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BIOGRAPHY.

SOME ACCOUNT OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON, a most celebrated English philosopher and mathematician, and one of the greatest geniusses that ever appeared in the world, was descended from an ancient family in Lincolnshire, where he was born in the year 1642. His powers of mind were wonderfully comprehensive and penetrating. Fontenelle says of him; "that in learning mathematics he did not study Euclid, who seemed to him too plain and simple, and unworthy of taking up his time. He understood him almost before he read him: a cast of his eye on the contents of the theorems of that great mathematician, seemed to be sufficient to make him master of them." Several of his works mark a profundity of thought and reflection, that has astonished the most learned men. He was highly esteemed by the university of Cambridge; and was twice chosen to represent that place in parliament. He was also greatly favored by queen Anne, and by George the first. The princess of Wales afterwards queen consort of England, who had a turn for philosophical inquiries, used frequently to propose questions to him. This princess had a great

regard for him; and often declared, that she thought herself happy to live at the same time as he did, and to have the pleasure and advantage of his conversation.

This eminent philosopher was remarkable for being of a very meek disposition, and a great lover of peace. He would rather have chosen to remain in obscurity, than to have the serenity of his days disturbed by those storms and disputes, which genius and learning often draw upon those who are eminent for them. We find him reflecting on the controversy respecting his optic lectures, (in which he had been almost unavoidably engaged,) in the following terms: "I blamed my own imprudence, for parting with so real a blessing as my quiet, to run after a shadow."

The amiable quality of modesty stands very conspicuous in the character of this great man's mind and manners. He never spoke, either of himself or others, in such a manner, as to give the most malicious censurers the least occasion even to suspect him of vanity. He was candid and affable; and he did not assume any airs of superiority over those with whom he associated.

He never thought either his merit or his reputation, sufficient to excuse him from any of the common offices of social life. Though he was firmly attached to the church of England, he was averse to the persecution of the Non-conformists. He judged of men by their conduct: and the true schismatics, in his opinion, were the vicious and the wicked. This liberality of sentiment did not spring from the want of religion; for he was thoroughly persuaded of the truth of Revelation; and amidst the great variety of books, which he had constantly before him, that which he loved the best, and studied with the greatest application, was the Bible. He was, indeed, a truly pious man: and his discoveries concerning the frame and system of the universe, were applied by him to demonstrate the being of a God, and to illustrate his power and wisdom. He also wrote an excellent discourse, to prove that the remarkable prophecy of Daniel's weeks, was an express prediction of the coming of the Messiah, and that it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The testimony of the pious and learned Dr. Doddridge to the most interesting part of this great man's character, cannot be omitted on the present occasion. "According to the best information," says he, "whether public or private, I could ever obtain, his firm faith in the divine Revelation discovered itself in the most genuine fruits of substantial virtue and piety; and consequently gives us the justest reason to conclude, that he is now rejoicing in the happy effects of it, infinitely more than in all the applause which his philosophical

works have procured him, though they have commanded a fame lasting as the world."

The disorder of which he died, was supposed to be the stone in the bladder; which was, at times, attended with so severe paroxysms, as to occasion large drops of sweat to run down his face. In these trying circumstances, he was never heard to utter the least complaint, nor to express the least impatience.

He departed this life in the eighty-fifth year of his age; and in his principles and conduct through life, has left a strong and comfortable evidence, that the highest intellectual powers harmonize with religion and virtue; and that there is nothing in christianity, but what will abide the scrutiny of the soundest and most enlarged understanding.

How great and satisfactory a confirmation is it to the sincere, humble Christian, and what an insurmountable barrier does it present to the infidel, to perceive in the list of Christian believers, the exalted and venerable names of Bacon, Boyle, Locke, Newton, Addison, and Lyttelton! men who must be acknowledged to be ornaments of human nature, when we consider the wide compass of their abilities, the great extent of their learning and knowledge, and the piety, integrity, and beneficence of their lives. These eminent characters firmly adhered to the belief of christianity, after the most diligent and exact researches into the life of its Founder, the authenticity of its records, the completion of its prophecies, the sublimity of its doctrines, the purity of its precepts, and the arguments of its adversaries.

Murray.

Such is that faith, which is the term of acceptance with God in the covenant of grace. It is a direct act of love and obedience; and expresses a right frame of spirit. It is the spirit of Christ, and unites us to him, the *true vine*, as his spiritual branches; and as such, it is the appointed term of adoption into God's family, as heirs and coheirs with Christ, who is accepted and justified:—"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Our faith, however, is not the procuring cause of righteousness, nor does it work the righteousness of the law; but is that act, by which, we have spiritual and real union to Christ, both in the temper of our minds, and in a covenant relation, and so, are one in him, as he and the Father are one. In virtue of this union, what Christ has done, as our sponsor or mystical head, we are accounted as doing. As is the vine, so are the branches. Is Christ justified, so are his members, "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Abiding and acting in him, we have his obedience accounted to us: It is the obedience of his mystical body. Accordingly, St. Paul says, "The law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." The law viewing the believer in Christ, sees no fault and acquits him, and the judge must pronounce sentence of justification.

To sum up the whole in a word, by a divine and gracious appointment, our faith constitutes us spiritual members of Christ. He, as federal head of fallen man, has,

by his obedience and death, attained to the righteousness of the law, and is justified. His justification, according to the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, extends to all his spiritual members; therefore, all that are united to him by faith, are justified with him.

May we have grace, in all things, to adorn the doctrines of God our Savior, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

— JOB.

ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST,
NO. 9.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

IV. CHRIST acknowledges the Father to be the only true God. John xvii. 3.

Answer. Since there is but one true God, each person in the godhead is that *one only true God*. But it is not said that the *Father only* is the true God exclusively of the other persons of the divine Trinity; nor will these words of Christ support us in saying so.

V. It is objected that Christ disclaims some perfections of the Supreme God. Now if he wants any perfection essential to the Deity, he is not God in the highest sense.

Answer. As we allow this consequence, so we think it may as justly be concluded, that if Christ has any perfection truly divine, then he is truly God, and does not want any essential perfection. And as we have endeavored to prove that divine perfections are ascribed to him, we will now consider whether any essential perfection is disclaimed by him, or denied to

him. I say, *essential perfection* of the Deity. For it is allowed that there are *personal attributes*, such as unbegotten, only begotten, &c. by which the divine persons are distinguished. But the essential attributes of Deity are, we conceive possessed by the Son of God. And we shall now consider what is urged to the contrary.

1. It is said that Christ disclaims omnipotency, when he says John v. 19, I can do nothing of myself. Surely this is not the voice of a God, but of a man.

Answer. But he says also in the same verse "What things soever the Father doth, the same also doth the Son likewise." This I think is the voice of a God, and not of a mere man. He who doth all things that the Father doth must be almighty. Besides, it has been shown that he is almighty both from his titles and his works.

When Christ says that he can do nothing of himself, his meaning may be that he does nothing of himself separately, without the concurrence and co-operation of the Father. They are united in operation, as well as in essence. Or rather, Christ here speaks as Mediator, an office which he holds and executes under the Father, and agreeably to his commandment. But his condescending to become the servant of God for our sakes is no evidence that he is not by nature God Almighty. As the Son of God, and Mediator, he received all from the Father. And it was fit, that what Christ received from the Father be ascribed to him, as the Fountain of all power and perfection.

It is objected that Christ disclaimed absolute goodness; rebuking the young man who called him *good master*; adding, there is none good but one, that is God.

Answer. The words of Christ "Why callest thou me good," seem to have been spoken by way of inquiry, rather than rebuke, and to admonish him that, to call one absolutely good, was a higher expression of honor than was proper for a mere man, and that he should not have called him good master unless he meant to honor him as God. And if Christ had spoken in a way of reproof for his giving him a title, which properly belonged to God alone, kneeling before him in a worshipping posture, while he viewed him but as a mere man, I see not that this implies a disclaiming any divine perfections, though he would not receive idolatrous honors from one who believed him to be but a man.

It is also objected that Christ was not omniscient, and therefore was not God in the highest sense. For he owned that he knew not the day, or hour of his second coming, but that this was known to the Father only. Mark xiii. 32.

This seems to be one of the most considerable objections, that I have met with. And it has been supported and pressed with great acuteness and spirit. Let us see if this *dignus vindice nodus* can be untied.

Here let it be remembered, that it is testified of Christ, that he knew all things. The apostles had told him so, nor did he intimate that this was their mistake. It is also certain that he has that knowledge, which qualifies him

to be the Governor and Judge of the world. He has that knowledge which according to the Scriptures is peculiar to God, even the knowledge of the hearts of all the children of men. But what is alleged in the objection looks like a contradiction to it. How can these seeming contradictions be reconciled.

The common answer, (and I know no better) is to this effect, Christ being a true man as well as God, his human nature was subject to the imperfection of a finite being. His knowledge was limited. His human mind at that time knew not the day or hour of his coming. It was not then revealed to him as man. Though as God he knew all things, yet a human mind is not capable of omniscience. And the time of his coming, and the end of the world was not to be known by men, and so was not revealed to Christ as the prophet who was sent into the world to teach mankind. The knowledge which he had as teacher was such, as qualified him to execute this office according to the orders he had received. And he might truly say that as a man, instructed to teach his disciples the words of eternal life, he knew not what they inquired for.

But to this it is strenuously objected,

1. That this distinction of two natures is not intimated in these discourses of Christ.

I answer, The Scriptures testify that Christ is God, and that he is man. This is more than intimation, it is a plain proof that he has two distinct natures.

If it is impossible for the same nature to be less than fifty years old, and yet older than Abra-

ham, when Abraham had been long dead; if a mere man cannot at the same time be in distant places, in heaven and earth; if every thing could not be made by a mere man who had no existence till long after the world was created; if it is impossible, that a mere man should be God over all, blessed for ever, sustain the peculiar names, titles, and attributes of the Supreme Being, do those works which are peculiar to him, and be the object of religious worship to angels and men, then Christ, of whom all these things are affirmed, had a nature distinct from the human. And it is in vain for any to say that this is a mere shift, a cunning invention of men.

2. It is objected, that Christ could not truly say that he knew not the day of judgment, if he knew it as God. For though we may affirm a thing of a person which belongs only to a part of him, yet we cannot truly deny any thing of a person, if it belong to any part of him.

I answer, Christ might truly say that he knew not the day of judgment, though as God he was omniscient, if this had not been revealed to his human understanding, and if it were sufficiently evident that he meant only to disclaim this knowledge in respect of his human mind. Expressions are true, if the intended meaning of them is true, and sufficiently obvious. And the intended meaning of language is often determined, not barely from the words separately taken, but from the words compared with the known character of the speaker, the subject to which they have relation, with other circumstances. Now supposing

Christ to be God (which as respondent I have a right to suppose, especially after the arguments which have been adduced in proof of it) taking it also for granted that he was a man, it must now be plain and obvious that if one who is God and man shall own himself ignorant of any thing, he must mean not that he is ignorant of it as God, for God is omniscient, but that he is ignorant of it as man whose knowledge is limited. Therefore they who believed that Christ is God and man, would be in no doubt what his meaning was, and that it was true in the sense obviously intended. It looks more like sophistical cavilling, than fair, candid reasoning for any to say that expressions are not true, when the intended meaning is true, and so obvious to those to whom they were addressed, that they could not be fairly misunderstood. A thing may be truly denied to a person though it belong to a part of him, when it is apparent, that the denial is meant only in respect of the part of which it may truly be denied. So when man is said to be immortal, this is denying mortality of him. Yet this is often said in respect of his soul, though in respect of his bodily part he is mortal. So Christ hath said, He that believeth on me shall never die, though all men are mortal.

3. It is further argued, If Christ had a divine knowledge, his disciples must be supposed to believe it, and then no doubt they directed their question to the divine knowledge, rather than the imperfect human capacity.

Answer. We willingly allow that Christ's disciples believed

that he, as God, was omniscient. They said they were sure that he knew all things. And therefore when Christ said that he knew not the time of his second coming, it must be so plain and obvious that this was not meant of his divine nature that there could be no room for doubt, or danger of mistake.

But I should think that Christ's disciples directed their question to him as their teacher, and were not so absurd as to expect to receive any information of which he, as man, was ignorant. If they directed their question to him as the omniscient God, yet the answer which Christ gave them shews that he did not answer them as God who knoweth all things.

4. It is further objected, that Christ says the Father *only* knows the day of his coming; which plainly excludes every other person. And as Christ is confessedly a distinct person from God the Father, this knowledge is denied to him by consequence. Yea, it is expressly said in Mark xiii. 32, that the Son knoweth not that day. And his saying that that day is not known to men, or angels, or the Son, shews that he speaks of the Son in his highest character, as superior to the angels and inferior to God alone.

Answer. If we look back to the 26th verse we shall see that Christ is here speaking of himself as *Son of man*, or in his human nature, which being personally united to the divine *logos* has a dignity superior to the angels, and inferior only to God.

Whereas it is said that the *Father only* knoweth the day of the coming of the Lord, whence

it is argued that Christ in his highest character knoweth it not. It may be answered that the title, *Father*, is not only attributed to the first person of the godhead, by way of distinction, but was also a common appellation given to the divine being, among both Jews and gentiles. Whoever was acknowledged as God was also styled *Father*. If the word *Father* be thus understood in these words of Christ which we are now considering, the purport of them will be that neither men, nor angels, nor even Christ himself, as man, knew the day of his coming, but God only, and so no person who is God is denied to have this knowledge. And if by *the Father*, the first person of the godhead, be more especially designated, yet the other divine persons, particularly the Son of God, who is in the Father and one with him, cannot reasonably be supposed ignorant of that which is said to be known to the Father only. The Father who is termed the Fountain of the Deity, or rather the original of the divine persons is here considered as representing the whole godhead. To conclude that the Son of God, as God, is ignorant of that which is said to be known to the Father only would be as unreasonable as it would be to conclude that the Father is not omniscient, because Christ says that "no one (*oudeis*) knoweth the Father but the Son," who is also said to have a name which no one knoweth but himself. In short, there are so many examples in Scripture, in which universal expressions must be taken in a limited sense, that one is ready to wonder it should be so insisted on, that the exclu-

sive term *only* be taken without the restriction, when there are so strong reasons to the contrary—

V. It is objected, that the way, in which we interpret this text will make the plainest speech uncertain and insignificant.

But this is said without reason. It is an approved rule of interpretation, that the meaning of expressions is to be determined, not only by the bare consideration of the words taken singly, but also by considering every circumstance, which may help us to discern what is the true intent of them. It is an approved rule of interpreting the Scriptures, to explain particular passages so, as to preserve consistency through the whole. Agreeably to these maxims we have endeavored to explain the text we have been considering; nor do we apprehend that any unreasonable, unallowable license has been taken by wresting and straining the words in a manner not warranted by parallel examples, as has been shown. And, upon the whole, the sense which we have given is not unobvious, when all circumstances are duly considered; and if it seem to any to be attended with any difficulty, it is as nothing compared with the absurdity of supposing such a person, as the Son of God is represented in the Scriptures, to be in his highest character and capacity, ignorant of the time of his coming, and the end of the world. And if the sense we have given appear sufficiently plain, obvious, and even necessary when all circumstances are considered, the objection, that *the evangelists subjoin no caution against taking the words in the obvious sense, is obviated or superseded.*

The words of Christ, Matt. xx. 23. Mark. x. 40, have also been urged as an objection to his proper divinity: "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to those, for whom it is prepared of my Father." But there is no foundation in the Greek text for any to pretend, that Christ disclaims a right to dispose of the honors and rewards of his kingdom, and assign to his servants their respective rank. For the words in the original are, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, save to those for whom it is prepared." What is added by the translators, by way of supplying a supposed ellipsis, rather obscures and perverts, then clears the sense of the words. Indeed, to say that it belongs not to Christ to assign his servants their rank, or the honors which they are to receive in his kingdom, would be contrary to so many plain and express Scripture testimonies that one might wonder that learned and ingenious men should ever suggest such a thought. Has not Christ said that *He gives his sheep eternal life*, John x. 28. That the Father hath given him power over all flesh, *that he should give eternal life* to as many as are given to him, John xvii. 2. Paul also expresses his assurance that there was laid up for him a crown, which *the Lord, the righteous judge should give to him, and all who love his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. In the epistles, which Christ sent to the churches in Asia, how often do such expressions as these occur; to him that overcometh *will I give to eat of the tree of life.*

Be thou faithful unto death, and *I will give thee a crown of life.* To him that overcometh *will I give to eat of the hidden manna.* To him that overcometh *will I grant to sit with me in my throne, &c.* And again. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me *to give to every man according as his work shall be.* More proofs to some purpose might be adduced, but these seem sufficient.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE PECULIAR DOCTRINES OF
THE GOSPEL EXPLAINED AND
DEFENDED.

[The following letter, from Noah Webster, Esq. to a friend in Boston, written for private use, is now published at the earnest request of some gentlemen of piety, who had read the original; the author having, on revision, made some alterations, and added a few remarks to elucidate particular points. Such parts as were of a more private concern are omitted. EDITORS.]

New Haven, Feb. 23d, 1809.

DEAR BROTHER,

I have read the little pamphlet, entitled a "Review of Hints on Evangelical Preaching," which you sent to me, requesting my thoughts on the subjects of which it treats. That the writer and the publisher of that review may have been actuated by very honest motives, I would not dare to question. Multitudes of respectable and intelligent men in this country, and probably in Europe entertain the same unfavorable opinion of what is called *evangelical preaching*. I once entertained similar opinions, though probably not to the full extent with the writer of the review. But I was opposed to every thing, that looked like *enthusiasm* in religion, and talked much about the propriety of being a

rational Christian. I am still opposed to enthusiasm, but I am now convinced that my former opinions were erroneous, and that I formerly included under that term, a belief in some of the fundamental, and *most rational* principles of the gospel.

That some preachers, who call themselves *evangelical*, may utter opinions which are *not* evangelical, is not at all improbable; nor is it to be expected that no man, who ministers in holy things should go too far in depreciating the moral duties. Minds, impelled by zeal, may acquire a momentum that may carry them beyond the gospel mark, at which they aim. But, if I understand the reviewer, he not only censures what may be really wrong in zeal, but aims to make the *moral duties* the essence of the gospel, which the publisher of the pamphlet calls the *benevolent and moral religion of Jesus*. And this I understand to be the creed of many respectable men in this country. I am probably as sincere a friend to the moral duties, as the reviewer; but that these constitute the groundwork of the gospel, I believe to be a fatal error, a rock on which perhaps more intelligent men are shipwrecked than on any other. Were there no other defect in this creed, this alone would overturn it, that no man, destitute of a principle of holiness, or a supreme love and regard to his Maker, can perform the moral duties, in the manner which the laws of God require. His motives cannot be pure; they cannot spring from the right source; nor will any man, without a higher principle, than a mere regard to social happiness ever be

able to perform all the moral duties with steadiness and uniformity.

But let us examine this scheme of religion on other grounds. It is the principle of our religion, and of all true religion, that there is a God of infinite perfection, who is the Author of whatever has been created. This Being is man's Creator, and of course, his sovereign Ruler; and if his sovereign Ruler, he has a right to give laws to man for his government. From God's sovereignty, or his character as Creator and Governor of the universe, results necessarily his *right* to the supreme reverence of all the rational beings he has created; and from this sovereignty, and from the perfection of his nature, as well as from his benevolence to man, in creating him, and supplying him with all the means of happiness, results God's *right* to man's highest love and gratitude; for nothing is more obvious than that supreme excellence is entitled to the first place in our esteem. Our *first* class of duties then respects our Maker, our Preserver, our Benefactor, and Redeemer. These duties, I apprehend, are dictated by reason and natural religion, as well as commanded in the Scriptures. They result necessarily from our relation to the Supreme Being, as the head of the universe.

In the next place, men are made for society. Our natural propensities lead us to associate with each other; and society is necessary to the continuation of the species, as well as to our improvement, protection, and happiness. From this association of men, and the various interests involved in it, result numerous

social duties, which we comprise under the general term, *morality*. These constitute the *second* class of the duties of men. This distribution of our duties is precisely that which Moses has made in the ten Commandments, which were originally divided and engraved on *two tables*. The *first* table contained our duties to God; the *second*, our duties to each other; and this distribution is expressly recognized by our Savior, who declares that the *first* and great commandment is to love the Lord our God with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind; and that the *second*, which is like to it, is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Now let me ask the advocates of a *moral* religion, with what propriety or by what authority, can we dispense with the *first* table of the law, or even postpone it to the *second*? Are not the duties of *piety* as necessary and as positively commanded as the duties of *morality*? and more, are they not placed at the head of the list? The command, "thou shall have no other God before me," which enjoins supreme love, reverence, and adoration, as duties to the Creator of the universe, *precedes* all the other commands, not only in the order of arrangement, but in the order of *propriety*, resulting from God's character and supremacy. The Scriptures inculcate this doctrine from beginning to end; and it is as consonant to reason, and the moral fitness of things, as it is to the Scriptures.

To illustrate great things by small, let me state the following case. The father of a family, wishing to furnish his children with the means of enjoying hap-

piness, tells them "I have the means of supplying you with every thing you can desire. I will build, for each of you, a house in my neighborhood, and I will send you every day, whatever you want or can enjoy, and you shall have no trouble in living, except in dressing and preparing the provisions and materials I shall send, to suit your own desires. But to secure to yourselves the continuance of my favors, it is necessary that you comply with two conditions—the first is, that you shall treat me with the respect due to a parent, and call daily at my house to thank me for the benefits you receive. The second is, that you shall treat each other with the utmost kindness and justice." Suppose then that these children, placed in this eligible situation, and living in profusion on their father's daily supplies, do actually comply, in a good degree, with the second condition, performing all their social duties, with tolerable, or even with strict punctuality; but pass thirty, forty, or fifty years without once calling upon their benefactor, to make to him their grateful acknowledgments. What shall we say to such base ingratitude? But suppose further, that these children, instead of a pious veneration, and daily expressions of gratitude to their kind father, should declare that *they owe to him no immediate duties*: that to be kind and just to each other is all that is necessary to fulfil the conditions, on which they hold their estates and enjoyments, and some of them even reproach their father as a hard master, and treat him with open contempt! What can be said in vindication of such conduct?

Can such children claim from their insulted benefactor a continuance of his kindness? Much less can they expect, or even hope from him further means of enjoyment, and a more splendid establishment! I leave this case, my dear brother, to be decided by the advocates of a *religion* consisting of *moral duties*; referring you however to a single passage of Scripture, in which Jehovah, as the Father and Ruler of men, claims his rights with the affecting benignity of a God. "A Son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is my honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" Mal. i. 6.

If I understand any thing of God's character and moral government, and of our relation to him as his dependent creatures, a supreme regard to him as the first great cause and last end of all things, is the *foundation* of all true religion in the heart—as indispensable to the perfection of his moral government, as it is to the happiness of his rational creatures. Perfect excellence being entitled to supreme love and regard, and God being perfect excellence and the only Being of that character in the universe, it results that intelligent creatures must give to him the first place in their hearts, or they do not conform to the standard of moral rectitude, which God has established; and if they do not conform to that standard, they cannot be entitled to the happiness which results from such conformity. Hence we are repeatedly informed in the Scriptures, that "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom;" the foundation on which the whole system stands.

God then claims from us, as the first duty, a supreme regard to his character and laws, which is to be manifested by the duties of piety, prayer, worship, fear, love, attendance upon his instituted ordinances, and a reference to his will as the only rule of our moral and religious conduct; in short, an unreserved submission to his laws and government. He, as the Sovereign of the universe, has a *right* to this regard, he demands it as his right, and according to my view of his character and government, he cannot dispense with it. I should even say, with reverence, it would be an imperfection in his government if he could.

But this is not all. While God makes his own glory the chief object of his works and government, he has made holiness or conformity to his image, the condition, on which his rational creatures are to enjoy supreme happiness. The connexion between holiness and future felicity is inseparable. The happiness of a future life, is represented as consisting in the enjoyment of God's favor and presence. How, let me ask, can a soul enjoy the divine presence, without supreme love to the divine character? What joy can a soul experience in the presence of a God, to whose attributes and laws, it is not previously reconciled? How can a soul be delighted with the favor of God in heaven, which has never loved him supremely on earth? Is the heart to be changed after death? This, we are forbid to believe. A man may, in this life, perform moral duties, without any particular regard to his Maker, and without any particular relish for

his character and government. He may perform good works to his fellow men, even from a sense of their fitness and propriety, without performing a single act of homage to the Supreme Being, although, as I have before remarked, without a reference to God's will, he will rarely perform them with uniformity, even in the view of the world. But the natural heart is enmity against God; and if such moral man dies without a change in the affections of his heart, what qualification will he possess for that heaven, whose employment consists in *loving* and *praising* God? How will he relish the joys of pure and holy spirits? It is impossible. Even in this life, nothing is more painful to a man than the presence of a kind benefactor whom he has injured. Were a man of mere morality to be instantly transferred to the presence of the glorious Jehovah, his sense of ingratitude to his Maker and Benefactor, would fill his soul with unutterable torment. To a soul, not previously prepared, by pious affections, to relish the joys, that must spring from the presence and favor of a pure and holy Being, heaven itself would be a hell. An unholily being cannot be happy in the immediate presence of a holy God; at least, in my apprehension it appears to be impossible. Hence it appears that regeneration and holiness of heart, are in the very nature and fitness of things necessary to the enjoyment of heaven; and the gospel doctrines really stand as well on the immutable order of things in the universe, as on the positive declarations of Christ and his apostles. We are placed on this

earth in a state of trial and probation, furnished with intellectual powers to learn the character of God and our own duty; with the word of God to direct us, and a free will to accept or reject the offers of salvation. To complete the means of salvation, a Mediator has been provided, to make an offering of himself for our sins and satisfy that law which we have violated, and which we ourselves are certainly unable to satisfy. In this state, the seeds of holiness are to be planted in the heart, and are destined to grow and ripen into a full harvest of felicity in a future life. *Holiness*, in this life, is the *germ of heaven*. But holiness, in a scriptural sense, and indeed in any sense, is a distinct thing, from a principle of morality. Morality or good works respect our fellow-men; holiness respects God. It is that state of the heart which proceeds from supreme love to God, faith in Christ, and entire submission to the divine commands. Without this holiness, the Bible informs us, no man shall see the Lord. And this holiness is indispensable to the performance of good works. As faith without works is dead; so good works are the fruit of faith. And according to the gospel, it is not possible for moral duties to be acceptable to God, unless they proceed from faith and holiness, or from a supreme regard to God's will, as their spring or motive.

These doctrines involve the necessity of regeneration, a doctrine which many men, called Christians, deny, and which the morality-system utterly excludes. I know not how men who believe the Scriptures can reason away a

doctrine so fully and expressly revealed as that of the new-birth. The passages of Scripture which directly assert the necessity of such a change, I need not recite; they must be familiar to you, but I will make a few remarks on this subject.

That the heart of man is naturally destitute of holiness, or true love to God, is equally proveable from the Scriptures and from observation. That the natural heart is at enmity with God, one would think any person must admit, who reads history, or observes the state of society within his own view. But I want no other evidence of the fact, than that which is furnished by the men who make morality or good works the basis of all religion and the ground of acceptance with God. The disposition to exclude the duties of piety as of primary importance, in a scheme of religion; or a disposition to obtain salvation, by the merit of moral duties, in exclusion of the merits of Christ's righteousness, without a supreme love to God and his laws, and an entire dependence on sovereign grace, is to my mind a demonstration that the natural heart is "enmity against God." Indeed it is an astonishing proof of pride and ingratitude, that men who acknowledge themselves to have been created without any agency of their own, and who cannot raise an arm or draw a breath without the agency of their Creator, should attempt to prove that they can obtain salvation by their own works, without divine aid, and without the infusion of a principle of holiness by the same Spirit, which first breathed into man

the breath of life. Why is it more improbable that God should exert his sovereign power, in regenerating the soul, to make it a suitable being to dwell in immortal glory, than that he should form the body, as a suitable being to inhabit the earth? It should be observed that the Supreme Being reserves to himself exclusively the glory of creation. He created man and the universe with all its furniture. He has placed the animals, plants, and minerals of this globe at the disposal of man. We have the means, under his providence, of multiplying the number of animals and plants, at pleasure; we can modify and use the species which he has made, but observe, we can *create* nothing; we cannot add a single new species to those which God has made. If the heart of man, in its natural state, is not qualified to be an inhabitant of heaven, and must be renovated, how is the change to be effected! The Scriptures every where represent the change of affections in the heart, as a *new birth* or *creation*; and if such is the change, who but God is to be the Creator?

Regeneration consists in an *entire change of the affections*. The natural man's affections are placed on temporal enjoyments and objects of this life. Hence the social duties are the sum of his religion. The affections of the regenerate heart are placed on God, as the first and noblest object of love; on Christ as the Redeemer, through whom man has access to God and happiness, and on the will of God as the only rule of his conduct. It looks to God as the Author of all good; trembles at the thought of

offending him ; submits cordially to his commands and dispensations ; and reposes with delight and unshaken confidence on his promises. The real Christian does not, in his moral conduct, make his own honor, interest, or reputation, the primary rule of decision ; but endeavors to regulate his actions by God's law ; "for of him, and through him, and to him are all things." In short, his heart recognizes the great truths delivered by our Savior, that the *first* and *great* commandment is to love the Lord our God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind ; and that the *second* is, to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is unquestionably the order of pious affections ; the order of nature ; the order of moral fitness ; and the order of the gospel. And how is it possible for men who study the universe and read the Scriptures, to attempt to invert this order ? From what cause proceeds this unnatural perversion of truth, as immutable as God himself ? Is it not the natural pride, and the evil propensities of the human heart ? Why does man wish to dispense with the duties of piety, and obtain salvation upon the strength of duties performed to his fellow-men ? Is there any thing painful or mortifying in piety, and a dependence on divine grace for salvation ? If there is, the heart is wrong. There is certainly no durable pleasure in sin. Long before I had these views of the gospel scheme of salvation, I was convinced that sin even in this life, produces more pain and misery, than real pleasure. No, my friend, there is no substantial satisfaction in this life, except in

conforming to the laws of the Supreme Lawgiver. As his laws and character are the most excellent, and as intellectual happiness can proceed only from truth and excellence, it results that man must enjoy the most happiness, when his heart is reconciled to the divine laws, and most conformed to the divine character.

So far are the duties of piety and religion from being painful, that the human mind, roving from one temporal object to another, unsatisfied with the pleasure they afford, perplexed with doubts, and like Noah's dove, finding no solid ground on which to rest, never enjoys permanent peace until it has sought a refuge in that ark of divine safety, the Redeemer's kingdom. The soul of man, is, I am persuaded, never tranquil, till the will is subdued, and has yielded, with implicit submission, to God's sovereign grace. This submission, however humiliating it may appear to the natural man, is accompanied or followed with unspeakable satisfaction. The most dignified attitude of feeble, sinful man, is that of a penitent at the foot of the cross imploring pardon from an offended God ; and I firmly believe, that every man must be brought to this posture, before he can enjoy any permanent tranquillity of mind in this life, or possess any qualification for the happiness of the next.

These sentiments may perhaps expose me to the charge of *enthusiasm*. Of this I cannot complain, when I read in the gospel, that the apostles when they first preached Christ crucified, were accused of being full of new wine : when Paul was

charged by Felix with being a madman; and when Christ himself was charged with performing miracles through the influence of evil spirits. If therefore I am accused of enthusiasm I am not ashamed of the imputation. It is my earnest desire to cherish evangelical doctrines, and no other. That the opinions here expressed are substantially true, I firmly believe; and I number it among the strong arguments in favor of the truth of these doctrines, and of revelation, that pious men in every age, have entertained similar views, and experienced corresponding affections of the heart. In every period of the church, and in every country, where the true religion has been professed, men of piety have had substantially the same views of the character of God, and of the duty of man; the same supreme love to their Maker; the same submission to his will, faith in his promises, and zeal in his cause, as were manifested by Abraham, by David, and the apostles. This uniformity of affections among pious men, in distant countries and periods of time, affords a solid proof of the truth of their religion, and of its divine original; for nothing is uniform but truth; nothing unchangeable but God and his works.

Nor is the opposition to this scheme of religion, in my apprehension, less an argument of its truth. In every age, men who are unwilling to submit to God's sovereignty, and who desire to have as little dependence as possible on his power and mercy, have opposed the religion which gives to God his true place in the universe. The men who now

reject the doctrines of the divinity of Christ, of regeneration, of the atonement; of saving faith, and of free grace; follow the footsteps of the chief priests, scribes, and pharisees; substituting external duties for the doctrines of the cross. But, in my apprehension, we must receive these doctrines, or reject the Scriptures, as a forgery, and Christ as an impostor. To reject the Scriptures as forgeries, is to undermine the foundation of all history; for no books of the historical kind stand on a firmer basis, than the sacred books. The correspondence of the geographical descriptions, interspersed in various books, with the real state of the countries described, as it now exists, will demonstrate the historical truth of the Scriptures, beyond the possibility of cavil.

If then the Scriptures are ascertained to be faithful histories, or relations of many facts still capable of unequivocal proof, we have a pledge that the writers have not deceived us, in regard to facts not now equally susceptible of proof; and we have the strongest ground to believe that they are what they are declared by the writers themselves to be, the records of God's revealed will. No historical facts are better attested than the miracles performed by Jesus Christ; and to deny the facts is to set afloat all history. If Christ then performed the miracles ascribed to him, he must have been a divine person, or a mere man possessed of divine powers for particular purposes; but he could not have been a mere man, for he expressly declares that "Before Abraham was, I am," John viii. 58. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self,

with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was,*" John xvii. 5. We must therefore admit with the apostle, that Christ was "God manifest in the flesh," or place these declarations to the account of falsehood, and hold Christ for an impostor; which no believer in the Scriptures will have the hardiness to do. I once had doubts on this subject; but my mind is now satisfied of the divinity of our Savior. "Never man spake as he spoke." The prophecies respecting Christ, and the astonishing train of events, recorded in the Jewish history, as preparatory to his appearance, have had no small effect in satisfying my mind on this subject. Let any man attend, among other prophecies, to the clear predictions of Christ, in the ninth and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah, and he will find abundant evidence of Christ's divinity, and the inspiration of the Scriptures. It cannot be said that these predictions are forgeries, for we have ample proof that they were written several centuries before the birth of Christ. A part, if not the whole of the Old Testament was translated into Greek, by the seventy, nearly three centuries before Christ appeared, for the benefit of the Jews, who, after their captivity and dispersion, had lost a knowledge of the Hebrew language; and this translation is now extant. In addition to this, it has been justly remarked that the quotations from the Old Testament by the apostles and evangelists are taken from the Greek copy. If then the predictions of the prophets are genuine, as I firmly believe, they must have been

dictated by the Spirit of God. Now the prophets apply to Christ not only the attributes, but the title of Jehovah יהוה זרקט *Jehovah our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6, and xxxiii. 16. I have long regretted that, in the common version of the Bible, the original word *Jehovah* has not been generally retained in the translation. I think the original loses much of its force in the English word *LORD*, and when applied to Christ, the evidence of the divinity of Christ, contained in the title, is, to an ordinary reader entirely lost, or much impaired.

To those who object to this doctrine of Christ's divinity, on account of its mysteriousness, I would reply, that there is nothing more mysterious in this doctrine, than in every thing else, respecting God and his works. Men should not stumble at mystery, after having disposed of the difficulties attending the belief of a preliminary mystery, the least comprehensible of all. The existence of a God, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being and perfections, is, in my apprehension, by far the greatest mystery, that can be presented to the human mind. Yet few men hesitate to believe in the existence of such a Being. Men who are not staggered at this first and greatest mystery, one would think, could not hesitate to give their assent to doctrines involving less difficulties; for when once the existence of a God of unlimited power is admitted, we may safely admit the existence of any facts, however mysterious and astonishing, that do not involve an absolute contradiction. I am not perfectly satisfied with the

terms used in creeds, "three persons in one God," the terms are not scriptural, and may not assist the understanding in its contemplations on this subject. I receive the doctrine just as the Scriptures represent it, without attempting to explain it in terms of my own. I bow to this, as to all other mysteries in the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace. All creation is full of mystery, indeed the constitution of man, is perhaps as great a mystery as any other. The union of an intelligent principle, with a certain organic structure of bones, flesh, vessels, and nerves, is perhaps as really incomprehensible by us, as the existence of God, or the divinity of Christ; for we cannot compare degrees of incomprehensibility. Explain to my understanding, how a man, by an act of the will can move a finger, and I think I may safely undertake to unfold any mystery in the gospel. Explain to me, the natural cause of attraction, in gravitation, cohesion, or magnetism; describe to me the process of vegetation on the earth, and of mineralization, beneath its surface; attend the chymist in his laboratory, and see two invisible colorless gases combined in a certain proportion, producing that visible substance, water, and the same substance decomposed and converted into gases; in short, unfold to my comprehension, the cause of heat, the operations of light, and of congelation, before you complain of the mysteriousness of Christ's divinity. What is there, my dear friend, in heaven above or on the earth beneath, which we *do* comprehend? Surely beings of our limited capaci-

ties have no right to expect we shall be able to understand all the works and counsels of the infinite Jehovah. It is our duty to admire and adore, to love and obey. In short, it is the duty of man to be *humble*. Indeed it is a remarkable fact, that God rarely communicates to man the consolations of his grace, and evidences of his favor, till severe convictions have reduced him to a strong sense of the *feebleness* of his powers, as well as of the *sinfulness* of his heart. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

Men who depend on their own works for salvation, appear to question the special influences of the divine Spirit, in renewing the heart. It is difficult to reconcile this skepticism with a belief in the Scriptures, which repeatedly and unequivocally assert the fact. Real Christians have the witness within themselves; that is, they have evidence from their views of divine things and the affections of the heart, which leave little or no room to doubt the divine influence, which produced them. The operations of the Spirit are very various. In some persons, convictions produce anxiety and terror which drive them almost to despair. In others, convictions are less violent, but produce a solicitude which leads the subjects of them to read the Scriptures; to inquire the way to Zion; to attend to the means of grace, and gradually to renounce all reliance on themselves, and to seek God through Christ with humility, prayer, and submission. In some cases, though less frequently, persons, without much previous distress have opened to their minds, most luminous views

of the excellence of the divine character, of God's love and mercy in Christ, and seem to pass at once from death to life; and from the most determined enmity of heart and opposition to the Christian scheme of salvation, to the most cordial delight in the doctrines of the gospel. These facts which are within the observation of every honest inquirer, correspond with the account Christ himself has given of the operations of the Spirit, which are compared to the blowing of the wind, whose *effects* only are perceived. Many persons, whose views and affections are evidently changed, are not sensible of any particular operation on their hearts. They have new affections and views, but know not the time or the manner in which they received them. In others, the impressions are too sensible not to be recognized. I know there are men who denominate such impressions *enthusiasm* and *spiritual delusion*. But the instances of such sensible changes of the heart, in persons of sound judgment and cool, dispassionate minds, not prone to yield to fanciful suggestions and transient feelings, furnish evidence of the reality of such special agency of the divine Spirit on the heart, which I cannot think it right to reject.

That the operations of the Holy Spirit are sometimes accompanied with a *light* exhibited to the imagination, is not generally believed; but I am inclined to believe the fact on the authority of well authenticated cases. I see no more reason for disbelieving the fact, than for rejecting the account of St. Paul's conversion; for the soul of man

is undoubtedly the medium through which the Supreme Being makes his communications. At the same time there is so much danger of deception, in the force of the imagination, that I think the evidence of such facts should be very clear to encourage confidence. The proof of a real change of heart should rest on the subsequent life; for "the tree is known by its fruit." But that God does make special communications of his favor to man, through the intellectual and spiritual principle, or soul, and that he often grants the requests of his children, by a direct agency, independent of visible means, are facts fully revealed in the Scriptures, and well known to Christians.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," is the repeated promise of our Savior; a consolatory promise that many pious souls have known to be fulfilled, to their unspeakable joy, and to the great confirmation of their faith.

These are points which I am sensible, are not generally believed. But why should they be questioned? For what purpose was the soul infused into man? Why was man distinguished from the brute? If man was made to perish like the beast of the field, of what use is his intellectual part? The animal appetites of the brute, afford perhaps, in the gratification, as much pleasure as those of man. Surely then man was endowed with superior powers and faculties for some important purpose. For what purpose? The soul bears some resemblance to divinity, and is evidently designed for

enjoyments of a superior rank. To direct the intellectual powers of man to their proper objects, it was doubtless necessary for him to have a revelation of God's will, and such revelation requires a direct communication from God. It may be said, that such communications were undoubtedly made, but having been made, and the substance of them recorded, further communications are unnecessary. This may, in a sense, be true; but I see no improbability in God's continuing to make special communications of his will to man, by illuminating the mind, in the present, as well as in former periods. The instances, in which such revelations are distinctly recognized, may be rare; but some well authenticated facts of this kind, may serve to confirm the truth of former revelations, and fortify the faith of Christians. Such instances now, as in former ages, may be intended to answer some important purposes in the economy of Providence and grace; and are probably, in most instances, given in answer to fervent prayer.

It is no objection to these opinions that such communications are not general or common; any more than it is to the special infliction of punishment, by divine wrath, on some heinous crimes, while other crimes apparently as offensive, are suffered to pass, for the present, unpunished. If a blasphemer, riding in company, should, with an oath and a lie upon his tongue, declare that the horse he is on never stumbles, and his horse should instantly fall and break the man's neck, no person could hesitate to believe it at least probable, that the Almighty had interposed, by his

agency, to execute sudden vengeance on the offender. Yet many other men, committing a like offence, may escape present punishment, without, in the least, impairing the evidence of God's special interference in the case stated. For it is the character of God, as represented in the Scripture, and manifested every day, to exercise mercy rather than vengeance, and by a few instances of his wrath, to give examples and evidences of his power and government, to recal other offenders to their duty. It is equally probable that special communications of his will, and of his favor, may be made, to strengthen the faith, and animate the hopes of those who confide in him. Not to believe in such instances is to discredit all human testimony. If you will take the trouble to converse with experienced Christians, and read the written accounts of their lives, you must, I think, be satisfied, that God does, at times, as directly interpose, in behalf of those who *ask him in faith*, as he did in restoring health to the sick, and sight to the blind, under the ministration of our Savior on earth.

Such facts serve to establish the doctrine of a *special providence*, the truth of which I once questioned, but now fully believe. Indeed it is surprising I could ever entertain a doubt on the subject; for it is as unphilosophical as unscriptural, to admit a general providence without a special one; as a general providence implies particular providences. I was probably led into this error by the false philosophy which prevails in the world, by propagating which

men strive to exclude the agency of God from all direct concern with the affairs of this world, and of the universe. This philosophy substitutes for the mighty hand of Deity, the operations of *second causes*, and *laws of nature*. We are taught in our youth that nature or created things, are subject to certain *laws*, such as *attraction*, *gravitation*, and *repulsion*; and with the help of these, we pretend to account for all the phenomena of the universe, without the direct agency of a supreme, intelligent Cause.

But what are the *laws of nature*? *Nature*, in its most comprehensive sense, means all that is *made or produced*, and *laws*, when applied to such created things, signify the regular motions, operations, and changes of these things; or the causes by which they are produced. If the laws of nature are the motions and changes of bodies, then they are *effects*, and not causes, and we ascribe the phenomena of the universe to the *effects* of something else. If these laws are the producing or primary cause, they must be the supreme Author himself, whom all rational men must admit to be an intelligent Being. Is it possible that laws or principles, competent to carry on the stupendous operations of the universe, can be attached to matter, and not immediately dependent on the almighty Author! Is matter susceptible of such active principles, independent of an intelligent mind? I would not dare to circumscribe, even in thought, the power of Jehovah; but I have given up this philosophy, and am compelled to resolve all the *laws of nature* in-

to the direct agency of the *almighty first Cause*. The operations of nature are evidently the effects of that power constantly exerted, which first called all things into existence. Hence their uniformity, for nothing can be uniform, but God and his operations.

The Jews were an illiterate people, cultivating neither arts nor sciences, to any considerable degree; yet, surprising as it may appear, they were, for ages, the only people whose history has come down to us, who appear to have had just ideas of the only true philosophy, which, mounting to the true source of all created beings and their operations, ascribes all events to Jehovah. Upon this scheme of philosophy, the difference between miracles and natural events is, that natural events are the *usual, constant, and regular* operations of divine power, and supernatural events are the *unusual and special* operations of the same power, which astonish men, merely because they are not frequent. It cannot be the *magnitude* of the event which excites our wonder; for we have no ground to suppose the raising of the dead is a *greater* act of divine power, as it regards the Supreme Being, than the growth of a tree. If any person should incline to allege that the difference between a miracle and a natural event, is, that a natural event takes place by means of some medium or instrument, and a miracle, without such medium, this would only compel us to mount one step higher to find the immediate agency of God. The waters of the Red Sea were removed to make a passage for

the Israelites, by a "strong east wind;" but it was "God who caused that wind to blow," and the effect produced may have been as really supernatural as the revival of Lazarus from the dead.

I see nothing therefore in reason to make me doubt, that God's moral government may admit, and even require, in every period of the world, special interpositions of power, divine and supernatural; nor can I see in such special interpositions, any thing more improbable, than in the first formation of man, by moulding matter into a particular organic frame, and infusing into it an intelligent principle. The God who created the universe, governs it and all the beings that inhabit it, by such exertions or operations of power, general or particular, as best suit his own purposes.

The doctrine of predestination and election is one which is much opposed by some denominations of Christians. But I see not how this doctrine can be separated from the being and attributes of an infinite God. If God is infinite, there can be no such thing as *past*, and *future*, or a succession of ideas, in the divine mind. The terms *predestination* and *foreknowledge*, are therefore inapplicable to the Supreme Being; and are used only in reference to finite beings, who have a succession of ideas. An infinite being must know with certainty every event, *future* as well as *past*; and if events are certainly known to him, they must be unalterably determined: for how can he *know* them, but in consequence of his own determination? If they are not certain he cannot know them; and

this supposition involves both a limitation of his knowledge, and an imperfection in his attributes. I conceive therefore the Scriptural doctrine of election stands on the very character and attributes of that Being, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Yet we are conscious of free agency in our determinations. That man, is not, in a strict sense perfectly free, that is, independent of God, in determining his actions, we must believe, for there can be but one such being in the universe, as a perfectly independent mind; but I see no contradiction nor absurdity in the doctrine of a predetermined order of events in the universe, and at the same time, the possession by man of such a freedom of will, as to render him accountable for his actions. The first is affirmed in the Scriptures, and in my apprehension, is inseparable from the sovereignty and infinite perfections of the Deity; while the last is equally affirmed in the Scriptures, and authorized by our own experience. The terms *unconditional election*, I think, are inapplicable to the subject; for we have the Scriptures for our authority, supported by every principle of reason, that every man's future state will be determined by his voluntary obedience or disobedience. I think it better to submit and obey, than to perplex our minds with abstruse reasonings on subjects beyond our comprehension.

To many men, the doctrine of *free, unmerited grace*, in the salvation of sinners, is very offensive. Such persons seem to suppose they can merit salvation and claim it as a right. But was not our

first formation an act of free grace and uncontrolled sovereignty? Was not the gift of an intelligent mind to man, distinguishing him from the brutes, an act of sovereign grace? Did a man ever plant a field with corn, and claim from the Almighty, as a *right*, a fruitful harvest? Why then object to free grace in the works of salvation? Surely man, a feeble frail being, who holds his life and all his powers, at divine sufferance, should be more humble.

But is there nothing for man to do? He is commanded to "work out his salvation with fear and trembling." Yes, my friend, man has much to do, he must work out his salvation with fear and trembling; but the misfortune is, a great part of the world wish to work out their salvation *without* fear and trembling. They are willing to be honest and just to their fellow men, and then confidently claim salvation from their Creator, without fearing his laws or trembling at his judgments; without performing the duties of piety, submitting to his will, or accepting a Savior; in short, without that humility, which gives God all the glory, and that holiness without which there can be no enjoyment in heaven. The condition of salvation which God has imposed is, that *the heart must be right with God*; not with man, for man is not the lawgiver or judge, but *with God*, the only being who has the right to judge, and the power to punish or reward.

Man comes into the world without any knowledge of his Maker, and with a heart opposed to his law. His business is to learn the character of God,

from the Scriptures, and from the works of nature and providence; then to learn his own sinfulness and frailty, and his obligations to love and serve his Maker. Being convinced of his own sinfulness and utter helplessness without divine aid, it is his duty to abandon every sin, to humble himself before his Maker, repent of all his transgressions, bow to God's sovereign will, implore his pardon, and cordially accept of the Savior, as his only hope and refuge. On such conditions salvation is freely offered; and those who comply with them, may expect the consolations of the Spirit, and good hope through grace, of their acceptance with God. But men cannot expect these consolations, until they are humbled. Those who proudly rely on their own good works, virtually tell their Maker, they do not want his assistance and grace; and God gives his Holy Spirit to those only who ask it in humility. God is the Sovereign of the universe. He *does* govern it; he has a right to govern it; and men, if saved, can be saved only on the conditions which he has prescribed. He reserves to himself the whole glory of saving sinners, and the hearts of his children rejoice in the divine determination.

I am therefore of opinion that the doctrines of divine sovereignty, the divinity of Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and free grace through Christ, are fundamental in the gospel scheme of salvation. Those who reject these doctrines appear to me to tear out the vitals of christianity, leaving nothing but a lifeless skeleton. The cold doctrines of Arminianism almost exclude the di-

vine agency in man's salvation. They supersede the necessity of a Redeemer, and of public worship, for morality may be taught in families and schools. In short, they never reach the heart, and appear not to alter the life and character.

Such are not the doctrines of the gospel. These elevate the soul to God, the Fountain of light, life, and blessings; they subdue the natural pride of the heart, control the passions and change the affections. They infuse a principle of supreme love to God, and create a faith in Christ which tranquillizes the soul, dispels the gloomy anxieties of skepticism, alleviates the cares, and enlivens the joys of life; and to crown all, reposes, with delightful confidence, upon the almighty arm of a Redeemer for salvation.

Nor are the temporal benefits of real religion less conspicuous, in the effects they produce in families, and in society. In minds the best regulated by family discipline, and the rules of civility, there will at times break forth sallies of envy, jealousy, petulance, and discontent, which annoy the peace of families and of neighborhoods. Nothing seems effectually to restrain such passions but divine grace. The fear of man, and a regard to decorum will not produce the effect, in minds of a particular structure. But the humbling doctrines of the gospel change the tiger to a lamb. Real religion, which implies a habitual sense of the divine presence, and a fear of offending the Supreme Being, subdues and controls all the turbulent passions; and nothing is seen in the Christian, but meekness, forbearance,

and kindness, accompanied by a serenity of mind and a desire to please, as uniform as they are cheering to families and friends. On this subject I speak with delight from observation.

At the same time, real religion inspires mutual confidence, it establishes a guard over the heart, and creates a security for fidelity and affection, in husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends, which cannot be derived from authority or instruction; from the force of law, or the influence of example.

These, my dear brother, are some of my views of the calvinistic doctrines and their effects. These doctrines, in the main, I do believe to be *evangelical*, and my belief is not the effect of education, for formerly my opinions were unfavorable to some of these doctrines. My belief is the fruit of some experience, and much inquiry and reflection.

It is with heart-felt regret, that I see a large portion of the world so inattentive to religion. Men often live for many years, gazing upon the stupendous fabric of the universe, apparently without a sentiment of piety; and wander among the charming beauties of the earth, where the power, the wisdom, and the beneficence of the Creator are displayed on every flower, and every leaf, with as little admiration and gratitude, as the beasts that graze on the field. Equally insensible are they to the beauties of the divine character, unfolded in the works of providence and grace; forgetting that the same God who arrays the lillies of the field, with more than Solomon's glory, is ready to clothe

his children with the splendid robes of the Redeemer's righteousness. And what is astonishing, but often true, the more temporal blessings men enjoy, the less disposed are they to love and obey their heavenly Benefactor: a truth which gave occasion for our Savior to remark, how difficult it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. It is a melancholy proof of the depravity of the human heart, that men often invert the order of things, and suffer their gratitude to abate, in proportion as their wealth increases. Indeed it is extremely painful to a reflecting mind, to observe men in affluence, who live amidst a profusion of every thing the bounty of heaven bestows, indulging in sensual gratifications and rolling in splendor; but forgetting, or in-

sulting the Benefactor, while they riot on the benefit.

But I must come to a conclusion; or instead of a letter, I shall write a book. I could dwell on subjects of this kind with pleasure; but if what I have written is the truth, it is enough: if not, it is too much. If my opinions are erroneous, I should be happy to be corrected; if they are substantially true, I hope they will have their due weight. As pilgrims on the same journey, it *would* be for our mutual happiness on the road, "so to be agreed as that we might walk together," and be united in principle as well as by the most endearing of all ties, Christian love.

I am, with sincere affection,
Yours, &c.

NOAH WEBSTER, JUN.

SELECTIONS.

THE CHARGE OF SEDITION AND FACTION AGAINST GOOD MEN, ESPECIALLY FAITHFUL MINISTERS, CONSIDERED AND ACCOUNTED FOR.

These that have turned the world upside down, have come hither also.

The unbelieving Jews.

(Concluded from p. 26.)

THE fact, that the character of *seditions, troublesome, and disorderly* has been constantly given by wicked men to the servants of God, was established in the last number. We are now to inquire what it is in true religion, that gives occasion to this charge, and makes the world to believe it.

That there must be something of this kind is very evident. So uniform an effect, could not take place without an adequate cause.

And, to a serious and attentive observer, I am persuaded it is not difficult to discern. The general cause of this effect is, that, in an equivocal sense, the charge is just. True religion does, indeed, give trouble and uneasiness to wicked men, while they continue such; and it cannot be supposed, but they will deeply resent it. In order to illustrate this a little more fully, I beg your attention to the three following observations.