obtain one more glorious. I address you now, because I know that the retrospection of your former situation must make you unhappy; and that I can show you a path to happiness and glory, with which I presume your majesty is yet unacquainted.

I have heard, sire, that you intend to divert your mind by the pursuits of mathematics and of agriculture, and by writing the history of your life. Justice to your character, as well as the gratification of the public may require the latter. In such a work, I will be glad to find that your fall has not been occasioned by incapacity. I cannot allow myself to think, that the man who has long displayed such incomparable talents in the cabinet, and in the field, should reject the terms proposed to him at Chatillon, from any other reason, than that he knew, that the fickle, vain glorious French, would never submit to the sceptre of a stranger, who had lost his dazzling lustre. I presume, sire, you risked all, because shorn of any part of your glory, you knew you could not reign at all. It would give pleasure to every admirer of genius, if you can clear your intellectual character from the aspersions thrown on it by a band of despicable scribblers, who live by defamation.

But I am mistaken, sire, if ever any pursuits or studies of an earthly nature, confer happiness on the humiliation and retirement of him, who has through so many storms, proudly and successfully guided the helm of the world; who has stood so long at the head of all conquerors. Did the mechanical employments of Charles V., console the voluntary retirement of a man accustomed to govern, even though he left his power in the hands of his son. To be stripped of honours and power, and fame, gives a shock to the mind, of

which they who never possessed them can form no adequate conception. Some of the wretched tribe of scribblers, accused you of meanness and cowardice, because you did not end your sufferings like Cato. But your philosophy is more rational, and more manly, that teaches you that it is greater to endure a suffering life than to end sufferings by death. By uncommon efforts of stoical apathy, you may, in some measure, deaden the sensibilities of nature, and learn to endure your misfortunes with fortitude. But enduring suffering is not happiness; it is only insensibility to misery. A dead body in the midst of flames is not in pain, nor is it happy. Were we to grant them that the stoical discipline was successful in extirpating all the feelings or passions of human nature, still their wisdom was folly. Their happiness arose from insensibility. But the project is impossible. It is contrary to the nature of man, and no human being ever arrived at a state of insensibility under sufferings. And if it fail of success in those who have been submitting to its discipline from their youth, much less effectual will it be with him who has drank long out of the cup of pleasure, filled with all the sweetness that this world could afford; who has indulged even in the intoxication of power. They must know little of human nature, who think that the pain of death would be any consideration to a man in your situation. To suffer the loss of glory and of power, is more painful than to suffer death a thousand times. How often had you looked down through the long series of coming ages, anticipating immortal praises from France,—from the world. How inconceivable must be your anguish, when you have lived to hear yourself reviled by France, and to be held up a but of ridicule to the world! You expected the trophies of your fame to be eternal; but already the proud monuments of your glory are defaced; an untimely frost has nipped your laurels. What then could induce oblivion? "What could give you happiness? Were the island of Elba a mass of pure gold,

were all its pebbles diamonds, it could not make you forget your lost glory.

I admit, sire, that your misfortunes do not justly deprive you of the glory of your former great actions. In the eye of philosophy, the worth of your intellectual character, must be formed by tracing throughout all your conduct, the various combinations of means which your genius has employed to effect your purposes. Your genius ought to appear great, in proportion to the vastness of your aims against the difficulties to be surmounted in accomplishing them, and to your ability in producing, or combining means to give them effect. Though I know but little of your history, I know so much as to venture to assert, that all your enemies will never be able to pull you down to the level of mankind. Like Satan, though you have been hurled from glory, you remain great in your fall. But, sire, it is not impartial philosophy that draws your character; you are painted generally in caricature. For every individual who is capable and inclined to sit in equitable judgment upon you, there are a million who refuse you the laurels, merely because you have been finally disappointed. Nor need you look with perfect confidence to the voice of history, the usual appeal of disappointed ambition. The present fame of our Cromwell, may teach you, that an unsuccessful aspirer to royalty, sinks never to rise again. Had Charles to his own crimes, added all the crimes of Cromwell, what would have been the glory of his name, had he possessed the talents of the usurper! In every country, the rulers have the sentiments of the bulk of the people much under control; and there is no point in which their influence is more conspicuous than on this. To divest usurpers of every great, as well as of every good quality, is naturally the propensity of all legitimate monarchies. What probability is there then, sire, that ever your memory shall be respected in France, while a Bourbon reigns there? Had you been able to commit your power to the hands of your son, had your dynasty been fixed in a long series

of your descendants, the glory of your name would have increased with time. Why was the murdered Caesar enrolled among the gods? Why does his glory still survive? The power wrested out of the hands of Caesar, was recovered by his friends, and his heirs reigned for ages after him. To this hour, monarchs and princes are found to be distinguished by the names of that wicked usurper, or by those of his successor. Sire, I consider you a greater man than Caesar, and not a more wicked man; yet I doubt much, if ever it will be fashionable for emperors, kings, and princes, to assume your names.

Sire, I would charge myself with cruelty, in calling your attention to the unhappiness of your situation, if I could not direct you to a source of comfort, that has never failed to alleviate the keenest afflictions. You have lost the world, and must be oppressed with the anguish of disappointment. I point out to you the way to obtain the glory of the world to come, with which earthly glory cannot be compared. Every avenue is closed against your ambition in this world. I open to your view a field for your ambition, boundless, and glorious. If once you enter it, you will look back with pity on all your former competitors, and with contempt on those objects, for the possession of which you have so ardently contended. In addressing you on this subject, I am not certain whether I ought to consider you as an infidel, or as a believer in revelation. You have been represented even as an Atheist. Indeed, I do not consider it any way material what are your peculiar religious sentiments. The Gospel can subdue an Atheist, as easily as a devotee. Though you had all your life been opposing christianity, I address to you the saving truth with as great confidence, as if you had been a monk, or a pillar-saint. The Scriptures demand assent on evidence, that no rational creature is excusable in rejecting. They never yet were rejected for want of evidence. Men hate them, and the God which they reveal, because their own works are evil. They do not come to the light, lest their works should be made manifest. There is as

convincing evidence, that the Scriptures are the word of God, as there is that the heavens and the earth are his works. Vain men may deny both, but they are influenced by a different principle from the love of truth. Their opinions shall be a monument of human folly throughout eternity.

Now, sire, the substance of the Scriptures is contained in any one of those many declarations that proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ. The atonement by his death is the centre of revelation, in which all its numerous lines meet. The way to heaven is through faith, in the efficacy of his blood. All men are declared guilty before God, and obnoxious to divine vengeance. The good news proclaimed in the Gospel is, that God sent his Son into the world, that in human nature, he might make atonement for the sins of men; and that all who shall believe in Jesus as thus sent, shall be saved from all their sins. This plan of salvation secures the justice of God from all imputation; for sin is punished to its utmost desert in the substitute of the sinner. It glorifies the mercy of God; it announces pardon, through faith in the blood of Christ, to the chief of sinners. It proclaims the sovereignty of God, and his free favour to guilty man, for sinners are interested in the atonement, merely by crediting God's testimony with respect to it. "By grace ye are saved," says the apostle, "through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

That this plan of salvation was not devised by human wisdom is clear from this, that to human wisdom it appears foolishness. It is neither received nor understood by the wisdom of this world. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." These declarations of Scripture are verified by observation. Christianity has been for ages received as the religion of many nations, yet so averse are men to the simple view of it given

in the Scriptures, that the bulk of them in every country where it is acknowledged, have especially altered it, variously modeling it according to their respective tastes. Instead of consisting in the belief of salvation by the atonement of Christ, Christianity has been made by some to consist in silly, superstitious, rites ; by others in works of moral righteousness. Though almost all systems seem to make some account of the death of Christ, every system that has been composed by human wisdom, rests salvation on a foundation different from that laid by the apostles. Even those that come nearest to the gospel, while they often use the Scripture phraseology, cannot steadily and uniformly hold forth faith in the atonement as the only thing necessary to justify the sinner before God. "While they rest on faith, faith is something else than the mere crediting of the gospel. Nay, so strong is the opposition between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man, that many who are in some measure taught by God, suffer human wisdom to influence their explications of the gospel of Christ.

Sire, read the Scriptures, and I will appeal to your majesty's candour, whether there can be any doubt that salvation is promised to all who believe in Jesus, or who believe the gospel. "Go ye," says Christ, "into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Compare the numerous other passages that speak on the subject, and whatever be your sentiments of the Scriptures, you cannot but perceive that in their obvious import, they teach that no other thing is necessary to make a sinner righteous before God, than the belief in the atonement made by his Son. Now, sire, if this is the testimony of Scripture, and if this is so contrary to human wisdom that all the wise men of this world, when they have received the gospel, have altered it so as to make it speak a different language, is there not the fullest evidence, that the Scriptures are not an invention of man? They have been called an invention of

priestcraft; but I affirm without qualification that whoever says so is either ignorant of the Scriptures, or ignorant of human nature. The Scriptures teach unqualified submission to civil rulers. This may make them agreeable to the rulers of this world, but there is not another feature in them agreeable to either priests or statesmen. Can that be the production of human wisdom, that human wisdom has in all ages counted folly? I maintain before all the philosophers in the world, that the Scriptures must be from God, because they could not have been devised by man. Ask all the various sects, what is Christianity? Compare their answer with the declarations of the apostles, and the result will afford evidence that the gospel is no forgery. The glorious plan which forgives the sinner without clearing the guilty, never before had entered into the conception of man. This is the declaration of the prophet Isaiah, and of the apostle Paul. "Eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Human wisdom invent the gospel! More easily might it have formed the plan of the solar system. Priests forge the gospel! Was it ever known that any man forged a warrant for his own execution?

Since the first publication of this gospel, it has been objected to it, that it is unfriendly to good works. If men are saved through faith in the atonement of Christ, without any account of their own righteousness, it is alleged that there is no encouragement to virtue; on the contrary, that there is an encouragement to sin. If the greatest sinners are saved through faith, without any conditions of a future holy life, as influencing their pardon, what is then to keep them from indulging in their favourite vice? Who receives such views? For the refutation of this objection I refer your majesty to the sixth chapter of Paul's letter to the Church in Rome. The nature of the truth believed for salvation is such, that none who understand it can live in sin. If men will abuse the gospel to this purpose, their

condemnation will be just, for it assures us that the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, teaches them who receive it, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Though works of no kind, either preceding or following the belief of the truth, have any effect in the acceptance of the sinner before God, yet we are taught repeatedly that only they who bring forth the fruit of righteousness, have really understood and believed the gospel. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Affliction and anguish will be awarded to every man that doeth evil. If in reality you are convinced that the Scriptures are a revelation from God, I presume to suggest to your majesty, that you must have misunderstood them. The belief of the gospel is altogether inconsistent with the pursuit of the glory of this world. The Scriptures declare, that whosoever loves the world is an enemy to God. Without charging you with any peculiar crimes in your way to power, or in the securing or extending of your empire, your professed aims have been inconsistent with the faith of the gospel. If the power and glory of this world have been your objects, you have not perceived the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. But in the pursuit of these objects, it is impossible that you should not have covered your head with crimes. Men who gain the world by their swords may, naturally, be as far from cruelty as others, but the necessity of their affairs obliges them to make no account of the lives of their fellow-creatures. Military glory must always be purchased by blood, and power is seldom attained and secured in innocence. All conquerors since the formation of the world, have been the enemies of mankind. Their laurels are earned by the groans of the dying, and at the expense of the misery of the widow and orphan. If, sire, I presume to remind you of the ocean of human blood spilled in your wars, it is not to revile you, but to show you that you have yet to give account to the Governor of the world. If God heard the cry of the blood of Abel, when it called to him for

vengeance, shall he be deaf to the cries of the slaughtered thousands, that fell on the bloody fields that have given you fame?

But, sire, whatever may be your guilt, you are not, on that account, excluded from hopes of mercy, if you believe on the name of the Son of God. He came to seek that which was lost, and to save the chief of sinners. The Jews were chargeable with the murder of the Lord of Glory, yet he commanded that the gospel should be preached first to them, and many of them were saved through the blood which they themselves had wickedly shed. Peter declared to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, not long after the death of Christ, that they were chargeable with his blood, yet that there was, through that blood, salvation to all who should believe. "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."—Acts ii. 36-38. The same day, we are informed, two thousand of them believed. The apostle Paul had formerly been one of the greatest persecutors of whom we read. Yet on his way to Damascus, to execute a bloody commission against the saints of God, the Lord appeared to him, and called him to the service of himself. Speaking of himself, he says, ""Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."—1 Tim. i. 13-15. You see, sire, this man who had imbued his hands in the blood of the saints, was saved through faith in the blood of Christ. He had, indeed, devastated no countries, he had overturned no thrones, yet by his determined opposition to the truth, he had manifested greater enmity to God than any of the conquerors that ever scourged the

world. God's selection of him as a monument of mercy, assures the guiltiest of mankind of acceptance with God through faith in the blood of Christ. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Look, then, sire, to the blood of Christ, and you shall have your hands washed from all the blood you have shed, and which is now crying to heaven for vengeance against you. You will stand before God in the day of judgment altogether blameless; for though you are guilty in yourself, his death is a complete atonement, and faith in it will procure you acquittance. God will be faithful and just to forgive you all sins through faith in the great sacrifice of Christ. This, sire, and nothing else can free you, or any other man, in the day of judgment. Were you to give your body to be burned, you could not clear yourself of the smallest sin that stands on record against you. No power on earth can be of any avail to rescue you from the doom of the ungodly, if you reject God's plan of salvation. Nor will the power even of the Almighty save you in any other way. God cannot lie, and he hath declared that there is no other way of access to him, but through faith in the atonement of his Son. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Do not fly, then, sire, to any of the vain refuges of superstition, in order to procure an interest in the atonement of Christ. Faith in that atonement is the only way of being interested in it, and every other way imports a rejection of the gospel. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Were you to retain a thousand chaplains who should incessantly perform religious rites for you, it would profit you nothing. Nay, in addition to this, were you yourself to make your knees like horns, by the frequency of prayer; were you to make your body like a skeleton by fasting; were you to occupy

your whole time, till the close of life, with devotional exercises, it would profit you nothing. God's plan of salvation is effected and published ; whoever rejects it must be condemned. All the austerities practised by devotees; all the rites instituted by the wisdom of men, usually termed superstition, instead of appeasing the divine wrath, rather inflame it, as manifesting enmity to God's truth.

I am aware, sire, that this plan of salvation will appear foolishness to the wisdom of this world, and that unless God opens your eyes to discover his glorious character displayed in it, you will not relish it. The apostle Paul assures us that it is not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world. Men of power and ambition consider all earnestness about the salvation of men as mere enthusiasm. The governing of states; the planning of schemes beneficial to society; the advancing of the arts and sciences, are the objects to which the ambition of men is naturally directed. Their souls burn with the love of fame, and to enroll their names in the history of their country appears the great object of living. Attention to the gospel, or concern for the future welfare of men, appears to them the grovelling pursuit of an abject mind.

Sire, I am in quest of power and glory. The desire of these is as strong in me as it can possibly be in you. Nor do I avoid seeking them in any measure that might be attained in this world, because I am insensible to their claims. I bear contempt and ridicule, not because I want feeling, but because I keep before my eyes the transcendent power and glory to which I expect shortly to be exalted. You, sire, are now despised and ridiculed, and I have no doubt that this is the bitter part of your cup. But were you sure of being shortly restored to your former situation, with such additional power as would enable you to triumph over all your enemies, you could bear with patience the reproach cast upon your name. This, sire, is the principle upon which I endure all the reproaches which are cast on me for following the commandments of the Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. I am seeking a crown and a kingdom. Let us, then, compare the objects of my ambition, with those things that have been the objects of yours. You possessed a kingdom powerful and glorious, but even had you defeated the allied sovereigns, and subdued the whole world, your possession of power would have soon ceased by death. A few years would have separated you from all your kingdoms and conquests. But I seek a kingdom that can never be taken from me, and a kingdom inconceivably more glorious than all the kingdoms of this world. Let us hear what the Scriptures say of this kingdom, for I rest all my expectations upon the authority of God's declarations. I indulge no enthusiasm. It is called an inheritance incorruptible, undented, and that fadeth not away. Christians are said to receive a kingdom that cannot be moved, and they are called a royal priesthood, and said to be kings and priests unto our God. Now, sire, is there any comparison between this kingdom and the kingdoms of this world, that are uncertain, tumultuous and transitory? And were you really to receive the gospel, and keep before your eyes the glory, stability, and eternity of the kingdom promised to the saints, servants of Christ, would you regret the kingdom you have lost? Christ has promised that every conquering soldier of his army shall sit down upon his throne as he also has sat down upon the throne of his Father. Sire, had your majesty continued for half a century to sway the sceptre of France, and to awe the world by your power, that half century would soon have worn away, and in the end of it, you would have lost all your earthly glory of course; you would then have been in the earth undistinguished from the beggar ; you were then for ever separated from the dear objects of your ambition. And if you had died ignorant of the plan of salvation which I am recommending to your attention, you would have entered into everlasting misery. Listen to the voice of Scripture on this head, for I pretend to know nothing about this matter, but what I have learned from it. "When the Lord Jesus shall

be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," &c 2 Thes. i. 7-9- You see, sire, that all who know not God, and obey not the gospel, shall be punished with everlasting destruction. Dives was not distinguished for wickedness, yet after death he lifted up his eyes being in torment in the midst of flames, from which he was assured there was no deliverance. What, then, as our Lord has feelingly said, what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? If then, sire, your loss of power would be the means of calling your attention to the gospel, if you would in this discover the pearl of great price, you would not only patiently acquiesce in the sovereign will of God in excluding you from power, but bless him for the exchange. I declare most solemnly to your majesty, that when I have been contemplating you in all the height of your power, and glory and fame, I would have been filled with horror at the thought of changing situations with you. No, sire, the meanest Christian on earth has greater riches, and honour, and glory, and a more excellent kingdom than ever you possessed. It is to this glorious, and stable, and everlasting kingdom I call your attention. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall reign with him for ever. You have long fought as a good soldier in this world, enlist under the banner of Jesus, the captain of our salvation, fight his battles, and you shall receive a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away. The crowns of the victors in the Olympic games were fading, the crowns of France and of Italy you have lost; I point out a crown to you, infinitely more glorious than they, that shall never fade, that shall never be torn from your head. • Let us next contrast the glory and fame that are the reward of the great achievements of the soldier of Christ, and of the soldier of this world, or of the philosopher, statesman, orator. There is nothing

more dazzling than military glory—no sight more imposing to the imagination than that of a conqueror returning at the head of his victorious armies. It is more fascinating to every ambitious mind, than even the charms of royalty. Were all the kings and princes of Europe standing on one hand, and Wellington on the opposite, I would turn my back upon them all to look at Wellington; yes I would turn my back upon all the allied sovereigns in their triumph, to look at Napoleon in his disgrace. This token of superior admiration, genius will ever bear away from rank. The wise plans of the statesman, the learning of the scholar, the knowledge and discoveries of the philosopher, the thunder of the eloquence of the orator, all command admiration, and hope for deathless praise. Cold-hearted moralists may endeavour to divert us from excessive attachment to such objects, by telling us of the folly of being at such trouble to keep alive the letters of a name, but such vain philosophy never abated the fever that rages in the great mind of an ambitious man. We know it is vanity, but to obtain that vanity, we forego every other pleasure that is inconsistent with our pursuit, encounter the greatest difficulties, and submit to the most painful labours. It is only the gospel of Christ that can open a source to ambition, that has attractions sufficient to draw off our affections from worldly glory and honour. In this and in this alone, we have objects worthy of our ambition, worthy of our labours. Here, if we toil, and struggle, and fight, we do not toil, and struggle, and fight for a shadow. Take a view of some passages of Scripture that speak of the glorious reward of the Christian soldier, or of the glory and fame of the Christian soldier. "When the Lord who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." "Ye who have followed me, in the regeneration ye shall sit on twelve thrones, a white stone and a new name written;" or, eternal glory, everlasting fame are the rewards of the Christian hero. This raises his mind above all the worldly honours that can be bestowed by the breath of man. This makes him

happy even in the dishonour and reproaches that he receives from the world for Christ's sake. Yes, sire, I am counted as a madman by the world, and receive from them every epithet of opprobrium. Yet the great things which I have in view enable me to take it not only patiently, but triumphantly. When I receive such treatment, I console myself, I even exult, by reflecting on the words of Christ, "Blessed are ye," &c.

Paul gloried in persecutions. Peter and James left the assembly of the Jewish rulers, after being scourged, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. What is the glory of all earthly conquerors to mine? I shall have honour, when all the honours of Alexander, of Cassar, of Napoleon, and Wellington, shall have an end. To share this honour, sire, I invite you; could I succeed in my efforts, my glory would be increased; for every soldier in the warfare shall be rewarded according to his works.—1 Cor. iii. I bear to you, and to all men, the most thorough good will. It gives me great pleasure to be the means of bringing any sinner to the knowledge of Jesus. Could I be so happy as to be the instrument of inducing your majesty to become an humble follower of Jesus, I should triumph now and for ever. Whether you receive the gospel or not I shall be happy to hear that you always conduct yourself worthy of your former glory. Let not adversity force you to utter any abject complaints. Never stoop below the character of the hero.

I am your faithful servant,

A Carson.

CHARACTER AND EMPIRE OF SATAN.

The existence of an evil Being, having influence on the affairs of this world, is a truth that rests on the word of God. The errors of superstition on the one hand, and the skepticism of philosophy on the other, have depraved the accounts given of him in the Scriptures, and have both, served his purpose in calling off the attention of men from his true character. While the one exhibits him merely with horn and hoof, the terror of the nightly traveller; and the other either denies his existence, or represents him as a very harmless sort of Being, fit for the machinery of the comic drama; he is better enabled to deceive the world. Christians themselves may not sufficiently attend to what is written of him, and, therefore, be the more exposed to his influence. It shall, therefore, be the object of this Essay, to collect from the Scriptures the scattered hints of the character and empire of Satan, for the information and warning of all who fear God.

SPIRITUALITY—SATAN IS A SPIRIT.

This evil Being is represented to us in the Scriptures as a spirit. He is one of the fallen angels, and angels are spirits.—Heb. i. 14. He is the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience—Eph. ii. 2. This defends his character from the degrading representations of poetry; and the actions ascribed to him in the book of God, from the ridicule of wit and philosophy. Milton's devil is certainly much superior to the vulgar one of Tasso; but he is infinitely inferior to that of the Scriptures.

Though he is called a spirit, too much of his power, strength, and majesty result from size and other attributes of body. He is terrible as a giant, rather than as a spirit. Floating on a lake of brimstone, in length many a league, he has the same sort of sublimity with Mahomet's Borak whose head reached to the seventh heaven. When about to engage Ithuriel, he swells up to an enormous size touching the very stars, and unaccountably finds a spear equal to his arm, but I would rather see the martial tread of Cuthullin or the terrible mien of the son of Starno. The exhibition of Satan staggering from the stroke of Abdiel, and smarting from his airy wounds is more ridiculous than sublime. How much more terrible does Satan appear in the Scriptures, as the destroyer of mankind, by seducing them to his service, and continuing to reign over them as willing subjects? In "Paradise Lost," Satan's flight from hell is accomplished with time and immense toil: how much more sublime is the Scripture view of him, that represents him passing almost instantaneously, as a spirit, to all the different parts of the earth?

MALIGNITY OF SATAN

One of the most remarkable features in the character of this Being is his malignity. From his enmity to man, he received his name Satan. He was the author of the ruin of the human race. He is the murderer of the whole family of Adam. To this day he holds the empire of death; every one as he dies may be said to fall by his hand, because he falls by the eating of the forbidden fruit. Therefore, it is written, that Jesus became a man, that by death he might destroy him who has the power (empire) of death, that is the devil. The cruelty that is in the heart of man was induced by becoming the children of Satan, through compliance with his temptation

Ye are of your father the devil, says Jesus to the Pharisees, and the lusts of your father you will do: he was a murderer from the beginning. Yet the malignity of Satan is immensely beyond anything ever found in man. The most cruel tyrants of whom we read seem to have been influenced and excited by fear, envy, revenge, jealousy, and not to have been actuated solely by their delight in the misery of others. Some things in the history of Satan seem ascribable to nothing but pure malignity. What misery has been in the world since the fall! What murders, and wars, and cruelty! What poverty, and sickness, and suffering! The devil is the author of all by seducing our first parents from their allegiance to God. But this is nothing compared with that everlasting misery which is denounced as the punishment of all evil doers. What a malignant mind must be in the Being that planned the everlasting ruin of the whole race of Adam. Dives, even in hell, was anxious that his relatives should not come to that place of torment. It is usually said, indeed, that his motives were not affection, but dread of aggravated punishment to himself, as by his means they were strengthened in their infidelity. This,

however, is not said in the Scriptures, and the narrative evidently ascribes his solicitude to affection for his brethren. I see nothing in the Scriptures to oblige me to suppose that the wicked become more depraved in hell than they were on earth. Man is now a child of the devil, yet I do not think that any of the human race, had they intercourse with the happy inhabitants of another planet, would wish to bring them into misery.

The malignity of Satan is seen in the sufferings of Job. How anxious was he to obtain leave to afflict him! How full of hatred to man must he be to inflict so terrible a stroke on that happy family! What tyrant of the human race would not have pitied the anguish of that just man? Yet Satan is not to be moved, no measure nor duration of misery will satiate the malice of that malignant being. Without any abatement of rancour, he beholds his victim writhing under the most excruciating torments in his body, whilst his mind is oppressed with the sudden and unsuspected death of all his children.

But his malignity is still more apparent in his cruelty to his own subjects. Hatred to God may increase his malice to the people of God, but he is cruel where there are no such additional excitements. This is seen in the diseases inflicted by the evil spirits under his government, when they obtained permission to take possession of men. How shocking is it to read the accounts given in the gospels of those possessed by these agents of Satan! Their greatest gratification appears to be human misery. Almost in all cases where they took possession of their isolated victim they brought disease. Read the piteous narrative of the possessed recorded, Mark ix. 17—22. What a horrid specimen of diabolical malignity! The demoniac in the country of the Gadarenes was "always night and day in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones."—Mark v. 5.

There is nothing can put the malignity of infernal spirits in a more glaring point of view than the request of the legion that they

might be permitted to enter into the herd of swine Mark v. 12. Whether their object was to inflict misery on the animals, or to injure their owners, or both, we see that the chief delight of the spirits of darkness is in doing mischief.

It will afterwards appear that Satan has influence in the various modes of the religion of his servants of the human race; and it is evident how much human misery has been increased by false religion. Cruelty is the distinguishing feature of the gods and the worship of all idolators. The ancient Nemesis and the modern Juggernaut are princes under the same sovereign—the ruler of the darkness of this world. What insatiable malignity then must that being possess, whose chief delight is in cries, and groans, and blood!

POWER OF SATAN

The power of Satan is such as will excite the wonder of all who attend to the display of it in the Scriptures, and ought to excite the caution of all who fear God. If the Christian need not dread Satan, it is not because he is himself a match for that high spirit, but because the Lord is the strength of his people. There is a superstitious fear of the visible appearance of Satan, but of the true greatness and power of that spirit, men in general have no adequate conception. Were he permitted to exercise his natural powers according to his pleasure, the sons of men could not a moment withstand him. He could derange the whole material creation. Let us examine a few examples of his wonderful power. One astonishing instance is exhibited to us in the afflictions of Job.—Job i. 13—19. His intellectual ability is seen in this plan, which is admirably calculated to effect his purpose. But we shall at present view nothing but his power in effecting this plan. God gave the house of Job into the hands of Satan; but Satan destroys it by his own power, through the instrumentality of his servants, and the agency of natural causes. He displays a sort of providence in this grand work. "The men were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away, yea they have slain the servants," &c. Here we see the power of Satan over the mind of man, both in suggesting and executing evil. This was not the first time that Job's property was before these depredators. Why did this not come into their minds before? Or, if ever they had thought of it before, why did they not execute it? The Sabeans acted purely, solely from avarice, and not to serve the devil. But why did they come the way at that particular time? Satan must have regulated their journey, whatever was its direct object, bringing them to the place, presenting the objects, and

exciting their covetousness. We know not how he acts upon the mind of man, but no man who believes God's word can doubt of such agency; and no man of real good sense will question its possibility, for our knowledge of spirit is next to nothing. Why did the Sabeans kill the servants? Did they always act so cruelly? Why was one servant preserved? The devil intended him as a messenger of the evil news, but the Sabeans had no such intention. Satan, therefore, not only excited these pervaders to plunder and murder, but also by his interposition in some way, he saved one, to convey the doleful message to the victim of his malice—" While he was yet speaking," &c.—Job i. 16.

Many a time the fire of God had before this flashed over the flocks of his servants, but now it strikes and destroys. Satan, then, when permitted, is able to cause thunder storms, and bring destruction on man and beast. The philosopher after all his researches can obtain but a glimmering into the causes that operate in producing this phenomenon of nature; but Satan, when permitted, can unload the artillery of heaven, and give unerring direction to the bolts of God. They struck men and beasts, but one servant is preserved by the astonishing interposition of the evil spirit, that he might carry the afflicting tidings to the servant of God. What an idea does this give of the power of Satan, compared with the colossal monster of Milton? How much more terrible is Satan, hurling the thunderbolts, or the fire of God, than tumbling the angels at the head of his connections?

Ver. 17.—Here, again, we perceive Satan, as the god of this world, influencing the minds of his subjects to effect his purposes through the gratification of their own propensities and lusts. Who suggests this thought to the Chaldeans? Why was it at this particular time? Why did they slay the servants? Why did they spare one? Satan brings all these different parties to work assigned them, as exactly as a general draws up, and brings into action, the different

corps of his army. How many bands of Sabeans and Chaldeans are every where around the dwellings of God's people! Were Satan permitted to employ his nocturnal depredators according to his pleasure, the restraints of law would be a feeble protection to the just. It is a constant miracle, that in the depraved and miserable state of thousands, with every facility to plunder and murder, with little probability of detection, God's people are permitted by Satan to sleep in safety. But their father makes a hedge about them.

Ver. 18, 19.—How feeble are the mightiest of earthly monarchs compared with the prince of darkness? When permitted he can give direction to the free will of the bands of roving plunderers, and raise and direct the winds of heaven. The genius of man is proud of discovering a little of the cause and phenomenon of the winds, but Satan, when permitted, can cause them upon a grand scale. An overwhelming wind from the wilderness buried the children of Job in the house of their feasting. But in the midst of this ruin how is one spared! This mighty spirit threw his shield over one for a messenger. How soon, if permitted, would he make the earth a desolation? The united efforts of the human race could not withstand him for a moment. Nay, he could employ the children of men to destroy one another. What an absolute command must he possess over his agents! The whole artillery must be brought to bear upon this unhappy man in succession, at a particular moment. Nothing must take place sooner nor later than it did. The messengers must arrive one after another to bear down the fortitude of the man of patience. The Sabeans and Chaldeans, though acting freely, were brought to the ground at nearly the same time, excited by the desire of their respective objects, and set to work with the exactness of the motions of an army. What a consummate general is this emperor of darkness! In one of the temptations of our Lord we perceive the great power of Satan over the laws of nature or works of creation.—Mat. iv. 8.—Luke iv. 5. Without entering into any discussion with respect to the

precise way in which this was effected, nothing can be more certain than that the thing asserted was literally accomplished. Whether it was by an aerial representation, or by a particular modification of the laws of vision, the fact is equally astonishing. From no mountain could be shown by natural means, all the kingdoms of the world, nor the whole of any kingdom. The narrative is inconsistent with the supposition that merely a great view is meant, for he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time. Every circumstance fixes that the expression is literal. The great cities of the world must have been presented to his eyes, with all their glory. As for this purpose he took him to the top of a very high mountain, it does not appear likely that it was done by aerial representation. Nothing can suit the whole of the narrative better than to suppose that by a particular modification of the laws of vision he caused our Lord to perceive objects every where round the globe in a moment of time.

INTELLIGENCE AND SUBTLETY OF SATAN

From what we have already seen of the exercise of the power of Satan, it appears that he is a complete master of science. He is the prince of philosophers. He seems perfectly acquainted with all the secrets of nature. He who can produce thunder, and lightning, and storms, cannot be unacquainted with their causes. The laws of vision must be perfectly understood by him who showed all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

But nothing shows in a more striking manner the wonderful abilities of Satan than the skill that is manifested by him in managing his empire over men, and directing his temptations. It is solely by excitement and persuasion, through their own sinful passions, that he seduces, and governs and retains his subjects of the

human race. To use force would be to defeat his own ends, for actions to be criminal must be freely done by the agent. What consummate address must he possess, who "deceiveth the whole world"? What must be his knowledge of human nature, when he suits his temptations to the dispositions, situation, and circumstances of the millions on whom he exercises his skill? By the desire of knowledge he deceived our first parents, by the hopes of plunder he led on the Sabeans and Chaldeans against the property of Job. By the love of money he excited Judas to the perpetration of a crime the most ungenerous and inexcusable that ever was committed. We shall afterwards have an opportunity of perceiving more fully his address in temptation, or in tempting and governing mankind.

From one of the temptations of our Lord—Mat. iv. 6—it appears that he is well acquainted with the Scriptures, and that he can quote them readily. He appears also to have understood that the old testament prophecies referred to the Messiah.

The knowledge, sagacity, and penetration, of infernal spirits appear from the heathen oracles and spirits of divination.

FALSEHOOD OF SATAN.

Satan is remarkable as having seduced our first parents by lying Gen. iii. 1-7. He is a liar, and the father of it—John viii. 44. As inventors and discoverers in the arts and sciences are usually styled the fathers of the arts and sciences invented or discovered by them, so the devil, as the first liar, is styled the father of lies. As by lying he ruined the human race in their first parents, so he still continues to deceive them.— 2 Cor. xi. 3. Eve was seduced to believe that God's threatening would not be executed; and the bulk of the world still believe that God will not be as severe as his word. By plausible reasons, accordant to the corrupt mind, he still persuades his

subjects, to make God a liar. By his subtlety and artifice he deceiveth the whole world. Lies are the support of his kingdom, and the badge of his children.—John viii. 44. By lying Satan murdered mankind. By believing that lie, and making God a liar, they became the children of Satan, murderers and liars.

ACTIVITY.

In reflecting on the history of Satan, nothing surprises us more than his unceasing activity, and the boundless multiplicity of his engagements in every part of the earth. He is a tempter to every one of the human race; and it appears that he watches the peculiar situation and circumstances of every individual as well as of societies, so as to be ready to take advantage of them.—1 Cor. vii. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 11. From Job i. 7; ii. 2, we see that he is constantly employed over the earth, in promoting the interests of his kingdom. Peter represents him as a roaring lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. What wonderful activity must he possess to manage such a complication of affairs, among so many millions! What an exalted idea does this give us of spirit! As Satan is not omnipresent, he must pass to every part of the globe with a rapidity that far exceeds human conception. The incredulity of those who would reject, or explain away this part of the character of Satan, is founded merely in their limited notions of possibility. Milton's devil may show his agility by posting round the globe, or making the circuit of the globe in the course of a night; but the devil of the Scriptures is a spirit, and, like thought, is instantaneously present in the place of his destination.

THE DOMINION OF SATAN.

This powerful spirit is the head of the whole apostasy of angels and men. The angels who fell are called the angels of the devil—Jude i. 6; Rev. xii. 7.

Beelzebub is the prince of the demons Luke xi. 15.

He is the prince Of the power of the air. I can conceive of nothing that this expression can mean, but that the fallen angels under the government of Satan, have their residence throughout the boundless regions of the atmosphere The infernal spirits compose a society, and live under government, having Satan for their chief ruler. It appears from Eph. vi. 12, that they are separated into distinct governments, though they have the same supreme sovereign. They are called principalities and powers, which seem to import that there are many distinct societies among them, having separate governments. Many curious speculations might be suggested with respect to the principles that retain these spirits in obedience to their sovereign; but as these can receive no elucidation from the Scriptures, it is worse than unprofitable to indulge them. One thing is certain, they are all combined in one common cause against the human race. They are the rulers (despots) of the darkness of this world.—Eph. ii. 2. They are the agents of Satan in his government of men, and they rule through the ignorance of the world. In the history of the demoniacs, we see that they delight in giving torment to the human race. Their efforts are peculiarly directed, under their prince, to ruin Christians, and destroy Christianity Eph. vi. 12; Rev. xii. 7.

Satan is not only the prince of the angels that fell with him ; but by seducing our first parents to join in his apostasy, he has extended his empire over the human race. All men are represented as naturally his children and subjects. They continue so till they are delivered from his power, through faith in the blood of Christ.—Acts xxvi. 18.

By dying under the curse of the law as a substitute for his people, and atoning for their sins by the blood of his cross, Jesus Christ has destroyed him who has the power of death.

The apostle John declares that the whole world, except believers, lieth in the wicked one.—1 John v. 19. He says again (iv. 4), "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Believers overcome the temptations of false teachers, and the plausibility of false doctrine, not by the strength of their own understanding, but because the Spirit of God, who abides in them, is more powerful than the devil who influences and assists the corrupters of the truth. Satan is here asserted to dwell in, and influence all, wicked men.

Such is the influence of this great enemy of God and man over the human race, that Jesus Christ calls him the prince of this world.—John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11. These passages plainly import, that he is permitted to exercise his authority over this world, and that he governs all men, but" Christians, as any other king governs his subjects. The only difference is, he governs spiritually, and uses no force to give effect to his authority. He rules through the hearts and lusts of his subjects.

The apostle Paul calls him the God of this world 2 Cor. iv. 4. This imports, not only that he rules over men, but that their submission to his authority is considered by God as worship given to his great enemy. By complying with his temptations, and performing his works, they make him a god. All the endless variety of evil works that are in the world, are, therefore, so many ways of worshipping Satan. How little does the world think that while they are engaged in their pleasures and sinful amusements, they are solemnizing the rites of the worship of the devil?

The connection between Satan and ungodly men is so intimate, that they are called his children, or he is called their father.—John viii. 44. As by believing God's testimony about his Son, we are born

again, and become the children of God, so by believing the devil's testimony, with respect to the forbidden fruit, the human race, in their first parents, became the children of their destroyer. By believing his lie against the God of truth, they lost their divine image, and their relation to God as a father, and became assimilated to the father of lies—they became enemies to God, and lovers of iniquity—so that the devil reigns over them as willing subjects. Though they were made his subjects at first by fraud, and continue so to their temporal and eternal misery, yet they need not be kept in their allegiance by force, like the subjects of other tyrants, but obey out of their inclination to evil. He reigns in them as his children. Our Lord says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do." They willingly and eagerly perform the works of their father.

This lamentable fact is exhibited at large, in striking language, in Eph. ii. 2. Believers, as well as others, are naturally the children of wrath; and before they come to the knowledge of the truth, they walk according to the prince of the power of the air. This spirit is said now to work in those who reject the gospel.

In tempting our Lord, the devil expressly asserts his property in the whole world. When he had showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them, he said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" or, as Luke expresses it, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine.—Luke iv. 6, 7. It is true that this is only the language of Satan, and he makes no scruple of a lie. It is sometimes said that he promised what he could not give. But, as it appears to me, there is no reason to question the veracity of Satan in this instance. Our Lord never questions the truth of his assertion; but repels his attack by a passage of Scripture respecting the sinfulness of complying with his proposal. There is no

reason to think that Satan would not make good his promise to the full extent. If he reigns over the world, what difficulty could he find, if permitted by God, in putting any fit instrument at the head of all the kingdoms of the world. Though the empire of Alexander and of Caesar, &c., were of divine appointment, there is no reason to question that Satan gave them his authority. A thing may, in one sense, be from God, and, in another, from Satan 2 Cor. xii. 7. Indeed, if Satan could not give what he promised, there was no force in the temptation. If a man promises me a kingdom for committing treason, when I know him not to be able to fulfil his promise, his promise has no allurements. There is no temptation at all. If, therefore, this is a temptation of Jesus, the devil must have been able to make good his promise. We know also (if further confirmation is necessary) that this very spirit gave his authority to the beast.—Rev. xiii. 2. The man of sin obtained his wonderful authority through the influence of Satan. The dragon gave him his seat and great authority.

The temptation that Jesus resisted, took effect with his pretended followers, and the worship of the beast was repaid with the seat of the god of this world. The man of sin is one of the principal vicegerents of Satan on the earth, though he professes to be the vicegerent of Christ.

LETTERS
TO THE
AUTHOR OF AN ARTICLE
IN THE EDINBURGH REVIEW
ON
EVANGELICAL PREACHING

IN WHICH THE PRINCIPLES OF THAT WRITER ARE SHOWN TO BE IN DIRECT
CONTRADICTION TO THE WORD OF GOD, AND THE DOCTRINES OF
SCRIPTURE ARE STATED AND DEFENDED.

PREFACE.

At first sight nothing appears more astonishing than that so many different and opposite doctrines should be taken out of the Scriptures. Can it be possible that in a revelation from God, with respect to the most momentous of all questions—the way of salvation—there should be just ground for all the innumerable variety of plans that have professedly been deduced from it? Are the Scriptures, like the heathen oracles, designed to be capable of different and opposite interpretations? If they are intelligible, why do not all men understand them in the same sense? Is it not the highest interest of every man to know the plan that God has appointed for sinners to escape the wrath to come? What, then, is the cause of this wonderful difference among those to whom this revelation is addressed? We have the answer to this question in the denunciation of God by Ezekiel against the false prophets: "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God, Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!" Here the reason of the error of the false prophets is, that "they prophesied out of their own hearts," and "followed their own spirit," instead of submitting to the predictions that God had delivered by the true prophets. Had not Jeremiah, for the space of forty years, in the most precise manner, and with a variety of emblems, declared to the people of Israel, that their city should be destroyed, and themselves carried into captivity to Babylon? Why, then, was not this believed? Why did they not return from their idolatry, as the only means by which they could escape this dreadful catastrophe? Was it not the

true interest of both people and prophets to understand the mind of God on this subject? Was not error in this matter the greatest evil? Yet neither prophets nor people believed God. On the contrary, the prophets predicted peace, and encouraged the people to hope that the city and temple should not be destroyed, and that they themselves should not be carried to Babylon. The false prophets prophesied out of their own hearts. They predicted not what God had declared on this subject, but what was agreeable to their own wishes. Instead of following the Spirit of the Lord, they followed their own spirits, and declared visions, when, in reality, they had seen nothing.

In these false teachers of Israel, we have a picture of all false teachers, in every age. Their doctrines are not taken from the Scriptures, but from their own hearts. They follow their own spirit, instead of searching for the mind of the Spirit of the Lord in his word. They proclaim their dogmas as the truths of revelation, when in revelation they have found no such thing. They have seen nothing; yet they utter their own sentiments as the dictates of the Holy Spirit. This strikingly applies to the author of the article in the "Edinburgh Review," which is the subject of the following strictures. His doctrines are not founded in Scripture; they are in direct opposition to Scripture; yet he pretends that they have their foundation in the Word of God. He "speaks out of his own heart," and "follows his own spirit," yet he ushers in his errors with a "Thus saith the Lord."

To the last moment, the false prophets of Israel continued to deceive the people, by assurances that the predictions which denounced evil, should not be accomplished. Thus they surrounded the city with a wall, that on the outside appeared to the people sufficient, but which was incapable of withstanding assault. "Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there was no peace ; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: Say unto them which daub

it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower ; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury, to consume it. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall and upon them that have daubed it with untempered mortar; and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it; to wit, the prophets of Israel, which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace saith the Lord God."— Ezek. xiii. 10—16.

Here we see that these false prophets deceived the people with the cry of peace, and assured them that the city should not be taken. Yet destruction was at their very door. So shall it be with every refuge of lies invented by false teachers, in order to deliver sinners from the wrath to come. They may build up a wall for defence, and cover it over with untempered mortar, which may give it an appearance of strength, but it will fall when the storm of the divine fury assails it. Instead of saving the inhabitants of the city, it will crush them under its ruins.

The same disposition that originated the false refuges of the prophets and people of Israel, models the doctrines of the Scriptures in every age. The Scriptures give an account of man, that is not at all agreeable to himself, and, therefore, false teachers employ all their subtlety to alter or modify that account. The Scriptures represent men, by nature, as the children of wrath—as totally corrupted and

ruined—false teachers, speaking "out of their own hearts," and "following their own spirit," force the Scriptures either to retract or qualify their assertions. The Scriptures assure us, that without a spiritual birth, men cannot enter into the kingdom of God: this doctrine is not agreeable to the human mind, and therefore it continues to represent this spiritual birth as nothing but a change from heathenism, to a profession of Christianity; or, if the language of Scripture is refractory, and will not yield to this torture, still man must have the glory of choosing whether the Spirit of God shall bring him to life. The Scriptures assure us, that men are not justified by works, either in whole, or in part; but that they are justified freely by faith in the Lord Jesus, who gave himself to redeem his people from their sins: yet false teachers, "speaking out of their own hearts," evade the clearest, and strongest, and fullest declarations to this purpose, and assure men, that their works must have some share in their acceptance. If all other expedients fail, faith itself is turned into a work; salvation is supposed to be by faith, because of the excellence of faith as a moral quality. There is not one declaration of Scripture that has not been set aside by this pernicious principle. On every subject, the Scriptures are obliged to speak, not what God has given them in charge, but what the wisdom of this world thinks most suitable to be spoken. In interpreting the Scriptures, false teachers, "speak out of their own hearts"—"follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing." Their object is not to ascertain with precision what God has spoken, but to make God speak what is agreeable to their own system.

The Lord calls the prophets of Israel, foolish prophets. No doubt they were at the head of the wise men of this world, and had the greatest influence in their country. They might look down with insolent contempt on the "silly creatures that saw their lost and perishing condition by nature;" they might value themselves on account of their superior attainments j but in the estimation of

Jehovah, they were fools. And were they not fools in the highest sense of the word? Was it not the most consummate folly to hope to evade the divine judgments, by denying them? A short time discovered their folly; and the ruin of Jerusalem, with the captivity of the people, proved them to be prophets of lies. And are they wise who attempt to banish the evangelical doctrines from the Bible? Will not God, though he be long silent, at length arise to speak on this subject? The storm will at last fall down upon this crazy wall, and crush the false teachers under their own works. Let modern false teachers read their doom in God's denunciations against the prophets of Israel. "They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith; and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God."—Ezekiel xiii. 6—9.

TO THE AUTHOR OF AN ARTICLE IN THE EDINBURGH
REVIEW, ON EVANGELICAL PREACHING.

LETTER I.

Sir—In your Strictures on Evangelical Preaching, you commence by observing, that "Persons who appropriate to themselves, as par excellence, a title which others claim an equal right to enjoy, or profess a similar desire to merit, must expect their pretensions to be subjected to a somewhat rigid scrutiny; nor are they ever entitled to complain, if they incur a certain degree of obloquy and invective." With the former part of this observation, I cordially agree; the latter I denounce as unchristian and unreasonable. Let the pretensions of every doctrine be examined with a scrutiny, rigid in proportion to its importance. As the point referred to is the most momentous that can occupy the attention of the human mind; as the system called Evangelical, denounces every opposite system, as being eternally ruinous to the souls of men, let it be tried with the utmost severity, by the only test of truth—the Word of God. But to assert that the speaking of a certain set of doctrines as Evangelical, while others opposed to them claim the same title, justly incurs any degree of obloquy and invective, is as disgraceful to a philosopher, as it is unworthy of a Christian. Two systems opposed to each other, cannot both be the gospel; and shall he be reproached, who calls that system evangelical, which he perceives to accord with the Scriptures? Even if he is wrong, he is not worthy of obloquy and invective. If he uses false reasoning, let him be exposed; if he employs quibbles or disingenuous resources, let him be lashed with the utmost severity; but if he is honest in the declaration of his sentiments, let him not be reproached, because he assumes that two opposite systems cannot both be the gospel. Must a noble lord decline his title, and share his

estate with a pretender, till the matter is determined by the judge? If, relying on his own exclusive right, he treats all other claimants as mere pretenders, is he worthy of obloquy and invective? You glory in morality, and blame the evangelical preachers for not sufficiently enforcing it; but your own morality is most immoral.

The manner of speaking which you reprobate is exemplified and justified by the Apostle Paul. He speaks of his gospel, which insinuates, that there would be other doctrines claiming the title of the Gospel of Christ: he speaks of another gospel, and declares that it is not truly a gospel—"which is not another," importing that every doctrine different from what he preached, whatever may be its pretensions, is not the gospel that saves sinners. In designating one system of doctrines as evangelical; in denying this designation to every other system, what more is done than the apostle has done in the beginning of his Epistle to the Galatians? Instead of admitting that different systems have an equal claim to be designated the gospel, he declares that the perversion of the gospel is ruinous. "There be some," says he, "that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed." This is a hard saying, who can bear it!

You speak of other designations as being equally unjustly assumed as exclusively belonging to this obnoxious party; "such as saints, people of God, and the like." This you represent as "disparaging to the rest of the Christian world." By this you seem to admit, that these titles exclusively belong to what you call the Christian world. Now, is not this disparaging to what I suppose you would call virtuous heathens, and to all who do not profess Christianity? Why do you adopt titles which cannot include these

persons? The titles referred to, do not justly belong to all who call themselves Christians, more than they do to heathens, or Mahomedans. Let them be given to those on whom the Holy Spirit conferred them. Let persons who have the holiness of the truth be called saints. Shall persons who are not only unholy, but who ridicule holiness, be called saints, or holy persons, as a designation? Most of those who call themselves Christians, would think it a disparagement to be called saints. These evangelicals, it seems, "evince considerable aptitude in discovering that they are objects of persecution, and in availing themselves of whatever presumption is thence to be drawn of the genuineness of their pretensions; not seeming to recollect, that though the people of God are taught to expect persecutions, all persecuted people, or all who conceive themselves persecuted, are not necessarily people of God." Certainly it requires in any person very great sagacity to discover when he is persecuted 1 It is a most mystical subject. Are we then reduced to such a situation, that we should not confidently say that we are persecuted, when, on account of our doctrines, we are hated and ill-treated? But we are admonished that all persecuted people are not necessarily people of God. We need not the admonition. We believe that a man may suffer for his evil conduct, as well as for the truth. Persecution is indeed not a test of truth; yet it is of great importance for the Christian to know, that it will always be the lot of genuine Christianity, as far as its enemies have the power. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake," says Christ, "for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted, they the prophets which were before you." If we have not the truth of Christ, and if the evil speaking is not false, we claim no share in the blessing.

"We would advise the persons of whom we speak," you say, "well to consider whether the hostility of which they complain, or rather of which they boast, is not the natural return for those terms of contempt and reprobation which they are in the habit of so freely bestowing on all beyond their own clique; and (since we are not aware that in this age or country, religion is ever visited with obloquy as such) whether it is by the maintenance of religious truth, or religious duty that reproach is incurred, and not rather by dogmatical absurdities, or superstitious observances." Very kind advice. On this extract, it is quite sufficient to observe, that the system designated Evangelical, is hated; and that its professors are exposed to persecution, let their lives be ever so blameless. The grossest dogmatical absurdities and superstitious observances, are not so much the object of the displeasure of the world, as the unadulterated gospel of God. The persons to whom you allude, speak not of others with contempt; but they faithfully declare the testimony of God with respect to the character and prospects of all unbelievers. The condemnation of the enemies of the gospel is not gratifying to their feelings, but is a deep and constant source of sorrow. Every real Christian will have feelings in unison with those of the apostle, when he so earnestly and affectionately declares—"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." When in the further examination of your views, I shall tell you that you have a gospel different from that of Paul—a gospel that cannot save sinners—I will do so in the spirit, not of hostility, but of love. I disclaim having any thing to glory in more than the guiltiest of mankind. Had it not been for the sovereign power of God, I might have been opposing the gospel as well as you. In the same

sovereignty, you may yet repent to the acknowledgement of the truth.

There is a statement in this extract, which appears inconsistent with a former admission. You tell us, in a parenthesis, that "you are not aware that in this age or country, religion is ever visited with obloquy as such." I presume, you mean, religion as such. You had previously admitted that "the people of God are taught to expect persecution." Now, whence do these persecutions come? If in this age and country, the gospel of Paul is not an object of obloquy, how can Christians be taught to expect persecutions? Is it in heaven that they are to be persecuted? Your thoughts, Sir, are very crude. You have the cloak and staff of the philosopher, but you want his soul.

You give us a number of characteristics belonging to this system, as presumptions of unsoundness and delusion. It is "the fashion" If you mean that it is generally adopted by the people of fashion, nothing can be more untrue. If you mean that it has of late been very generally received, this is no presumption of unsoundness and delusion. The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. "Will this be a presumption of delusion? Your observation seems to be an admission, that Evangelical religion is on the increase. This is good news.

It is with you another suspicious thing, "when a peculiar set of views are seen to arrive at a sudden and violent growth." Do you forget the first progress of the gospel? You seem, however, to guard against this, by adding, "a set of views, not for the first time promulgated." But the fact that the progress of the gospel depends on God's sovereign power, strangles this sophistry. Were a nation born to God in a day, there would be no presumption of unsoundness or delusion.

But this system has the misfortune, it seems, "not to profess to be the result of recent improvements in Scriptural criticism, or in natural theology, or ethics." It would indeed be a presumption of

unsoundness in any system, to profess to be the result of recent discovery in Scriptural criticism. The true system of doctrine, whatever it may be, must be contained in the most defective translation of the Scriptures, if it be honest. The discoveries of sound criticism will corroborate it, and crush the pretensions of its adversaries. What an absurdity, to speak of a system as owing its origin to improved criticism! I say this on the admission that the improvements in Scripture criticism, are fully equal to the boasts of a certain set of theologians. This, however, I do not admit. I believe that an extensive acquaintance with the writings in the languages of the Scriptures, guided by a sound understanding, would make a better translation than any of those modern ones, that are made on the principles of boasted Scripture canons. Many real improvements of our translation, in particular passages, have undoubtedly been made. But by far a greater number of pretended improvements are gross corruptions, not founded on an interpretation according to the principles of language. Besides, it is in small matters they amend; in matters of the highest importance they pervert and corrupt. It is still a greater absurdity to speak of a system of the doctrine of Scripture, as the result of natural theology, or ethics. Natural theology, or ethics might, without absurdity, profess to overturn the Scriptures; but without the grossest absurdity, it cannot profess to interpret the language of Scripture. This, let the result be what it may, must be done on the principles of language itself.

"Their doctrines," you say, "derive their birth from a period when comparatively little light was sought or claimed from these sources." These doctrines, Sir, derive their birth from the Bible, and needed not the aid of criticism to bring them out. They are the obvious testimony of the word of God, to all who are acquainted with the language in which they are written; and no honest translation can entirely exclude them. On every branch of our system, we dare the learning of our antagonists, and defy criticism to

bring our colours from the mast. Every advance in sound criticism, will add to the evidence of the evangelical doctrines, and take away the foundation of their competitors.

Another presumption of unsoundness and delusion in these doctrines, you profess to find in the fact, that "during a long space, distinguished by some of the most illustrious names in divinity ever known in the world, they had become all but exploded." How long was truth exploded during the dark ages of Popery? How many of the best scholars and metaphysicians have been involved in the darkness of that system? The Scriptures provide an answer, "not many wise." "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

Another symptom of unsoundness and delusion in these doctrines, you make to consist in the supposed fact, that "in their present spread, they have made their progress not downwards from the enlightened and reflecting, but upwards." Let this be a fact, and it is quite in unison with the word of God. It manifests, that it is not by human wisdom, and power, and influence, but from the working of God, that the truth prevails. The gospel, at first, came not from Jewish doctors, or Gentile philosophers, but from the fishermen of Galilee; and it made its progress also at first among the poor.

LETTER II.

Sir—In announcing your plan, you tell us, that "it is not your purpose at present to test the peculiar doctrines of the Evangelical school, by their uniformity either with Scripture, or with particular ethical theories." To what tribunal, but that of Scripture, should their doctrines be brought, if the purpose is to know whether they are Scriptural? An infidel may consistently try them by another standard; but to all who profess that the Scriptures are the word of God, the test of all doctrines claiming a foundation in Scripture, must be their conformity with Scripture. The abstract truth or falseness of those doctrines is not the question; but whether they are doctrines of Scripture. If they are found to be doctrines of Scripture, they must be received as truth by all who receive the Scriptures. Were the Scriptures found to contain any doctrine self-evidently false, the conclusion would be, that the Scriptures are false, not that they do not contain such doctrines. You act like a lawyer, who, in ascertaining the meaning of a will, proceeds independently of the will "My Lord and Gentlemen of the jury, I do not mean to inquire whether the claimant before you is named as heir in the will—I will content myself by showing that he is a very unworthy man, and that many others have a better right to the inheritance." Opposite counsel, smiling contemptuously, replies, "My Lord, the merits of the different claimants is not the question; I have found that this is the true last-will and testament of a man in a sound state of mind, and one who had a full right to dispose of his property. My client is expressly named as his heir." It is strange that in religion, even the devotees of science and reason lose common sense. I object to your plan, Sir, as unphilosophical and absurd. Can it be ascertained whether certain doctrines are evangelical, by any other test than the

Scriptures? If you say that the doctrines referred to are self-evidently false, renounce the Scriptures, and fight us as an infidel.

You speak of Ethical theories as a test of those doctrines, though you decline at present to employ it. Here again you do not act as a philosopher, more than as a Christian. Can any Ethical theory prove that such doctrines are not in Scripture? Even allowing that Ethical theories have a right to be umpires with respect to all religious doctrines, still, in ascertaining what is contained in Scripture, we must employ solely the principles of the interpretation of language. But Ethical theories, instead of being admitted to the high honour of deciding what is truth, are worthy of no more respect than a madman's dreams. They are not self-evident, and, therefore, can be of no avail against a revelation attested by sufficient evidence. In your views, Sir, I can perceive neither Scripture nor reason. The Neological principle, which accommodates the meaning of Scripture to philosophical views, is as absurd as it is wicked.

The doctrine of human depravity is the first thing in the system of your opponents, which you assail. You admit the thing in some sense, but charge the evangelical views on this point as extravagant. "The evangelical divines," you say, "insist, that every thing whatever that man does, (at least in his natural state) is evil, and altogether evil; that he not only never seeks to do good, but that he is continually and wholly intent upon wickedness; that his every thought, and every act is wickedness, and only wickedness." Without correcting the exaggeration of this phraseology, I merely observe, that the evangelical doctrine, is not that every thing done by a sinful man is in its own nature sinful; but that as the action of the sinner it is sinful. The thing itself may be duty. "Now, if these assertions," you say, "were mere figures of speech, we should not quarrel with them." Then I would differ from you here also. There could be no such figures of speech; and persons who, in the interpretation of Scripture, explain away the meaning of the Word of

God, on the principle of figures of speech, show that they are as ignorant of the nature of figurative language, as of the doctrines of the Bible. "But if they are literally meant," you say, "nothing else can possibly be said of them; but that they are utterly nonsensical." Here again I differ from you. Even if these doctrines are false, they are not nonsensical. Do you not know, Sir, that a thing may be untrue, without being nonsense?" Surely," you continue, "some, at least, of the thoughts and motives of men are directed to procure food and clothes for themselves and their children. Is there wickedness in this?" Here, Sir, you think you are strong; but it is ignorance of the doctrine of your opponents, that gives you this confidence. To provide food and raiment, your opponents do not account sinful, but even those things as done by the sinner are sinful. Do not the Scriptures say, that the ploughing of the wicked is sin? Ploughing is a duty in itself, yet it is sinful as the action of the sinner. "Sometimes we are told," you say, "that every action is sinful that does not proceed exclusively from a regard to the Divine commands." It is not necessary that regard to the Divine commands should be the exclusive principle. The Scriptures address our hopes and fears, &c., but surely a regard to the command of God is necessary to obedience. This is self-evident.

"Again," you say, "we are told that we are blind to sin, until our eyes are opened by the Holy Spirit." Your opponents do not mean that men, in a state of nature, do not discern anything to be sinful, but that they have not a sufficient view of the guilt of sin. You say, "If sin is not known to be sin, it is for that very reason (as a subject of responsibility at least) not sin." Why then were there so many offerings for the sin of ignorance under the Old Testament? Are you a better judge of sin than God? When God speaks, let men be silent, and receive his testimony with the most cheerful submission. What an arrogant creature is man? Who is he that dares to question what is taught by the Almighty? Was Paul innocent in persecuting the

Christians? Yet he did it with a good conscience. "I verily thought," says he, "with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." He counted himself the chief of sinners, on account of this conduct, yet he declares that he did it ignorantly. What regard is to be had to your speculations about sin, when the Word of God speaks so expressly to the contrary? It was wise in you not to attempt to test the doctrine of your adversaries by the Scriptures.

In a note, you observe, "In the declarations made with such peculiar zest and complacency by the evangelical party, on the depravity of human nature, we are apt to view them as merely indulging in feelings of deep humility, until it is recollected, that, of this depravity, they themselves (at least by their own account) have ceased to be partakers. The depravity, then, which they so ingenuously confess, is the depravity of all mankind, except themselves." I suppose, Sir, you thought this very witty, as well as very severe. But it is sheer colouring. The evangelical party confess, not only that they are involved in the universal guilt of human nature, but that even after they are born again, there is still a law in their members that warreth against the law of their mind. Each of them confesses with Paul, "In me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." You must be totally ignorant of the principles of those whom you oppose, else you would not speak thus. The sentiment which you here reprobate, is altogether unevangelical.

You speak with great contempt of "the silly creature impressed with the necessity of seeing his 'lost and perishing state by nature.'" But on whom does your ridicule fall? On God himself, who attests the fact as to the lost and perishing condition of all men by nature. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we

all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved.)" Who are you, Sir, that you will reply against God? With respect to the universal guilt of human nature, I will lay before you one statement of the Word of God, which, if you do not believe, neither would you believe if one should rise from the dead. "What, then, are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now, we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." I am well aware of the profane attempts of false criticism to give a turn to this passage, that will limit its application. But they are utterly vain, forced, and even childish. This passage answers all the questions which you put to your opponents. Whatever consequence you may dare to draw from it, this divine description of human nature makes all men, "by nature, the children of wrath."

LETTER III.

Sir—You are next led to the subject of regeneration, and you ask—"Is there any Christian preacher who fails to inculcate the necessity of repentance, and amendment, in every respect in which a man's life has not been in conformity with the Divine law, as that without which there can be no salvation—any preacher who holds out the hope of salvation to the man who wilfully continues in the practice of any sin, or the neglect of any duty—to the man who does not, in short, make the Law of God the paramount rule of his life? We do not think that any preacher requires less than this, as entitling any man to nourish the hope of salvation—we do not know that evangelical preachers can possibly require any thing more" This, Sir, is not a mode of reasoning that I should expect in a work that pretends to dictate to the philosophical world. You meet your antagonist on his view of regeneration; and you answer him by discussing its effects. Even were there an entire agreement between you and your opponents, on the points mentioned by you, still the subject of regeneration remains to be discussed. You tell us in a note, that you "do not here enter into the question, whether regeneration—conversion—being born again, even bears at all in Scripture, the evangelical meaning." But this is the very thing that must be first determined. Not one step can be advanced till this is settled. If you find fault with the doctrine of your opponents, on the subject of regeneration, you must state your view of the subject, and show in what respects their doctrine is erroneous.

"In insisting, then," you say, "on the necessity of regeneration, as an effect, there is no ground for the exclusive pretensions of the latter." What do you mean by regeneration as an effect? If your conclusion has any connexion with the observations on which it

pretends to be founded, you must mean the effects of regeneration. But if this is your mind, you have very unhappily expressed it: for regeneration as an effect, and the effects of regeneration, are very different things.

Having so easily disposed of your antagonist, on the subject of regeneration itself, you then examine him as to the manner of regeneration. "Now," you say, "the impression which evangelical preachers constantly convey on this head, is to the effect, that every man must, at a particular assignable period of his life, have made a change altogether different in kind, and degree, from any step in moral or spiritual improvement made either before or after; a change so great, that the part of his life immediately preceding it, as compared with that which immediately succeeds it, may, in the most literal and proper terms, be denominated a state of utter and desperate wickedness, recklessness, and blindness," &c. Here again, I perceive imbecility and confusion. Instead of speaking of the manner of regeneration which you propose, you speak solely of its nature and the time of its taking place. After this, Sir, what title have you to look with contempt on the most silly of "the silly creatures who are impressed with the necessity of seeing their lost and perishing state by nature?" The most fanatical ranter could not leave his subject more completely than you have done.

As to the manner of regeneration, your opponents say nothing, for they are taught of their Lord, that this is inexplicable.—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." As to the thing itself, it is a new spiritual life, as much the effect of God's immediate power, as is the life of the embryo in the womb of the parent. No man can serve God acceptably, without this new birth. Even Nicodemus, though he was a teacher in Israel, is taught that he must be born again: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," says Christ to Nicodemus "except a man be

born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Believers are said to have been naturally dead in sin, and to be quickened, or made alive by God. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." The effect of divine power was not more real in raising Lazarus from the grave, than it is in giving spiritual life to every child of God. This cannot be expressed more strongly in human language, than it is in that of the Spirit of God. From this we will not recede a hair's breadth. We dare not modify the testimony of the Spirit of truth. If all the saints and angels in heaven, in concert with all the Christians on earth, were to attempt to produce this spiritual life in any individual, without the aid of the Spirit of God, they would utterly fail in the accomplishment. Even the word of the Saviour himself, when not accompanied with his Spirit, did not produce this life and light. "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." So then, Sir, we are not afraid to state this truth, in terms even stronger than yours.

When you assert, however, that your opponents teach that the time of the communication of this new life is always assignable, you misrepresent them. That some persons may speak in this way, I admit; but it is not the doctrine of the evangelical system ; and, as a matter of fact, I do not know an individual of them, of any denomination, who holds this. The new life may have been communicated so early, or so imperceptibly, that the moment of its commencement may not be ascertainable. The great matter with every individual is, not to be able to ascertain when he was made alive unto God, but that he is now actually alive.

You come next to treat of the agency in regeneration. "On this head," you say, "we have never known any Christian preacher who did not assiduously seek to impress his hearers with a sense of the deep and arduous nature of the Christian course, and of the difficulties, and dangers, and temptations, with which it is beset,

carefully calling their attention, at the same time, to the promise of Divine assistance which Scripture affords, and earnestly urging them to seek that assistance, as that which could alone enlighten, and strengthen, and purify them." Here, again, you leave your subject. You profess to treat of the agency in regeneration, and you speak of the arduous nature of the Christian course. Instead of speaking of the agency of God in producing new life, you speak of that agency in supporting this new life.

"All this, however," you say, "will not satisfy evangelical preachers; for they never cease maintaining that man can do nothing for himself, and that regeneration is altogether and entirely the work of the Spirit. Every case in which a person contracts religious impressions, or enters upon a religious course of life, is spoken of as a plain evidence of Divine interposition, as showing "the power of God." In the strongest terms that language can afford, we ascribe this new life entirely to God. But we do not teach that every case in which a person contracts religious impressions, or enters upon a religious course of life, is an evidence of Divine interposition. There is much religion in the world, and many religious impressions, which are not of God.

"Such expressions as these," you say, "obviously mean that when one man has come into a state of salvation, another has not; this is not by the first person doing something which the other failed of doing, but by a supernatural intervention being made in behalf of the former which was not made in behalf of the latter;—in other words, that a man's salvation has not been made to depend upon himself—has not been put into his own power." This is the doctrine of your opponents. This is the doctrine of the Word of God. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God. God forbid! For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So, then, it

is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Here, Sir, is a statement as strong as it is possible for language to express. Is this less offensive to you than the language of those who receive it as the declaration of God? The apostle proceeds to a still more offensive doctrine. "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" Mark, Sir the only answer that the apostle deigns to give to such objections as yours.—"Nay, but, oh man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" This will for ever answer all the quibbling sophistry of those who attempt to hold the Scriptures, and deny the evangelical doctrines. I know that the whole ingenuity of man has been employed to give a turn to this phraseology that may put it aside from its object. But till heaven and earth pass away, the attempt will be fruitless. The sagacity of Satan could not pervert these words with plausibility.

But if this is the meaning of your opponent, you ask what is the object of the hortatory parts of evangelical discourses? It is a sufficient reply to this that the same God who testifies of man's inability, has commanded that all men should be called to believe the gospel. We are not bound to satisfy any man who professes faith in the Scriptures, as to the manner of the consistency of these things. If we prove that they are both from God, they must be consistent, though we should not be able to prove their consistency. Calls to faith and repentance are the means by which God brings his people

to the knowledge of himself—means however, that will never be successful but through his own infinite power.

You ask, "What kind of sense is this, to urge a man to do something, and tell him in the same breath he can do nothing?" Do not the Scriptures call on all men to believe? Do they not say that faith is the gift of God? I will exemplify to you, from the conduct of Jesus himself, the consistency of this apparent inconsistency. "Jesus said to the man with the withered hand ; Stretch forth thine hand." Was the man able to stretch forth his hand? Was he able to move it, more than he was able to move the mountains, or bring down the sun from the firmament? Yet he stretched forth his hand in a moment; with the command, Jesus communicated the power to obey. So with the calls to faith; men are dead in sin, but God gives life, and faith, through his Word, by his Spirit. Had the man with the withered arm adopted your plan, he would have -petulantly replied to Jesus, "why do you mock? why do you call on me to do, what you know I am not able to do?" This might have been very clever; but it would have ruined both body and soul. Had you been at the tomb of Lazarus when Christ raised him from the dead, you would have had a very appropriate subject for your ridicule; and, doubtless, you would have been very witty. "Lazarus come forth" said the Saviour, with a loud voice. "Lazarus come forth" cries the mocker, "you might as well call upon the rocks to live. Have you not been told that the man is four days in the grave? Why do you call upon a dead man to live?" Yet the word of the Lord was not in vain. Jesus spoke the world into existence, and by the power of the same word Lazarus heard, and lived, and came forth. In these facts, Sir, we will for ever have an answer to all the quibbles of sophistry, with respect to calling on dead sinners to believe.

"But, say the evangelical preachers," you observe, "we do not recognise man's own power to do what we urge; and our persuasions, or threats, are merely the means by which the influence

of the Holy Spirit is to be conveyed to him. Well; but how do these things operate? Is their use commanded, without any reference to their adaptation to the end?" We are not bound to show how these means operate. It is sufficient, that he, who can effect the end, has commanded the means. There is, no doubt, an adaptation to the end, in all the means appointed by God; but the means have no fitness to do the thing without God's immediate power. Was it the virtue of the word, or the power of the speaker, that produced creation?" Can they operate otherwise," you say, "than through man's sense of being able to make a choice—able to make some effort or exertion?"—They do not operate through any such conviction.—In faith this is never thought of.—Was the man with the withered hand restored to soundness, by a consciousness of being able to make some effort? Was Lazarus brought to life, by a conviction that he had the power to make a choice of continuing in death, or of coming to life? Your metaphysics are as bad as your theology.

"Supposing the means not to succeed," you say, "would it be admitted to be quite rational and allowable for a man to say—the Holy Spirit has not yet moved me—I must be damned in consequence, I cannot help it?" To this it is sufficient to reply, that while faith is said to be the gift of God, unbelief is declared to be not only a sin, but the greatest of all sins. We are not bound to show the consistency of the metaphysics of this question. We reply, with the apostle on the subject:—"Nay, but, Oh man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Unbelief is a man's sin, although faith is the gift of God.

"Or, on the other hand," you say, "supposing the means to succeed, the persuasion or threats to take effect, in that case, will the man have done nothing? Will he have remained purely passive?" Faith is the gift of God, yet, faith is the act of the human mind. You may as well ask, when a man sees with his eyes, has he done nothing?

"If it is said," you observe, "the choice, though apparently a man's own act, is really not his own, but the work of the Spirit in him; we answer, it may be so. It may be that we are not the same men we were yesterday; that our recollection of the past, and our perceptions of the present, are altogether fallacious; but this, we shall say, that if there be any one thing that we are sure of, it is, that our volitions, or acts of choice, are our own, and not those of another being, and that we are wholly responsible for them." No doubt, Sir, you think you are very strong here. You think you have entrenched yourself behind self-evident truth. But your confidence arises solely from your want of discrimination, and your ignorance of the doctrine of your adversaries. They do not say that a man's choice and volitions are not his own, and that they are the choice and volitions of another being. But they say, that a man will not choose or will what is good, without the Spirit of God enabling him. They do not call our volitions God's volitions: they teach that God enables us to will. In all such quibbling, it is sufficient to reply with an apostle, "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Can any thing more expressly declare that we are not able to will good more than to do good of ourselves?" If we are conscious of the power of choice," you say, "the Spirit acts, or does not act, just as we choose to act in this or that way ; so that, still, our situation, in every practical meaning, would rest with ourselves." Does not this say, that the dead man is continued in death, or brought to life, just as he may choose life or death? But the Word of God meets all such objections. The passage already quoted, assures us that God worketh in us both to will and to do, not according as we perversely choose, but according to his own good pleasure. Another apostle assures us, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." Of his own will—not of our own choice. Believers "are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In every respect, then, this new birth is of God.

Indeed, it is absurd and ridiculous to speak of a birth, in which the person born in any respect co-operates. You speak of absurdity in the system of your opponents, but your own system is palpably absurd. It makes the child its own parent.

"If a man can do nothing to save himself," you say, "he is damned for not doing what he cannot do. Is this consistent with the Divine justice?" Is not this the very objection anticipated by the Apostle Paul, and which he answers, not by showing the metaphysics of the question, but merely by denying the consequence?" What shall we say then? Is their unrighteousness with God? God forbid." The depths of the Divine councils are not to be fathomed by us. What he asserts must be true, and, at the same time, however unaccountable it may appear to us, it is perfectly just. God must be believed on his own authority; not on the grounds of our ability to justify him.

"To evade this consideration," you say, "we shall be presented with fine spun distinctions, between a natural, and a moral inability." This distinction I believe to be sound and satisfactory. Yet there is no necessity to employ it in order to repel such conclusions as yours. It is quite enough that God testifies both that men by nature are dead in sin, and that they are guilty on account of unbelief. Both must be true, in whatever way they may be consistent. The obvious ground of harmony is, that different kinds of inability are spoken of. But independently of understanding this, both truths must be received on the testimony of God. In replying to such men as you, I will enter into no metaphysical solution of difficulties. I will show you that God testifies that all men are dead in sin, and that faith is the gift of God, while I will contend as strenuously as you can do, that men's sins are their own, and justly render them liable to the wrath of God. I believe God, and receive the kingdom of God as a little child.

"What," you ask, "is the specific case of fault or error which is conceived to require such frequent and urgent assertions of this

doctrine?" What other justification is necessary to bring any doctrine forward, than that God has taught it? Is it not a sufficient reason to urge it continually, that it meets us so frequently in the word of God? Must not men be told their true state before God? Is a truth not the more earnestly to be pressed, when it is so hotly and violently assailed, by men who know not the Gospel?

You ask, "Whether it is for the credit of Christianity, as a system fitted for the acceptance of a rational being—whether it is consistent with the supposition of man's being a rational being, to say, on the one hand, that revelation has not sufficient evidence to procure his belief, does not present considerations sufficient to move his conduct; or on the other, that he is incapable of being moved by such evidence and such considerations, without a supernatural interference?" Does the credit of Christianity require it to do what it does not profess to do? What it asserts God only can do? It is, indeed, worthy of all acceptance; yet it teaches us that none will accept it without the power of God. Is it any discredit to a truth, that men are so blinded by hatred to it, that they will not receive it till God opens their hearts? But speculations on this subject are useless and vain. It is a matter of Divine testimony, and on this ground only, will I rest its defence. If I prove that this doctrine is the testimony of God, I will give your speculations to the wind. Man is a rational being, but almost every thing in his conduct is most irrational. It is not possible to defend the honour of rationality in man, even if the Scriptures had never been published.

"What," you ask, "shall we say of the complete sacrifice of all worldly ease and pleasure, of the dreadful privations and tortures often incurred by the Hindoo, with a view to secure his welfare in a future world? Yet, we believe, supernatural interference will not be pleaded in such an instance as this?" What shall we say? This fact has no difficulty—no application to the point in hand. We say, that the Hindoo does what a man dead in sin may do. Nay, we say, that

this conduct is a proof of his spiritual death. We say, also, that a man under the name of a Christian, may give his body to be burned, as well as his goods to feed the poor, without being spiritually alive. This objection shows the deepest ignorance of the subject. Does the conduct of the Hindoo please God, or show him to be in the lowest degree spiritually alive? If not, how can the example bear on the subject? This, Sir, is not reasoning, more than it is Christianity.

"Is the Christian's belief, then," you ask, "formed on less sure grounds? Is the conduct required of him less rational, less practical? Is the Christian himself less rational, less sensible of the wisdom of sacrificing all worldly good for the sake of his everlasting happiness?" Here you give us an example of your usual confusion of ideas. The point in hand concerns the natural man—the unbeliever—the man dead in sin. Here you pass to the Christian, as now made alive by the Spirit of God. Your questions take it for granted, that your opponents hold that there are some works in their nature so difficult, as not to be performed by men in their own strength. To disprove this, you show us what we must admit the Hindoo does in his own strength. We crush your objection, by admitting that all this, and more, may be done by men spiritually dead. You take it for granted that the Hindoo makes himself spiritually alive by the works referred to. If not, it is nothing to your purpose. Is there any accuracy of thinking in this reasoning?

In a note, you observe, "If it is not alleged that, in such cases, the Divine interference is manifest to our perceptions, or that the effect is inexplicable from known motives on the human mind, the fact of such interference must be rested on the authority of Scripture. But what shall we say when these very instances, as they are termed, of Divine power, are produced as proofs of the truth of Scripture, i. e. the miracle first proved by Scripture, then Scripture by the miracle!" Here you think you have completely entrapped your antagonist. You triumph over him as reasoning in a circle. But, Sir,

in a moment I will show that all the wonder of your mark of admiration ought to be directed against your own ignorance. I will deliver your opponents out of this magic circle. When I reason with a man who denies regeneration, while he admits the Scriptures to be the Word of God, I will prove regeneration solely from the Scriptures. When I reason with an infidel, I appeal, as a subordinate argument, to the undeniable fact, that by the belief of the Gospel, millions of the most abandoned characters have been changed in views and conduct in a manner which philosophy never effected—never professed. This I consider a most solid argument. But, whatever you may think of it, it is not reasoning in a circle. It is nothing akin to the process by which men prove the Scriptures by the church, and the church by the Scriptures.

"But, waiving this," you say, "Scriptural usage in one sense, ascribes every thing to God, in respect that every faculty we possess is given by him, and cannot be exercised independently of him; in another more particular sense, it ascribes to him all the effects produced by the promises and threatenings contained in revelation." This is mere assertion, and I meet it by asserting, that there is no such Scriptural usage.

"But, let them define what they mean by a saving faith," you say, "and then tell us whether as great a devotion to religious duty in a Christian, as a Hindoo or a Mahometan sometimes exhibits, would not be a saving faith?" What an absurdity! Devotion to religious duty is not faith of any kind. This is the grossest abuse of language.

I overlook the philosophy of your account of the favour which evangelical doctrines enjoy among the weak and ignorant. If we can prove that these are the doctrines of Scripture, the strong and the wise will be damned if they reject them. I will not take time to expose your error in supposing, that if the influences of the Spirit are sensibly felt, they are distinguishable from the operations of the mind that feels them. It is in the operations of the mind that the

influences of the Spirit are felt. But I cannot forbear tasting a delicious morsel of philosophy in the following quotation:— "The idea of man's being wholly passive in the work of spiritual improvement—the mere subject of a change impressed upon him by a power external to himself— seems to be fast producing the persuasion, that if anything can be done for salvation at all, it can only be done by the use of what are called religious ordinances." So, then, the idea that nothing can be done, is fast producing the idea that something in a particular way can be done! But the evangelicals are so weak and ignorant, that they cannot penetrate to the bottom of this sage philosophy.

You speak contemptuously of religious ordinances, and then endeavour to save yourself, by observing, that you are opposed merely to the disproportionate zeal for them. "Prayer-meetings abound, preachings are thronged, preachers run after, observance of the Sabbath, punctual attendance on public worship, are the most common, and treated as the most important subject of inculcation." Such language appears to undervalue the things mentioned, and not merely to censure undue importance as given to them. Though Christians ought not to substitute any ordinance for the Gospel itself, yet too much zeal cannot be manifested for the Sabbath, and the ordinances of worship.

LETTER IV.

Sir—The question of faith and works is the next subject of your discussion. "Here," you say, "we are prepared to maintain, in spite of all the efforts of evangelical preachers, to make the contrary appear, that some of their most common representations must have the effect (if they have any effect at all) of relieving men from the duties of morality, of making morality utterly useless as regards salvation, and, of course, of removing all motives to the practice of moral virtue that may be drawn from that source. Every body knows," you continue, "that no topic is a more constant and favourite one with the evangelical preachers, than the inefficacy of works, as means of obtaining salvation; nothing the object of more frequent denunciation than the placing of any dependance on our works, or the using of any attempts, or entertaining any hopes, to procure salvation in this way; nor do they ever omit to reprobate, as an error of the most fatal kind, the idea that our works can, even in part, and together with the atonement of Christ, contribute to the procuring of our salvation. Will any man who is acquainted with the meaning of language, say, that from representations of this kind, it is not the first and most natural inference, that we cannot benefit ourselves by practising moral virtue; that we need not, therefore, seek to practise it; that the practice of moral virtue is useless? For, if good works do not contribute to our salvation, what motive is there (founded on a regard to our salvation) for the performance of them?"

No doubt you think that your reasoning here is perfect demonstration, or rather self-evident truth. But I will prove, in a few words, that your speculations, instead of being the brightness of truth, are not only in direct opposition to Scripture, but that they manifest a want of the perspicuity of a philosopher. You do not

distinguish where there is an essential difference. You say " the first and most natural inference is, that we cannot benefit ourselves by practising moral virtue." If you mean that moral virtue cannot have the smallest effect in our justification, this is not an inference from the above language. It is the direct assertion. How absurd to speak of an inference in this sense! But this is not your meaning, your inference is not sound. Good works may be very useful in several respects, nay, they may be absolutely necessary, though they are utterly useless for justification. You must either be deficient in powers of discrimination, or you must be so blinded by hostility to the doctrine which you oppose, that you cannot coolly examine it. Has an heir no motive to love a kind father, though the estate descends to him by entail, and not by will ?" We love God, because he first loved us." If we believe that when we were dead in sin Christ died for us, have we no motive to do his will? Though good works have nothing to do in our justification, yet we are told, without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Is there, then, no motive to holiness? We learn from Scripture that believers, though justified entirely by faith in the blood of Christ, will be rewarded in proportion to their works. Is there, then, no motive to perform good works? But, Sir, though your speculations were so subtle as to perplex my philosophy, I would, with unabated confidence, rest all upon God's testimony. The word of Him who cannot lie, assures us that works cannot justify, and the same word assures us, that those works "are good and profitable unto men." Who is he who thus dares to reply against God ?" Now, in regard to this statement," you say, "we in the first place, not merely deny that faith will produce good works, flattering the idea, or definition of a saving faith (which evangelical divines themselves furnish), but assert the very contrary." After the express declarations of God in the Scriptures, such language is truly surprising. This gives God the lie in the most audacious manner. Well, let us hear how the assertion is supported.

After telling us in what the perfection of faith consists, you ask, "will a belief that our works can in no degree or way contribute to our salvation, produce works? will it not produce, if it produce anything at all, the very reverse?" Here, again, I discover either a want of perspicuity, or a want of honesty. You represent faith to consist in believing that works can in no degree contribute to our salvation. But this is not the faith that saves the sinner. The faith that saves us includes indeed the idea that works cannot contribute to our justification; but it consists in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is possible that a man might believe that works cannot save, and yet not have the faith of the gospel. You err, then, Sir, in representing as saving faith, that which is only an idea pre-supposed in it; and which may subsist without it. Before you can prove, that instead of producing good works faith will produce the very reverse, you are obliged to misrepresent it. That faith which will produce bad works, is not the belief that we are justified by the blood of Jesus, but a faith that believes that good works are in every respect useless. Such a faith would, indeed, produce bad works; but such is not the faith of the gospel.

"The fact is," you say, "that the evangelical professors here unconsciously borrow a leaf out of the ordinary system. That faith will, according to its degree, produce good works, is a true proposition, where faith means a belief not merely in Christ as our Saviour, but a belief in all that Christ has told us,— one of these things being, that we shall be saved if we practise good works according to his commands, not saved otherwise." Not a leaf, not a letter, is borrowed from your system. It is true that faith in every Divine declaration will produce corresponding effects; but the faith of the gospel itself produces good works. Can a man believe that Jesus died to save him, while he could do nothing to save himself, and shall he not love and obey him who died for him?

"But the proposition that faith will necessarily produce good works," you say, "in the evangelical idea of faith, i. e., faith involving the belief that our works can in no degree help to procure salvation for us, is an absurdity but just one step removed from a contradiction in terms." Instead of being a contradiction in terms, I maintain that there is not the smallest inconsistency in this doctrine. Is it a contradiction in terms to assert that a malefactor pardoned by his Majesty, may afterwards love and serve his sovereign, though his love and service cannot possibly have any influence on the pardon? You do not reason as a philosopher, more than as a Christian. "Instead of proving," you say, "that we wholly and entirely trusted in Christ, our performance of works should prove just the contrary." So, then, if the pardoned criminal loves and serves his sovereign, he proves that he does not believe that pardon was owing to mercy, but to his own deserts! May there not be other motives for performing good works, though they should not have any share in our justification? Surely a sound mind might see this distinction.

"Surely," you say, "the obvious and natural way of proving that we trust altogether to Christ, and not at all to our works, is not to perform these works." Can it be a natural way to prove, that we trust altogether in Christ for our justification, and not in works, to neglect the thing that Christ has commanded? While works are not performed for justification, they are necessary for other purposes.

In a note, you observe, " This is the exact counterpart of St. Paul's reasoning (Gal. v. 2—6.). He urges on the Jewish converts, if they will resort to circumcision, and the other rites of the ceremonial law, Christ's sacrifice can profit them nothing; because this would indicate a want of reliance on that sacrifice. From which we draw this inference, and beg the earnest attention of evangelical divines to it—that if, in these texts where St. Paul speaks of faith as the exclusive means of salvation, as opposed to works, he had spoken

with a view to moral works, he would have prohibited these works on the same ground as he prohibited circumcision. Did St. Paul prohibit moral works?" Here you think you have your opponents in a net; but I can show you in a moment that your reasoning is sophistry, and that its apparent strength lies in a want of discrimination. I observe, in the first place, that the works excluded by Paul from having a share in salvation, are not merely ceremonial rites, but all works of the law, moral as well as ritual. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Is not this the whole law, moral as well as ceremonial?" But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for the just shall live by faith." Is this the ceremonial part of the law only? Could this assertion be made, if men are justified by the moral part of the law? It absolutely excludes from salvation all who trust in the law in every view of it. "And the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them shall live in them." Is not this the whole law?" Is the law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily, righteousness would have been by the law." Does not this exclude works of the moral part of the law, as well as of the ceremonial?" Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" This shows that they desire to be under the law as a whole. The attempt, then, to prove that it is ceremonial, and not moral works which the apostle excludes from having any share in justification, is as silly as it is wicked.

Now, let us take a look at your inference. You say, that if Paul had excluded moral works as well as ceremonial works from justifying, he would have prohibited both. I maintain, on the contrary, that he might expressly exclude both from justification, while he might have prohibited the one, and enjoined the other. Moral works are good in their own nature; ceremonial works are

good only as the appointment of God. The one, then, cannot be prohibited, the other may be prohibited, while the former has no more concern in justification than the latter. This, Sir, is my philosophy; show me where it is wrong. But there is another mistake in your view of this matter. Paul equally prohibits moral and ceremonial works in the matter of justification. But he did not prohibit circumcision to the Jews at that time. They might practise it, but not for salvation; Paul circumcised Timothy.

"But, in the next place," you say, "supposing that faith necessarily did produce good works—so that, where no good works appeared, there could be no faith—still, if works, as works, were not means of salvation, there could be no motives for the performance of them." What! if works cannot be useful for one purpose, can they not be useful for another? If works are not means of justification, they are not to be performed for justification; but if they are necessary for other purposes, they must be performed for those other purposes. The most silly of "the silly Creatures, who see their lost and ruined condition by nature," can discern this.

"If the faith is not there," you say, "the performance of works will not make it to be so, and therefore cannot mend the matter." Very true. But what has this to do with the question at issue? though it is contended that faith will always produce good works, yet it is not contended that works will at any time produce faith. We do not say that a man should eat and drink in order to create an appetite, but that a man, who has an appetite, will eat and drink.

"But now," you say, "leaving all these objections to the manner in which evangelical divines rebut the charge of making good works, or moral virtue, unnecessary to salvation—since they acknowledge, in point of fact, however inconsistently, that good works cannot be dispensed with—what, we desire to know, becomes of their assertion, so often, so absolutely insisted upon, that we are saved by faith alone, without good works; and that all that is

necessary for us is to believe in Christ? To say to a man you are saved by faith without works, but you must give the works too, or else you cannot be reckoned to have the faith—what is this but a pitiful sophism?" There is no sophism in the doctrine of your opponents on this point; the inconsistency is all in your own apprehension. When it is said that a man is saved by faith, without works, the meaning is, that he is justified by faith without works. When it is said that works are necessary, it is not meant that they are necessary for justification, but as the fruits of faith. Paul asserted, that of all the ship's company there should not one lose his life; yet he afterwards declared, that unless the sailors should abide in the ship, salvation was impossible.—Acts xxvii. 22, 31.

You observe in a note on this passage, "We have now and then heard evangelical discourses constructed on this plan :—In the first head, the preacher would maintain, in the most express and unequivocal terms, that we are saved by faith alone, without works: the second, he would commence by asking, Do I then say we can be saved without works ?—absurd, ridiculous, a vile calumny, and what not: never seeming to observe, that the supposition thus indignantly disclaimed in the second head, is, to the letter, the very proposition maintained in the first." Though this appears to you directly contradictory, I will show you that it is, when rightly understood, perfectly consistent. Salvation sometimes applies to justification, and sometimes to admission into heaven. When it is said that salvation is by faith alone, without works, the meaning is, that we are justified before God without works; but when it is asserted that a man cannot be saved without works, the meaning is, not that he cannot be justified without works, but that he cannot enter heaven without works. Works are as necessary in their own place, as faith is in its own place. What inconsistency is in this? "Does God Almighty," you ask, "thus trifle with the understanding of his creatures? and is revelation really a thing of riddles and

conundrums for men to exercise their wits withal r* God Almighty does not trifle with the understanding of his creatures, but his creatures often misuse their understanding in perverting his word, when it opposes their own views and wishes. Revelation is not a thing of riddles, but many, from their own blindness, find inconsistency in its most consistent doctrines. "If our gospel be hid," says Paul, " it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." The doctrine you oppose is as clearly the doctrine of God, as the heaven and the earth are his work. It is only by the most daring and obstinate perverseness that you can misrepresent it. Consider, then, Sir, that as God will not trifle with the understanding of his creatures, neither will he allow his creatures to trifle with him. If this is the Word of God, what is the guilt of the man who, on that supposition, charges God with trifling with the understanding of his creatures? Jeremiah predicted that Zedekiah, king of Judah, should behold the eyes of the king of Babylon: Ezekiel predicted that Zedekiah should not see the land of the Chaldeans. Josephus informs us, that Zedekiah considered these two prophecies as contradictory, and therefore disbelieved both. But, in due time, he found that both were true. Sir, the day will come, when you shall see that all the Divine declarations are consistent with one another. There will be a time when the doctrine of faith and works will not appear a juggle.

In a note to the last extract, you say, "Here we cannot help alluding to the manner in which evangelical preachers manage to get over the numerous plain declarations of Scripture, that we shall be judged according to our actions." Is not this flagrant calumny? Do your opponents deny that men shall be judged according to their works? Have they any need to get over the passages to which you refer? Is not the doctrine of these passages a part, an essential part, of their system?

"If a text says," you continue, "that a man who obeys the Divine laws, will be rewarded with future happiness—yes, they say, if he does keep the Divine laws to the letter." Well, and what is this to the subject on which you bring it to bear? Does this imply that men shall not be judged according to their works? It says only, that there are no men who keep the law. As to the question, whether a man is entitled to the reward of keeping a law, who does not keep it fully, the negative is self-evidently the proper answer. Can a man be entitled to the reward of keeping a law, who in any degree breaks the law? To a certain person who wished to have eternal life, by doing some good thing, Christ says, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Are the commandments kept when any of them is broken? Is not this a contradiction in terms? And does not an apostle tell us, that " whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all?" How, then, can men have a reward by the keeping of the law?

But, you add, "As if God would mock his creatures with promises of his reward, which he knew they could never, without his merciful allowance, act so as to obtain." Is it mockery to tell a man who wishes to be saved by doing good, what is the good that he must, according to that way of salvation, perform? And is not this the most effectual way to convince him that salvation in that way is impossible? But view the matter as you will, mockery or truth, this is the necessary import of the expression. To keep the law, is not to break the law. The keeping of the commandments, insisted on by Christ, cannot admit, in any point, the breach of them. If they are broken, in any instance, they cannot be said to be kept. It requires no great depth of intellect to understand this truism. But you speak of a merciful allowance. You have called the evangelical doctrines nonsensical, where I have shown them to be consistent. But I maintain that it is sheer nonsense to speak of salvation by the keeping of a law, while there is a merciful allowance for breaking

that law. Does this keep the commandments? Such an observation is as disgraceful to intellect as it is opposed to Scripture. Let it be allowed, for the sake of argument, that God will make allowances for the breach of his law, then salvation is not by the keeping of the commandments. This way of salvation is neither law nor gospel. It is mere absurdity.

"So also they say," you remark, "that, by the good works to which reward is promised, we must understand merely the righteousness of Christ, imputed to the believer." This is not a correct statement. Believers are justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, or reckoned as their own, because they are one with Christ by faith. In Christ they are every thing that the law requires in them, in order to escape its curse. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." But the works that shall be rewarded in believers, are the works which they have in their own persons wrought, through faith in Christ. They are their works, yet they are works which Christ works in them. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." "It is God who worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure."

"Thus," you say, " a text declaring that our salvation depends on our works, is made to declare that it does not depend on our works, but on our faith." This is another misstatement. If there are any fanatics who speak thus, they must not be confounded with those who have a title to the character of evangelical preachers. The texts, the innumerable texts, that require good works in believers, are not explained as if they meant that faith is required. Both classes of passages are allowed their own meaning, and insisted on with equal zeal. Both faith and works are necessary in the heirs of salvation; but they are necessary for a different purpose. While it is declared that he that believeth not shall be damned, it is declared with equal

correctness, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The inconsistency which you discover in the system of your opponents, is not in their doctrine, but in your own misrepresentation. "The great body of Protestants," you say, "maintain that all men are sinners, and liable to punishment; and that no man can, by any works, moral or ceremonial, make atonement for his sin: in this sense, they maintain that works cannot contribute to their salvation." But, Sir, not only are works unable to make atonement; they are equally unavailing as a medium of connection with the atonement. It is by faith, and not by works, that men are justified, through the atonement. Your doctrine here is as faulty as it is every where else; though you falsely represent it as the doctrine of the generality of Protestants. Besides, Sir, if "all men are sinners, and liable to punishment," can they be rewarded for keeping the commandments? Are they to be both rewarded and punished? But you may say, that the atonement blunts the edge of the law. Then, Sir, salvation is not by the keeping of the law, but partly by the law, and partly by the atonement. How, then, could Christ say, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments?"

"It is never in any other meaning than this," you say, "that the New Testament writers represent salvation as attainable without works." The New Testament writers exclude works, as well from being the medium of connecting sinners with the atonement, as they exclude them from making atonement. It is as a medium of connection with Christ, and not as an atonement, that faith is commanded. It is on this point only that faith and works are contrasted. Indeed, it is self-evident, that neither faith nor works can make atonement. Though we could keep the whole law at present, this would not make atonement for former breaches of the law.

"And, though their proposition (in this meaning) holds equally true," you add, "both as to moral and ceremonial works, it was in respect of the latter solely, that the occasion for maintaining the

proposition existed." Were this true, it is nothing to the purpose. No matter what gave occasion to the statement of the proposition, if the proposition includes moral works as well as ceremonial. But your statement is not true. Even the error of the Galatian churches was not confined to circumcision as a rite unconnected with law, but as a part of the law; and though circumcision was particularly the object of their zeal, yet they evidently joined with it the whole law. The apostle's reasoning supposes this. This is every where obvious from the epistle, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." "This only would I learn of you: received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith." "For as many as are under the works of the law are under the curse." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith." "And the law is not of faith." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." Does not the term law here refer to the whole law of Moses ?" Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Circumcision, then, while it was the great, was not the only point in which they were attached to the law.

"There is not, we believe," you add, "one text to be found, to the effect that faith alone, without works, can procure salvation, which has not by the context, a direct and visible reference to the case mentioned in Acts xv. 1." This is not so. When Paul directly treats on the subject of justification in the epistle to the Romans, he speaks of the law without any reference to circumcision. "Therefore," says he, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Is the knowledge of sin by circumcision ?" But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested." Does the law here mean circumcision only ?" Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? of

works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Is circumcision the only thing that could afford a ground of boasting? Sir, your observation is not only unfounded, but there is no plausible occasion to suggest it. When works are excluded from justification, the whole law of God is referred to, and moral works are as directly excluded as ceremonial. This perversion of the Word of God, by which some have endeavoured to set aside the apostle's doctrine, is without any colour of plausibility.

"Preaching," you say, "against seeking salvation by works now, in the way that St. Paul found it necessary to preach it, is among the greatest absurdities that ever entered the human brain." I have shown you that the Apostle Paul preaches against works as a ground of justification, as directly with respect to moral works, as with respect to ceremonial. But were it otherwise, your doctrine here is false. Though the occasion of preaching against works as a ground of salvation, had invariably been the reliance of the Jews on circumcision, still, as the Apostle puts down reliance on circumcision, by reasoning that will equally apply to every work of the law, it would be quite proper to make this application of his doctrine to every case in which works of any kind are relied on for justification. The individual case referred to, might respect a work of the ceremonial law, but the principle on which it is condemned refers to the whole law. If prejudice does not here blind you, I cannot compliment your understanding, on account of this observation. In "overturning circumcision as a ground of justification, the apostle shows, in general, that works of law cannot justify; yet your perspicuity allows you to assert, that to include works of moral law is an absurdity. Silliness, I see, is not the exclusive characteristic of the evangelicals.

You ask, "Why do not evangelical preachers take some pains to put down the worship of Baal?" Now, I cannot see the

appropriateness of this example. To make it appropriate, you must suppose that the evangelical preachers are now preaching against justification by circumcision, though there is no one who holds it, and then ask, "As they do this, why do they not also preach against the worship of Baal, although there is now no man who worships him?" But the evangelical preachers are using the apostle's doctrine against circumcision, just as they might use the condemnation of the worship of Baal. The worship of Baal is forbidden, on grounds that exclude from worship everything but God; and, on this authority, they might preach against the Baalism of Popery, and every other species of idolatry. I may bring this example to refute yourself. If an apostle, in reprobating the worship of Jupiter, or any other of the heathen gods, would ground his doctrine on the truth, that there is no proper object of worship but the one God, who made heaven and earth, would it not be proper on this ground to exclude from worship everything that in modern times is worshipped? Now, this is the very thing that the apostle has done. He opposes circumcision on grounds that respect works of law of every kind. Moral works are as expressly included in his reasoning, as even the works of the ceremonial part of the law.

"As forgiveness of the past," you say, "does not imply a dispensation for the future; and as a pardon for the past would be a nullity when the transgression was not abandoned, and where fresh guilt was to be incurred, it is also held that there can be no pardon without repentance and amendment." Now, while I hold the necessity of works in their proper place, as strongly as you can do, yet I have an objection to this phraseology. It makes atonement respect sins antecedent to repentance and amendment only, and justifies the after part of the life, either by perfect conformity to law, or leaves him to punishment for every breach. Now, the Scriptures represent the influence of the atonement as extending to the whole life: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Dares

your penitent amended man incur no fresh guilt? If he does, this doctrine of yours does not provide for it. It must be provided for by some "merciful allowance."

Having so satisfactorily reconciled the contesting claims of faith and works, you triumphantly ask, "In what does the statement now given fall short of being evangelical, or wherein consists that 'trusting to works'—that 'self-righteousness'—that 'pride of the human heart'—which evangelical professors never cease inveighing against as damnable errors, into which all but themselves have fallen?" I fancy, sir, I have shown you a trifling difference between your system and that of your adversaries on this subject. That difference, every unprejudiced mind must see to be an essential and a wide one.

"The 'self-righteousness' which we find the most severely condemned in Scripture," you tell us in a note, "is that of the persons who trusted that they were righteous, and despised others. Whether the evangelical party are distinguished by an extraordinary exemption from this fault, we shall not pretend to say." This insinuation is most injurious and unjust. Every one who truly receives the evangelical doctrines, glories only in the righteousness of Christ. Instead of despising others no less righteous than he is himself by nature, he receives salvation on the same ground as the thief on the cross.

You censure your opponents, in a subsequent paragraph, for distinguishing between outward act and motive, as if no one, in viewing actions, fails in including the exercise of a moral and religious principle. But, sir, the glory of God is a motive essential in every good action. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink," says the apostle, "or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Everything, then, must be done to the glory of God, and whatever is not done to the glory of God, is sin, is a breach of this divine law.

"On the other hand," you say, "if evangelical teachers include, in their idea of faith, the principle of moral virtue, a regard to moral and religious obligation, where will their doctrine differ from that of all other Christian teachers?" Their doctrine will not indeed differ from that of any who can with propriety be called Christian teachers; but it will differ vastly from your doctrine. I have shown you that difference. I observe here, that faith, as connecting the sinner with the work of Christ, is not to be considered as a work of obedience to the law, but as a divinely appointed medium. Faith is efficient, not from its own intrinsic excellence, but from the divine appointment. It is the work of Christ that is the righteousness of the saint, and his faith connects him with that work. They who speak of salvation being by faith, on account of the excellence of faith itself, are virtually on the same foundation with those who preach salvation directly by works.

Having, as you think, convicted and exposed the doctrines of your opponents, with an evidence of truth, which you seem to consider as equal to demonstration, you come next to accuse them of neglecting the duties of morality. Now, sir, were all your representations true, it would only say, that they act in direct opposition to their own system. That works ought to be pressed on their own proper ground, is as much their doctrine, as that faith is to be preached for justification. I am very little acquainted with the actual labours of the body of evangelical preachers; but I am not to believe your report contrary to their own profession. On the contrary, I am to believe that they preach works as they hold them. If any teacher of God's people, calling himself evangelical, neglects to urge everything that he believes Christ to have appointed, I am not his apologist. Good works can never be too earnestly, or too often, pressed on all believers. They ought to be taught all things that Christ has enjoined; and they ought to be reminded of things that they may have already learned. If any of us are deficient on this

point, we thank you for reminding us of our duty. But, sir, I suspect that what displeases you, is, that the evangelical preachers do not press the duties of a Christian on sinners. You are displeased that some food is not administered to Lazarus, to help to bring him to life. But you may see in the Word of God, that men were to believe in Christ before they were to be fed as Christians.

You say in a note, "We are very far from wishing to say that all the sermons of evangelical preachers are of a profitless character." But, sir, the comment contradicts the text. The thing, you say, you have no wish to say, is the very thing you have said. "No attempts," you say, "are ever made to excite feelings of gratitude towards the Deity." "There is an utter and entire neglect of giving instruction as to the various duties required of man." How does such language consist with such a modification? If you really repented for having calumniated your opponents, you should have expunged the text, instead of giving an inconsistent explanation in a note.

"We have heard," you say, "we know not how many evangelical sermons on the subject of the question put by the jailer at Philippi, and the answer given to him. It never seems to be considered that the jailer at Philippi was a heathen, who had not, at the time of his question, believed in Christ before. Because this was a proper answer to a heathen, does it follow that it is equally proper to a congregation of professing Christians? Surely human absurdity cannot go beyond this." The same question, sir, must have the same answer in all times and in all countries. It supposes ignorance in the person who puts it; and that ignorance may be found in such a congregation as you refer to, as well as among heathens. If all who do not bring forth fruit unto holiness are to be accounted unbelievers, as the Scriptures teach, then such congregations abound with persons who need information on this great question. But granting, for the sake of argument, that all who go to hear the gospel, believe it previously, still there is a warrant to preach as Paul

did to the Philippian jailer. The apostle preached to the churches the same gospel that he preached to the heathen. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Again, granting that all such congregations are exclusively real believers, then they will have been saved by the same faith as was preached to the jailer at Philippi. This will not make a different way of salvation for them and for him. Do you mean that something more will be required of such congregations, than what is required in heathens? Will faith save a heathen, and are others to be saved by works? What confusion of ideas is this! If more is required of such congregations than is required of the jailer at Philippi, because he was a heathen, does not the jailer come into their situation the moment he believes? Is he then to have salvation by faith only? Or, in addition to this, must he now be saved by works? If he is to be saved by works, then what Paul first preached to him is not true.

That the same gospel is to be preached to all men in every age and country, is clear from the express words of Christ:—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Every creature—every creature! Then, sir, the absurdity in this matter rests with yourself, and not with the evangelical preachers. But how childish is your proof that every one of such congregations must be a Christian because he goes to hear preaching! Were all the multitudes who heard Christ disciples? The claims even of many who favoured him, were rejected by him.

I have no language sufficient to express my abhorrence of a sentiment expressed in the following quotation:—"The abstrusest portions in Hebrews, Romans, Galatians—all relating to temporary and local subjects of discussion, and which, to the great majority of

a congregation, cannot convey the shadow of an idea—appear to receive a marked preference," &c. Is this language to be employed about any part of that book, of every part of which, we are assured by the Spirit of God, that it is profitable? Who are you, sir, that you take upon you to blaspheme the Scriptures?

"The fatal defect of the evangelical system, when representing salvation as obtained by faith alone, obviously lies," you' tell us, "in the narrow signification they so unreasonably attach to the term faith or belief; making it to denote certain mystical and undefined feelings in regard to the atonement only, (notions, by the way, for which Scripture does not afford the shadow of a warrant,) instead of a general persuasion of the reality of Christ's authority, and consequent reception of his instructions, and submission to his commands." Faith, sir, your opponents do not make to consist in mystical and indefinite feelings in regard to the atonement. It respects Christ as he is revealed in the gospel. It includes both his person and his work. When you speak of faith as being a general persuasion of the reality of Christ's authority, you are essentially wrong. Many confessed that authority, who were rejected by him. Nicodemus was taught that the belief of this authority was not enough. It was essential to believe that he was the Son of God, obviously in the proper sense of that term. But, when you include as an ingredient in faith, "the reception of his instructions, and submission to his commands," you speak neither Scripture, nor philosophy, nor common sense. Submission to authority is not faith of any kind: it is merely an effect of faith. Is this the man who is to overturn the evangelical school? Learn, sir, the common meaning of words before you undertake to reform the phraseology of evangelical preachers. To believe and to submit, are as different as cause and effect.

"This it is," you allege, "which keeps them constantly on the strain to discover, in the term faith, or belief, some extraordinary

and mysterious import; it being undeniable, that, in the ordinary sense of the word, their hearers believe already." No mysterious, nor extraordinary meaning is attached to the word faith as it respects salvation. It is never taken to import more or less than its common meaning. But it is maintained, that the man who mistakes the meaning of what is reported to him, does not truly believe it, though he may be conscious of believing it as he apprehends it. Would you say that a person believes any proposition in Euclid, when you find that he does not understand it? Now, as faith will always produce good works, if a man could speak of the gospel, apparently as clearly as an angel of heaven, yet continue in sin, we are warranted to say, not only that he is a wicked man, but that he does not believe the gospel. He is under some mistake about it, though no man may be able to point it out. We never flinch from this assertion, in the most absolute sense, "He that believeth shall be saved."

You ask, "Do they not discover an evident shyness of approaching to the subject of moral conduct, as if it were dangerous ground to tread upon?" Again, you speak of "their evident disinclination even to read the moral parts of Scripture." I solemnly and distinctly disavow this, on the part of all truly evangelical preachers of every denomination. This is the most licentious calumny. To any man who thoroughly understands the gospel, there is not even the appearance of inconsistency between the simplest preaching of faith, and the most ardent zeal for the abounding of good works. Every part of Scripture, true evangelical preachers value as more precious than diamonds. Is it quite consistent, that the writer who takes so licentious a liberty should adopt the maxim, that his opponents, for the assertion of their views, are worthy of obloquy and invective? Is the ninth commandment no part of the law?

As you speak with coolness with respect to the ordinances of worship, so you speak with laxity with respect to the practices of the

school of Satan—balls, plays, and the misspending of the Sabbath. Refraining from these things, it seems, belongs "to evangelical austerities." So, then, your zeal for morality is enlightened and discriminating. It burns for some favourite points of duty, but is lax enough with respect to the first table of the Divine law. The amusements to which you refer are, doubtless, the works of the flesh, and are included in the "such like," appended to the specifications of Scripture. The stage, as it exists, has been condemned by many moralists, who knew not the gospel of Christ, and were influenced by no higher motive than the welfare of society. But with you, it seems, it is an innocent amusement for a child of God. It is at least to be countenanced for certain purposes. Are these amusements really innocent? If they are, let them be followed. If they are not, let no supposed good effect from allowing them, induce us to follow them. Of the man who does evil that good may come, the Scripture says that his damnation is just. But let us take a glance at your arguments for tolerating these practices:—"By drawing the line that separates religion and irreligion too far on the side of the former, they place a great many persons beyond the pale." Sir, the line that separates these territories must be drawn by the Word of God; and our business is not to draw a line, but to discover the line. Instead, then, of being a good thing to draw this line too far on one side, it would be a very wicked thing. Let us not make anything sin, that is not really sin. Well, but it seems there is danger of placing beyond the pale, persons who are "near the boundary." What a cluster of incongruities is here! How can we put out of the pale, persons who, by the very supposition, are out of it? But, what is still a more wonderful thing, those persons who are placed out of the pale, who were previously without it, might have been kept within it, by a certain process! This is a still more surprising miracle. To keep people within a boundary who are without that boundary, must certainly be a very clever thing. You talk of the juggling of your

opponents, with respect to their doctrine of justification by faith; but your own exploits would baffle the skill of the most expert of the Indian jugglers. How silly do the wisest men appear, when they attempt, by sober argument, to justify sin?

"It can never be too earnestly kept in view," you sagely remark, "that every difficulty we add to religion, is a persuasion to irreligion." What, sir, have we to do with adding or taking away difficulties with respect to religion? Is it not God only who has a right to forbid, or permit everything in this respect? Is it a persuasion to irreligion, to tell men that practices contrary to the Word of God, will be at last visited with his vengeance? Your morality is as bad as your doctrine, and your philosophy is as bad as your morality. There is nothing but confusion in your system.

"Next," you say, "if religious persons refuse to countenance what are generally reckoned innocent amusements, these amusements will not be therefore abstained from." But if religious persons do not reckon them innocent amusements, are they to countenance them, in order to catch people by guile? Shall they not tell the thief or the drunkard that he is in danger of hell, because the thief and the drunkard may continue in their crimes? If the amusements referred to, are in themselves innocent, let them be vindicated on that ground.

"But being thus left," you say, "entirely in the hands of the worthless, they will acquire a dangerous character, from which they might otherwise have been kept free." This takes it for granted that they are innocent, and only susceptible of abuse. But your opponents think them all bad. Shall they then engage in things which they account wicked, to prevent others from becoming worse? Shall we join the thief in filthy frauds, to keep him back from doing that which would bring him to the gallows? You speak of your opponents as " placing religion more in the performance of ordinances of worship, than in the regulation of the heart and

conduct." Certainly the midnight revels of the ball-room, and the gross impurities of the stage, are admirably calculated to regulate the heart and conduct!

It has always been triumphantly alleged in favour of the evangelical doctrine, that it produces that morality which its opponent possesses only in theory. This you do not attempt to disprove, though, in part, you endeavour to account for the fact on another principle. But your account is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural. "We may admit the fact," you say, "as alleged, in regard to many of the supporters of those opinions; we can even admit that evangelical preaching, may have been the means of bringing to a religious life, persons for whom soberer views would have had no attractions." Now, who are these people? I presume they are very wicked and ignorant people. Well, admitting that such persons are brought to a profession of religion by the evangelical doctrine, what, I ask, is it that makes them moral, seeing their doctrine not only naturally, but necessarily, produces immorality? According to your views, while they are zealous for religious doctrine, they ought to be abandoned to every vice, seeing sin is quite consistent with their salvation. Then, sir, I reject your philosophy as unsound, while I denounce your religion as infidelity. You produce an effect, not only without a cause, but contrary to a cause. We can produce thousands of the vilest characters made virtuous by our gospel. If, then, that gospel necessarily leads to licentiousness, what is the cause of that change? You allege that this morality is not the result of our doctrine, but that it arises in spite of that doctrine. Now, if this is so, what is that wonderful principle that is so powerful as to produce morality, in spite of a cause that necessarily produces immorality?

You allege that "the assumption of such opinions has oftener been the issue, than the commencement of a pious and virtuous character." But granting, for the sake of argument, that a virtuous

life precedes the adoption of these views, why is it not abandoned the moment they are received? Why do men continue to practise what they now see to be useless? Above all, how can they continue virtuous, while the doctrine which they have received necessarily leads to vice? Did you ever know a man believing sin to be harmless, who did not practise it? Sir, there is no philosophy in your reasoning. Besides, I ask, are you as good a judge in this matter as your opponents? Are they not the best judges whether a virtuous life has preceded or followed their alteration of views? Are they not the best judges with respect to the principle that moves them to virtuous actions? Ask every individual of all who are truly born again, through the truth of the gospel by the spirit, and their answer without a single exception will be, that their morality is the effect of their principles.

You have one observation with respect to our argument on this point, to which I by no means object. "If our objections to the evangelical system," you say, "be unsound, let them be exposed; otherwise we cannot allow of even good results being brought about by false representations of religion." I cordially assent to this. Your doctrine is not proved from the Scriptures; no fancied good results can warrant it. But, if our doctrine is the obvious meaning of the whole current of Scripture; if nothing but false reasoning and forced criticism can banish it from the Scriptures, then the fact now referred to, is a most powerful and satisfactory confirmation that our views are just.

"We regard evangelical opinions, then, "you say, "as having sprung out of an increase of religious feelings, rather than as having produced it." Will you show how religious feeling naturally produces such doctrines? Is it not unphilosophical and absurd to speak of religious feeling as the origin of belief? Is not believing the foundation of all human conduct?

"In the estimation, however, usually made of evangelical practice," you say, "there is a fallacy or two to be pointed out. The evangelical party claim a greater zeal for religion in respect of their more frequent attendance on religious ordinances—stricter observance of the Sabbath—abstinence from many amusements," &c. Does not this indicate that frequent attendance on religious ordinances, strict observance of the Sabbath, &c., are not considered by you as matter of duty? Now, sir, as you admit that there are ordinances of Divine appointment, you are self-condemned. If God has appointed ordinances, are they not to be strictly observed? I maintain, that not only is frequent attendance on religious ordinances a duty, but that a single day's unnecessary absence from what God has appointed, is a sin. What, sir, could you say to any one who should reason on the eighth commandment, as you do on the fourth? If one day is the Lord's day, is it not wholly to be given to the Lord? Is it lawful to turn it into man's day?

"A Roman Catholic," you say, "is not a more religious man than a Protestant, because the latter does not, like the former, do penance or perform pilgrimages." Very true. But have you not admitted that these religious ordinances are Divine appointments? Do you believe that penance and pilgrimages are such? This reasoning is not only disgraceful to philosophers, like the far-famed Edinburgh reviewers, but is disgraceful to common sense.

In conclusion, you observe, "The folly may have its day, but common sense will ultimately prevail." The opposers of evangelical doctrine, are in the habit of speaking, as if all sound understanding were on their side, and that their adversaries were mere fanatics. I hope, sir, I have lowered your pulse a little. I have shown you that there is neither Scripture nor philosophy in the reasoning that expels the evangelical doctrines from the Bible. I undertake to show, against all the Edinburgh reviewers, assisted by all the school of German neology, that it is not possible to banish the evangelical

doctrines from the Scriptures, without betraying error in the operations of intellect in their reasoning, and a violation of the laws of language in their criticism.

LETTER V.

Sir—Although you speak of salvation and atonement, I perceive that you are entirely unacquainted with the plan on which sinful man is accepted by the just and holy God. You make salvation a compound of Divine mercy and human merit. But the Scriptures represent salvation as harmonizing the mercy and justice of God. Man is saved altogether of mercy, yet he is at the same time, in another view, saved altogether in accordance with justice. The work of Christ becomes the work of the believer by his oneness with him by faith. Every believer is a part of the body of Christ, and what Christ has done for him, thus becomes his own.

The believer died with Christ and has risen with Christ. What you may think, or what I may think, on this subject, independently of the Word of God, is of no value. Let us then for a moment, come to the Scriptures, on this momentous question. May God enlighten your eyes, and grant you repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Let us turn to Rom. iii. 20—28: —" Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now, the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By

what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Here the apostle does not speak merely of mercy, but of righteousness, yet of righteousness without the law. What strange language is this! Is there anything but the evangelical doctrine will give meaning to this passage?

The sinner obtains righteousness, yet he obtains it without the law, or without himself fulfilling the law. He is made righteous by Christ's fulfilling of the law in his room. That this is the meaning is expressly asserted, for it is added—" Even the righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." Is there any darkness here? What fair interpretation can avoid our doctrine in this place? Are not believers said here to be justified freely by his grace, and that through the redemption of Jesus Christ? Where is there any room for your system in this passage? If the believer is justified freely by grace, how can he be justified by his works?

What is still more wonderful, God is here said to be just in this way of salvation, and yet to justify the ungodly. How can God be just in forgiving sin? How he is merciful in forgiving sin, it is easy to discover; but how is the forgiveness of sins just? Through the redemption in Christ. God is faithful and just to forgive the sins for which Christ has accounted. It would be very unjust to make the believer suffer for sins for which Christ has suffered. This would be to pay the same debt twice. The sinner, then, is saved by faith, in a way in which he becomes completely just —as innocent as the angels of heaven—as pure as the throne of God. Though in themselves believers are sinners, yet in Christ they are perfect in righteousness, and in holiness. Christ sees no deformity in his spouse "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Now, if God sees no spot in his people, there must be a point

of view in which they are without spot; for God perceives things as they are. The salvation that the apostle here speaks of excludes boasting; does your plan of salvation exclude boasting?

Look now to the beginning of the fourth chapter. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Does this language need any commentary? The man who is here represented as justified, worketh not for his justification, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly. I defy any system ever invented by man to give consistency to this language. On all other views but that of justification in Christ, it is a contradiction in terms. If they are ungodly, how are they to be justified? If they are justified, how can they be ungodly? In themselves they are ungodly, the children of wrath by nature as well as others; in Christ there is no unrighteousness in them. They have in him paid their debt: they have suffered the full penalty of the law, and have fully kept all the commandments. Here it is supposed also that believers are saved by God's not imputing sin to them. But if this is so, there must be a point of view in which there is no sin in them; for God, the just God, will impute sin wherever he finds it. But he will not impute sin to believers, because he has imputed it to their substitute and head. He cannot reckon it to both.

Agreeably to this, believers are said, in the beginning of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, not merely to be saved by faith, but to be justified by faith. In Christ Jesus all believers are as righteous as if they had never sinned, but had themselves kept the whole law. ' ; Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with

God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This plan of salvation, by justification through Christ, is not only the doctrine of Scripture, but is a proof that the Scriptures are not the invention of man. It never could have occurred to man, that it was possible to save him in a way of righteousness. Indeed this is so strange, that men, even after the Word of God has come to them, continue to hold their own views, while they profess to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God. Man's wisdom could not find out how a sinner could become righteous, and the wise men of this world still continue to reject it, even when they receive the book as Divine, in which the revelation is made. The Scripture, then, can be no forgery. Man naturally looks for salvation by merit, or by mercy, or by a mixture of merit and mercy. They only who become as little children, will look for a salvation that makes them righteous, while they are in themselves sinners.

In the end of the same chapter, the apostle asserts that "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Grace reigns—that is, salvation is altogether of grace; in it grace reigns as a sovereign. It has no partner in its throne. But how does grace reign? Does it reign so as to dishonour justice, and to encourage sin? No: it reigns through righteousness. It has provided a sacrifice to take away the sins of those over whom it reigns. It does not injure justice. It gives the law of God all its dues. Christ obeyed its demands in his life; he suffered its penalty in his death. This, sir, is Paul's gospel; how different is it from yours?

Agreeably to this view, Paul considers his crown of glory as a crown of righteousness, and the judge who awards this crown, a righteous judge. Could any man under heaven justly speak in this way, from the merit of his own works? That perfection that the law requires in us, is to be found in Christ, and only in him. Of God he is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The highest angel in heaven must give place to the

weakest believer on earth. The angels are represented in a circle without the throne; but believers sit down on the throne of Jesus. As one with him, they can have no superior in heaven, among all the creation of God. All things in heaven, as well as in earth, are Christ's, and what is Christ's is the believer's: for every believer is a fellow-heir with Christ.

In the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul exclaims, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" This imports, that the most imperfect of all those who are saved, are without sin, in Christ. None in heaven or earth can lay anything to their charge. Christ has paid the debt. Even God himself, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, sees no blame in believers in Christ. They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is the salvation of the Bible: how different from the salvation which you preach!

You maintain, sir, that faith, instead of producing good works, will produce the contrary. In this you are at direct issue with the God of the Bible. He has, in many places, solemnly asserted what you have the rashness expressly to deny. In Acts xv. 9, we read, "and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Here faith is said to be the means of purifying the hearts both of Jews and Gentiles. Who, then, is the man who takes on him to assert that faith will not purify the heart, but that, on the contrary, it would lead to sin? Peter says (1 Peter i. 22)—" Seeing ye have purified your souls, in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren." Here the belief of the truth, through the Spirit, is represented as purifying the souls of men. To obey the truth, is to believe the truth. The gospel calls on men to believe. He who believes, obeys that call; and by the belief of the truth is purified in heart, and, consequently, in life.

1 John iii. 3—"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Hope is the effect of faith. All

hope of being made like Jesus, when he shall appear, is grounded on faith in him as a Redeemer.

Titus ii. 11-14—" For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Thus the grace of the Gospel, instead of leading to sin, teaches those who receive it to deny ungodliness.

Colossians i. 6—" Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." Those who know the grace of God in truth, bring forth fruit from the moment of hearing it.

The Apostle James says—"Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." Faith, then, must always produce good works.

1 Thess. ii. 13—"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Here the gospel is said to work effectually in those that do believe.

1 John v. 4, 5 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Can anything more expressly refute your doctrine than this? He that is born of God overcomes the world. Faith gives the victory over the world. What faith is it that gives the victory over the world? The faith that Jesus is the Son of God. What

regard, sir, ought we to have to your speculations, in opposition to the express, the clear declarations of the word of the living God? Who are you, that you will presume to grapple with the Almighty? If you will hold your system, give up the Bible. The attempt to oppose the evangelical doctrines, while the Scriptures are admitted as the tribunal of judgment, is as vain as an attempt to overturn the pillars of heaven.

Philosophers, whether as infidels, or under a profession of faith in revelation, have always presumed to treat true Christianity with indignity. The Greek philosophers scorned the doctrine of the apostles as foolishness; and modern ethical science, more unjust, while it has pilfered from the Bible almost everything valuable in its various systems, advances positions in fundamental opposition to revelation. Sometimes this is done with undisguised hostility to the religion of Christ, but oftener with a show of respect for it as the religion of the country. But, sir, the most dishonourable situation in which it is found, is when it presumes. to promulgate its dogmas under the sanction of the Word of God, and explain the dictates of the Spirit of God, by the doctrines of the schools. In none of these characters, however, does it appear a formidable enemy to the simplest Christian, who is aware of the proper mode of defence. All the difficulties that Christians have found in defending the doctrines of grace, have arisen from an undue respect to the authority of systems of philosophy, and a desire to vindicate the unsearchable ways of God. This is an undertaking uncalled for and profane. It is as unwarrantable to attempt to vindicate God in the unfathomable depths of his counsels, as it is to arraign him. If we are assured that it is God who speaks, it is absurd, as well as impious, to demand of him a reason for his conduct. I admit that the light of nature is a revelation previous to that of the Scriptures, and that nothing can be true that is self-evidently contrary to this. If there is not something known without revelation, man is incapable of receiving a

revelation, and the grossest contradictions of superstition might claim a sanction from the Word of God. But, beyond this range, philosophy is not to be allowed to advance a single step. A contradiction cannot be true; and no revelation can be from God, that professes to teach contradictions. But of the mysterious ways of God, the light of human intellect is not an adequate judge; and from God only can we learn anything of them. Whatever a properly-attested revelation from God teaches of him, or of us, must be submitted to with the most unqualified deference. The pretensions of philosophers on this point, are not only to be resisted as false, but scorned as assuming and unphilosophical. They build on their own fancies as first principles, and disregard principles that are self-evident. As the Scriptures came recommended by the most abundant evidence, Christians are entitled to trample on every dogma of philosophy, that stands in opposition to the doctrine of Christ.

But not only is false philosophy an enemy from whom Christianity has nothing to fear, it is one whom she is entitled to despise. Though Christianity is not the wisdom of this world, yet it is the "wisdom of God," and to every person who understands it, it has its evidence in itself. It gives a character of God at once perfect in every attribute, with all his attributes in harmony. It discovers a plan of salvation that never would have presented itself to the human mind, and, therefore, is incapable of being forged; while it gives a ground of hope most completely satisfactory to the conscience, under the deepest conviction of guilt, and apprehension from the Divine justice. To the question, how man, being a sinner, can stand with acceptance in judgment before a just and holy God, it affords an answer that gives confidence to the chief of sinners who receives the account, while it cuts away every hope from any righteousness in the sinner himself.

It manifests a righteousness so perfect, as to enable the guiltiest sinner on earth, to lift up his head before the tribunal of justice, with

the confidence of an angel; while, at the same moment, he looks on himself as having in himself by nature no good thing; and with respect to his own character he exclaims, " God be merciful to me a sinner!" Here, then, is a scheme of salvation that brings glory to God with salvation to man. God is just, and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus. The law of God, instead of being injured by the intervention of Christ, is magnified and made honourable. But has philosophy given an answer to this question? Never, never, never! No scheme ever formed by it, harmonizes the justice with the mercy of God in man's salvation. And what, sir, is your doctrine on this point? It is neither law nor gospel; it is neither philosophy nor Christianity. It is a vain attempt to mix mercy with merit; and reconcile an infidel metaphysics with the grace that brings salvation. With you, God is neither perfectly just nor perfectly merciful: while you speak of atonement, you speak also of salvation by a merciful allowance in judgment. It is quite evident that you have no consistent views on the subject; and that, while you profess to hold the Scriptures as a revelation from God, you oblige them to speak according to your own predilection.

Your doctrine, indeed, is not new, nor is it now exhibited with an unusually imposing address. Your objections to the evangelical doctrines are the same that in every age, unbelief has urged against the Gospel of Christ. In urging them, you have discovered no accuracy of thinking, no vigour of intellect and expression, no deep penetration, or discrimination, that are at all calculated to make us dread you as an adversary. But you have one advantage that will for a time operate in your favour. You have come forward under the sanction of a periodical work of high character and influence among speculative men. With many, it will be a sufficient recommendation of your doctrines, that they are ushered into the world by the Edinburgh Review. But the evangelical doctrines dread not the attack of the proudest school of infidel science. Ingenuity has long

expended all its resources in opposing the doctrines of the cross, and every fresh assault will afford Christianity a new triumph. It is not to be doubted, that every instance of opposition to the gospel of grace, under all the various modifications of unbelief, is a part of the plan of him, who in weakness died for his people, but who, now, with all power, reigns over all worlds, and regulates every event for the glory of God, and the good of his people. Heresies must arise, that they who are approved may be made manifest, but "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

REMARKS

ON THE
SANCTIFICATION OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

Some Christians have supposed that the New Testament does not sanction the religious observance of the first day of the week, and that such a practice is founded on a misconception of the law of Moses. As this is a matter of the first importance in Christianity, it is right that it should be investigated in the fullest manner. Till the Scriptures have been examined throughout, with the utmost deliberation and impartiality, it would be rash to incur the hazard of annulling what God may have enjoined. Let us discard, without ceremony, all the commandments of men; but let us take heed lest, in the intemperance of our zeal, we do not dismiss with them any of the commandments of God. After the fullest and most calm deliberation, the evidence in favour of the sanctification of the first day of the week, appears to me decisive. I shall, therefore, for the satisfaction of my brethren who may have doubts on this subject, submit to them the grounds of my opinion. In doing this I am conscious that prejudice for antiquity has as little weight with me as fondness for novelty. I have desired, above all things, to know the will of God, and when I think I have discovered it, I am anxious to impart it to my brethren. I am impatient to save them from the sin of teaching the disciples of Jesus to despise what the Scriptures teach them to reverence, and of adding to the offence of the cross, by a tenet unsupported by the authority of God. In examining this subject, I entreat those of sentiments opposite to these inculcated in this paper, to dismiss from their minds everything but the desire of finding truth. Let the fear of God banish all partiality for opinions' already conceived, and all undue desire of vindicating what has

already been avowed. It is a difficult thing to review our own opinions, especially when published, with the impartiality which we can bestow upon those of others; yet, without this attainment, no man is thoroughly fitted for discussing subjects of controversy. It is an awful thing, in giving the import of God's testimony upon any matter, to give it a turn to suit our own views; yet, a bias of this kind is sometimes discoverable, as well in intemperate reformers, as in the prejudiced defenders of ancient error.

In examining the evidence on this subject, it has appeared to me, that they must have taken a very partial view of it, who have supposed that the seventhday-Sabbath rests on the Mosaic law. If we consult the book of Genesis, we shall find that it was instituted two thousand years before the law, and is founded upon reasons that have no exclusive respect to any nation, or to any dispensation. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made."— Gen. ii. 1-3. Here is a Sabbath even before the entrance of sin, founded upon reasons that apply to all nations and to all times. Is God's resting on the seventh day, a reason for the Sabbath applicable to the Jews only? Is not this a Sabbath for all the human race? Is there anything of a local or temporary nature in this language? Is not the reason assigned for the institution of the Sabbath, as forcible this day as the day it was given? Is it not as applicable to us as to the Jews, or to Adam himself? Is the finishing of the work of creation no longer worthy of remembrance? Granting then in the fullest sense, that the law of Moses is abolished, how does that affect this subject? Shall the abolition of the law which was not given for two thousand years after the institution of the

Sabbath, abolish an institution which, though incorporated in that covenant, is totally independent of it?

The Sabbath is not a Jewish institution, for though it formed a part of the national covenant, it was previously incumbent on all mankind in virtue of its original appointment. As the Sabbath was incorporated into the Jewish law, it received appendages applicable to the Jews alone. These appendages perished with the law, but the Sabbath itself no more dies by being connected with the law, than the soul does by being united with the body. Suppose a landlord to give leases in which it is covenanted that his tenants are subject to forfeiture upon conviction of any act of treason, their loyalty is then one of the conditions on which they hold their farms. In addition to the fear of the civil powers, they are deterred from treason by the dread of losing their property. Suppose again, that on the expiration of these leases, the landlord makes no such covenant, but leaves them with respect to their title to their farms, at full liberty either to be loyal or disloyal. Is it not evident, that though free from their covenant and its additional enactments, they are still bound by the laws of the state, and that though they shall not now on account of treason forfeit their lands, yet they shall still be answerable for their crimes to its laws. In like manner, the Sabbath which was an institution for the human race, was embodied in a temporal covenant with a particular nation. With the abolition of that covenant, the temporal sanctions of the Sabbath were abolished, and everything in it that peculiarly respected that nation, but the Sabbath itself, could not perish with a covenant of which it was independent.

But I shall go farther. To overturn the Sabbath, it is not sufficient to prove merely the abolition of the law no, nor even the insufficiency of the evidence in favour of the sanctification of the first day of the week. I maintain that, even though the day of Christ's resurrection should be degraded, the Sabbath remains in virtue of its original institution. There is no proof it is said, that the day of

Christ's resurrection was observed as a Sabbath; grant this, and what follows? Is it that there is no Sabbath? No verily, but that instead of the first day of the week, the seventh according to the original appointment is the Sabbath. Christ tells me that he is Lord of the Sabbath, and the New Testament affords me evidence that it is changed; but had I no such evidence of a change, the seventh would still command my respect. The reasons upon which God rests the appointment of the Sabbath, are as lasting as the hills; while the creation remains they cannot wax old. Every nation under heaven is equally bound to respect the day that God sanctified and blessed. If the nations have lost the knowledge of the original Sabbath, they have in like manner lost the knowledge of many other things. But as soon as they receive the Scriptures which contain this institution, their neglect of it will be their condemnation. God sanctified and blessed a Sabbath for the human race, even in a state of innocence, for the commemoration of the finishing of his works. Shall the abolition of a covenant that respected only one nation, abolish that Sabbath? Will any man presume to class the original Sabbath appointed for man in innocence, with these beggarly elements, these rudiments of the world, which were to , vanish as shadows at the coming of Christ? I conclude then, that if the first day of the week is not to be observed as a Sabbath, the seventh day still enjoys that honour. It was appointed for the human race, and not for a particular nation: it was appointed for man in innocence, and not merely as a shadow having reference to human guilt; it was founded on reasons applicable to all ages and countries. No artillery employed against the law of Moses, can ever be brought to bear upon it. It stands as firm as the throne of God.

Again, the Sabbath is one of those commandments which in general are recognized by our Lord and his apostles, and are exhibited in the New Testament as living after the death of the law. There is nothing that can be said from the abolition of the law of

Moses, that deters me from using this argument. While I admit, in the fullest manner, that this law is abolished, I contend that everything in that law, that was obligatory on all men, and on the Jews previous to their national covenant, remains unaffected by the death of the law. I shall not enter into that question at present; but, as a foundation for the present argument, shall merely observe, that though the usual distinctions of the law are both unscriptural and pernicious, the commandments which men have termed the moral law, are sanctioned by the New Testament. To the ruler who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, our Lord replied, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery," &c. It is no matter in what view it is supposed that our Lord uttered these words. Whatever was his view, he admits that the keeping of the commandments would gain eternal life. They are the substance of human duty. Did ever our Lord speak so of any of the temporary precepts of the law of Moses? Could it be said that by observing any of these rites that are really abolished, a man might have eternal life? Besides, is it not evident that our Lord understood these commandments in all the extent in which some of them are explained by him in the fifth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew? In the sense in which they stood in the national covenant—by keeping of which they had a right to a happy life in Canaan—they were kept; but this did not entitle to eternal life. Whatever precepts are made, the conditions of eternal life must contain the substance of all the duties that God requires of man. Is it not most absurd to suppose that the commandments, to the obedience of which our Lord attaches eternal life, are abolished by his coming? Instead of abolishing them, he recognizes and explains them. Is it not most absurd to suppose that these commandments, to which our Lord pays such deference, should share the same fate with the carnal Jewish rites? Here, then, the commandments, in general, are recognized. The fourth, indeed, is not named. Neither are several others. But when

they are generally referred to as a whole, and a sample given, those not named are equally sanctioned. Indeed, if only one precept of the decalogue is continued in force in the dispensation of Christ, it will show that the abolition of the law does not necessarily destroy any of them. If one survives, all may survive. If any perish, it is not by being involved in the general ruin of the law, but by individual reprobation. No one will say but that the Sabbath might have been totally abolished; but to do this, more would have been necessary than the abolition of the law; for its existence did not depend on the law. The Jewish Sabbath hath been abolished, and the original Sabbath hath been changed, for the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

These commandments are, in like manner, sanctioned by all the authority of the apostle Paul Rom. xiii. 8—10. We are urged to love one another, because "love is the fulfilling of the law." He then enumerates some of the commandments, and shows that they are briefly comprehended in love. But if these commandments had been abolished, they would not have been spoken of as a fulfilling after the death of Christ. Nothing can be more palpably obvious than that the commandments are here generally considered as obligatory. The Sabbath, then, which is one of these commandments, is obligatory, as far as it is unchanged by Christ.

Not only are the commandments generally recognized by the New Testament, but the fourth commandment is itself both recognized and explained by the Lord. There is no other commandment more fully illustrated by him. He explains its nature, shows what may be lawfully done on it, and clears it from all the rubbish heaped on it by the Scribes and Pharisees. If he does not enforce it with greater strictness, as he does some other of the commandments, it was because these religionists were over rigorous in the observance of it. By showing the nature of the things that might be done, he teaches that things of another nature ought not to

be done. Will it be said that all this was intended for the Jewish Sabbath, which was immediately to cease? Then, it may as plausibly be said, that what he said of the sixth commandment, and of the seventh, had a reference only to the duration of the Mosaic law, and that, after its abolition, murder and adultery are no crimes; at least, that what our Lord says against them does not apply under the present dispensation. Our Lord says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, committeth adultery with her in his heart." Shall it be replied, "Truth; this is adultery, and sinful as long as the law lasts; but, as the law is abolished, adultery is not now a crime." On the contrary, do not all understand this to be the Lord's explanation of that sin, importing its criminality under the new dispensation? And, if this be the case with respect to one of the ten commandments, why is it not so with respect to the fourth? Why do we not grant our Lord's recognition of that commandment to have the same weight as his recognition of the seventh? If the latter was duty, independent of the law, so was the former. Besides, can it be supposed that our Lord would have been at such pains in explaining a precept that was to die with himself? How many encounters has he with the Pharisees on this subject? Instead of avoiding giving them offence, he seems intentionally to heal often on the Sabbath, when he might have easily omitted it till the next day. We cannot suppose that Christ was influenced by that vanity which sometimes actuates people in ostentatiously displaying their liberty, glorying in their superiority to vulgar prejudices. He was lowly in heart. I rather suppose that his design in this part of his conduct was, to take an opportunity of showing the true nature of the Sabbath, for instruction to his disciples throughout all ages. It strikes me that it is not likely that he would have been so solicitous to quarrel with them on this question, if the Sabbath itself was a merely temporary Jewish institution, tottering to its fall.

This is not all that may be drawn from our Lord's explanation of the Sabbath. Some of the arguments used against the Pharisees evidently import, that the Sabbath is no temporary institution. "The Sabbath," saith he, "was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Here two points are fixed, namely, that the Sabbath is a universal institution, and that it was designed for the advantage of man. He speaks of it not as a Jewish institution, but refers to its original appointment for man. The Sabbath was not made at the giving of the law: it was made immediately after the creation of the world. But when it was made, it is here asserted it was made for man. It is, therefore, for the human race, and not for the Jews, it was made. Why then should man be loosed from the Sabbath, when the Jews were loosed from the law, to which, as a nation, they were married? If it was made for man, it must be obligatory on man, independent of the Jewish covenant altogether, until it is either changed or individually abrogated. Can the abolition of a temporary, national covenant, abolish a Sabbath made for the human race—made even before the entrance of sin? Shall a paradisiacal institution be classed with these carnal ordinances, those rudiments of the world, those beggarly elements, of which all that was peculiar to the Jews in their national covenant consisted, and which the New Testament represents as done away?

The phrase referred to imports, also, that the Sabbath was made for the benefit of man, not as his burthen. It was, therefore, for the advantage even of Adam, in a state of perfect innocence, to have a day set apart as a Sabbath. Now, is it not absurd, even to the utmost bounds of absurdity, to suppose that a Sabbath was of advantage to innocent Adam, and that it is not of use to the children of God in their state of imperfection? Shall a Sabbath be useful amidst the innocence of Eden, and shall it be useless amidst the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh? How can any man say that he has no need of a Sabbath that was useful to Adam before his fall? But if

a Sabbath is useful, the Sabbath cannot be abolished. I hold it to be as clear as the light of heaven, that if the Sabbath was useful when it was made, it is much more needful now.

To the Jews who sought to slay Jesus for performing cures on the Sabbath, he replies: "My Father hitherto worketh, and I work."—John v. 17. Here the ground of our Lord's defence is the example of his Father. This shows that Jesus does not consider the Sabbath a merely Jewish institution; but, that he views it as that first Sabbath sanctified and blessed by God after the creation. As a merely Jewish institution, the Father's working on that day would have been no justification of himself for like conduct. Jesus was made under the law; but was the Father bound to keep any institution he gave the Jews? It was the duty of the Jews to keep the holydays; but God might have made a new world on these days, or, which is the same thing, he might have permitted, and he did permit, all other nations not to respect these holydays. But he would not do so with that day which he blessed, and sanctified, and honoured by his own example. Though the Lord of heaven is not bound to law, yet he honoured and sanctified the Sabbath, and observed it himself by resting from his works. Our Lord's argument takes it for granted, that the Father himself still respected the Sabbath; for in any other view it is irrelevant. If God did not respect the Sabbath at all, why is anything that he does on that day referred to as a justification of the conduct of one who is bound to keep that day. The Lord might command men to keep a day that he does not keep himself. It was no justification of Jesus to allege that the Father did similar things to those he did on the Sabbath, except it is true that the Father respects the Sabbath. But this argument has full force when taken in connection with the Lord sanctifying the Sabbath, and sanctioning it even by his own example. If, then, the Father himself respects the Sabbath by his own example, whatever he does on the Sabbath might be done by Jesus, though he was bound to keep the Sabbath.

God is working every day in providence s and on the very first Sabbath on which it is said that he rested, he was working in some respects. He rested from creation! hut he was still working in providence. What conducted the heavenly bodies in their revolutions? What made all things to proceed on that day as on others? The hand of the Lord alone. If the Lord would cease to work, the revolutions of the heavenly bodies would cease, the productions of the earth should not advance in growth, and animals should not come into the world on that day. Our Lord's design in this argument is to show the Jews that though God himself respects the Sabbath, there are some things he does on that day. Like things, then, might be done by him, even when under obligations to keep the Sabbath; for nothing could be essentially a breach of that day which was sanctioned by something similar in the conduct of the heavenly Father, who himself respected that day. This argument, then, takes it for granted that the Sabbath is not merely a Jewish institution, and that it was not only respected by God when he made it, but that it was still respected by him. If he had not still a respect to it, his conduct on that day would be no example to those bound to observe it. How honourable, then, is the Sabbath! It was not only made for man in a state of innocence, but it was honoured by the observance of God himself, who is not bound to law at all, and is still respected by him. With respect to the first, marriage is on a level with it; but with respect to the latter, it is unrivalled among all the divine institutions. Shall it, then, be supposed, that such an ordinance should perish with the national covenant of the Jews?

Having proved that the original Sabbath could not be abolished with the law of carnal commandments, let us next see if there is any evidence that the day of its observance is changed. We may observe, in the first place, that our Lord prepares us for a change, when—after a copious enumeration of arguments, showing its nature—he asserts that he is Lord of the Sabbath. This implies his absolute

authority over it; and not obscurely hints that he designed to make some alterations with respect to it. But that he did not intend to use his Lordship over it, for the purpose of entirely destroying it, we are assured by what he previously declares—"The Sabbath was not made for man."

That the day of its observance was actually changed, and that the first day of the week is now entitled to that honour, is clearly intimated by the meeting of the churches on that day, and the marked respect that our Lord paid to it. On the mere circumstance of His appearing to his disciples on the evening of the first day of his resurrection I would build nothing, taken independently; but even that appearance seems to be related in a marked manner by John—"Then the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." But connecting this with his next appearance, it is impossible not to suppose that there was a design in marking the particular day. "And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst." If the disciples did not meet during the preceding week, which is not likely, then there must have already been a command for meeting on this particular day; but if they met through the week, and our Lord did not during that time appear among them, allowing the doubts of Thomas to remain all that time, then he surely designed to honour the meeting on that day more than any other of their meetings. Is there no intention in mentioning with such exactness that this appearance was on their meeting eight days after his first appearance. No doubt, our Lord appeared frequently to them on all days of the week; but the marked manner in which his appearance among the assemblies of his disciples on the first day of the week is recorded, evidently intimates design.

But this fact derives additional force from connecting it with the meeting of the churches on that day. When we find that the churches continued to meet on that day, we are confirmed in the opinion that we have not misinterpreted the preceding intimation. If there is a day in the week to be honoured above the rest, there can be no doubt but on that day the Lord would appoint his churches to meet. If, therefore, I have proved that there is a Sabbath independent of the Jewish law, obligatory for reasons applicable to all mankind—if the seventh day was neglected by the churches planted by 3 the apostles, and the first day appointed for their meetings—I consider the matter settled. If the seventh day had been continued in its original distinction, it is to me clear as demonstration, that it would have been honoured by the meetings of the churches. When that day is not so honoured, and another day obtains that distinction, the change is proclaimed in language loud and clear. Were not the weekly meetings of the Jews on the day then honoured as the Sabbath, and were not their other stated days honoured by meetings? The day, therefore, that has the honour of the meetings of the churches has the honour of the Sabbath.

Had there been no intention to respect the first day of the week, there is no reason to suppose that the Lord would have fixed any particular day for all the churches in all the different countries of the world. Why did he not leave the day of meeting as open as the hour of the day at which they meet? Since he has not done so, but fixed down all nations and ages to meet on the first day of the week, he must have designed to honour that day. Some admit that the churches ought to meet on that day, but contend that the day is not to be respected. But it strikes me that the only reason for fixing a particular day must have been to honour that day.

But the argument has irresistible weight when considered with reference to Judea. In that country the disciples would not be permitted to follow their civil employments on the seventh day of

the week. Now, is it at all supposable, that the Lord would oblige the churches in Judea to meet on the first day of the week, when they must be unemployed on the preceding day, except it was to honour the day of meeting? Would not this have been a useless burden?

Farther, if no respect is designed to the first day of the week, why are the meetings weekly? Why are they not every fourth day, every fifth day, every sixth day, every tenth day? If all regard to that primitive division of time be done away with, why is it still pressed upon our view by weekly meetings? If the frequency of meeting was not left to ourselves, why did we not get the French decade? Does not the establishment of a weekly meeting recognize the primitive division of time, and the utility of one day in the week being taken from civil employments? In giving weight to the argument from the meeting of the first churches, various circumstances concur with the simple fact, why were the meetings weekly? If weekly, why on the first day of the week, especially in Judea? Let it be remembered, also, that it is not merely the meeting on that day that proves the day holy, although nothing but respect for that day can be assigned as pointing it out for that purpose. The meeting of the churches on that day, taken in connection with the fact that there is a Sabbath independent of the Jewish law, forms an argument in my mind not to be resisted.

From the resurrection of Christ, some reason in favour of the sanctification of the first day of the week, as an independent argument. From the importance of the event, they deduce a Christian Sabbath. But this is a foundation upon which no well-taught Christian can hold any truth. This basis would bear the whole fabric of superstition and will-worship. If an ordinance can be deduced from our own views of the importance of any event, there will be no end to ordinances. But though this is irrelevant as an independent argument, it has much weight when coupled with the evidence of the sanctification of the day of Christ's resurrection. It is like a cipher in

figures—placed on the left hand it is nothing; on the right, it has the power of increasing the force of the figures that precede it. All the arguments in favour of the sanctification of the first day of the week will receive an additional force from the consideration of the import of that illustrious fact—the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on that day. On that day he ceased from the mightiest of almighty works. If the finishing of creation was worthy of a day of commemoration, why will we resist the evidence of a day for commemorating the finishing of the more glorious work of redemption?

Nor does the day appear to have been overlooked by the prophets. It seems evidently anticipated in the 118th Psalm. Speaking of the triumph of Jesus, the Psalmist exclaims, "This is the day the Lord hath made; we will be glad and rejoice in it." The time he refers to is when the stone rejected by the builders was made the head of the corner—when this day of the Lord appeared wonderful in the eyes of his people. But was not this when Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead? Why, otherwise, does he couple a certain day with the celebration of that glorious triumph?

But the nature of the evidence of the passage usually quoted on this subject from the book of Revelation, is such as cannot ever be evaded. This is calculated, not only to satisfy the candid inquirer, but to stop the mouth of evasion itself. "I was in the spirit," says John, "on the Lord's day." If after reading this, any one should venture to assert, that there is, under the new dispensation, no day to be regarded above another, I should not feel myself bound to reason with him, as one who did not perceive evidence, but as one who resisted evidence. If anything can be established from the New Testament, this passage proves incontestably, that the first churches had a Lord's day. Why, then, have they supposed that any view that can possibly be taken of the law of Moses, should sap the

foundations of this edifying ordinance? Long after the abrogation of the Jewish law, John shows us that he had a Lord's day; and from the manner in which he refers to it, it is evident that none of those, to whom he wrote were ignorant of the particular to which he alluded. It might as well be supposed, that when we date our letters by the day of the week, the persons to whom they are addressed should not understand what particular day we mean. There was, then, at that time, a Lord's day, universally known and acknowledged among Christians.

Will any one now object that they cannot find out what day of the week is this Lord's day? Grant the objection to be well founded, and what follows? It follows that the Scriptures are an imperfect rule; that they set apart a particular day, without giving us any information with respect to what day they mean. Let persons who entertain this view burn their Bible, for surely it is not the book of God. Can anything be more absurd and even blasphemous? The New Testament informs us, that there is a Lord's day, but gives us no hints from which we may discover that day!

But even this skepticism will not free them from a Sabbath. If the first day of the week has not received that honour, the seventh appointed at first must still retain it.

But after observing the honour put upon the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, can any candid mind doubt of the day called the Lord's day? Look at the churches in all parts of the world, meeting from the beginning on the first day of the week, and not on the seventh; and after this try to doubt any more. The passage in the book of Revelation establishes a Lord's day, and these other passages clearly fix the particular day so called.

Even this passage itself affords no trifling evidence that the day referred to is the notable day of Christ's resurrection. What day is so likely to be the Lord's, as the day of his triumph? The most remarkable day ever the world saw. Besides it is evident, that John

marks this day as honoured by the Lord, in giving these important discoveries of his will with respect to things, till the second coming.—" I was in the spirit," says John, "on the Lord's day." The Lord then honoured his own day in this way. Now, compare this with the accounts in which we see him honouring the first day of the week. and we will have a sufficient criterion by which we may distinguish the day that is here called the Lord's—the day that these other passages mark as being honoured as the first day of the week. The day here honoured is called the Lord's day. May we not then conclude that they are the same day—that the first day of the week is the Lord's day; or that the Lord's day is the first day of the week?

It has been said that this book is figurative, and that this appellation is figurative also. I would not wish to hear any Christian making use of such an objection. It argues so much perversion of mind, so much obstinacy of unbelief, that it would be difficult for me to suppose that it satisfied the conscience of him who should use it. This book is indeed in its general character figurative; but every thing in it is not figurative. If the appellation, Lord's day, marking the time of receiving the revelation, be not plain language, there is no dependence to be put upon language at all. As well may it be said, that the Apostles' banishment was figurative, that Patmos is figurative, that the testimony of Jesus Christ is figurative, and that the name Jesus itself is figurative. There are no bounds to absurdity, when obstinacy will think itself justifiable in availing itself of anything that an ungoverned imagination can suggest. Instead of plying such an objector with arguments, I should judge the most wholesome discipline for him would be to warn him against the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds.

Among the various ways by which Satan has Attempted to rob us of this precious ordinance he has suggested, that if the respecting the Lord's day so far as to meet, cannot be denied, no more of it ought to be sanctified than what is employed in the meetings. But if

Satan quotes Scripture, Scripture can be retorted on Satan to his confusion. It is the Lord's day: if so, the whole of the day is his. How it is to be employed privately, is to be learned from our Lord's lessons on the nature of the Sabbath. There is no doubt, that if some have erred by rejecting the observance of this day, there are others who have erred by insisting on Pharisaical strictness. Many Christians would certainly have taken part with the Pharisees in their charges against Jesus for breaking the Sabbath. They hold it in such a way as to make it a yoke and a bondage, not a privilege and a blessing. Such persons ought to study the reasons by which our Lord justifies his conduct to the Scribes and Pharisees on this subject. They will find that no work of love to the human race is improper on this day; and that every thing belonging to a church, however much it may lead into temporal matters, ought to be attended to on it. If the priests in the temple service did the work of the shambles, and were blameless, nothing that concerns a church of Christ can profane the day which he claims as his own. The view in which many keep the Lord's day condemns Jesus Christ as a Sabbath breaker.

Some take offence at the name Sabbath, as applied to the Lord's day. There is no doubt but the names, Lord's day, and first day of the week, are those by which alone it is designated in the New Testament; but it appears to me that this fastidiousness is too nice. Sabbath imports a day of rest; such a day is the Lord's day; and if it agrees to the idea imported in the name, why refuse it the name? Besides, it appears to me evident, that the Lord's day includes the commemoration both of the finishing of creation, and of redemption. The original Sabbath was never abolished, therefore must still exist. It can be found no where, but in the first day of the week. It is asked if the Lord's day is a Sabbath, why not so called? For a very sufficient reason. Another day had already engrossed that name, and therefore, although it deserved that name ever so well, the

irreversible foundations of the laws of language, would not permit it to be given. In the age in which the New Testament was written, the Sabbath always referred to the seventh day. They discover more precipitancy than deep research, who deny this name as applicable to the Lord's day. Some people arrive at the perfect knowledge of the Bible, as Gil Bias got to the bottom of medicine, not by mature study, but by adopting hastily a few insignia of perfection.

ON HUMAN CERTIFICATES
OF THE
EXCELLENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Christians have discovered a great propensity to sanction the wisdom of God by the wisdom of men. The Scriptures, on the contrary, oppose these; and, instead of coveting the patronage of the wisdom of this world, they cast upon it the utmost contempt. So far, therefore, as Christians do otherwise, they are carnal, and walk as men. That the Scriptures are suited to the capacities of all men, and that they are the power of God to the salvation of the learned and wise as well as the unlearned and unwise or illiterate and ignorant, is a truth that reflects glory on them; yet, that they should be so agreeable to the natural taste of learned men, as to recommend themselves to their constant perusal, is neither agreeable to fact nor to the nature of their contents, except these are grossly perverted and mistaken. These reflections may frequently occur from the writings of Christians; they are at present excited by some things in the article of Buck's Anecdotes, entitled the Scriptures. Speaking of the book of God, he says—"It is so sublime in its language, so noble in its doctrine, yet plain in its precepts, and excellent in its end, that the man must be ignorant and depraved indeed who lives without reading it." I acknowledge that there are many specimens of sublimity in the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament, that it is impossible to find parallels in any of the writings of men; but it is equally true that there is much, especially in the language of the apostles, that cannot bear the test of criticism, according to the rules of human eloquence. I am convinced that the rhetorical excellencies

of many parts of Scripture would recommend them to the admiration of the learned, were they to be found on any other subject, but fact proves that there are many who live without reading them, who cannot be called ignorant in any other sense than as referring to the gospel. The nobility of its doctrines, instead of being an inducement to wise men to study the Scriptures, is the very thing that prevents them from looking into the Bible, and would prevent them, had it all the elegance required by the rules of all critics from Longinus to Doctor Blair. If any such delight in reading the Scriptures, it is under some misconception of that which is the glory of the Christian; and such parts of them as have the least reference to the foundation of a sinner's hope.

"I walk," says Queen Elizabeth, "many times in the pleasant fields of the holy Scriptures, where I pluck up the goodly herbs of sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, digest them by musing, and lay them up at length in the high seat of memory by gathering them together; so that having tasted their sweetness, I may less perceive the bitterness of life." A few words of the preciousness of Jesus would have been more convincing evidence that she well understood and valued the Bible, than all this farrago of quaint and incongruous metaphor. I cannot tell in what part of the sacred volume that celebrated queen learned to persecute the saints of God. Her pride, her ambition, her haughtiness, her cruelty are not convincing proofs that she had drunk in the spirit of Christ.

It would, indeed, be pleasing to learn, that "the book which Sir Isaac Newton studied with the greatest application was the Bible;" if it was also ascertained that his love to it originated in the belief of the doctrine of the cross, and of salvation to the guiltiest of men, by faith in the atonement of Christ. But if it is true, that he denied the divine nature of the Son of God, I class him infidel as Thomas Paine.

I am as little edified with the certificate of Mr. Locke, though it appears plausible. "Mr. Locke," says our author, "justly esteemed one of the greatest masters of reason, being asked, a little before his dissolution, 'What was the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain a true knowledge of the Christian religion in the full and just extent of it?' made this memorable reply—'Let him study the holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. -Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter.' And again—' The only way to obtain a knowledge of the Christian religion in its full extent and purity is the study of the holy Scriptures.'" For my part, instead of considering these words memorable, I look upon both the question and answer as peculiarly silly. Where could a knowledge of Christianity possibly be obtained but in the Scriptures? It might as well be asked, how shall we obtain a knowledge of the Scriptures? No real knowledge, more than a just and full knowledge, of Christianity can be obtained from any other source than the Scriptures. These accounts and defences of Christianity, independent of the inspiration of the Scriptures, can serve the cause only of Antichrist. Mr. Locke's words seem to pay the highest compliment to the Scriptures; but that they are consistent with entire ignorance of the truth is clear, from the words of the same author, except he is inconsistent with himself. "God," says Mr. Locke, "had, by the light of reason, revealed to all mankind who would make use of that light, that he was good and merciful. The same spark of the divine nature and knowledge in man, while making him a man, showed him also the way of atoning the merciful, kind, compassionate Author and Father of him and his being, when he had transgressed that law. He that made use of this candle of the Lord, so far as to find what was his duty, could not miss to find also the way to reconciliation and forgiveness when he had failed of his duty. The law (meaning the law of nature) is the

eternal immutable standard of right, and a part of that law is, that a man should forgive not only his children, but his enemies, upon their repentance, asking pardon and amendment. And therefore he could not doubt (see Leland, 1, 148) that the author of this law, and God of patience and consolation, who is rich in mercy, would forgive his frail offspring, if they acknowledged their faults, disapproved the iniquity of their transgressions, begged his pardon. and resolved in earnest, for the future, to conform their actions to this rule, which they owned to be just and right; this way of reconciliation, this hope of atonement, the light of nature revealed to them." Now, how does this consist with the compliment he makes to the Scriptures? If this is true, what is the use of the Scriptures? If the light of nature points out both a man's duty and the way of atonement for transgression, what room is there for revelation. If repentance, asking pardon, &c., be that atonement, what need is there for the atonement of Christ? Does not Mr. Locke insinuate that God himself is bound by the law of nature to forgive his penitent enemies? What blasphemy is it to speak of a spark of the divine nature and knowledge in man? Does not this make man in part a divine being? Is not this the old error taught by the devil, that men are "as gods, knowing good and evil?"

The testimony of Sir William Jones is just, so far as it goes; but it is not decisive of his having discovered the true excellence of the Scriptures, and I am not sufficiently acquainted with his history to form an opinion of it. "I have regularly and attentively read these holy Scriptures, and am of opinion, that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity and beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been composed." It is not any of these perfections that recommends the Bible to the attention of sinners. This may recommend it as a classical book of morals; but it is the testimony that it bears to Jesus, that recommends it to the

guilty. I do not find fault with Sir William's remarking of those excellencies; but, in a man that understood the Scriptures, I would expect something more. It is like, in speaking to criminals, proving the style in which is conveyed the condemnation by the judge, or the reprieve by the sovereign.

The honorable Robert Boyle, we are informed, spent his "whole life and fortune in illustrating the beauties of the two grand volumes of creation and revelation. He has said everything in favour of the Bible that language admits of. He calls it that 'matchless book,' and has written a whole volume to illustrate its beauties." If the author could have informed us that Mr. Boyle held the apostolical testimony about Jesus, it would have enabled us to rejoice exceedingly in the disinterested zeal of this truly great man. If he confessed the Gospel, his zeal in the spreading of the Scriptures was a testimony in favour of his sincerity; but it damps my joy that I have heard he was an Arian, or, that he did not believe in the divine dignity of the Son of God. I hope I have been misinformed.

"The learned Le Clerc tells us," says our author, "that while he was compiling his 'Harmony,' he was so struck with admiration of the excellent discourses of Jesus, and so inflamed with the love of his most holy doctrines, that he but just then began to be acquainted with what he scarce ever laid out of his hands from his infancy." Admiration of the discourses of Jesus, and love of Christianity, as a system of perfect religion, or morality, do not characterize a man as a Christian. All who heard these discourses of our Lord and his very manner, could not but confess the superior excellency of his doctrine. I have no objection to speak of this as a testimony in favour of the Scriptures, or of the Gospel; but I would always adduce it as a testimony forced by evidence from enemies. Le Clerc, with all his learning and study, if he taught salvation in any other way than by having faith in the atonement of Jesus, imputed for righteousness, cannot be enrolled among Christians. The excellency

of the morality of Christ, may very properly be argued from the confession of great men, and his greatest enemies may here be brought in as unsuspected vouchers. But the doctrine of salvation to guilty men, through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, is the distinguishing excellency of the Bible, and to confirm it by testimonies taken from those who understand not this excellency is not to serve it. What would Elizabeth have thought of one of her friends, who, to prove the excellency of the greatness of his mistress, would quote the approbation of the lowest political pamphleteers, who understood nothing of the principles of greatness? What would Newton have thought of one who would have complimented him with the approbation of some writers of mathematical questions in a common almanac, who understood none of his great principles? What would Locke have thought had some of his friends attempted to raise the merit of his metaphysics by the approbation of some pedant that could not enter into any of his speculations? And what is the Bible obliged to those who exhibit in its favour, the compliments of these great men, who, though conversant with it, were ignorant of its chief design and glory? No man's praise, however sincere, is of any value farther than his knowledge. When I hear a country pedant praising another as the most consummate scholar, though I may be fully convinced of his sincerity, I cannot give the smallest weight to his testimony. I would rather hear the poorest, weakest, and most illiterate Christians adduced as vouchers for the excellencies of the Scriptures, than all the enlightened philosophers and statesmen in the world. They, and they alone, are a practical proof of the excellency of the Scriptures, who, by understanding them, have been "turned from darkness to light." I would make more account of the testimony of poor Joseph, the London idiot, than that of the illustrious Newton or Locke.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WORKS OF GOD,

DESIGNED TO MANIFEST

THE UNBELIEF OF MEN.

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deut. XIII. 1—3.

There is one point of analogy in the works of God, which, from its universality, must be the effect of design. In examining the works of creation, of providence, and the words of divine grace, this striking singularity presents itself to us, that in all there are instances of apparent negligence, or want of skill, or of want of design, or of inconsistency. As this phenomenon is viewed in any single instance, or in any number of instances, without a reference to a general analogy, it has usually afforded a plausible source of objections to unbelievers of every kind. The Atheist, the Deist, the opposer of the divinity and atonement of the Son of God, and the adversaries of everything that is taught in the Scriptures, find this a never-failing refuge. The defenders of truth have as generally over-looked this analogy as their opponents, and have, consequently, been often much embarrassed in repelling objections. How often do they wish

that in his works and in his word, God had been a little more on his guard, and not have afforded such a handle to error?

To those who perceive this analogy, and the design of it, the wisdom of God appears in a character altogether divine. If, in all his works, God has left sufficient marks of the impression of his own hand, there is no necessity that he should shut up every avenue to invasion, and silence incredulity by permitting no occasion to make it manifest. On the contrary, if men "love darkness rather than light," why should not occasion be afforded to embolden them to make known their choice? If men are haters of God, why should he not give them opportunity for rebellion? What the weakness of man would incline him to prevent in his own case, in like circumstances human wisdom is inclined to wish that God would prevent in his own.

Let us turn our eyes to the works of creation, and see what pretext they afford to the Atheist. Time and the discoverers of Natural Philosophy, have, no doubt, deprived him of many of his arguments, or answered many of his objections, but as much still remains to his purpose, as may give him room to talk. What a disproportionate share of this little globe do we find under seas! How much of it is taken up with mountains, sands, and uninhabitable deserts! How much rendered noxious by the unwholesomeness of the climate! How much scarcely habitable by excessive heats and colds! Of what use are those immense tracts covered by perpetual snow? Why are these seas impassable by mountains of ice? By such arguments as these, Mr. Hume and others have thought themselves entitled to conclude that there is no sufficient evidence that the world is the effect of a designing cause or if there is design in the cause, that there is no reason to believe that it was guided by goodness and wisdom. The philosophers in reply, have, no doubt, pointed out many useful purposes served by some of the things objected to by the Atheist, and have made the

best apology they could for others. But after all that can be said—it must be owned, that Almighty power joined with infinite wisdom and goodness, could have produced a world with all the advantages of the present, without any of those inconveniences complained of by the Atheist. In standing up as the advocate of God, the philosopher rather apologises for the imperfections of the objectionable parts of the divine workmanship, than vindicates their wisdom. It appears to me, that in repelling the attacks of the Atheist, we may assume a firmer tone, and take a shorter course. When we have from the innumerable and irresistible evidence of wisdom, power, and goodness, proved that the world is the work of an Almighty, all wise and good being, we are not bound to show these perfections in every acre of barren sand. We need not struggle with him about the advantages of mountains, rocks, and deserts. Whatever other thing God may have designed by these, one obvious use of them is to afford an occasion to make manifest the pride and atheism of the human heart.

In like manner, in the works of Providence, many occasions to error are afforded. Though a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without God's knowledge, though his power is exerted continually about all his works, it is astonishing how Providence hides himself from the eyes of carnal men. He moves the very tongue that reviles him. Yet, men in general perceive no need for his operation, except in effecting miracles. What are called the laws of nature, are merely the process according to which he usually works; but in this way he hides himself from the world, and has given occasion to them to worship this idol instead of himself. Nature is the God most usually in the view of men. In sending good and evil, God gives occasion to men to suppose that there is no particular providence, or if there is, that he makes no distinction between sin and holiness. My field, said one, produces as sure a crop, as that of my neighbour.

The like difficulties occur to the student of moral science. How many plausible objections may be made to the testimony even of the senses. By a patient collection of supposed lying reports, we are seriously warned not to trust our eyes, our ears, or any of our senses. A jaundiced eye makes white appear yellow; therefore, we should not believe our eyes, when they tell us, that there is a world. A man who has a leg cut off, may feel pain in a toe of that foot many years afterwards; therefore, it is irrational to give credit to the testimony of feeling. A ventriloquist may speak so as to make us believe that the voice is not coming from himself, but from under the earth, from the clouds, or from any other quarter; therefore, we ought not to give credit to the reports of our sense of hearing. By crossing our fingers, we may feel a little ball double, therefore we ought not to take for truth the reports of feeling. By indisposition, the most pleasant food appears of a different taste; therefore we ought not to believe the sense of taste. By such arguments as these, sceptical philosophers have thought themselves justifiable in not believing the existence of an external world. Who thinks a pity of those foolish wise men? Is it not right that they should have some occasion to discover to the world their madness?

Let us turn now to the Deist, and see what pretext <he can find in the Scriptures to justify his impiety. There is enough to give him boldness to declare his disapprobation of the wisdom of God. See what a formidable series of seeming inconveniences and contradictions he has mustered up. How many people when they reflect on this subject, cannot refrain from regretting that the Scriptures contain such blemishes! Though they allow that the difficulties are capable of solution, they cannot but think it would have been better, had there been no occasion for such solutions. This is man's wisdom, but God's wisdom is different. It gives the Infidel a handle for unbelief.

The same point of analogy discovers itself in every thing taught in Scripture. The Lord Jesus and the apostles were aware of the coming of Antichrist. Yet, in their phraseology, there are not wanting occasions of seeming justification of his pretensions. When Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter, and the power of remitting sins to the apostles, could he not, especially as he must have been aware of the use that afterwards, would be made of his language, have used a mode of expression that would not possibly have admitted of such perversion? Do not most Protestants on reading the words referred to, wish that Christ had been a little more circumspect in his phraseology? To me it appears that all such expressions are intentionally to make manifest, those who hate the truth. We shall find that the Socinian, Arian, and every other enemy of the truth, may plead from Scripture phraseology, some plausible defence of their errors. Men in general, who oppose these errors, would most scrupulously avoid the phraseology that God seems intentionally to employ. The same observation may be made with respect to all the differences among Christians. What can be alleged by any of them against anything that is taught by Scripture, is no better than what can be alleged by the greatest unbelievers. By perverting Scripture phraseology, they show their disaffection to that part of divine truth which they have not been taught.

Instead of making the application, as might be done in a thousand instances, I spare the feelings of my brethren, and leave them to make the application themselves. If the works of creation and Providence, afford a pretext to the perverseness of men, let not Christians think themselves safe when they take shelter under apparent difficulties. Were it not for their own ignorance and alienation from truth, these difficulties would have no weight.

REMARKS

ON THE

STANDARD OF DIVINE TRUTH.

Before any important advances can be made in any science, the foundations of it must be ascertained and accurately discerned by those employed in rearing the superstructure. Whatever rests on any other grounds, though it may add to the apparent size of the building, diminishes its strength and beauty. For more than two thousand years, the inquiries of philosophers concerning the works of God, were carried on by hypotheses invented by ingenious men, for explaining the phenomena of nature, and during all that time, few real discoveries were made with respect either to matter or mind. Lord Bacon was the first who clearly pointed out the proper method of philosophising; Sir Isaac Newton on natural philosophy, and Doctor Reid on the science of the mind, were the first to put it in practice. In both of these departments of knowledge, one theory succeeded another till the time of these illustrious philosophers; but since that period, their respective sciences rest upon a foundation from which they can never be moved. And what has produced this remarkable difference between their systems, and those of all preceding philosophers? It is solely to the standard of truth which they ascertained, and to which in all their enquiries they appealed. Had he invented a theory, and proceeded by conjecture, Newton, with all his vast abilities, would have reared only a temporary fabric, to be blown away by the next innovator. The philosophy of Aristotle reigned in the schools without a rival, till the time of Des Cartes.

That great man completely overturned the theories of the Stagyrite, but instead of building on more stable ground, he set himself to invent a theory of his own. By the contrivance of an immense whirlpool of subtle matter, he carried round the heavenly bodies in their evolutions, like straws and chaff in a tub of water; and this wild conjecture satisfied a great part of the learned of Europe for a considerable time, and with many, prevented the reception, even of the discoveries of Newton, for half a century. Despising vain conjectures, and being guided in his experiments and observations by those selfevident rules of philosophising which he had laid down, Newton ascertained those laws of nature that must for ever give satisfaction to the mind of man.

The revolution effected by Doctor Reid in the philosophy of the mind, is not less wonderful than that effected by Sir Isaac Newton, in that of matter. By taking for granted principles that are false, and rejecting the authority of others that are self-evident, philosophy, till his time, had established the most monstrous and incredible absurdities. The principles adopted by philosophers had rejected the testimony of the senses, and left no evidence even that there is an external world. By the most conclusive reasoning from these principles, Berkley had proved that there is no matter in the universe, and with equal validity Hume advanced a step farther, and boldly annihilated both matter and mind. According to this great philosopher, there is neither matter nor mind, neither God nor devil, nor angel nor spirit, nothing in the universe but impressions and ideas. And all these monstrous absurdities flowed regularly from the principles acknowledged by all philosophers till the time of Doctor Reid. And how did Reid restore us the world, from the united grasp of all the wise men of the world? By settling the standard of philosophical truth, by vindicating the authority of the testimony of our senses, and rejecting that of the figments of philosophers. In ascertaining the powers and faculties of the human mind, he

admitted no appeal but to the mind itself by observation and experiment; and every fair result of such an appeal he received with avidity, however opposite to the established sentiments of philosophers. By this process he has done more to ascertain the principles of the human constitution, than all the philosophers who preceded him; and it is only by following in his track, that this science can be perfected.

It would not be without interest for a Christian to read the observations of this philosopher on hypotheses, as almost without exception, they apply to the theories of men with respect to the contents of the Scriptures. If hypotheses have led men to misinterpret the works of God, hypotheses have led them to misinterpret his word. The analogy is singularly striking.

And if human conjecture has ever failed with respect to the works of creation, shall it succeed with respect to the depths of the divine counsels in the redemption of sinners? Vain theologians, will ye not learn from this, that the way to discover the mind of God, is not to form hypotheses, but to examine the Scriptures? What is it produces your infinite diversities? How is it ye deduce from Scripture your innumerable errors? Ye form theories, and then wrest the Scriptures to agree with these. With the arrogance of Satan, ye determine, by your own views, what must be the divine conduct and plans, and with satanic ingenuity and effrontery, ye torture his word to speak your sentiments. While in words ye acknowledge the Scriptures to be a standard, ye take the liberty of erecting a standard of paramount authority in your own understandings, and of interpreting the oracles of God, by the delusions of your own fancies. Though ye call the Scriptures a standard, ye do not allow them to be the sole standard of divine truth. Some things, ye say, God has left to be planned by the wisdom of man. How, then, can ye escape error? How can ye agree with each other? Christians, have ye no errors, have ye no differences? Believe it, they are mostly owing

to the same cause. Strange as on first view it may appear, Christians do not all agree in the source of religious sentiments. Do not some, even till this moment, contend that some things are left to human institution? What common principle have we then to reason with such? With them the Scriptures are not the sole standard. Others by distinctions and difference of times,' and various inventions, have considerably abridged this standard, so that almost the half of its testimony is not heard in evidence, but rejected as irrelevant. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is treated like that of an old honest but doating man, who speaks now and then to the purpose, but is perpetually subject to mental wanderings. Even among those who acknowledge the Scriptures as the sole standard, I find there are vain controvertists, who steadily and uniformly act up to their avowed principles. When the interest of a favorite dogma is at stake, every artifice is employed to make the witness prevaricate. With all their deference for the authority of the divine word, how do they grapple with it, when it seems to enjoin any disagreeable practice? Christians, in ascertaining the mind of God, let us banish all the prejudices and prepossessions of our own minds. Let us listen to the Scriptures as the rule, as the perfect standard. Let nothing be received, because it commends itself to our wisdom; let nothing be rejected for want of this sanction. Let us remember that, in all things, the wisdom of God is not like the wisdom of man.

FAITH THE FOUNDATION

OF THE

GREATER PART OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

Philosophers have laboured much to rest all their knowledge on the foundations, not only of self-evident, but of necessary truth. They have esteemed it an affront to their art, not to be able to deduce all their doctrines from the intuitive light of their own reasoning faculty. Evidence has been supposed to consist in the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas; and, consequently, to believe anything which is not the result of the operation of reason, is to believe without authority.

For this purpose, some of our greatest philosophers have renounced the empire of common sense, and commenced their career with universal skepticism. Even their own existence, and the existence of the world, cannot be taken for granted. These truths must be proved by reason, or they must want a foundation. But they have laboured in vain. After all the exertions of the greatest human faculties, it cannot be proved even that there is a world, unless implicit credence is given to the testimony of the senses. Not only do men in general, but even philosophers themselves, continue to believe in their own existence, and in the existence of the world, not from the arguments alleged by Des Cartes, Malebranche, Arnauld, and Locke, but from the testimony of consciousness and the senses.

The theologian who loves to strut in the philosopher's steps, and to ape his sentiments and language, has, also, talked much of subjecting the contents of the Word of God to the control and determinations of reason. What cannot be comprehended or

accounted for by the reasoning faculty, it is supposed irrational to believe. With this standard in his hands, he goes through the Scriptures, pruning, and retrenching, and refining, and supplying, that the dictates of the Spirit may be modeled, so as to pass the review of human reason.

According to their different degrees of intrepidity and prejudice, the various sects have modeled the Scriptures by the principles of reason. Some content themselves by taking from divine truth some of her strongest features, and giving her those additional graces that human wisdom can supply; while others deface every marked feature in her countenance, diminish her to a very pigmy, and, instead of her own noble deportment, give her the airs, gestures, and voice of our rational christians.

It is no displeasing thing to find these vain pretensions refuted and ridiculed, even in the philosopher, by the first name in moral science. Doctor Reid irresistibly proves, that the greater part of the knowledge, even of the philosopher, rests upon foundations of which no account can be given. Many things we believe, not because our reasoning faculty perceives the evidence, but because, by the/ principles of our constitution, we are irresistibly determined to believe. Reason, he asserts, can lay no claim to the greater part of the knowledge of which philosophy boasts. "By his reason he can discover certain abstract and necessary solutions of things; but his knowledge of what really exists, or did exist, comes by another channel, which is open to those who cannot reason. He is lost to it in the dark, and knows not how he come by it."

How is the philosopher assured that he thinks, and reasons, and exists? Is the belief of these truths a deduction of his reason? or must he depend solely on the testimony of his consciousness for the reality of these things? Why does he believe the reports of memory with respect to what happened to him the preceding hour? Does he ever seek any other reason than that he clearly remembers it? Yet the

belief of the veracity of memory is not a deduction of memory, but a principle of the human constitution. Let him open his eyes and look at the sun. Why, great philosopher, do you believe in the existence of yon vast orb of light? Can you prove it by abstract reasoning? Is your conviction the result of the operation of your reasoning powers? No; you believe that the sun exists, because you see it. You have no better foundation for your conviction than the absolutely perfect reliance you have in the testimony of the senses. And what are the senses? Are they not witnesses appointed by God to report to you certain truths that are necessary for your welfare? You receive the reports of your senses with the unsuspecting confidence of a little child; but the testimony of God in the Scriptures, with respect to his own character, and the work of his Son, Jesus Christ, you will not receive upon all the authority of the Almighty. Yet, you never will enter into the kingdom of heaven, unless you receive it as a little child. The testimony of God must be received on the authority of the reporter. Implicit credence must be given to his word, without requiring corroboration from the testimony of human reason. We can give no more account of our belief of the existence of the world, than of our belief of the character and atonement of the Son of God.

What a vast proportion of our knowledge depends upon the testimony of men! Were we to refuse assent to every thing but what comes under our own immediate review, we would sweep away all our knowledge of foreign countries and of past times, and reject the immense treasures heaped up for our use by the experience of others. On these principles, the greatest genius on earth would never advance beyond childhood. But whatever incredulity a man may profess, he is irresistibly determined to rely upon the testimony of others, and it is not till we are deceived that we learn to regulate our belief in human testimony by the criterion that experience has proved to be a necessary limitation. If, then, we believe the testimony of men, greater is the testimony of God. Why, then, will

not men submit to the report that God has given of his Son? Was the credibility of any witnesses ever better attested than that of the apostles? Was there ever any historical fact better proved than the death, resurrection, and atonement of Jesus Christ? Does the authenticity of any book present such a mass of varied evidence as the Bible? The voice of the Lord, attested by innumerable credible witnesses, calls continually from heaven, proclaiming mercy, through belief in the atonement, to the vilest of the human race; yet men in general, instead of hailing the good news, go about to fortify themselves in rejecting the credibility of the message. The multitudes that pretend to pay any attention to the voice of God, instead of receiving the testimony of the divine word, like that of any plain, honest man, in the evident sense of the language, have employed themselves in altering the report, and suiting it to the corrupt tastes of the various classes of society. In this place we hear the apostles speaking like philosophers, and preaching the doctrine of the rational christians. In another, they assume the grimace and cant of enthusiasm. Here they are made to utter the dictates of moral science, and there they enjoin the austerities of monkish superstition. With some, you would think that they had no other business but to wrangle about party politics; with others, they are thought fit for no other employment but the civilization of barbarians, or the regulating of the manners of society.

Let Christians seek no other authority for the belief of anything, than that God has taught it in his word. While others show their rebellion against God, by replying against his word, let them receive with promptness and gratitude every communication of the unerring word.

THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD.

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” 1 COR. 1, 21.

The powers of the human mind, though puny in comparison with the divine wisdom, are great in themselves. Though unequal to the task frequently assigned them, their efforts, when legitimately employed, are truly astonishing. The great intellects of Des Cartes and Leibnitz, when employed hypothetically on the formation of worlds, are lost in an abyss. Their theories are only the ingenious reveries of learned madmen. But when we behold in Newton the lawful direction of the human faculties, we are constrained to admire their wonderful capacity. What an amazing depth have the intellects of that single man penetrated into the works of God! The worlds formed by the imagination of other philosophers, he overthrew with a touch, and discovered the admirable simplicity of the laws that govern the works of creation. Has the sagacity and patient exercise of the faculties of the human mind determined the motions, dimensions, and distances of the heavenly bodies? Look into the discoveries of natural philosophy, and admire the extent of human intellect. On the foundation of a few axioms what a stupendous fabric has been reared by mathematics! In every human science where the powers of man have been properly directed, there success has been superior to the most sanguine anticipation. The inspiration of the Almighty hath given him understanding.

But let us try these wise men on things that relate to God. Have they discovered the glories of the divine character? Have they made a proper estimate of the character of man? Have they perceived the

origin of the guilt and misery of the human race? Have they seen that men are by nature universally in rebellion against their maker, and, consequently, the children of wrath? Have they discovered the way to heaven? Have they told us how God can be both just and merciful—the just God, yet the Saviour of the ungodly? Have all their searches after God discovered his nature, or given any light to the guilty, in order acceptably to approach him? No; in all these things they are very children. In answering these questions, they are like men shooting at a mark in the blackness of midnight.

That God might give a fair trial to the efforts of human wisdom on these subjects, and silence for ever the arrogant pretensions of philosophy, learning had been deeply cultivated for several centuries before the proclamation of that truth that saves the sinner. For a period of more than five hundred years, the subtlety of the genius of the philosophers of Greece had been diligently and enthusiastically employed in inquiries about God, virtue, and happiness. But in all these five hundred years, instead of discovering anything like the truth, they made not the smallest approaches towards it. Instead of pointing out the true way to virtue and happiness, their learned theories only bloated the mind with increased measures of vanity, and served to show that the wickedness of the human heart increases with an increase of its wisdom. These wise men differed from the vulgar, only in the excess of their arrogance. Their investigations led to skepticism or atheism; and when they had not these results, they never raised an individual above the folly of polytheism. It is usual with the learned men of modern times, to endeavour to cover the nakedness of their ancient brethren. In excuse for the worship of the gods by the sages of Greece and Rome, it is alleged that their compliance was only out of constraint or courtesy. If the excuse is founded in truth, it condemns their honesty, and robs these boasted sages of all pretensions to virtue. While they talked so much of truth and of virtue, how can they be justified in not confessing the truth,

which they are supposed to possess? But, although they occasionally speak something rationally of some of the divine attributes, there is, in my apprehension, not the smallest reason to suppose, that any of them who were not atheists, were anything but polytheists. The patriarch of the heathen world, (as Socrates is styled, I think by Lord Shaftesbury,) though ridiculed on the stage by Aristophanes as an atheist, died in the sincere profession of the worship of the gods. Before his death, he ordered his friend to sacrifice a cock to Esculapins. What were the gods of the Epicureans? Lazy, voluptuous sensualists, who lived at a great distance above the clouds, and took no concern about the affairs of men. What a poor view of the divine character was entertained by the stoics, is seen in every line of their philosophy. Their man of virtue was superior to their Jupiter. Instead of needing mercy from divine clemency, he scorned to crouch under all the effects of the unprovoked rage of heaven. The wise man might be happy independent of Jupiter, and even as his opponent; yet, as the Pharisees among the religious sects of the Jews, the stoics were the strictest sect among the philosophers.

That the highest efforts of human wisdom might be exerted, there was nothing wanting to stimulate their genius. They were divided into different sects, who were perpetually at war. Each philosopher was roused by all the strongest passions, to labour for the honour of his system. Philosophy was not merely the ornament, but the very business of life for thousands of the acutest men. The approbation of numerous disciples increased the exertions of the heads of sects, and the perpetual discussions among their followers, could not but sharpen the penetration, and increase the vigour, of the human mind. As war increases the courage and prowess of nations, controversy undoubtedly increases the energy of the mental powers among warring sects. And what was the result of all their inquiries, of all their intricate discussions? Let us receive an answer to this

question from the mouth of God himself. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."—1 Cor. i. 19-21. So far from discovering the divine character, and the plan of salvation, God testifies of these sages, that, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

That the wisdom of this world is still not only unequal to the discovery of divine truth, but in dreadful opposition to it, when discovered, is seen in the doctrines of our modern philosophers. In many things respecting the perfections of God, they speak more rationally than their ancient brethren, owing to the light of revelation, which sheds some of its rays on those who are blind to its true glory. They have rejected polytheism, and ascribe immensity, and eternity, and many other attributes, to their god. But he is a god, perfect neither in mercy nor in justice. He neither saves the guilty, nor condemns every transgressor. With the above exceptions, the god of the philosopher is not materially different from the god of the ancient sage. Their man of virtue is in every essential point the same. Modern philosophers are even found to acknowledge this. They are willing to give a just theme of praise to the happy tendency of the labours of their great predecessors. Mr. Dugald Stewart, the greatest living philosopher in the science of mind expressly asserts, that some of the ancient systems were rather defective than erroneous. Philosophy has never changed her tone. The soul of her systems in every age is the same. She is every where known by her hatred of the true character of God, and her encomiums on the virtue of human kind. If ever she succeeds in bringing men to find happiness, it will be by storming the gates of

heaven by the artillery of moral worth. Learn, then, proud philosopher, that your wisdom is folly in the estimation of God. Denounce your atheistical delusions—submit to the wisdom of God—receive the atonement of Jesus. If any man is wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD MAKES WISE THE SIMPLE.

The question which, in vain, is put to the wisdom of this world, receives a satisfactory answer from the weakest of those who are taught of God. Ask the authors of all the systems of philosophy that ever were promulgated, how a sinner can be saved, and you will receive an answer very different from that of the Scriptures. They whose genius has invented the most profound and subtle theories, supported by the most abstruse speculations—they who have discovered the laws that regulate the course of nature—they who can solve the most difficult problems in the abstract sciences, will speak like children or simpletons, when they attempt to point the way of fallen man to heaven. They will talk inconsistently of virtue and of merit, of mercy and of justice, of imperfection and of moral worth. If they deign to recognise the Christian system under any view, it is only to make it speak their own sentiments, and sanction their vain speculations by the authority of heaven. None of all the mere philosophers that ever lived could perceive how mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. There is a parable in their sentiments on this subject, and each system differs not more from truth, than one part of it does from the other. If human virtue is acknowledged by all to be imperfect, it must come short of the standard by which it is to be measured. How, then, can it either merit reward, or screen from punishment? That which comes not up to the standard, is in all things rejected. If God has not raised that standard unreasonably high, there can be no excuse for coming short of it. If God does not require men to come up to his standard, in order to escape punishment, or receive a reward, then

his standard becomes no standard. It lies, then, upon philosophers and theologians, who propagate the sentiments of philosophers, to point out that second standard, and to ascertain the necessary degrees of excellence. But human virtue is defective, even according to the standard of philosophers themselves. How, then, can the best of men escape divine wrath? No mere philosopher will ever succeed in giving consistency even to his own scheme.

But while the wise men of this world talk at random about the divine attributes, and flatter their deity with a pomp of incongruous phraseology, the illiterate peasant, who is taught by the Word of God, exhibits the divine attributes in all their extent, expatiates with wonder on their harmony, and proclaims the name of that God, whom to know is eternal life. The truth that the wisest of the sons of men do not understand, is understood by thousands of the weak things of this world. Ask poor Joseph, the London simpleton, the way to heaven, and he will reply—"It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, not excepting the very chief."

It is astonishing to observe what cultivation of mind the knowledge of the truth confers on the illiterate. They are enabled to talk rationally and consistently on the divine character and plan of salvation, when there is nothing but darkness, inconsistency, and error, in the discourses of the philosopher. Viewing this world in the light in which it is represented in the Scriptures, they obtain more correct views of everything respecting the state of man, and the divine government. The present state of man is the most difficult problem that human wisdom has to encounter— a problem that it cannot solve. But the knowledge of the truth explains all the phenomena of human conduct, and makes the Christian the only true philosopher. Self-knowledge, it has always been the boast of philosophy to confer, and her employment to recommend. "Know thyself," is the great injunction of the ancient philosopher, which has

always been supposed to contain the essence of all wisdom. But no man knows himself, till he knows the truth in which his true character and situation are exhibited. Of all truths, self-knowledge is the one of which the philosopher is most ignorant. He speculates on the human character, and traces the sources of human action; but he wants the key that can alone open the secret recesses of the heart. He may ascertain with great accuracy, the various powers and faculties of the mind, and communicate many valuable observations on their culture; but, to the moral state of the mind, he is an utter stranger. Partiality to himself and his race, makes him mistake its language on this subject. He hides the depravity of human thought, and veils the evil that appears in the conduct, under the names of imperfection, or defective virtue. When he draws a picture of human nature, flattery guides the pencil. Her hectic cheek he suffuses with the redness of health and vigour, and her loathsome diseases he throws into the shade, or covers with drapery. While the philosopher's motto is, "know thyself," it ought rather to be, "know every thing but thyself."

The Christian, however illiterate, views human nature in a juster light. He traces her seeming virtues to their true source, either in appearance only, or in her constitution. The benevolent affections which are the philosopher's great boast, and which are almost his only hope, the christian ascribes to the constitution, which is the result of divine wisdom, and entitled to the rank of moral worth, no more in man than in the brute, in whose nature they are found as far as they are necessary for the preservation of the individual and the species. What the philosopher considers as slight failings or frailties, the result of excusable imperfection, the christian condemns as manifesting enmity to God. He sees that in him, that is in his flesh, or as he is born, there is no good thing.

How much the light of the christian peasant, with respect to Providence, and the divine government, exceeds that of the philosopher, may be seen in an instant from their observations on a

newspaper. The former speaks like one admitted to the council of his heavenly sovereign; the other speaks as if there were no God, or no control of Providence. Where the one finds all things dark, unaccountable, and forbidding, the other finds all things clear and consolatory. While the man of wisdom hides his head, like a child, in a thunderstorm, the man of God smiles when he hears the terrible voice- of his great creator. In short, the christian sees everything around him with so much more clearness and accuracy, that he is like a man with an additional sense. A great philosopher observes, that to comprehend time and space, the human mind perhaps wants an additional faculty. To behold the character of God and of man, the human mind wants the light of heaven. May the Lord open the heart of those deluded men, to attend to the things spoken by the apostles, instead of their own vain speculations.

The cultivation of mind, conferred by the knowledge of the truth, is seen in a striking point of view, in the precision and facility with which many illiterate men speak on subjects, on which even those who have employed all their lives in schools and studies cannot speak, without committing everything to memory. This is so observable, that many who are enemies to the gospel, cannot but wonder while they revile.

It has been often said, that it is necessary for philosophy to go before, as the harbinger of christianity, that the minds of men may be civilized before they be christianized. How unfounded this opinion is, no Christian needs to be instructed. Its fallacy may appear even to blindness itself. Who were the bitterest enemies of the truth in the days of the apostles?— the philosophers, next to the religious zealots. Fanaticism expresses her rage by the paroxisms of madness. Philosophy attempts to laugh the Gospel out of the world, and scowl her from the earth by the supercilious brow of cool contempt. Instead of taking the apostle by the hand at Athens, and introducing him to the favorable reception of the people, both the

Stoics and Epicureans encountered him. Come, said the haughty wise men, let us hear what these babblers have to say. The gospel, so far from finding a friend in philosophy, meets her as an enemy, and treats her as an impious seducer of men to the worship of a false god. She needs not her services; she fears not her attacks. Though the gospel is the power of God to the salvation of the philosopher, as well as the vulgar, it is an awful truth, that not many of the wise men of this world are enlightened by it. The wisdom and sovereignty of God have left the schools of philosophy, and seats of learning generally, in the possession of his enemies, while he has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. This is a fact obvious to every christian that is at all conversant with the world. What reason can we assign for this? Shall we say that the gospel is not able to change the philosopher? Shall we ascribe it to the weakness of the gospel, or to the wickedness of the philosopher? To neither. We reply with Jesus, &c.

SOLUTION OF THE GREAT PARADOX

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” EXODUS XXXIV. 6, 7.

When Jehovah declared his character to Moses, he proclaimed "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." These words are well known and often repeated for the encouragement of repenting sinners; but they are very generally misunderstood. Upon first sight they appear a paradox, and few venture to quote them without some qualifying epithet to reconcile the apparent contradiction. How is it that the different parts of this seemingly inconsistent character can be viewed in harmony? If God clears not the guilty, how does he forgive iniquity? If he forgives iniquity, must he not clear the guilty? Which of these attributes shall we limit or modify to make it consist with the other? Shall we lower the claims of both, and find a union by a compromise? Let us try the first. It is said that Jehovah clears not the guilty. Now, as all men are more or less guilty, consequently, if we should understand the word in a strict sense, no one could be saved. What if we should suppose that the word guilty means those

who are egregiously guilty. The meaning, then, will be a very comfortable one for the bulk of mankind, who, though they cannot plead entire innocence, are in their own eyes far from enormity of transgression. It will import that though God will forgive iniquity to a certain extent, this is not to be understood as an encouragement for heinous sins. People of tolerably good moral conduct have no reason to fear on account of a few slips; but let not adulterers, murderers, and reprobates of that description, dare to shelter themselves under the wings of divine mercy. This seems to agree very well with the hopes of many, whose language intimates that they expect this sort of leniency from God. He is not very exact in counting the sins of men. He marks no little sins; if they can answer for one of a thousand of their transgressions, they are not far astray.

Aye, but there is one thing spoils this comfortable scheme of divinity. Like Des Cartes' worlds, it is the invention of human wisdom, not the plan of Jehovah. It looks admirably well in theory, but if we bring it to the test of truth, it is annihilated by a touch. Guilty cannot mean merely guilty in excess, but must apply to every degree of guilt. Whatever be the nature or magnitude of the crime with which a criminal is charged, if it is proved, he is found guilty. Punishment is, indeed, proportioned to guilt; but a criminal is brought in and sentenced as guilty, as well for petty larceny as for murder or high treason. The word guilty, then, must apply to every sin, and to every degree of sin.

Since the term guilty is so very stubborn as not to bend to our system, what if we should try the effect of some explanatory epithet? Instead of guilty, let us suppose the phrase to be impenitently guilty, and we will have a meaning admirably to our purpose. In confirmation of this explanation, besides the invincible necessity of the thing itself, we have then the authority of almost all divines. This description of the divine character is scarcely ever heard from the pulpit in any other sense. To repeat the passage

without supplying this necessary modification, might frighten sinners too much, and drive them to despair. For if God does not clear the guilty, what comes of sinners? The admirable moral tendency of this explanation is also a very strong recommendation; while it leaves hope to poor penitents who have abandoned their sins, and who, though not positively virtuous, are doing all they can by their prayers and tears to supply the deficiency. This view cannot countenance sin, because it gives no hope to the sinner till he finds himself a penitent. It gives no unnecessary discouragement to sinners, because there is mercy enough for them, if they are only willing to quit - their sins. Surely, then, we have at last hit upon the true theory that will reconcile all inconsistencies and avoid all extremes.

The whole fabric is not only proportionable, but strong in every part but the foundation; but as that happens to be entirely on a running sand, it will tumble as soon as assailed by wind and water. Were the word impenitently to be recognized by the Scriptures, nothing could overturn our system. But the misfortune is, the authority of God is opposed to that of the divines, and our fair scheme, with all its advantages, vanishes into air. We have no more warrant to say impenitently guilty, than we have to say innocently guilty.

If neither of the opposite parts of their character will bend so as to unite with the other, we might try to meet them by obliging both to give a little. A small concession of the claims on each side would make peace. I have no doubt that in this way we might form a very pretty theory; but as it would be subject to the same unfortunate objections, we shall spare ourselves the trouble.

Since we can make nothing of this passage by our own wisdom, let us try to exhibit it in the light of revelation. Let us see if there is not a view in which the opposite parts of this character are perfectly reconcilable with each other. If the word of God shows us how God

can pardon sin without clearing the guilty, then there is a sure refuge for sinners; then the wisdom of God will appear as much superior to the wisdom of men, as heaven is higher than the earth.

The Scriptures declare that God not only pardons sinners, but even the chief of sinners. The plan by which he effected this without clearing the guilty, is manifested in the atonement of his Son Jesus Christ. He gave his Son a sacrifice and a ransom, that he might suffer the punishment of sin, and that whoever believeth in him may not perish but have everlasting life. Jesus Christ took on him the sins of his people, and in suffering under them, was esteemed virtually guilty. The sins, therefore, of believers have been atoned for to the utmost extent of their desert. When Jesus became the sinner's surety in the eye of law, those for whom he suffered are innocent. In pardoning them, God does not clear the guilty. As guilty, they have been punished in the death of their substitute. When their guilt has been purged away, they must, of necessity, be declared clear. Whoever, therefore, has had his sins atoned for in the death of Christ, will stand before the tribunal of God as spotless as an angel. Now, God declares to the whole world, that whoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. As all who have their sins atoned for by Christ shall be cleared on the day of judgment, so all who believe, and they only, are declared to have their sins thus cancelled. Faith in the divine message, that proclaims Jesus as coming into the world to die for the guilty, is the medium through which sinners become interested in his atonement.

Is not this plan of salvation truly divine? Could ever such a way of harmonizing the divine attributes in saving the guilty have occurred to the mind of man? Sinners, abandon every refuge of lies, invented by delusion and forced on the word of God by constraint. Believe the truth, and ye shall be pardoned in such a way as will clear you. Submit to the gospel of Christ. All perversions of the word of God will be found at last to be refuges of lies. No scheme of

salvation ever invented by men, can show the consistency of the divine character. In the death of Jesus alone can we find a plan that will consist with the whole word of God. Notwithstanding the death of Christ, it still remains true that God does not clear the guilty. All whose sins are not atoned for in the death of Christ must suffer the full retribution of their demerit. Let none dream of mercy and of escaping through Christ, while they continue to neglect the gospel. The same authority that declares, that whosoever believeth shall be saved, declares also, he that believeth not shall be damned.

THE SCHEME OF SALVATION
BY LAW AND GRACE,
IRRECONCILABLE WITH ITSELF.

Perhaps there never was a man owning the divine existence, so full of the opinion of human merit, as not in some respect to have recourse to the grace of God. Even Tindal, whose god is more limited in his powers than an earthly father or master, speaks of a gracious god. They who deny the atonement of the Son of God in the proper sense of the word, speak, notwithstanding, of grace and mercy. On the other hand, few of the multitudes who speak of salvation by grace, hold the doctrine in such a view as to exclude law and merit. The scheme of salvation which commands the approbation of the greatest part of what is called the christian world, is that which represents an interest in the atonement to be procured by the condition of good works. In opposition to all these, the apostles declare salvation to be purely of grace, the free gift of God through Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul not only asserts salvation by grace, and not by human merit, but declares that salvation by grace and works, is a contradiction in terms. "And, if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise, work is no more work."—Rom. xi. 6. "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise."—Gal. iii. 18. This is so obvious a dictate of common sense, that it is strange to find any professing to believe the Scriptures, and mixing these incongruous elements. Yet, these things thought so inconsistent by the apostle, have been found perfectly reconcilable by others; and what Paul looks upon as a contradiction, they have considered as a scheme, beautifully harmonizing the attributes of

God, and the moral agency of mankind. God is just and gracious in the atonement, while man is entitled to the benefit of this and the reward of eternal life, by his repentance and new obedience. This is the darling scheme of the wise and the unwise. The bold conclusions of the Socinian and Arian are embraced only by a few hasty speculatists. They are never likely to be the refuge of the generality of mankind.

But let us see how the admirers of this popular scheme reconcile what Paul looked upon as a contradiction. If it is obvious to common sense, that grace and merit are irreconcilable, how can those who have not only common sense, but many that have much good sense and learning, be blind to the contradiction? It seems to me, that they hide the inconsistency from themselves, by viewing the grace of God and the merit of man, as not respecting the same things. Were it not for something of this nature, it would be impossible to attempt to reconcile things palpably irreconcilable. The same thing that is given purely of favour, cannot also be given as wages for work. But they contrive to appropriate the grace of God to one thing, and the merit of man to another. The former respects the giving of Christ as a ransom for sinners; the latter respects the terms of obtaining an interest in this ransom. The atonement is all of grace, but human efforts must obtain an interest in that work. This surely is the spirit of their doctrine, who speak of the grace of God in salvation, yet of man's being pardoned through the atonement for his repentance, rewarded for his sincere obedience. The grace of God consists not in giving all freely through Christ, but in making salvation possible through him, which was otherwise impossible, in giving a new and an easier covenant, which requires not perfect but sincere obedience. This they call a milder law, the gospel covenant, &c. In this view, also, some speak of faith itself, as if God, on account of the excellent disposition which it is supposed to manifest, accepts it in lieu of sinless obedience to his law. They seem to have the same

view of God's grace, as they would of that of a rich man, who, to encourage industry among the poor, would engage to give them wages, in value much above their work. While others give but a shilling a day, he gives five. He is gracious, then, in giving the poor so good a bargain; they merit their wages, because they have performed the work. But it is obvious, that when the Scriptures speak of God's grace, and the opposition of grace and works, they refer to the whole scheme of salvation, and oppose grace to work with respect to the same points. In Gal. iii. 18, where Paul asserts the inconsistency of law and promise, he is speaking against the doctrine of those who made the observance of law necessary to salvation, as well as faith in the death of Christ. In Rom. xi. 6, it is not only the salvation of sinners that is represented as of grace, but the election of them as of grace. The heirs of life are represented as chosen, not on account of works that they should do, but altogether out of grace. If so, works of no kind can ever be represented consistently with Scripture as conditions of salvation. But all the ingenuity of all the learned advocates of this heterogeneous scheme, has never been able either to harmonize it with the Scriptures, or even with itself. If God requires any conditions on the part of sinners, it is impossible that salvation is of grace. However inconsiderable and easy such conditions may be, however short of the value of what is gained, still, when they are performed, they are work, and therefore contrary to grace. When they have been performed, they give ground to glory. If in themselves they are of no value, then they who have them not, are not inferior in moral worth to those who possess them; consequently they are of no value. If, though of no value in themselves, they are valuable, as commanded by God, then they who possess them, offer some value to God for their salvation. But if these conditions are valuable in themselves, as is generally supposed by the advocates of this scheme, then, according to their value, do they afford God a price for what he

gives. If faith, repentance, sincere obedience, are the work of man, or the production of man's own efforts, then his salvation is the fruit of his own labour. If one perishes, because he does not comply with these terms, and another is saved on account of them, then salvation is not of grace, but by human merit. The man who is saved may glory in the success of his efforts. He cannot be said to be saved by grace. He has given value for what he has received; and although it is not full value, it is all that is thought reasonable in his bankrupt circumstances to require of him. God then still demands of him all the debt which he is able to pay. Is this a salvation of grace? If faith, repentance, sincere obedience, are spoken of as the gift of God, then it is absurd in that view of them, to consider them as conditions on the part of man. In this view, the man who receives them has no more merit than the man who receives them not. If through faith; repentance, and sincere obedience, are the gift of God, but are given to one rather than another, on account of complying with some previous conditions, it is only removing merit a little farther back, and salvation is the reward of these previous conditions. On the other hand, if it can be said that salvation is of grace, that eternal life is the gift of God, then it is absurd and contradictory to suppose that the performance of any thing is required on the part of man. It cannot be grace that requires—that will not give without something in return. It cannot be a gift that requires a purchase before it is communicated. No conditions on the part of the sinner can exist in a free salvation. It is of faith that it might be by grace. The pride of man is humbled in the doctrine of the cross. The virtuous sage is able to offer to God, for his salvation, nothing more than the abandoned profligate. If they believe the gospel, they both alike are changed by its power; they repent, are born again, and perform good works.

THE MAHOMETAN FAST OF RHAMAZAN.

Many persons in their eagerness to support orthodoxy as a system, speak of salvation by grace and faith in such a manner as to undervalue holiness and a life devoted to God. But there is no ground for this in the Holy Scriptures. The same gospel that declares salvation to be freely by the grace of God through faith in the blood of Christ, and asserts, in the strongest terms, that sinners are justified by the righteousness of the Saviour imputed to them on their believing in him, without any respect to works of law, also assures us, that without holiness, no man shall see God; that believers are cleansed by the blood of atonement; that their hearts are purified by faith, which works by love, and overcometh the world; and that the grace that brings salvation to all men, teaches those who receive it, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Any fear that the doctrine of grace will suffer from the most strenuous inculcation of good works on a Scriptural foundation, betrays an inadequate and greatly defective acquaintance with divine truth, and any tampering with the Scriptures, in order to silence their testimony in favour of the fruits of righteousness, as absolutely necessary in the Christian, is a perversion and forgery with respect to the word of God. Holiness is as necessary as faith, but it is necessary for a different purpose. When these purposes are clearly discerned, there will appear no clashing between faith and works, between justification by grace through the atonement, and the fruits of this in righteousness and holiness.

On the other hand, there are many who, not discriminating between the holiness which is produced by the belief of the truth, and that counterfeit piety which is the offspring of ignorance and superstition, think favourably of all who are greatly devoted to external acts of religion. The man who prays, must, in their estimation, be a man in favour with God, without considering that he may be praying, not like Paul after his conversion, but like the Pharisee for ostentation, or as a legal price for his salvation. If he fasts, however superstitious may be his views of religion, it is hoped that God will accept so much piety, though it be in ignorance. If he afflicts himself, and does many things with a view to please God, and appease his wrath, it is hard to think, as appears to them, that it will be utterly without advantage to him in the final day of reckoning. A pillar saint may to them be an object of contempt, but they will not be so uncharitable as to suppose that his austerities will not be rewarded, or at least graciously accepted in the judgment.

These observations forcibly strike us in reading the following account of the austerities with which the Mahometans observe their fast, Rhamazan.

If persons who set so high a value on merely external acts of devotion and religious austerities under the Christian name, would turn their eyes to the ancient nations who professed the grossest idolatries, and modern nations, which are either Pagan or Mahometan, they will find examples of devotedness and superstitious piety, which go far beyond those that, under the Christian name, appear to them to be either meritorious, or in some way giving a claim to divine favour. The austerities of heathenism and of false religion, have infinitely surpassed the severity of Christian superstitions.

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS EXTRACTED FROM A NEWSPAPER:

THE RHAMAZAN.

"Constantinople, December 17,

"The continuance of the Rhamazan keeps every thing connected with politics in the most perfect state of stagnation at Constantinople; fasting, praying, promenading all day, and feasting, and making merry all night, is all that is now going on; and every thing except such daily business as cannot be interrupted, is put off till the approaching Bairam. The painfully rigid observance which Mahometans pay to the keeping of the fast of Rhamazan, throughout the whole month, is most remarkable, and forms a striking contrast to the so misnamed fasts in Catholic countries. Here no exception is made in favour of a fine piece of fish, or a dainty omelette, under the plea of its not being flesh; nor are any discussions entered into as to what may be eaten or what may not; the term fast, or Islam, means total abstinence; and from the time the first rays of sun appear above the horizon, till the Murzzim from the minaret proclaims the hour of sunset prayer, no morsel of food of any kind passes the lips of the rigid Mosleim; and even when the Rhamazan falls in the hottest months of summer, which it sometimes does, (the lunar calendar used by the Arabians, bringing it of course through all the seasons every thirty-three years,) the hardy Homal in the streets, and the Caiquegi at his oars, toils through the labours of the day, exposed for so many hours to the broiling sun, without permitting themselves even a drop of water, to moisten their parching lips. This, however, is not all, for incredible as it may appear, it is no less a fact, that to some of the more rigid Mussulmans, even the hours of sunset scarce can be said to bring a breaking of the fast, since during the night, when it is permitted to eat, they scarce take what is sufficient to support nature. During the month Rhamazan, which thus converts night into day, the nature and habits of the Turk may be said to become entirely changed. Instead of rising, as usual, with the first

beams of the morning, and retiring to rest again at a very early hour, he very rarely quits his couch till mid-day, and deprived even of the pleasure of his pipe, thus endeavours by sleep to get through his weary hours of fast. All except those who are really obliged to work, lay aside business of every kind, and about three of the day, all the gay world of Stamboul, not excepting the Sultan himself, may be seen promenading in the large open space in front of the Seraskier Pacha's. The Sultan, who is incog. on these occasions, passes almost unheeded through the crowd, and when he has fatigued himself with walking or riding, he seats himself in the shop of a tobacconist near the end of the promenade, from whence he amuses himself in contemplating the gay scene before him. In the evening, the mosques and houses are all partially illuminated—the streets are again filled, and every calire is crowded with smokers, enjoying the so-long forbidden chibouque and amusing themselves with story telling, magic lanterns, &c, till morning's dawn again obliges them to commence their rigorous abstinence. Thus passes the Rhamazan at Constantinople, till the part of the Bairam which follows again, restores things to their ordinary course."

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL,
WITH ENCOURAGEMENTS
TO THE VIGOROUS PROSECUTION OF THE WORK.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN SURREY CHAPEL, LONDON, OCT. 12, 1842.

"Occupy Till I Come."—LUKE XIX. 13.

A Mere glance at the employments and labours of men, with the slightest knowledge of the human constitution, must convince every impartial observer that mankind are not now in the situation in which they were at first placed by their Creator. Every other animal has a mode of life and employment entirely suitable to its nature; and though it may share in the common misery, all the attributes of its nature have their full scope. Its work is as high as its rank in creation; and no principle of its constitution remains without its proper exercise. Not so with man. He has a soul possessing powers capable of the most astonishing exertions, and of making endless progress in knowledge; yet, he is found in a state of the utmost degradation, with employments little above those of the brutes. The man of science and the savage have every principle of human nature in common. What a difference in their attainments and in their employments!

Nor is this unsuitableness of the employment of man to his high mental dignity exclusively to be found in savage life. It is to be found in the most advanced state of civilized society. In all countries, and in all ages, the great body of men are almost constantly employed either in manual labour, or in toilsome business. Indeed we need not to look solely to the great masses of

society for proof that man is doomed to toil. It is a law from which there is no exemption. Every man has the proof in himself. From the sovereign to the meanest subject, all, all labour under the same curse. The very honours of royalty are a load, which vanity itself cannot sustain without weariness.

The highest aim of the legislator is to provide reward for labour; and his object is fully accomplished when all hands are employed, and labour is adequately remunerated. The millennium of the statesman, as well as of the chartist is, "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work:" when men have work and wages he sees nothing amiss in the lot of human nature. But the eye of the Christian should penetrate men deeply. In the incessant and universal toils of mankind he should perceive the curse of God against the first sin. From the cradle to the grave it is work, work, work.

The man of God is not exempt from the labours and toils of life. God feeds his people as well as he feeds the fowls of heaven; he clothes them as well as he does the lilies of the valley; but he neither feeds them as he does the fowls, nor clothes them as he does the lilies. He feeds and clothes them by means; and they must toil and spin, and sow and reap, and gather into barns. But blessed be God, the curse is in some measure turned into a blessing. All the labours which we are called to perform, and all the sufferings which we are called on to endure, are to be performed and endured to the glory of God. When the poor man toils to earn a scanty subsistence, and trudges home at night with a weary body, he can console himself with the reflection, if he has faith in Christ, that he is labouring in the Lord's service. His work is not merely to man: it is to God.

The words which I have chosen as the subject of discourse, remind us that Jesus confers certain talents on his servants; and that he requires the diligent use of these talents. The injunction extends to every talent, and to every department of life. But I shall confine my observations to that which is the more immediate object of this

meeting—the employment of our talents in the propagation of the gospel, presenting some encouragements to the vigorous prosecution of the work.

1. My first observation on the subject is, that the gospel being destined to pervade the earth, christians are the appointed means to convey it to its destination.

It may not be without profit that we turn our attention for a moment to the wisdom of God in appointing his people as the means of propagating his gospel. To human wisdom these means appear inadequate; and in despair of success from these means, christians, following their own wisdom, are prone to look for others more effectual. In all ages and countries the people of Christ generally are poor and despised. How is it possible, then, that the gospel can be effectually propagated and supported by them? Did Christ place this burden on the shoulders of his people, because he was destitute of other resources? Is he poor, that he requires the labours and the earnings of his poor people, in order to the extending of his empire? If he possesses all power in heaven and on earth, could he not propagate his gospel without burthening his own servants, who generally have little to spare? Could he not lay his taxes on his enemies? Yes; our great Lord commands all the resources of the universe, and could execute his will by a greater variety of means than we can conceive; or he could communicate the knowledge of salvation altogether without means. He could reveal to the heirs of salvation the truth which interests them in the blessings of his death immediately * with his Spirit, without any instrumentality at all. Atonement for sin through the blood of Christ was necessary, that grace might reign through righteousness; and that all the attributes of God might harmonize in the salvation of the guilty. But sinners might have been made acquainted with that salvation, and sanctified

by faith in it, without any external revelation, either spoken or written. The Spirit of God could speak to the hearts of men in every part of the earth, as well without instrumentality as with it. Why then has not Jesus chosen this plan? To human wisdom it has many advantages; yet, when divine wisdom has not chosen it, whatever may be its appearance to us, it is not the best plan. One thing is obvious in this procedure by means—it is analogous to God's way of working in other things. Jehovah manifests himself in the works of creation and providence; yet he lies hid by his way of working. In like manner, he reveals himself in his word; yet, while the light shines in darkness the darkness perceives it not.

But if instrumentality is to be used, an instrumentality might have been found more convenient for man, and apparently more effectual than that of christians. Christ could have sent the gospel through the world by the ministry of angels. How admirably, in the estimation of human wisdom, would the means be suited to the end! Christian missionaries need food and raiment while they are engaged in preaching the gospel; they must be carried to their stations by expensive conveyances; and they are subject to the violence of the enemies of their Lord. The angels needed no earthly supplies; they could convey the news of salvation to every quarter of the globe without expense, without loss of time, and without danger. Human missionaries must, with a great expense of labour and time, make themselves acquainted with the languages of all the nations they address. The angels could, in this, have no difficulty. Why, then, was not this plan chosen? It has innumerable advantages in the estimation of human wisdom. Yet, as it was not chosen, it cannot be the best plan. So far from employing only the ministration of angels in the propagation of the gospel, when on one occasion divine wisdom sent an angel to Cornelius, he was commissioned not to preach the gospel, but to charge the centurion to send for Peter, to "tell him words whereby he should be saved." It is not difficult to

see, in fact, the wisdom of not employing this instrumentality. Had the angels been the heralds of the gospel, its efficacy would have been ascribed to the instruments, and not to the power of God. While the angels have a certain employment about the gospel, the propagation of it is confided on those who are higher than the angels by being one with the Son of God.

Another possible means of propagating the gospel, which more than any other has always been the favourite of human wisdom, is the employment of the powers of this world. If our Lord Jesus Christ rules over the world, he surely could employ its rulers in the propagation of his gospel. How admirably does the plan appear, to carnal wisdom, suited to the end! This will not only prevent persecution, but it will open to the gospel every country under heaven. Will Christ burthen his people while he can avail himself of the revenues of kingdoms? Will he take the mite from the poor widow while all the treasures of the earth are his? Yet Jesus has not adopted this plan. While civil government is his institution, and while he employs the rulers of the world invariably for his own purposes, he has enjoined on his disciples to propagate his gospel, and support his kingdom. Instead of choosing to be introduced to the world, and to have his kingdom raised and maintained by the kingdoms of this world, he chose to make his way through the enmity and most malignant opposition of the rulers of this world for several hundred years. Instead of preventing persecution, it is after his wisdom that persecution should exist. The propagation of the gospel is a miracle of providence. Jesus has left it on the waters like the ark of bulrushes which carried Moses, yet it has not yet sunk, and it will never sink. In this way the power is seen to be not of men, but of God. And while Christ is head over all things for the good of his church; while he makes everything serve his purpose with respect to it, there is a wisdom and a propriety in raising, extending, and maintaining it, through the means of his own

subjects. His kingdom is not of this world, and the management of it could not consistently be given to the kingdoms of this world, which, in general, are hostile to it. Sometimes people talk foolishly, as if to employ the means which God has appointed to effect an end, is to take the thing out of the hands of God. But, surely, to employ means that God has not appointed, neglecting the means which he has appointed, is to take the thing out of the hands of God.

Fellow christians, then, I call your attention to your duty, and to your honourable service. God has not thought proper to convey the knowledge of salvation to men by his Spirit, without the use of means—he has not employed the ministry of angels, but that of men—he has not appointed to this high service the rulers of this world; but he has committed it to the zeal and devotedness of his disciples. Will you not show yourselves worthy of such a trust? Will you not manifest, by your alacrity in this service, that you feel the honour conferred on you by your Lord? Think not of it merely as a duty, but also as a privilege. Jesus calls not on you from his poverty, but to prove your faithfulness, and his own almighty power. If he has given you all that you possess, will you grudge for his cause a portion of the worldly good things which he has bestowed on you? If he has bought you with his blood, has he not a right to your property and your lives? How many thousands have been spent in doing honour to her majesty in her late visit to Scotland! That expenditure was useful to her only as it manifested the dutiful affection of her subjects. The money lavished on decorations that could last but for a day, were considered important as a manifestation of allegiance and of love. She could have borne the expense of all herself, without feeling it as a burden; yet she received the tokens of affection at the expense of all who offered them. A trifle expended for her gratification in this way, would give her more pleasure than presents expended out of her own treasures. How highly, then, are you honoured, my fellow christians, when Jesus Christ gives you an

opportunity to manifest your allegiance to him, by contributing of your substance to the extension and support of his gospel. How greatly was he pleased with the woman who showed her affection to him by anointing him with a box of precious ointment. "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having a box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."—Matt. xxvi. 6-13.

2. My second observation is, that the duty of exertion to propagate the gospel extends to all christians without exception.

Every christian is a soldier; and every christian soldier must fight to put his Lord in possession of his rightful dominions. More is required of some than of others; but something is required of every one. And the passage from which I have selected the foundation of this discourse shows us that the Lord requires of his people in proportion to the talents which he confers on them. The great body of christians may not be able to address public assemblies, but there is not one of them who may not tell his neighbour the way to heaven. Cannot the simplest man make known to others the ground on which he rests his own hope of salvation? If he knows the truth so as to be saved by it, he may declare it to others so as to save them. What can make it improper for an uneducated man to speak to

his companions on the one thing needful? Can he speak to them on matters of worldly business, and can he not speak to them on the truth that saves the soul? Can he teach the mysteries of his trade, and can he not teach the way in which God's justice and mercy harmonize in the justification of the ungodly by faith in Christ Jesus.

Uneducated christians, even the poorest, have in private life more favourable opportunities of communicating the gospel to their associates, than the most learned and the most elevated in rank. The manners of the world make it difficult, if not impossible, to introduce the gospel into certain circles. When the rich wish to preach the gospel, they must, in general, go to the poor. They seldom have access to the ear of their own circle. Even the highest christian nobility will find their efforts impeded by innumerable obstacles in the forms of life in the upper ranks. When God designed that Caesar, and the mighty men of Rome, should hear the gospel of Paul, he sent him as a prisoner to stand for his life before the emperor. Had Paul gone to Rome as a preacher, though he had been a Demosthenes, he might never have gained a hearing from Caesar. Priests and princes would have represented him merely as a fanatic, and the ear of majesty might never have heard the gospel from his lips. In proportion to a man's elevation in rank is he shut out from the gospel, and in this respect the poor have the highest privileges. They hear and are saved, while the rich and the mighty perish without hearing it, though it may sound every where around them. How is this manifested and confirmed by town missionaries. The word of life can be sent into the hovels of vice, while the lordly palace, which has perhaps more need of it, must be passed by. The poor are always accessible, and the poorest christian may have, every day, opportunities of declaring the truth, from which the highest christian may be excluded. If the people about him are wicked, still he may find means to gain their ear about the value of the soul, and the redemption that is in Christ. The poorest and

weakest member of a church may have access to innumerable persons from whom the pastor is entirely shut out; and will be heard when the pastor would give intolerable offence.

That deadly heresy which confines the preaching of the gospel to office conveyed by a certain succession, is an infernal machine for destroying the souls of men. It is one of the great artifices of Satan to spike the cannon on the gospel batteries. What can more effectually serve the kingdom of darkness than a conviction that it is a sin to proclaim the kingdom of light? But it is as unscriptural as it is irrational. The scriptures know nothing of such a succession. It is the invention of the man of sin, calculated to extinguish the light, and promote the empire of darkness. And whatever may be the mode of conveying office, the preaching of the gospel, either publicly or privately, is not confined to office. Every christian has a right to preach the gospel, and according to his abilities and his opportunities it is his duty to preach it. This vile dogma of Oxford is self-evidently false. If the gospel is true, can there be any danger of sin in proclaiming its truths? If the gospel is salvation, and if God wills the salvation of men, can it be sinful to tell them of that which saves from hell? What would you think of a senator who should rise up in the British senate house, declaring that no watchmen ought to be employed in the city of London, but those who have a regular succession from the watchmen who lived at the foundation of the city, and that, though the city were fired at innumerable points, no man had a right to cry " Fire, fire," but the legal watchmen! It is only in religion that the effusions of folly and absurdity are dignified as wisdom.

Nothing can be more clearly established from the history of the Acts of the Apostles, than that Christians, without exception, were employed in disseminating the gospel. Here the Spirit of inspiration refutes by anticipation that anti-christian heresy that confines the preaching of the gospel to office. Every christian may not be able to

make a long public discourse. Learned and talented men may not be able to do this at a moment. But to preach the gospel is no more than a declaration of the good news of salvation to the guiltiest of men, through faith in the atonement of Christ. He who knows how God can be just, yet the justifier of the ungodly, can preach the gospel at a moment's warning. Illiterate christians are not to affect eloquence, nor to stalk in the pomp of the schools. This, indeed, would be ridiculous. But what christian is there who may not in private speak the great things of God in his own manner? And though his language may be homely, it is suitable to those addressed, and, even if addressed to the most elevated in rank, may be blessed to the salvation of the soul. No man expects the graces of oratory from those who have no pretensions to them. It is only when illiterate men affect fine speaking that they become harlequins.

There is, perhaps, a tinge of Puseyism in the constitution of dissenting churches, which, in some measure, may tend to mar the progress of the gospel. While they trample on the pretensions of succession, they connect preaching inseparably with office. The right to preach must be given by those who are supposed to possess this power. To preach the gospel without this would be to touch the ark of God. To trace this out to its principles would bring us to Puseyism in its worst form, and one good result of the late extravagances of Oxford may be, to compel dissenters to entrench themselves in all things on Scripture grounds. No man can give authority to another to preach the gospel. No man has a right to restrain another from preaching the gospel. Every man has a right to exercise the talent which God has given him. No human authority can give a man a right to attempt anything which requires a talent which he does not possess.

Of the importance of the pastoral office I have the strongest conviction. It cannot be too highly valued when viewed in the light of Scripture. It is an ordinance of God, without which, when it is

attainable, a church cannot prosper. To dissenters, perhaps, there is as much need to inculcate a sense of its importance, as it is to others to prove that it is overvalued. If some deify their teachers, and swallow everything that is poured out of the pulpit, that is no reason why others should not highly respect them, and value their teaching, as far as it accords with the word of God. But it does not impair the importance of the pastoral office to assert that the preaching of the gospel belongs to all christians as far as they are qualified, and that the interest of Christ's kingdom requires that this be done as extensively as possible. As Moses said to Joshua when he was jealous for the honour of his master, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets;" so should we all say, "Would God that all the Lord's people were preachers of the gospel." Had all the people of Israel been prophets, it would not have affected the office of Moses, nor in the smallest degree have impaired his dignity. If all christians were employed in preaching the gospel, it would not render it unnecessary to have pastors in the churches, nor impair their true dignity. The true dignity of bishops consists in their qualifications—not on the forms of their appointment. All the authorities on earth could not make a man a bishop who does not possess the qualifications required in Scripture.

Now, dear brethren, if this is true, it is a point of vast importance for the prosperity of the cause of Christ. Let it, then, be reduced to practice. What a wonderful assistance it would be to pastors, if every member of the churches were through the week to avail himself of every opportunity of sowing the seed of the word! If every one felt himself bound to do something personally to convert sinners, how many more might be expected to be added to the churches! How widely are the members of a church scattered through the week, and with what a number of persons have they intercourse! If every one, then, were deeply impressed with the duty of bringing in recruits for the army of Christ, is it not likely that

there would be great success? I beseech you, then, dear brethren, as you love your master and the souls of men, arise to action. Soldiers of Christ, will you decline to use the weapons of the gospel? They will be mighty by the power of the mighty God.

3. My third observation is, that the duty of assisting in spreading the gospel must be viewed with reference to the different talents conferred on the people of God.

All may, in one way or other, do something; and if they avail themselves of their opportunities, the meanest of them may do much. But our present object requires that I should particularly refer to contributions for enabling the society to spread the gospel in foreign and distant countries. The present times are very unpropitious for raising money. The resources even of the wealthy are affected by the state of trade, while many of the poor of the churches may be in straits. But instead of being a reason to stand back, or to curtail, this ought to excite all who are able, to make double exertion. Let the rich curtail other expenses, and deny themselves rather than the cause of Christ. Let not their economy single out the gospel as a sacrifice. Let it have a fair dividend on the assets of the bankrupt. And the apostle Paul, by the example of one of the churches, shows us that even deep poverty may abound to the riches of liberality. In this the fiftieth year of its existence, the society, encouraged by its success, intends to make a great effort. Let every christian, then, do his duty. The poorest may do something; and if everyone does something, the aggregate will be a large sum. Would not the poorest member of the body of Christ desire to do something for the increase of the body? Who is it that would not wish a partnership in the firm? Jesus has no need of the widow's mite; yet he accepts it with the highest approbation.

If the poor may do something, those in better circumstances may do much. But this will greatly depend on the management of their affairs. In the arrangement of their expenses, the cause of Christ ought ever to be considered as an indispensable item. With respect to man it is voluntary; but they are under law to God in this as in all other things. When christians act upon the principle that nothing is to be done for the cause of God, till there is something of superabundance in their circumstances, they will never do much, and oftener they will do nothing at all. Let every one consider that even the man who works with his own hands, is to appropriate a share in the profits of his work for the taxes of the kingdom of Christ. Do justice, then, my brethren, to your Master. Come forward, and pay your taxes with cheerfulness. You have as good value for your money, as you have in the raiment with which you are clothed. The support of the gospel is your debt, as much as payment for your food. ..Bring this, then, my brethren, within. Your regular expenses, and you will pay it without difficulty, and without grudging. Every new tax imposed by the legislature, even the very taxes, the object of which you disapprove and abhor, you must pay. Will you not pay the taxes of Christ's kingdom, for an object dear to your hearts?

On the wealthy, however, the burthen must principally fall. But is this a grievance? Is it not the highest privilege? Who gave you what you possess? Who can make it a blessing to you? How ought you to exult if God has opened your hearts to honour him with your substance! Jesus said to a certain rich man, "Zacchaeus, come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." This day his providence says to every rich christian in this assembly, "I require a share of the good things which I have bestowed on you, that I may send my gospel to the heathen." Remember, he does not ask as one who needs. He asks as your liege Lord. He asks to prove your allegiance, and manifest your love to him and the souls for whom he suffered.

Is it not more blessed to give, than to receive? How many rich men squander thousands, and tens of thousands, on folly, and in abominable vices! How many spend princely revenues on the mere vanities of life! How many noble estates are ruined by gambling and debauchery! These are the fools. They are fools for both worlds. But is he a fool whose heart inclines him to make a noble gift to the cause of the Redeemer, for the spreading of that gospel that brings glory to God and salvation to man? This is the wise man. His treasure is not dissipated; it is laid up in heaven, where moth cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal.

In addressing the Baptists of England, there is no need of rebuke with respect to liberality. On the contrary, not to praise, would be as injurious to the gospel as it would be unjust to the many instances of noble-minded liberality. The body, in general, are doing well: many of them have done nobly. Let them hear this praise from their brethren, as they will have their reward from their Lord. Let the example be imitated; and let those who have done well, not be weary in well doing. If any wealthy christians among you have hitherto kept back, let them now come forward, and press to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Let every resource be put in requisition. Your views of the kingdom of Christ and his ordinances, exclude you in a great measure from the co-operation of the great bulk of christians. You must support this war yourselves, or allow the troops to leave the field in dishonour. Show, then, that as God has hitherto enabled you to do the work, you are still willing to carry it on, as he may assist you. Can there be a greater honour than that your Master has assigned you this work? You have begun the assault on the kingdom of darkness; you have carried it on with signal success; will you not ask God, as the greatest favour, that you may be honoured to fight till the whole world shall be put in subjection to your Lord? Now is the day of arduous contest. Your troops are pressing on the enemy. Will you hold them back from victory by

cutting off their supplies? You have unfurled the banners of the cross in many a distant clime; let them wave victoriously till the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

I have never felt conviction from the attempts that are sometimes made to settle by invariable rule the proportion of the wealth of a christian to be given to the cause of Christ. One thing appears evident, that it has a reference to the calls that the providence of God makes on us, and to the cheerful spirit of liberality that he bestows on us. Nothing is to be given grudgingly; and sometimes a wealthy christian may not see objects on which he can conscientiously spend his money, even when he is eager to discover them. He may be like the great capitalist, solicitous to employ his capital, but unable to find any safe and profitable speculation. We may conceive circumstances where a christian may be obliged to pray for a field on which to occupy his talent. It is not christian liberality, but fanatical prodigality, to expend money on doubtful objects, lest capital should increase. When a new country is open to our commerce, the capitalist soon avails himself of the opportunity of employing his capital to advantage ; and when a door is opened for the gospel, the wealth of the people of God may be employed to great profit. Happily, on the present occasion, there is no need of doubt or speculation on this subject. Since Jesus was on earth, there has not been a time in which a wider door was opened for the gospel than is now opened. Press forward, then, ye wealthy christians, and embark your capital in this good cause. Here the prodigality of liberality is economy. Here is safe and profitable employment for your capital. You have done great things; continue to do great things. God has opened a door to you that was shut to former ages.

4. Another observation is, that a church, in its meetings for its own edification, ought to have constantly in view the conversion of sinners.

It is necessary that churches be taught all things that Jesus has commanded. All the doctrines, and laws, and ceremonies of the house of God are to have due attention in their proper places. But it ought never to be forgotten, in any meeting of the saints, that the gospel, in one way or other, should be exhibited for the salvation of those who have not yet believed. Without this, how can sinners be brought to the knowledge of the truth? How can we be clear of their blood, if we allow them to depart without showing them the way of the remission of sin? To-day I may be discoursing of some duty or ordinance of Christ. Let me, then, keep to my subject. But if in some part of the sermon I cannot find an opening to tell sinners the way to heaven, I am but a bungling workman. Why is a church called the pillar of the truth, if it is not a finger-board, constantly pointing to heaven? Refuge, refuge, ought to be so plainly inscribed on it, that he that runs may read.

In this view there is an admirable wisdom in the appointment of Jesus in the observance of the Lord's supper every first day of the week. In this ordinance "Jesus Christ is evidently set before us as crucified for us." Here the gospel is presented to the eyes as well as to the ears. Would it be any loss to them, if all the churches of Christ were to return to this primitive practice?

If a church of Christ is thoroughly alive and active, the gospel will sound out from it even among those who have never been present at its meetings. Many will be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and die in the faith of the Lord Jesus, who will never be united with the church on earth. We ought to be careful, then, that while we are not ashamed of any part of the will of God, nor backward to teach it on proper occasions, the truth that saves the

soul be the chief object of our zeal. The most scriptural order will not profit, without a clear and pure gospel. Let us aim to be more distinguished for our profound views of truth, than for zeal for our own peculiarities, however scriptural they may be. Our finger should ever point to the new and living way into the presence of God, through the blood of his dear Son. This is the only thing that can ever make true converts. In this way the churches that sprinkle any country, will gradually approximate, like different fires in a forest, till at last they will meet in one universal flame. "From you," says Paul to the Thessalonians, "sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad." Every church is a missionary society of the most effectual kind, if it is truly a candlestick to hold up the light to the world. This, however, does not interfere with the necessity of combined effort to send the gospel to distant lands, or even the land in which we live. In the times of the apostles both resources were employed. Every speculation that throws obstacles in the way of the spreading of the gospel, or tends to divert the efforts of the soldiers of Christ in extending the kingdom of their Lord, must be of Satan, though it should speak as an angel of light. What a perverted conscience it must be that fears to offend God by cooperating in extending the knowledge of salvation?

5. A fifth observation on this subject is this—we ought not to think it enough to labour zealously ourselves individually, we should endeavour to communicate the same spirit of zeal to all our brethren with whom we come in contact.

Some people have a happy talent for setting all around them to work, and of diffusing a spirit of zeal among the people of God. You cannot be in their company without catching some of their fire. This is a most important talent, and should be diligently cultivated where

it is possessed. Constant reflection on the miserable state of the world without the knowledge of Christ, will always in some degree communicate it, and every opportunity of employing it ought to be improved. In this way we may have a share in the glory of the labours and success of others. Brethren, then, in your intercourse with each other, let it be your aim to excite one another's zeal. We are all prone to sleep, and we have need of being constantly kept awake by mutual encouragement.

But it is in public addresses that this spirit can be most effectually communicated. An audience, if not under the influence of prejudice, or of an unfavourable bias, is from sympathy naturally disposed to catch the feelings of the speaker; and if he convinces their judgment, he has a ready access to their hearts. The wonderful adaptation of the ordinances of a church of Christ to the constitution of man, is evidence that they are from God. While no indulgence is given to either superstition or fanaticism, every principle of human nature has its proper operation. The living voice is the most powerful instrument to move the heart of man ; and in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, the living voice is most powerfully employed. Men are more impressed with what they hear, than with what they read.

Let the pastors of the churches especially, then, avail themselves of their peculiar advantages in this respect. Let their souls burn with zeal, and the same spirit will be communicated to the brethren. One of the most important duties of a general is to keep up the order of the soldiers. Devotedness and zeal in an army, is of much more importance than numbers. If a minister of Christ, by his address to the church over which he labours, succeeds in kindling the zeal of the brethren, how much might be effected before the end of the day on which he addresses them? Onward, then, onward, fellow-soldiers; fight, and press forward others to the fight.

6. My sixth observation is, that should a christian be so unhappily situated as to stand alone in any place, he must not year to encounter the enemy.

One man may engage with a host without the charge of rashness. There is never any propriety in saying, "I am but an individual, what good can I do?" You may do much good. Were you the only christian in a kingdom, you might fight the battles of the Lord with success. This is an amazing peculiarity in the christian warfare. What is the duty of the soldiers of Christ, might be imprudence and recklessness in the soldiers of a temporal kingdom. When a body of troops are so outnumbered that there is no rational hope of success, their duty, not only to themselves, but to their country, and to their sovereign, calls on them to surrender. But there is no surrender in the christian warfare. A single christian must stand against the world. He may die; but he will conquer. Faith in the God of Israel stirred up Jonathan, with his armour-bearer, to attack all the hosts of the Philistines. If this was not faith, it was madness. It was not madness, but faith; for the God of Israel gave him victory and immortal glory. "There is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few."

Christian soldiers, here is scope for the prodigality of heroism. Here is encouragement for the brave souls which burn with zeal to do exploits in the cause of the Lord Jesus. Have you not read of the deeds of the mighty men of David? Have you not been fired with emulation of their heroism? Is there no man among you who will dare to lift up his spear against eight hundred men? Where is the race of heroes? Are the soldiers of the Son of David dwindled down into a race of little men? Not so, not so, my fellow-soldiers; we have men who have lifted up their spears against thousands. Our brave comrades in the east and in the west, have exceeded the heroism of the heroes of David. Imitate their example at home, and bear down

with impetuosity upon the enemy. Infidelity and fanaticism, Puseyism and spurious philosophy, are rallying the troops of hell. Charge furiously among them, and drive them off the field, or trample them on it.

“THE WRETCH WHO TREMBLES ON THE FIELD OF FAME,
MEETS DEATH, OR WORSE THAN DEATH, ETERNAL SHAME.”

If you stand alone in a court or in a coal-pit, in a senate or in a workshop, aim at the conversion of all about you. If you make but one convert, that one will make others, and there is no end to the increase. The leaven will be continually spreading, and thousands and tens of thousands may be brought to glory by this beginning of victory. Up then, my fellow-soldiers; gird on your armour; assail the foe. Think of the deeds of the men of David.

7. Another observation on the subject is, that an ardent spirit of prayer is essential to the prosperity of the churches, and the success of their missions.

In examining the documents with respect to the origin of the Baptist Missionary Society, I was happy to find that the institution originated in a spirit of prayer, and was throughout cherished by it. This proved the thing to be of God. All success depends on the Almighty arm. Not only can we not do great things without him, but without him we can do nothing. We could no more, without the operation of the Spirit of God, convert the soul of a single man, than we could remove the mountains into the midst of the sea. It is God who at first shone out of darkness, shines into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When the Lord intends to do great things for his people, he usually pours out on them a spirit of prayer to ask great things from him.

How much Paul valued the prayers of the saints, is seen from his letters to the churches. He entreats the brethren to pray for him, and the success of the gospel in his hands. "Finally, my brethren," says Paul to the Thessalonians, "pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men."—2 Thess. iii. 1. Paul was equally distinguished for praying for the brethren. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."—Col. i. 9, 10. Should not, then, constant prayer be made by the churches for the success of their missions, and for the opening of the world to the gospel of God?

8. I would call your attention to another observation, which is, that it is God who opens a door for the gospel in any place; and when God opens a door, it should be entered.

Paul tells us, that a door was opened to him of the Lord at Troas; and that a great and effectual door was opened to him at Ephesus, which induced him to remain there for some time. Now, as God has opened many doors to your society, is it not your duty to enter and occupy? Is not this a call from your great Lord to advance and mount the breach which he has opened in the enemy's walls? Could any command be given in more intelligible language? Press forward, then, ye devoted men, who have given yourselves to the Lord, to make his name known among the heathen. Fear not to enter the door that the Captain of Salvation hath opened to you. Come forward, ye redeemed of the Lord, and enable the soldiers of the cross to take the field. When your sovereign has so clearly intimated his pleasure,

would it not be a breach of your allegiance to decline acting? Should one of her majesty's generals decline entering a besieged city, when it was proved penetrable, would he not be condemned by a court-martial? His life and his honour would be the forfeit of his treason. Is less to be expected from the soldier of the cross? Enter, then, me fellow-soldiers; enter the breach that God has made before your eyes in the walls of the enemy.

9. Thy last observation which I shall submit to your consideration on this subject is, that they who preach the gospel, especially to ignorant heathens, should do it not only in all godly sincerity, but in all plainness and simplicity.

I am convinced that nothing more powerfully mars the effect of the gospel, even where it is preached in truth, than an affectation of eloquence and of deep research. Theological writings have for some time appeared to aim at an abstruse, metaphysical, and technical phraseology, as if the object were to conceal rather than illustrate. It is still worse if this style is brought into the pulpit. A book may be read a second time, but if an audience does not catch the meaning as it flies, it is lost for ever. On philosophical subjects, let us speak as philosophers; but in speaking on the great things of God, let our aim be to be understood. Let us use the utmost plainness. If we are not understood, we cannot be useful. It is by entering the understanding that the gospel succeeds. Every effort, then, ought to be made, that the most ignorant may apprehend the meaning. How awful is it to occupy our mind about the glitter of words, in speaking to ignorant sinners about the way of escaping the wrath to come through the redemption of Christ Jesus? It is loathsome in the sight of God; it is contemptible in the estimation of every sensible man. Who would think of dazzling expressions in directing perishing mariners to a way of escape from a shipwreck. The language that is likely to be

most intelligible is always to be preferred; and that language would be suggested by the occasion to a heart that feels. Even in point of eloquence, the most essential quality in style is perspicuity. Nothing can be eloquent that is not intelligible to those addressed. The man who makes his audience understand him most easily, is always the best speaker; and it is not necessary to be either quaint or vulgar, in order to be interesting even to the lowest of the people. Mountebank extravagance is as much to be avoided as a jargon of metaphysics: it is unworthy of the subject, and it is not necessary to arrest the attention even of the careless. Look at the discourses of Jesus. Was ever language so perspicuous? Was ever eloquence so insinuating and commanding? His figurative language was taken from the most common objects; but it was never mean. It never wanted dignity. He affected no oddity or extravagance of manner or diction; yet he always commanded attention. It was impossible not to listen to him. Innumerable multitudes pressed to hear him; and while his enemies gnashed on him with their teeth, they could not keep themselves from hearing him.

I would, then, earnestly entreat my younger brethren, who have an eye to the ministry, to attend to this observation. I would press it also on those who have the responsible duty of selecting missionaries. He who cannot make himself understood by his audience—he who cannot command it, is not gifted for public usefulness. More is to be expected from the most unpolished speaker, when he is urged on by a burning zeal for the salvation of sinners, than from the most brilliant diction, when its object appears to be to captivate the imagination.

This obstacle to the success of the gospel was anticipated by the spirit of inspiration, and Paul reprehends it with the most indignant zeal. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." Here we see that even the cross of Christ, or the true

gospel, will be made unsuccessful by an affectation of human eloquence. It is worthy of consideration how much of the want of success in the preaching of the gospel, by the servants of Christ, is owing to this wisdom of words. If Paul's gospel is presented to the world in a dress in which Paul would not exhibit it, lest it should thereby become ineffectual, is it to be wondered that the cause should still produce the dreaded effect ?" And I, brethren," says the same apostle to the same people, "when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Permit me now to present to you some of the encouragements to the vigorous prosecution of the work in which you have, for the last fifty years, been engaged. It will be profitable to contemplate these, however familiar we may be with them, in order to incite us to renewed and more strenuous efforts. We must, from time to time, bring under our contemplation the things which we most fully know, if we wish to be affected by them, in order to more vigorous action. This is the great use of the ordinances of Christ; this is the great use of such meetings as the present. The wild boar bridles his back, and whets his tusks, for the attack; and the lion lashes his sides to raise his fury for the onset. And shall not we inflame our zeal in the cause of Christ by the contemplation of the encouragements which we have for vigorous effort?

1. The first encouragement which I shall mention is, that God has already accepted you in the work, and not only blessed you, but eminently blessed you with success.

Your missions are prosperous. What greater encouragement to support them with alacrity and redoubled effort! This is an answer to the antichristian arrogance that asks for your commission, and would exclude you from the field of labour. You have no right, says the man of Oxford, to preach the gospel; you have not the succession. Down, thou child of superstition! Jesus, by blessing our labours, says you speak what is false. He has set his seal to our commission. He has appeared at the head of our missions in every part of the world. Your answer, my brethren, to them that trouble you is this: Has not God honoured us to do his work? Does he not thus own us as his servants? This is the ground on which Paul himself rests the defence of his apostleship against the Puseyites of his time. "If I be not an apostle unto others," says he to the Corinthians, "yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."

Your converts in India, in the West Indies, and in other places, are your evidence that the great head of the church has put you into commission for the enlargement of his kingdom. You have the very proof of being sent of God, on which Paul relies in his own case. Thousands of the children of Satan, through your means, have become the children of God. The apostle John says of Demetrius, that he had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself. How is it that a servant of God has good report of the truth? Is it not by the truth's prospering in his hands? When the truth preached by him is received by sinners, the truth gives its testimony in favour of the

preacher. You have this proof of your commission, my brethren. You have carried the gospel into places where the name of Christ was not known or heard; you have translated the Scriptures, or parts of them, into languages spoken by more than five hundred millions of men; you have been signally successful in propagating the gospel. Is not this an answer sufficient to all who trouble you about your commission? This is the broad seal of heaven. You can afford to leave succession, with other endless genealogies, to the man of sin.

2. Another encouragement is to be found in the providence of God with respect to your missions.

You are comparatively but a small denomination; yet your missions have been well supported. God has furnished you with missionaries, and supplied you with money. You have had men to offer themselves to go down the shaft, and others with a strong hand have held the ropes. Now, had not both these things combined, your undertaking must have failed. There must be men to take the field, and money to support -them in it. Here Jesus appears as the God of providence. The Spirit of God stirred up Carey and his associates to jeopard their lives in this novel expedition. Did the exploit of Jonathan and his armour-bearer manifest a bolder faith? If the latter was of the suggestion of the Spirit of God, so, doubtless, was the former. Who put it into the heart of those missionaries to go to such a country as India? India was at first shut against them. Who opened it? The arm of the Lord was with your missionaries, as it was with Jonathan in the destruction of the enemies of Israel.

But it was not enough that men were raised up fitted for the work of missionaries, and ardent to undertake it; there must be means to supply their wants in this undertaking. Can this be expected in a single denomination of dissenters? Here we see the finger of God. Divine providence shows that all things are

conducted with a view to the kingdom of Christ. In this Jesus manifests that he is the ruler of the world. The silver and the gold are his, and he commands them as fully as his cause needs them. He bestows upon his people what his work requires. It is found, that in this unpopular denomination of dissenters, there is wealth sufficient to sustain their missions, and a heart inclined to bestow it. God either takes rich ones from the world, or he makes his people rich, that they may expend it in the support and extension of his kingdom. Brethren, had you missionaries without means of supporting them, or means without missionaries, your work must stop. God has given you both amply sufficient, if you have the grace to use them. If there is any individual present whose heart inclines him to the work of a missionary, let him take encouragement from this. It is God who stirs up the hearts of his people to devote themselves to his service. Fear not, then, to do that which is in thy heart. And let wealthy brethren consider who it is that has given them their substance, and for what purpose he has given it. They are the stewards of the Lord; let them be faithful. Is it not an honour, brethren, that the Lord has given you so high a trust, as to make you his treasurers? Many of you have done nobly. Your names will justly be had in everlasting remembrance. See that profligate, who, in a frolic, or a gambling-house, or in debauchery, has spent tens and hundreds of thousands. How ought you to bless God, who has given you a heart to spend thousands in the propagation of the gospel! See that man of vanity, or of pleasure, who wastes whole estates on idle show, or the gratification of beastly appetites; and with the revenues of a prince is more straitened than his menial servants. Should you not bless God, that he has shown you the true use of riches; and that to expend them liberally in the cause of Christ, is to lay up treasure in heaven? Brethren, look around you in the world, and tell me how many worldly rich men make a good use of their riches, even as it respects this world. Are there many who use them for the purpose for which

they are fitted, as respects temporal happiness, without reference to a world to come? I consider riches a blessing in themselves, and a great blessing when rightly used. It is not christianity, but fanaticism, that despises them. The christian who possesses them, has innumerable ways of employing them, that will tell on all the ages of eternity. But were there neither a heaven nor a hell, many rich men are fools. They are not lords of their wealth, but their wealth is their lord. Is it not a great blessing then, my rich brethren, if God has given you grace to make a fair estimate of your wealth, and to employ it for its proper purpose? It is a noble triumph, to triumph over that which triumphs over the whole world.

In the building of the tabernacle, there were found with the people of Israel, coming out of the slavery of Egypt, all the materials for the work; and God gave skill to the workmen to do everything in perfection, in all the various arts. And is it not God who has provided funds for your missions, and missionaries possessed of skill and zeal to undertake the work?

Mark, also, my brethren, the providence of God in the accidental stationing of your missionaries. God, by his providence, has sent them to the places for which he fitted them, as if the thing had been done by inspiration. The talents of the missionaries of the West Indies have been remarkably adapted to their work. Those lion-hearted men no dangers could affright. Their christian heroism gave christianity and liberty to the slave. In like manner the learning and acquirements of those in the East Indies, fitted them to translate the Scriptures, in which they have succeeded, and in which they are still employed with every prospect of success. Does God rule the world? If so, then is God at the head of the Baptist Missionary Society.

3. Another source of encouragement you have in the fact, that your society has been the occasion of originating many other societies for spreading the gospel at home and abroad. In this way

you will have a share of the glory and the reward of others who have nobly copied your noble example. In this way you may expect that your increased zeal will increase the zeal of others, and that the extension of your labours will issue in inducing others to extend their labours. In this fact I am convinced you have unfeigned delight. If there is any man among us who does not rejoice in seeing all denominations of christians girding on their armour, and flying to the standard of the cross in the field of battle, we will consent that he shall be called a bigot. God speed the efforts of every man as far as he has the truth of God with him. No farther. Not an inch farther. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, even when it was done through envy and strife. How much more ought we to rejoice, when the origin of our society has been the occasion of originating a multitude of others, influenced by the love of Christ and the love of souls? The most unbounded liberality does not imply a tittle of relaxation in our zeal for any part of the truth of God. We should not conceal our views of the importance of the purity of the faith, order, and ordinances of the kingdom of God; nor cease to urge them on our brethren who think differently. Not to do this would be a breach of the command that requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves. That man is a knave, or a hypocrite, who believes his own views in any matter to be scriptural, yet professes to be careless whether others receive them. But if we cannot bring others to our mind, the next thing is to endeavour that all christians should do good as far as their system will allow them; and especially that all be employed in spreading the gospel. Just in proportion as this is done, our own boundaries are enlarged; for all christians have one kingdom, however they may differ about the order and law of it. The most fervent zeal for every part of the truth of God, is in perfect accordance with unbounded forbearance towards all the people of God. This we ought to manifest to the world, that unbelievers may see, that while Christ's people have different views in many things,

there is one thing in which they are all united. This would have a powerful tendency to remove a stumbling-block out of the way of ungodly men, who, from the many divisions among christians, rashly conclude that there is no truth in christianity. This would also add much to our own happiness. If a christian can take no pleasure in contemplating the good done by persons of a different denomination, he will be deprived of all that enjoyment which arises from viewing the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, the salvation of multitudes of sinners, and the spreading of the glory of Immanuel. The man who looks on all christians as one body, though in this world torn asunder by ignorance and waywardness, considers the success of others as his own gain. Every sinner rescued from destruction, by any denomination whatever, is the riches of the whole body of Christ. Brethren, I yield to no man in zeal for baptism; but baptism is not my gospel. I love all who love Christ. I wish to rouse the zeal of every christian to strive for the faith of the gospel, and bring down the kingdom of Satan.

But, my brethren, I find in your denomination no occasion of rebuke on this subject. Instead of envying the efforts even of the very men who are striving to drive you out of India, I know you wish them success, as far as they love God's truth. Their superstition you cannot approve; and you should not affect not to loathe and abhor it. It is unchristian; it is antichristian. Expose it freely; war against it with your whole heart. But if souls are brought to Christ by any man, there is joy in heaven, and why should there not be joy with us? Whilst you follow your own views in doing the will of your Lord, be ready to cheer the efforts of all the soldiers of Christ, when they face the common enemy. Take encouragement in your own work from the fact, that God has excited the zeal of his people of every denomination to put his Son in possession of the world. This is a sign that he intends to conquer. Will a sovereign raise immense armies, and bring them into the field with all munitions of war,

when he has no intention to use them? The cannon from a thousand batteries are playing on the enemy: soon we shall hear "Victory, victory!"

Not only are we to be encouraged in our work by the fact, that all God's people are at work; we ought to be incited to double effort by the fact, that the devil's people are also at work with all activity and eagerness. Superstition and fanaticism, infidelity and false philosophy, are raging like a flame in a forest. The troops of hell are threatening to bear down all before them. Up, then, my brave fellow-soldiers; up, and at them.

4. Another encouragement to zeal in this work is, that every man, however weak and poor, may do great things, if he is thoroughly devoted to the Lord.

All Christ's servants have not great talents, but every one of them has some talent; and if this is occupied to the best advantage, it is capable of an immense increase, and of effecting glorious things. The prospect of rising to distinction in the army of Christ is open to every soldier. Many a soldier in the ranks may have more of the soldier in his soul, than has the general who commands him. But usually the lot that first casts a man into the ranks, will keep him there for ever. Even in those armies in which all rise by merit, the bulk must remain in their situation for want of talents. But in the army of Christ there is not only nothing to prevent a soldier from rising; every soldier has a talent, which, if zealously cultivated, will bring him into distinction before his Lord. Flaming zeal and diligence can never be disappointed. Success in forwarding the cause of Christ in an eminent degree, is within the reach of the weakest talents, and of the poorest lot in life. Entire devotedness to the Lord will make even a simpleton useful. There is work which he cannot do, but his Lord has provided work which he may do, and do

greatly to the glory of God. Fellow-soldiers, is not this encouragement for heroism? Whatever may be your station, or talents, if your whole souls are in the work of Christ, you may do great things.

5. The last source of encouragement which I shall present to you is, that your reward will be according to your labour.

Can you wish greater encouragement? Some have alleged that this doctrine fosters a legal spirit; but this is an utter misconception. It urges us to labour not for our justification or acceptance with God, but for a high share of the reward which Jesus has promised to labour. Believers are justified without any respect to their works by faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ; but by the appointment of Christ, they are to receive their reward according to their works. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labours."

My brethren, had we such a prospect for glory from our exertions in this world, how very diligent should we be! Yet how worthless would be this glory compared with that of the man of God! Should each become a Rothschild, a Newton, or a Wellington, our glories would soon decay. The laurels placed on our head by the hand of man soon fade; but those conferred by Christ bloom in an eternal spring. Your crown is an incorruptible crown. If earthly distinctions will urge to undergo labour, and toil, and sufferings, ought not labours, and toils, and sufferings to be despised, when we look to the crown of glory that fadeth not away? Do not your hearts bound, when you anticipate the rule over ten cities? Were Jesus visibly at our head, should we not covet opportunities of displaying our valour and devotedness in his service? Where is our faith? Is not the eye of Jesus for ever upon us? He will not forget the work and labour of love. Occupy, then, my brethren, till he comes. The

kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord. We have received orders to put him in possession. Let the trumpet sound to battle. Raise high the banners of the cross. Engage the enemy in every part of the world. "Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

THE END.

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