DISCOURSES

ON

THE PRINCIPAL POINTS

OF THE

SOCINIAN CONTROVERSY.

*****

BY RALPH WARDLAW,

GLASGOW.

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TO THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST

ASSEMBLING FOR WORSHIP

IN

ALBION-STREET CHAPEL, GLASGOW,

This Volume,

WITH FERVENT WISHES

THAT, BY THE DIVINE BLESSING,

IT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR SPIRITUAL IMPROVEMENT,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR

GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE PASTOR.

PREFACE.

"WHY publish a new Volume, on a subject which has already produced so many?" Were I to answer this question by pleading the solicitations of friends, I should speak the truth; for such solicitations have been numerous, and some of them entitled to my highest deference. Yet I should present an apology, neither satisfying to the Public, nor to myself. For if an author is not convinced in his own judgment, that his work is either called for by particular circumstances, or likely to be serviceable to the cause of truth, he ought to possess sufficient fortitude to resist the wishes of others; and if he professes to publish in compliance with these wishes *alone*, he will find very few possessed of sufficient charity to give him credit.

When the Unitarian Chapel in this City was opened, and the Sermon "On the Grounds of Unitarian Dissent," which Mr. Yates had preached on that occasion, was given to the public, I happened, from an

entirely different cause, to have my thoughts directed towards the principal points of the Socinian Controversy; and, in revolving various subjects for a series of monthly Sabbath-evening Discourses, it occurred to me, that, at such a time, when the leading doctrines of Christianity were openly impugned and denied, and the sentiments of those who held them in many particulars grossly misrepresented, a short course on these points might be seasonable and useful.

Satisfied that we pay no compliment to our own sentiments, when we are startled by any apprehension of discussion possibly making proselytes to those of our opponents,—I could not acquiesce in the opinion, that the best way on such occasions is, to suffer error to pass in silence, and to fall of itself. I thought, and still think, that this procedure is giving to such error an undue advantage. It is putting it in the power of its advocates to say, that we dread investigation, and find it our wisdom to be quiet:—it is leaving the weak, the wavering, and the ill-informed, to be the dupes of misrepresentation, or a prey to the wiles of sophistry, and the imposing influence of high pretensions to learning and candour:—it is lulling the multitude of nominal professors of the truth in satisfaction with a vague and unexamined assent to a system, respecting which they hardly know "what they say, or whereof they affirm:"—and to the far greater multitude of persons, who do not think on these matters at all, it is furnishing a plausible ex-

cuse for continued carelessness. They will not take the trouble to examine what its professed adherents are not at the pains to defend; and they pursue their wonted course of thoughtless impiety, with one vacant reflection, suggested by what they see and hear, that "after all, these *heretics*, as they are called, must surely have a good deal to say for themselves."

These Discourses were favoured, in the delivery of them, with a measure of public countenance, as gratifying as it was unexpected:—and the same reasons, which suggested the idea of preaching them, afterwards induced me to consent to their publication. I hope they may, in however small a degree, contribute, by the Divine blessing, to promote the reception and the influence of that truth, with the establishment and progress of which are connected the glory of God, and the salvation of men.

Local circumstances frequently procure a reading to new works, when old ones on the same subject, even although of superior merit, would continue to lie neglected. Should no new views or new arguments be advanced, still it is needful, as different times and different places have their peculiar prevailing tastes, to present what is old in new and various forms.

But besides this consideration, (although of itself sufficient)—it has frequently struck me as a defect of considerable magnitude, in some of the treatises, which have been published on the subjects handled

in this volume, particularly the Divinity of Christ, that the writers have lessened the effect which their works are designed to produce, by *attempting more than enough.* Instead of confining themselves to those passages of scripture, in which the argument is prominent and palpable, resting their cause on these, and leaving it to their readers to apply the genereal principle, when thus successfully established, to the interpretation of other passages ;—they have with the laudable view of showing how full the Bible is of the particular doctrine they defend, exerted their ingenuity, with various success, in bringing texts to bear upon it, of which the application is dubious, or, even when satisfactorily ascertained, by no means impressive. I need not point out the various ways in which this mode of conducting the argument is fitted to hurt the cause in which it is employed, and to afford an advantage to its adversaries. It is just as if a person, wishing to present a view of the evidence of the truth of Christianity from the fulfilment of prophecy, instead of selecting those grand and leading predictions, of which the accomplishment has been notorious and unquestionable, should occupy his pages in explaining and supporting, however ingeniously, his own interpretation of particular passages in the prophets, respecting which the wisest commentators have hitherto differed in judgment. It has been my aim, in the following Discourses, to avoid this defect. Whether I have at all succeeded, it is not mine to determine.

I have only further to observe, that, in defending what I conceive to be the essential articles of scriptural truth, I have confined myself entirely to the Scriptures themselves. Those, who wish to trace the history of early opinions on these subjects, may satiate themselves with the copious works which have been written on both sides. For my own part, although satisfied of the propriety of not allowing the opposers of the truth to occupy even this ground, I yet cannot help considering it as a monstrous insult to the Divine author of revelation, to admit the supposition for a moment, that, on such subjects as these, it should be necessary to wade through the multifarious opinions of antiquity, in order to understand his meaning. I say, *on such subjects as these:* for if on *these* points there is such a want of explicitness,—points that regard the object of worship, the state and prospects of man, and the foundation of his hopes for eternity,—on what subjects shall we look for clearness and precision? If it were indeed the case, that, on such topics as these, the Bible is indeterminate, requiring, for the explanation of its language, the commentary of ancient opinion, the infidel would be furnished with an argument against its Divine origin, more powerful than any he has ever been able to produce.

In the following Discourses, additions, omissions, and other alterations, have been occasionally, but sparingly, made. In general, they are printed very nearly as they were delivered. I once had thoughts of dividing them anew, into sections of as nearly equal lengths

as possible; but, upon reconsideration, gave up the plan. The chief difference in the arrangement is, that the recapitulations and the conclusion, on the subject of the Divinity of Christ, are here thrown into a distinct Discourse; which increases the number from eleven to twelve.

I commend the work to the blessing of God, and to the candid judgment of men.

R. W.

Glasgow, April 30th, 1814.

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DISCOURSE I.

ON THE UNITY OF GOD AND THE TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD.

DEUT. vi. 4.

HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD, OUR GOD, IS ONE LORD.

DEISTS have often contemptuously smiled at the diversity of sentiment, which exists among professed believers in revelation. It is no part of my present purpose, to examine into the causes of this diversity. It ought not, however, to be unnoticed, that among Deists themselves, the differences, in proportion to the extent of their creed, and the nature and number of the topics which it embraces, are neither fewer, nor less considerable. No two of them seem to be agreed, as to what are, strictly speaking, the articles of faith, in the system of *Natural Religion*. There are few phrases, indeed, of which the proper import is more undefined.

Various circumstances may be considered as contributing to account for this important and curious fact.

In the first place. In a country where Divine revelation is possessed, and where its truths are in general currency, there will always be found, among those who reject its authority, a great deal of unacknowledged obligation to it. Truths are brought forward by persons of this description, as the result of their own unassisted investigation, which, without the aid of revelation, were never discovered by philosophers of the most sagacious and comprehensive minds; and for the knowledge of which, they are, in reality, indebted to that very revelation which they disbelieve

and contemn. They thus borrow from the armoury of God the very weapons with which they oppose his cause. They pilfer fire from the altar of Jehovah, to burn the sacrifice at the shrine of their own wisdom. They abstract the coin of Heaven, and proudly stamp it with the image and superscription of Reason.—The variety of degrees in which this kind of secret sacrilege is practised, contributes, of course, to the diversity of sentiment among the professed opposers of revelation, respecting the true extent of the natural powers of discovery, on such subjects, possessed by the human mind.

2dly. Another consideration, conducing to the same effect, is, that in the speculations and reasonings of such men, *theory* is resorted to more than *fact*. Now to the variety of theoretical speculation there are hardly any assignable limits.—But surely men who, on such a subject as that before us, are content to deal in theory, are miserably inconsistent with themselves. In science and philosophy they are accustomed to insist on facts, and on experimental induction, as the only basis on which theory should rest. Yet here, although facts without number present themselves, in the history of every age and of every nation in which revelation has been unknown, theory is still pertinaciously adhered to; and human reason has been most ingeniously and plausibly shown to be eminently capable of effecting, what in fact it has never done. The truth is, that of the air-built speculations of such philosophers the whole fabric is at once overthrown by a single glance into the state and history of the heathen world. It is a case determined by an extent of practical evidence, such as hardly ever bore on any other question. One great experiment was made, for the long space of *four thousand years*, during which the world in general was left to itself, with full opportunity to try its powers. The experiment was on a large scale; it was tried with every possible variety of

circumstances; and the unvarying and undeniable result was, that "*the world by wisdom knew not God.*"*

3*dly*. An important distinction, although in itself very obvious, has, on this subject, been frequently overlooked: I mean the distinction between any truth being *agreeable to reason when made known*, and the same truth being *discoverable by reason without supernatural illumination*.—Some of the truths of revelation are so strikingly consonant to right reason, and, even when the hearts of men are at variance with them, commend themselves so instantly to their judgments, that we are apt to be seduced into the belief that mankind could never possibly be ignorant of them. When once revealed, the proof of which they are susceptible is so plain and so conclusive, that Reason gets the credit of their discovery, although uniform fact pronounces the credit to be undeserved.

Some, indeed, have gone so far on the other side, as to express a doubt whether mankind, entirely apart from revelation, could ever have attained to any conceptions *at all* of the being and perfections of God. If in the term *revelation* we include original and traditionary, as well as written revelation, it is obvious that this is a question, which hardly admits of any certain determination: for, on the supposition of original revelation having been possessed by men, (and of this there cannot surely be a doubt, on any ground, either of reason, or of scripture) it becomes quite impossible to say what proportion even of the ideas which *have* prevailed in the world, should be considered as the remnants of sadly corrupted tradition: especially when we take into account the resemblance which has, in various instances, been discovered, and which, in some cases, indeed, forces itself upon our observation, between what is recorded in the beginning of the scripture revelation respecting the great object of worship, and the most fantastic notions and monstrous rites of Heathen superstition.

* 1 Cor. i. 21.

Let me now apply these general remarks to the great doctrine of the Divine UNITY.

This, it is obvious, is the prominent truth in our text.—It is a doctrine in the highest degree agreeable to reason, when propounded and explained. Yet if natural religion comprehends those views only of "the things of God," which men *have actually attained* without revelation, it may admit of serious doubt, whether the Unity of the Godhead should be numbered among the articles of its creed. The general aspect of the Heathen world seems decidedly to affirm the contrary: for polytheism, in one form or other, has been universally prevalent in the public profession and worship of mankind. And even with regard to the two or three individual philosophers, who appear to have arrived at more rational views on this important point, it may be observed—in the first place, that what they say consists more of shrewd conjecture than of any thing like certain knowledge; and is, besides, mingled with much ignorance and much falsehood:—and secondly, that even as to those notions, which approach nearest to the truth, it has been matter of question, whether they might not have obtained them, mediately or immediately, from intercourse with that people to whom had been committed the oracles of God.

If, again, by the articles of Natural Religion we are to understand those truths, which, whether men have actually discovered them without revelation or not, are *capable of being proved by sufficient natural arguments*, the question assumes quite a different aspect; for it is very plain, that a truth may be perfectly susceptible of such evidence, while from inconsideration, or from worse causes, mankind may have failed to discern it.

Attempts have been made to prove the Unity of God, in the way of demonstration *a priori*, as philosophers speak; that is, from the necessity and eternity of his existence. It

has been found very difficult, however, even by minds of singular acuteness, to frame an argument of this kind, that shall at once be easily intelligible, and productive of clear and firm conviction. At least, to any demonstrations that have been constructed on this principle, strong objections have been opposed. And the reasonings for and against are much too subtile and metaphysical for public discussion.

The argument in support of the Divine Unity, derived from the visible works of Deity, is founded chiefly on the *uniformity of plan* which these works appear to exhibit. This uniformity indicates unity of design, and from unity of design, is inferred the operation of *one designer*.

That there are indications, strong and convincing, of harmony of plan, and unity of counsel, in the material universe, is beyond all question. In every department of Nature we perceive the application of certain general principles and laws of procedure; so that, to use the words of an admirable writer, "we never get among such original "or totally different modes of existence, as to indicate that "we are come into the province of a different creator, or "under the direction of a different will."

I am fully satisfied, that the true cause of that melancholy ignorance of God, which has all along prevailed throughout the Heathen world, has not consisted in any deficiency as to the means of knowledge, nor in any want of natural capacity to discern and to judge. Were either of these the case, the ignorance would have a valid excuse. The cause is to be found in the want of a *right disposition of mind*. This is the great *original sin* of our nature, that blinds the understanding to the beauty of truth, and the deformity of error. And the powerful influence which it exerts upon the mind is most forcibly expressed by Paul, when he says respecting mankind, that "*they did not like* (or *chuse*) *to retain God in their knowledge*."* The mere remembrance of what is already known, is a much easier

* Rom. i. 28.

matter than the discovery of what is previously unknown; especially if the memory is assisted by frequent repetitions, and multiplied manifestations, of the same truth. Men were originally possessed of the true knowledge of God. However inexcusable they might have been, had they been left, in a state of entire ignorance, to gather this knowledge, in the way of discovery, from the works of God, this was not, in fact, their situation. All that was to be effected by the numberless displays of the Divine power and Godhead, was only to *keep them in remembrance* of what they already knew. Yet even with these advantages, "*when they knew God*, they glorified him not as God;" they did not "*retain him in their knowledge*;" but "*changed the truth of God into a lie.*" They received, at the first, a lesson from God himself:—they had this lesson written before their eyes on every thing around them:—every thing in heaven above and in earth beneath; every part of the animate and inanimate creation, repeated it to their eyes, and to all their senses, had they but kept them open to observation:—Yet they not only did not learn, but rejected and forgot what they had been taught; not only did not discover what was unknown, but lost what was known; and, instead of being led by the creature to the Creator, put the creature in the Creator's place!

These observations are applicable to the Unity of God, as well as to his existence and various perfections:—And if the want of a right disposition of mind operated thus positively to the loss of what was known, we cannot be surprised, that the same cause should operate negatively, to the prevention of the recovery of what was lost.

With regard to the Divine Unity, besides, although there are no difficulties that could stand in the way of a rightly disposed mind, there are some considerations, which, on a mind otherwise disposed, may easily be conceived to have their influence, in confirming it in ignorance.

The most obvious of these is, the mixture of good and evil, which prevails in our own world, and which forces itself on observation every day, and every moment.—This state of things, considered in itself, apart from any supposed traditionary knowledge of its origin, is not, on principles merely natural, very easily explicable.—It gave rise, accordingly, to the ancient Manichean doctrine, of two distinct eternal Beings, one good and the other evil, superintending the operations of two principles, corresponding to their respective natures; the good Being, supremely happy in himself, and the author of all the happiness that exists among creatures; the evil Being, in himself unhappy, and, from the malignity of his nature, the cause of all misery.—The variety of good and evil Deities, also, which is to be found in the mythology of every Heathen nation, indicates the operation of the very same principle of reasoning. If, in general, the sentiment prevails in these nations, of ONE of these Deities being superior to all the rest, instead of supposing this sentiment to be deduced from the observation of unity of design in the appearances of nature, the more probable supposition seems to be, that it is the remains of the original and right belief respecting the Divine Unity, which, although so fearfully corrupted, other and opposite notions have not been able entirely to obliterate.

It may be further observed, that the evidence of *unity of design* is necessarily less obvious to a superficial observer, than the evidence of *design itself*.—The marks of design are discernible in each of the individual objects, that come within the reach of our observation: and every separate instance is a distinct and conclusive proof, of the existence and operation of a designing Cause.—Unity of design, on the contrary, must be discovered, not in each of the parts considered separately, but in the system of nature as a connected whole; in the harmonious relation of the parts to one another, and their joint influence in the production

of a common defect.—It by no means follows from this, that the argument cannot be conclusive without a perfect knowledge of the whole creation. The case is the same as in the proof from nature of the Divine wisdom. In both instances we reason from analogy; and the reasoning is, in each, fair and conclusive. Finding the clearest and most astonishing indications of wisdom and skill, in all the productions of nature that come within our observation, we infer, that the same skill and wisdom would be found to pervade, and to characterize, those parts of the universe, that are beyond the range of our actual knowledge.—On the same reasonable principle of inference, we conclude, that harmony of plan exists throughout the material universe, from the marks of such unity in that portion of it, which the sphere of our observation embraces. The inference is, in both cases, greatly strengthened by the fact, that uniformly, in proportion as the inventive ingenuity of man has extended the range of his acquaintance with nature, the marks of design, on the one hand, and of harmony of design, on the other, have been found progressively to multiply.—But although the evidence is, in both cases, satisfactory, it is not, I repeat, in both equally obvious. The proof of unity of design is, from its nature, more complex than the proof simply of intelligence and skill; requiring a greater extent of knowledge, and a greater power of comparison and combination; so that, viewing the evidence abstractly, and supposing ignorance of both, we should expect the discovery of the latter to precede that of the former.—This observation is much strengthened, in reference to the ruder states of human society, when we reflect, how many appearances there are in nature, of more or less frequent occurrence, of which modern science has furnished satisfactory explanations, but which, to the unenlightened mind, appear utterly strange and inexplicable, and either suggest the suspicion, or ripen it into belief, of

the agency of different beings, various in character and in power.

But further: even supposing harmony of plan demonstrated, and, by consequence, unity of design completely ascertained; is this, after all, a certainly conclusive proof of *only one designer?* Clearly not. It is admitted by the best writers on the principles of natural theology, that the whole of their argument for the Divine Unity, drawn from harmony of plan in the universe, "goes no further than to an unity of counsel."* Now, however high may be the degree of *probability*, arising from this, of the unity of the Divine Being, it is evident that it must be taken in connexion with other considerations, to give it conclusive effect. For the *possibility* is abundantly obvious, of unity of counsel subsisting among a plurality of counsellors.†

But whatever may be the views we entertain as to the extent of natural evidence in support of the Unity of the Godhead, there can be no doubt, that this doctrine forms one of the first and fundamental truths of Divine revelation. It is in many places of the inspired volume distinctly and plainly affirmed; and it appears pervading the whole, as one of those great leading principles, to which it owes the peculiarity of its general complexion, and to which all the subordinate parts of the system bear a constant reference.

The people of Israel, accustomed to the idolatries of Egypt, and possessing, in their nature, the same evil propensities, which produced departure from God among the Gentile nations, had manifested, in the wilderness, long before the time when Moses addressed to them the words of our text, a strong tendency to idolatrous defection. The same disposition continued to display itself during all the subsequent period of their history, till their return from the

* Paley's Nat. Theol. chap. 25, page 487, second edition.

† See note A, at the end of the volume.

captivity in Babylon; after which time, their corruption, still retaining its inward dominion, appeared under other forms of outward transgression.—Against the indulgence of this propensity to depart from God, they were often warned, in the name of Jehovah, in the most solemn and awful terms; the warnings pronounced by their commissioned lawgiver, and by the prophets of after times, were frequently verified and impressed by the execution of signal judgments; and the continued repetition of the offence, in defiance both of warnings and of judgments, strikingly showed the strength, and the infatuating influence, of the corrupt inclination which led them astray.

That the Unity of God is a leading doctrine of the Scriptures, and that this doctrine is pointedly affirmed in the text, as an admonition to the Israelites against the polytheism of the surrounding nations, I need not, I apprehend, take time to prove.—I would rather proceed to observe, in consistency with the object which I have principally in view, that while the Unity of the Godhead is thus clearly affirmed, and forms a characteristic feature of both the Jewish and Christian revelations, we are, by the same scriptures, taught also to believe, that in this one Godhead there are three distinct subsistences, which, for want of a better word, we are accustomed to denominate *persons*:—the FATHER, the SON or WORD, and the HOLY SPIRIT.

Whence, or on what accounts, these distinguishing appellations are given, is not the subject of our present inquiry. I only remark, in general, that we do not consider them as expressive of a distinction that is merely official, or as exhibiting the same Divine person under three different aspects:—but as implying a real, personal distinction, which has subsisted from eternity, and is essential to the nature of Deity.

Of the precise import of the term *personality*, as applied to a distinction in the Divine essence, or of the peculiar

nature and mode of that distinction, I shall not presume to attempt conveying to your minds any clear conception. I cannot impart to you what I do not possess myself:—and convinced as I am, that such conception cannot be attained by any, it had been well, I think, if such attempts at explanation, by comparisons from nature, and otherwise, had never been made. They have afforded to the enemies of the doctrine, much unnecessary occasion for unhallowed burlesque and blasphemy.—The Scriptures simply assure us of *the fact*:—of the *mode* of the fact they offer no explanation. And where the Bible is silent it becomes us to be silent also; for when, in such cases, we venture to speak, we can only "darken counsel by words without knowledge."—The fact, and not the manner of it, being that which is revealed, is the proper and only object of our faith. We believe that *it is so*; but *how* it is so, we are not ashamed to say, we do not presume even to conjecture.

But, before proceeding further, it will be proper to show, that what has been stated is indeed the doctrine of the scriptures.

Here, then, I would, first of all, observe, that while the text as it stands in our English translation, appears simply to affirm the Unity of God, it affirms it, according to the proper import of the words in the original language, in connexion with the plurality of persons in the Godhead:—

"Hear, O Israel, JEHOVAH, OUR GODS (ALEIM) IS ONE JEHOVAH."

Unity and plurality are both here asserted; and the plurality is emphatically declared to be consistent with the Unity.

The use of a plural noun for *GOD*, in the Hebrew language, and the construction of that noun with other nouns, and with verbs and pronouns, sometimes in the singular number, and sometimes in the plural, have often been noticed as remarkable anomalies; and these anomalies, or

irregularities, are, at the same time, connected, on some occasions, with particular modes of expression, such as seem to be utterly unaccountable, on any other principle than that of a plurality of persons in the Divine Unity.

For example: In Gen. i. 26. Jehovah is represented as saying, with regard to the creation of man, "*Let* US *make man in* OUR *image, after* OUR *likeness.*

This, it will not be denied, is very remarkable language: and attempts have, accordingly, been made to account for it, on various principles.

In the first place: It has by some been alleged, that *Angels* are here associated with Jehovah.—But surely nothing can be more unnatural and unworthy than such a supposition. What! the only living and true God sharing with his creatures his peculiar glory! consulting with them in terms of equality, about a work, which is necessarily the exclusive prerogative of infinite power!—even that God, who so often claims this work, the work of creation, as entirely his own, and as distinguishing him from all pretenders to Divinity, and who so solemnly declares, that He will not give his honour to another! Such an idea is too flagrantly inconsistent, to merit any lengthened exposure. —I may just add, however, that the Scriptures nowhere give any countenance to the notion of Angels having been employed in the creation of man, or of man's having been formed in the image of Angels.

2dly. By others, Jehovah has been considered as using, on this occasion, the language of *Majesty*, according to the practice of earthly potentates.

One should be apt to think the converse of this proposition more probable; and that if Moses employed the plural number, as the peculiar style of Divine dignity, it had been afterwards, in the presumption of pride and vanity, assumed by the rulers of this world.—But, *in the first place*, it is not consistent with fact, that the Supreme Being

is ever represented in the Scriptures as using this particular style. It is indeed quite the contrary. In the most sublime and solemn portions of Holy writ, in which the Divine Majesty of heaven and earth is introduced as speaking, it is uniformly the singular number that is used.—2*dly*. Neither was it, in point of fact, the style of the kings of the earth themselves, in the time of Moses; nor, indeed, can any instance of it be produced from the whole Bible.—3*dly*. When do we ever find an earthly monarch, *consulting with himself?—addressing proposals to himself?* Even if it had been the style of royalty in the days of Moses, the interpretation would be inadmissable: for in times and places in which it *is* the style of royalty, the expressions in question are still without a parallel; nothing of the same kind can be produced.—4*thly*. There is another passage which occurs soon after in the same book, and which is akin to the one now before us, only, if possible, of still more unexampled singularity; to which, consequently, these remarks apply, with even a greater degree of force and conclusiveness. In Gen. iii. 22. Jehovah is introduced as saying, after the fall of Adam, "*Behold the man has become* AS ONE OF US, *to know good and evil.*"—"*As one of us!*" What can this language mean, when considered as the language of the one God? An earthly king might use such an expression, to comprehend his *fellow-kings;* all who possessed the same rank and authority with himself. But Jehovah stands alone. As the sovereign of the universe, he has no compeers—no *fellow-gods*. No potentate among men could use an expression like this, in reference to *himself alone*, unless under the influence of a disordered mind. Yet thus the inspired historian represents Jehovah as speaking: and there seems to be here no principle of easy and natural interpretation, but that which is afforded by the doctrine of the TRINITY.—An expression precisly of the same des-

cription with the one I have just been considering, occurs in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, the 6th and 7th verses, in the account there given of the confusion of languages at Babel: "The Lord said, behold, the people is one, and they have all one language: and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. *Go to, let* us *go down*, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."—I need not say, that to this passage the observations which have been made apply, with the same force as to the one on which they have been founded.

The plural name of God is most generally connected with verbs in the singular number. It is so in the words, from the first chapter of Genesis, which we have just been considering; and about thirty times, indeed, in the course of the same chapter. It is worthy of notice, that while, in the declaration of the Divine purpose, "*God said let us make man in our image*," terms are employed expressive of plurality, the style of *unity* is resumed, in the record of the execution of the purpose: "So God created man in *his* image; in the image of God created he him."

Not unfrequently, however, as before noticed, this name, itself in the plural, is associated, in syntax, with verbs, adjectives, and pronouns, in the same number. For example: "Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is a *holy God*:" the adjective *holy* as well as the name of *God*, is, in the original, in the plural number.—"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth:" In the Hebrew "thy *Creators*."—"Thy maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is his name:"—both the nouns *maker* and *husband* are plural,—thy *makers*—thy *husbands*.—"If I be a master, (in the Hebrew, "If I be *masters*") where is my fear?"—"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy, (in the original the *holy ones*)

is understanding."*—These are quoted as a specimen, merely to shew you what I mean. A very considerable number of instances, of various descriptions, might be added.

This kind of anomaly, which pervades the phraseology of the whole Old Testament revelation, where the writers appear at liberty, under Divine inspiration, to use sometimes the one mode of expression, and sometimes the other, finds a principle of solution, sufficiently natural, in the truth of the doctrine which I am endeavouring to defend; nor is it easy to assign to it, if this doctrine is proscribed, an origin equally simple and satisfactory.

A variety of other proofs might be adduced, on this subject, from the Old Testament scriptures. They are to be found, for example, in such expressions as these:—"And now the LORD GOD, and HIS SPIRIT hath sent ME."†—"Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; for MY mouth it hath commanded, and HIS SPIRIT it hath gathered them:" ‡with others of a similar description:—but as it is not my purpose, (for which my reason will appear by and by) to enter at large into the evidence of the Trinity in general, I shall rather go forward to those of the New; proceeding, at the same time, with regard to them also, on the same principle; selecting only one or two of the most prominent passages.

Of these, most of you will doubtless expect, that one at least, if not the very first, should be the remarkable verse in the fifth chapter of the first epistle of John. "*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.*" And certainly this text should have been entitled to hold the first place, had its genuineness been undisputed, or disputed, as that of many texts has been, on slender grounds. I freely acknowledge, however, that the evidence of the spuri-

* Joshua xxiv. 19. Eccl. xii. 1. Isa. liv. 5. Mal. i. 6. Prov. ix. 10.

† Isa. xlviii. 16. ‡ Isa. xxxiv. 16.

ousness of this celebrated passage, if it were even much less conclusive than, in my mind, it appears to be, would be quite sufficient to prevent me from resting upon it any part of the weight of this argument.

I shall confine myself, at present, to a few remarks on two passages only.

The first is the form of baptism, prescribed by our Lord, in the commission, which he gave to his apostles, immediately before he left the world; and which you will find in the nineteenth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of the gospel according to Matthew:—"*Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*"

On the very first aspect of this text, it seems most unreasonable to suppose, that the one true God is here associated with two of his creatures; or with one of his creatures, and an attribute, or energy, or mode of operation. It appears to me, that the simple statement of such an interpretation should be sufficient to insure its immediate and unqualified rejection.—Yet the unreasonableness is increased, when the words are considered as the terms of an initiatory rite, connected with a religion, in which all worship but what is addressed to the one Jehovah, is, under every form, whether expressed or implied, so decidedly and totally condemned.—The apostles were to teach the Gentiles, that they should "turn from those vanities which they worshipped, to the living God:" and those who received their instructions they were to baptize "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." What, then, must have occurred to their hearers and converts, from the use of these words, but that they were now, instead of the multitude of their former deities, to adore and serve the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as the one living and true God?—Baptism was to be administered, in the name of all the three, in the very same way; and

surely, therefore, there is the fairest reason to conclude, in the same sense. It is not, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of his two servants, the Son and the Holy Spirit;"—nor even, "baptizing them in the name of God, and of Christ, and of the Spirit:"—but, without the slightest intimation or symptom of any change in the meaning of the expression, in its application to one of the persons more than to another—"baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."—The very same kind, and the very same degree, of honour and reverence, that are paid in this rite to one, are paid, as far as language can indicate the meaning of the speaker, alike to all.*

The second passage is the form of apostolic benediction, used in the conclusion of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians:—"*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all! Amen!*"

That this form of blessing includes in it a prayer, it would be a waste of words to prove. To whom, then, is this prayer addressed?—Had it been simply said, "*The love of God be with you all! Amen!*" no one, I suppose, would have hesitated to say, that, when the apostle thus expressed himself, he presented, in his heart, a petition to the Father of mercies, for the manifestations of his love to the believers at Corinth.—On what principle of criticism, then, are we to interpret the expression, "*the grace, or favour, of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" an expression so precisely the same in form, in a different sense? in a sense that does not imply Jesus Christ's being the object of a similar inward aspiration? And the same question might be asked, with regard to the remaining phrase, "*the communion of the Holy Spirit.*"—It should be considered, too, that

* See some further observations on this text, in the beginning of the eighth discourse.

the Corinthians, to whom he thus wrote, would at once associate the phraseology employed with the terms of the initiatory ordinance of baptism, to which they had submitted on their entrance into the Christian church. They would perceive the coincidence between the one and the other; and would understand the apostle as addressing himself, in their behalf, to the three persons in whose name they had, upon his own instruction, been baptized.—I would only further ask at present, how we can suppose an inspired man, or even a man of common understanding, to recommend, in the solemn language of prayer, his converts and brethren, to the love of God, and to the favour and communion of two of his creatures; or to the love of God, the favour of a man, and the communion of an attribute, or influence, or energy? and that, too, not only in terms so exactly alike, but with a precedence given to the creature, in the order of address?

I must now remark, that these are proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity *in general*. The argument, however, is cumulative. It is my design, in a series of discourses, to prove, distinctly, the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit: and the evidence in support of the general doctrine is not properly closed, till all this mass of separate proof has been adduced, and illustrated. You must not, therefore, imagine, that we have now done with the proof of the subject which has been under consideration. Much more of a general nature might have been said; but as all that will come to be advanced, on the particular topics of the Deity of Christ and of the Spirit, will be found to bear, directly and fully, on the doctrine in question, I have purposely forborne entering into it more at large.

But, in answer to all our reasonings, it is by many thought sufficient to say,—The doctrine of which you have been speaking is *a mystery*.—I shall not here enter into

any critical explanation of the sense in which the term *mystery* is employed by the New Testament writers;—but, understanding it according to its ordinary acceptation, as signifying something that is either difficult to be conceived, or entirely incomprehensible, (the latter of these being obviously the meaning affixed to it in the terms of the objection)—I freely and explicitly admit, that the doctrine in question *is* a mystery,—a mystery in the strongest sense of the word. But while I admit, without hesitation, the truth of the proposition expressed in the objection, I as distinctly deny the validity of the objection itself.—If the mysterious and incomprehensible nature of the doctrine in question, be a sufficient reason for its rejection, then may this reason be, with safety, generalized, and reduced to a principle, of universal application. The principle will be: *Every thing that is mysterious and incomprehensible ought to be disbelieved.*—Supposing, then, for a moment, the correctness of this principle, let us see what will become of some of the fundamental truths even of Natural Religion.—Take, for example, the *omnipresence* of Deity. We believe this to be one of his essential attributes. We are accustomed to say, without any feeling of hesitation, that *God is here.* Yet we believe and affirm, with quite as little hesitation, that he is at the same moment, equally present in the remotest part of the universe, at the distance of millions of millions of miles:—that he is present here, and present there, in the possession and exercise of all his infinite perfections. But while certain modes of expression are, on this subject, familiar to our minds, have we ever endeavoured to analyze the conceptions which these modes of expression appear to convey? Have we ever tried to answer to ourselves the question, *How is it,* that this infinite Being is every where present? *How is it,* that he exercises, at the same instant, in every point of space to which his presence extends, all the infinite

perfections of his Nature?—Is he a *spiritual substance*, infinitely extended? Against this notion of *infinite extension* there have been advanced powerful, perhaps insurmountable objections: and the truth is, that if we imagine we possess any conception at all of the *mode* of the Divine omnipresence and omniscience, we greatly deceive ourselves. That the Supreme God is so present with every creature, as to have a perfect knowledge of that creature, and an absolute power over it, is a truth susceptible of the strictest demonstration. But as to the *manner* in which the infinite Spirit is thus every-where present; as to the manner in which he possesses this knowledge, and exerts this power, we are safest when we say, *We cannot tell.*

But why illustrate the falsehood of the principle I am now considering, from what regards the essence and perfections of Deity? Is there no mystery in any thing beneath his infinite nature? Is not the observation as true as it is trite and common, that every thing around us is full of mystery?—We are a mystery to ourselves. We have no sort of accurate conception of the nature of that union which subsists, in our own persons, between the body and the soul; between gross corporeal substance, and invisible, immaterial spirit. This union, with all its singular phenomena, has been, still is, and I believe we may with safety say, ever will be, an inscrutable mystery. Philosophical men have marked, with increasing attention and accuracy, the various and complicated results of this union; and they have often fondly deceived themselves, by imagining they have discovered a cause, when, after all, they have only been applying the terms expressive of causation, to some effect less obvious to ordinary discernment, than the one for which they were endeavouring to account. The various theories of nervous influence, with their different degrees of ingenuity and plausibility, are no more than physiological guesses at a particular fact. Of the manner in which

mind is united to matter:—of the way in which the one operates upon the other:—of the question *how* nerves convey volitions and transmit intelligence; they leave us in as profound ignorance as ever.—What then shall we say? Is it reasonable, that a creature, who cannot, voluntarily, shut his eyes, or open his mouth, or lift his finger, without an incomprehensible mystery, should be startled and offended, because in what God reveals concerning his own infinite nature, he finds something which he cannot understand?—that a creature, who feels himself baffled, in his greatest efforts of intellect, by the vegetation of a blade of grass, or the nature of the vital principle, which moves the wing of the smallest insect that glitters in the sun-beam, should be startled and offended, because he cannot comprehend the essence, and the mode of existence, of the infinite God?

"In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
"All would be gods, and rush into the skies."

And we are not ignorant, when and whence this pride originated. When the devil, presenting his allurements to that ambition which his own suggestions insinuated into the human heart, said to our first parents, "*Ye shall be as God;*" no sooner was the temptation complied with, than man, becoming the victim of a disordered mind, began to fancy himself what the tempter had promised he should be: and ever since, pride has swayed the sceptre of the unrenewed soul.—But surely, if there be a subject, among all that can occupy the mind, in the contemplation of which we should be humble and self-diffident; it is the nature of the infinite Jehovah. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is higher than heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."*

The doctrine of which I now speak, is freely admitted

* Job xi. 7—9.

to be *above reason*. But it is of consequence to observe, that, on this very account, it seems impossible to prove it *contrary to reason*. It is a common and a just remark, that there is an essential difference between any thing being above reason, and being contrary to it; and that it may be the former without being the latter. I think we may go a step farther; and affirm, as I have just hinted, that the very circumstance of its being the former precludes the possibility of proving it to be the latter. I question whether any thing that is above reason can ever be shewn to be contrary to it. For unless we have some notion of the thing itself, on what principle can we possibly make out the contrariety? Were we to say that the persons of the Godhead are one and three *in the same sense*, we should evidently affirm what is *contrary* to reason; because such a proposition would involve, in the very terms of it, an irreconcilable contradiction; but so long as we do not pretend to know, or to say, *how* they are one, and *how* they are three; to prove that we assert what is contrary to reason, when we affirm that they are both, is, from the very nature of the thing, impossible. For what is it which is to be proved contrary to reason? Upon the supposition made, *we cannot tell:* it is something which we do not know; of the nature and circumstances of which we are left in total ignorance.—The truth is, we are lost, completely lost, whenever we begin, in any view of it whatever, to think about the Divine essence. We can form no more distinct conception of a Being that never began to exist, or of a Being that is every-where present, and yet is wholly no-where, than we can of one essence, in which there are, and have been from eternity, three distinct subsistences.

A subject such as this, is far from being without use. It is eminently fitted to humble the pride of human intellect, and to make us remember, and feel, that we are crea-

tures: a truth, it may be thought, sufficiently obvious; but one which we are in no small danger, on such subjects, of at least practically forgetting. Incalculable mischief has arisen from men's aspiring at knowledge beyond the reach of their own, or of any finite powers, and beyond the limits of the Divine declarations. Yet the attempt to comprehend the mode in which the Divine Unity subsists in three persons, is certainly not more foolish, than it is to refuse credence to the fact, because it exceeds our comprehension. He, who does so, on such a subject as this, must either, as we have seen, be guilty of the most palpable and glaring inconsistencies, or else the limits of his belief must be narrow indeed. There is hardly a point, in fact, at which a man of this description can consistently stop, short of universal scepticism. O the presumptuous arrogance of the human mind, that will not be satisfied unless the nature of the infinite God is brought down to the comprehension of a creature, whose faculties are so limited, that he is puzzled, confounded, and lost, in the consideration of *himself!* and to whom there is not a single object in existence which does not present mysteries, that mock all his efforts at explanation!

Let us not forget, what is the proper province of reason, with regard to Divine revelation. We shall examine this subject more at large hereafter. Meantime, it may be observed in general, that we ought, beyond all controversy, to exercise our reason, in determining the question, whether this book contains a revelation from God. This we must do, by an examination of the evidences, of various kinds, external and internal, by which its high claims are substantiated. But suppose this great point fairly ascertained: what is the province of reason *then?* Is it not equally beyond controversy, that, *on this supposition*, the only rational conduct is *implicit faith?* Once ascertain the Scriptures to be "given by inspiration of God," and no-

thing can be more absurd, than to erect our reason into a standard of the truth or falsehood of what they contain. This would be to deify reason: to "exalt it above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." It would be to admit that the declarations of this book possess the authority of God, and, at the same time, to question and deny them on the authority of reason;—to question and deny them, that is, on our own authority; thus assuming to ourselves the arrogant office of censors on the dictates of infinite wisdom and infinite truth.—It is true, that the contents of this book ought to be examined, as forming what has been called the internal evidence of its Divine authority. If it could be shown to contain what was clearly contradictory, the discovery would be a proof, sufficiently convincing, of its not being from God. This, however, is firmly, and without qualification denied. I am arguing, too, at present, on the supposition of its being acknowledged as a revelation from heaven. And I repeat, that for any man to profess to believe that the Bible is the word of God, and yet not implicitly to regulate his convictions by the question, "what saith the scripture?" is of all conduct the most unreasonable and inconsistent.

For my own part, so far from being staggered by finding mysteries in revelation, I am satisfied, that the entire absence of them would have formed a much stronger ground for suspicion. All analogy excites and justifies the expectation of them. *Nature*, in its various departments, is full of them: and shall we, then, account it strange, that there should be any in the department of *grace?* They abound in the *works* of God: why, then, should we not look for them in his *word?* They present themselves in the nature and constitution of every one of *his creatures:* and is it to be conceived, that in *his own* nature and essence, nothing of the kind should be found? Is it reasonable to think, that all should be plain and easily compre-

hensible, which relates to God himself, and that inexplicable difficulties should embarrass and stop our researches, only in what regards his creatures? Ought we not rather, on such a subject, to anticipate difficulties?—to expect to feel the inadequacy and the failure of our faculties?—and to expect this, with a certainty proportioned to the superior magnitude of the subject above all others that can engage our attention, and its complete and absolute remoteness from the sphere of all our senses, and of all our experience? If finite things every moment confound us, ought we to be surprised at finding that we cannot comprehend what is infinite?—Let us remember, my brethren, the apostolic lesson, and let it be our desire, that we may think, and feel, and act, on all subjects, and on all occasions, consistently with the principle and spirit of it: "I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF, MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK, BUT TO THINK SOBERLY."*

I shall conclude this Discourse with a single practical observation.

While the unity of the Godhead is proclaimed in the text, in terms fitted to impress the vast importance of the doctrine on the minds of the Israelites, they are admonished, with the same earnestness, to hear, and to retain in their remembrance, the duty which they owed to "Jehovah their God, the one Jehovah:" "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*" This, according to the testimony of our Saviour himself, is "the first and great commandment:"† and it may be considered as the principle and sum of all the rest.—It is a righteous law: "holy, and just, and good." It finds a testimony in every conscience, that is not seared to utter insensibility.—But alas! it is a law which we have broken. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." And

* Rom. xii. 3. † Matth. xxii. 37, 38.

in the violation of this law, which respects the inward spring of all our conduct, is involved the breach, in their great principle, of all the other commandments of God.—We have not given to God the supreme, and affectionate, and practical homage of our hearts. In withholding it, we have sinned: and having sinned, we are justly condemned.—This is the state in which the gospel finds us: this is the state, indeed, that renders the gospel necessary.—The gospel is a manifestation of God's love to his enemies. "Herein is love, *not that we loved God*, but that *he loved us*, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* It is the object of the gospel, to reconcile these enemies to God: to bring them to a participation of his pardoning favour and paternal love, and to the renewed exercise of love to him. It is the word of reconciliation: and the ministry of it is "the ministry of reconciliation."—"Now then," says the apostle of the Gentiles, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us; we pray men in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God: for He hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."†—When a sinner, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, believes this testimony, and complies with this invitation, the enmity of his heart is subdued:—love to God, for what he is, and for what he has done, complacential and grateful love, takes possession of his soul: and, although mingled and polluted with the foul dregs of remaining corruption, it becomes the spring of his future conduct; emitting, in all directions, streams of the same nature with itself, although tainted proportionally with the same pollution. He is no longer "without law to God," but is "under the law to Christ." He lives to God. He "has his fruit unto holiness, and his end everlasting life."

* 1 John iv. 10. † 2 Cor. v. 19—21.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"———HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD."

In last discourse, I endeavoured, from the words of Moses to the Israelites in Deut. iv. 4—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord," to illustrate the great doctrine of the Divine Unity.

After a few introductory remarks, on the unreasonableness of Deists in smiling, with scorn, at the diversity of sentiment among professed believers in revelation, while, in proportion to the limits of their own creed, a diversity no less striking is found to prevail among themselves; and also on some of the causes which may contribute to produce this difference of opinion, among those who agree in rejecting the Divine authority of the Bible:—I proceeded to consider a little, how far this important doctrine of the Unity of God is entitled to be ranked among the articles of Natural Religion; and closed some desultory observations on this question, by remarking, that, whatever judgment we might form concerning it, no doubt whatever could exist, as to the doctrine under consideration being a prominent and essential article of revealed truth.

I then attempted to show, from a variety of passages, in the Scriptures both of the old Testament, and of the New, (the only source of information possessed by us on the subject) that in the Unity of the Godhead there are three distinct subsistences, which, wanting a more appro-

priate term, we denominate *persons*—the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Spirit*.—On this subject I stated, that the *fact* is revealed, while the *mode* of the fact, remaining an undiscovered secret, is not the proper object of our faith:—that, although this doctrine does, without doubt, involve in it a mystery, that is, in the ordinary sense of the term, something that is incomprehensible; yet nothing can be more unreasonable, than either to reject Christianity because it contains what is mysterious, or to resolve on expunging all mystery from its authenticated records; for that both the nature of the subject, and all analogy, fully justified even a previous expectation that mysteries should be found. I observed, that not only is the ordinary distinction well founded, between what is *above* reason, and what is *contrary* to it; but that it seems, in the nature of the thing, impossible to prove that to be contrary to reason, which is admitted to be above it; because nothing can be shown to contradict reason, which we do not at all understand:—that there are, in Natural Religion, mysteries not less incomprehensible than those of the christian system:—that he, who withholds his faith from a declared fact, because the *manner* of it is beyond his comprehension, must, if he would be consistent with himself, contract within very narrow limits indeed, the range of his belief: and that, while reason ought to be exercised, with a seriousness becoming the importance of the subject, in ascertaining, by the examination of evidence, whether the Holy Scriptures be a revelation from God; yet, this important point being once settled, so far is implicit faith from being unreasonable, that the contrary is irrational in the extreme; an impious deification of reason; an exaltation of its authority above the authority of God.

It is impossible to resume the illustration of these various and important topics.—Of one other observation, however, I must particularly remind you:—that the argument

in support of the doctrine of the Trinity was not, by any means, completed, when those passages of scripture had been adduced, in which that doctrine is asserted or implied in its full extent; in which, that is, all the three persons of the Godhead are introduced together: that the proofs of the Divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, form distinct portions of the same body of evidence; all bearing directly on the one great, general truth.

I now, therefore, proceed to a part of my subject, which is, without controversy, of pre-eminent importance:—THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

To impress upon your minds the vast importance of this subject, let me entreat you to consider it a little, *in its own nature*, in *its connexion with our most interesting and solemn duties*, and in its *relation to other truths*.

Contemplate this subject, *in the first place*, in *its own nature*.—There are some doctrines which we at once perceive, as soon as they are stated, I do not say to be of no value, (for nothing which God has been pleased to make known is destitute of value) but to be doctrines of comparatively minor consequence; while there are others, which we as immediately discern to be of essential and vital importance. To the latter of these classes the doctrine before us will, without hesitation, be referred, by every reflecting mind. If it be indeed a truth, that Jesus Christ is "GOD OVER ALL," it is utterly impossible that it can be a truth of subordinate magnitude. The simple statement of it is enough to show that it must rank as a *first principle*; an article of prime importance; a foundation-stone in the Temple of Truth;—a star of the very first magnitude in the hemisphere of christian doctrine.—For my own part, I believe it to be even more than this; a kind of central Sun, around which the whole system of Christianity, in all its glory, and in all its harmony, revolves.

This view of its importance is confirmed, when we consider it, *secondly*, in *its connexion with our most interesting and solemn duties.* I mean the duties which we owe to the great object of supreme reverence, worship, and obedience.—If Jesus Christ be not God, then we, who offer to him that homage of our hearts which is due to God alone, are, without doubt, guilty of *idolatry;* as really guilty as the worshippers of the deified heroes of Greece or Rome. We are guilty, like them, of "changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man;" of thus alienating the honours of him who hath declared, that he "will not give his glory to another." This, surely, is no trifle.—But is it, on the other hand, a trifle,—is it fitted to excite no serious concern, no uneasy apprehension—to withhold Divine honour from one to whom it is due? to divest of his Supreme dignity, and to equalize with ourselves, puny worms of the dust, one whom Angels and Archangels adore, as "over all, God blessed forever?"—Consequences of such magnitude, on both sides, certainly stamp with immense importance the inquiry on which we are now entering.

The same thing is manifest, *thirdly*, from the intimate relation which this doctrine bears to others.—It is an integral part of a system of truths, which stand or fall along with it. It is connected, for example, in the closest manner, with the purpose of Christ's appearance upon earth, and the great design of his sufferings and death; that is, with the vitally important doctrine of *atonement: this* doctrine, again, is inseparably connected with the corruption of human nature, and the universal guilt of mankind; from which it is that the necessity of such atonement arises:—this, in its turn, essentially affects the question, respecting the true ground of a sinner's acceptance with God; the necessity of the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit; the principle and motive of all acceptable obedi-

ence; and other points of similar consequence. It is very obvious, that two systems, of which the sentiments on subjects such as these are in direct opposition, cannot, with any propriety, be confounded together under one common name. That both should be Christianity, is impossible; else Christianity is a term which distinguishes nothing. Viewing the matter abstractly, and without affirming, for the present, what is truth and what is error, this, I think, I may with confidence affirm, that to call schemes so opposite in all their great leading articles by a common appellation, is more absurd, than it would be to confound together those two irreconcileable theories of astronomy, of which the one places the Earth, and the other the Sun, in the centre of the Planetary System.—They are, in truth, *essentially different religions.* For if opposite views as to the *object of worship*, the *ground of hope for eternity*, the *rule of faith and duty*, and the *principles and motives of true obedience*;—if these do not constitute different religions, we may, without much difficulty, discover some principle of union and identity, among all religions whatever; we may realize the doctrine of Pope's universal prayer; and extend the right hand of fellowship to the worshippers at the Mosque, and to the votaries of Brama.*

Such, then, is the importance, direct and relative, of this point of doctrine,—that Jesus Christ is truly God; that in his person there subsisted, when he was on earth, and still subsists, an union of the Divine and human natures.

The same distinction, which was formerly stated on the subject of the Trinity in general, ought here also to be kept in mind: I mean the distinction between the *fact*, and the *mode* of the fact. The former alone is revealed; and it alone, therefore, is the object of faith. As in the

* Some further remarks on this important subject, will be found in the concluding discourse of the series.

case of the doctrine of the Trinity, we believe that *it is so;* but *how* it is so, we do not pretend to know, far less to explain.—The only questions which we think ourselves entitled to ask, are: "Is this book a revelation from God?" And, supposing it to be so, "Does it testify this fact?" The mysteriousness of the fact cannot, in this case, any more than in the former, and for the same reasons as were then assigned, be any valid objection to our believing it.—How that which is infinite, can be united with that which is finite;—the infinite nature of Deity, with the finite nature of a creature, of a mortal man, is at once admitted to be beyond our comprehension. But let us see here, as in the former case, whether there be not, in some of the Divine perfections, of the existence of which we are not disposed to speak with even the slightest measure of doubt, something quite as incomprehensible; felt to be so, whenever we attempt to make it the subject of fixed thought, or of distinct conception. I refer to the same attribute of Deity, from which I took my illustration formerly. We ascribe *omnipresence* to God. We say that God is *here.* But *how*, I ask, is he here? How *can* that which is *infinite* be *here?* What is the nature of that connexion, which subsists between a Being who is infinite, whose existence is boundless, and any particular, limited portion of space? As soon as our opponents have answered *this* question, we shall be able, I think, to answer theirs, What is the nature of the connexion between the infinite nature of Deity, and the finite nature of "the man Christ Jesus?" The principle which affords a satisfactory answer to the one, will afford an answer equally satisfactory to the other. That is, they are both alike unanswerable:—for I do not introduce the one case, as furnishing any explanation of the other, so as to render it more easily comprehensible; but only to show, how apt we are, in one instance, hastily to assume impossibility and contradiction.

while in another, in which the difficulty is equally great, we are accustomed to speak, as if we were not sensible that there exists any difficulty at all.

A subject of this kind, it is easy in the extreme to burlesque and ridicule: and the propensity to this sort of profane jesting, has, alas! been too often indulged.—But surely it is not a theme for unhallowed merriment, or sarcastic wit. It is a doctrine, from the truth or falsehood of which there arise, as we have seen, consequences so highly important, that the man is to be pitied, who is capable of treating it with levity.—That it is a mystery, is granted. But so is also the topic just now alluded to—the presence of the infinite God, in a limited point of space; and so are many other things which we are accustomed to consider as undeniable truths. That the union of the human nature with the Divine, in the person of Jesus Christ, implies any change in Deity—or any thing like a confinement of the infinite Jehovah, we are not so senseless as for a moment to suppose. But we do affirm, that in the person of Jesus, the human nature is, in some way unknown to us, so united with the Divine, as to have itself no distinct subsistence apart from that union:—that, in this sense, he is "God manifest in the flesh."

Nothing can be more disingenuous, than, either directly or indirectly, to represent the matter in dispute between Trinitarians and Antitrinitarians, to be, whether Jesus Christ was *a man*;—or to reason as if this were, in any respect, the question at issue. I do not say that it is ever formally stated in these terms; but there is a fondness frequently apparent, for mustering those passages that speak of Jesus as a man, that is apt to have an imposing effect on the mind of an unwary reader, leading him to conclude that all these declarations of his humanity are so many direct denials of his divinity. It should be remembered, however, that about the manhood of Jesus there is no dis-

pute. It is equally admitted on both sides; and the proofs of it are as valuable to those, who affirm his divinity, as to those, who deny it. There were, indeed, some ancient heretics, who denied the real humanity of Jesus; who considered him as a kind of phantom, and all his sufferings as endured only in appearance. Against such, the evidence of his proper manhood might with propriety be directed; but it is worse than futile, when pointed against those, to whose system the reality of his human nature is as essential as that of his Divine. The simple and only question evidently is, not, whether Jesus Christ was *man*, but whether he was not *also God*.

Now this is a question, with regard to which, it is manifest, our appeal must be made exclusively to the sacred volume. The sole inquiry is, "What saith the Scripture?" —And in making this appeal, in prosecuting this inquiry, it is of unutterable importance, that our minds be duly impressed with the sacredness of the word of God. To wrest the scriptures is, in the highest degree, dishonouring to their Divine Author. It is doing to Him, what is felt and resented by a fellow-creature, as one of the grossest of insults. By wilfully perverting from its true meaning, (that is, from the meaning which, we are sensible, the Spirit of Truth intended it to convey,) any passage of the Word of God; or by applying it to a purpose which it was not designed to serve, we are guilty, not of a slight and venial fault, but of a crime of deep and aggravated enormity; a crime, the very thought of which should make us tremble. It is nothing less, than imputing to the Author of Truth, sentiments contrary to what he meant to express; making the God of immutable veracity a liar; attempting to impress the seal of heaven on falsehood and forgery. This is high treason against the Divine Majesty. It is conduct which cannot be guiltless; which cannot be safe; but which, while it is deeply criminal, must be perilous in no

common degree.—Let us then beware, on this and on every other subject, of using, on either side, such freedoms with the Word of the Most High God, as we should reckon it base to use with the writings of a fellow-man. For if we *do* "wrest the Scriptures," it must be, as we are assured, "to our own destruction."*

It is my intention, in this discourse, to confine myself to certain general views of the subject, which seem to contain in them very powerful evidences of the truth to be established; and afterwards to enter into a more particular examination of some of those passages of Scripture, which form the more direct and immediate proofs.

It will be thought necessary, however, that I should at present say a little, in vindication of myself, for applying to Jesus Christ the words, which I have selected, as the ground of this discouse.

The whole verse runs thus:—"*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this (or he) is the true God, and eternal life.*"—I am quite aware of the ambiguity arising here, from the appearance of a *double antecedent.* By "*him that is true,*" it is said, we are to understand *the Father:* and to this appellation, which is the remote antecedent, the expression "*this is the true God*" may refer, as well as to "*his Son Jesus Christ,*" which is the immediate antecedent.

On this subject, let me request your attention to the following brief remarks.—It is the established *general rule,* that the personal, or the demonstrative pronoun, should be considered as referring to the *immediate antecedent.*—To this general rule there are two cases of exception: 1st, When obvious and indisputable necessity requires the con-

* 2 Peter iii. 16.

trary.*—But in the instance in our text, no such necessity can be pleaded, except on the *previous assumption* of the certainty that Jesus Christ *is not* the true God. Were this antecedently demonstrated, it might justify a deviation from ordinary practice. But to proceed on such an assumption, is to beg the question in dispute.—2dly, When the immediate antecedent holds no prominent place in the sentence, but is introduced only incidentally, the remote being obviously the chief subject, having the entire, or greatly preponderating emphasis, in the mind of the writer.—It requires only the reading of the verse, to satisfy any candid mind, that this is not the case here; and that no reason exists on *this* ground, for any departure from the general rule. The Son of God stands *first* and *last* in the part of the verse which precedes our text.

These observations are not at all affected by the difference in the translation of the verse, as given by our opponents in their "improved version of the New Testament." They render the words thus: "and we are in him that is

* Thus, when Peter, addressing the Jewish council, respecting the man that had been cured of his lameness, says, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, even by him, doth this man stand here before you whole. *This* is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is now become the head of the corner:" Acts iv. 10,11; no one ever imagines, that because the lame man is the immediate antecedent, "*This is the stone*" must be interpreted as referring to *him*.—The same *impossibility of mistake* exists, as to the reference of the demonstrative pronoun, in the following verse of the second epistle of John.—"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. *This* is a deceiver, and an antichrist."—In showing that the pronoun in the words of our text should be understood as referring to the remote antecedent, Mr. Belsham introduces this latter passage, and he mentions no other, as "*a similar case!*" Of the degree of parallelism, and of the candour evinced in such a reference, I may safely leave the reader to form his own judgment.—Belsham's Calm Inquiry, into the Scripture doctrine concerning the person of Christ; pages 232, 233.

true, *through* his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and everlasting life :"—a translation to which I should not be disposed to make any very material objection ; and in which, it is obvious, the relative positions of antecedents and pronouns remain unaltered.

On the supposition that the words "*this is the true God*" refer not to "*Jesus Christ,*" the immediate, but to "*him that is true,*" the remote antecedent ; and that the translation "*through* his Son Jesus Christ," is correct: we are tempted to ask, Was there any occasion for the explanation ? Could it ever have entered into the imagination of any reader, that in the sentence "*we are in him that is true, through his Son Jesus Christ,*" the apostle could mean by "*him that is true*" any one else than the true God? Is it very likely, think you, that after speaking of "*him that is true,*" in a connexion where Jesus Christ is represented as "*his Son,*" he would feel it necessary to subjoin the explanation, "*he that is true* is *the true God?*"

But the circumstance which, in my mind, places the matter beyond dispute, is, that *the same person* is plainly and unequivocally spoken of as "*the true God,* and ETERNAL LIFE." It will be granted, that a writer is the best interpreter of his own phraseology. Observe then, the expressions which he uses in the beginning of the epistle : "THE LIFE *was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you that* ETERNAL LIFE, *which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*" In these words, it is admitted by Socinians themselves, that "*the eternal life,*" or, as they render it "*the Everlasting Life,*" is a title given to Jesus Christ.*—Compare, then, the two passages.

* "Life, and, in the next clause, Everlasting Life. Christ is so called as the great teacher of everlasting life."—Improved Version of the New Testament; note on the place.—It is not with the *explanation* of the title that we have at present to do, but simply with the admission of its being a designation of Jesus Christ: an admis-

Is not the conclusion of the Epistle a clear explanation of its beginning? "*We show unto you* THE ETERNAL LIFE, *which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,*" —"*We are in him that is true, even in his Son*"—or, (for it makes no difference as to the present argument) "*through his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and* THE ETERNAL LIFE."* Is not this as if the Apostle had said, "This is he of whom I spoke in the commencement of my letter: *He* is THE LIFE, the ETERNAL LIFE, whom I then mentioned, as the great subject of apostolic testimony?"—Now if *this* designation, which follows the words of the text, is clearly meant of Jesus Christ, the immediate antecedent; so, beyond all reasonable dispute, must the title in the text itself. The *same person* is most undeniably affirmed to be "THE TRUE GOD and THE ETERNAL LIFE."

If any thing further were necessary to confirm what appears so incontrovertible, it might be noticed, that THE LIFE is a title appropriated to Jesus, in other parts of Scripture; and chiefly (which adds strength to the conclusion respecting the passage in question) in the writings of this same apostle. "I am the way, the truth, and THE LIFE:" —"I am the resurrection and THE LIFE:"—"THE LIFE was the light of men."

To the words of our text, there is immediately subjoined an admonition against idolatry:—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols." The connexion, in which this admonition is introduced, is an additional proof that our interpretation of the preceding verse is correct. For, as an eminent writer most justly observes, "it is very un-

sion distinctly made in this note, and made, indeed, both in it and in the text, by the printing of the words "the Everlasting Life" with initial capitals.

* Απαγγελλομεν ὑμιν ΤΗΝ ΖΩΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΝ, ἡτις ἡν προς τον πατερα,—κ. τ. λ.———οὑτος εστιν ὁ αληθινος Θεος και ΗΖΩΗ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΣ.

"likely, that the Apostle John should conclude his epistle "with such a solemn charge against idolatry, or the wor- "shipping of that which is not God, and yet, in the fore- "going verse, leave his expression concerning the true "God, so easily and so naturally to be interpreted con- "cerning Jesus Christ, if he were not the true God."*

Having made these few observations, with a view to show that the text which I have chosen is not a mere motto, but itself a proof of the doctrine to be established; let me now request your attention to the *current language of the New Testament*, relative to this important point.

Before quoting the following passages, as they stand in our ordinary English translation, I must be allowed to observe, that, so far as my acquaintance with the original language enables me to judge, this translation conveys their legitimate meaning; and that I should quote them, with the very same degree of confidence as to the impression which they are fitted to produce, to an assembly of Greeks, in *their* tongue, as to you, my friends, in *yours*.

"They shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us:"—"Many of the children of Israel shall he (John the baptist) turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord:"—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made:" —"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth:"—"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven:"—"Ver-

* Dr. Watts' "Christian Doctrine of the Trinity." Works, Vol. v. p. 19.

ily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am :"—"I and my Father are one :"—"I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and he that hath seen me hath seen the Father :"—"They stoned Stephen, invoking (Jesus) and saying, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit!—Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!' "—"Of whom, as concerning the flesh, the Christ came; who is over all God blessed forever :"—"Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh :"—"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in 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 :"—"Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; and, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands :"—"To the church of God which is at Corinth,—with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours :"—"He knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man :"—"All the churches shall know, that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts ;"—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them :"—"Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world :"—"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me :"—"Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ :"—"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you :"—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father,

who hath loved us—comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work :"—" We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ : this is the true God and eternal life :"—" I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty :"—" He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last :"—" I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."*

I have taken these passages, as they have presented themselves to my mind, without attending to any principle of arrangement. I shall afterwards have occasion, to make a selection from them, under distinct heads of argument; when some others also, both from the Old Testament and from the New, will come to be introduced.—The general question, which I have to ask at present, is this :—Is there any previous probability, that so great a number of passages, scattered throughout the Bible, and all bearing, directly, although in different ways, on the same important point, should have been, without exception, either *interpolated*, *corrupted*, or *misunderstood* ?—that no critics, ancient or modern, have been sufficiently acute to discover, or sufficiently candid to admit, those manifold corruptions and interpolations, of verses and of chapters, which have been detected and exposed by the Editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament, and the friends of their system ?—that all translators, into English, French, Latin, Italian, German, and other languages, have either wilfully or ignorantly erred ; these editors, and other translators of their party, alone excep-

* Matth. i. 23. Luke i. 16, 17. John i. 1—3. John i. 14. John iii. 13. John viii. 58. John x. 30. John xiv. 9, 10. Acts vii. 59, 60. Rom. ix. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Col. i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 8, 10. 1 Cor. i. 2. John ii. 24, 25. Rev. ii. 23. Matth. xviii. 20. xxviii. 20. 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. Eph. vi. 23. 1 Thess. iii. 11. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. 1 John v. 20. Rev. i. 8, 17. xxii. 13.

ted?—that the whole host of interpreters of the Scriptures have, either through ignorance, or prejudice, or inattention and carelessness, totally misapprehended the true sense of these passages; except the very few, who deny that in any one of them the Divinity of Jesus Christ is at all to be found? Are such suppositions as these, I ask, when applied to so large a number of passages, in themselves probable? Or are they quite consistent, in those who make them, with any thing like a becoming measure of modesty and humility?

I have not mustered these quotations, from any idea that frequency of repetition adds any thing, strictly speaking, to the value of testimony. If this book be the word of the God of truth, *one express declaration* should, on any point, be sufficient to satisfy our minds. It is, at the same time, true however that when a doctrine is of fundamental importance, we reasonably expect that it should hold a more prominent place, than we can suppose to be given to it by a single declaration. It is also true, that the import of one passage is more liable to the possibility of mistake, than that of many; partly, from the very cause just alluded to, that when such a passage affirms a doctrine of great magnitude, its very solitude excites suspicion. On these grounds, frequency of repetition and allusion, or what may properly be termed the *general strain* of scripture phraseology, comes to be a consideration of no trivial weight; the various passages in which a doctrine is either asserted, assumed, or alluded to, serving mutually to illustrate and support one another.

But it may be alleged there are other passages of Scripture, which speak a very different language from those which have been quoted:—passages, in which Jesus is spoken of as *inferior* to the Father; as *sent* by the Father; as *obeying*, and *serving* the Father; as *receiving a commission*, and executing a work, *given him to do*. All this,

we at once admit; with the very same readiness and cordiality, with which we admit his having been *a man*. I address myself at present to those who acknowledge the Scriptures as the word of God; and who are consequently satisfied, that they cannot in reality contradict themselves. To such, I propose the following simple question: Which of the two views—that which asserts the *mere humanity* of Jesus Christ, or that which affirms the union of his *humanity* with true and proper *divinity*—affords the easiest and most complete reconciliation of these apparent contrarieties, and the fairest solution of the difficulty thence arising? Take, in the first place, the system from which the Deity of Christ is entirely excluded. I need not say how superlatively difficult the attempt must be, to bring the host of texts already quoted, along with others of a similar description, to speak a language in accordance with this hypothesis. Every one, who is at all acquainted with the subject, is aware, that the attempt has employed, and exhausted, all the possible arts and resources of criticism:—with what success, remains afterwards to be seen.—Take on the other hand, the view of the person and work of Christ, presented in the following words:—"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* *Suppose*, for the present, this translation to be correct, and the ordinary interpretation of the passage to be the just one; we have, on this supposition, a *double view* of the person and character of Christ, which appears instantly to furnish a natural and satisfactory solution of the whole difficulty. If he be, indeed, both God and man, we have no reason, surely, to be greatly aston-

* Phil. ii. 6—8.

ished, if we find language respecting him, of seemingly opposite complexions, according as he is spoken of under the one, or under the other view, of his person. When we adopt this principle of interpretation, the apparent confusion becomes order and harmony. If, besides, he voluntarily undertook the office of Mediator, and is represented, in the Scriptures, as performing this work in the willingly assumed capacity of a servant; there can be no doubt, that this view of his mediatorial character and work does, in fact, afford a very easy and consistent interpretation of almost all the passages, in which he is spoken of as *inferior* and *subject*; as *serving* and *obeying* Jehovah; and as *receiving his reward*.—On this principle, supposing it just, we cease to wonder at the seeming contrarieties. We perceive them to be merely apparent: nay, to be such as we had every reason previously to expect.—If, then, this be a key which fits all the wards of this seemingly intricate lock, turning among them with hardly a touch of interruption, catching its bolts, and laying open to us in the easiest and completest manner, the treasures of Divine truth:—if this be a principle, which, in fact, *does* produce harmony and consistency in the word of God, while the rejection of it, on the contrary, gives rise to difficulties without number; is not this, of itself, a strong presumptive evidence that the principle is correct, and well-founded?—I shall probably have occasion, in a subsequent discourse, to touch again on the reasonableness of this principle;—a principle which might be reduced into a general rule of interpretation:—that *of two contending systems, that one ought to be preferred, which not only affords a natural explanation of those texts by which it seems to be itself supported, but, at the same time, furnishes a satisfactory principle of harmony, between these, and those other passages, which have the appearance of countenancing its opposite.*

I must now go on to state and illustrate two or three

general considerations, in which the divine dignity of Jesus Christ is evidently and strongly *implied*:—certain views, which, on any other supposition, are utterly bereft of all their force and propriety; and appear altogether unnatural and unaccountable.

1. The first of these which I shall notice is, the view given in the Scriptures, of *the love of God, as displayed in the mission, or gift, of Jesus Christ*.—This love, as every one who knows his Bible is aware, is uniformly spoken of in terms which intimate its astonishing and unparalleled greatness. "God so loved the world, that *he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life:"—"God *commendeth* his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:"—"What shall we say, then, to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? *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?"—"God is love. Herein 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."*

If Jesus Christ was merely a human prophet, commissioned to teach mankind the will of God; on what principle of interpretation are we to explain such language as this?—It is language peculiar to this one subject; unalienably appropriated to the Son of God. There had been before him, and there were after him, "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But to no prophet, or inspired teacher, either in Old or New Testament times, do we ever find language applied, in the remotest degree analogous to this.—Why is this the case? The gratitude due to God for the instructions of his com-

* John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8. viii. 31, 32. 1 John iv. 8—10.

missioned teachers must be in proportion to the importance of their respective messages; or, supposing their message to be substantially the same, to the clearness and fulness with which it is delivered. If Jesus Christ is to be viewed in this simple light, as "a teacher sent from God;" if his life was only an example, and his death a confirmation of his testimony; where shall we discover that unparalleled peculiarity of love, and whence derive that incomparably superior obligation, which the passages quoted so strongly express?—There cannot be a question, that the will of God was more clearly and fully developed by the apostles, after the day of Pentecost, than it had been by Jesus himself, during his life upon earth. Yet, when do we find any language like that which is used respecting him, applied to Peter or Paul?—although they also proved their sincerity, and sealed their testimony, with their blood?—Why is Jesus Christ characterized as God's *unspeakable gift?* Why is the love displayed in *this* gift, the pledge and assurance of every other blessing?—a pledge so precious, an assurance so decisive, as to convert into a contradiction in terms, the very supposition that any other possible good should ever be withheld?—Why is it thus exhibited, as without parallel or comparison, not only among the creatures of God, but in the whole conduct of God himself?—Indeed, my brethren, the supposition of Jesus Christ being a man only, like ourselves,—a mere human prophet, so reduces, and neutralizes the meaning of the expressions which have been quoted,—so totally annihilates their spirit, and beauty, and propriety; that I trust you will be disposed to say along with me, with all the emphasis of conviction, *It cannot be true.*

II. The same remark is applicable, with at least equal force, to the representations which are given, in the New Testament, of *the astonishing condescension and love of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.*

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor; that ye, through his poverty, might be rich!"* On repeating these words, we naturally and instantly ask, *when* was he rich *as a man?*—When he was born in the stable, and laid in the manger? When he said, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head?" At what time was he rich? and when, and how, did he become poor? The answer of our opponents to these questions is, He *never became poor*:—the original word does not denote his passing from an antecedent state of opulence to a subsequent state of poverty; but his living in poverty, although he was, at the same time rich:—"*While he was rich, yet, for your sakes, he lived in poverty.*"† If, for a moment overlooking the criticism, you inquire,—how was this? How was it, that, although rich, he lived a life of poverty?—the reply is—"*He was rich in miraculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own benefit.*"‡—"Miraculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own benefit."—What a strange supposition is this! What! a prophet of the Most High, with miraculous, that is, with almighty power, at his own disposal, to use, as he may incline, for promoting his own wealth, and honour, and aggrandizement! Divine power transferred to a creature! subjected to the will and pleasure of a mere man—a "fallible and peccable man,"§—"a man in all respects like other men, except in being se-

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† See Improved Version of the New Testament.

‡ Belsham's Calm Inquiry, page 126. The words of the Editors of the Improved Version are to the same effect: "Our Lord was rich in miraculous powers, which he could employ, if he pleased, to his own advantage." Note on the text.

§ Priestley.

lected by Divine wisdom to be the messenger of truth and mercy to mankind!"* ——Such transference of Divine power, I would, in the first place, remark, is a natural impossibility. The might which effects the miracle resides in God alone. It never can belong to the creature. And residing, as it must, in God alone, it can never be exerted to gratify the will of a creature, who would pervert it to a selfish purpose, or to any purpose different from that which he is commissioned to accomplish, and for the accomplishment and vindication of which alone, the interposition of the power is pledged. The contrary supposition is pregnant with consequences the most serious and fatal. It destroys the certainty of the evidence of miracles; and thus subverts one of the main pillars on which the truth of Christianity rests. For, if miraculous power was entirely a *discretionary* power, lodged in the hands and placed at the will of its possessor, to be used for any purpose he pleased;—then, what security have we, that it has, in every instance, been used agreeably to the design for which it was bestowed?—always in support of truth, and never of error?—always for the accomplishment of Divine, and never of selfish ends?—The very expression, that it was "*at his option*" how he should employ this power,—at the option of a man like ourselves, subject to the perverting influence of human infirmities and human passions,—supposes the possibility of the one, as well as of the other: and thus a miracle, however fully ascertained, ceases to be a conclusive evidence of truth, or a certain indication of the Divine will.—I satisfy myself with this observation for the present. If the *principle* be wrong on which the interpretation of our opponents is founded, the interpretation itself cannot be right. The text will come into notice again.—Meantime, consider, how full it is of beauty and of force, when referred to Him, who, although rich as the

* Belsham.

great Creator and sovereign Proprietor of the universe, became poor in the assumption of our nature, making no use, in that nature, of those riches which were all his own, but "humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!"—This is GRACE indeed!—Grace that shall be the theme, the worthy theme, of everlasting song!

Further: on the hypothesis of our opponents, what shall we make of the following language? Paul, in praying for the Ephesian believers, expresses himself thus:—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge!*"*—What, I say, are we to make of this? If Jesus Christ was a mere human prophet, who, having fulfilled his prophetic commission, attested the truth of it by his death;—where is this marvellous, this unexampled love?—this love of which the limits cannot be measured?—which has a height and depth, a breadth and length, exceeding all comprehension?—Differences there may be between this man and other men—between this prophet and other prophets; but no differences can there be, of sufficient magnitude to justify such expressions as these. On the supposition in question, this language is entirely out of nature:—we cannot go along with it:—it violates every sentiment of propriety:—it is the mere rhapsody of admiration; the unmeaning bombast of eulogy.

III. With this last observation is closely connected, the *depth of interest*, the *warmth of admiring transport, and adoring gratitude, with which the contemplation of this subject inspired the hearts of the New Testament writers.*—The thought of the love of Christ, and of the love of God in Christ, as displayed in the humiliation and suffer-

* Ephes. iii. 17—19.

ings of the Saviour, sets their hearts on fire. The very mention of it, even an incidental allusion to it, carries away their feelings, and fills them with the loftiest, the sublimest emotions; with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." "What shall we, then, say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God who justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ who died, yea rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (as it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter:) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life; nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers; nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"* Whence these glowing transports? Whence this celestial elevation of spirit? Why does the thought of "Christ crucified," animate the souls of these writers with such exulting triumph, and bind them to their Saviour and Lord, with such fervent and resolute attachment? "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him!"† Take away the view of his condescension and grace apparent

* Rom. viii. 31—39. † Phil. iii. 7—9.

in his assuming our nature, to suffer and die for the redemption of the lost; and such transports become mere passion, without reason. But admit this view; and all is natural:—the cause is adequate to the effect; the effect fully justified by the transcendent grandeur of the cause.

IV. Another of those general considerations to which I solicit your attention is, *the account given in the New Testament of the exaltation of Jesus, at the right hand of God.*—This exaltation is represented as the consequence, and the reward, of his finished work. Let one passage suffice, as a description of its glory:—"He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places; far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet: and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him who filleth all in all."* The nature of this delegated power, with the ground and principle of its delegation, we shall have occasion afterwards to illustrate; and to show that the exercise of it necessarily implies the possession of Divine perfections. The question which I wish to impress upon your minds at present, is this:—If Jesus Christ was a mere human prophet, who was sent to teach the will of God, and who fell a martyr to the truth; why this strange distinction? Why is *this* prophet thus singled out, and invested with glory, above the highest archangel; and with all power and authority in heaven and in earth? That he might be superior, even eminently superior, although a mere man, to other prophets, and servants of Jehovah, we can very readily conceive. But is not the height of glory, on this supposition, out of all proportion to the superiority of the service? Do we not feel, as if Isaiah, and Peter, and Paul, were kept too low? *They* thought not so: *they* felt not so. But

* Eph. i. 20—23.

why? Because they viewed him, who was the great subject of their predictions and of their testimony, as, in personal dignity, and in important commission, infinitely their superior; one to whose condescension and grace, they were themselves infinitely indebted;—and whom they considered it as *their* highest honour to serve, and to celebrate. The following words, before alluded to, assign the true cause, and it is an all-sufficient and satisfying one, of the height of glory and honour, dominion and power, to which Jesus is raised:—"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* Here is the genuine reason, plainly and explicitly stated; and here, all is proportion and propriety. It is *right* and *suitable*, that He who *thus* humbled himself, should be *thus* exalted. It is *right*, that he who stooped so low should be raised so high:—that he who assumed our nature in a low estate, should exhibit in that nature his heavenly majesty:—that he who redeemed men should reign over them: that he who "endured the cross, despising the shame," should occupy the throne, and be "crowned with glory and honour." All who know and feel his grace, are disposed, with one heart and one soul to sing:—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen!"—"Worthy is

* Phil. ii. 6—11.

the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"*

V. The last of these general considerations which I shall mention, is *the high claims of Jesus on the love and obedience of his followers.*

To all the prophets of God, the commissioned ambassadors of Heaven, as to fellow-creatures, who have been the instruments of much good to us, at the expense of much self-denial and suffering to themselves, we certainly ought to feel a warm and grateful attachment. But what mere human prophet ever addressed the people to whom he was sent, in such terms as the following? "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me:"—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."—"If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."† Who can this be, who advances claims so high, on the love, and service, and obedience of his hearers:—who, in terms so unqualified, appropriates their attachment; and is not afraid of dividing their hearts between himself and the Father that sent him?—If the speaker was indeed what *we* affirm him to have been, the language is suitable to the person; we are sensible of no incongruity between them; but are, on the contrary, awed to silence by the dignified authority, and won to compliance by the mild benignity of his address. But if he was a human prophet merely, on a level in nature with the disciples and the multitudes to whom he spoke, every feeling

* Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 12. † Matth. x. 37, 38. Luke xiv. 26. John xii. 26.

of fitness and propriety is outraged: the language has no parallel in the history of the discharge of prophetic commissions: it is the language of unexampled presumption. —Yet these high claims were felt and owned by his followers to be just. Love to Christ became the grand moving spring of Christian activity: "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."* Love to Christ was a prominent and distinguishing feature of the Christian character: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!"† The want of this love incurred a heavy curse: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha!"‡ How destitute of reason, I repeat, are such expressions, if Jesus was a mere human prophet! The obligation to such supreme love, with all its various expressions, we find it impossible, on this supposition, to bring ourselves to feel; either on account of what he is, or on account of what he hath done. We must qualify the language, we must dilute its strength and pungency to such a degree, as to render it a most unnatural vehicle of the sentiment it was designed to express, before we can bring it at all within the bounds of moderation and propriety. But view Jesus Christ as IMMANUEL—GOD WITH US;—the atoning Redeemer of a lost world:—and all is as it ought to be. The strongest terms that can be selected, are not then too strong to express his claims on our attachment; his title to the entire surrender of our hearts and powers to his service: nor is eternity itself too long to celebrate his praise. The contemplation of *what he is*, and of *what he hath done*, disposes us, with all the ardour of a grateful and adoring heart, to join in the song of heaven—a song, indeed, in which all creation is represented as uniting:—"BLESS-

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. † Eph. vi. 24. ‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

ING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB, FOREVER AND EVER! AMEN!"*

My dear friends, if the subject of which I have been speaking were a matter of mere abstract speculation, I should reckon myself ill-employed in touching it in public at all;—far more so, in entering into any detailed discussion of it. Such themes as these become not him, whose office calls him to

"———negotiate between God and man,
————————the high concerns
Of judgment and of mercy————————."

But feeling, as I do, my own hopes for eternity at stake, with the doctrine whose truth it is my object to vindicate; and satisfied, that *your* hopes must rest on the same foundation—(for if this be the right one, there is not another:)—I cannot but feel it my duty, to press it upon your most serious and earnest attention.—In next discourse, I intend, if God shall give ability and opportunity to prosecute the subject, to enter on the direct proofs, that the peculiar NAMES, ATTRIBUTES, WORKS, and WORSHIP of the true God, are distinctly ascribed in the Bible to Jesus Christ. And all that I request of you, is a patient and candid hearing; and a seriousness becoming the high importance of the point under discussion.

As to any practical improvement of what has been delivered in this discourse, I have only to say, (for it would be quite unseasonable to enlarge,) that if the spirit of the different Scripture quotations, expressive of Christian principles and Christian feelings, in the latter part of the discourse, be imbibed and cherished, and practically displayed—this will be, of all effects the most desirable; the most conducive to your happiness, and to the glory of God our Saviour. May He graciously grant this effect, for his name's sake! Amen!

* Rev. v. 13.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"———HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD."

HAVING called your attention, in last discourse, to certain general, but to my mind highly interesting and important views, of this momentous subject, I shall defer recapitulation for the present, as it is my intention to give a brief summary of the whole evidence, when I have brought my illustration of it to a close:—and shall now immediately proceed, agreeably to the method which I announced, to lay before you such direct proofs as appear to me most conclusive, that the NAMES AND TITLES, the ATTRIBUTES, the WORKS, and the WORSHIP, belonging exclusively to the true God, are expressly, and without qualification, ascribed, in the Scriptures, to Jesus Christ.

This is a field so very extensive, that I should feel myself fully justified, in devoting to each of the four divisions of it a distinct discourse.—It is not my design, however, to enter thus minutely into detail. I mean not to bring forward into prominent view every particular, which might with propriety, be illustrated; nor to adduce, on those particulars which *are* brought forward, every text which might fairly be adduced;—nor even on the texts which are adduced, to say all that might, without impropriety be said.—With some of these texts, indeed, there are connected certain minute critical discussions, which to a popular auditory could hardly be made clearly intelligible;

and which could not, therefore, be introduced without palpable impropriety, and without an appearance of pedantry, and of ostentatious display, such as we ought, on all occasions, sedulously to avoid. Such discussions I shall, therefore, as much as possible shun.—It is, besides, my object, to abridge, and to concentrate, rather than to present a full and extended view of the subject:—not to collect all the scattered light that could possibly be brought to bear upon it; but to catch a few of the more powerful and vivid rays, and to draw them into a focus;—to present the argument in a condensed, and, I would humbly hope, also in a somewhat luminous point of view.

I. Let me begin, then, with the NAMES and TITLES peculiar to Deity.

And here, agreeably to the plan of *selection* which I have prescribed to myself, I shall confine your attention to the two most obvious and important of these,—GOD, and JEHOVAH.

1. We argue, that Jesus Christ is called GOD, in the absolute or unqualified sense of the name, in the following among other passages of Scripture.

1*st*. The text itself.—I endeavoured in last discourse, from a variety of considerations, to vindicate its application to the immediate antecedent; especially from the circumstance of the *same person* being so obviously denominated "*the true God* and *the Eternal Life*," when compared with the designation so exclusively appropriated to Jesus Christ, in the beginning of the epistle:—"*the Life* was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you *the Eternal Life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."—The illustration and proof of this point I do not further resume: but proceed to show the consistency of the text, thus interpreted, with other passages of the Divine Word, which all, indeed, mutually communicate light and evidence to one another.

2*d*. John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and THE WORD WAS GOD."

That "THE WORD," in whatever way we choose to translate the original term which is so rendered, whether we retain this rendering, or give the preference to WISDOM, or REASON, is here to be understood as a designation of Jesus Christ, is so incontrovertibly clear, that I should reckon it ill-spent time, to argue with any one who could be so disingenuous as to question it.—The whole of the subsequent context shows it; in which the same glorious person continues to be spoken of, in different views, and under different appellations, till it is said of him, in the 14th verse, "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."—The application of the title to Christ is, besides, more than justified,—it is put beyond all controversy, by the use of it elsewhere, in the writings of this same apostle. He thus commences his first epistle:—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of THE WORD OF LIFE:"—and the similarity between the opening of the epistle and the introduction to the Gospel is so striking, as to leave no doubt in any considerate and candid mind, whether "*the Word*," in the latter means the same person with "*the Word of Life*," in the former. The same appropriation of the title to Christ appears, in one of those sublime visions described by this apostle in the book of Revelation; where the Redeemer is introduced, marked by designations and characters which preclude the possibility of mistake:—"I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse: and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a

name written which no man knew but he himself: and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called THE WORD OF GOD."* †

Supposing it, then, to be admitted, that "the Word" here does not mean an *attribute*, or an *abstract quality* personified, but *a person*; and that this person is Jesus Christ:—we affirm, that the verse contains a plain and express declaration of his true and proper Divinity. "*The Word was God.*"

To take off the force and conclusiveness of this proof, it has been alleged, that as the name of "*God*" in this clause has not the *definite article* prefixed to it in the Greek,‡ the clause itself might or even ought to be rendered, not *absolutely*, "the Word WAS GOD," but, agreeably to a subordinate sense in which the word *God*, we are reminded, is sometimes used in Scripture—"the Word was A GOD."

Some of you, who are not accustomed to this sort of criticism, will probably feel somewhat startled by such a mode of expression, in the place where it is thus represented as occurring:—and certainly well you may. The supposition is, indeed, a very strange one—that in a book, an inspired book, of which it is one of the leading designs, to assert and establish the existence, dominion, and worship, of one God, in opposition to all idols and idolatry, one of the writers, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, should begin his portion of it with the very language of paganism;—with language so evidently calculated to mislead his readers;—so favourable, in the first impression which it necessarily makes upon the mind, to the notion of a supreme and subordinate deities.

But the truth is, this writer *has not so expressed himself*. There is not even ambiguity in his language. He has as-

* Rev. xix. 11—13. † See Note B.

‡ —ὁ Λογος ην προς τον Θεον, και Θεος ην ὁ Λογος.

serted the absolute proposition, "*the Word was God,*" in the only terms in which he could have asserted it, in this simple form, without grammatical impropriety.

It has been observed, by different critics, that in the sentence in question, *God* is what grammarians term the *predicate of the proposition*:—that is, *the Word* is the *subject* spoken of; and that which is *predicated*, or affirmed, concerning it is, "the Word *was God.*" Now in these circumstances, the article is, agreeably to the ordinary rules of Greek syntax, properly *rejected.* Had the article been prefixed to "*God,*" the more natural meaning of the sentence would have been, "God was the Word," a proposition essentially different:—or, at the very least, the proposition would, by such a construction, have assumed a convertible form, and the meaning have been rendered quite ambiguous.*

But why dwell on these general principles of syntax, when in the very context itself we have ample evidence before us of the unsoundness of the objection? It is truly wonderful, that any critic should have ventured to occupy such ground, if he had read the first eighteen verses of this chapter, and was desirous of preserving his reputation for candour. Those, who understand the original, already know, and those who do not may be assured of the fact, that, in the instances I am now about to quote from the subsequent context, the word *God* stands precisely in the same circumstances, with regard to the absence of the article, as in its occurrence in the clause of the first verse, which we are now examining.—Ver. 6. "There was a man sent *from God,*† whose name was John:" Ver. 12. "As many as receive him, to them gave he power to become *the sons of God:*"‡ Ver. 13. "Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,

* See Middleton on the Greek article, pp. 342, 343, and 455—464.

† Παρα Θεου. ‡ Τεκνα Θεου.

but *of God*:"* Ver. 18. "No man *hath seen God* † at any time." In all these instances, the name of GOD is evidently used in its primary and unqualified acceptation: yet in no one of them is it accompanied with the article. Are we, then, to render these verses according to the principle adopted for the translation of the first verse—"There was a man sent from *a God*"—"to them gave he power to become sons of *a God*"—"who were born—*of a God*"—"No man hath seen *a God* at any time?"—This is not pretended. Why, then, is this mode of translation to be adopted in the first verse, when it is evidently in opposition to the practice of the writer in the immediate context, and, what is more, when the word occurs in circumstances, which, according to the ordinary rules of Greek syntax, ascertain it to be used in its unqualified sense, even more decidedly than in any of the other occurrences of it, which have been quoted? Is it fair, ingenuous, and manly, in our opponents, to conceal from the view of the unlearned reader, a circumstance so important, and to themselves so obvious and well known, as the practice of the writer, with respect to the use of the same word, in the immediate context; and to apply to the first verse a principle of interpretation, which they never think of applying to the others? Has not this too much the appearance of bringing the text to the system, rather than the system to the text?

That the word *God* is sometimes used, in the Scriptures, in an inferior sense, is by no means denied. The occurrences of it in this sense, however, (as applied, for instance, to angels and to magistrates,) are very rare; and they are uniformly in such circumstances as at once to preclude the possibility of any pernicious mistake. "I said, ye are gods:"—"Worship him, all ye gods:"—"God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he ruleth among the gods." Who was ever misled by such

* Εκ Θεου. † Θεον εωρακε.

phrases as these, into idolatry, and polytheism? No difficulty is felt. The mind of the reader is left perfectly easy and unembarrassed. Are these, then, to be considered as parallel expressions to one, which, if the Unitarian interpretation of it be just, has actually misled into false confidence, and idolatrous worship, ninety-nine hundredths of the professing Christian world?

The same observation is applicable, in its full force, to another view of the text before us, which, although not the one usually given of it by Unitarian writers, is adopted by some of them, and must not be entirely overlooked. Dissatisfied with the translation, "the Word was *a God*," and sensible, it should seem, of the force of those considerations, by which the word *God* is shown to be used in its proper and unqualified sense, they admit that it should be so understood: but the meaning of the expression is not, say they, that Jesus Christ was himself truly God, but that, as the great prophet of the Most High, he was *in the room of God*, the *representative of God* to mankind. The only passage on which this interpretation is founded, as a parallel case, is, what God says to Moses in the first verse of the seventh chapter of the book of Exodus: "See, I have made thee GOD (not *a God*, as it is rendered in our translation) I have made thee GOD to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." I have no doubt, that the true meaning of this expression is the same with that of the 16th verse of the 4th chapter of the same book, where God says to Moses respecting Aaron, "he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him *instead of God*." But is this expression, I ask, in which a person, acknowledged, on all hands, to have been a mere human prophet, is spoken of, in an address by Jehovah himself, as *made*, or *appointed* God, to a particular individual, on a particular occasion, and for a specific design, to be considered as parallel to the one before us, in which, without the

application of a single restrictive term, and without the smallest hint that should lead to the idea of representation or vicegerency, it is simply affirmed, that "*the* Word WAS GOD?" For my own part, I can hardly bring myself to conceive how any one can assert the parallelism of the two cases, who is not searching for support, which he finds extremely scanty, to a pre-conceived and favourite opinion.

At verse 14th of this chapter, to which allusion has already been made, it is said:—"The Word *was made flesh—or became flesh*—and dwelt among us—full of grace and truth." By those who deny the Divinity and pre-existence of Jesus, these words are rendered, "*and* (or *nevertheless) the Word was flesh.*" They do not deny, that the verb, which they translate *was*, does frequently signify *to become;* but the most general signification of it, they remind us, is *to be*. *Flesh*, again, they say, is often used generically for *man;* and peculiarly for man considered as mortal; which no one certainly will be disposed to question. Now since, according to them, "THE WORD" also means *a man*, even the man Christ Jesus, who had no existence otherwise than as a man, the amount of import in this words is, that the man Christ Jesus, "the first preacher of the gospel, although honoured with such signal tokens of Divine confidence and favour, and although invested with so high an office, was nevertheless a man, a *mortal man.*"* I think I may, with perfect safety, leave this, without comment, to your own understandings. It is a proposition, which, if Jesus Christ *had* been a mere man, it does not seem very likely, that the Evangelist would have thought of thus formally announcing; and if he had, it requires only a comparison of his words, with the commentary of our opponents, to satisfy you, that they are

* Cappe, as quoted in the Note of the Improved Version.—Mr. Belsham's interpretation is the same. Calm Inquiry, pages 38. 39.

not the terms which of all others he was most likely to choose, for expressing the idea, which it is supposed to have been his intention to convey. To a candid reader, I think, it must also be sufficiently obvious, that the Word's *becoming flesh*, or *man*, is represented as taking place, *in order to* his dwelling among men on the earth.

3*d*. The two expressions—"*the Word was God*," and "*the Word became flesh*,"—when taken together, accord precisely with other passages of Scripture, in which he is denominated God, in the very same kind of connexion.—Isaiah ix. 6.—"For unto us *a child is born*, unto us *a son is given*:—and his name shall be called—the *mighty God*." Matth. i. 22, 23. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall *bring forth a son*, and they shall call his name *Emmanuel*; which, being interpreted, is *God with us*." The former of these two passages is strikingly express:—and as to the strange and flimsy ground on which the genuineness of the chapter, wherein the latter occurs, has been questioned, I shall probably take some notice of it in a future discourse.*

4*th*. Rom. ix. 5. "Of whom, (the Israelites) *as concerning the flesh*, the Christ came, *who is over all*, God, *blessed forever*."†

This seems abundantly plain:—so plain, and so decisive, that if there were not another text in the whole Bible directly affirming this great truth, I know not how I should satisfy myself in rejecting its explicit testimony. It has, accordingly, been put upon the rack, to make it speak, by dint of torture, a different language.

* See Note C.

† I give the Greek here, for the sake of easy reference to it in what follows:—εξ ων ο Χριστος, το κατα σαρκα, ο ων επι παντων Θεος, ευλογητος εις τους αιωνας.

It might perhaps be enough to say, respecting this passage, that, according to the order of the original words, the received translation is the most *direct* and *natural* rendering. This, so far as I know, no one has ventured to deny. All that has been affirmed is, that it is *capable of bearing* a different sense. And this has accordingly been attempted, in no fewer than five different ways :—

"Of whom, by natural descent, the Christ came. God, who is over all, be blessed forever !"*

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom—the Christ came, who is above them all (viz. the fathers.) God be blessed forever !"

"Of whom the Christ came, who is over all things. God be blessed forever !"†

"Of whom the Christ came, who is *as* God, over all, blessed forever :"‡—and, by a conjectural emendation,

"Of whom the Christ came, (and) whose, or of whom, is the supreme God, blessed forever."§

With regard to the last of these various modes of evading this troublesome text, the severest terms of reprobation are not too strong.—*Conjectural alteration* of the original text, is an expedient which, all critics are agreed, nothing but indispensable necessity can, in any case, justify. In the present instance, the alteration is not only a most unwarrantable liberty with the sacred text, but, even if on this ground it were admissible, it is liable to other objections, on principles both of syntax, and of propriety as to sense.—These, however, it is needless to state; because the emendation itself, although still suggested as, in its nature, "most happy and plausible," and spoken of

* Placing the full stop after σαρκα.

† In this and the preceding, the full stop is placed after επι παντων.

‡ The received punctuation is retained.

§ Ων ὁ is the conjectured reading here for ὁ ων.

in terms that show evident reluctance to part with it,* is acknowledged to be unsupported by a single manuscript, version, or authority, and is not insisted on. I must be allowed, however, to add, without questioning the *ingenuity* of its inventor, that its *plausibility* can only be felt by a mind strongly prepossessed in favour of the meaning which it is designed to support.

The translation, again, which qualifies the meaning of the term *God*, and, to mark its being used in an inferior sense, introduces a particle that has nothing corresponding to it in the original—"who is *as* God, over all, blessed forever;"—is so completely gratuitous, so totally unwarranted by any thing that bears the remotest resemblance to principle; nay, so directly inconsistent with that ascription of supremacy, and of eternal blessing, which is, in the very verse, connected with the name; that I should not have thought of mentioning it, had it not been for the sake of showing, to what shifts a critic, even of eminent talents,† may be reduced, when, rejecting the plain and obvious meaning of a text, he is, at the same time, desirous to strike out something new, and to give it a turn that is original, and peculiar to himself.

I mention it also, indeed, as being a sufficiently convincing evidence, that this critic did not feel himself satisfied with the other expedient, adopted by his friends in general, which, by altering the punctuation, would convert the latter part of the verse into a doxology, or ascription of praise. And it is not to be wondered at, that he should

* "This conjecture, ingenious, and even probable as it is, not being supported by a single manuscript, version, or authority, cannot be admitted into the text. But one may almost believe, that the present reading might be owing to an inadvertence in one of the earliest transcribers, if not in the Apostle's own Amanuensis."—Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 224.

† Wakefield.

have felt this ground untenable. For there is not one of the three ways in which this has been attempted, which has not been shown to involve either a violation of a principle of syntax, or a deviation from the ordinary, perhaps I should say the invariable, arrangement of the words, when an ascription of praise is intended, (invariable at least in the practice both of the Septuagint and the New Testament writers) or both these anomalies together.

But besides these considerations as to the construction of the words in the original, there is something in the *antithetical* form of the sentence, which clearly indicates the same thing, and confirms, if such confirmation were necessary, the common translation. I allude, as you will perceive, to the phrase "*according to the flesh.*" Is not this expression evidently intended to *distinguish* what he was *thus*, from what he was *otherwise?* Does it not immediately suggest the question "What was he else?—What was he *not according to the flesh?*" The ordinary translation of the phrase in question conveys the precise meaning of the original:—"*as concerning the flesh;*" that is, "*as far as respects the flesh,*" or "*as to his human nature;*" which is thus contrasted with that higher view of his person, according to which he was the possessor of underived and independent existence. Remove from the words this idea of antithesis, and you deprive them of all force and meaning whatever: you convert them into a useless and unnatural pleonasm, which adds weakness, instead of strength and propriety, to the expression and the sentiment. "He could not be better or greater than Abraham or Isaac, by this *fleshly origin;* and to insist so particularly upon it would have rendered the matter more marked and certain; but there is a magnificent rise in the climax, when we come to read, that this Christ who came of the fathers according to the flesh, was indeed and in

reality GOD BLESSED FOREVER!"* As to translating the words in question "*by natural descent*," not only is it liable to the objection, in all its force, which has just been stated; but it is likewise a most arbitrary freedom with the words themselves, which is utterly inadmissible, and deserving of the severest reprehension.†

5*th*. Heb. i. 8. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is forever and ever.‡

On this passage, I shall not need to detain you long. Two or three remarks will be sufficient, to prove it a most explicit testimony to our Lord's Divinity, an incontrovertible instance of the application to him of the name of GOD, in its unqualified sense.

1. The translation of the words proposed by the adversaries of this doctrine, carries in it its own refutation:—"God is thy throne forever and ever."—"*God is thy throne!!*"—God is called a Rock, a Refuge, a Fortress, a Sun, a Shield, by obvious and beautiful metaphor. But here, it is not pretended that there is any metaphor. It is not meant that God is, in any figurative sense, (which it would not, indeed, be very easy to conceive) the throne of his Son. There is, it is alleged, an *ellipsis*; "God is thy throne," meaning, "God is *the supporter*, or *the stability*, of thy throne." Such an expression, however, in such a sense, is, I am confident, without its fellow in the Scriptures, or in any writings in any language.

2. Not only is this the case, but the words, when so rendered, contain a glaring departure from the established practice of Greek syntax. For if the writer of the epistle really meant to express what our opponents impute to him,

* Nare's Remarks on the Improved version of the New Testament, page 165.

† See Note D.

‡ Προς δε τον υἱον· Ὁ θρονος σου, ὁ Θεος, εις τον αἰωνα του αἰωνος.

the original word answering to *throne*, as being the predicate of the proposition, ought, agreeably to the rule mentioned on John i. 1. to have been without the article. So that we have here a figure of speech, itself unnatural and unexampled, expressed, at the same time, in false Greek.*

3. There can be no doubt, that the original words rendered "*O God*," may, with perfect propriety, be so translated; and we shall see immediately their consistency when understood as an address, with what follows in the subsequent verses, where the writer applies to him another quotation from the Old Testament, in which the title LORD is plainly equivalent to JEHOVAH.

4. The ordinary translation agrees with the whole scope and design of the chapter, which is to assert and prove the exalted dignity of him who is the subject of it, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Now, "*God is thy throne*," in the sense attached to the expression, conveys nothing, in the least degree peculiar:—for God is the stability of *all* thrones. The angels, with whom Jesus is in the context compared, are elsewhere denominated "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers:" and it is just as true of them, that God is the stability of *their* glorious state, as it can be in the case supposed. How then are we to imagine, that, for the express purpose of proving the superiority of Christ to angels, the writer should, with formality and emphasis, mention a circumstance in which there is no peculiarity whatever, but which he might, with equal propriety and truth, have affirmed of angels, or even of earthly princes, as of Christ?

5. I might spare myself the trouble of these remarks; for several of those who either are avowedly, or are at

* See Middleton on the Greek article, pages 576, 577. Eclectic Review, vol. v. pages 386, 387.

least known to be, hostile to the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, distinctly admit, that GOD is here in the vocative case, and, consequently, that Jesus is, in this instance, so denominated.* They do not, indeed, draw the conclusion to which this naturally leads; but still shelter themselves under the supposed *inferior sense* of the term; which they consider as originally applied to Solomon, in the psalm from which the above address is quoted.† The truth of this hypothesis we *decidedly* deny; and understand the psalm as a *direct* prediction of the glory of the Messiah's person, character and reign. But, on the supposition that it were well founded, let us observe for a moment what would follow. If "*God*" in the quotation is to be understood in its inferior sense—in the same sense in which it is conceived to be applied to Solomon, the argument of the writer who makes the quotation is as effectually destroyed, as it is by the monstrous translation, "God is thy throne." Angels are called "*gods*," in a sense surely *not inferior* to that in which the term could be applied to Solomon. What then becomes of the argument derived from the quotations in proof of Christ's *superiority* to angels?

* "I will conclude with noticing what indeed is already known, that *Eusebius*, in his *Dem. Evang.*, has for ὁ θεος, quoted ω θεε: and that *Wetstein*, whose bias is elsewhere sufficiently manifest, candidly admits that ὁ θεος is here the vocative, and that the writer has called Christ by the name of God." Middleton's "Doctrine of the Greek Article," page 579.—"I am glad to see, that since the publication of his discourse before the Unitarian Society, June 1808, *Dr. Carpenter* has seen reason to admit, that the idiom of the Greek *forbids* our rendering it "God is thy throne:" which, in his discourse, he had selected as one among the most important *improved* renderings: he very candidly, therefore, desires his former remarks to be expunged. Letters to Mr. Veysie, Introd. p. xi. He at the same time, however, contends for the *lower sense* of *Elohim*, as applied to Solomon, in Psalm xlv." Nare's Remarks on Impr. Vers., pages 211, 212.

† Psalm xlv. 6.

The passage quoted is, on this supposition, as conclusive an evidence of *Solomon's* superiority, as of Christ's. It could not, in truth, prove Christ to be higher than even the princes of this world.

6*th.* Besides the passages which have now been quoted and illustrated, there is a particular *class* of texts, which have been brought forward into more prominent notice of late, on this interesting subject; the application of which depends on the usage of the Greek language with respect to the definite article; an usage, not only ascertained beyond all controversy, by the learning of recent critics, but recognized and proceeded upon, without any reference to the support of a theological system, in almost all the older English translations of the Bible.

I shall mention only two of these texts as a specimen of the whole:

2 Peter i. 1. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, *through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*" These words are rendered on the margin of the larger English Bibles—"through the righteousness *of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" And there cannot be a doubt that, according to the established principles of Greek construction, this is their only just translation. An instance of construction, in every respect the same, occurs at the eleventh verse of this same chapter, where the principles alluded to are correctly observed:—"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom *of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" It is just as improper to render the words in the first verse, "through the righteousness *of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,*" (unless the appellations "God and our Saviour" be understood as both connecting with "Jesus Christ") as it would be to render

those in this verse "into the kingdom *of the Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*"*

Titus ii. 13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing *of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*" These words, even as they stand in our received translation, may evidently be understood as equivalent to "the glorious appearing of *Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour.*" It is more than probable that our translators intended them to be so understood; for if they be understood otherwise, they are unquestionably misinterpreted. To avoid all ambiguity, and to express the precise sense of the original, they ought to be rendered, "the glorious appearing *of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" Besides the established rule of construction formerly referred to, there is, in the present instance, an additional consideration in support of this rendering, which, if it were needed, is of no trifling weight; I mean the circumstance, that, while we are directed very often to the second "*appearing*" of *Jesus Christ*, as the object of Christian hope, my recollection does not at present furnish me with any instance, in which we read of the *appearing* of *the Father.*†

Having detained you longer than I intended on this particular, I now go forward to the proof, that the name JEHOVAH is also ascribed in the Scriptures to Jesus Christ.

I do not at all insist on the general application of the term LORD to Christ, throughout the New Testament: because the original word so rendered is capable of expressing, and is certainly used to express, dignity of various kinds and degrees. It is the word which is, in some instances, rendered by our translators, SIR; and it might

* The words in the first verse are—εν δικαιοσυνη του Θεου ημων και σωτηρος Ιησου Χριστου—and in the eleventh—εις την βασιλειαν του Κυριου ημων και σωτηρος Ιησου Χριστου.

† See Note E.

with propriety have been so rendered more frequently than it is. On the *mere* designation of Christ by this title, therefore, no conclusive argument can be built. One observation, however, in the way of exception to this remark, ought to be attended to. The word which is rendered LORD in the New Testament is the word by which the name JEHOVAH is invariably expressed by the Septuagint translators of the Old. In such passages, therefore, as are quoted from the Old Testament into the New, we are entitled to understand and interpret it as equivalent to JEHOVAH. Thus much it would certainly be most uncandid to question.

JEHOVAH is the incommunicable name of the Supreme God; signifying his eternal, independent, and immutable existence. He appropriates it to himself, calling it "MY NAME JEHOVAH;" and the writer of the eighty-third psalm concludes with these words, "That men may know, that thou, WHOSE NAME ALONE IS JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth." If this name, therefore, is directly given, in the Scriptures, to the Messiah, to Jesus of Nazareth, the question of his supreme Divinity ought to be decided.

Let me request your attention, then, to the following instances; which, as in the former case, are selected from among more.

1. Luke i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to THE LORD THEIR GOD. And he shall go before HIM in the spirit and power of Elias—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Observe here, 1*st*, That the pronoun HIM, in the 17th verse, has for its only antecedent, "THE LORD THEIR GOD" in the end of the 16th. 2*dly*, To convince you that there is no propriety in introducing any *supplement*, to explain away the immediate reference of this to the Messiah himself, and to force it to apply to the Father who

sent him, you have only to consider how precisely the language of the angel, as recorded by Luke, accords with the language of the ancient prophets, on the same subject. The words of Isaiah, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH, make straight in the desart a highway for OUR GOD,"* were fulfilled, according to the New Testament explanation of them, when John the Baptist appeared, as the forerunner of the Messiah, to announce his approach, and prepare the people for his reception. John applies them to himself. In answer to the inquiry, "Who art thou?" "I am the voice," said he, "of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, (JEHOVAH) as said the prophet Esaias:"† and the Evangelists distinctly affirm concerning him, "*This is he* that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, (JEHOVAH) make his paths straight."‡ Now, whose way was John sent to prepare? Whom was he commissioned to introduce? "I am not THE CHRIST," says he, "but I am *sent before him*:"§ "*That he should be made manifest to Israel*, therefore am I come, baptizing with water."‖ A comparison of these passages makes it strikingly evident that HE is the person to whom the name JEHOVAH is given by the prophet. This is powerfully confirmed by another passage in the prophecies of Malachi: "Behold, I will send MY messenger, and he shall prepare the way before ME: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to *his Temple*, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith JEHOVAH of hosts."¶ He before whom the messenger was to be sent is here the speaker; and this speaker is Jehovah of hosts: the Lord whom the people sought, even the Messenger of the covenant in whom they delight-

* Chap. xl. 3. † John i. 23. ‡ Matth. iii. 3. § John iii. 28
‖ John i. 31. ¶ Mal. iii. 1.

ed, was to come to *his* temple: he, therefore, who was to come to that temple, could be no other than Jehovah the God of Israel, for whose exclusive worship it was reared and consecrated, by whose name alone it was called, and who uniformly appropriates it to himself by the appellation, "MY HOUSE." It was not the temple, and could never be so denominated of any merely human prophet, or of any creature, however exalted.

2. Heb. i. 10. "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands." These words are quoted from the 102d psalm, the 24th verse, where the psalmist is addressing him, who, throughout the psalm, is called JEHOVAH: and there can be no manner of doubt that this is one of the cases formerly alluded to, in which the word rendered *Lord* in the New Testament, must be understood as equivalent to that sacred name. This being, on all hands, admitted, there is another thing which is at least equally clear, that the writer of the epistle quotes the words, as a direct address to him, whom he had just distinguished from angels by the title of "THE SON." If there is one thing, indeed, clearer than another, in the course of our present argument, it is, that the expression with which the eighth verse begins, "*Unto the Son he saith,*" includes both the quotations which follow; and that the particle *and*, in the beginning of verse 10th, is meant to connect the two together, as referring to the same person. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom:—And, (that is, *unto the Son he also saith,*) Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth."—With the utmost stretch of charity, I find it, I confess, difficult, to give those who question this, the credit which they claim for candour. If it be not as I have stated, there seems to be no certainty in human language; no possibility of a

man's expressing himself so as to avoid being misunderstood.

3. Isaiah vi. 1—5. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also JEHOVAH, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim :—And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is JEHOVAH OF HOSTS ; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that spake, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone ; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for *mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.*"

Do you ask, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this ?" We have an answer from the oracle of God.—In the 9th and 10th verses of this same chapter, God says to the prophet, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not, and see ye, indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes : lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed."—Compare these words with John xii. 41 ; where, speaking of the Jews rejecting the testimony of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all the miracles by which it was confirmed, the Evangelist quotes the words of the prophet, as remarkably verified by their obstinate perverseness, and then adds : "These things said Esaias, when he *saw his Glory ;* and *spake of him.*"—There is no evading the inference which the comparison of these passages forces upon our minds. When it is said by the Evangelist, that Isaiah "*saw his glory*"—are we not to understand him as referring to the glory *which Isaiah describes himself as having seen ?* "I *saw* Jehovah," says the prophet, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up :" —"*Mine eyes have seen* the king, Jehovah of hosts."—

"These things," affirms the Evangelist, "said Esaias, when he *saw his Glory.*"—I have spoken of the *inference* which the comparison of these passages forces upon our minds: but the truth is, there is, properly speaking, no *inference* in the case; but an express and pointed declaration, on the part of the inspired historian, that the glory of Jehovah seen by the prophet, in the sublime and magnificent vision by which his mind was so powerfully affected, was the *glory of Christ.*—"I speak as to wise men: Judge ye what I say."

There are, I am fully aware, many other passages in the Old Testament Scriptures, in which the name *Jehovah* is given to the Messiah, besides those to which I have now directed your attention.—"Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous *Branch*, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah our righteousness.*"—"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against *the man* that is *my fellow*, saith *Jehovah of hosts.*"—"They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And *Jehovah* said unto me, cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them."—"I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear:" with the application of the words to Christ by an inspired apostle; "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ;* for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, (Jehovah) every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."—"Surely, shall one say, in *Jehovah* have I righteousness and strength:—In *Jehovah* shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory:" with the application by the same apostle; "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us

wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."*—On these, however, and other passages that might be mentioned, I do not insist; my object being, as I have already intimated, a selection of proofs rather than a full discussion of the whole argument. If the evidence adduced on this particular be sufficient to ascertain the fact, that the name *Jehovah* is given in the Scriptures to Jesus Christ, a *principle* of interpretation will thus be established, which will at once produce, and justify, the application to our adorable Redeemer of a variety of other passages, which might possibly, indeed, be interpreted otherwise, but which find in this principle a more natural and easy explanation.†

I shall conclude this part of my subject by observing, that the *proper* title *Lord*, although not sufficient of itself, like the name Jehovah, to ascertain the Divine dignity of him to whom it is applied, is yet given to Messiah, in one instance at least, in terms which are very peculiar. I refer to the first verse of the 110th psalm:—"*Jehovah* said unto *my Lord*, sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."—"What think ye of Christ?" said Jesus, on one occasion, to the assembled Pharisees, "Whose son is he?"—They immediately replied, "The Son of David."—"How, then," he rejoined, "doth Da-

* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zech. xiii. 7. xi. 12, 13. Isa. xlv. 23. with Rom. xiv. 10, 11. Isa. xlv. 24, 25. with 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

† I have forborne noticing those places in the Old Testament history, in which the appearances are recorded of that mysterious person called the Angel of the covenant, the Angel of the Divine presence, &c. but who, while he is spoken of as an angel, assumes the name, and speaks in the character of Jehovah;—not because I think this kind of evidence irrelevant or inconclusive; but because, even among those who admit it, there are diversities of judgment as to the extent to which it should be carried; and because it would have led to a discussion too extensive for the plan of these discourses.

vid in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord (Jehovah,) said unto *my Lord*, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him *Lord*, how is he his Son?"* The question, it seems, perplexed and nonplussed the Pharisees:—"No man was able to answer him a word:"—And it must forever confound, and *ought* to silence all those, who deny that Jesus possessed any nature superior to that which he derived by his descent from David, or any existence previous to the time, when, by his birth into this world, he became *David's Son*. The only simple and satisfactory answer to the question is to be found in the distinction of natures for which we contend. His name was IMMANUEL; and he was thus at once "the ROOT and the OFFSPRING of David," David's SON, and David's LORD.

II. I now come forward to the SECOND BRANCH of this important subject, the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures.—I shall, on this part of the argument, confine myself to the four following particulars; and shall illustrate them with as great brevity as is at all consistent with doing justice to the cause of truth:—ETERNAL EXISTENCE—ALMIGHTY POWER—OMNIPRESENCE—and OMNISCIENCE.

These are attributes indisputably peculiar to the one supreme God: and therefore, if really ascribed to Jesus Christ, must confirm the conclusion to which we have already been brought, that the names GOD and JEHOVAH, when applied to him, are to be understood in their highest and most unqualified sense.

1. ETERNAL EXISTENCE.—Those many passages of the Gospel history, in which Jesus speaks of his having "come down from heaven;" of his having "come forth from the Father, and come into the world, and being about to leave the world, and return to the Father;" of his "as-

* Matth. xxii. 41—46.

cending up where he was before;" and others of a similar description, I pass over, to avoid being tedious; although, I am perfectly satisfied, that, except on the supposition of his *pre-existence*, they are incapable of any interpretation that is not, in the highest degree, forced and unnatural.

Our Lord expressly affirms, that he existed "*before Abraham.*"—John viii. 58. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was (or was born) I am."*

Of these words various explanations have been given by Unitarian expositors. The principal are the two following.—"1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, before *Abram* shall become *Abraham*, I am *he*," that is, the Christ.—I am afraid you will think, such of you as are strangers to Socinian glosses, that I must certainly be mistaken: but I assure you this is not the case. This interpretation was really "proposed, although not absolutely adopted," by several of the old Socinians. But why, you will say, mention it *now?* If it was only *proposed* by *them*, has it ever been *adopted since?*—It has:—And it is this alone that induces me to notice it. It has been "revived and defended" by more than one writer of the modern Socinian school.†—But what *is* the explanation? The question is natural, for the explanation is one which needs to be explained.—"Before Abram shall become Abraham, I am *he*."—It was promised, you know, to the patriarch, when his name was *Abram*, that he should be "the father of many nations;" and on that occasion, his name was, with significant reference to the promise, changed to *Abra-*

* πριν Αβρααμ γενεσθαι εγω ειμι.

† "This explanation of the text was proposed, though not absolutely adopted, by Slichtingius, Wolzogenius, Stegman, and others of the old Socinians. It has been revived and defended by a writer in the Theological Repository, vol. iv. p. 348; and Dr. Carpenter, in his letters to Mr. Veysie, p. 246, expresses his approbation of it." Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 81.

ham :—And our Lord, it seems, in this declaration to the Jews, "solemnly avers, that before the accomplishment of this promise to Abraham he appears as the Messiah !!"—To deny to the author of this conceit the merit of ingenuity, would certainly not be to do him justice. But whether it was originally the sudden thought of a lucky moment, or excogitated by intense meditation, it is, beyond a doubt, a conceit as wild and extravagant as ever suggested itself to a fancy, sent abroad in quest of solutions for a troublesome difficulty. Apart from the absurdity of supposing a sentence in which there must be an ellipsis (i. e. an omission, to be supplied by the hearer) of the very word that is indispensable to make out the sense ; and of imagining our Lord to express so simple an idea in a way so quaint and unnatural, for no conceivable purpose, unless it was to be misunderstood :—I say, apart from such considerations as these, what shall we think of the proposition itself, which our Lord is thus made to affirm ;—and to affirm in the terms of grave and solemn asseveration? "that he *now* appeared as the Messiah ; and that his appearance was before an event, which was quite well known to be still future !"—But I am wasting your time. I proceed to mention a *second* interpretation of the words, which is the one now most generally adopted.—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am *he* :"* i. e. the Christ. Our Lord is supposed to refer to the certainty of the Divine determinations, and to say, that before Abraham came into being, his own appearance as the Messiah was so irrevocably fixed in the immutable counsels of God, that he might be said even then to have existed in that character. This explanation, though not so extravagant as the former, is not less untenable. Let me request your attention to the following brief remarks.—1. It is admitted that the same words which they render "I am *he*," are so

* Improved Version of the New Testament.

translated in the 24th and 28th verses of this chapter:—"If ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins:" "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*." It is very obvious, however, that phrases of this description must be understood according to the connexion in which they occur. By this alone it can be determined in what instances the supplement is necessary.—2. The expression, "before Abraham *was* born, I *am* the Christ," is very unnatural, and quite anomalous. "I *was* the Christ," is the phraseology which any one intending to express the sentiment ascribed to our Lord, would unquestionably have used.—To render the original words thus, however, as some have ventured to do, is, at least, very arbitrary. That the present tense may sometimes be used to denote *past time that comes down to and includes the present*; that is, may be used for what is called the preterperfect—*I am*, for *I have been*; is conceivable on a sufficiently simple principle. But that it should be used for *time absolutely past*—*I am* for *I was*—supposes a deviation from the obvious principles of language, and consequently from ordinary usage, which nothing but absolute necessity could justify, and of which it is at least doubtful whether any instances parallel to the one before us can be produced.—If we understand our Lord's words as affirming his *past* and *present* existence as *one and the same*—i. e. as affirming his *absolute* or *eternal* existence, they are not only correct, but full of beauty and energy: nor can their grammatical impropriety be easily accounted for on any other hypothesis.—3. How came the Jews so completely to misunderstand our Lord's meaning, if the sentiment ascribed to him by the adversaries of his Divinity was that which he intended to express? Reference is generally made, in discussing this subject, to the *Greek* of the Evangelist. We should recollect, however, that this was not the language in which Jesus

spoke:—that he conversed with the Jews in their own tongue; and that they were therefore much better qualified, especially when the look, and emphasis, and manner of the speaker, are taken into account, to understand what he meant, than we can possibly be now. Yet the Jews *did* understand him as affirming something widely different. This is clear from their conduct. They immediately "took up stones to stone him." They conceived him to be guilty of *blasphemy*: evidently for the same reason as on some other occasions, "because he, being a man, *made himself God.*" We never hear of their offering to stone him for simply asserting his Messiahship: and the idea which has often been suggested, is, therefore, far from being destitute of probability, that there was in our Lord's words, an allusion, perceived by the Jews, and rendered perhaps emphatical, by his manner, to the words of God to Moses—"I AM THAT I AM: thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."* †—

* Exod. iii. 14.

† Mr. Belsham falls into a curious inconsistency on this subject:—"The Jews," says he, "*evidently understood* the language of Jesus as an assertion of his existence before the birth of Abraham; for, in the paroxysm of their rage, they took up stones to stone him as a liar and a blasphemer." Yet, a few pages after, when he has endeavoured to show how common that figure of speech is in the Scriptures, by which any thing is represented as *existing in the purpose of God*, long before it actually comes into existence, we find the following words:—"To the Jews, therefore, who were familiar with the language and imagery of their own prophets, our Lord's declaration of his existence, as the Messiah, before the birth of Abraham, would not sound so harsh and offensive, as it does to modern readers; who, not being accustomed to the bold dramatic language of prophecy, are *apt to understand that of actual existence, which the Jews would easily perceive to be figurative.*" Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pages 75, 97. So that, according to Mr. Belsham's *theory*, the Jews would quite easily understand our Lord in one way, although *in fact*, upon his own statement, they evidently did understand him in another, all their familiarity with the

4. On *our* interpretation of the words of Jesus, they are a proper answer to the question of the Jews. On that of our opponents, they contain what we should be very apt, in the ordinary intercourse of life, to denominate an unworthy evasion. The question respected the time of his existence :—the answer has no reference whatever to this subject :—"Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?"—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I was ordained, in the purpose of God, to the office of Messiah, before Abraham was born !" The opponents of our Lord's Divinity, accordingly, are under the necessity of denying that this was at all intended by him as an answer to the question of the Jews. "He did not design to rectify," they say, "their silly mistake." "He did not regard their impertinent question."

In thus affirming his having existed before the days of Abraham, our Lord asserts no more than other passages of Scripture concur to establish : and this agreement of our interpretation with the testimony of other parts of Scripture is an additional confirmation of its truth. In a passage formerly quoted from the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews he is addressed as "*Jehovah*, who, in the beginning, laid the foundations of the earth ;" and who must, therefore, have existed, as the psalmist expresses it, "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the worlds were formed." And the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, expressly declares him to have been "*before all things*."*

Further : the titles and designations which are used in the Scriptures to express self-existence and eternity, are applied to him by the inspired writers ; and are represent-

language and imagery of their own prophets notwithstanding ;—and that according to the *theory*, would not sound at all harsh and offensive, which in *fact* excited a *paroxysm of rage !*

* Col. i. 17.

ed as assumed by himself. Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Although I am fully satisfied that these are the words of Jesus Christ, yet if any shall insist that they are spoken by the Father, the argument, it may be observed, will not, by the admission of this, be at all weakened. For as the refusal to acknowledge them as the words of Christ proceeds upon the principle that the titles assumed in them belong exclusively to the only true God, this gives the greater conclusiveness to other passages, in which it is beyond a doubt that Christ does appropriate some of these titles to himself. In the 17th and 18th verses of the same chapter, he is introduced as saying to the beloved disciple, "Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the living one:* and I was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." And at the 13th verse of the 22d chapter: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." When these passages are compared with the language of Jehovah, Isaiah xliv. 6, "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; *I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God:*" you need not be directed, surely, to draw the inference. The titles denote eternity and self-existence:

* The original words are Εγω ειμι ὁ πρωτος, και ὁ εσχατος, και ὁ ζων· και εγενομην νεκρος, κ. τ. λ. Which our translators render, "I am the first and the last; *I am* he that liveth and was dead," &c. The reader will observe that a και is in this translation omitted, and a supplemental *I am* unnecessarily thrown in in its place. The words are literally rendered as in the text. They are pointed in this way by Griesbach; nor does any various reading appear, which could have led our translators to render them as they have done. I have taken no notice of the words in verse 11th, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," because, in this occurrence of them, they are rejected by Griesbach as spurious.

they are appropriated by Jehovah to himself: and yet they are repeatedly assumed by Jesus Christ. I conclude this particular with the remarkable words of the prophet Micah, on which the preceding portions of Scripture may serve as a sufficient comment: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, who is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."*

2. ALMIGHTY POWER.

This divine attribute is plainly ascribed to Christ in a prophecy of Isaiah formerly quoted: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called—THE MIGHTY GOD."† The phrase in the original, as well as in our translation, is precisely the same with that which occurs in verse 21st of the 10th chapter of the same book: "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto THE MIGHTY GOD:"—and there can be no doubt that it is a characteristic designation of the true God, in which, by the attribute of omnipotence, he is distinguished from the idols of the heathen, which could "neither do good nor do evil; which were all vanity, and their work of nought."—I have already said, that I consider the following words in the beginning of the book of Revelation, as the words of Jesus Christ: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, THE ALMIGHTY." The connexion in which the words stand, and the manner of the writer in other parts of the same book, concur to show that Jesus is the speaker. And even if it were otherwise, the clear and frequent application of a part of these expressions to Christ, is sufficient to justify us in the application of the whole. He, who is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and

* Micah v. ii. † Isaiah ix. 6.

the last," "the living one," we may be well assured is also THE ALMIGHTY. "We look for the Saviour from heaven," says Paul, "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, (the mighty energy) whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* Such language cannot with propriety be used, respecting any being who is not possessed of *omnipotence*; and he who is possessed of omnipotence, can be no other than the true God. But the almighty power of Jesus will be still more fully apparent, when we come to consider the Divine works that are ascribed to him in the word of God.

3. OMNIPRESENCE.

Jesus, while he was on earth, when delivering directions for the conduct of his people in all succeeding times, gave the following encouraging promise:—"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."† To settle the meaning of this remarkable declaration, it is sufficient to compare it with an assurance given to Moses, by Jehovah, the God of Israel:—"In all places," said he, "where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."‡—These two promises are precisely the same. They are both equally clear declarations of omnipresence: and the reasoning which would set aside the one, would as effectually invalidate the other. No being could make either the one or the other, but a being who was present in all places, and who knew all things.

The promise of his continued presence with them, made by Jesus to his disciples, at the very time when he was about to leave them, is equally incapable of a simple or consistent explanation, on any other principle. Who, but a being conscious to himself, of the possession of this Divine attribute, could say to them, in such circumstances,

* Phil. iii. 21. † Matth. xviii. 20. ‡ Exod. xx. 24.

when just about to bestow upon them his parting blessing, and to ascend visibly into heaven, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?" They who would translate these words "*to the end of the age*," and interpret them of "the end of the Jewish dispensation, at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple;"* and who would thus sweep away all that animating encouragement which the servants of the Saviour have since been accustomed to derive from his promise;—adopt an interpretation which, after all, is insufficient for their purpose. For the presence of Jesus upon the earth, in his human nature, after he was taken up from his apostles into heaven, was just as impossible for a day as for an age, and for an age, as for the whole duration of time. He did not remain on earth till "the end of the age:" and he who could be with his apostles, by the care of his superintending providence, the supports of his Spirit, the miraculous operations of his power, and the efficacious influence of his grace, *during their lives*, may be with his faithful servants still, and continue with them to the end.—To interpret a declaration so unqualified, "Lo I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world"—or even (supposing the propriety of the limitation) "to the end of this age," as having been fulfilled by the *occasional* appearances of Christ to his servants, *in vision*, during the period of the apostolic ministry; is not to *explain* it, but to *explain it away*.† Even these

* Impr. Vers. Text, and Note upon it.

† Even this much is not, if we may take Mr. Belsham's authority, *universally* admitted among Unitarians.—"*Many*, says he, of the Unitarians believe, that Jesus continued to maintain, *occasionally at least*,‡ *some* personal and sensible connexion with the church, (how admirably cautious!) during the apostolic age, which he expressly promised to do (Matth. xxviii. 20.) and in this way they account for the continuance of those miraculous gifts and powers which were exercised in his name while the apostles lived, and also for occasional personal

‡ πασας τας ἡμερας—i. e. *at least occasionally!*

occasional appearances implied a perfect and immediate knowledge of all that was passing upon earth, connected with the progress of his cause and kingdom: for by such knowledge they were timed and regulated.—Some, indeed, refer the word *always* more especially to the continued "communications of the Holy Spirit," that is, of *miraculous powers*, during the first age of the Christian church. But to these also the remark just made is strictly applicable: for they were not conferred without knowledge, discrimination, and particular design. Nor is it less applicable to the regular and instantaneous interposition of miraculous power, on all occasions when such interposition was requisite. For if Jesus himself both *possessed* the power, and *knew* all the times at which its exercise was required, his will concurring, at the instant, with the *fiat* pronounced in his name by his servants upon earth; he must be the Almighty and Omniscient God:—unless, indeed, we can bring ourselves to believe, that all that our Saviour meant by these apparently plain and explicit words, "Lo, I am with you—I am with you always"—was, not that he should himself be with them at all, but only that God should be with them, and that he, in his exalted state, should be made acquainted, by Divine communication, with their situations, and labours, and success! And yet this, I apprehend, will be found, on mature consideration, to be the whole amount of meaning that remains, if we deny to the speaker the attribute of omnipresence.

appearances and interpositions which have never occurred since: but it is believed that he is now withdrawn from all sensible intercourse with this world, though some have *conjectured that he may still be actually present in it*, and attentive to its concerns." *i. e.* observe, *in his human nature*, (for according to them he had no other.)—Some, then, have actually *conjectured*, that he is still in this world, *in the body*. "the *wandering Jew* of vulgar superstition!!"—See Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pp. 152, 153.

I am fully convinced, that we ought to interpret on the same principle the words of Christ to Nicodemus: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." Different views, however, have been taken of these words, even by interpreters who are friendly to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity: but your time will not permit me to enter into any examination of them.

The attribute of omnipresence may also be considered as necessarily involved in the last of those incommunicable perfections of Deity, which, I proposed to show, are ascribed, in the Scriptures, to Jesus Christ:—

4. OMNISCIENCE.

The evidence on this particular may be brought within very short compass: for it is irresistibly conclusive.—"Thou, even THOU ONLY," says Solomon, in his address to Jehovah, at the dedication of the temple, "Thou, even THOU ONLY, knowest the hearts of all the children of men:"—"The heart," says God himself by the prophet Jeremiah, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I JEHOVAH search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."—"I will kill her children with death," says Jesus Christ to the church in Thyatira, "and all the churches shall know, that I AM HE WHO SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."*—Is there any need of further witness? If this be not a direct and unqualified claim of a peculiar Divine prerogative, there is no meaning in human language; and to "search the Scriptures" for clear and satisfactory knowledge, must be a vain and fruitless task. Even if he had simply said, "All the churches shall know that I SEARCH the reins and the hearts," this of itself would have been

* 1 Kings viii. 39. Jer. xvii. 10. Rev. ii. 23.

enough for the argument; because the passages above cited do most emphatically appropriate the searching of the heart to God alone. But the terms in which he expresses himself are much more definite. They evidently proceed upon the express assumption that this *is* the exclusive prerogative of ONE BEING only. They agree with, and confirm, the appropriation to God, of this universal and intuitive knowledge of the heart, so distinctly marked in the former passages: "All the churches shall know, (not merely "that *I search*" but) that I AM HE THAT SEARCHETH the reins and the hearts." I think I might at once, without hesitation, rest the omniscience of Christ on this one proof.—You may notice, however, how exactly this language respecting himself, accords with what is said of him, during his abode upon earth:—said in terms which admit of no restriction; John ii. 24, 25: "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them," (*i. e.* to those mentioned in the preceding verse, who professed to have been convinced by his miracles) "because he KNEW ALL MEN; and needed not that any should testify to him of man: for he KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN."*

On a confession of the omniscience of Jesus—a confession which he himself received without contradiction or explanation—the apostle Peter, when his heart was bleeding at the remembrance of his sin, founded his touching and impressive appeal, as to the unfeigned sincerity of his repentance and his love:—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?—Yea, Lord, thou KNOWEST ALL THINGS; thou knowest that I love thee!"—And so may the people of God still make their appeal, when, at any time, they have fallen into sin, and when the sincerity of their penitence and of their Christian profession is questioned. And in

* In the Improved Version, both this text and the one above quoted from the book of Revelation are passed over without the slightest remark.

doing so; they unburden their loaded spirits, and experience a joy, with which, even while the heart knoweth its own bitterness, a stranger doth not intermeddle.

This Discourse has necessarily consisted entirely of proof: nor would it be considered as quite admissible, to deduce any inferences from the point at issue, till the evidence of it has been closed. To detain you longer at present would, besides, be very unseasonable.—I entertain no fears about the practical consequences, if the truth which I am endeavouring to establish, be once received in the love of it.

Respecting that portion of evidence which we have gone over, one remark may be made, which, it is probable, many of you have anticipated:—that with regard to all those texts which have been quoted, no attempt is made to prove that, upon the ordinary principles of construction, they are *unfairly* or *unnaturally* rendered. As to a number of the texts, indeed, it is not the translation that is disputed, but the sense. In those, however, of which a different translation is proposed, it is not pretended that the new rendering is more consistent with the rules of syntax, or the ordinary usage of the original language, than the old; but only that the words *are capable of bearing it*—that it is *possible* for them to be so translated. It seems as if writers on that side of the question proceeded upon the principle, that the doctrine is in itself so utterly incredible, that if there is a discoverable sense of which the words are at all susceptible, that sense ought to be preferred.—I would, on this subject, remark, *in the first place*, That in every one of the instances I have referred to, in which a change of translation is attempted, there is requisite, to make out the change, some deviation, either greater or less, from the ordinary arrangement of the words in similar cases, or from the usual, if not even the uniform syntax of the original language.—*Secondly*, That any such

principle as that alluded to is, in its nature and practical application, utterly inconsistent with the candour of an ingenuous mind. According to it, our inquiry is not to be, What is the plain and obvious meaning of the writer agreeably to the ordinary and established rules of interpretation?—but, is it possible to understand his words otherwise? Men may talk of *prejudice*: But I can conceive of few prejudices more strong, or more deceitful, than that which is involved in such a principle. It is surely a very suspicious circumstance, as to the foundation on which any system rests, when its abettors feel it necessary, formally to warn their readers "to be on their guard against what is called the natural signification of words and phrases."* Can any thing be more unfavourable to the discovery of truth? or can any thing more plainly indicate a secret dissatisfaction with ordinary rules, and an unacknowledged feeling of the need in which the system stands of some unusual modes of interpretation?

Yet on what subject should TRUTH be more seriously and devoutly the object—the simple and exclusive object, of our inquiry, than on one so important and so interesting as that now before us?—On such a subject, it is my sincere and earnest prayer, that I may never be left to contend *for victory*. God forbid! On points of amusing theory, and abstract speculation, we may argue for the sake of argument, and triumph in the success of our own ingenuity;—though, indeed, even on such topics, the practice, when indulged in, is by no means free from the danger of pernicious influence on the mind of the gratuitous combatant:—But for fellow-creatures to argue for victory, when the claims of Deity are involved in the question, and when all the dearest interests, and sublimest hopes of mankind are at a stake!—this were a prostitution of intellect, and a perversity of principle, unworthy of a rational be-

* Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pages 4, 5.

ing ;—and in a being who feels and acknowledges his responsibility to the "Judge of all," an insensibility of conscience, unutterably affecting, and ominous of the most fearful results.

Let the inquiry, then, of every one of us always be, "What is truth?" and our prayer, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law."

DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"———HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD."

I proposed, you will recollect, to prove, that the distinguishing NAMES, ATTRIBUTES, WORKS, and WORSHIP of the Supreme God, are all, in the Scriptures, unequivocally ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Pursuing this arrangement, I endeavoured, in last discourse, to show you, from a variety of passages, both in the Old Testament and in the New, that the names GOD and JEHOVAH are, in their proper and highest sense, given to Christ:—and also, that he is distinctly represented as possessing the Divine attributes of *Eternal Existence*, *Almighty Power*, *Omnipresence*, and *Omniscience*.

Still deferring further recapitulation, I now go on immediately to the two remaining articles of discourse.

III. We affirm, then, in the *third* place, that *Works* are ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, to which no being is competent but the Supreme God.

The most superficial reader of the Gospel history can hardly fail to be struck,—I do not say with the miracles themselves which Jesus is recorded to have performed—for similar wonders were wrought by the prophets before, and by the apostles after him;—but by the *peculiar manner* in which some of these miracles are described as having been done. "He arose, and rebuked the winds, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still! and immediately there was a great calm." Do not these words remind us of that

Being, of whom it is said, in the sublime language of the psalmist: "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people?"* When the Redeemer performed this miracle, the persons who were in the ship were filled with amazement and dread, and said one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"† Had the name of the almighty Jehovah been invoked, or in any way acknowledged, when the command was given that hushed the turbulence of the storm;—although the instantaneous suddenness of the effect could not have failed to strike them with wonder, yet the cause of the astonishment would not have been such as is here described. They could, in that case, have been at no loss, even for a moment, to account for what was done. But, "the winds and the sea OBEY HIM!" Here seems to have lain the chief cause of their amazement. They saw *a man*—in external appearance like one of themselves. Yet this man "spoke, and it was done."—spoke with the authority and the majesty of one who was conscious of having *in himself* the necessary power. And when they expressed the perplexity of their minds—as respecting a fact for which they were unable to account—saying, "What *manner* of man is this?" the true answer would have been, "He is a man, in union with Deity:—he is Immanuel, God with us."

There is nothing from which we can conceive the mind of a holy creature to revolt with deeper abhorrence, than the discovery of his having said or done any thing that could lead his fellow-creatures to imagine, even for an instant, that he claimed *equality with God!* And the higher we ascend in the scale of being, the more strongly, we cannot but suppose, would such impression of abhorrence be felt; so that to consider Jesus as the most exalted of created beings, instead of weakening, adds strength to this

* Psalm lxv. 7. † Mark iv. 39—41.

view of the argument, arising from his words and conduct while he sojourned among men. We should certainly have expected, that a creature of this character, feelingly alive to whatever bore the remotest resemblance to impiety, and deeply sensible that there could be no impiety, no blasphemy, so heinous, as that of seeming to claim equality with the infinite God,—had he perceived in the minds of those with whom he conversed, the thought arising that he seemed to be advancing such a claim, would have shuddered with instinctive horror; would have hastened to disclaim the imputation, in language of which the meaning could not be mistaken; and would sedulously have shunned every form of speech, and every mode of conduct, that could possibly countenance a supposition so inexpressibly shocking to his mind.

The application of these remarks to the case of Jesus might be illustrated by a variety of instances. I shall at present, however, notice only another incident, in addition to the one already mentioned. "There came a leper to him, doing him obeisance, and saying, Sir, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."* What is his reply to this address? Should we not expect a creature, of the character before described, to say: "If thou *wilt*, thou *canst!* —Impute not the *power* to *me*. I may be *willing* indeed; but God alone is *able*." Such was the humble spirit of his faithful apostles, when they said, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power and holiness we had made this man to walk?"—and when "they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like infirmities with yourselves."† Far different is the answer of

* I adopt here the translation of *obeisance* for *worship*, and *Sir* for *Lord*, merely to show, that it is not on the terms of this leper's address that the stress of the present argument in any degree rests.

† Acts iii. 12. xiv. 15.

Jesus : "*I will : Be thou clean !*"—If Moses and Aaron were punished with exclusion from the land of promise, because they failed to sanctify the name of Jehovah, in the eyes of the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah, performing the miracle with inconsiderate passion, as if the power had resided in *themselves*—"Hear now, ye rebels, shall *we* fetch you water out of this rock ?" surely these words of Jesus must have been rebuked, as words of unparalled presumption, by that God who "will not give his glory to another." But, in truth, there was no presumption in them. He who uttered them, although he appeared on earth in "the form of a servant," to execute a special commission, which he had voluntarily undertaken to fulfil ; and although in conformity with the official character which he had thus assumed, he speaks of "the works which he did in his Father's name, bearing witness of him that the Father had sent him ;"—was, at the same time, the "Fellow of the Lord of hosts," possessing in himself underived and independent power.

Of this you will, I trust, be more fully convinced, and your surprise will thoroughly cease at the manner in which such miracles as those now referred to were performed, when I have shown you, as I shall now proceed to do, that the CREATION OF ALL THINGS is one of the works ascribed in the Scriptures to Jesus Christ.

1. John i. 1—3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*"

These words, say the opposers of our Lord's Divinity, ought to be translated : "All things were *done* by him, and without him was not any thing *done* that has been *done*."*

* The original words are Παντα δι' αυτου εγενετο· και χωρις αυτου εγενετο ουδε εν ο γεγονεν.

"*The beginning*," say they, "means the beginning *of the Christian dispensation*, or of the *ministry of Christ*;"—and by "*all things*," we are to understand all things *in that dispensation*.

On this view of the passage I beg your candid attention to the following remarks.

There seems to be an obvious connexion between the expression "*In the beginning*," and the words "*All things were done by him*:" the former expressing the *time* of the latter. Now, with what propriety could it be said, that in the beginning of his ministry, or in the beginning of the Christian dispensation, all things in that dispensation, were done by him?—"*The beginning*" becomes, on this hypothesis, a phrase of no definite meaning:—it is impossible to say what period of time it includes. All things in the Christian dispensation were not, surely, done by Jesus, in the *commencement* of his own personal ministry:—are we to include, then, *the whole* of his ministry?—But it is further said—"Without him was not any thing done that was done; which means, it is alleged, that "as all things in the Christian dispensation were done by his authority, and according to his direction; *in the ministry committed to his apostles nothing was done without his warrant.*" Is "*the beginning*," then, to be considered as comprehending the period of *their* ministry also?—If, on the contrary, we connect the expression "*in the beginning*," with the declaration "All things were *made* by him," and consider the writer as speaking of the original formation of the material universe, and as referring to the language of the inspired historian of the creation at the opening of the book of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" we obtain not only a definite meaning to *each* of the phrases separately, but, at the same time, a manifest and consistent *alliance between them*.

But the word, we are reminded, here rendered "*were made*," is a word, which, although it very often occurs in the New Testament, is never used in the sense of *creation*. "It signifies *to be, to come, to become, to come to pass, to be done or transacted.*"

I shall not tax your patience by entering here into minute verbal criticism. Two remarks will, I think, be sufficient.

1. It will not, I presume, be questioned, that, among the various general meanings of this word, it signifies not merely *to be*, but *to begin to be*—to *come into being or existence*—either absolutely, or in any particular state of the thing which is spoken of. Now, without entering into any particular examination of those passages where it is usually considered as signifying *to be made*, this of itself, I should think, is quite enough. For surely, when a *producing agent* is at the same time mentioned, to *come into existence by means of that agent*, amounts to much the same thing with *being made by him*.

2. It must not be overlooked, that this writer himself, in this very context, fixes the sense in which he uses it, beyond all reasonable doubt. In verse 10th, he says of Christ, the true light—"He was in the world, and the world *was made* by him, and the world knew him not."—"The world *was made* by him," is the very same phrase in the original with "all things *were made* by him," in the third verse.* Nothing, one should think, can be more decisive than this.—How, then, is this second passage to be disposed of? "The world *was done* by him," it is obvious, will no longer answer. An expedient, however, is at hand:—but one, of the candour of whose inventor, I honestly confess, I have not charity sufficient to persuade myself. The words here, it seems, must be rendered, by means of a supplement,—"and the world was—*enlightened*—by him!" To the merest sciolist in Greek, this

* ὁ κοσμος δι' αυτου εγενετο.

translation, (if such it must be called) may be left to its own merits. But it is not, by any means, ignorance of Greek that has produced it. It is not easy for charity itself to ascribe it to any thing else than attachment to a system: which, in so many instances, warps the judgment; makes "the worse appear the better reason;" disposes to the admission of any thing rather than the obnoxious doctrine; and causes that to seem natural, which, in other circumstances, would be instantly rejected, with indignant derision. There are not a few unnecessary, and there are some injurious supplements in our ordinary English Version: but certainly there is nothing of the kind that can bear a comparison with this. I only ask any person who has learned the first elements of *English*, what he should think of a writer, who, intending to express the sentiment that the world was enlightened by Jesus Christ, should write the substantive verb, *was*, and leave the word *enlightened*, not only the principal word, but absolutely the only word by which his meaning could be determined, to be supplied by the reader! Yet this is precisely what these critics suppose the inspired historian to have done in the present instance. The difference of idiom between the English language and the Greek can afford no refuge here; for it is utterly inconceivable, that *this* should be an admissible idiom, in any language whatever.*

* The proposed supplement, however, is professedly taken from the preceding verse. The two verses together, (with the supplement) stand thus: Ην το φως το αληθινον, ὁ φωτιζει παντα ανθρωπον ερχομενον εις τον κοσμον. Εν τῳ κοσμῳ ην, και ὁ κοσμος δι' αυτου εγενετο (πεφωτισμενος·) και ὁ κοσμος αυτον ουκ εγνω. To this a parallel passage has been produced; the only one, it should seem, that could be found. It is Matth. xxiii. 15. "ὁτι περιαγετε την θαλασσαν και την ξεραν, ποιησαι ἑνα προσηλυτον· και ὁταν γενηται, ποιειτε αυτον υἱον γεεννης διπλοτερον ὑμων.—I shall leave it to the Greek reader to detect the parallelism. If there is one, it will not require to be pointed out to him.

Mr. Cappe, departing entirely from the ordinary and established

Considering verse 3d then as fairly translated—agreeably to what it was the intention of the writer to express; —I have only further to observe respecting it, that the terms in which it ascribes the creation of all things to Jesus Christ, are peculiarly pointed and emphatical: "All things were made by him; and without him *was not made even a single thing that was made.*"—Such is the literal rendering. And what is the necessary inference? The eyes of his understanding must be sealed by inveterate prejudice against the doctrine in question, who does not immediately perceive it. If *not one thing was made without him*, does it not incontrovertibly follow, that *he was not a created being himself?*—For if he were—although the *first* and the *highest* of created beings, still he would be himself an exception and contradiction to the statement made. The apostle Paul says, respecting Christ's mediatorial dominion: "God hath put all things under his feet: but when it is said, *all things* are put under him, it is manifest that *he is excepted who did put all things under him.*" On the same obvious principle we draw our

meaning of διὰ, when used in a genitive case, translates—"the world was made *for* him:" and the meaning, according to him, is: He was in the world, and the world, i. e. *the Jewish dispensation*, "was made for him," i. e. instituted with a view to his coming, and calculated to reveal and recommend him; yet the world, i. e. the subjects of that dispensation, knew him not!!

Mr. Belsham says he adopts the former of these explanations, proposed by his learned and ingenious friend, Dr. Carpenter, "with *some hesitation:*" and yet afterwards, when speaking of Mr. Cappe's translation, he gives the preference to the other, because "he feels some reluctance to understand the preposition διὰ in a sense so unusual, when the construction does not require it, and a very good and *obvious* sense can be given without it." Surely that sense cannot be very *obvious*, which has only been *proposed* in *Dr. Carpenter's* time, (I speak on Mr. B's authority) and which Mr. Belsham himself admits *with hesitation.* Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pages 35, 37, Note 20.

conclusion here: "When it is said, and that with such emphasis and precision, All things were made by him, it is manifest that he is excepted by whom all things were made."*

The unreasonableness of any other interpretation will appear peculiarly glaring, when this passage is compared, and taken in connexion, with others of a similar description.

2. Col. i. 16, 17. "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*."†

In whatever sense we understand the words of the verse preceding these, in which Jesus is spoken of as "the Image of the invisible God, the first-born of the whole creation," it is at present sufficient to say, that it must be a sense consistent with the verses quoted, which evidently refer to the same person.

And with regard to these verses, the first thing to be observed is, that we are free from the objection brought against the former passage: for here we have the word used which *is admitted properly to express the idea of creation.*—Is this then, as might reasonably be expected, to settle the point? No such thing. The *creation* here spoken of, it seems, is not a creation of things or beings themselves, but merely of certain states and orders of beings; not a material, but a spiritual creation; not a creation of the heavens and the earth, but only of *things in* heaven, and *things in*

* See Note F.

† Ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι, εἴτε κυριότητες, εἴτε ἀρχαὶ, εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται· Καὶ αὐτός ἐστι πρὸ πάντων, καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε.

earth :*—in short—"The creation which the apostle here ascribes to Christ, expresses that great change which was introduced into the moral world, and particularly into the relative situation of Jews and Gentiles, by the dispensation of the gospel." Nay, more than this :—you are not to suppose that the beings, here spoken of as *created*, possess any *real existence*. By no means. They are merely the creatures of a superstitious fancy, from whose *supposed* existence the apostle borrows a figurative illustration of his subject. "This great change," it is said, "he here describes, *under the symbol of a revolution, introduced by Christ among certain ranks and orders of beings, by whom, according to the Jewish demonology, borrowed from the oriental philosophy, the affairs of states and individuals were superintended and governed !!!*"†

You will now, I presume, cease to wonder, that the opposers of our Lord's Divinity should anxiously caution their hearers and readers against the "*natural signification* of words and phrases." If recourse to figures so wild and extravagant as this be requisite to discover the meaning of scripture, there is indeed abundant reason for the caution. Suppose we should admit that "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers," referred to beings whose existence was merely imaginary—unreal phantoms, with the various orders of which heaven was supposed to be peopled, in the "crude mythology of the East :"—still we have to ask, where is the alleged "*symbol of a revolution*" among them? There is not a word about

* Dr. Priestley's language on this subject is particularly remarkable :—"On this passage," says he, "it is obvious to remark, that the things, which Christ is said to have made, are not the heavens and the earth, but only *some things*, that were *in* the heavens, and *in* the earth," &c.—Hist. of Early Opinions, Vol. I. p. 65.

† Improved Version, Note on the Text.

revolution, or the slightest allusion to it in the passage. It is *creation*, and creation alone, that is mentioned ;—the creation of "all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible ;"–the bringing of all these things into existence : and it is language which all the ingenuity of criticism cannot explain away. How mournful is it that such ingenuity should ever have been employed !—Surely, if we were to set ourselves to devise terms, for the express purpose of conveying, as explicitly and unequivocally as possible, the idea of *supreme divinity*, we should find it difficult to select any better fitted for our design than those which are used in these verses. What could we say more, than that "by him all things were 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 ; he is before all things ; and by him all things consist ?"—If that Being, *by* whom all things were created, *for* whom all things were created, who is *before all things*, and *by whom all things consist*, be not the Supreme God,—we may well ask, "Is there a God at all?" if there be, how shall we describe, how shall we distinguish him ?

Why then refuse assent to declarations so plain, and so pointed ?—Why reject the obvious and literal meaning of such expressions, and prefer one, of which the very mention shows it to be so far-fetched and unnatural, so utterly subversive of every principle of just and ingenuous criticism, that the same mode of interpretation, if applied generally, would enable us, with ease, to solve the problem, of *bringing any required sense out of any given words*.

But our proof of this point is not yet finished.—We have found an objection taken, as to the passage first quoted, against the particular word used in it, as not properly signifying *creation*.—In the next, as we have seen, the

word *is* used which is allowed to signify creation ; but it is objected, that the creation of which it speaks is not that of the heavens and the earth themselves, but of *things in heaven*, and *things in earth ;* not a material, but a spiritual creation.—Unreasonable as these objections appear, yet let us see, whether we have not creation ascribed to Jesus *in the precise form required ;*—the creation of the heavens and the earth themselves :—

3. Heb. i. 10, 11.—" And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast *laid the foundations of the earth*, and *the heavens are the works of thy hands.* They shall perish, but thou remainest ; yea all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and of thy years there is no end."

I have formerly shown, that these words are here introduced as an address to *the Son ;* the expression " *unto the Son he saith,*" at the beginning of the eighth verse, being evidently the introduction both to the preceding quotation and to this.

Now, if this be the case, (and, as I before remarked, I can imagine nothing clearer) the point is settled. For I must be allowed to take for granted, that if the quotation *is* so applied, it is *correctly* applied. I have, for the present, no argument with those, who may have gone so very far, with some of the leaders of Unitarianism, as to charge the New Testament writers, and particularly the author of this epistle, with unappropriate applications of Scripture, far-fetched analogies, and bungled and inconclusive reasonings.

I have only to add, on this part of the subject, that while creation is thus repeatedly, and in the plainest terms, ascribed to Jesus Christ, the Scriptures give no countenance to the idea, of his executing this work, as a subordinate agent, a mere instrument, inferior to Jehovah. The very

terms, indeed, in some of the passages already quoted, themselves preclude every such supposition. They are *universal.* The creator of *all things*, of *all created beings*, cannot be himself a creature ;—cannot therefore be, in any sense, or in any respect, an inferior agent to the Supreme God. He who is *not a creature* must be GOD : and God is ONE. This idea is strongly confirmed by such expressions as the following in the prophecies of Isaiah :—"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called ; I am he ; I am the first, I also am the last. *My hand* also hath laid the foundations of the earth, and *my right hand* hath spanned the heavens :"—"Thus saith Jehovah thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb ; I am Jehovah, that maketh all things ; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself.*"*

Allusion has been made, in the course of the preceding illustrations, to the *new creation.* I might now, with propriety and effect, enlarge on this subject ; and show, from the Scriptures, that it is as truly a peculiar work of God, —the effect, in all its branches, of Divine energy, from the regeneration of the sinner to his final reception to glory—as the creation of the material universe. Interesting however as the views are, which this department of the argument presents to the Christian mind, I must forbear : —and shall proceed to the consideration of certain other works, which are ascribed to him *as Mediator ;* and to which he is not, and cannot be, competent, unless considered as "*Immanuel, God with us.*"

On the principle of *selection*, I shall confine myself to two—the GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD, and the FINAL JUDGMENT.

That these works *are* ascribed to Jesus in his exalted state, no consistent believer of the Bible can entertain a

* Isaiah xlviii. 13. xliv. 24.

doubt. In the immediate prospect of ascending to the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, he said himself to his disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—"He is Lord of all;" "Lord of the living and the dead;" "exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, both in this world, and in that which is to come—having all things put in subjection under his feet."*—And a part of the exercise of his sovereign dominion, is the administration of judgment, at the great day of final retribution. The testimonies of the Word of God on this point are many and explicit. "We shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ:"—"God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead:"—"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father: he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him:—he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man:" —"He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify, that it is he who was ordained of God, to be the judge of living and dead:"—"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom:"—"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 the left. Then shall

* Matth. xxviii. 18. Acts. x. 36. Rom. xiv. 9. Eph. i. 20—22.

the KING say to them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world:'—then shall he say also to them on his left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' —And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into everlasting life."*

Figurative language is a convenient, and therefore a favourite resort, of the opposers of our Lord's Divinity.—Plain and express as these ascriptions of dominion and judgment to Jesus Christ appear to be, they are all, on this principle of interpretation, readily set aside. His advancement, in his state of exaltation, to the government of the world, is pronounced "a notion unscriptural and most incredible." All that is said on this subject, it is alleged, means "not the personal authority of our Divine Master, but the prevalence of his religion in the world:"—"and a consistent Unitarian, acknowledging Jesus as a man in all respects 'like unto his brethren,' regards his kingdom as entirely of a spiritual nature, and as consisting in the empire of his gospel over the hearts and lives of its professors."† —And as to his "judging the living and the dead at his appearing and kingdom," while difficulty is felt and acknowledged, and a great deal is said with a view to remove, or at least to alleviate it, it is at last "conjectured, that when Christ is represented as appointed by

* Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10. Acts. xvii. 31. John. v. 22, 23, 27. Acts. x. 42. 2 Tim. iv. 1. Matth. xxv. 31—46.

† Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, p. 74.—Calm Inquiry, pages 319, 320.—"Agreeably to the prejudices and imaginations of Jews and Gentiles, the subjection of all mankind to the rules of piety and virtue delivered by Christ, is shadowed out under the imagery of a mighty king, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth," &c. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 473, as quoted by Mr. Belsham in a note, p. 321 of Calm Inquiry.

God to judge the world, nothing more may be intended by this language, but that the final states of all and every individual of mankind *shall be awarded agreeably to the declarations of the gospel!*"*

There is this peculiar convenience in such a principle of interpretation, when applied to this extent, that it precludes, in a great degree, the possibility of refutation. When one text of Scripture is alleged to have a figurative and not a literal meaning, the only effectual method of detecting and exposing the misinterpretation, is a comparison of it with other passages, of a kindred description, which, from their connexion, are evidently intended to be literally understood.—But when a whole series of texts, so plain and pointed as those which have been quoted, are asserted, or conjectured, to be entirely figurative;—what are we to do? We have no *plainer* texts to which we can refer, in the way of comparison and mutual illustration:—no passages more evidently literal, to prove the alleged figurative ones to be literal also. We can do nothing, in such a case, but leave the texts to the impartial judgment of the candid reader of the Scriptures. I shall do so, in the present instance, with one general observation:—that if such are the principles according to which the Bible is to be interpreted, the careless infidel is furnished with the most plausible apology which can be urged for declining the trouble of examining it;—that there is no possibility of arriving at any certain knowledge of its contents.

But all this authority, it is further replied, even on the supposition of its being really possessed and exercised by our Lord in person, is represented as *given to him;* as not original and inherent, but *imparted* and *delegated;* which, it is alleged, is quite inconsistent with the idea of his own supreme, underived God-head.

* Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 345.

Let us examine this a little.

In the first place: The ordinary solution of such apparent difficulties is a perfectly valid one. There is no incongruity in the idea of delegated authority and dominion, when Jesus is viewed as a *Divine Mediator*. Those who maintain this view of his person and character acknowledge such delegation, as an essential article of their scheme. Believing him to be represented in the Scriptures as voluntarily assuming the form, and acting in the capacity of a servant, they are not startled at finding this representation consistently supported throughout. In perfect harmony, therefore, with this view of his relation to the Father, in the work of redemption, they consider all that he did as done *by appointment*, and all that he received in his exaltation to glory, as received in the form of *reward*;—and the reward they account singularly appropriate, consisting, as it does, in his investiture, as Mediator, with the administration of that peculiar branch of the Divine Government, which has for its immediate object the completion of the glorious effects resulting from the work of salvation which he finished when on earth. Admit the principle of his acting, in the scheme of redeeming mercy, in the voluntarily assumed capacity of a servant; and all is plain:—instead of disorder, embarrassment and difficulty, we have a perfect plan, not only interesting in its design, and glorious in its consequences, but consistent and harmonious in all its arrangements; "well ordered in all things, and sure."

But *in the second place:* There is another view of this subject, which appears to me perfectly free from fallacy, and decisive of the question.—*Delegation*, let it be remembered, *cannot confer any ability for the discharge of the functions of the office delegated.* It may bestow *title* and *right*; but it can communicate no *capacity*, no actual *qualification*. We may suppose a child of a year old in-

vested with the official titles and honours of the Lord Chancellor of England :—but will such investiture *qualify* the babe for the fulfilment of the duties attached to that high and important office? I need not answer the question.

It is vain, then, to talk of *delegation*. If Jesus Christ be, indeed, LORD OF ALL, and JUDGE OF ALL, what, I ask, are the qualifications essential to the Being who governs and who is to judge the world?—And to this question I answer, without fear of contradiction by any reasonable and unprejudiced mind, *Omniscience*, *Omnipotence*, and *Independence*.—That the world cannot be *governed*, and cannot be *judged*, by any being who does not possess these attributes,—although the theme is tempting as a field for interesting declamation,—it were certainly a waste of time to detain you by a formal proof. He must be sadly pressed by the necessity of a system, who can feel a moment's hesitation in acknowledging this.* If it be so, then, that the Governor and Judge of the world, must be an *omniscient*, *omnipotent*, and *independent* being :—and if it be so, as the Scriptures testify, that the Father *judgeth no man*, but hath committed *all judgment* unto the Son ; does it not follow, as an immediate and irresistible consequence, that *the Son is such a Being?*

To complete this argument, it must be further observed; —that if such qualities must be possessed by the governor and judge of the world, they must, from their nature, be *original* and *inherent*. They are entirely unsusceptible of *transference*, or *communication*.—*Independence* is so, beyond all contradiction. And to imagine, because a certain portion of such knowledge as is usually beyond the reach of human penetration, has, at times, been imparted to men by Him who knoweth all things,—and a certain measure of extraordinary power conferred on creatures by

* See Note G.

Him who can do all things,*—that therefore the transference or communication is supposable of *omniscience* or *omnipotence*;—it requires only to bring the terms together, to show the contradiction which the supposition involves: —*an omniscient and omnipotent creature!* or, if you will, —for the absurdity is equally great—*two omniscient and omnipotent beings, and yet the one dependent on the other!* On this supposition, we may, it seems, arrive at the conclusion, that a being is omniscient and omnipotent, and yet remain uncertain whether that being be God!

IV. If you have followed me distinctly in the proof of the Divinity of the Saviour, from the ascription to him of the *Names*, *Attributes*, and *Works* of Deity, you will not be surprised to find him represented in Scripture, as the proper object of that WORSHIP, which cannot, without impious idolatry, be addressed to any other being than the Supreme God.—The proofs, at the same time, that this is the case, form an additional and distinct branch of the evidence of his Godhead. This, you will recollect, is the fourth and last part of my subject.

The instances of obeisance done to Christ, while he appeared as a man on the earth, I do not particularly notice, because, in the greater number at least of these instances, the kind and degree of intended homage cannot with certainty be ascertained. I pass them, with one general remark. In some of these instances, as must strike every reader of the Gospel history, there is so striking a resemblance, so very near an approach to Divine worship, that we should have expected a creature actuated by such principles as were formerly described, tenderly alive to a sense

* In reasoning against the Arians, who suppose the power of creation communicated to the Logos, although himself a created being, Dr. Priestley says, with great justice:—"Why might not the power of *self-subsistence* be imparted to another, as well as that of *creating out of nothing?*" History of Early Opinions, p. 77.

of his infinite inferiority, and jealous of the glory of the God that sent him, to have said, on such occasions, as the apostle Peter did to Cornelius—"Stand up: I myself also am a man;" or as the angel to John, when he fell at his feet to worship him;—"See thou do it not—worship God."—Nothing of this kind, however, is to be found in the life of Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists. He accepts all the homage that is offered him, without a hint of its impropriety, or the slightest monitory intimation of his equality in nature with the persons by whom it is paid.

This observation might he applied with peculiar force to the words of Thomas, the incredulous disciple, addressed to his Master, when the evidence which he had required of the reality of his resurrection, was vouchsafed to him: —"Then saith Jesus to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God."*—The question respecting these words is, whether they are to be understood as a *confession*, or an *exclamation*.—That, when taken simply by themselves, they *may* be understood in the latter of these senses, it is needless to deny. Nor do I feel disposed to lay so much stress as has been generally laid upon the objection urged against this interpretation, derived from its supposed impiety: because it depends greatly on the magnitude of the occasion, and the peculiar state of mind of the speaker, whether such exclamation should be charged with impiety, or justified as the appropriate utterance of sudden and overpowering, yet serious and devout emotion. Neither do I think that the style of our Lord's reply, "because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed," is, of itself, sufficient evidence that the words of Thomas must be understood as an address to Christ, and as a confession of his faith: because, in such circumstances, an exclamation of

* John xx. 27, 28.

devout astonishment is itself a confession of faith; or, in other words, a declaration of full conviction. But there are two considerations which satisfy me, that the words were a direct address to Jesus, and that it is most unnatural and arbitrary to interpret them otherwise.—*1st*, When the other disciples assured Thomas of their Master's resurrection, they said to him, "We have seen THE LORD."—Thomas, when his incredulity is subsequently overcome, confesses him in the same character—"MY LORD."—Had he said no more, I presume there would never have been any dispute about the meaning of his address. Yet nothing can well be clearer than that the two titles, "*my Lord*," and "*my God*," are both given to the same person. To separate them, as some have actually proposed, and consider the former as addressed to Christ, and the latter to the Father, is what no man could be led to do, but by the perverting influence of systematic prejudice. If "*my Lord*" was addressed to Christ, as all the circumstances of the case compel us to admit, so, beyond all reasonable controversy, was, "*my God*."—*2dly*, That the Evangelist, who relates the circumstance, understood the words as addressed to Christ, is very evident from the style in which he records it: "Thomas *answered and said unto him*, My Lord, and my God." He "*answered and said unto him*." Is this the manner in which any writer would record an exclamation of astonishment? Jesus *said to Thomas*, "——be not faithless, but believing:" and Thomas answered, and *said to him*, "My Lord, and my God." I do not know if there be any mode of expression by which the historian could have conveyed the idea that this address was to Christ, more explicitly than he has done.*

* There is a passage, indeed, in 1 Sam. xx. 12, which may seem, at first view, in opposition to these remarks. In our English translation it stands thus:—"And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or

Now if the words were addressed to Christ—nay, if there was even a possibility of their being so understood, the principles above stated would apply in all their force. A mere human prophet, faithful to the honour of the God from whom he had his commission, would have warned his mistaken follower, and all who heard him, to beware of fancying that he possessed any dignity that could entitle him to such an address. His heart would have been chilled at the very thought; and he would have been distressed till he got the warning uttered. But nothing of this kind appears:—"Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed:—blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."*

Let me now direct your attention to a few passages of Scripture, in which Divine worship is either authorized, or obviously addressed, to the Saviour in his exalted state.

I begin with a class of passages, in which the phrase *calling on the name of Christ*—or *calling on the name of the Lord* occurs.

Of these passages you may look first to Rom. x. 11—13. "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that *call upon him:* for whosoever shall *call upon*

the third day, and behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee, the Lord do so, and much more to Jonathan, &c." Here the words "Jonathan *said unto David*," are followed by an address to God, "*O Lord God of Israel*," while yet David is evidently spoken *to* in the subsequent part of the verse.—This, however, is very unnatural: and the marginal reading seems to be, as it is on some other occasions also, much preferable:—"And Jonathan said unto David, Jehovah, the God of Israel—when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or the third day, and behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee,—Jehovah do so and much more to Jonathan, &c.

* See Note H.

the name of the Lord shall be saved."—It is evident that in the preceding context *Christ* is spoken of, as the *subject of apostolic testimony*, and the *object of the faith* of all who receive that testimony. And by comparing what is added in verse 14th, it is indisputably manifest, that *he* is "the Lord" spoken of in the verses which have just been quoted:—"How, then, shall they *call on him* in whom they have *not believed?* and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Whether the editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament conceived, that superficial readers might not immediately think of *Christ* being meant by "*the Lord*" in this passage, and that therefore there was less danger in allowing the phrase "*calling on the name* of the Lord" to stand unaltered, I cannot tell; but so it is, that unaltered they *have* allowed it, in this instance, to stand.—They have also translated the same phrase in the same manner in Acts ii. 21, where the same quotation is introduced, from the prophecy of Joel—"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord* shall be saved."—Yet in the texts which I am about to quote, the phraseology in the original is precisely the same:—why the translation should be different, it is not very difficult to conjecture.—Before noticing these, however, it is worth while to observe, that in the passage now before us, we have a *double* proof of the Godhead of our blessed Redeemer. We have seen, that it is of *him* the apostle speaks. To *him*, therefore, this inspired writer applies the words of the prophet:—"It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of *Jehovah* shall be delivered:"—so that Jesus is here distinguished by the incommunicable Name of the God of Israel, and at the same time pointed out as the proper object of religious invocation.

The following are the passages alluded to, in which the

phraseology of the original is the same, but which are otherwise translated in the Improved Version of the New Testament.—Acts ix. 14. "And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that *call on thy name* :"* —Acts ix. 21. "Is not this he who destroyed them that *called on this name* in Jerusalem ?"†—Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord.*"‡—1 Cor. i. 2. "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*,§ both theirs and ours."—In all these passages, the construction of the words in the original is the very same as in those quoted from the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the 2d of the book of Acts ; it is the construction which is invariably employed in the New Testament, and in the Septuagint translation of the Old, wherever the verb used signifies to *invoke* ; and to translate them otherwise is an arbitrary departure from the ordinary practice of the language.

The received translation is also fully justified, by various express instances of such invocation of the name of Jesus ; by which the practice of the apostles and primitive Christians is further ascertained.

1. 1 Thess. iii. 11—13. "Now God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you : to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

* Impr. Vers. "who are called by thy name."

† Ib. "that call themselves after this name."

‡ Ib. "taking upon thyself his name."

§ Ib. "are called by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the first of these verses, Jesus is acknowledged, in connexion with God the Father, as ordering the events of providence.—"*The Lord*," in the verse which follows, is evidently the same Lord as in verse 11th, namely, "the Lord Jesus Christ:" and he is thus owned, and addressed, as the author and perfecter of all Christian graces in the hearts of his people.

2. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. "Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

Nothing, surely, can be more plain and decisive than this.—Are we to suppose, that a mere man, or even the most exalted of creatures, is here associated with the Most High God, in a solemn prayer for the communication of comfort and stability to the Christians at Thessalonica?—and not only associated with him, but, in the order of address, *put before him*?—He who can bring himself to believe this, may, without either scruple or inconsistency, join in the worship of departed saints and martyrs, and that in a much higher sense than the church of Rome professes to do.—But, on the contrary, he who, in the worship which he addresses to God the Father, refuses to join the name of the Lord Jesus, as an object of equal adoration, refuses Divine honours to one, whom this inspired Ambassador of Heaven considered as entitled to them, and to whom, in his own practice, he uniformly ascribed them.

3. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. "For this thing I besought *the Lord* thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me."

It requires only the reading of these verses, to show

that *the Lord*, in the 8th, to whom Paul presented his supplication for deliverance from trouble, is the same with *Christ*, in the 9th, in whose promised strength he confides and triumphs. This is as plain as language can make it. "I besought THE LORD," says he:—"HE," that is THE LORD, "said unto me, MY STRENGTH is made perfect in weakness:"—"I will, therefore, glory in my infirmities, that the POWER OF CHRIST may rest upon me."

4. In addition to these passages, might be adduced, the *forms of benediction* with which the Epistles generally open or conclude, and which cannot be viewed in any other light than as brief prayers for the Divine blessing on the churches and individuals to whom they are addressed:—Ephes. vi. 23. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!"—2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all! Amen!"—2 John 3. "Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love!"

5. We have before seen, that the Christians were early distinguished, both among themselves, and in the world, by the description of "*those that called on the name of Jesus Christ.*"—Paul then did not stand alone, as a worshipper of Jesus.—We have a remarkable and affecting instance of another saint's practice in Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon (God) and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."—The name of GOD, in the first of these verses, is supplementary. The supplement is improper; nor does it, in the slightest degree, affect the argument afforded by the passage. The prayers were addressed to JESUS: and

Jesus should have been the supplementary word. It is needless here to prove the fact: it is not denied; nor does it admit of any question.

But with regard to this, and similar passages, it has been said, in the form of a general objection:—"*This address of Stephen to Jesus, when he actually saw him, does not authorize us to offer prayers to him, now that he is invisible.*"*

This is truly strange ground. It is the ground, however, which is taken; and we must give it a few moments' notice.

Observe, then, *in the first place*:—There is no sufficient evidence of the supposed fact of *actual vision*.—Even the vision described as seen by Stephen in the Council Hall (verses 55, 56,) I think there is every reason to believe, was only a vision of *strong faith*:—a *mental* vision, imparted by the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit, with which at the time he was filled.† But at any rate, whether this opin-

* Improved Version of the New Testament: Note on the place.—In this solution, with some slight variations, Unitarian expositors seem universally to agree.

† Thus Ezekiel describes a vision of the glory of Jehovah, which was seen by him, while he *sat in his house, and the elders of Judah sat before him*. See Ezek. viii. 1—4. A variety of similar examples might be produced.

In the following most singular passage, Dr. Priestley seems to favour the idea of Stephen's vision having been only a supernatural impression on his mind; while yet he draws from it the same inference against the prayer's being pleaded as a precedent: "To conclude as some have done, from the single instance of Stephen, (the *single instance!*) that all Christians are authorized to pray to Christ, is like concluding that all matter has a tendency to go upward, because a needle will do so when a magnet is held over it. When they shall be in the same circumstances with Stephen, having *their minds strongly impressed* with a vision of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, they may then, perhaps,"—*(perhaps!)*—even although supposed in *the same circumstances*:—is it, then, doubtful, after all, whether

ion be well or ill founded, that vision was seen in the place of assembly. It was now at an end: nor is there the slightest evidence that it was at this time repeated.

2*dly*. Suppose it to have been a *real occular vision*; and suppose it also to have been repeated:—of what was it a vision? of Jesus Christ *at hand?*—within reach of an immediate application by the voice?—"He saw," the record says, "the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." It was a vision, then, of the glory of Jesus in the place of his exaltation, in the third heavens. But how, at this immense distance, was the voice of the expiring martyr to reach a human ear? Surely the voice could enter no ear there, but the ear of him who hears, at the same moment, "all that in every place call upon his name;" and to whose audience immeasurable distance is no interruption. But it may perhaps be said, that as there was a miracle in the vision, there might be a miracle also in the hearing of the prayer. I remark, therefore,

3*dly*. It seems passing strange, that the circumstance of actual vision should be considered by any, as at all altering the nature of the case. Are we to conclude, then, that a creature, a mere man, may, in particular circumstances, be a proper object of prayer and religious worship?—that when *seen* he may be prayed to; but when *unseen*, the prayer must be withheld as idolatry! Does the mere circumstance of his being *visible* impart a transient Divinity, and a momentary title to the honours of Godhead—a Divinity and a title, lasting only while the vision lasts?—Can

Stephen was *right* in praying to Jesus?)—"they may then, perhaps, be authorized to address themselves to him as he did: *but the whole tenor of the Scriptures* shows, that otherwise we have *no authority at all* for any such practice." Hist. of Early Opinions, Vol. i. p. 47. The *candour* of the bold and sweeping assertion with which this extract concludes, the reader is left to appreciate from the passages already quoted, and those which still remain to be mentioned.

visibility or *invisibility* change the nature of a creature, deifying for the time a *mere son of man*?—Surely the weakness and inconsistency of such ground as this, must be felt by every mind that remains open to conviction on this most important subject.

We cannot conceive to ourselves a more solemn act of worship, than that which is implied in a dying man's commending his departing soul to the Being who is the object of his address:—and from the same Being to whom he commends himself, interceding, with the same breath, for forgiveness to his murderous enemies!—The very prayers which Jesus, in the human nature, addressed to the Father, Stephen here addresses, in similar circumstances, to the Son: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"—"Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit!"—So prayed the dying Redeemer to his Divine Father. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"—So prayed the dying martyr to his Divine Saviour and Lord. Yet the Unitarian hypothesis supposes, not only that these solemn petitions were, in the latter case, presented to a mere creature; but that even when God and Jesus were *seen together*, the prayer was turned away from *God*, and addressed to *man*.

Enough, surely, has been said, to expose the fallacy of the objection. It might however be added, that in the passages formerly quoted there is abundant evidence, that it was not always at times when Jesus appeared in vision to his servants, that he was addressed as the object of prayer. The silent breathings of Paul's heart ascended to his Saviour, even at the moment when he was writing his Epistles, in warm and earnest intercession for the Christian brethren to whom he wrote.

Thus have we seen, that, in the New Testament Scriptures, Christians are described and distinguished by their "calling on the name of the Lord Jesus;"—and that there

are various and most conclusive instances, of their applying to him in prayer, for providential direction in their ways—for deliverance from trouble—for all descriptions of spiritual blessing to themselves and others; forgiveness of sins; inward peace and consolation; increase of love; progress in holiness; establishment in every good word and work, even unto final perfection;—for reception at death, and admission to eternal happiness.

Let me now close this series of proofs, by directing your attention, for a few minutes, to that most sublime and overpowering vision, described in the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation:—where we have the worship exhibited, which is paid, by Angels and redeemed men, to GOD and THE LAMB;—and in which the whole creation is represented as uniting:—"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, 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 living creatures, and 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 the throne, and the living creatures, 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! And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, even all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever! And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever."

After reading such a passage as this, can we retain a doubt, whether the Being who is thus represented as occupying the same Throne with the Eternal, and receiving the very same expressions of adoration and praise;—of unqualified adoration,—of everlasting praise;—be himself more than a creature?—Let those who deny the Divinity of Christ, from professed concern for the glory of the only true God, seriously consider, how far they really consult the honour of that God, when they suppose one of his creatures seated on the same throne, and partaking with him the same eternal glory and praise!

But we are reminded, that this is entirely a "*visionary scene*:"—that "the homage is paid to a symbolical representation of Christ, by symbolical persons, as visibly present with him; and that this cannot justify the actual worship of Christ, when he is not visible."

To part of this wild objection an answer has already been returned. I would only further remind those who urge it, that in such emblematical visions, they must be fully aware, the *nature* of the beings represented, and their *relations*, respectively, to each other, cannot be considered as undergoing any change; but must remain precisely the same. Such scenic exhibitions accord with the truth and reality of things. The reason why Christ, in the vision, appears, and is worshipped, under the symbol of a "Lamb as it had been slain," is strikingly apparent to

every one, who remembers the language of the Baptist, "Behold the LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world;"—and who credits the declarations of the Scriptures concerning him, as the Divine Redeemer, who assumed our nature, and made atonement for sin by the shedding of his blood. And if the circumstance of symbolical representation destroys the conclusiveness of the inference as to the worship of Jesus Christ, it must be allowed to have the same fatal application to the other Divine person in the vision: because the infinite and invisible God is here also symbolically represented, as seated on a throne, and as receiving the same adoration from the same symbolical worshippers.

But we are further referred, for a parallel case, to 1 Chronicles xxix. 20. "And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and *worshipped the Lord and the King.*"

But *are* the two cases at all parallel? David said, "Now bless Jehovah your God." Did he intend, that the people should associate himself with Jehovah in the same act of religious adoration? Certainly not;—nor were they guilty of so gross and impious a profanation. When it is said, "they *worshipped* the Lord and the King," a general word is used, in its general or indefinite sense. And although the expression may sound somewhat strangely, yet knowing as we do, that the word denotes various kinds and degrees of homage or reverence, according to the nature and dignity of the object addressed, we feel no difficulty in instantly applying to it, in reference to GOD and to the KING, its different modifications of meaning.*

* The English word *worship* has this general signification. See Johnson's Dictionary. An instance of its lower application, as signi-

The word *worship* stands here in the same circumstances with its opposite *blasphemy*, when it is said, by the witnesses suborned, at the instigation of Jezebel, against Naboth the Jezreelite, "Naboth hath *blasphemed God and the King*." In neither case do we feel in the least degree at a loss. But in the case to which this has been adduced as a parallel, we have the very same act of worship, expressed in the very same words, addressed equally to "Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." The cases would have come nearer to parallelism, and the inference in question might have been justified, had it been recorded, that David appeared between the cherubim, in the place of the Divine presence, by the side of the glorious Shechinah;—and that the people bowing their heads, and worshipping the Lord and the King, united them in one doxology, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, and unto David the king, forever and ever! Amen!"—But our minds revolt, with indignant loathing, from suppositions so unseemly;—so degrading to the infinite Majesty of heaven and earth;—to that God, who "will not give his glory to another."

In the vision, then, of which I have read, in your hearing, the inspired description,—a vision so full of impressive sublimity, we behold, in the adoration of the Lamb, the Divine injunction obeyed, and its meaning thus practically illustrated:—"AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM!"*

I have thus fulfilled my design;—which was, to lay before you such evidence as appeared to my own mind fully satisfactory, that the *Names*, the *Attributes*, the *Works*, and the *Worship*, exclusively belonging to the

fying *civil respect and deference*, occurs Luke xiv. 10. "Then shalt thou have *worship* in the presence of those that sit at meat with thee."

* Heb. i. 6.

One Supreme God, are, in the Scriptures, unequivocally ascribed to *Jesus Christ*.

To the promised recapitulation of the whole argument on this most momentous subject, I could not now do justice, without taxing to excess, both the patience of my hearers, and my own strength. There are, besides, some further observations, of a general nature, which still remain to be made; but which cannot, for the same reason, be introduced, with propriety, at this time.—The recapitulation, along with these, and a few words of practical improvement, will form the substance of another discourse.

DISCOURSE V.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT IN THE THREE PRECEDING DISCOURSES, WITH CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"———HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD."

I HAVE now, in three discourses, endeavoured to establish, by a direct appeal to the Scriptures, the great doctrine of the Supreme Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is my design, in this discourse, briefly to recapitulate their contents, and to conclude the subject with a few additional general observations.

In the first of these discourses, I began by pointing out the vast importance of the doctrine in question;—as apparent, 1st, in *its own nature:* it is a doctrine of which the simple statement is of itself sufficient to show, that if it be a truth, it must necessarily be one of essential consequence:—2dly, in *its connexion with the first and highest class of our duties;* the admission of it, if false, implying the guilt of direct idolatry; and the denial of it, if true, the refusal of divine honours to the true God:—3dly, in *the intimate relation which it bears to other truths;* as forming one in a harmonious system of doctrines, which must stand or fall along with it.

I then proceeded to observe, (as on the subject of the Trinity in general) that, with regard to this momentous doctrine, the *fact* alone is revealed, and not the *mode* of the fact; and that the former alone is, therefore, the object of our faith.—That the fact is mysterious, was fully admitted:—but there is nothing in it, I observed, more incomprehensible, than in the mystery of the Divine *omnipresence*;—in the nature of that relation, which we affirm to subsist, between an infinite Being and any limited portion of space, when we say of such a Being, *He is* HERE. —All that we affirm, I noticed, is;—not that any change whatever took place, or, indeed, possibly could take place in the Divine nature, either in order to its union with the human, or in consequence of such union; but that, in some way unknown to us, the human nature is so united with the Divine, in the person of Jesus, as to have itself no distinct subsistence apart from that union.

I next adverted to the proper state of the question.—It is not whether Jesus Christ was A MAN; for on this point those who affirm and those who deny his Divinity are agreed; and his real humanity is as essential to the system of the former as to that of the latter:—it is simply, whether "the Man Christ Jesus" be not, at the same time, GOD.

This is a question, I remarked, which cannot be determined in any other way, than by an appeal to the holy Scriptures; these being the only source of information on the subject:—and in making this appeal, it is of immense consequence, that our minds be deeply impressed with the sacredness of the Divine word; and with the guilt and danger of wilfully wresting it from its legitimate sense.

After proving that the words of the text—"*This is the true God*,"—really refer to Jesus Christ, and are not merely a convenient motto, but a proof of the point in

question :—I proceeded to show, by the simple citation of a considerable number of passages and expressions, what seemed to be the current phraseology of the New Testament, on this important subject. Respecting those various texts, I mentioned before quoting them, that I could have rehearsed them with the very same confidence, as to the impression they were fitted to make, to an assembly of Greeks, in the original language, as to you in yours :—and afterwards stated, the great and obvious improbability, that all these passages, together with all others of a similar complexion, that might have been quoted, were either *interpolated*, or *mistranslated*, or *misinterpreted* ; and that, through ignorance, or prejudice, or carelessness, no critics, translators, or interpreters, had made this discovery, excepting those who can find in none of them the doctrine which they have so generally been understood to assert.

I took particular notice of the objection, derived from the frequent occurrence, in the New Testament, of language of a different and apparently opposite complexion ; —in which Jesus is represented as inferior to the Father —as sent by him—receiving a commission from him—obeying and serving him—and receiving from him his reward.—On this point I illustrated one general observation, of prime importance on this subject, and in its principle applicable to others of a similar nature :—namely, that while all the art of criticism has been expended, in explaining away those passages which assert his Divinity, and the pains which the attempt has cost sufficiently evince the superlative difficulty of the task ;—the only key to the easy and consistent interpretation of these apparently contradictory passages—the only principle of interpretation which reconciles these seeming contrarieties in the scripture testimony, is the ordinary opinion of the union of two natures in the one person of Christ, and of his having acted, as Mediator, in the voluntarily assumed capacity of the

Father's servant:—and that the principle of interpretation, of which this can be truly affirmed, certainly derives from this circumstance a very strong presumptive evidence of its correctness and legitimacy.

In the latter part of the discourse, it was my endeavour to show, that there are various and important general considerations, in which the dignity of Jesus Christ is very strongly, although indirectly, implied;-and which, on the supposition of his being a mere man, or even a mere creature, however highly elevated, are bereft of all their peculiar beauty, and force, and propriety.—I illustrated this remark in five particulars:—*1st*, The views which are uniformly given in the Scriptures of the unparalleled and inexpressible love of God, in the gift of his only-begotten Son:—*2dly*, The marvellous condescension and grace of Jesus Christ himself; which the strongest possible terms are employed to express:—*3dly*, The depth of interest, the warmth of admiring transport and adoring gratitude, excited in the bosoms of the New Testament writers, by the contemplation, and even by the passing thought, of the love of Christ, or of God in Christ:—*4thly*, The representations given of the height of glory and honour, dominion and power, to which Jesus is exalted, at the right hand of God, as the consequence and reward of the work finished by him when on earth:—and *5thly*, The singular claims of Jesus on the love and obedience of all his followers.—The language used on all these subjects, I endeavoured to show, is utterly extravagant and unaccountable, on the hypothesis that our blessed Redeemer was no more than a mere human prophet, who was commissioned, like other prophets, to impart to mankind the will of God, and who sealed his testimony by his death.

In the second and third discourses on this subject, proof has been adduced from the Scriptures, that the *Names*, the *Attributes*, the *Works*, and the *Worship*, belonging

exclusively to the only true God, are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Adopting, throughout, the principle of *selection*, I confined myself, on the first of these heads, to the two names, God, and Jehovah.

I.—1. God.—John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word *was God.*"—John i. 14. "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth:" compared with Isaiah ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called—*the mighty God:*"—and Matth. i. 22, 23. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name *Immanuel*, which, being interpreted, is, *God with us*:"—Rom. ix. 5. "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, the Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed forever:"—Heb. i. 8. "But unto the son he saith, thy throne, *O God*, is forever and ever!"—2 Peter i. 1. "Who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of *our God and Saviour* Jesus Christ;" a reading justified by the established principles of Greek syntax, and by the precise parallelism of the expression in the 10th verse of the same chapter—"An entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of *our Lord and Saviour* Jesus Christ:"—Titus ii. 13, to which the same general principles of syntax most clearly and decidedly apply; "looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of *our great God and Saviour* Jesus Christ."—To these passages, a number of others might have been added.

2. Jehovah.—This is the incommunicable name of the true God, the God of Israel.—He calls it "*My name Je-*

hovah," Exod. vi. 3, and the Psalmist says, "That men may know, that thou, *whose name alone is Jehovah*, art the Most High over all the earth." Psalm lxxxiii. 18.—It is given to Jesus in the following passages.—Luke i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of Israel shall he (John the Baptist) turn to *the Lord their God*. And he shall go before *him* in the spirit and power of Elias—to make ready a people prepared for *the Lord*:" compared with Isaiah xl. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of *Jehovah*, make straight in the desert a highway for our God;" a prophecy which is applied to the ministry of John as the forerunner of Jesus, both by himself and by the New Testament historians. John i. 23. Matth. iii. 1—3. Mal. iii. 1. "Behold, I will send *my* messenger, and he shall prepare the way *before me*: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to *his* temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, *saith Jehovah of hosts*."—Heb. i. 10. "And, Thou, *Lord*, (answering to *Jehovah* throughout the psalm from which the words are quoted) in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands." Isaiah vi. 1—5. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also *Jehovah*, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up:—above it stood the Seraphim—and one cried to another, Holy, holy, holy is *Jehovah of hosts*; the whole earth is full of his glory:—mine eyes have seen the King, *Jehovah of hosts*:" compared with John xii. 41. "These things said Esaias, when he saw *his* (Christ's) glory, and spake of him." Jer. xxiii. 6. "This is his name, whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah our righteousness*." Zech. xiii. 7. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against *the man that is my fellow*, *saith Jehovah of hosts*:"—Isaiah xlv. 23—25. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteous-

ness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In *Jehovah* have I righteousness and strength:—In *Jehovah* shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory;" compared with Rom. xiv. 10, 11. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ:* for it is written, As I live saith the Lord, *(Jehovah)* every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God;" and 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. "Of him are ye, in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness (or justification) and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." I observed, that if conviction was produced by these instances, such conviction would naturally lead to the application of the name to Jesus, in many others, which might not, at first view, appear so obvious.

To these passages was subjoined the remarkable reasoning of the Saviour himself, founded on the peculiar application of the title *Lord* to the Messiah, by David in the beginning of the 110th Psalm: Matth. xxii. 41—46. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto *my Lord*, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David, then, call him *Lord, how is he his Son?* And no man was able to answer him a word."

II. Of *Divine Attributes* ascribed to Jesus, I confined myself to four;—*Eternal Existence, Almighty Power, Omnipresence*, and *Omniscience*.

1. *Eternal Existence.*—I here referred, in general terms, but without any particular illustration, to the numerous passages, which intimate his pre-existence, by speaking of him as coming down from heaven, and as ascending

up where he was before; of coming forth from the Father, and coming into the world, and of leaving the world and returning to the Father, &c.—and then more particularly to John viii. 58. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Before Abraham was, I am*:"—Heb. i. 10. "Thou, Lord, *in the beginning*, hast laid the foundations of the earth:" —Col. i. 17. "And he is *before all things*:"—Rev. i. 8, 17, 18. xxii. 13. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty:" "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one:" "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last:" compared with Isaiah xliv. 6. "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last: and besides me there is no God:"—Micah v. 2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel:—*whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"

2. *Almighty Power.*—Isaiah ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called—*the Mighty God*:" Where the phrase is the same as in chap. x. 21. "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto *the mighty God*:"—Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, *the Almighty*:"—Phil. iii. 21. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, 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.*"—For further proof of the ascription of omnipotence to Christ, I referred to his *works*, which were afterwards to be considered.

3. *Omnipresence.*—Matth. xviii. 20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I* in the midst of them:" compared with the parallel promise of God to Moses, Exod. xx. 24. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee:"—John iii. 13. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who *is in heaven*:"—Matth. xxviii. 20. "And Lo, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" Omnipresence is implied likewise in

4. *Omniscience;* which has, at the same time, its own distinct evidence. Rev. ii. 23. "All the churches shall know, that *I (Jesus Christ) am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts;* and I will give unto every one of you according to your works:" compared with 1 Kings viii. 39. "Thou (Jehovah) even *thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men:*" and Jer. xvii. 9, 10. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? *I Jehovah search the hearts, I try the reins,* to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:"—John ii. 24, 25. "But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he *knew all men;* and needed not that any should testify to him of man; for he *knew what was in man:*"—John xxi. 17. "Lord, *thou knowest all things,* thou knowest that I love thee."

III. Works peculiarly belonging to the true God, are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Under this head, I first of all directed your attention to the miracles of the Saviour; and endeavoured to show, with regard to some of them, that the *manner* in which they were performed was essentially different from that of any miracles ever wrought by prophets and apostles; and was not susceptible of vindication from the charge of presumptuous impiety, on any other supposition than that he

possessed *in himself* the power necessary to their accomplishment.

I then showed, that *creation*, the *creation of all things*, is ascribed to Jesus.—John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—*All things were made by him, and without him was not any one thing made that was made:*"—verse 10th, "He was in the world, and *the world was made by him*, and the world knew him not:"—Col. i. 16, 17. "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*:"—Heb. i. 10. "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, *hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands*:"—compared with Isaiah xlviii. 12, 13. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am the first, I also am the last. *My hand*, also, hath laid the foundations of the earth, and *my right hand* hath spanned the heavens;" and Isaiah xliv. 24. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer; and he that formed thee from the womb, I am Jehovah that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*; that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*."

Passing over the subject of the new or spiritual creation, which, however, according to the Scriptures, is as really a peculiar work of God as the former, and which is also, in all its branches, ascribed to Christ:—I proceeded to notice, the *government of the world*, and the *final judgment*.—From a variety of passages, of which the testimony is plain and direct, and which it is unnecessary now to repeat, I showed, that these works *are* assigned to Jesus Christ, as the Mediator between God and men;—and I then obviated the objection, derived from the circumstance of the power of government and judgment be-

ing exercised by *delegation*; observing 1*st*, That such delegation does not at all imply *inferiority of nature*, but is in perfect harmony with the general representation given of Christ, in his mediatorial character, as *voluntarily assuming the capacity of a servant*, and, in that capacity, executing his appointed work, and receiving his promised reward:—and 2*dly*, That if *the fact* be admitted, of Christ's being invested with supreme authority as Lord and Judge of all, there are no qualifications which can fit him for the discharge of those high official acts implied in such authority, short of *omniscience*, *omnipotence*, and *independence*: and that these attributes, if possessed, could not, from their nature, be obtained by transference or communication from another, but must have been original and inherent.

IV. As to the DIVINE WORSHIP, of which the Scriptures represent the Redeemer as the proper and worthy object:—I did not insist on those acts of obeisance that are recorded as having been done to him when on earth, because it is difficult, as to the greater number at least of these, to ascertain with certainty the kind and degree of homage that was intended to be paid. I only remarked, in general, that in some cases, it bore so very near a resemblance to Divine worship, that a creature, feelingly alive to a sense of his inferiority, and jealous of the honour of the God that sent him, might surely have been expected to caution those who paid it, against undue reverence, and the approach at least to impiety which it involved, as others are recorded to have done in similar circumstances.

I applied this observation particularly to the words of Thomas, after his Master's resurrection, when, upon his incredulity being overcome by the testimony of his senses, "he said unto him, *My Lord and my God*:"—and I endeavoured to prove, that these words cannot be fairly in-

terpreted otherwise, than as an address to Christ, and a confession of the faith of him who uttered them.

The following texts were then quoted and illustrated, in proof of this particular.—Rom. x. 11—13. "For the Scripture saith, *Whosoever believeth on him* shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall *call upon the name of the Lord* shall be saved. How, then, shall they *call on him in whom they have not believed?*"—Acts ix. 14. "And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that *call on thy name:*"—Acts ix. 21. "All that heard him were astonished, saying, Is not this he who destroyed *them that called on this name* in Jerusalem?"—Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of* the Lord."—1 Cor. i. 2. "To the church of God which is at Corinth—with all that, in every place, *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,* both theirs and ours."—1 Thess. iii. 10—13. "Now God himself, even our Father, *and our Lord Jesus Christ,* direct our way unto you. And *the Lord* make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, even as we do toward you: to the end *he* may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints:"—2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. "Now *our Lord Jesus Christ himself,* and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace; comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work:"—2 Cor. xiii. 8—10 "For this thing I besought *the Lord* thrice, that it might depart from me. And *he* said unto me, *my* grace is sufficient for thee; for *my* strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the *power of Christ* may rest upon

me:"—Eph. vi. 23. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ:"—2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."—2 John 3. "Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and *from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father* in truth and love.—Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon (Jesus) and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!* And he *kneeled down*, and cried with a loud voice, *Lord, lay* not this sin to their charge! And when he had said this, he fell asleep."—Rev. v. 11—13. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures 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. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, even all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, *and unto the Lamb*, forever and ever! Amen!"—Heb. i. 6. "When he bringeth again the first-begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him:*" of which commanded worship the preceding scene exhibits a most sublime and impressive exemplification.

Surely, if Jesus Christ be not God, the language of the New Testament has been framed to deceive. The writers must have intended to exalt their Master at the expense of truth. If not—if they meant that their readers should form no higher idea of Jesus Christ, than as a mere human prophet, commissioned to teach, as other prophets had done before him, the will of God to men; they certainly

have, on this supposition, been most unfortunate in their use of words. Laying inspiration entirely out of the question, how can we suppose, that upright men, with honest intentions, should have so expressed themselves, on a subject of this nature, as actually to mislead ninety-nine in the hundred of all who have ever professed to believe their writings?—The case, it ought to be particularly observed, was one of no difficulty. The writers were not handling a point of great metaphysical nicety; which required, for the prevention of mistakes, peculiar caution in the choice of their expressions. If Jesus was no more than a human prophet, we can conceive nothing more easy, than for those who "wrote of him" to avoid all such phraseology as could possibly convey to the minds of their readers any impression inconsistent with this simple view of his person, and office. But is this the case? I confidently leave with yourselves the answer to this question. For my own part, I can discern only one alternative:—Either this book was not given by inspiration of God, nor even written by men of common understanding and common honesty;—or the men who wrote it were taught of God to believe, and commissioned to reveal to others, as one of the leading truths in their system of doctrine, that Jesus Christ, although born of the seed of David according to the flesh, was, at the same time, "over all, God, blessed forever."

We are accustomed to speak of the artless simplicity of the New Testament historians—of their entire freedom from every symptom of passion, partiality, or exaggeration, as a strong indication of their veracity; a convincing evidence of the truth and honesty of their narrative. But if the fact be, that they have written respecting their Master in such terms, as to convey to the minds of an immense proportion of their readers, not merely the impression of his having been *a greater man* than he really was—possessed of higher powers, and of a purer and more

exalted character, than truly belonged to him—(a fault so common with biographers ;)—but absolutely an impression of his having been *more than man*, of his having been the "Son of God," in a sense that implied his *equality with the Father* :—nay, if they have even left it a matter of uncertainty with their readers, whether the subject of their histories, whom, on the supposition, they must have viewed as a mere man like themselves, ought to be simply revered as a human prophet, or adored as "God over all :"—I know not how this fact can be easily made to accord with the validity of the argument.—On the contrary, supposing the Divine dignity of his person, nothing can be more wonderful than the manner in which they write. In the simplicity of the statement of facts, and in the total absence of all reflections of their own, and of all attempts to work upon the passions of their readers, it is so essentially different from what, in such circumstances, we should naturally have expected from the operation of the ordinary principles and feelings of the human mind, that it becomes an evidence of more than their *credibility* : it becomes a proof of their *inspiration*—of their having written under the direction and restraint of a superior influence.

I fully admit, that, as the doctrine of which I have been treating is an article of faith of high importance, we should reasonably expect to find it revealed in plain and explicit terms. And I contend, that the fact corresponds to the expectation—that it *is* so revealed ;—in terms as plain and explicit as are employed to express any other truth whatever, contained in the Bible.

I alluded, in a former discourse, to a mode of reasoning sometimes resorted to by the adversaries of this doctrine. —They count the number of passages which are usually adduced in support of it ; and are fond of calculating, and pointing out, the small proportion which these passages

bear to the contents of the different books in which they occur, and to the body of revelation in general. But, in truth, there can be no mode of reasoning more sophistical than this. We might, with equal propriety, dictate to the supreme God, the particular *manner* in which he should communicate to his creatures the knowledge of his mind, as presume to fix the number of times that any doctrine must be repeated, in order to entitle it to their reception and belief. It has often been remarked, with regard to the Scriptures, and it has, at the same time, been shown to be, on various accounts, one of their peculiar excellencies, that they are not written in a *systematical form.* To say, therefore, as is frequently said, respecting any of the texts which have been quoted, or of others, that they state the doctrine in question, not directly and formally, but indirectly and incidentally, is to say nothing at all to the purpose; nothing that can, in the mind of any reasonable man, in the least degree invalidate their force: for it amounts to no more, than that the manner in which *this particular truth* is revealed, corresponds with the general plan or method of Divine revelation in the Bible.

It is, I am aware, a common mode of speech on such subjects, that "*the Bible is full* of the doctrine;" that it "appears conspicuous in *every page* of the word of God." But is any one ever misled by such expressions? Does any one ever imagine them to mean any thing more, than that the particular doctrine, respecting which, they are used, is *in many places clearly revealed,* and that *throughout* it is *implied* and *understood?*—The most effectual way to illustrate this, will be to apply the observation to what our opponents themselves profess to consider as the essence of Christianity. According to them, the grand distinction of the gospel is, its ascertaining the certainty of a resurrection from the dead, a judgment to come, and a future state of rewards and punishments. To these top-

ics they are accustomed to apply the very language of which I now speak. For example:—"The apostolic summary of the Christian faith is, 'that God will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' This doctrine *beams forth, with unclouded splendour, from every page of the New Testament*, whatever becomes of the correctness and accuracy of the received text."* I find no fault with this language, nor with the particular application of it. I only remark that it is language quite as fairly applicable to the doctrine under our consideration: and that, upon the principle of judging doctrines, according to the number of passages in which they are stated, (stated, I mean, not incidentally and casually, but as the direct and formal object of the writer) even *this* "summary of the Christian faith" would hardly, I fear, itself abide the application of this novel and singular test of truth.

The sole question, on all subjects of this nature, with which we have to do,—let it be constantly impressed on our remembrance, and uniformly recognized in our practice,—is simply this;—not "In what manner, or with what degree of frequency, is this, or any other doctrine revealed?" but, "*Is it revealed?* Is it, according to the ordinary meaning of words, clearly made known in this book?" That the Divinity of Jesus Christ is plainly and unequivocally taught in *our received translation*, at least, of the New Testament, cannot admit of a moment's question:—and of the faithfulness of this translation, in the various passages referred to, I must, after the observations which have been made upon them, leave every one to form his own judgment.

But the *Received Text*, we are often reminded, from

* Introduction to Improved Version of the New Testament, page 28.

which our English translation of the New Testament was made, is far from being perfect. It is of considerable antiquity; and hundreds of additional manuscripts have been discovered and collated, since it was completed.—I wish to avoid here any show of such biblical learning, as I am conscious to myself I do not possess. Happily, indeed, there does not exist the slightest occasion for extensive critical discussion. A single observation will be perfectly sufficient to enable you to appreciate the value of the improvements upon the received text, *with regard to the particular subject in hand*:—for with their *general* importance as to other subjects we have at present no concern.—Of all the texts, then, in the New Testament, to which I have directed your attention on this interesting topic, how many are there, do you suppose, which undergo any alteration in the text of *Griesbach*, the most recent, and, on all hands, acknowledged the most perfect?—You will be surprised, perhaps, especially any of you who may have been in the way of hearing Griesbach so often and so triumphantly appealed to, as he usually is by our opponents,—when I assure you that there is *not one*:—that not a single text of all that have been quoted is in the slightest degree touched by this high and vaunted authority!

The fact as to this matter stands as follows.—There are *three texts* connected with the present subject which this eminent critic sets aside: namely, 1 John v. 7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one:"—Acts xx. 28. "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood:"—and 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."—The first of these texts is rejected as entirely an interpolation. In the second, the reading "the church of *the Lord*" is preferred, on a preponderance of authorities, to the reading of the received text, "the church of

God."* In the third, "God was manifest in the flesh" gives place to "*He who* was manifested in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit, &c."† Now to no one of these three passages have I referred, in proof of the doctrine which it has been my object to establish; nor is it now my intention to enter into any discussion of the merits of the controversy, respecting the spuriousness of the first, or the various readings of the second and third. I feel not the smallest necessity for pressing even these texts, however important they may seem, into the service. The cause does not require it. An anxious defence of disputed passages has the appearance of an acknowledgment, that the doctrine which they are brought to support cannot be successfully maintained without them. Even if the passages in question had been less doubtful than they are, I should have been disposed to decline insisting upon them, for the

* Κυριου for Θεου. While the Editors of the Improved Version adopt this reading, and are supported in it by the authority of Griesbach, and by the concurrence also of some Trinitarian critics; (see Eclectic Rev. vol. V. page 246.) the reading of the received text is not universally given up even by Socinian Expositors. "Mr. Wakefield contends strenuously for Θεου, and afterwards effects his escape from the consequence, by proposing two of the most extraordinary criticisms that were ever ventured by a Greek scholar. Του ιδιου αιματος, he renders, not *his own blood*, but *his own son*, because truly a man's *son* may be said to be *his own blood:* and therefore, the *Son* of *God* may be expressed by God's own blood,—an expression, which, if it had been used of God the Father by a *Trinitarian* in defence of *his* doctrine, would have subjected him to Mr. Wakefield's ineffable contempt. Mr. W. supplies also another way of getting rid of the difficulty, (that is, the difficulty of acknowledging the Divinity of our Lord) viz. that of translating the words—"by the blood of his own," (supplying the word *Son.*)—This observe is the rendering of δια του ιδιου αιματος."—Magee's Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice. Appendix, vol. ii. page 462. Note.

† See Note C.

express purpose of making it apparent, that the cause is independent of their aid ; and that so far as respects the foundation on which my belief in the Divinity of my Saviour rests, I could, without hesitation, relinquish them all, and still retain my conviction unshaken, and unimpaired. It is not on the genuineness or accuracy of one or two insulated texts, that this important article of faith depends. If language have any consistent and intelligible meaning ; —if the writers of the sacred books at all understood what they wrote ;—the Divinity of Jesus Christ, in inseparable connexion with his atonement, forms a fundamental article in that system of truth, which they were inspired to communicate to mankind. It is an integral part of an harmonious and magnificent whole. And now that we have seen the full amount of those alterations on the Received Text which have any relation to this subject, I think we may adopt, with emphasis, the language quoted a little ago :— "This doctrine beams forth, with unclouded splendour, from every page of the New Testament, *whatever becomes of the correctness and accuracy of the Received Text.*— It is impossible that any translation, deserving the name of a translation, can be made, which does not plainly testify the doctrine in question. Even in the Improved Version itself, it "*beams forth*," in spite of every attempt to quench or to cover its light. From the *translation* it has been found impossible to exclude it : and the object of those notes, which are, with a few exceptions, appended to all the passages relating to the subject, is, to explain away what the translation cannot conceal ; not to show, like other commentaries, what the meaning *is*, but what it *is not*. And specimens of criticism more purely arbitrary and licentious, I may safely venture to say, are no where else to be found, except in those writings from which, in general, they are selected.

I shall now close the discussion of this subject, by im-

pressing a little further on your attention, as a grand practical deduction from what has been said, a text to which I briefly alluded in a former discourse: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich."* From the proofs and illustrations which have been laid before you, of the Divine dignity of our blessed Redeemer, these words will be understood in all their greatness of meaning, and felt in all their force of tender and impressive appeal.

I formerly stated the interpretation put upon these words by the adversaries of the Divinity and pre-existence of Christ. They affirm, that the word rendered "he *became poor*" does not mean a *transition* from a previous state of riches to a subsequent state of poverty, but describes the two states as contemporaneous;—that "although rich, he lived in poverty:" and the sense affixed by them to the words, when thus translated, is, that he was rich in miraculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own advantage, yet denied himself, and chose, for the good of others, to live a life of poverty and dependence.

On this view of the passage, permit me to offer a few additional observations.

1*st*. It is at once admitted, that the word signifies to *be* poor, as well as to *become* poor:—but that the former of these is its only or exclusive signification, is far from being true.† No argument is founded on the mere etymological

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† The following note on this text, is taken from the Eclectic Review of the Improved Version of the New Testament; a Review distinguished for its ability, and in which there certainly is no ground given for any complaint of deficiency of candour.—"2 Cor. viii. 9. επτωχευσε, 'he lived in poverty.' In the note we are told, that 'the word properly signifies an actual state, not a change of state.' This observation is not correct. Πτωχεια, and its cognates, certainly denote an actual state, and assert nothing necessarily on the cause or occa-

import of the verb, as if, in itself, it necessarily expressed the idea of transition from riches to poverty;—it is enough, that it will, with equal fairness, bear this meaning; and that other considerations, of sense and connexion, determine it to be the acceptation in which it is here used.

2*dly*. Supposing the criticism were correct, and the translation, "although rich, he lived in poverty," were adopted, this would not, by any means, ascertain the justness of their interpretation, or necessarily exclude the idea of our Lord's Divinity: for the words, it is obvious, might still mean, that, as he possessed, during his life upon earth, the Divine nature in union with the human, and consequently continued, as God, the creator and proprietor of the universe, although *thus* rich, he condescended to live in poverty.

3*dly*. The interpretation of our opponents is liable, as I stated in a former discourse, to a decisive objection, from its supposing a mere human prophet possessing miraculous powers *at his own disposal*. This supposition, I endeavoured to show, is utterly inadmissible; as being completely subversive of our confidence in the evidence of miracles. The power by which these were wrought did not, and could not, in whole or in part, reside in the creature;—

sion of that state. But from a curious passage in Aristophanes (Plutus, 546—553) and the remarks of the scholiast, it appears almost certain, that these words were, very often at least, understood by the Attics as implying a fall from better circumstances: for πτωχεια is applied to Dionysius, the exiled Tyrant of Syracuse.—Plutarch (Wyttenb. t. 1. 939.) has μαλλον πτωχευσεις, 'You will become more sordidly poor.' Suidas says, Πτωχος·—ὁ εκπεπτωκως του εχειν· than which nothing *could* be more express. The Attic, next to the common Greek, furnishes our best guide for the ἁπαξ λεγομενα of the New Testament when the LXX are silent: but in this case their testimony is abundant. Πτωχευω occurs six times in the Old Testament and Apocrypha; and *always* in the sense of transition from comfort or opulence to poverty."—Eclectic Review, vol. V. page 340.

in the "holy men of God" who were commissioned to impart to the world the knowledge of the Divine will. *They*, in truth, did nothing—and could do nothing. "The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the word by signs following:"* and the miracle, or rather the evidence of the truth arising from the miracle, consisted in the immediate and visible concurrence of the Divine will, with the expressed will of the prophet, at whose command the effect took place.† In this, indeed, lies the very nature of a miracle, as a *Divine attestation* to the truth of the prophet's pretensions, or of the particular testimony which he delivered:

* Mark xvi. 20. *The Lord*, by whose power the miracles of the apostles are here represented as having been effected, is evidently *the Lord Jesus*, the exalted Redeemer. This is clear, from the connexion of the verse quoted with that which precedes:—"So then, after *the Lord* had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, *the Lord* working with them, and confirming the word by signs following."

† Dr. Priestley states this sentiment most explicitly in the following short extract. Writing against the Arian notion of the creation of the world by the instrumentality of the Logos, he says:—"Some may possibly say, 'It is not necessary, that Christ should of himself have wisdom and power sufficient for the work of creation; but that nevertheless God might work by him in that business, *as he did in his miracles* on earth; Christ speaking the word, or using some indifferent action, (such as anointing the eyes of the blind man) and *God producing the effect*.'—The two cases, however, are essentially different. That Christ or any other prophet should be able to *foretell what God would do, (which in fact is all that they pretended to)* was necessary as a proof of their divine mission, whenever there was a propriety in God's having intercourse with men by means of a man like themselves, &c."—While Dr. Priestley thus correctly describes the true nature of miraculous power, as being simply the ability to foretell the immediate interposition of Divine agency at any particular juncture, he at the same time, very consistently with his view of the person of Christ, places *him*, as to the nature of the power with which he was invested, on the same level with other prophets.

—"God *bare them witness*, by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."*

4thly. According to the interpretation of our opponents, the language of Paul, in the passage before us, was not at all peculiarly applicable to Jesus; but was equally true of Paul himself, and of his fellow-apostles. They too possessed miraculous powers, and that in a very eminent degree. To allege that the absolute command of such powers was entrusted to Jesus, and not to them, is a mere gratuitous assumption, and an assumption, which, on the supposition that Jesus was a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, possessing the same nature with the apostles themselves, and that nature only, is destitute of any reasonable foundation. I argue only on supposition. The transference of miraculous power, so as that it should reside in the creature is, as I have already noticed, a thing in its own nature impossible. But suppose for a moment it *were* possible; if one mere man, "fallible and peccable," could have this power committed to him, at his absolute disposal, it is difficult to conceive why others, who are denominated "holy men of God," should not have had it in the same way. The apostles, then, were *rich in miraculous powers*, and yet *they* too *lived a life of poverty*. And Paul might have adduced his own example, in the same terms, and with the same force: "Ye know *my* gracious goodness, that though I am rich, I live in poverty, that ye through my poverty may be rich."—Would this apostle, think you, have relished such a translation and exposition of his words, as would have placed himself and his Master on a level?

5thly. There is an obvious and pointed *antithesis* in the verse, which ought not to be overlooked, and which concurs with other considerations, to decide its true meaning.

* Heb. ii. 4.

The expression in the end of the verse, "that ye, through his poverty might be made rich," which declares the gracious design of the Saviour's condescension, with regard to sinners, implies, beyond all question, a transition from poverty to riches:—"that ye, through his poverty, *might be enriched.*" If so, let not the sentence be robbed of one of its chief beauties. A transition is expressed, on the part of Jesus, a voluntary transition, from a state of infinite glory and riches, to a state of debasement and poverty; in order to a transition, on the part of his people, from a state of wretched degradation and poverty, to the possession of true honour, and of excellent and durable riches.

Ye know, then, my Christian brethren, this marvellous grace. And what effect ought the contemplation of it to produce on your dispositions and conduct?—I answer, in the words of the apostle, "Let *this* mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."*—Imitate the noble spirit of *benevolence*, displayed in this wonderful example. Study to promote the benefit—the temporal, but above all the spiritual and eternal benefit of your fellow-men; and be ready, with all cheerfulness and promptitude, to make every sacrifice for the accomplishment of this most valuable end. It was to quicken the spirit, and to rouse to the practice, of disinterested and enlarged beneficence, that the apostle introduced the example of the Redeemer's grace. And surely every true disciple of the Redeemer, as an undeserving partaker of this grace, must feel his heart touched by the appeal;—touched in all its finest and noblest affections; thrilled with holy delight; animated by fervent gratitude; glowing with emotions of kindred generosity; "ready to every good work;" and prepared, with resolute self-denial, to "suffer the loss of all things."

If you believe the doctrine which I have been endeav-

* Phil. ii. 5.

ouring to establish, "your hearts will burn within you" with *love to the Divine Saviour:* and while the glow of grateful attachment combines with admiration of all the excellencies of his pure and spotless character,—the feeling will constrain you to cheerful, unreserved, and universal *obedience to his will;*—"to live, not unto yourselves, but to him who died for you, and rose again."—It will excite you also to fervent prayers, liberal contributions, and active and persevering exertions, for the advancement of his glory in the world.—Influenced by concern for this object, and for the salvation of sinners, with which it is inseparably connected; and convinced, that error is subversive of both, dishonouring to the Saviour, and destructive to mankind; you will feel the duty of "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints;" of maintaining its purity, and promoting its diffusion.

Of this faith I do consider the doctrine in question as an essential and fundamental article. To *my* eyes, if you remove this truth, the Sun of righteousness is covered with "dire eclipse," and the bright prospects of futurity overspread with "the blackness of darkness." Take away this truth, and the doctrine of atonement connected with it, and you replace at the gate of paradise the dread sentinel stationed there at the fall, with his flaming sword, that turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life:—nay, you root out the tree of life itself from the midst of the paradise of God.

Believing the doctrine to be thus important, to comprehend within itself all the hopes of a guilty and perishing world,—while I would contend *meekly*, I must be pardoned if, at the same time, I contend *earnestly*. It is not a subject for that speculative, cold-hearted indifference, which is falsely esteemed by some essential to freedom from prejudice. Men may speak lightly of sentiment and of faith. The Bible certainly does not. Salvation, in

both of its great branches—salvation from the *guilt* of sin, and salvation from its *power*—is in it continually represented, as connected inseparably with the faith of the gospel. The truth as it is in Jesus, while it is, to him who believes it, the ground of his justification, and the firm foundation of his hope, is, at the same time, the means of subduing the enmity of his heart against God, and the great principle of his progressive sanctification. He "lives by the faith of the Son of God." This faith "purifies his heart," and "works by love." It produces in the soul the principles of obedience; and the practice follows in the life. Like the prophet's cruse of salt, by healing the fountain it rectifies the streams.

"May God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in your hearts, giving you the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ:"—to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!

DISCOURSE VI.

ON THE TEST OF TRUTH, IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

1 THESSALONIANS v. 21.

"PROVE ALL THINGS—HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

A DISCOURSE, of which it is the object to ascertain the test of truth in matters of religion, and to explain the proper principles of its application, it may appear to some of you, would have been more naturally introduced as first in the proposed series. One consideration has induced me to delay it till now. The previous discussion, it occurred to me, of one at least of the principal points of controversy, might furnish to your minds ready and appropriate illustrations of the principles which are now to be laid down;—illustrations which could not otherwise have been easily obtained, without awkward and embarrassing anticipation. In this way, the argument which has already been closed, will afford means of elucidating the principles on which it has itself been conducted, and of demonstrating the rectitude of these principles, so that we may apply them, with the greater confidence, to the topics of future consideration.

The text which I have read contains a most important precept; or rather two precepts, closely connected with each other. "Prove all things:—hold fast that which is good."

The command to "prove all things," ought to be applied

both to *doctrines* and to *duties*:—we are to maintain with steadfastness what we have first ascertained to be *good*;—what is *true* in doctrine; what is *right* in conduct.

But the injunction to "prove all things," supposes some fixed standard by which all things are to be tried; and the proper meaning of the injunction is—"*Bring all things to the test.*"

What then *is* the test to which all things are to be brought? Is it REASON?—or is it REVELATION?

On the supposition of our having a revelation from God, there can be but one answer, surely, to this question, among all who "think soberly."—The test must, without controversy, be, *not Reason*, but *Revelation*. To affirm the contrary, would be to exalt reason, in the certainty of its decisions, above Divine authority, and the claims of Natural Religion above those of the Word of God.

What then is, on such subjects, the proper province of Reason?—To this inquiry an answer was briefly given in a former discourse.—There are two points which we not only may with propriety, but ought in duty, to employ our reason to determine. The first is, Whether the Scriptures *be* a revelation from God:—and when this has been satisfactorily settled, the second is, What is the true meaning of the various parts of this revelation?—what does it contain?—what does it really teach us to believe, and to do?—Reason, then, is not the test itself:—it is only the instrument by which we *ascertain* the test, and by which we *apply* it to use. If this be to renounce the free exercise of our reason, we plead guilty. But to assign to reason any higher place, on subjects of this nature, we cannot but reckon most irrational and inconsistent, as well as, in the highest degree, arrogant and presumptuous. The testimony of the God of truth must be taken in whole, or rejected in whole. What *He* expressly dictates, it must be impious for reason to presume to dispute.

Agreement with regard to the test to which disputed doctrines are to be brought, is obviously of the very last importance. It is, indeed, quite essential. There can be no satisfactory reasoning without it; for without it there is no arriving at any conclusion.

On this subject, then, it is a question of great magnitude, "*Is* this volume, which we call the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration of God? *Is* it a Divine revelation?" There is an obvious and important difference between this question, and the question, Whether these Scriptures *contain* such a revelation?—I have all along hitherto proceeded on the assumption, that not only the latter, but the former also of these questions, is rightly answered in the affirmative;—that is, on the assumption of what is usually termed the *plenary inspiration* of the sacred volume. I have taken it for granted, not only that they *contain truth* but that *all* which they contain *is truth*.

I do not feel myself called upon at present to enter into any proof of the genuineness, the authenticity, and the inspiration, of the various writings contained in the Bible. This is a distinct subject; and it has been often and ably handled. The evidence of the canonical authority of some of these writings is, it is true, greater than that of others. But as to all and each of them, it is *sufficient*.—The great majority of the books of the *New Testament* were received into the canon, without dispute, from the beginning. These were denominated *undisputed books*.* A few, namely, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the book of Revelation, were questioned by some in early times, although they were generally received, and obtained, of course, in distinction from the others, the appellation of *disputed books*.† The evidence, however, of the authen-

* Ὁμολογούμενα. † Ἀντιλεγόμενα.

ticity and genuineness of these books is abundantly sufficient to justify their admission into the canon. And it has been frequently, and with great justice, observed, that the very circumstance of *a few* having been thus questioned, is a strong proof of the validity of the claims of *all*; because it clearly evinces, that they were received, not with inconsiderate rashness, but with strict and jealous investigation.

I must likewise be allowed to take for granted the *inspiration* of the Scripture writings, as well as their genuineness and authenticity:—to consider *the whole* of these writings as having the stamp of *Divine authority*;—as containing *truth*,—*the whole truth* which God has thought fit to communicate,—and *nothing but truth*. This is indispensably necessary to the Scriptures being a proper *test* either of doctrines or of actions. A test, or standard must, it is very obvious, be something that is itself fixed; —and to which we can make our appeal, in all cases, with confidence and security.—That by which we are to "*prove all things*," must surely be something which is *itself already proved*.

It is extremely difficult to maintain a process of scriptural reasoning with the adversaries of the Divinity and atonement of Christ; because the notions which they entertain respecting the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures are so very vague and undefined.—Of this I must lay before you two or three instances.

"The Scriptures," says one of their most eminent writers, were written without any particular inspiration, by men who wrote according to the best of their knowledge, and who, from their circumstances, could not be mistaken, with regard to the *greater facts* of which they were properly *witnesses*; but (like other men subject to prejudice) might be liable to adopt a hasty and ill-grounded opinion concerning things which did not fall within the compass

of their own knowledge, and which had no connexion with any thing that was so. We ought all of us, therefore, to consider ourselves fully at liberty, to examine, with the greatest rigour, both the reasonings of the writers, and the facts of which we find any account in their writings; that, judging by the rules of just criticism, we may distinguish what may be depended on from what may not."* I like the honesty of this avowal: but I presume you will agree with me in thinking, that *Deism* ought to have been the profession of him who makes it. Every one must at once perceive, that, according to this view of the Scriptures, they cannot be a *test* by which *all things are to be proved;* for instead of possessing any fixed character and decisive authority, there is nothing certain in them. In bringing all things to *them* as a test, we may be rejecting important truth, and storing our minds with mistakes as to facts, and with hasty and ill-grounded opinions, the result of ignorance and prejudice. They are *themselves*, it seems, to be *proved* by a standard of superior authority. For what is there, in the preceding quotation, respecting the Holy Scriptures, which might not be said, in the same terms, and with the same truth, with regard to the writings either of the author himself, by whom their authority is thus unsettled, or of any other human author whatever? Are you prepared, then, my friends, to consider those Scriptures, to which you have been accustomed to make your appeal, as to an inspired standard, and "the only infallible rule of faith and manners,"—as the productions of fallible men, partaking throughout of the fallibility of their authors? If not, you are not prepared to follow this guide, who expresses, in the sentences I have just quoted, his deliberate opinion; an opinion frequently, and in similar terms, repeated in his writings.

* Priestley's History of Early Opinions, vol. IV. page 5.

Although all the writers of this class may not express themselves with the same decidedness, and reject, in terms equally unqualified, the inspiration of the sacred volume, yet are they all characterized by a similar laxity of principle on this important point. "The Scriptures," says another of their leading authors, (and his words strikingly illustrate the distinction, made a little ago, between the Bible *being* a revelation of God's will, and only *containing* such a revelation)—"The Scriptures contain a faithful and credible account of the *Christian doctrine*, which is the *true word of God:* but they are not *themselves* the word of God, nor did they ever assume that title: and it is highly improper to speak of them as such; as it leads inattentive readers to suppose they were written under a plenary inspiration, to which they make no pretension; and as such expressions expose Christianity unnecessarily, to the cavils of unbelievers."* —The same writer, in giving a statement of the Unitarian creed on this and other subjects, says:—"The Unitarians maintain, that Jesus and his apostles were supernaturally instructed, as far as was necessary for the execution of their commission, that is, for the revelation and proof of the doctrine of eternal life, and that the favor of God extended to the Gentiles equally with the Jews; and that Jesus, and his apostles, and others of the primitive believers, were occasionally inspired to foretell future events. But they believe that supernatural inspiration was limited to these cases alone, and that when Jesus or his apostles deliver opinions upon subjects unconnected with the object of their mission, such opinions, and their reasonings upon them, are to be received with the same attention and caution, with those of other persons in similar circumstances, of similar education, and with similar habits of thinking.—The unitarians admit, that the

* Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, page 19.—The *Italics* in the preceding extracts are not mine, but the Author's.

Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and especially the latter, contain authentic records of facts, and of Divine interpositions; but they utterly deny the universal inspiration of the writers of those compositions, as a qualification to which indeed they make no pretension, and of which they offer no proof; and the assertion of which tends only to embarrass the evidences of revelation, and to give advantage to its enemies."*

One thing respecting writers of this school, which cannot fail to strike every attentive reader of their works, is, the strong partiality which they uniformly manifest to the *Gospel Histories*, above the *Apostolic Epistles*.—Of the latter they shake themselves loose with very little ceremony indeed. The first of the writers to whom I have just referred, in speaking of the Arian opinion that the world was formed by Jesus Christ, as a subordinate agent to the Father, has these words:—"Now, as it is not pretended that there are any miracles adapted to prove that Christ made and supports the world, *I do not see that we are under any obligation to believe it, merely because it was an opinion held by an apostle.*"† And again: "It is not certainly from a few casual expressions, which so easily admit of other interpretations, *and especially in Epistolary writings, which are seldom composed with so much care, as books intended for the use of posterity*, that we can be authorised to infer, that such was the serious opinion of the apostles. But *if it had been their real opinion, it would not follow that it was true, unless the teaching of it should appear to be included in their general commission.*"‡ The other writer, speaking of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's operation on the minds of men, expresses himself thus: "In popular language, the virtuous affec-

* Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pages 451, 452.

† Priestley's History of Early opinions, page 63.

‡ Ib. page 70.

tions of virtuous men are, with great propriety, ascribed to God; and the pious writers of the Scriptures have often adopted this form of expression. Whether they themselves believed in the existence of frequent supernatural impressions upon the mind, does not clearly appear; and it is certain, that they no where affirm that it constituted any part of there commission, to teach this extraordinary and improbable doctrine."*

This distinction between what the apostles taught, and what they were commissioned to teach;—between what they wrote, and what they were inspired to write; is the most convenient that can well be imagined. According to the sentiments just quoted, we are not bound to receive, as of Divine authority, any doctrine or precept, of any kind, delivered by the apostles, unless it be accompanied with a formal declaration, that it came within the extent of their commission:—nay more, unless this was ascertained at the time, as to each particular doctrine and precept, by a miracle or miracles specially adapted for its confirmation! In this way, the epistles are fairly excluded from forming any part of the test of truth and of duty. If any thing in them is not exactly to our liking, we have only to make it out that it is no more than the private opinion of the writer, or a part of his reasonings and inferences; and that it did not come within the limits of his commission. And nothing in the world can be easier than this: because, on this principle, these limits are no where defined by the writers themselves, and may, consequently, be drawn by their readers as wide or as narrow as may suit their respective inclinations. And by those who hold the sentiments which I am now opposing, they are, in all conscience, drawn narrow enough.

From the views of inspiration which these writers entertain, we are prepared to hear, without surprise, (for it is

* Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, page 78.

mournfully consistent) one of them charging the sacred penmen with using language, even on the most important subjects, to which *they themselves probably annexed no very distinct ideas;* and another, as I hinted in a former discourse, accusing the author of the admirable and interesting epistle to the Hebrews, with "*far-fetched analogies, and inconclusive reasonings.*"

There are one or two passages in the writings of the apostle Paul, (writings which, by the way, are ranked by Peter with "*the other Scriptures,*" and which are to be regarded by us as of the same authority) in which he has been understood by some to disclaim inspiration, on the particular subjects of which he is at the time speaking, and to deliver his own private judgment. I am fully satisfied that this opinion is founded in a mistake; and that this apostle in no one instance disclaims inspiration, or Divine authority, in what he teaches, or in what he enjoins. On the discussion of this question, however, it would be foreign to my present purpose to enter.* I only observe respecting it, that even if the common supposition that he does were well founded, the inference which has usually been drawn from the circumstance appears a very fair and legitimate one—that since we find him so cautiously and faithfully giving intimation, when, in any particular instance, it is *not the Lord* that speaks but *himself,* we ought to consider this as a virtual assurance, that in all other cases, in which no such intimation is given, it is *not himself* that speaks, but *the Lord.*

The writers of whom I now speak, who express themselves thus slightingly as to the apostolic epistles, are wont to insist on the gospel's being quite sufficient—nay, on any one of the gospels being by itself sufficient, for our complete instruction in the principles of the Christian faith. "Each of the gospels," says one of them, "was certainly

* See Note I.

intended to be a sufficient instruction in the fundamental principles of Christianity."*—I am by no means disposed to deny, that the fundamental principles of Christianity may be found in each of the evangelical histories. But if it was God's method, to complete the communication of his mind and will, in various successive portions; are we, I would ask, to consider ourselves warranted to put asunder what he intended we should join together, and use as one whole?—The gospels, we should recollect, are *narratives of facts*; and as such, could go no further than the facts themselves admitted. If, therefore, it was not the purpose of God to give a complete developement of Christian doctrine during the personal ministry of Christ, it is sufficiently obvious, from the very nature of the thing, that this complete developement could not be contained either in one or in all of the gospel histories, of which the one simple design is, to give an account of that ministry. Our Lord himself said, on one occasion, to his disciples, when he was about to take his leave of them, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now:"—and again; "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth;—he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."† Are we not taught by such expressions, that during his life-time their instructions were not complete?—That at a future period they were to receive, by direct inspiration, a more full, even a perfect acquaintance with that doctrine, which it was to be the great business of their lives to communicate to mankind? And are not those who slight the Epistles, and speak of them as containing the opinions and reasonings of fallible men, guilty of contemning the precious results of this promised Divine illumination, and of rejecting the

* Priestley's History of Early Opinions, page 16.

† John xvi. 12, 13, 14, 26.

counsel of God, against themselves? I earnestly wish my Unitarian friends (for such I desire to esteem them, as fellow men, although I cannot give them the right hand of fellowship as Christian brethren) to consider this with becoming seriousness, and to beware:—and it is my fervent prayer, that others may be preserved from that fatal delusion which it is my present object to expose;—that they may be saved from treating with unseemly levity the word of the most High God, and may continue to approach it, as they approach to its Divine Author himself, "with reverence and godly fear!"

This feeling of humble reverence will be associated, in proportion to the degree in which it exists, with self-diffident and ingenuous *candour*:—a disposition of mind absolutely indispensable to the right discharge of the duty enjoined in the text, of "*proving all things.*" In bringing either sentiments or practices to the test of God's word, it should be our sincere desire to have our minds divested of all *prejudice*;—so that we may come to the Bible, not with a view to find confirmation of opinions which we have previously formed; but with humble and earnest solicitude after an answer to Pilate's question, "WHAT IS TRUTH?" If we come in any other temper of mind than this, we are sure to fail.

We, my brethren, are often and earnestly exhorted by our opponents, to the laying aside of prejudice, and to the exercise of candid and unbiassed judgment. It is certainly our incumbent duty, to take all such admonitions in good part. But when it is modestly taken for granted, that all our sentiments, as to what we are accustomed to reckon the distinguishing and peculiar doctrines of the gospel, have their origin and their foundation in prejudice alone;—unfortunate and inveterate early prejudice:—nay, when we are told publicly, and from the press, "that *thinking it unsafe to make faith the result of rational in-*

*quiry, we determine to ground it in early prejudice:"** —we have only to say, that such reflections are not the most likely way to produce the candour, of which the absence is deplored. We presume to think, sensible though we be that we are liable to the influence of prejudice as as well as others, that rather more than enough is here assumed;—and we reject the charge brought against us, as illiberal and unjust.

When, in connexion with lamentation over the unhappy power of prejudice, we are assured, with an air of imposing confidence, that we need only to lay this prejudice aside, to use our reason freely, to employ our understanding without apprehension;—in order to our immediately discerning our errors, and embracing the truth:—let us not forget, that "our hearts are deceitful above all things." I do not say, that such assurances are intended as flattery; but they are most certainly fitted to have the effect of flattery:—and there are few species of flattery more insinuating and dangerous, than that which suggests the independence of reason, and the sufficiency of unassisted intellect. Let us not forget ourselves. Let us not be bewitched into self-sufficient confidence. But let us still, with importunity and fervour, implore the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit of promise, while, with humility, and reverence, and desire after the purity of truth, we "search the Scriptures."

I am no enemy to free inquiry. But I am for keeping Reason in its proper place; and for retaining on our minds a constant, deep, and humble sense of our own weakness and liableness to err. There is a daring and presumptuous rashness, sometimes characterized as *magnanimity*, and as "*noble intrepidity*"† in the pursuit of

* Mr. Yates' Sermon on the Grounds of Unitarian Dissent, pages 18, 19.

† Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions. Dedication, page vi.

truth, which is neither the spirit of true Christianity, nor of sound philosophy; and against which every man will be on his guard, who is desirous "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly." It is highly gratifying to the self-complacent vanity of the human heart: but on this very account it is more deluding than the strongest prejudice. Nothing stands in the way of this high-minded, this fearless temerity. Its favorite maxim, under which it protects itself from reprobation, and imposes on the mind that is under its perilous influence, is, that "Truth must be followed, whithersoever it leads;"—must, without hesitation, be embraced, although it should be in opposition to all that has hitherto passed for truth in the world; the perfections, and even the very existence of the Divine Being himself not excepted.* Thus it is that evil sanctions and justifies itself, under the name and appearance of good. Thus it is that "Satan transforms himself into an angel of light."—That truth should be followed whithersoever it leads, is a maxim of which no one can dispute the soundness: and because it

* The following striking and affecting instance of the *sang froid* with which this spirit enables a man to suppose and to contemplate even the conclusion *that there is no God*, is taken from No. 4. of the Appendix to the Memoirs of Dr. Priestley, vol. I. p. 423. Speaking of the doctrine of *equivocal*, or *spontaneous generation*, in certain species of plants and animals, as maintained by Dr. Darwin, and impugned by Dr. Priestley, the latter of whom considered it as a direct introduction to atheism, the writer says:—"I do not see the *certain* tendency of this opinion to atheism; for this property of spontaneous production may have been originally communicated under certain circumstances, as well as any of the other properties of organized or unorganized matter; and the one and the other may be equally necessary parts of the pre-established order of things. BUT IF IT DO LEAD TO ATHEISM, WHAT THEN? There can be no crime in following truth wherever it leads; and I think we have sufficient reason to believe, that the result of truth must be more beneficial to mankind than error."

is thus indisputable, the pride of philosophical ambition assumes it as the motto of its banner, and, unappalled by what might alarm the timidity of vulgar minds, pursues, with lofty air, its wild and desolating career. Just and important, however, as the general maxim is, it is a truth neither less just, nor less important, that in proportion to the magnitude of the subject, and to the nature and extent of the consequences, ought to be our certainty *that it is indeed truth* which we adopt and maintain.

There are many prejudices besides that which exists in favour of what is old and long-established. In not a few minds, the predilection is strong in behalf of whatever is *new* ;—while in others there is an irresistible desire after something that is *singular* and *original* ; something which they can appropriate, and call *their own*. Some adhere pertinaciously to error, because, a change of sentiment would affect their character for *steadiness* : others inconsiderately embrace it, misled by the secret desire of a reputation for *candour* ; a reputation bestowed of course, and often with lavish flattery, among the party whose sentiments they are induced to espouse.

I am aware, that, according to strict etymological import, a *prejudice* should be considered as a judgment, or opinion, previously formed, by its attachment to which the mind is biassed in its inquiries after truth. But I use the word in a somewhat looser sense, as including those *predispositions*, as well as *previous judgments*, by which the mind is in danger of being thus injuriously influenced. In this view, there is a class of prejudices, of still more powerful operation than any of those I have mentioned : I mean those *moral prejudices*, by which the heart is prepossessed against the doctrines of the gospel. There is a prejudice, deeply rooted in the breast, against whatever is, in any form, humbling to human pride :—a prejudice against whatever is mortifying to human corruption. in any

one of its various branches. These, and such as these, are the prejudices, by which the reception of gospel truth into the mind is most vigorously and successfully opposed. But of these I may have occasion to take more particular notice at a future opportunity.

From prejudice, of every description, it ought, as I have said, to be our most earnest prayer that we may be delivered, in our investigation of the Scriptures of truth:—that we may search them, not with a proud and refractory, but with an humble and teachable disposition; looking for direction and illumination to Him who hath said, that "*the meek* he will guide in judgment, that *to the meek* he will teach his way." It is thus only, that we can "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Let the following brief remarks, then, sum up what I have to say on the important duty inculcated in the text, of "*proving all things.*"

1*st*, The Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, are the TEST by which "*all things*" are to be "*proved.*"

2*dly*, These Scriptures must be received as *an inspired whole*:—because if we are to take them only partially, without previously fixing what portion of them is to be held as inspired, and what not, we are as completely destitute of any certain test of religious truth, as if we had no revelation at all. Far more must this evidently be the case, if, while the Scriptures are acknowledged to contain truth from God, their proper inspiration is, notwithstanding, *entirely denied*: For in that case, whatever degree of deference we may think reasonably due to them, yet as the productions of fallible men, *no part of them whatever* can be an infallible criterion. You have heard how loose and vague are the sentiments of our opponents, respecting these important points;—points which immedi-

ately regard the very ground on which all controversy, on such subjects as the one which has been under discussion, must of necessity be conducted ;—there being no other accessible source of information.

3*dly*, In making our appeal to the Scriptures, we should beware, on all occasions, of secretly indulging *a wish* to discover any part of them, however small, to be spurious. From a lowly sense of the deceitfulness of our hearts, and on account of the degree in which such a wish is in danger of biassing and perverting our judgments, we should be the more especially jealous of ourselves, in those instances, in which the particular passages in question contain, or seem to contain, any thing that is inconsistent with the opinions which we may previously have formed :—and no word, or text, or passage, should be pronounced an interpolation, without the clearest *critical evidence* of its having formed no part of the original record, as dictated by the Spirit of God. The truth is, such words, and texts, and passages, are so very few in number, and in every respect of such a nature, that the unlearned reader of the English translation needs not to be under the slightest apprehension of being led, from *this* cause, into any erroneous sentiment :—for I question if there be any one sentiment, or principle, contained in the Scriptures, of which the truth depends on a solitary text.

On this part of my subject, what is to be said for the candour of our opponents, in rejecting, as they do, from the canon of Scripture the first two chapters, (except the introduction) of the gospel by Luke, and the first two (except the genealogy of our Lord) of the gospel by Matthew ? There can hardly be conceived, (I put it seriously to their own consciences) a more shameless violation of all the established rules of sacred criticism, than their conduct as to these portions of Scripture exhibits. For, on what authority do they proceed in their rejection of them ?

Not, as they themselves admit, on the authority of any versions or manuscripts; for the passages are found in all the manuscripts and versions that have yet been discovered. But the gospel of Matthew used by the sect of the *Ebionites*, wanted, it seems, according to the testimony of two of the ancient Fathers,* the first two chapters; and the first two chapters of Luke's gospel were wanting in the copy of that gospel used by Marcion, a heretic of the second century. What, then, is the nature and amount of this authority? It is, *in the first place*, as already noticed, an authority directly opposed to that of all versions and manuscripts, without a single exception, that have yet been discovered. It is, therefore, *2dly*, an authority, the admission of which, in these circumstances, is a flagrant departure from the canons of Biblical criticism laid down, as the result of long experience, by the most eminent critics, and recognised, and sanctioned, and professedly adhered to by our opponents themselves.† But it is also, *3dly*, an authority, even with regard to the passages in question, in itself inconsistent and contradictory. The Ebionites, they admit, on the authority of one of the ancient Fathers before alluded to,‡ *mutilated* the copy which

* Epiphanius and Jerome. Even this, however, has been shown to be unfounded. Dr. Laurence, in his "critical reflections on some important misrepresentations contained in the Unitarian Version of the New Testament," (a work which will well repay the trouble of a careful perusal) has shown, by reference to preceding critics, and by quotations adduced by himself, that the latter of these Fathers, instead of asserting the absence of the first two chapters of the Hebrew gospel, used by the Ebionites, has asserted the very reverse:—and that the former, instead of considering that gospel as "the original gospel of Matthew written in the Hebrew language for the use of the Jewish believers," pointedly stigmatized it, as an imperfect, spurious, and mutilated copy. See the work of Dr. Laurence referred to, pages 24, 25, 41—44; and pages 19—21.

† See introduction to the Improved Version of the New Testament.

‡ Epiphanius.

they used of the gospel according to Matthew, by *taking away the genealogy*. They therefore think proper to *retain* the genealogy :—and yet, on the sole authority of these same acknowledged *mutilators*, they reject the remainder of the first two chapters. Marcion, in like manner, rejected, according to their own statement, the whole of the first two chapters of the gospel by Luke ; and yet, in *opposition* to that authority, and without assigning a reason, they *retain* the introductory verses to Luke's gospel, while, in *compliance* with it, they *repudiate* all that remains of these chapters. 4*thly*, It is an authority, which if consistently followed, (and why it should be followed in this instance, and not in others, no good reason can be assigned) would lead to the immediate rejection of *the whole of the Old Testament*, and at least *almost the whole of the New*. For by the same authority on which the Editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament, and Unitarians in general, build, respecting the omissions in question, we are informed, that the *Ebionite* canon of the New Testament rejected the last three gospels, and all the epistles of Paul : and as to *Marcion*, that he rejected the Old Testament, and every part of the New which contained quotations from the Old ; and that the only gospel he used was that of Luke, from which, too, he expunged whatever he did not approve.

Such is the authority, which, in defiance of all Versions, and of all Manuscripts, as well as of all the critics, and among the rest Griesbach himself, who not only admits the passages in question, but never gives the slightest hint of their ever having been doubted ;—such is the authority which is brought forward to set aside these portions of the sacred volume ! And such being the nature of the authority, is it possible to avoid a suspicion—is it a breach of charity to entertain it—that there must have been in the minds of those who reject these chapters, a secret *wish to*

find them spurious?—a predisposition to lend a willing ear to whatever could be adduced, with even the remotest semblance of plausibility, to bring them into discredit?—They contain, you all know, accounts of the incarnation of our Saviour, which cannot be made to comport with the Unitarian creed: and this seems to afford the only key to the mystery (for when this is left out of view it really *is* a mystery) of their being rejected as interpolations, or even branded as doubtful, on such authority. They are, on universally acknowledged principles, *critically right;* but they are, unhappily, *systematically wrong.**

4*thly*, When we examine any word, or text, or passage, our sole desire should be, to discover, not the sense which it *may bear*, or which we may imagine it *ought to bear;* but the sense in which it was originally used by the writer himself;—the sentiment or sentiments which the Holy Spirit designed to convey by it:—and, *in general*, the

* The reader, who wishes to see the subject of the authenticity of these portions of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels, fully and ably discussed, will find ample satisfaction in the second and third chapters of Dr. Laurence's work, before referred to;—in Mr. Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version, pages 4—33;—and in the Appendix to the 3d edition of Dr. Magee's Work on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. II. pages 451—481, Notes.—Dr. Laurence concludes his Dissertation on both these passages, with the following words: "Upon the whole, then, taking a retrospective view of what has been advanced on both topics, will Unitarian candour act unworthy of itself, if, instead of rejecting any part of St. Matthew's Gospel upon the credit of the Ebionites, or any parts of St. Luke's Gospel upon the credit of the Marcionites, it be disposed to give a due weight to that text, the authority of which no biblical critic of eminence has ever yet attempted to shake; if it put the concurrent testimony of antiquity, supported by the accurate collation of Manuscripts, Fathers, and Versions, into one scale, and, throwing the spurious Gospel of Ebion, and the more spurious Gospel of Marcion, into the other, behold them ignominiously kick the beam."—See Note K.

meaning that is the most plain and obvious is most likely to be the true one. To the violation of this reasonable maxim, we are all, at times, under strong temptations. How far it is adhered to by our opponents, I must leave it to yourselves to judge, from their interpretations of the various texts, adduced and illustrated in former Discourses.

5thly, To the dictates of the inspired volume, our minds should be prepared humbly and implicitly to bow:—whatever it plainly declares, we must receive, without gainsaying. The reasonableness of this has been formerly pointed out. Without it, it is obvious, our appeal to the Bible, as a standard and test of truth, is utterly hypocritical and vain. As an illustration of what I mean, I shall present you with a specimen of the opposite temper of mind.—On the text, John vi. 62. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?"—a celebrated Unitarian writer, more than once referred to in this Discourse, thus expresses himself:—"Though not satisfied with any interpretation that has been given of this extraordinary passage, yet rather than believe our Saviour to have existed in any other state before the creation of the world, or to have left some state of great dignity and happiness when he came hither, I would have recourse to the old and exploded Socinian idea of Christ's actual ascent into heaven, or of his imagining that he had been carried up thither in a vision, which, like that of St. Paul, he had not been able to distinguish from a reality:—nay, I would not build an article of faith of such magnitude on the correctness of John's recollection and representation of our Lord's language:—and so strange and incredible does the hypothesis of a preexistent state appear, that, sooner than admit it, I would suppose the whole verse to be an interpolation; or that the old apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis

wrote another."* This, you will admit, is abundantly bold, and abundantly honest; and were I to use the severest terms of reprehension, in animadverting on such language, I think I might escape without subjecting myself to very heavy censure. My only remark shall be, that when a man has got thus far, openly avowing his determination to believe any thing, however monstrous, rather than the plain and obvious meaning of the words of Scripture, we must of necessity have done with him. Reasoning comes at once to an end. We have no common standard of appeal with him. We have nothing to bind his conscience, nothing to convince his judgment.

6*thly*, My last observation is, that we ought to beware of forming our judgment from detached and insulated passages of the word of God:—that we should take the Scriptures in their harmony, comparing one part with another, and using them, as much as possible, as *self-expositors*. You will immediately perceive the particular *bearing* of this remark, in reference to our present subject. In a former Discourse I noticed the *seeming contrarieties*, in the Scripture testimony respecting the person of Christ; and I endeavoured to point out also the *true principle of harmony* among them. A single observation or two shall suffice at present, in addition to what was then said.—"Christ," says a Unitarian writer, "always prayed to this one God, as his God and Father. He always spoke of himself as receiving his doctrine and his power from him; and again and again disclaimed having any power of his own. 'Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself.' John v. 19. 'The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.' 'John xiv. 10. 'Go to my

* Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, pages 57. 58. &c. as quoted by Dr. Magee, vol. I. pages 87, 88.

brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' John xx. 17. *It cannot surely be God,*" adds he, "*that uses such language as this.*"* Now, without making any particular comment on the language which this writer uses, might I not, on the other side, repeat again the various passages before quoted, in proof of his *Divinity*, and then say, with at least equal confidence, "*It cannot surely be a mere man, of whom such things are said?*" Here, then, is the question brought into short compass. It comes at once to an issue. Here are two classes of passages, both contained in the same book—both claiming to have their testimony received, as of the same authority.—Here are two bands of witnesses. They all seem to speak in language plain and distinctly intelligible. But they appear to contradict one another.—What then shall we make of them? Whether are we to receive the testimony of the one, or that of the other?—Or must we reject that of both?—Or shall we apply scourges, and racks, and screws, and all the instruments of torture, to force from the one, or from the other, a declaration, that they did not all intend to express what their language seems, beyond all doubt, to convey?—Or, lastly, is there no principle of reconciliation and harmony between their apparently discordant testimonies? Is there no ground on which both may consistently be believed; since both appear to be supported by the very same measure of credible evidence?—Here is the question; here, I apprehend, the one great point on which the whole controversy turns. And in answer to the question, I still affirm, as before, There *is* such a principle—there *is* such a ground—and besides it there is *no other*. It is to be found, as formerly stated, in the double view which is given by the apostle Paul, of the person and official character of Je-

* Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions, vol. I. p. 10.

sus, when he says respecting him, that "being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Admit the double view of the person of Christ which is here stated, and the difficulty vanishes. The testimony of the different witnesses, elicited without torture, and interpreted without perversion, becomes *one testimony*.—In plain terms, there is, on *this* principle—(a principle which, you may possibly think, I am disposed to press too often upon your attention, but which really merits repetition on account of the extensiveness of its application on this subject, the occasion for the use of it, as, from the nature of the case, might have been expected, perpetually recurring) there is, I say, on *this* principle, hardly a single text that occasions any difficulty to an attentive and ingenuous reader.—On every consideration, then, of fairness and candour, is not this the view which ought to be preferred, by all who are desirous rightly to obey the injunction in the text, "PROVE ALL THINGS?"

I must now draw to a close.—Your time will not admit of my urging upon my fellow Christians, at any length, by the various and powerful motives which might be presented to their minds, the important duty of "*holding fast that which is good*.

All truth is good. The truth revealed in "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," is peculiarly good:—good in its own nature;—good in its holy and happy influence;—good in all its present and in all its eternal consequences. Let me exhort you, my brethren, to hold it fast *purely, firmly, meekly, practically*.—*Purely*; without any admixture of error:—*firmly*; not "halting between two opin-

ions," fluctuating and undecided, or imagining that truth and error may be embraced and held with equal safety :—*meekly*; maintaining it with an humble consciousness of your own natural blindness, and a feeling of your entire obligation to the enlightening Spirit of God ;—with benevolent affection to the persons of your opponents ; and with the patience and gentleness of Christ :—*practically*; exemplifying, in the whole of your conduct, personal and social, private and public, in the family, in the church, and in the world, its renewing, and purifying, and gladdening efficacy.

To *all*, I would say, and say with the earnestness of affectionate entreaty, "Search the Scriptures." Examine them for yourselves. Examine them with a seriousness becoming the importance of the inquiry, and the magnitude of those consequences that are necessarily connected with it. Derive no foolish and vain excuse for neglecting to do this, from those differences of sentiment which you may observe to subsist among the professed followers of Jesus Christ. The sentiments of others are nothing to you. It is not of *others*, but of *yourselves*, that you must give an account to God. Let each individual, therefore, attend to the gospel, as if he were himself the only creature to whom it is addressed. O! beware of satisfying yourselves at present, with such excuses as, you must be conscious, will never bear the scrutiny of the great day. Your immortal souls are at stake. Be, therefore, in earnest. Take nothing upon trust. What you hear from us, or from others, examine by the light of the Divine word. If we speak not according to that word, there is no light in us. It is not what *we* say, but what *God* says, that is "able to save the soul."—"My Son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee ; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply

thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;—then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."*—May God thus incline your hearts to "PROVE ALL THINGS, AND TO HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

* Prov. ii. 1—5.

DISCOURSE VII.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

ROMANS iii. 25, 26.

"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 AT THIS TIME HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT HE MIGHT BE JUST, AND THE JUSTIFIER OF HIM WHO BELIEVETH IN JESUS."

"THE value of the gospel," says an eminent Unitarian writer,* "depends not at all upon any idea we may have concerning the *person of Christ:* all that we ought to regard is the *object of his mission,* and the *authority* with which his doctrine was promulgated. The doctrine of immortality, which is the great object of the whole revealed will of God, is just as acceptable to me from the mouth of the son of Joseph and Mary, as from the mouth of any man created for the purpose, from the mouth of an Angel, or from the voice of God himself speaking from heaven."

How different from those of this writer, were the thoughts and feelings of the inspired author of the epistle to the Hebrews!—"God, says he, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his own Son." And having, in the remainder of the first chapter, as we have formerly seen, illustrated the

* Dr. Priestley.

glory of the person of Christ, as the Superior of prophets and of angels, the Equal of God the Father, the everlasting and almighty Creator and Lord of all things;—he deduces from the view thus given an inference, founded on the obvious principle, that the importance of the message, and the danger of rejecting it, must bear some proportion to the dignity of the messenger by whom it is sent:—"*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 steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense 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; God also bearing them witness, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will!"*—If Jesus was not superior to prophets and angels, there is no force in this conclusion; and, on the other hand, the higher his superiority, the more impressive is the inference, and the more imperative the duty.

If, indeed, the *sole object* of the mission of Christ, was, to assure men of "the *doctrine of immortality*;"—if, as the same writer elsewhere alleges, "his business, like that of any other prophet, was nothing more than to deliver a message from God, and to confirm it by miracles;" we should, in that case, on the supposition of the Divinity of Christ, find it difficult to vindicate the wisdom of God from the charge of exciting useless astonishment, by using a method so extraordinary, for the accomplishment of an end, which might surely have been effected by simpler means.—On this principle, we should have been constrained to admit, if not entirely, at least in a very great degree,

* Heb. ii. 1—4.

the alleged *inutility* of the doctrine, which it has been my object, in several former discourses to establish.

But we distinctly and entirely deny the justice of the representation, which is thus given, of the purpose of Christ's mission.—That he was "a teacher sent from God," we cordially admit. That "life and incorruption were brought to light," to clear and unclouded light, "by his gospel," we rejoice to know and to acknowledge. But that the sole, or even the principal design of his coming was, to confirm the certainty of a future state, and assure mankind of a judgment to come, we cannot by any means, allow.—We assert, that he came in the character not only of a prophet, but of a priest; not to instruct merely, but to redeem; not only to set an example of obedience, but to atone for transgression,—"to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself:"—that when life and incorruption are said to have been brought to light by the gospel, the meaning is, not merely that the doctrine of a future state was certified to men; but that by his "finishing the work given him to do," the ground of hope was laid, and the way to the enjoyment of eternal happiness in that state clearly and fully made known.

When we consider that the period denominated "the fulness of the time,"—the period of the expected Messiah's advent,—holds so prominent a place in the Old Testament Scriptures; appearing there as the point to which all preceding time looked forward;—that what was then to be accomplished was brought before the eye of hope by so vast a variety of typical institutions;—that it constituted "the spirit of prophecy;" being the theme of its sublimest and most rapturous anticipations, the burden of its sweetest songs, the chief of its great and precious promises;—that those "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," exhausted on this subject the language of astonishment, and of delight;—

when we consider all this, we should have good reason, surely, to be surprised, if, after all, the sum of what was to be accomplished at that remarkable epoch, was nothing more than the confirmation of a truth already known.

While we readily admit, therefore, that the *object of the mission of Christ* is what ought supremely to engage our attention, we conceive that, even from previous and preparatory circumstances, there was strong ground to conclude, that this object was to be something more than what has now been stated;—we are convinced that it actually *was* something more;—and that the purpose of his appearing was so far from having no connexion with the doctrine of his Divinity, that his Divinity was essential to its accomplishment.

Further; if the fact be indeed, as I have been endeavouring to prove, that God was manifested in the flesh; the greatness and singularity of the fact may well convince us of the magnitude of the design. An event so prodigious as the appearance of God in our nature, could not take place, either for no purpose, or for a purpose of trifling moment. The God of infinite wisdom does nothing in vain. Every effort of his power has an end in view; an end always worthy of himself in its nature, and in its importance, proportionate to the means employed for its accomplishment.—The two great general purposes which are constantly regarded by him, in all his works, and in all his ways, are, the manifestation of his own glory, and, in connexion with it, the happiness of his sensitive, and especially of his intelligent creatures. Both of these purposes we consider as having been eminently answered, by the incarnation, sufferings, and death, of the Son of God, when viewed in that light in which we believe the word of God to represent them,—as an *atonement for the sins of the world.*

In the preceding part of this epistle, the apostle had

proved, by an appeal to *facts*, the universal depravity of Gentiles and of Jews. At the tenth verse of this chapter, he proceeds to show, that the conclusion, to which facts had conducted him, accorded with the declarations of those Scriptures, of which the Jews acknowledged the Divine authority.—Having established the sinfulness, he declares the guilt and condemnation of all mankind ;—he shows the impossibility of any creature's obtaining justification by a law which he has violated, and which, in the plainest and most unqualified terms, pronounces against all transgressors the sentence of death ;—on the hopelessness of this wretched state, he founds the necessity of *free forgiveness* ;—and he then points out the leading object of the mediation of Christ ; which was, to render the exercise of God's mercy, in bestowing such forgiveness, consistent, in the eyes of his intelligent creation, with the claims of his dishonoured authority, the demands of his justice, the glory of his holiness, the rectitude of his moral administration, and the general good of the universe.

" Whom" (i. e. Christ Jesus, verse 24.)—" Whom God hath set forth as 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 at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

From these verses, I propose to illustrate, and prove, the five following observations :—

I. It is in consideration of the Sacrifice of Christ, that God is propitious to sinners :

II. In pardoning the guilty on this ground, God displays his righteousness :

III. The ground on which the pardon of sin is bestowed, has been, in every age, and under every dispensation, the same ;

IV. An interest in the pardoning mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, is obtained by faith:

V. In resting our hope of forgiveness on the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, we build on a sure foundation.

To say all that might be said, in a field so extensive as this, is more than could well be done in several discourses. It is my intention, to confine myself to the more prominent views of my subject: and as I am persuaded that the principal objections, brought against the doctrine of atonement, arise from mistaken apprehensions of its nature, I shall endeavour, as much as I can, to avoid controversial discussion, and, with as great brevity and simplicity as the nature of the subject will permit, to state what appears to be the testimony of God.

I. Let me now, then, proceed to the illustration of the *first* proposition in the series:—*It is in consideration of the Sacrifice of Christ that God is propitious to sinners.*

There are, among critics, different opinions with regard to the proper import, in this connexion, of the original word translated, *propitiation.** Several, of high eminence, give it as their judgment that, in its present occurrence, it ought to be translated *propitiatory sacrifice*;† while others prefer rendering it *propitiatory*, or *mercy-seat.*—To the latter of these two opinions I am inclined to give the preference.—The same word occurs in only one other place in the New Testament;—in an epistle, generally believed to have been written by the same author:—Heb. ix. 5. "And over it (viz. the ark of the covenant) the cherubim of glory, shadowing *the mercy-seat*:—in which

* Ἱλαστηριον.

† Michaelis' Introduction to the New Testament, page 179, and pages 187, 188.—Kypke, as referred to by Michaelis in both these passages.—See also, however, Dr. Marsh's notes on the latter passage in the same volume, pages 449—452.—Dr. Magee, too, prefers the translation of *propitiatory Sacrifice.* Vol. I. page 221.

occurrence of it, there can be no doubt about its signification.—It is the word also, which is invariably used by the Greek translators of the Old Testament, for that part of the sacred furniture of the Tabernacle. The word translated, in other passages, *propitiation*, although of kindred origin, is different.* On these grounds, I think the word used in the text should be translated *propitiatory*, or *mercy-seat*. We shall see immediately, however, that with regard to real effect on the subject now before us, there is no very material difference, if, indeed, there be any difference at all,) between the one translation and the other.

According to the meaning thus assigned to the word, we have, in the text, an allusion to the mercy-seat under the law, as a type of Jesus Christ, and of the effects, as will appear, of his atoning sacrifice. To the institution of the mercy-seat we must therefore look, that we may rightly understand the allusion. It is to be found in Ex. xxv. 17—22. "And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim that are upon the ark of

* Ἱλαστηριος. Compare, in the Greek, 1 John ii. 2. iv. 10.

the testimony, of all things that I will give thee in commandment to the children of Israel."

It is from this description that Jehovah receives the appellation of—the God that *dwelleth between the cherubim;** an appellation which may, consequently, be interpreted, as of equivalent import with the New Testament characters—"*the God of peace*"—"*the God of all grace.*" —The position of the propitiatory, upon the ark of the testimony, might be intended to indicate the consistency of his appearing in this benign character, for the purpose of communing with his guilty creatures, with the claims and sanctions of his righteous law. So that when Jehovah, the God of Israel, "shone forth" from between the cherubim, "mercy and truth" might be said to "meet together, righteousness and peace to embrace each other."

Surely this cannot fail to remind you of Him, who received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!*" It is *in him*, as the subject either of promise, of prophecy, of typical institution, or of direct testimony, that God has, all along from the beginning, made himself known to men, as "*the God of peace.*" It is in him that he "reconciles the guilty to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."†

Had nothing further been said respecting the mercy-seat, we might have been led to conclude, that Jehovah appeared there in the exercise of *mere* mercy; I mean of mercy, unconnected with any kind of *satisfaction for sin.* —With the description of the propitiatory itself, we must, however, connect the account which is elsewhere given of the manner in which it was to be approached by the worshipper; the high-priest being expressly enjoined to

* 2 Kings xix. 15. Psalm lxxx. 1.

† 2 Pet. i. 17. Matth. xvii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 19.

draw near to Him, who dwelt between the cherubim, both in his own behalf, and in behalf of the people, according to certain prescribed rites.—A particular account of these is contained in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Leviticus, of which a few verses will show you their general nature, sufficiently for our present purpose. Verses 2, 3, 11—15. "And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place, within the vail, before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.—And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat."

This *goat of the sin-offering*, as we learn from the intermediate verses, was one of two, which Aaron was to take from the congregation of Israel:—and after *it* had been thus offered in sacrifice, and its blood brought within the vail, the remaining goat, with all the iniquities of the

children of Israel laid upon its head, by the solemn vicarious confession of the high-priest, was to be sent off alive into the wilderness, bearing away, emblematically, as a devoted victim, this load of *atoned* and *acknowledged* guilt.—The figure was necessarily *double*: the slain goat typifying the atonement of Christ, and the scape-goat representing its efficacy.

But the circumstance which I wish, at present, to impress particularly on your attention, is, that the mercy-seat was to be approached *with blood*;—with the blood of *atonement*; for such it is, in various parts of the chapter, expressly declared to have been.*—This blood was to be brought within the vail, and to be sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat:—and while the sacrificial blood was thus presented, the burning incense was, by the cloud of ascending smoke, to diffuse its grateful fragrance, in emblematic testimony of the Divine satisfaction:—and this satisfaction is, accordingly, elsewhere expressed, in connexion with the sacrifice of Christ, and with the offerings by which it was typified, by Jehovah's *smelling a sweet savour*.†

The mercy-seat, then, in order to Jehovah's appearing there as the God of grace, consistently with the glory of his name, must, it appears, be stained with the "blood of sprinkling,"—the "blood that maketh atonement for the soul."—The reason why the blood was specifically appointed for this purpose is emphatically assigned in the subsequent chapter of the book of Leviticus—"For *the life of the flesh is in the blood*; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."‡ The blood, then was the atonement for the soul, because

* See verses 6, 30, 34, &c.

† Compare Gen. viii. 21 with Eph. v. 3. Rev. viii. 3, 4. Psalm cxlii. 2.

‡ Chap. xvii. 11.

it was the *life* of the victim:—and because it was the appointed atonement for the soul, it was to be held sacred, on pain of death.

It is true, that, in the chapter of Leviticus first referred to, atonement is said to be made for places, and for instruments of service, as well as for persons.—"And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.—And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and shall make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and shall put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel."* On this subject, it has been justly remarked, that the atonement prescribed by the Levitical law "produced, in all cases, the effect of *fitting for the Divine service.* This, in such as involved no consideration of moral character (as in the consecration of inanimate things, or the atonement for persons labouring under ceremonial impurities) could consist only in the removal of the external impurity; for in such cases, this impediment alone existed:—while in those in which moral character *was* concerned, (as in cases of sin, whereby man, having incurred the displeasure of God, had disqualified himself for the offices of his worship,) the unfitness could have been removed only by such means as, at the same time, removed that displeasure, and restored the offender to the Divine favour: or, in other words, the atonement was, in such cases, an act of *propitiation.*"†

* Lev. xvi. 16, 18, 19.

† Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. I. page 330.

This distinction seems to be reasonable, and obvious. I would further remark, however, as a good deal of stress is laid, by the adversaries of the atonement, on the circumstance I am now considering, that, in the verses last read, there is a marked connexion between the atonement for the holy place and for the instruments of Divine service, and the pollution and guilt of the children of Israel. It is from *their* guilt and pollution that the necessity for such atonement is represented as arising:—so that the atonement for the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar, is still, in some sense, an atonement for the sins of the people, which are considered as cleaving to, and polluting, and unfitting for the service of God, the places and the instruments of their worship. Of this the verses last quoted are, of themselves, a sufficient evidence. The apostle Paul, in a similar manner, connects the two ideas of "purifying with blood the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry," and of the atonement made, by the same means, "for the errors of the people."*

The law, then, I must now observe (and with the observation I shall conclude the illustration of the type)—the law, by which it was enjoined, on pain of death, that the mercy-seat should not be approached otherwise than *with blood*, strikingly represented the necessity of the shedding of the blood of Christ, in order to his being the *true propitiatory*; that is, in order to God's being "*in him well pleased*," and thus accessible to sinners, as suppliants for mercy. And, agreeably to this, it may be noticed, that the declaration of God's satisfaction in his beloved Son, which came from "the excellent glory" on "the holy mount," was connected with the subject of conference between Jesus and his heavenly visitants,—"*the decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.*"

The first of our propositions is further confirmed, by

* See Heb. ix. 19—22.

the correspondence of the current language of Scripture with the meaning of this particular type, as it has now been explained. The doctrine of atonement, or propitiation, pervades the whole of the inspired volume. The following passages, and expressions, are only a selection, to which a great many more of a similar kind might be added.—" He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquities of us all :"—" For the transgression of my people was he striken :"—" Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin :"—" He shall bear their iniquities :"—" He bare the sin of many :"—" Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world :"—" The Son of man is come—to give his life a ransom for many ;" —" This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins :"—" The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world :"—" 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 :"—" Who gave himself for our sins :"—" Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us :"—" In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins :"—" Who gave himself a ransom for all :"—" Now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself :"—" How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself

without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"—"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself:"—"He made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:"—"Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree:"—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God:"—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin:"—"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world:"—"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood—be glory and dominion forever, and ever. Amen!"—"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."*

If such passages as these, which are taken from the prophets, from John the Baptist, from Christ himself, and from his apostles, do not convey the ideas of substitution and atonement, is it possible, by human language, to convey these ideas at all? What other words and phrases would we select, if it were our special desire to express them more distinctly?

In these passages, you will have perceived, there is a very frequent reference, when the death of Christ is spoken of, to the *sacrifices* of the Old dispensation. Now, although the victims which were slain at the altar, and "whose blood was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin," could not, by any virtue of their own, take away the guilt of transgression, so as to save the sinner

* Isaiah liii. 5, 6, 7, 12. John i. 29. Matth. xx. 28. xxvi. 28. John vi. 51. Rom. v. 6—9. Gal. i. 4. iii. 13. Eph. i. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Heb. ix. 26,14. vii. 27. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24. iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. ii. 2. Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 9.

from its future eternal punishment :—(this the apostle affirms was "not possible," and its impossibility was indicated by the constant repetition of the same stated offerings :) yet they were, beyond all reasonable question, propitiatory in their nature :—"their blood was brought into the sanctuary *for sin*;" and they procured, when duly offered, the remission of its temporal consequences. Some of them were appointed for ceremonial omissions and uncleannesses, and others for the transgression of precepts more directly of a moral nature. But the general idea of atonement pervades and characterises the whole. It seems to have been the principle on which the Mosaic Law was framed, that "*without shedding of blood there could be no remission.*" In this marked and prominent feature of its character, it was prefigurative of the true atonement that was to be made for sin in "the fulness of time." It was in this way especially—by typical illustration, that God's method of justifying the ungodly was, as the apostle expresses it in the 20th verse, "*witnessed by the law.*" Divest these rights of their typical import, and they become utterly unworthy of the wisdom by which they were appointed. Worthless in themselves, their sole value arose from their being "figures of that which was to come." And from their nature, as described in the law, they could not, if they were types at all, be typical of any thing else than of a true and proper sacrifice for sin. The animal sacrifices which, from the sacred history, we know to have been offered before the law, even from the earliest times, had the same typical meaning and design. They were only embodied, and, perhaps, at the same time, multiplied and varied, in the Mosaic ritual; that law of which the leading object is expressed by Paul, when he denominates it, "a schoolmaster (to direct) to Christ."

If we admit the hypothesis, that the redemption of a lost world by the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God,

was, from the beginning, the Divine intention, we are furnished with a ready and satisfactory explanation of what otherwise remains, notwithstanding all the ingenious attempts of philosophical men to account for it, involved in inexplicable mystery—I mean, the *origin of animal sacrifice*, and the universal traditionary prevalence of it among mankind. On the supposition in question, nothing can be simpler or more natural: on any other, the subject is full of difficulty and perplexity.

No sooner had Adam fallen, than the remedy was revealed, in the form of promise, for the ruin which he had brought upon himself, and entailed on his future race. By the institution of such sacrifices, the particular *nature* of the intended remedy was intimated. For, in this singular rite, the pious worshipper was reminded, on the one hand, for his humiliation, of the forfeiture of his own life, of the death which he deserved on account of sin; and, on the other, for his consolation, and peace, and joy, of the promised substitution of another in his stead, to bear his sin, to atone for its guilt, and to save him from its punishment. This institution, having been continued through the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, formed afterwards, as we have seen, a very prominent part of the Mosaic ritual. Its object was still the same. The law, by its sentence of condemnation, against which it provided, in itself, no adequate remedy, "shut up" those who were under it "to the faith which was afterwards to be revealed;" while by its various rites it shadowed forth that faith to the mind of the attentive and devout inquirer;—showing it obscurely, as if through a veil; discovering, yet concealing; "the shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things." On this hypothesis, there is a harmony between the Old dispensation and the New, and a unity of design throughout the whole history of the Divine procedure towards mankind, which we seek for in vain on any other principle.

When we speak of the *sacrificial language*, (if I may so express myself) of the New Testament, in reference to the death of Christ, it is usual to resolve it all into *figure* and *allusion*. This, however, is at once to deprive the language of *its* meaning, and the rites alluded to of *theirs*. It is, besides, to charge the writers with singular folly. No idea could well be simpler, or more easily expressed, than that of a prophet's dying to confirm his testimony, or rather to prove his sincerity in delivering it, (for his submitting to sufferings and death could prove no more than this,) or even to afford, in his own rising from the grave, the evidence and the pledge of a future resurrection. Why such language as that which has been quoted should be so constantly used to express such ideas as these, if these were indeed the ideas intended to be conveyed, is a question which can hardly be answered, on any principle consistent with the inspiration, or even with the common sense of the writers. If the death of Christ was not an atonement for sin,—the law and the Prophets, Jesus himself, his forerunner, and his apostles, all spoke a language which is to me utterly unintelligible; and which could not have more effectually deceived, had it been framed for the express purpose of deception.

So much for our first proposition, that it is in consideration of the sacrifice of Christ, that God is propitious to sinners.

II. I now proceed to show, *in the second place*, that IN PARDONING THE GUILTY ON THIS GROUND, GOD DISPLAYS HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

This is obviously the very spirit of the text:—"to *declare his righteousness* for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to *declare* at this time *his righteousness, that he might be just*, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

The proper idea of *propitiation* is, *rendering the Di-*

vine Being propitious, or *favourable*. We must beware, however, of understanding by this, any thing like the production of a change in the Divine character; as if the blessed God required a motive to pity, an inducement to be merciful, a price for love and grace. Far be such a thought from our minds! We ought to conceive of Jehovah as eternally, infinitely, and immutably, compassionate and merciful. That any transition is produced in his nature, by the mediation of Christ, from previous vindictive cruelty to benevolence and pity, (as the adversaries of the doctrine of atonement are, either through ignorance or from a worse principle, accustomed to speak) is a supposition full of blasphemous impiety. God has been from eternity, and to eternity must continue, the same; "without variableness or shadow of turning." Being absolutely perfect, he cannot change to the better; for perfection cannot be improved. The slightest alteration, therefore, of what he is, would deduct from that infinite excellence, without which, he could not be God. But while God is infinitely and immutably *good*, he is, at the same time, infinitely and immutably *holy*, and *just*, and *true*. We ought never, indeed, to speak of him as acting at one time according to justice, and at another according to mercy; if by this mode of expression it be meant, that in any part of his procedure, in the smallest possible degree, the claims either of mercy or of justice are ever suspended, or left out of view. He never acts in opposition to the one, or to the other, but always agreeably to both. He is never just without being merciful, nor merciful without being just.

The character of God is, *perfect excellence—infinite goodness*:—not a hemisphere of separate stars, but one glorious Sun of pure and holy light. The attributes which constitute this character, although we may speak of them, and reason about them, distinctly, are completely insepa-

rable in their exercise ;—united in the *conduct* of the Almighty Agent, by the same necessity which unites them in his *nature*. That nature being one and immutable, with no part of it can any step of his procedure ever be inconsistent; but all should be considered as the result, not of one attribute, or of another, but of that glorious combination of all excellencies, which constitutes *infinite perfection*. The light of the sun we can divide, by a prism, into its various colored rays ; and each of these rays we can make the object of distinct attention :—but it is the combination of all the seven that constitutes *light*—of which its colorless purity is the prime excellence. Thus may we make the various perfections of the Divine nature the subjects, one by one, of separate consideration :—but it is the union of them all, in inseparable existence and exercise, that forms the character of that infinite Being, of whom it is said, "*God is light ; and in him is no darkness at all.*"

What then is the light in which the doctrine of atonement places the Divine Being? In reply to this question, I observe :—that, as a righteous Lawgiver and Ruler, Jehovah must be considered as displeased with his guilty creatures, on account of their violation of his authority ;—while, at the same time, from the infinite benignity of his nature, he is inclined to forgiveness. But, if his government be righteous, its claims, in their full extent, must, of necessity, be preserved inviolate. Any change in these must be a change from right to wrong ; and must affect both the immutable holiness of the Divine character, and the general good of the universe. The principles of the Divine administration, the commands and the sanctions of God's law, if admitted to have been originally right, can never undergo alteration ; for alteration of any kind, even in the way of mitigation or reduction, implies the acknowledgment of error in the first enactments.

The great question, then, on this momentous subject, comes to be:—"IN WHAT MANNER *may forgiveness be extended to the guilty, so as to satisfy the claims of infinite justice, and thus to maintain in their full dignity, free from every charge of imperfection or of mutability, the character of the Governor, the rectitude of his administration, and the sanction of his law?*"

The rendering of the Divine Being propitious, in this view, refers, it is obvious, (and the distinction is one of great importance on this subject) not to the *production* of love in his character, or in the particular state of his mind towards fallen men, but simply to the *mode of its expression.* The inquiry is, How may the blessed God express his love, so as effectually to express, at the same time, his infinite and immutable abhorrence of sin; and thus, in "making known the riches of his mercy," to display, in connexion with it, the inflexibility of his justice, and the unsullied perfection of his holiness?

When we say that God is displeased with any of his creatures, we speak of them not as *creatures*, but as *sinners.* He hath sworn by himself, that "he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked." But he hates sin:—not as possessing any power to affect his own infinite, independent, and unchanging happiness and glory, (I mean his *essential* glory;) for as to these, it may well be asked, "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgment?"—"If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thy hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of

man."* But he hates sin—as contrary to his holy nature, hiding his glory from the eyes of his intelligent creatures, and, in proportion to the extent of its prevalence, tending to the destruction of the order and happiness of the universe. When we speak of *hatred* as existing in the infinite mind, we ought, it is true, to beware of associating with it any idea of passion or turbulent emotion. But to make it a question whether God be displeased with sin, and with sinners, is to confound good and evil together; to divest the human mind of all its salutary fears of judgment to come; and to dispute the propriety of God's own language on this momentous subject. In the Scriptures we find it affirmed, that God is "*angry with the wicked every day;*" that he "*hateth all the workers of iniquity;*" that he hath "revealed from heaven *his wrath* against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;—and the "children of disobedience" are denominated "*children of wrath.*" When God, on the other hand, forgives iniquity, he is, in perfect consistency with such expressions, represented, as "*turning from the fierceness of his anger, and taking away all his wrath;*" as "*not retaining his anger* forever, because he delighteth in mercy;"—as "*pacified*" towards the objects of his forgiveness, "notwithstanding all that they have done:"—and they who before were "children of wrath," are described as then saying, with holy and humble joy, "O Lord, I will praise thee; for though thou wast angry with me, *thine anger is turned away.*" This is PROPITIATION: and it is *in Christ Jesus*, as we have already seen, that God is thus propitious to sinners.

The *righteousness* of God is *declared*, or made manifest, by the infliction of the penalty of transgression on the person of Jesus Christ, as the voluntary surety and substitute

* Job xxii. 2—4. xxxv. 6—8.

of the guilty. This, it is freely admitted, is not according to the precise *letter* of the Divine law: for that law, like every other, requires, of course, the personal punishment of the offender: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But the *spirit* of the law is as fully preserved; the ends of justice as effectually answered; the dignity and authority of the Divine Lawgiver as completely secured, by the sufferings of a sufficient and voluntary substitute, as by the sufferings of the guilty transgressors themselves. Nay, if, as in the case before us, this willing surety is, in nature and dignity, transcendently superior to the sinner in whose room he appears, these ends may be answered, with even much more impressive effect, in the one way, than in the other.

The righteous God has given to his creatures a righteous law, accompanied with the threatening of a righteous penalty. If the law and the penalty were both originally righteous, they must remain immutably so. If the law, when given, required no more than what is right, how can it, without bringing a reflection on the perfect wisdom and unchanging rectitude of the Divine character, ever require less? If the penalty, by the threatening of which obedience was originally enforced, contained in it no more than what is strictly just, how can this penalty, without giving rise to the very same kind of reflection, be remitted, or even mitigated?

The two great ends of *public justice* are, the glory of God, and, in connexion with it, the general good of his creatures. It is essentially necessary to the attainment of these ends, that the authority of the government of God should be supported, in all its extent, as inviolably sacred; —that one jot or one tittle should in no wise pass from the law;—that no sin, of any kind, or in any degree, should appear as venial;—that if any sinner is pardoned, it should be in such a way as, while it displays the Divine

mercy, shall at the same time testify the Divine abhorrence of his sins. All this is gloriously effected, in the gospel, by means of ATONEMENT ;—by the substitution of a voluntary surety, even of him whose name is Immanuel, to bear the curse of the law, in the room of the guilty. In his substitution, we see displayed, in a manner unutterably affecting and awful, the *holy purity* of the Divine nature ; for no testimony can be conceived more impressive, of infinite abhorrence of sin, than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Here, too, we behold the *immutable justice* of the Divine government, inflicting the righteous penalty of a violated law. It is to be considered as a fixed principle of the Divine government, that *sin must be punished ;* that, if the sinner is pardoned, it must be in a way that *marks* and *publishes the evil of his offence.* This is effected by substitution ; and, as far as we can judge, could not be effected in any other way. In inflicting the sentence against transgression on the voluntary and all-sufficient surety, JEHOVAH, while he clears the sinner, does not clear his sins ;—although clothed with the thunders of vindictive justice against transgression, he wears to the transgressor the smile of reconciliation and peace ;—he dispenses the blessings of mercy from the throne of his holiness ;—and, while exercising grace to the guilty, he appears in the character—equally lovely and venerable—of

—— the sinner's friend,
And sin's eternal foe !

In this way, then, all the ends of *public justice* are fully answered. The law retains its complete, unmitigated perfection ; is " magnified and made honourable :"—the dignity and authority of the government are maintained, and even elevated :—all the perfections of Deity are gloriously illustrated, and exhibited in sublime harmony :—while

the riches of mercy are displayed, for the encouragement of sinners to return to God, the solemn lesson is at the same time taught, by a most convincing example, that rebellion cannot be persisted in with impunity ; and motives are thus addressed to the fear of evil as well as to the desire of good :—such a view of the Divine Being is presented in the cross, as is precisely calculated to inspire and to maintain (to maintain, too, with a power which will increase in influence the more closely and seriously the view is contemplated) the two great principles of a holy life—the LOVE, and the FEAR OF GOD ;—filial attachment, freedom, and confidence, combined with humble reverence and holy dread.

While it appears a most important scriptural truth, that something equivalent, in the eye of Divine Justice, to the punishment of the sinner, was, in the view and for the reasons which have been stated, absolutely necessary in order to his escape, I do not think there is any thing in the word of God, that warrants the representation, which has been given, by some of the friends of this doctrine, as if the sufferings of Christ formed what they call *an exact equivalent*—neither less nor more—for the sins of all who shall be saved by his atonement. This sentiment seems derogatory to the infinite dignity of the Sufferer, and the consequent infinite value of his sacrifice. The sufferings of the Son of God ought not to be brought into comparison, as a display of the Divine righteousness, with even the eternal sufferings of millions of his creatures. The idea of exact equivalent proceeds on the supposition, that the sufferings of Christ possessed just as much virtue, as is sufficient for the salvation of all who shall be saved; whose precise proportion of punishment he is conceived to have borne, according to the guilt even of each particular sin. I know not how *you* may feel, my brethren :—but *my* mind, I own, revolts from this sort of minutely

calculating process on such a subject; weighing out the precise quantum of suffering due to each sin of each individual, who obtains forgiveness; and there, of course, limiting the sufficiency of the surety's mediation. Such views have always appeared to me utterly inconsistent with the grandeur and majesty of this wonderful part of the Divine administration.

The mediation of Christ, I am disposed to view as a grand, general manifestation of "the righteousness of God," by which the claims of justice are, in the spirit of them, fully satisfied, and the glory of this attribute thus maintained, in the exercise of mercy:—a *general remedy*, admitting, *according to the Divine pleasure and purpose*, of a *particular application*. There is an obvious and important difference between the *sufficiency* of any remedy, and its *efficiency*. The former arises from the nature of the remedy itself;—the latter depends on its being applied. The former, therefore, may even be infinite, while the latter is purposely limited. The blood of Christ may be infinite in its atoning *value*, and yet limited in its atoning *efficacy; sufficient* for the salvation of *all*, and yet *effectual* to the salvation of comparatively *few*.

It is in this way, then, that God appears, in the gospel testimony, in that view of his character, which is to us the most deeply interesting of all the lights in which he has been pleased to make himself known—as "*the just God*, and *a Saviour*." It is in the cross of Christ, in the work, which *he* finished, when he "bowed his head and gave up the ghost," that "mercy and truth meet together —that righteousness and peace embrace each other."—To the sinner, it is, from first to last, a free salvation. God's instituting any means at all for securing the honour of his righteousness in bestowing pardon on the guilty, when his character, as the just God, would have re-

mained unimpeachable, had he consigned all transgressors to the doom which they merited, was itself an act of free, unsolicited grace. And even now, when these means have been revealed, the *claim of right* is rather to be considered as on the part of the surety, for the salvation of such as were given to him, than on the part of the sinner, who receives the blessing. Although we have "boldness, and access to God with confidence, through the faith of Jesus," yet even when we come in the name of the Mediator, we are taught to approach as *suppliants*, rather than as *claimants*; not demanding a debt, but entreating for a favour; pleading, with all the deep self-abasement of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" While, in forgiving sin, in justifying the ungodly, God acts in perfect consistency with justice as well as with mercy, to the sinner himself it is entirely a matter of pure, unconditional mercy. He is "justified *freely, by God's grace,* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

It has been asserted by some, that the doctrine of *atonement* is incompatible with that of *free forgiveness.* Let these words of the apostle, contained in the verse immediately preceding the text, silence, as they ought to do, every such objection. He here distinctly affirms, that the justification of the sinner is *free*—that is, *without any cause in him;* that it is, *by grace*—that is, as an act of *sovereign unmerited favour*—and yet that it is, *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*—In other places also, he uses language of exactly the same import:—"*In whom* we have redemption *by his blood,* the forgiveness of sins, *according to the riches of his grace.*"* It is evident, from such passages, that Paul perceived not the inconsistency, which the refinement of modern objectors presumes it has discovered. And I think we may

* Eph. i. 7.

be perfectly satisfied, to be in the same mistake with an inspired apostle.

It has likewise been seriously objected to the doctrine in question, that it never can be reconciled with the justice of God, to permit the innocent, to suffer for the guilty.

Perhaps it should be enough to remind those, who urge this objection, not only that the substitution and sufferings of Christ were entirely *voluntary;* but that, according to the view which we take of his person, they *could not possibly have been otherwise;* inasmuch as, previously to his assuming the form of a servant, he had no superior that could lay him under any obligation, nor would he, therefore, have violated any obligation, had he never acted the part he did. His own will alone could bind him. His "becoming flesh" was an act of sovereign condescension; and in all that he endured, in the nature, which he had voluntarily assumed, he was a willing sufferer.

But let me take up the objection in another light. According to the terms in which it is expressed, it proceeds on the supposition of the *innocence* of the sufferer. Is this, then, admitted? One hardly can tell whether our opponents admit it or not. They certainly can "find no fault in this man." Yet one presumes to speak of him as "*fallible and peccable;*"—another says, we have *no sufficient data by which to determine whether during his private as well as his public life he was free from sin or not; and that it is to us a matter of no material consequence!**—But "What saith the Scripture?"—"Such an high priest became us, who is *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,* and made higher than the heavens: who *needeth not daily,* as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, *first*

* Priestley and Belsham.

for his own sins, and then for the people's :"—" He *did no sin*, neither was guile found in his mouth :"—" Ye are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, *without blemish and without spot* :"—" He was manifested to take away our sins ; and *in him is no sin*."* Are not these declarations sufficient to satisfy every mind that feels itself bound by the authority of the Scriptures?—Taking for granted, then, the *perfect innocence* of Jesus Christ, let us consider *the fact* precisely as it stands. Here is *an innocent person suffering* ; suffering both in body and in mind, (if we are to judge from his own expressions of inward agony, and from the effects of that agony on his bodily frame) in a degree unprecedented and inconceivable. Let the objector, then, account for this strange phenomenon in the government of a righteous God. Why, we ask, does he suffer? Not on his own account. The supposition of innocence forbids this ; for all suffering arises from sin. Why, then, does he suffer? To confirm, by evincing his sincerity, the truth of his testimony, and to set before us an example of patience? The objector forgets himself when he alleges this as the cause. Let him recollect, that this is still suffering *for us—for our good*. Let him answer, therefore, his own objection. If it be *just* in God to allow the innocent to suffer for *these* ends ; why should it be unjust in him to allow the innocent to suffer for *another* end—even for the end which *we* allege to have been the true cause of these sufferings?—Can it be *just* in God to inflict sufferings on the innocent for an *inferior* end, and yet *unjust* in him to inflict the same sufferings, on the same person, for an end *obviously and incalculably superior* ?—The fact of an innocent sufferer being once admitted, the only scriptural, and, in my apprehension, the only rational (because the only

* Heb. vii. 26, 27. 1 Peter ii. 22. i. 19. 1 John iii. 5.

adequate) reason of the fact, and solution of the difficulty arising from it, is,—"God made him, who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." So strongly does the matter appear, in this light, to my mind; that I should almost affirm the very existence of the fact to be, of itself, a sufficient evidence of the doctrine.

It has further been objected, that when, in the New Testament, *reconciliation* is spoken of, it is not the reconciliation *of God to sinners*, but *of sinners to God*:—as in the following instances. "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 (or by) 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 by us; we pray (men) in Christ's stead, *Be ye reconciled to God*: for he hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:"—"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."*

I need not enlarge on this. Two or three brief observations will be sufficient to show the fallacy of the objection. *In the first place*, We have already seen, that in many parts of Scripture, words and phrases which are, in their meaning, perfectly *equivalent* with *reconcile* and *reconciliation*, are used respecting the state of God's regard towards sinful creatures;—as when he is said to be *pacified*, and to have his *anger turned away*. It is not about the *word* we dispute, but about the *thing*.—*2dly*, In the Scriptures the verb *to reconcile* is used, when the person,

* 2 Cor. v. 18—21. Rom. v. 10.

said *to be reconciled*, is not the *offended* party, but the *offender*; in which cases it manifestly signifies, not the removal of enmity in the heart of him, who is said *to be reconciled*, but the averting of displeasure, and the obtaining of favour, in the bosom of him *to whom he is reconciled*. For example:—Matth. v. 23, 24. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother *hath ought against thee*, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first *be reconciled to thy brother*, and then come, and offer thy gift." The person addressed is not supposed to have any thing against his brother, but to recollect that his brother has something against him. His brother is the aggrieved party. Yet it is not said "*Reconcile thy brother to thee*," but, "*Be reconciled to thy brother*." The former, however, is evidently what is meant—"Make peace with thy brother:—by becoming acknowledgments and submission, regain his lost favour, and restore the exercise of mutual affection." Another instance, equally conclusive, of the same use of the word, occurs in 1 Sam. xxix. 4. "And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him (that is, with Achish); and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow (David) return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him; and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he *reconcile himself to his master?* should it not be with the heads of these men?"—Saul, David's master, was the *offended* party. Yet David is not said to *reconcile his master to him*, but to *reconcile himself to his master*. *Obtaining favour with his master*, however, is, beyond all dispute, what is intended to be expressed. These instances are completely decisive, as to the use of the term for which we contend. And, agreeably to this view of its meaning, when sinners are said to *be reconciled to God*, the expres-

sion includes in it not merely the relinquishment of their enmity against him, but also the turning away of his displeasure against them. It means, in short, the bringing of the parties into a state of *mutual friendship.*—*3dly*, That this is the case, is clear from the very passages, in the epistles to the Corinthians and to the Romans before quoted. In the former of these passages, God's "*reconciling the world to himself* by Jesus Christ, is explained by his "*not imputing their trespasses unto them*:" that is, by forgiveness he brings sinners into a state of favour and acceptance with himself. As to the latter passage, its connexion with the preceding verse is sufficient to show that the meaning of *being reconciled* is there the same:—"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." If *reconciliation to God*, by the death of his Son, is not here *inclusive* at least of being *justified by his blood*, there is neither continuity nor conclusiveness in the apostle's reasoning.

Lastly; it has been alleged, that the whole of this scheme of atonement is *unnecessary*;—a useless incumbrance:—for that God might, with perfect propriety, forgive sinners, *upon their repentance*, without any such additional consideration.

What the infinitely wise and righteous God might, or might not, with propriety, do, in such a case—it hardly, perhaps, comes within our province to determine. Our safest and most becoming way of proceeding, in such circumstances, is, I should think, to form our judgment from the fact;—to consider what God has actually done, and thence to conclude, what was or was not proper for him to do. If God could, with perfect consistency and propriety, have pardoned sin without any such atonement as

we believe has been made for it, we may, with great safety, conclude, from what we know, both of his wisdom and of his goodness, that the atonement would never have been heard of:—for a WISE being does nothing in vain; and a GOOD being inflicts no suffering in vain. Surely when the blessed Redeemer, perfectly pure and holy, and the object of unmingled approbation and love, thrice prayed in agony of spirit, that *if it were possible* the cup might pass from him,—he would never have been permitted to drink it,—to drink it even to its bitterest dregs, had not his drinking it been indispensable;—had it not been necessary to the reconciliation of justice and mercy, in their exercise towards guilty men.

I have before endeavoured to answer, on this subject, the question, What saith the Scripture?—and, at the same time, to show the reasonableness of the plan which the blessed God is therein represented as having adopted, in order to his being, consistently with the glory of *his whole character*, "the GOD OF SALVATION." We have seen, in this discussion, the only ground on which, according to the gospel, pardon is bestowed. That it is ever bestowed on the ground of mere *repentance*, is not the doctrine of the Bible. Neither can it be shown, I would now add, to be the doctrine of Reason. *Analogy* is against it. Repentance and reformation do not, in the present experience of mankind, place transgressors, with regard to the temporal effects of their sins, in the same state as if they never had offended. The ruined health and fortune of the intemperate are not retrieved the instant they repent and reform. Besides; present obedience can only fulfil present obligation. There is, as has frequently been observed as good ground for affirming that former obedience atones for present sins, as there is for affirming that present obedience atones for antecedent transgression. Repentance neither alters the nature, nor annihilates the guilt

of what is past: and present duty, even if it were free from all mixture of imperfection, can do no more than answer for itself. It cannot possess the nature and efficacy of *works of supererogation* for our former selves, any more than it can for others.

Reason, then, to say the least of it, can arrive at no certain conclusion on this subject; and it becomes us to submit, with grateful humility, to the way of acceptance made known in the gospel. Repentance is *inseparably connected* with forgiveness;—but it is not its *procuring cause*—its *meritorious ground*. *This* is to be found only in the perfect obedience, and atoning death, of the Son of God:—and apart from faith in him, and dependence upon his righteousness and sacrifice, as the foundation of acceptance, there exists no repentance that is genuine and scriptural.

I must now hasten forward to the remaining observations; which shall be illustrated with much greater brevity.

III. *The ground on which the pardon of sin has been bestowed, has, in every age, and under every dispensation, been the same.*

This observation is founded on the expression used in verse 25th—"*for the remission of sins that are past* (that is, *which were formerly committed) through* (or *in*) *the forbearance of God.*"

These words evidently express, the *retrospective efficacy* of the blood of Christ; its efficacy, as the procuring cause of forgiveness to believers who lived before his coming in the flesh. God had before that time *remitted sin*:—and the words in question might, perhaps, be more strictly rendered, "to declare his righteousness, *because of**

* Δια την παρεσιν των προγεγονοτων ἁμαρτηματων.—Δια is here used with the accusative: and there can be no doubt that its ordinary signi-

the remission (or passing by) of sins formerly committed, in the forbearance of God :"—the sentiment expressed being apparently this ;—" that the passing by of sins *at that time*, when no adequate atonement had been made, might have given occasion for the impeachment of the Divine righteousness ; and therefore, this display of the righteousness of God was, in due time made, as that to which there had all along been a prospective regard—(as to a pre-determined event)—in the previous exercise of pardoning mercy." This view seems to be confirmed by the emphatical expression "*at this time*," in the 25th verse, which seems to refer to something which required to be done *now*, as having been acted upon in the time preceding.

The truth, then, which is contained in these words, is a highly important and deeply interesting one :—that throughout the whole period of time, from Adam to Christ, the forgiveness of sins was granted "*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ;*"—that God never was "*the justifier*" of any but of such as "*believed in Jesus*," or, as the original words literally mean, "*were of the faith of Jesus.*"* This faith, it is true, must of necessity have corresponded, in clearness of vision, and in strength of conviction, to the degree of light vouchsafed at the time: but it was not the less real, on account of the comparative

fication, when in regimen with this case, is *for, on account of, because of.* I am aware that in the present instance various renderings have been proposed, and more or less ably supported. I am not sure, however, that there is any necessity for departure from the usual signification of the preposition when governing the accusative. The sense given in the discourse seems to me sufficiently natural, and consistent with the scope of the context ; in which the apostle had just before spoken of the Divine method of justifying sinners as having been, in former times, " witnessed by the law and the prophets."

* Δικαιουντα τον εκ πιστεως Ιησου.

obscurity of the revelation; for, in the nature of things, it *could not* regard its object *further than that object was revealed.* In passing by sin, therefore, in the ages preceding the fulness of time, it appears that God, (to whom the future is as certain as the past; a purpose yet to be executed as sure as what has already been done; "one day," in this respect, "as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;")—it appears, I say, that God then granted the remission of sins "*in his forbearance,*" that is, while he was, as it were, *waiting* for the fulness of time, and was regarding, as the ground of his merciful procedure, the work which was then to be done—the atonement which was then to be made. "*At this time,*" —the time, for wise reasons, chosen and appointed by himself—"he *declared his righteousness,*" by the advent and atonement of Christ, "*that he might be just*" in having *formerly* justified, and just in *now continuing* to justify, "those who are *of the faith of Jesus.*"

What an interesting and impressive view does this give us, my brethren, of the efficacy of the Redeemer's sacrifice. "What is a man profited," said he himself, "if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* If the salvation of one individual is thus unspeakably valuable, how great must be the preciousness of that offering, by which there are redeemed unto God—redeemed from everlasting destruction, and raised to the enjoyment of everlasting life and glory—"a multitude which no man can number!" That countless multitude which John saw, in vision, assembled before the throne of God and of the Lamb, was not only composed of men "of every people, and kindred, and tongue, and nation," but of men of every successive period of time, from the day when man was doomed to return to the dust, till the day when "death

* Matth. xvi. 26.

shall be swallowed up of victory." Then "Adam shall salute his youngest born." Yet the song of this redeemed company is *one*. There is not one song for the patriarchs, and another for the prophets, and a third for the apostles;—one for the saints of the Old, and another for those of the New dispensation:—for patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and saints of every dispensation, have all been alike indebted to the same Redeemer. The "righteous Abel," the earliest victim of mortality, shall join in the same song with the last of the children of God that falls asleep in Jesus. All, having "washed their robes, and made them white, in the same blood," shall sing together, without a feeling or a tone of discord—"Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!"

IV. My *fourth* proposition was, that *an interest in the pardoning mercy of God, through Christ, is obtained by faith.*"

"Whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory, *through faith* in his blood—that he might be just, and the justifier of him *who believeth* in Jesus."

This is the unvarying language of the Bible. "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* might not perish, but have everlasting life:"—"He that *believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life; but he that *believeth not the Son* shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."* To multiply passages to the same effect, would be endless. To ALL, of every description, who are interested in the virtue of this atonement, faith is alike the *medium* of their interest. This sentiment is decisively expressed in the verses which follow the text:—"Where is boasting,

* John iii. 14—16, 36.

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 he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Seeing it is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."

The chief reason why faith is made the medium of justification, is stated in the 16th verse of the following chapter;—"wherefore, it is of faith, *that it might be by grace:*" and the simpler, consequently, our views are, of the nature of justifying faith, the clearer will our perception be of the reign of *Grace* in our salvation. For the apostle, in these words, (of which the meaning is in perfect harmony with all his reasonings on the same subject,) represents it as appointed by God to be the medium of a saving interest in the atonement, for this express reason, that it is a medium, which, from its very nature, sets aside all works from forming any part of the ground of acceptance, precludes all self-complacent boasting, and secures the entire glory to his own *free grace.*

The reasonableness of making faith, or the belief of the testimony of God concerning his Son, the medium of interest in the salvation, which that testimony reveals, must at once be apparent to every reflecting mind. No one, surely, can conceive it to be right, that the man who rejects the gospel, refusing to own it as a message from heaven, should nevertheless partake, equally with those. who gladly embrace it as such, the precious blessings which it reveals:—that he, who persists in despising the atonement, and in slighting and vilifying the great salvation wrought by the Son of God, should yet experience the saving efficacy of his blood. It is the sovereign and irreversible appointment of that God with whom we have to do, that "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that

believeth not shall be condemned." The sinner who esteems the blood of Jesus as an all-sufficient atonement for sin, and who, as ruined and hopeless, seeks forgiveness and acceptance on the ground of that atonement, "shall in no wise be cast out:" for God is "the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." But the sacrifice can have no saving virtue to any, who refuse to acknowledge its necessity, or to confide in its merits. This position I advance, not with inconsiderate levity; not with scornful indifference about the safety of my fellow-sinners; not for the sake of maintaining the consistency of a human system:—but from a deep conviction of its truth, and a solemn, heartfelt impression of its unutterable importance. To every imputation of uncharitable harshness, my answer is, "To the law and to the testimony." By this standard let the sentiment be impartially tried.

V. My last observation was, that *in resting our hopes of forgiveness on the atoning sacrifice of Christ, we build on a sure foundation.*

This observation is founded on two circumstances:—the dignity of the person, who is set forth in the gospel, as the true propitiatory;—and the supreme authority of Him, by whom he is set forth, as the object of faith, and the ground of acceptance:—"*Christ Jesus*—whom *God* hath set forth."

When we consider the Divine dignity of the Mediator between God and men, the "great high priest of our profession;"—when we are assured that our hope is founded on a work that has been finished, and on a sacrifice that has been offered, by Him whose name is Immanuel;—we possess a feeling of security, which nothing else whatever can impart. "*It is* CHRIST *that died.*" "*He offered up* HIMSELF." It is true, that the human nature alone could obey, and could suffer. But if it be also true, that the human nature of him, who obeyed and suffered, was as-

sociated in his one person with the Divine, that man's mind must be singularly constituted, who does not perceive the difference between what is done and suffered by an ordinary mortal, and what is done and suffered by a man in union with Deity; and who triumphs in the discovery, that this can be no more after all than human merit, and human sufferings. Upon such a principle as this, were a mighty monarch to perform an act of signal condescension and mercy, by voluntarily submitting to various sufferings, for the deliverance of the meanest of his subjects from existing or apprehended misery—it might be said, "*Royalty* cannot act; *Royalty* cannot suffer:—it is the *man* only, and not the *king*, that acts and suffers:—so that the actions and the sufferings of the king should be considered in no other light than as the actions and sufferings of the poorest beggar."—I am aware, that all comparisons of this kind fall infinitely below the subject which they are brought to illustrate. I have adduced this one, merely to show the futility of the principle on which such objectors proceed. Besides; the *whole humiliation* of Jesus, including his *assumption* of the human nature, as well as all that he did and suffered in that nature, is the ground of God's satisfaction in his beloved Son, and consequently the procuring cause of forgiveness and blessing to the sinner.*

The doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, then, which I have, in former discourses, been endeavouring to establish, is not, by any means, a useless, insulated truth;—a truth on which no other truths depend. Viewed in connexion with the atonement, which it has been the object of this discourse to illustrate and to prove, it is that which imparted to all that Jesus did and suffered, for the salvation of a lost world, its peculiar value, and its saving efficacy:—it is that which communicates their sublime grandeur to

* See Phil. ii. 6—11.

the doctrines of the cross elevating them above all that "eye had seen, or ear heard, or that had entered into the heart of man to conceive;"—investing the whole Christian system with a radient and heavenly glory, like that, which beamed around the transfigured Saviour on the Holy mount.

The second source of our security, in resting our hopes on this foundation, is, the authority by which it is here represented as revealed and sanctioned:—"*Whom* GOD *hath set forth.*"

God had set him forth partially, and with comparative obscurity, by the law and the prophets; and he now exhibits him in the gospel, with all the clearness of explicit testimony, as a propitiatory through faith in his blood." God was the Sovereign whom our sins had offended, and at whose mercy we consequently lay. He alone, when his creatures had "fallen by their iniquity," had a right to determine whether *any* remedy should be appointed for them at all;—and *if any*, what that remedy should be.—If HE, therefore, has made known a ground of hope for the guilty, we cannot, surely, wish for firmer security, or for any higher warrant, or encouragement, to rely on that ground with unshaken confidence. It is Jehovah that hath said, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed."* And we know what this foundation is:—"other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST."†

It is with God, as "the Judge of all," that "we have to do:"—and when we tremble at the thought of his purity and justice, in anticipating our appearance at his dread tribunal, there is nothing that can impart peace to the troubled conscience, and hope to the sinking heart, but the word of that Being himself to whom we have to render

* Isa. xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 6. † 1 Cor. iii. 11.

our account. Something which He has approved and accepted, and on which he has given us his authority to trust, is absolutely necessary to solid and satisfactory peace;—to peace, of which the source will bear to be thought of and examined. This we have in the glorious gospel; where "God hath set forth Christ as a propitiatory through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." It is the assurance of this that imparts the confidence of hope: every thing besides this leaves the mind distracted by uncertainty and doubt, or a prey to all the agonies of despair.

No question, then, on this subject, can be conceived of greater importance, than the question, "*What is the testimony of God, with regard to the ground of acceptance with himself?*" To discover the true answer to this question, let me beseech you to have recourse directly to the word of God. If you believe what is there testified, and imbibe the spirit of those holy men by whom that word was written, your language will be—and it will come from a glowing heart—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:—I count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith."—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God even his Father,—to him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen!"*

I shall devote the next Discourse to the consideration of the *practical tendency and influence* of the doctrine

* Gal. vi. 14. Phil. ii. 8, 9. Rev. i. 5, 6.

which I have now been illustrating, and endeavouring to establish as the doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.*

* On the doctrines of substitution, sacrifice, and atonement, as well as on a great variety of important collateral topics, the reader will find a vast body of valuable information, acute reasoning, and learned critical disquisition, in the "Discourses, and Dissertations" of Dr. Magee, of Trinity College, Dublin, now Dean of Cork, formerly referred to.—See also Jerram's "Letters on the atonement:"—Fuller's "Gospel its own witness," part II. chapters 4th and 5th; and "Essays," part III. pages 195—251; the piece entitled Three Conversations on Imputation, Substitution, and Particular Redemption:—and a valuable Discourse on the Sacrifice of Christ, its nature, value, and efficacy, lately published by Dr. John Pye Smith, of Homerton Academy.

DISCOURSE VIII.

ON THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

1 CORINTHIANS vi. 19, 20.

"YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN; FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE; THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD, IN YOUR BODIES, AND IN YOUR SPIRITS, WHICH ARE GOD'S."

IT is reasonable to expect, that those doctrines which form the leading articles of any system, should be plainly stated in the book which professes to make that system known. Whether this be not the case, with regard to the two great truths of the divinity and atonement of Christ, I now leave it with yourselves to judge. The latter, in connexion with the former, as I have more than once hinted before, I consider, as forming the very substance of the gospel, and as revealed in the Bible with a plainness and frequency, which *ought* to supersede all controversy on the subject.

I would now further remark, that if it be a doctrine contained in the Bible, its truth is supported by all the evidence which proves the Bible to be a Divine revelation; inasmuch as the whole mass of proof by which the inspiration, or Divine authority, of the Scriptures, is evinced, bears, in its full force, on each of the articles which these Scriptures contain. This evidence, in the two great branches, the *external* and the *internal*, into which it is

usually divided, is prodigiously extensive, and diversified. Of the *internal* evidence, the doctrine in question constitutes, in my judgment, a most prominent and convincing article: so striking does its consistency appear, with the *truth of things*;—with the real state of mankind, as evinced by universal experience;—and with the character, in all its various attributes, of that Divine Being, "with whom they have to do." The reasonableness of the doctrine, in these views, I endeavoured to show in my last discourse, chiefly by an illustration of its true nature, in opposition to the various misconceptions and misrepresentations of its adversaries.

That this doctrine is of God, is established by another branch of evidence, which I propose to illustrate a little in the present discourse; I mean the evidence arising from the *effects*—the *moral effects*, which, from its nature, it is fitted to produce, and to which the faith of it has in fact uniformly given birth. We naturally expect, that such effects as are worthy of God should arise from a doctrine, which God has revealed. We can never believe that doctrine to be from Him, of which the manifest tendency is, to confirm corruption, to disannul or to loosen the obligations to virtue, and to present encouragement to the commission of sin. As "he that committeth sin is of the devil," so must be the doctrine by which sin is promoted or tolerated. Could it be fairly proved that this is the case, either in *theory* or in *fact*, with regard to the doctrine of the atonement, this would, of itself, be sufficient reason for assigning it to the Father of lies, and for decidedly affirming, either that the Scriptures do not contain it, or that, if they do, they cannot contain a revelation from God.

In these Scriptures, the connexion between the faith of those truths which they reveal, and holiness of heart and of life, is uniformly represented as inseparable. The *fact*

of such connexion is declared to have been exemplified, in many remarkable cases of complete change of character, produced by the reception of the truth made known in the gospel.—Those, who before had been the slaves of sin, when they "obeyed from the heart the doctrine which was delivered to them" were "made free from sin, became servants to God, had their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life."* This change was frequently visible in persons of the very worst possible characters. Read the catalogue of crimes in the 9th and 10th verses of the chapter of which our text is the conclusion, and observe what is said in the 11th respecting those who practised them. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And *such were some of you:* but ye are *washed*, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are *justified*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."†

What, then, was the doctrine which possessed this transforming influence?—of which the preaching and the reception produced effects so singular and so excellent? It was the doctrine of THE CROSS;—the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, "delivered up for the offences of the guilty, and raised again for their justification;" "bearing their sins in his own body on the tree;" "suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God." The ambassadors of heaven proclaimed, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;"—that he had "made him who knew no sin to be sin for guilty men, that they might

* See Rom. vi. 17—22.

† See also Eph. ii. 1—5, 10. 1 Thess. i. 2—10. with chap. ii. 13.

be made the righteousness of God in him :" and, on the ground of this declaration, they " prayed men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God." The passage from which the text of last discourse was taken, contains a brief summary of the great doctrine of the cross, the doctrine which was declared to men with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.—" 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. 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 as a propitiatory, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who 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. Is he the God of the Jews only ? is he not also of the Gentiles ? Yes, of the Gentiles also : seeing it is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith ; do we then make void the law through faith ? God forbid : yea, we establish the law."*

Such was the doctrine which, accompanied with that Divine influence of which I am afterwards to speak, affect-

* Rom. iii. 19—31.

ed the hearts, subdued the wills, and changed the characters of men. And, let me ask, is not the fact still the same? What is the doctrine *now*, that is the means of "turning the heathen from idols to serve the living God?" —What is the doctrine which is owned of God, by its mighty efficacy in converting men from a life of abandoned profligacy to one of piety and virtue?—or from irreligious, worldly mindedness, to holiness, and devotedness to God?—What is the doctrine that brings the sinner, convicted, subdued, and penitent, to his knees before the throne of grace?—that makes the exercises of devotion his *privilege*, as well as his duty,—and communion with heaven his chief joy?—that makes "the Sabbath a delight;"—the inspired volume "more precious to him than thousands of gold and silver;"—his heart habitually humble;—his conscience tender;—his life not merely "sober and righteous," but "*godly?*"—What, in a word, is the doctrine that "converts the soul?"—the doctrine by which a sinner, "dead in trespasses and sins," is "born again?" —Is it not still the doctrine of a Divine, and divinely appointed Saviour, making atonement for sin by the blood of his cross? Is it not that very doctrine concerning himself, which Jesus taught Nicodemus, as the *means* of that regeneration, of which he had just before declared the indispensable *necessity?* "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 might not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but might have eternal life. For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."*

That such is the fact, the experience of many centuries

* John iii. 14—17.

has placed beyond all controversy. The *reason* of the fact—the fitness of the means for the production of the end,—it will be my object, in the subsequent part of this discourse, to show.

It is an undeniable and melancholy truth, that the doctrine of justification through the atonement of Christ *has been abused*. But what is there, of all good things, that is beyond the reach of perversion and abuse, by "hearts deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?" Hypocrisy, it has been justly remarked, may be considered as itself a proof of the acknowledged excellence of religion. Men do not think of feigning what is not esteemed as good. And the very circumstance, that when men are desirous to pass for being very religious characters, and to cloak under the semblance of sanctity the indulgence of sin, the profession which they embrace is, not that of Socinian sentiments, but always of the contrary, may be accounted a tacit admission in favour of the latter; for that can never be assumed as a *cover for evil*, by any man possessing the subtlety requisite for being a successful hypocrite, of which the practical effects are not seen and known to be *generally good*.—"Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," we learn from Jude, was a very early perversion of the gospel. And we need not, therefore, be surprised, if we still find men of the same description with those whom he mentions, and whose characters he portrays in such dark shades of colouring, men, who "creep in unawares" into the church of Christ, "ungodly men," who, by their subsequent conduct, betray the base and impious hypocrisy of their profession, "denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction."*

This leads me further to observe, that, apart from the simplicity and plainness with which any doctrine is di-

* Jude, verse 4.

rectly declared, we may often learn much of the real meaning of the writer, by considering the nature of those *objections*, which he either represents as having been started, or supposes may be started, against it. This is a remark, for the application of which there is frequent occasion in the reasonings of the apostle Paul. An instance of it, connected with my present subject, occurs in the beginning of the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans:—"What shall we say, then?" says he; "*shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*" Now, had the doctrine of the apostle been, *that men are justified before God, and obtain eternal life, by their own obedience*, is it at all conceivable, that he should ever have imagined such an idea, in the form of an objection, to present itself to the mind of any one of his readers? Had *this* been his doctrine, such an objection would not only have been destitute of all real force; it would not have possessed the remotest semblance even of *plausibility*. In short, it could never have been made; for it could never have entered into the mind of man. The only doctrine that could possibly suggest such an objection, is the doctrine of salvation by "free grace, without the works of the law, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This, accordingly, is the doctrine, against which the same objection is still incessantly made;—ignorantly and falsely made, we contend; for it was refuted by Paul himself; and it has been ten thousand times brought, and as many times refuted since. But still the nature of the objection shows the nature of the doctrine;—and the precise sameness of this and other objections, *then* and *now*, strongly indicates the correspondence between what is usually termed evangelical doctrine, and the gospel which Paul was commissioned to preach.

It is not at all my design to enter at large, in this Discourse, into an illustration of the practical influence of the

whole of that system of truths, of which those I have been endeavouring to defend form a part. I shall confine myself, at least in a great degree, to the doctrine of the atonement.

To this doctrine the text has immediate reference:—"*Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

One or two remarks shall suffice on the *language* of the text.

We "*glorify God in our body and in our spirit,*" when the powers of our bodies, the faculties of our minds, and the affections of our hearts, are all sacred to him; all regulated in their exercise, by a supreme regard to his authority as the rule, and to his glory as the end, of all our thoughts, words, and actions:—when our inward dispositions towards him correspond, in their nature, to the various lights in which his blessed character is presented to our contemplation:—when not only the duties, which we owe directly to himself, are faithfully and heartily fulfilled, but the duties which we owe to our fellow creatures, in the various connexions of life, are done "as to the Lord, and not to men." The expression may thus be considered as comprehending *the whole of practical religion*;—the whole extent and variety of duty, in its *inward principle* and its *external performance*. And although the character I have thus drawn is far from being, especially in their own estimation of themselves, the perfect attainment of any of the children of God, yet complete conformity to it is, to every one of them, the subject of daily solicitude and prayers, and the object of habitual and vigilant endeavours.

"*Ye are bought with a price.*"—It is common to speak of the blessings of salvation as purchased by the death of Christ for his people; nor is there any heresy, or material

error, in such modes of expression. In the New Testament, however, I think it is almost invariably the case, that when the idea of *purchase* is introduced, it is the purchase of *the persons themselves*. For *them* the price is paid. They are "the redeemed of the Lord;"—his "purchased possession;"—his peculiar property:—redeemed from the bondage of sin and satan, into "the glorious liberty of the children of God;" redeemed from death and hell, to the possession and hope of spiritual and eternal life. "*Ye* are not your own; for *ye* are bought with a price." And what *is* the price? The apostle does not mention it. The Corinthians, he well knew, would be at no loss to understand to what he referred. And this circumstance shows, how accustomed they must have been to the use of language of this description in his preaching;—to the representation of the death of Christ as the price of the redemption of sinners,—"the RANSOM for many." The following passages, among many others, are instances in proof of the justness of these remarks. "Feed the church of God (or of the Lord) *which he hath purchased* with his own blood:"—"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know, 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:"—"Thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed us* to God by thy blood."*

If, under the government of a holy and righteous God, *sin is pardoned*, we may rest assured that this pardon must be bestowed in a way that shall hold out no encouragement to the continued commission of it:—that if provision is made for the restoration of rebels to favour, it must be connected with provision for their return, at the same time, to loyal subjection and obedience. We are now to see whether the atonement of Christ does not happily unite

* Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 17—19. Rev. v. 9.

these two essential objects ;—whether this medium of restoration to the Divine favour, does not involve in its nature the most powerful considerations, at once to *deter from sin*, and to *excite to the practice of holiness.*

On this important and interesting subject, I shall endeavour, as on the former, to avoid, as much as possible, controversial discussion ; from a conviction, that there are some points, and that this is one of them, with regard to which the most effectual refutation of error is the statement of truth.

I shall illustrate the practical influence of the doctrine of the atonement, as arising from the views which are given by it, of the *law of God*, the *evil of sin*, the *character of the Divine Being*, the *love of Christ*, the *relation into which it brings us to God*, and the *necessity of holiness.*

The field is very extensive. I fear I may need more of your patience than I feel myself entitled to require. But I shall endeavour to discuss the different particulars with as much brevity as possible.

I. Let us, then, direct our attention, *in the first place*, to the light in which the doctrine of atonement places *the* LAW OF GOD.

Of every government that is desirous to prevent transgression, and to ensure cheerful and prompt obedience, it ought to be a primary object, to inspire the minds of its subjects with *respect for the laws.* In proportion as these are perceived and felt to be good, to be consonant with the principles of equity, and calculated to promote the prosperity and happiness of the community ;—in proportion as there exists a conviction that they really are such as *ought* to be uniformly and unalterably enforced, will be the likelihood of their commanding a general and ready submission. A law, or system of laws, that is either condemned for its excessive rigour, on the one hand, or,

on the other, despised for its weakness and instability, is not likely, in either case, to be obeyed with cordiality; nor, when transgression has been committed, is there much ground to expect, either very deep penitence in the criminal himself, or, in the community where the offence has been committed, any very strong concurring sentiment of condemnation.

To apply these remarks to the case before us. Nothing can be more obvious than that every system of doctrine, which excludes the atonement of Christ, as the ground of forgiveness, and makes the acceptance of men in the sight of God, to depend on their own obedience as its procuring cause,—must, of necessity, proceed upon the principle that the divine law is, in some way or other, relaxed in its strictness, reduced and mitigated in its requirements, satisfied with a partial and imperfect obedience. A law, which requires us to "love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind," "and to love our neighbour as ourselves;"—which demands the universal and unceasing operation of these principles, so that every thought, every feeling, every word, and every action, must be in perfect consonance with their pure unmingled exercise:—such a law, it is very manifest, can never suit any system of this description. Acceptance on the ground of such a law, is, with regard to every individual of the children of men, entirely and forever out of the question. The principles of the law must be qualified, and its requisitions modified and abridged, in accommodation to that depravity of our nature, which, by the mistaken advocates of such systems, is misnamed *human frailty*: the same spirit that relaxes the strictness of the law, with mournful consistency paliating the corruption that is opposed to it. We have been told, accordingly, that for God to punish every transgression of his law, committed by "*the frail and erring chil-*

dren of men," would be to act the part of a "*merciless tyrant.*"

Now, let me ask, are such views as these fitted to inspire becoming veneration either for the law, or for the lawgiver? Does the admission of such suppositions, or the use of such language, indicate a mind under the predominant influence of such veneration? Has the infinitely wise God, then, given a law to his creatures, by which he cannot abide, without incurring the charge of injustice and merciless cruelty? Has that law—(summed up in the two great precepts before mentioned)—which was originally "holy, and just, and good," ceased to be so, in consequence of the *indisposition of men to obey it?* I say their *indisposition*:—for *such*, in truth, is the *frailty* of which these writers speak;—such alone the nature of that *inability*, which they would plead as an apology for disobedience.

A law which admits of the violation of itself, is no law. It is a contradiction in terms;—a burlesque on legislation. Are we to conceive of the supreme Lawgiver, after he has laid before us his commandments, as addressing us thus:—"Such, O ye children of men, are my laws;—but I do not, by any means, require perfect obedience to them. And although I do not specify the particular instances in which you may transgress with impunity,—although I do not say how far you may go in the violation of them, and yet escape:—yet I will not, you may rest assured, 'my frail and erring creatures,' be such a 'merciless tyrant' as to call you to a strict account for every offence!"

This leads me immediately to another question, applicable to every view that can be taken, of a relaxed and mitigated law:—What is *the extent* of this relaxation? *How far* is the law mitigated?—If this question cannot be *distinctly* answered, then are we left in total ignorance what the law is at all, by which our conduct is to be tried.

There is no fixed standard. All is thrown loose. The inclination of each individual will, in every instance, with all the deceitful self-partiality which is natural to man, be its own interpreter of the law :—and as this inclination is, in every individual, in one direction or another, an inclination *to sin*, we can be at no loss to know to what side it will invariably lean.

It is very true, that there are cases, in which the threatenings of punishment annexed to human laws cannot, with propriety, be executed ;—cases in which it is right that the penalty should be remitted. But this, it is obvious, is not an excellence in such laws. It arises from their imperfection ; that imperfection which necessarily attaches to every thing human ;—it being impossible for the laws of men to provide, with precision, for every supposable case. But to imagine any portion of such imperfection to exist in the laws of God, would be utterly inconsistent with any just views of his omniscience and infinite wisdom.

In opposition to all such views,—unworthy views as I conceive them to be,—of the law of God ; but views, which, I repeat, are, in a greater or smaller degree, inseparable from every scheme of doctrine, that rejects the atonement, and places salvation on the ground of personal obedience: —in opposition to all such views as these, consider now the light in which the law of God is presented by the doctrine which I have been endeavouring to defend.

To me it has ever appeared one of the leading excellencies and glories of the gospel, that, while it provides salvation for the guilty, it does this without the slightest infringement of the immutable perfection of that law which they have violated. *It* stands in all its original extent and purity :—unaltered, unalterable. The doctrine of salvation by grace, " through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," *proceeds upon the express assumption*, of the *absolute and unchangeable perfection of the law*. This is

the very ground on which we plead for the necessity of that doctrine; the very foundation on which we consider it as resting. It proceeds on the assumption, that the law can, in no instance, be violated with impunity;—that the awful sentence which it has pronounced, "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them," is as righteous as it is awful;—that instead of God's acting the part of a "merciless tyrant" in condemning and punishing every transgression, "he and his throne would have been guiltless," and the sinner would have had no just cause to complain of undue severity, had he inflicted this curse, in its full extent. In this way, all is as it ought to be. God holds his proper place, and man his. The law condemns the sinner, and not the sinner the law. The transgressor is saved from death;—and yet the law which he has transgressed is "magnified and made honourable:"—and the righteousness of the sentence by which he has been condemned, is, even in the very act of forgiveness, recognised, illustrated, and ratified!

But I am forgetting, you will think, my promise of brevity.—Surely I need not now put the question to any candid and humble mind—"which of these views is most fitted to inspire our minds with *respect and reverence for the Divine Law?*" which is, consequently, most fitted to fill us with the dread of violating its holy requirements; and with self-condemnation, shame, and penitential sorrow, when we *have* transgressed? And which, therefore, bears, in these respects, the most favourable aspect on the great questions of moral obligation, and accountableness to God?

II. I must now proceed to the *second* particular, which is very closely connected with the first—namely, the view given, by the atonement, of *the evil of sin.*

I have said that this particular is closely connected with

the former. For "*sin is the transgression of the law;*" and our impressions of the evil of sin will necessarily be proportioned to our conviction of the immutable "holiness, justice, and goodness" of the law. This might, of itself, so far settle the point as to this second particular. There are various other lights, however, still more clear, impressive, and convincing, in which the subject may be contemplated.

It is a common and favourite sentiment with our opponents, that the chief end of God, in creation and providence,—in the whole of his administration,—is, not, as we allege, *his own glory*, but *the diffusion of happiness among his creatures.* Were this sentiment just, it would seem to follow, that the former of these two objects is of inferior consequence to the latter; and that *on the supposition* of their coming, in any case, into competition, the glory of God should give way, and be sacrificed to the happiness of his creatures. But surely no man of sober, well-constituted mind, will seriously and deliberately affirm, that there can be any thing to which the glory of the Most High should be subordinate and subservient;—any thing to which it ought to yield. And if so, then that which is highest in importance (as every thing must be that has immediate reference to the great Supreme) must, of necessity, be first in contemplation, in every part of the Divine procedure.

The connexion of these remarks with our present subject is this. The sentiment, that the happiness of the creature is the chief and ultimate end of the Divine administration, naturally leads to another;—that *the principal evil of sin arises from its effect in destroying that happiness*, or from its tendency to the production of this effect. But this, you will at once perceive, is *low ground* to take on such a subject. *We* consider the evil of sin, as arising chiefly from the manner in which it affects the honour

of the Supreme Jehovah. Sin is rebellion against the highest authority, opposition to infinite purity, ungrateful disregard of unbounded and unmerited goodness. It is the highest, the most contemptuous affront to the Majesty of heaven. Its *tendency*, were it allowed its full operation, is, to overturn the throne of the Eternal. It aims at the annihilation of his government, of his glory, and of his very existence. It is in such views of it as these, that we are accustomed to speak of it as *an infinite evil;* a phrase, by which we do not mean to assert that, in any strict philosophical sense, the actions of a creature can possess the property of infinitude; but simply that sin, as committed against an infinite Being, is an evil of incalculable demerit, and deserving of an endless punishment.

Let us now see, whether these views of the enormity of sin be not confirmed and sanctioned by God himself, in all their extent, by that method which he has been pleased to adopt, to render the forgiveness of it consistent with the glory of his great name, and of his righteous government;—that is, *by the atonement of Jesus Christ.*

O what a view, my brethren, what an affecting, what an overwhelming view, is here given, of the demerit of sin, in the estimate of a just and holy God!—Has *He* considered sin as standing in need of *such an expiation!* —not the mediation of a creature, even of the highest order, but the incarnation of a Divine person—the sufferings and death of "the man who was his fellow;" even of him whose name is "Immanuel, God with us?" Can we conceive a declaration more impressive than this, that sin is "that abominable thing which he hates?"—no light, no trivial, no venial evil—but indeed "exceeding sinful?"— In proportion as sin is lightly thought of, it will be readily committed. But oh! who, with Gethsemane and Calvary before his eyes, can ever think lightly of sin? Who that contemplates, not the bodily tortures merely; not the scorn.

and reproach, and "cruel mockings" only; not all the sufferings, of every description, which it was in the power of men alone to inflict;—but those deep, mysterious, inward agonies, which must have oppressed the soul of "the man Christ Jesus," when it was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;"—when "his sweat was like great drops of blood falling down to the ground;" and when, on the cross, he cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—who, I say, that contemplates this amazing scene, in the full remembrance of what he was, who thus suffered, can ever think lightly of sin—of sin, the accursed cause of all;—of sin, that infused into his cup of suffering all its bitter ingredients;—of sin, that sharpened, and barbed, and dipped, those "arrows of the Almighty," the "poison whereof drank up his spirit!"

Where there are low thoughts of sin, there will, of course, be low thoughts of its punishment:—doubts, possibly, whether, in some instances at least, it will be punished at all; and, at any rate, slight impressions of the nature and extent of the punishment which it shall incur.

I am not going to enter into any general proof of the inevitable certainty, and of the fearful nature, of future punishment. But look at the cross. Here is evidence enough. Who can contemplate Calvary, in the light in which *we* view it, and retain a doubt, for a single moment, in his mind, whether it be the Divine determination to punish sin? That it cannot pass with impunity under his holy government, was written of old, on every altar, in the blood of every expiatory victim; and it is now written on the cross, in the blood of the Son of God. And while the atoning death of the Redeemer decides the *certainty* of future punishment; the same event is enough, surely, to make the heart of every one to "meditate terror," who goes on in his trespasses, and neglects the great salvation. It could not

be to deliver from any slight or temporary punishment, that all this scene of wonders was acted;—that God appeared on earth "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and, in the nature, which he had assumed, into personal union with his own, "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." There would, on this supposition, be no reasonable proportion between the end and the means of its attainment;—between the evil, from which deliverance was to be effected, and the price, at which this deliverance has been obtained. It is a remarkable fact, that the strongest language in the Bible respecting future punishment, is the language used by the gentle and compassionate Saviour. *He* speaks of "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" of "outer darkness;" of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched." From this fearful doom, thus expressed by himself, he came to save the guilty children of men; and the wonderful means by which he effected this salvation, harmonize with, and solemnly confirm, the energy of his expressions. In *this* respect, as well as in many others, it is indeed, "*a great salvation.*"

I again leave it with yourselves to judge, whether the views now given of the atonement of Christ, or the views of those who, affirming the sufficiency of the mere repentance of the sinner, apart from any other consideration, to obtain his forgiveness, deny that any atonement was requisite, and that any has been made;—whether the one or the other of these opposite views be most calculated to impress the mind with a proper sense of the demerit of sin, and, as a practical consequence, to deter and restrain from the commission of it.

The views of sin, of human nature, and of the state and prospects of man, which are exhibited so impressively by the doctrine of atonement, are, it is true, deeply humbling. And there is reason to believe, that their mortifying ten-

dency is one great cause of their rejection; I do not mean by Unitarians only, but by multitudes besides. It is a part, and no small part, of "the offence of the cross."—And yet, to enlightened reason, their humbling nature ought to be one of their chief recommendations. It is right, surely, that *every* creature should be humble before God: and it is peculiarly reasonable that a *sinful* and *guilty* creature should be thus humble. There is no pride, indeed, to be found in the universe, except in the breasts of fallen creatures; that is, where of all places it ought least to be found. There is pride on earth. There is pride in hell. There is no pride in heaven. It was pride, in the form of ambition, that originally seduced man from his allegiance to God. Pride was thus the first principle of transgression: and it is pride, in all its variety of kinds, that still maintains and cherishes the spirit of rebellion. Surely then it can never be deemed right, that the means, by which man is restored to the favour of God, and blessed with pardon and life, should be of such a nature as to gratify and foster the very principle that seduced him, and that keeps him astray! No. This pride must be subdued. This spirit of elation, of self-dependence, and self-sufficiency, must be broken. "The lofty looks of man must be humbled, and the haughtiness of man must be bowed down, and the Lord alone must be exalted." The mind that does not instantly perceive, and feel, the *propriety* of this, must be, to a melancholy degree, under the perverting influence of the very principle in question;—a principle, whose dominion in the soul it is the first effect of the gospel to overthrow. In the New Testament, accordingly, *humility* is represented as one of the first and most essential qualities in the character of the true disciple of Jesus: and experience has universally taught, that every other Christian virtue will flourish in the same proportion in which

it prevails. The graces of the Christian life cannot thrive in the same soil with pride. It is one of those weeds, of rank luxuriance, which "choke the word, and render it unfruitful." And while humility in general is thus essential, the first sentiment, I would observe, of genuine Christian humility, is, *an abasing sense of guilt and of utter unworthiness in the sight of God*;—the sentiment of the publican, when, "standing afar off, he would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner!"—This sentiment is learned, this feeling inspired, at the foot of the cross. It is here that the sinner first knows himself;—here that his heart is broken;—here that he is emptied of highminded self-complacency;—here that his whole character receives the impression of the lowliness and meekness of Christ. For the humility which here takes possession of his soul, is not so properly a separate and independent virtue, as a general state of heart, that diffuses its benign influence through all the character;—not a distinct feature of the countenance, but that which imparts to all the features their combined expression of loveliness; not a particular object in the landscape, but the mild and mellow evening-light, which pervades, and softens, and beautifies the whole.

III. I must now proceed, *in the third place*, to consider the practical influence of those views, which are presented by the atonement, of *the character of God*.

I had occasion to observe, in last discourse, that "such a view of the Divine Being is presented in the Cross, as is precisely calculated to inspire and to maintain (to maintain, too, with a power, which will increase in influence, the more closely and seriously the view is contemplated) the two great principles of a holy life, the *love* and the *fear* of God; filial attachment, freedom, and confidence, combined with humble reverence, and holy dread." I

shall, at present, illustrate a little further this general sentiment.

These two sacred principles are to be considered as mutually partaking of each other:—*affectionate fear*—*reverential love.* This happy union is produced by a believing view of the combined perfections of God;—just such a view as is exhibited in the atonement, where, as we have seen, "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other;"—where God appears in all the majesty of offended holiness and inflexible justice, and, at the same time, "delighting in mercy." The two characters, "*God is Light,*" and "*God is Love,*" are alike illustrated by the atonement of Jesus:—the latter inspiring us with joyful confidence, and the former with holy awe; the latter encouraging us to draw nigh, while the former makes us still to feel our infinite distance;—so that while we approach with boldness to the *throne of grace*, we are not allowed to forget that it is the *throne of holiness.*

We have been often represented, when we speak of God as requiring satisfaction to his justice in order to the exercise of his mercy, as exhibiting him in the character of a gloomy and vindictive tyrant. The views laid before you, in the last Discourse, of the nature and proper design of the atonement, may suffice to convince you of the entire falsehood of such representations of our sentiments. I have now, however, to add, as a circumstance peculiarly worthy of notice, that, while our opponents reprobate the doctrine of atonement, in terms of indignant severity, as being an unworthy libel on the infinite goodness of the Divine Nature, this very doctrine is held forth in the Scriptures, as the most interesting and impressive manifestation of that goodness;—as the grand evidence of that most blessed truth, that "*God is love.*" "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein was mani-

fested 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 :"—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life :"—"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."*

This, I say, is a remarkable circumstance. We learn the existence and the degree of God's love from what it has done. The general goodness of the universal Parent, is strikingly discernible in creation and providence :— "his tender mercies are over all his works." These displays of his goodness are far from being overlooked, in the Scriptures, as reasons for the gratitude of his intelligent creatures. But the gift of his Son, to die for sinners, is still represented as his chief mercy;—his "unspeakable gift;" a display of his love by which all the other manifestations of it are thrown into eclipse. It has been eloquently and justly denominated, "the noon-tide of everlasting love, the meridian splendour of eternal mercy."

This display of the love of God,—of the freedom and the riches of his mercy, is pressed upon the attention of the disciple of Jesus, as furnishing the great motive to practical godliness. The text feelingly appeals to it. And the apostle takes his stand on the same ground, when he says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;

* 1 John iv. 8—10. John iii. 16. Rom. v. 6—8.

—and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God:" —and so does the apostle Peter, in a passage of his first epistle formerly quoted, "— pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know, 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."*

It is not the value of the blessings of salvation themselves only, (unspeakably precious though they be) that constitutes the most affecting display of the love of God: —it is the wonderful medium through which these blessings are bestowed. It is not merely that "*God hath given to us eternal life,*" but that "*this life is in his Son:*— it is not "*redemption*" only, but "redemption *through his blood,*" that manifests the "*riches*" of Divine "*grace.*" That *such* a mediator should be appointed!—that *such* an expiation should be made! It is *here*, that we "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." It is *this*, above every thing else, that binds and attaches the heart in grateful love. The motive comes home to the bosom of every child of God, with melting and mighty persuasion:—

"O what a scale of miracles is here!
Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
Through means, which speak its value infinite!
A pardon bought with blood! with blood Divine!
With blood Divine of him I made my foe!
Persisted to provoke—though awed and wooed,
Blessed and chastised, a flagrant rebel still,
A rebel, 'midst the thunders of his throne!
Nor I alone:—a rebel universe!
My species up in arms! not one exempt!
Yet for the foulest of the foul he dies!"

* Rom. xii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 17, 18.

The means by which we are brought to the possession of the blessings of salvation stamp a value on these blessings themselves. And who, let me now ask, will feel the obligation of gratitude for these blessings most powerfully?—Certainly, *in the first place*, the man who accounts himself *most unworthy of them.* He who fancies that he has the ground of his acceptance and salvation *in himself*, can never feel the same measure of grateful love, as he does, who, viewing himself as a *lost* creature, utterly helpless and hopeless; looks for eternal life as "the *gift of God* through Jesus Christ our Lord,"—bestowed "not for works of righteousness which he hath done, but according to God's mercy;" who feels and acknowledges himself "a debtor to mercy alone,"—to free, unconditional mercy. A sense of unworthiness, and a sense of obligation, must always be commensurate with each other. Unless we are sensible that God would be just in condemning us, we cannot be thankful for his pardoning us. The criminal who is not satisfied that he *deserves to die*, will feel but a slight measure of obligation to him who grants him his life. *In the second place*, he will be most thankful, who has on his mind the strongest impression of *the difficulties that lay in the way of his salvation.* Such, for example, as these:—the *enormity of sin;* —how is it possible that the God of infinite purity can pass it by?—the *claims of justice;*—how can these be made consistent with the pleadings of mercy?—the *demands of truth;*—how can God fulfil his threatenings against sin, and yet the sinner escape?—the *good of the creation;*—how shall guilty creatures be pardoned,—how shall rebels be restored to favour, and to the privileges of loyal subjects, and yet no encouragement be given to sin,—no temptation be held out to rebellion? He who perceives these difficulties, in their true nature and magnitude, and who sees how the infinite wisdom of God has combined with his

infinite goodness, effectually to solve them, by the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ, must surely feel a degree of gratitude, such as can never be experienced by him who reckons the whole scheme a useless incumbrance. If *grateful love*, then, be a motive to cheerful and active obedience, judge ye where the power of this moral spring is likely to be strongest, and most efficient. Jesus Christ has himself decided this point. "Simon," said he, in answer to the injurious surmises of the Pharisee, in whose house he received the expressions of affectionate penitence from the woman who had been a sinner, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he said, Master, say on. A certain creditor 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 thy 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."* That doctrine, then, which presents the most impressive and heart-abasing view of the evil nature of our sins, of their number and aggravations, and of the riches of Divine grace in their forgiveness, must, on the principle which is thus laid down, be the doctrine that is most of

* Luke vii. 40—47.

all fitted to inspire the heart with the fervour of grateful love to the God of salvation.

But all this, some may be disposed to say, is *selfish*. No, my friends. The love to God, of which I now speak, is, indeed, *associated*, in its exercise, with the exercise of *self-love*. And how *can* it be otherwise? Self-love is an essential principle in the constitution of our nature: and we are no where taught, in the Scriptures, to cultivate love to God, as if it were the love of *mere abstract excellence*; but as the love of a being who bears a relation, the highest, the most sacred, the most interesting of all relations, *to ourselves*; a relation, pregnant with the most important results, either of evil or of good. "We love him, because he first loved us." His love to us, however, is love *in union with holiness*; and complacent delight in this holiness is implied in that love with which we return it. While we love him *for what he hath done*, we love him also *for what he is*. We love him for *his whole character*.

This love, it should be again recollected, is associated, inseparably, with "godly fear." From a natural wish to find the character of God as favourable as possible to ourselves, we are in danger of lending a ready ear to the representations of those who speak of him as *all mercy, all compassion*; and of overlooking certain other views of his character which are also given in the Scriptures. Not that *too much* is said, or can be said, of his mercy and compassion; for no terms in human language can exceed, or can even express, that which is *infinite*: but that *too little* is said of such of his perfections as are of an awful and alarming nature. "God is jealous, and Jehovah revengeth: Jehovah revengeth and is furious: Jehovah will take vengeance on his enemies; and he reserveth wrath for his adversaries. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?"

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men:" "Even our God is a consuming fire."* "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."†

What do such expressions mean? That the infinite God is agitated by the emotions of turbulent passion? No. But they certainly express, they express strongly, they express in the only way, perhaps, in which the solemn truth could have been impressed on our minds, *the judicial displeasure* of God against sin:—and the design of them all is to deepen in our hearts the reverential fear of "*that glorious and fearful Name, the Lord our God.*"‡ The admonition implied in them all is, "Fear not them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him."§

Now the meaning, the awful meaning of *all* such expressions, is, as it were, concentrated in the cross of Christ. They were all repeated, in their full emphasis, by the voice of God himself, when Jesus "bowed his

* Και γαρ ὁ Θεος ἡμων πυρ καταναλισκον.—In our translation the και is entirely left out: "For our God is a consuming fire:" and many people seem afraid to quote the words, except in the form of a paraphrase—"a God out of Christ is a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity." This is a truth; but not the truth the apostle intended to express. The meaning seems to be, that the God of the gospel is the same with the God of the law:—that his character has undergone no change; that he is *still*, as of old, "a consuming fire, even a jealous God;" that his mercy in the gospel is in perfect consistency with his avenging jealousy of his glory:—and that, therefore, while we serve him "*acceptably*" through Christ, we must, at the same time, serve him "*with reverence and godly fear:*"—"for *even* our God," (such seems to be the effect of the και) "is a consuming fire."

† Nahum i. 2, 6. Rom. i. 18. Heb. xii. 29. x. 31.

‡ Deut. xxviii. 58. § Luke xii. 4, 5.

head, and gave up the ghost." For never was there so alarming a display made of God's abhorrence of sin, and of his avenging jealousy of his glory. But, let us not forget the point to which all these observations tend. The display of holy indignation was made by *the God of love*: and the display of love, equally conspicuous in the same event, was made by *the God of holiness*. And by the contemplation of this union of holiness and grace, of wrath against sin, and mercy to the sinner, there is produced, in our hearts, a corresponding union of *fear* and *love*;—a union of principles, which constitutes the foundation of all that is excellent in Christian character. In the whole conduct of the servant of Christ, in all its departments, the influence of this union appears. In his approaches to the throne of grace, fear produces an humble reverence of address, while love dictates the ardent expressions of filial confidence and delight:—in the general course of his obedience, fear makes him jealous of himself, with a trembling diffidence and caution: while love makes his heart and his countenance cheerful, his feet swift, and his hands active and vigorous, in the service of his Master:—his sorrow for sin is at once the solemn dread of Divine displeasure, and the meltings of love to an offended Father; the view of the cross, as a display of wrath and of mercy, inspiring both the one and the other:—fear makes him shun all that is displeasing to God; love incites him to pursue all that he approves:—in affliction, fear fills him with self-suspicion, and leads him to self-examination; yet, while he trembles at the rod, and is full of heaviness, love inspires complacent and cheerful resignation to the wise and gracious appointments, as he believes them to be, of his heavenly Father:—in prosperity, fear shuns, with anxious apprehension, the abuse of the bounties of heaven; and love, with a full and glowing heart, devotes all to the glory of the Giver:—throughout life, fear guides,

and love animates him:—in death, fear makes him serious, and love triumphant.

IV. Let me now direct your attention to another principle of Christian obedience, to which there is frequent reference in the New Testament,—I mean, LOVE TO CHRIST; and consider, for a little, the influence of the doctrine I have been endeavouring to defend, in producing and maintaining it.

That this love is an essential part of the Christian character, is evident, as I had occasion to mention in the second of these Discourses, from such passages of Scripture as these: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me:"—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:"—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha."* That it is one of the main springs of a holy life, is also clear from the language both of Christ and his apostles; and, I might add, from the experience of all his true disciples: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. If a man love me, he will keep my words: he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings:"—"The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again."†

On this subject, my brethren, we have been insidiously represented, as putting love to Christ in the room, as it were, of love to God; as withholding from the Father, in proportion as we give to the Son; nay, as even confining our gratitude to the Son, as one who has interposed to

* Matth. x. 37. Eph. vi. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

† John xiv. 15. 21—24. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

save us from the vindictive fury of the Father, to whom, therefore, it is more than insinuated, we can have no great measure of good will.* After having said so much on the character of God in last discourse, and on love to God in this, I need hardly, I presume, assert the groundlessness and falsehood of such a charge. I may, however, appeal to experience. Is it, then, indeed so, ye lovers of the Lord Jesus? Is it indeed so, in your experience, that your love to the father diminishes as your love to the Son increases? Do you not rather find, that in the affections of your hearts, as well as in their essence, "Christ and the Father are one?—that love to the one keeps pace with love to the other? Are you not disposed to say, with the very same fervour of grateful affection, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"—"blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he hath visited and redeemed his

* "The Father and the Son are commonly represented as distinct beings, of different, and even opposite characters; the Father, stern, severe, and inflexible; the Son all gentleness and compassion; submitting to bear his Father's wrath, and to appease his anger, by substituting himself in the stead of the sinner. It is impossible to regard these two characters with equal affection; and the love of the imaginary Christ robs the living and true God of his honour and homage." Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, pages 126, 127.—"——the imaginary person, to whom they ascribe the attributes of Divinity, and who is, to such a degree, the rival of the true and living God in their affections." Ibid page 128.—"I must also observe, that, as the God of this system is a Being of such stern severity, and, indeed, malignity, it is natural for those, who receive it, willingly to imagine the existence of a second person, who, being invested with all the amiable attributes of Deity, and having also voluntarily submitted, in an incarnate form, to bear the wrath of God for the benefit of believers, becomes really the object of religious complacency, gratitude, and confidence, and occupies that place in the mind, which properly belongs to the one living and true God." Ibid page 167.—The gross injustice and falsehood of such representations, will be perceived at once, by every candid and attentive reader of this and the preceding Discourse; and will be *felt* by every one who has "tasted that the Lord is gracious."

people!" and, "To 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 forever and ever!" Is it not the delight of your hearts to combine the praises of both—"Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb!"

"Glory be to Him who gave us,
Freely gave his Son to save us;
Glory to the Son who came!"

It requires but the glance of a moment, to discern the difference between the systems here. The obligation, in the one case, is less than nothing, when compared with that in the other. In the one case, we have a *fellow-creature*, a *fellow-man*, a *prophet*, commissioned of God to declare to us his truth and his will; to confirm, by miracles, the certainty of a future state; to show us, by his precepts, the paths of virtue: to set before us an example of obedience; to seal his testimony by his death; and by his own resurrection to assure us of the future resurrection of mankind from the grave. In the other case, (for I cannot use more appropriate language than that of the apostle, although it has already been more than once referred to) we have Him "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,"—(or "to be *as* God;" not, however, in the way of mere *resemblance*, but of *equality*, "to be *on an equality* with God")*—yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

"Who, being in the form of God," say our Unitarian opponents, "thought it not *a prey* to be *as God*," that is, "*Being in the form of God*," by the communication of

* See Note I.

Divine power and wisdom, "did not *eagerly grasp at the resemblance to God:*" which seems to amount to no more than this; that, *possessing resemblance to God, he did not eagerly grasp at that which he already possessed!*—But apart from all criticism, (for the passage would require more minute verbal discussion than befits this place)—apart, I say, from all criticism, and without going further into the passage than this first clause; I would seriously ask those, who thus interpret it, if they really think it *possible* that this can be its true meaning? Is it then to be the peculiar subject of our admiration and astonishment; is it held up to us as the example which, of all examples, we are most sedulously to imitate; that a creature, a man, possessing, by Divine communication, a singular portion of miraculous power and wisdom, did not pervert these high endowments to his own selfish ends!—that he was not guilty of the most heaven-daring presumption and impiety!—that he absolutely did not so abuse the gifts bestowed upon him, as to enter into a kind of competition for glory with that Supreme Being from whom he derived his wisdom and his power!—*Is* this, I ask, *can* this *be*—the singular virtue, which we are called to admire and to imitate, as the brightest model of excellence that ever was exhibited on earth?—And, what is more immediately to our present purpose, where, according to this interpretation, is the amazing condescension and benevolence of the Saviour? Is *this* "the height and depth, and breadth and length, of the love of Christ, which *passeth knowledge?*" —Is there in *this* any thing so incomprehensible—so utterly beyond the grasp of the most capacious mind?—The unnatural and vapid tameness of such an exposition is, of itself, sufficient to condemn it. It unnerves and paralizes the whole strength of the passage. It evaporates all its spirit, and freezes every syllable of it to very ice.

But when, on the contrary, we consider Jesus as *God*

in our nature; well may his love constrain us to "live not to ourselves, but to him who died for us and rose again." In himself he is infinitely amiable; and therefore worthy of being supremely loved for *what he is*. And oh! how shall we estimate, how shall we feel, how shall we express, the extent of our obligation to him? Whether we consider *his* disinterestedness, *our* unworthiness, the value of the blessings bestowed, or the expense at which they are procured;—we find, in every view, abundant matter for songs of adoring praise. *Here* is, *indeed*, a "length and breadth, a depth and height, passing all knowledge:"—nor shall we ever, while in this world, have any adequate conception of the nature and extent of our obligations to this love. We shall not fully comprehend it, till we shall read the lesson in the light of heaven;—till we come to know, by immediate possession, the joys of eternity. To the blessed hope of these immortal joys, it is *He* that hath brought us. He hath redeemed us from despair;—from the "fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation:"—he hath "*bought us with a price.*" Let "the life, then, which we now live in the flesh, be regulated by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us."* Yes; "*gave Himself for Us!*" And for what end? "That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"† *Let* us then, my Christian brethren, *be* thus "zealous of good works." Never let us oppose the purpose of such infinite love. As we "name the name of Christ," let us "depart from all iniquity."‡ Under the constant impression of his remembered love, let his affecting and authoritative expostulation touch our hearts, and permanently influence our whole conduct—"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the

* Gal. ii. 20. † Titus ii. 14. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

things which I say?"* Let us exemplify the power of that sacred impulse which is given to all the affections of the soul, to all the inward springs of action, by this one great principle of love to the Divine Redeemer.

> "Talk they of morals?—O thou bleeding Love,
> "The grand morality is love of thee!"

V. and VI. The two remaining particulars I shall illustrate together, because they are very closely connected with each other:—the *relation into which the atonement brings us to God;* and the view which it presents of the *necessity of holiness.*

We belong to God *as creatures;*—creation necessarily implying an indisputable right of property, on the part of the Creator, in the creatures of his hand, as well as a claim for their services, and for the devotion to himself of all they are, and all they have. But the text refers to a different ground of property, to a different claim on God's part, and obligation, thence arising, on ours. It represents us as his *by purchase*:—"Ye are not your own, for ye are *bought with a price; therefore* glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Through the blood of Christ, as the price of our redemption, and through faith in the atonement made by that blood, we become the property of God; his peculiar people; his purchased possession. The design of the blessed God in bringing us into this relation to himself, ought never to be overlooked or forgotten:—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, (a people acquired by purchase, as a peculiar property), *that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*"† I have already insisted on the obligation of *gratitude* which this implies. But there is also, what

* Luke vi. 46. † 1 Pet. ii. 9.

may, without impropriety, be termed the *obligation of consistency.* We become *his;* his in body and in spirit; in every member and power of the one, and in every faculty and capacity of the other. We feel ourselves his: and we ask, "*How ought they to live who are thus his?*" The text answers the question: and the general idea of consistency is marked, in a variety of points of view in the apostolic writings. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves, to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God:"—"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men:"—"We exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father doth his children) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory:"—"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called:"—"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord:"—"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch, and be sober:"—"If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things, which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify, therefore, your mem-

bers which are upon the earth."* In these and similar ways, do the inspired writers exhibit to the disciples their various relations, to God, to Christ, and to the future world, and urge them, by what I have termed the obligation of consistency, to a corresponding course of behaviour.

The *necessity of holiness* most strikingly appears, when we consider the character of that Being, whose we become through the atoning blood of Jesus. We are the purchased people, the property, the servants, the children, of the HOLY GOD. "This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."† In the following passage, these two descriptions of obligation—the obligation of consistency, and the obligation of gratitude, are most impressively combined:—"Wherefore, gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition

* Rom. vi. 11—13. 1 Cor. vii. 23. 1 Thes. ii. 12. Eph. iv. 1. v. 8. 1 Thes. v. 5, 6. Col. iii. 1—5.

† 1 John i. 5—7.

from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot."*

Besides :—we cannot for a single moment imagine the possibility of God's appointing an atonement, to save sinners from the guilt of sin, and from its punishment, and not, at the same time, to save them from sin itself. If it was the design of God, by means of the atonement, to bring sinners to *happiness*, it *must* have been his design to bring them to *holiness*. For he could not make them happy, without making them holy. If we can form any distinct idea at all of what philosophers mean by the *eternal fitness of things*, we surely see such fitness, in the establishment of an inseparable connexion between holiness and happiness, and between sin and misery. The designs of God are all worthy of himself. Two things were lost by the fall of man ;—the Divine *favour*, and the Divine *image*. It is the purpose of God, by the gospel, *to restore both*. It never was, and never could be his intention, to bring the guilty back to his *favour*, by means of an atonement, and to leave them destitute of his *moral likeness*. No. The restoration of the latter is as immediately the object of the Divine Being, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the restoration of the former. Let no one, therefore, imagine, that he *can* possess an interest in the Divine favour, through the atonement, while he is not renewed after the Divine image. The two go uniformly together. The latter is, as really as the former, *a part of our salvation*. This shows, in the strongest light, the necessity of holiness. For if we continue unrenewed in the spirit of our minds, one part of the Divine purpose, in the atonement of Christ, is not accomplished in us ; and without it, we have not only no good ground to believe that the other is, but the best reason to believe that it is not. and that " the wrath of God still abideth on us !"

* 1 Peter i. 18—19.

The atonement of Christ was intended to express, and did most affectingly express, the Divine abhorrence of sin: could it possibly be, at the same time, intended as the publication of an act of indulgence? It was designed to "magnify the law, and make it honourable:" could it be designed, at the same time, to "make it void?"—to annihilate, or to relax, its obligation? No, my brethren. We are "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." We do not, indeed, trust to the law, as the ground of our acceptance with God. For, conscious as we are that we have broken the law, *many* parts of it *in practice*, and *every* part of it in its great general *principle* of supreme and perfect love to God; and convinced that a broken law condemns, and can never justify us;—we have gladly betaken ourselves to that "grace," which "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." But while, renouncing all self-dependence, we acknowledge ourselves "accepted *in the Beloved*," it is still our desire to make the law of God the rule of our duty; to have the affections of our hearts, the words of our lips, and the actions of our lives, increasingly conformed to its holy dictates. We are well aware, that otherwise than by such conformity, we cannot fulfil the injunction of the text, to "glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are God's." And we know also, that we can have no satisfactory evidence that we are of those who are "*in Christ Jesus*," and "*to whom there is no condemnation*," unless we "*walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"*

I have thus, very imperfectly, set before you some of those considerations, which serve to vindicate, and to establish, the practical influence of the doctrine of salvation through the atonement of Christ. In preaching this doctrine, with its collateral truths, we feel no sort of appre-

* Rom. viii. 1.

hension with regard to the consequences. We are sure, that if any sinner embrace the doctrine in good earnest, he will instantly perceive the reasonableness, and feel the force, of the obligation stated in the text. He will begin a new life. He will "walk with God." He will live to him who died for him, and rose again." So uniform and invariable is this consequence, in every instance in which the gospel is received in the love of it, that no man, according to the Scriptures, is to be accounted a believer of its doctrines, whom "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" hath not "taught to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The man who "names the name of Christ," while he does not "depart from iniquity;" who professes to confide in his grace, and in his atoning sacrifice, while he obeys not his will, but "walks according to the course of this world," must be either a self-deceiver or a hypocrite; either imposing on others by a false profession, or a melancholy victim of the deceitfulness of his own heart.

When we say that, in preaching the doctrine of "justification by free grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," we preach a doctrine that is *consistent* with the interests of practical godliness, we occupy ground that is by far too low; as if we had done enough when we have merely shown that the two are *compatible*. We must go farther than this. The Scriptures represent the faith of this doctrine, as the great and only principle from which true practical godliness can arise; the only soil in which the genuine fruits of righteousness can grow;—the only basis on which the beautiful superstructure of a holy life can be effectually reared. The apostle Paul enjoins on Titus, that he should incessantly inculcate the doctrines of grace, not merely because in so doing there was *no danger* to the interests of morality, but as the only

efficacious means of maintaining and promoting the practice of true morality among the followers of Christ. "After that the kindness, and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and *these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that* they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*†

Of what unspeakable consequence is it, my brethren in Christ, to the honour of your God and Redeemer, to your own happiness, and to the spiritual and eternal interests of your fellow sinners, that you study to maintain a consistent course of conduct, "adorning the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things,"—"giving no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully!" You are aware of the foul aspersion that has been thrown on evangelical doctrine, as if its tendency was to hold out encouragement to sinful indulgence. Let your conduct, I beseech you, give this aspersion the lie. Live it down. Show to all

* ΊΝΑ—*in order that—to the end that* they who have believed in God, &c.—"These things," adds the apostle,—viz. the things which he had just enjoined him to affirm constantly—"these things are good and profitable"—or "these are the things that are good and profitable unto men;"—ταυτα εστι τα καλα και ωφελιμα τοις ανθρωποις. They were good and profitable *on account* of their practical tendency and effects. And these *good* and *profitable* doctrines he immediately contrasts with those things on which a particular description of teachers were accustomed to insist, but of which the nature and tendency were widely different:—"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions about the law; for they are *un*profitable and *vain*."

† Titus iii. 4—8.

around you that it is a calumny; the offspring of malignant hostility to the gospel, and to that holiness which the faith of it invariably produces. If men *will* "speak evil of you," O let it be "falsely." In the midst of *such* reproach, you will enjoy what is infinitely more than a counterbalance to it, the blessing of your Divine Master:—"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!"—"Put to silence, by well doing, the ignorance of foolish men:" and, pitying the delusion of heart which dictates their groundless reflections against your religious principles, strive to gain them to Christ, by exhibiting, in connexion with your Christian profession, all the amiable virtues of the Christian life.—"Giving all diligence, add to your faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be idle, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

And O! let mere nominal Christians be alarmed. *You* are the chief cause of this foul and false aspersion cast on the gospel of Christ. You, who "have a *form* of godliness, but deny its *power*: You, who bear the *name* of Christ, but do not bear his *image*: You, who make his

* 2 Pet. i. 5—11.

atonement an article of your professed creed, but remain unsanctified by the truth which you profess to believe: You, who seek to serve God and mammon; to unite the love of the world with the love of Christ: You, who are satisfied with being members of a Christian community, with having been baptized in your infancy, (or perhaps, in your adult years) with an external attendance on the ordinances of God, with getting the appellation of Christians from your neighbours, and, it may be, from your ministers, while the world, after all, has your hearts: *You* are the chief cause of this false reproach. I mean not to *rail* at you: I would rather most affectionately *warn* you. Of what avail, permit me to ask you, is the *profession* of faith in Christ, without the *reality*? Will it sooth and satisfy an accusing conscience? Will it comfort you in trouble? Will it support you in death? Will it sustain and acquit you in judgment?—Let me entreat you, as you value your eternal interests, to be *in earnest* about religion. The salvation of your souls, if it be worth any thing, is worth every thing. And without it, indeed, every thing else is worth nothing. Give up, then, your attempts at compromise between God and the world; and be decided. Halt not between two opinions. *Appear* on the side of God. *Be known* as the disciples of Christ. Remember what he hath said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."*

* Luke ix. 23—26.

Then might we say to you,—for *then* you would *feel the meaning of the words*,—(and O that *all* present so felt their lost condition as sinners, and so felt their obligations to the only Saviour, and to the mercy of God in him, that *to all* we might address them!)—"*Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God, in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are God's.*"

DISCOURSE IX.

ON THE DIVINITY AND PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MATTH. xxviii. 19.

"GO, TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST."

I SHOULD have no objection, with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, to take my stand in this text.—It would, perhaps, be going too far to say, that I should certainly be a firm believer of this doctrine, if there were not another passage in the Bible affirming it:—because, as I have more than once hinted before, I should expect an article of so much importance to hold a more prominent place in the revelation which contained it. Yet, even on this supposition, I know not well how I could have interpreted the text, according to any thing like its plain and obvious meaning, and, at the same time, have remained an unbeliever of the doctrine.

That the initiatory ordinance of baptism, prescribed in these words, involves in it an act of solemn worship, an invocation of the thrice-holy Name in which it is administered, is beyond all dispute. Now, how (as was remarked in the first of this series of Discourses,) how can we imagine any thing more fitted to mislead, than the supposition, that "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Spirit," means, the name of the only true God, and of one of his human creatures, and of an attribute, or power, or influence, or mode of operation? On the Trinitarian hypothesis, the form is natural, and proper. On that of its adversaries, it appears to be utterly irreconcilable with right notions, and becoming impressions, of the peculiar honour due to Him who "will not give his glory to another."

The very form of expression seems to convey the idea, not only of a Trinity of persons, but of that Trinity as subsisting in the one Godhead:—baptizing them in—(or *into*, for the change of translation does not at all affect the present argument)—baptizing them in *the Name*,—not the *names*,—but the *one name*, of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." If, however, it should be insisted, that "*the name*" is to be supplied before each,—"in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit;"—then, what are we to make of this last phrase, "*the name of the Holy Spirit*," if the Holy Spirit means an attribute, or a power, or influence? An attribute of Deity it cannot, indeed, be supposed to mean: for all the attributes of Deity are, of course, included in "*the name of the Father*," previously mentioned; and to baptize in the name of one of his attributes, after having baptized in his own name, while the thing itself is most unnatural, would certainly be a very vain repetition. It must mean, then, a *communicated power* or *influence*. But what, in that case, are we to understand by being baptized in, or into *the name of this influence?* In answer to this question, our opponents shall speak for themselves. After quoting the words of our text, one of them, deservedly eminent, thus writes,—and others agree with him: "*that is*, 'Go ye therefore into all the world, and teach, or disciple all nations, baptizing them into the profession of faith in, and an obligation to obey, the doc-

trine taught by Christ, with authority from God the Father, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost.' "* But if this was our Lord's meaning, why did he not plainly express it? It would surely have been quite as easy to convey this idea in simple and direct terms, as in a form so strange and enigmatical as that in our text. And here, I may remark, by the way, lies one great general objection to a vast number of the interpretations of Scripture given by our opponents. When they say, "*that is*," and subjoin their explanation, they make the writers and speakers use language, such as no man of common understanding, provided he had other words within his power, would ever think of employing, to express the sentiment which his interpreters affirm he intended to convey. When we read their interpretations, the question is perpetually recurring, "If these writers really meant this, why did not they say so in plain terms? This is an idea sufficiently simple;—one which, setting inspiration out of the question, they could have been at no loss to express, so as to have been at once distinctly understood. Why, then, have not they done so? Why have they chosen to be unintelligible? Why have they adopted phraseology so unnatural and ambiguous?—phraseology, such as not one man in a thousand would ever have imagined to convey the sense which you are pleased to affix to it?"

But further: the writer above referred to explains his meaning as follows: "By the Holy Ghost, as I apprehend, we are here to understand, the miracles of our Saviour's ministry, and likewise the miracles wrought by his apostles, and the spiritual gifts bestowed on the apostles, and other disciples of Jesus, and all believers in general, soon after our Lord's ascension, and all the miracu-

* Lardner's First Postscript to his Letter on the Logos. Works, vol. XI. page 147.

lous attestations of the truth and Divine original of the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ."* According to this explanation, "*the Holy Ghost*," in our text, means *miracles and spiritual gifts*:—and "*the name of the Holy Ghost*" must, of course, mean, *the name of these miracles and spiritual gifts!* What unaccountable phraseology is this!—according to which, being *baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit* is the expression chosen, to convey the simple idea, of being baptized into the profession of a religion, of which the truth was confirmed by miracles!—And this strange, anomalous language, we must conceive to have been used by Him who "spoke as never man spoke." If, indeed, the glosses of our opponents, on this, and some other occasions, were just, he certainly *did* speak as never man spoke; although in a sense of the expression very different from the true one.

That this passage has always been felt by Antitrinitarians, as a strong one against their system, appears very strikingly from the disposition evinced by some of them in ancient times, to improve upon the words of Christ: "*In the name of the Father*," said they, "*and through the Son, and by, or in, the Holy Ghost.*" This *shyness* indeed, of the plain phraseology of the Scriptures, is characteristic of their system; and affords, of itself, a strong presumption, that it has not the countenance of the Bible!

I have endeavoured, on former occasions, to show, with respect to the *second* of the persons mentioned in our text, how far the supposition is from being true, which I made at the commencement of this Discourse;—the supposition, that is, of this being the only text affirming the Trinity of persons in the Godhead. It is my design, in the present Discourse, to do the same with regard to the *third*—the HOLY SPIRIT. I must, therefore, take leave, for a while, of my text, and enter on a more general discussion of this subject.

* Lardner, Ibidem.

I suppose it will readily be admitted, that *if there be a plurality of persons at all* in the one Godhead, that plurality is a *Trinity*. For, although the views of the doctrine of the Trinity, held by those who have attempted to explain it, have been various; yet *Trinity* and *unity*, (taking the latter term in the sense affixed to it by Anti-trinitarians) are, properly, the only two hypotheses on the subject. All who believe the doctrine of a *plurality* to be taught in the Scriptures, believe that plurality to consist of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. None have believed in more,—none in fewer. *Plurality* and *Trinity* may, therefore, on this question, be considered as convertible terms; and, consequently, every proof of a plurality as a proof of a Trinity. On this principle, as the whole of the evidence of the Divinity of Christ, is evidence of a *plurality*; it might all be considered as bearing on the point which it is now my object to establish—the PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In the more direct discussion of this subject, I shall begin with the evidence of *Personality*.

To some of you this may, perhaps, appear preposterous. But by the proof of personality, on the present occasion, is meant, it should be observed, the proof *that the Holy Spirit is a person at all*. On our former subject, there was no necessity for our leading a proof of this nature; the personality of Jesus Christ, in this sense of the term, having never been disputed. The only question on *that* subject was, not whether he was a person, but whether he was a person *in the Godhead*. But in the argument now before us, the case is otherwise. The Holy Spirit is not considered, at least in general, by the opponents of his Divinity, as a creature, possessing distinct personal existence; but as a quality, a power, an influence. In this case, therefore, the proof of personality is an important and essential step towards the establishment of Divinity.

And, indeed, the evidence of the former will be found, in many instances, to involve in it a proof of the latter.

What, then, do we mean by *a person?* and what is the *proper evidence* of personality? By a *person* we mean that which *possesses personal properties:* and the only legitimate, I might say the only *possible* proof of personality, in the present case, or, indeed, in any case, is proof of the possession of such properties: and, in the particular instance before us, the only ground on which this can at all be ascertained, is the ascription of such properties to the Holy Spirit, in the Scriptures of truth.

Even in the department of *natural religion*, how is it that we prove the personality of the Deity? Not from any knowledge we possess of his *essence:* for of his essence, and of the essence of all things, we are entirely ignorant. It is from the indications presented in his works, of his possessing the properties, and performing the acts, of a person. "Contrivance, if established," says an eminent writer on this subject, "appears to me to prove every thing which we wish to prove. Among other things, it proves the *personality* of the Deity, as distinguished from what is sometimes called nature, sometimes a principle: which terms, in the mouths of those who use them philosophically, seem to be intended to admit and to express an efficacy, but to exclude and to deny a personal agent. Now that which can contrive, which can design, must be a person. These capacities constitute personality; for they imply consciousness, and thought. They require that which can perceive an end, or purpose, as well as the power of providing means, and of directing them to their end. They require a centre in which perceptions unite, and from which volitions flow; which is mind. The acts of a mind prove the existence of a mind: and in whatever a mind resides, is a person."*

* Paley's Natural Theology, chap. xxiii. at the beginning.

It is a fact beyond all controversy, that in the Scriptures all the variety of personal properties and personal acts, on which such an inference can be founded, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit:—

Let me, first of all, then, direct your attention to a few out of the many passages that might be adduced on this subject.

1.—John xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7—14. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever:"—"But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you:"—"But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"—"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convince the world, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"—"When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

In these passages, observe *in the first place*, the Holy Spirit is distinctly spoken of as *coming*, *testifying*, *receiving*, *showing*, *teaching*, *hearing*, *speaking*; all of which evidently imply personal agency.—*2dly*, In connexion with this, observe the appellation by which he is denominated,—"*the Comforter*,"—or, as it is rendered by some, the *advocate*:—and not only so, but, as distinguished from the speaker, Jesus Christ, himself a person,—"*another Comforter*."—*3dly*, Notice also the remarkable use, in

different instances, of the masculine *personal pronoun*:—"The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which the Father will send in my name, *he** shall teach you all things:"—"But when the Comforter is come, *whom* I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, *he** shall testify of me:"—"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *him*† unto you. And when *he** is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"—"when *he*,* the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of (or from) *himself*;"—"*he** shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

These are all as clear indications of personality, as language could afford.

2.—Acts xiii. 2, 4. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the *Holy Spirit said*, Separate *me (to me*, or *for me)* Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto *I have called them*."—"So they, being *sent forth by the Holy Spirit*, departed unto Seleucia."

Surely no words could convey the idea of personality more clearly and explicitly than these.—The Holy Spirit *calls* Barnabas and Saul to a particular work; and *commands* others to set them apart to that work. They are, accordingly, set apart *for him*; and they are then *sent forth by him*.

3.—Acts xv. 28. "For *it seemed good to the Holy Spirit*, and to us, to lay upon you no other burden than these necessary things.

In these words, the *Holy Spirit* must mean, either a person, or that Divine influence which was imparted to the household of Cornelius, when Peter preached to them, and "opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." To

* εκεινος. † αυτον.

speak of any thing *seeming good to that influence itself*, is a great deal more than unnatural:—it is nonsense. The influence was only the indication of the good pleasure of him whose influence it was. His *gifts* were the intimation of his *will*:—and it was in this view that the apostles considered them, when, inferring the mind of the Spirit from the interposition of his miraculous energy, they said, "*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost.*"

4.—Acts xvi. 6, 7. "Now, when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were *forbidden of the Holy Ghost* to preach the word in Asia; After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but *the Spirit suffered them not.*"

Here the Holy Spirit appears *prohibiting* and *preventing*; directing these missionaries in their course, according to his pleasure, and in opposition to their own previous intentions.

5.—Acts xxi. 11. "And when he (Agabus) was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, *Thus saith the Holy Ghost*, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."—Acts xxviii. 25. "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, *Well spake the Holy Ghost*, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers,"—&c.—Luke ii. 26. "And *it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit*, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ:"—Acts xx. 23. "Save that *the Holy Spirit witnesseth* in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me:"—1 Tim. iv. 1. "Now *the Spirit speaketh expressly*, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith:"—Heb. ix. 8. "*The Holy Ghost this signifying*, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest:"—Heb. iii. 7. "Wherefore, *as the Holy Ghost saith*, To-day, if ye will

hear his voice, harden not your hearts :"—Rev. ii. 7. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what *the Spirit saith* unto the churches."

In these, and many other passages, the Holy Spirit is described as *saying, speaking, witnessing, signifying, intimating his mind and will.*—I need not repeat that such language evidently proceeds on the supposition of personality: and the utmost violence is requisite, to interpret it on any other principle.

6.—1 Cor. xii. 11. "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally *as he will.*"

This, in the connexion in which it stands, is a strikingly conclusive passage.—The Holy Spirit is represented as possessing *will;* and as distributing the various miraculous gifts, *as that sovereign will directed.* The *possession of will* necessarily implies personality:—and the *sovereign manner* in which that will operates, in the distribution of supernatural powers, clearly shows it to be nothing less than a *Divine will.*

These passages of Scripture, then, which are only a specimen of many more that might be mentioned, represent the Holy Spirit as *willing, hearing, speaking, acting, commanding, forbidding, approving, bearing witness, receiving and executing a commission.*—That these are all personal acts,—acts of an intelligent agent,—can admit of no dispute. The inference, therefore, is, that the Spirit, —the Holy Spirit,—the Spirit of God, respecting which this is the current language of the Scriptures, must be such an agent.

To objections I shall come by and by.—But the argument on this branch of the subject is not closed. An additional, and most satisfactory proof of personality, arises from his being represented as the *object of the dispositions and acts of others;* of such dispositions and acts as can-

not be supposed to terminate on what is a mere attribute, or power, or influence; but only on *a person*, or intelligent agent.

1.—Matth. xii. 31, 32. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

In these words, the Holy Spirit is the object of a particular sin;—the sin of blasphemy.—By "Beelzebub the prince of the devils," the Pharisees, it is very obvious, meant *a person*; and they expressed themselves accordingly. To this wicked, malignant agent, Jesus, in his answer, opposes *the Spirit of God*. And without at all entering into any discussion respecting the precise nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which would be foreign to my present design, it is sufficient to observe, that he is evidently distinguished here from *the Son of Man*, just as we are accustomed to distinguish one person from another. —"They are both spoken of, with respect unto the same things, in the same manner; and the things mentioned are spoken concerning them universally in the same sense. If the Holy Ghost were only the virtue and power of God, then present with Jesus Christ in all that he did, Christ and that power could not be distinctly spoken against; for they were but one and the same."*

2.—Acts v. 3, 4. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?—Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God:"—and verse 9th—"Then Peter

* Owen on the Spirit, vol. i. p. 155.

said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"

I quote this passage at present, not in direct evidence of the *Divinity* of the Spirit, (in this view I may have occasion to notice it afterwards) but simply of his *Personality*.—He is, in these verses, represented as *lied unto*, and as *tempted*, or *tried*. But how can any one be *lied unto*, but one who is capable of hearing and receiving a testimony, and of discerning its truth or falsehood? Or how can any one be *tempted* or *tried*, but one who is possessed of understanding and will?—We are said to tempt God, when we impiously make trial of his faithfulness, or power, or justice. Ananias and Sapphira tempted the Spirit of the Lord, by their foolishly and wickedly presuming, that they might escape detection, or escape punishment:—neither of which could possibly take place, except through a defect of knowledge, or a defect of holiness.

3.—Eph. iv. 30. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Can any thing be the subject of the passion of grief, or can any thing, unless in the boldest flights of poetry, be so represented, that is not *a person*, possessed of understanding and consciousness?—To say that "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed," means, "Offend not God, by whose holy spirit ye are sealed,"* is a commentary;—and a commentary, it is worth noticing, which is so far distinctly in our favour; for it proceeds upon the admission (if it does not, why was it introduced at all?) that *if* the Holy Spirit were really represented, in the verse, as grieved, or offended, by those parts of temper and conduct that are enumerated, *it would follow*, that this Spirit must be acknowledged to be a person. Indeed, to suppose the apostle to speak of grieving an influence, or energy, or emanation of power, would be worse than ridiculous.

* Improved Version, Note on the Text.

4.—Acts vii. 51. "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

This is a passage of a similar kind to the last. The Holy Spirit is here represented as the object of *resistance*—one whose testimony, and whose will and authority were scorned and violently striven against.

Surely, then, that must be a person, possessing intelligence and will, and the other properties which constitute personality, which is thus represented as *blasphemed and spoken against*, as *lied unto*, *tempted*, *grieved*, and *resisted*.

Let me now shortly consider the great general objection which is urged against this reasoning. Such language, it is alleged, in which the Holy Spirit is described, directly or indirectly, as possessing personal properties, and performing personal acts, is entirely *figurative*. It belongs to the species of figure called *personification*; in which, as well as in all the variety of tropes and metaphors, the Eastern style peculiarly abounds.

It would be both uncandid and foolish, to attempt evading the force of this objection, by denying the existence, or even by questioning the frequency, of this figure of speech; according to which personal characters are ascribed to powers and attributes, as well as to other objects, which are universally known to possess no distinct personality, no conscious existence. Instances of this will immediately recur to the remembrance of all who are, in any degree, familiar with the sacred volume. Wisdom, Righteousness, Charity, Sin, Death, the Grave, Famine, Pestilence, the Sun, and other objects, are thus personified; that is, are represented as thinking, feeling, and acting, as if they were real persons. But who, in such cases, except the most stupid and ignorant, (if, indeed, even these) is ever in danger of being misled?—

Language of this kind occurs chiefly in poetry, or in such composition as admits, with propriety, the aid of poetical embellishment; and it is interpreted according to the licence of poetical or rhetorical diction. If it were only in such composition as this, that the ascription of personal properties and acts to the Holy Spirit was to be found, there would, in that case, be ground for the objection against our inference: nay, if in plainer composition it were uniformly otherwise, I should be disposed to admit the force of the objection, even to the entire overthrow of the inference. But the fact, as we have already seen, is far different. The ascription of personal characters and operations, to the Spirit of God, is to be found, not in the language of poetry and impassioned eloquence merely, but in the plainest prose; in the language of historical narration; of simple, familiar instruction; and even of promises, grants, and laws, in which precision is the first and most essential requisite. What, then, are we to make of a book, which, on the principle of the objection in question, requires, for its just explanation, that laws, and grants, and promises, and that the various descriptions of historical and didactic composition, be interpreted according to the same canons as are applied to the language of poetry and eloquence? This is, surely, most unreasonable. It tends to involve the contents of revelation in inextricable perplexity.—Any plain reader of the Bible, possessing an ordinary measure of understanding, (and we should never allow ourselves to forget, that for such, as well as for the learned, the Bible was designed) would certainly be led to conclude, that the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, which he finds so often introduced, is *a person*, an intelligent agent, a conscious and active subsistence.

We ought also to recollect, that while, with regard to the Holy Spirit, the ordinary current phraseology of the

Scriptures is framed on the supposition of his Personality; —this is not the case respecting any thing else which, although occasionally personified, is not a person. In other cases, the language of personification is the exception to the general phraseology. But in this case, it is quite the reverse :—any expressions that seem inconsistent with the idea of personality form the exception; the general complexion of the language being all in its favour.

Nothing can be more unreasonable, than to insist, because similar or even the same things that are ascribed to the Holy Spirit are also ascribed to other objects, in cases where the figure is perfectly and incontrovertibly obvious, and where there does not exist the slightest possibility of any person being misled by it; that therefore the ascription of these things to the Holy Spirit must be figurative also. When, for example, we have shown that the Holy Spirit is described as possessing *will*; we are immediately reminded that *so is the wind*—"the wind bloweth where it listeth." When we speak of him as *a witness* bearing testimony; *a stone*, we are instantly told, and a *heap of stones*, are represented as witnesses; and *heaven and earth* are called to witness. When we refer to passages in which he appears as *speaking*; *the Scriptures*, it is objected, are also said to speak :—as *teaching*; *nature*, too, is represented as teaching. And so on, in a great variety of similar instances. Such a principle as this is utterly inconsistent with all the established rules of sound philosophical criticism. If it were ever to be admitted as just, we should, I apprehend, find ourselves greatly at a loss to prove the personality of the Deity at all. For there is no one of those properties by which personality is usually thought to be ascertained, either ascribed to him in the Scriptures, or from his works discovered to belong to him, which is not at times figuratively attributed to creatures that are destitute of it.

But are there not, it will be asked, some things said of the Holy Spirit, which cannot in their literal acceptation, be affirmed respecting a person?—Beyond all question there are. The Holy Spirit is said to be *poured out*, to be *shed forth*, and to *fall* upon men:—persons are also said to be *anointed* with the Spirit, and *baptized* with the Spirit.

The following remarks on this point I submit to the candid consideration of my hearers:—

1st, There is, in such expressions, in which sense soever we understand them, a figure at any rate.—A *person*, it is very true, cannot literally be poured out. But neither can a *power*, or *virtue*, or *influence*. All that can be pretended is, that the figure in the latter case is not so violent as in the former:—a figure there certainly is in both. The existence, then, of a figure must be admitted by all parties.

2dly, Our opponents say, that the phrase *the Spirit of God* sometimes signifies *God himself*, although they affirm, at the same time, that its more general meaning is the *Divine power or influence*. May not *we*, then, be permitted to say, without being censured as very unreasonable, that the same phrase, while it generally means the Spirit personally, is sometimes to be understood of his various influences?

3dly, Such a figure of speech, in which the *person* is put for his character, his qualities, his influence, his doctrine, is by no means uncommon; and is used in cases where no dispute about personality at all exists.—Thus, in the following examples:—"As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so *walk ye in him: rooted* and *built up in him*:"—"Know ye not your ownselves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates?"—"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until *Christ be formed in you*:"—"As many of you

as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have *put on Christ.*"* Many others might be added; but these may suffice. The question, then, is—Is there, on the supposition of the Holy Spirit's Personality, any thing more unnatural or harsh, in the phrases in question, of his being *poured out, shed forth,* of his *falling* upon men, and of persons being *anointed* and *baptized* with the Spirit, than there is in these other phrases which have just been quoted, in which believers are said to *walk in Jesus Christ,* to be *rooted in him;* to have Christ *in them,* and *formed in them;* and to *put on Christ,* or *clothe themselves with him?* Every one perceives at once that, in such expressions, Jesus Christ is not, and cannot be, meant personally. Yet whoever thinks of arguing against his Personality, because such things cannot be literally said respecting a person? I imagine that in fact as little difficulty has been experienced, by simple, unsophisticated readers of the Bible, in the interpretation of the phraseology relative to the Holy Spirit.—Indeed, even in the language of ordinary life, the figure on which such phrases are founded is not uncommon. Thus we are accustomed to say of a son, that he has a great deal of *his father* in him, when we mean of his father's dispositions:—of a benevolent man, that he has much of *Howard* in him, when we mean of Howard's humanity:—and so in many other instances.

If, then, in such expressions, a figure must be admitted at any rate, whether the Holy Spirit be a person, or merely a Divine energy;—if our opponents themselves are constrained to understand the same phrase in different acceptations;—and if it is not unnatural, as from parallel instances we have seen, to put the person for his power or influence, or operation:—I have only to request, that taking these observations along with you, you will can-

* Col. ii. 6, 7. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Gal. iv. 19. iii. 27.

didly weigh such expressions as those we have been considering, against the multitude of passages in which personality is so plainly attributed to the Spirit of God; and judge for yourselves, on which side lies the superior force of the argument, and magnitude of the difficulty.—For my own part, I feel no hesitation: and if any of *you* feel otherwise, I trust that any remaining doubt will be fully removed, by what remains to be laid before you, in evidence of the Spirit's DIVINITY.

To the passages on this branch of my subject I shall refer with great brevity:—because, if the *Personality* of the Spirit be once admitted, his *Divinity* can hardly be questioned. It must have occurred to all of you, that the acts and operations ascribed, in many of the passages which have been quoted, to the Spirit of God, possess the clear and decided characters of Divinity. The only question is, whether they are ascribed to the Spirit *personally*. If this question be considered as satisfactorily settled in the affirmative, it will immediately follow, that THE SPIRIT IS GOD.

There are, however, some further evidences of his Divinity which are of a still more direct nature.---To a few of these let me now request your attention.

1.---Acts v. 3, 4. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?---Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Lying to the Holy Ghost is, in these verses, the same as *lying unto God*.---To say that it means lying to *inspired men*, does not affect the conclusion. For by whom were these men inspired?---They were "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Ananias and Sapphira lied, not to the supernatural *influence* which Peter possessed; But to the Divine *Author* of

that influence;---not to the *inspiration* of Peter, but to *Him by whom Peter was inspired.*

2.—1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" compared with chap. vi. 19. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which ye have of God?" and 2 Cor. vi. 16. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Christians are thus not only called the *temple of God,* because the Spirit of God dwelt in them: but they are also called expressly the *temple of the Holy Ghost* himself. The allusion is, as all of you are aware, to the temple at Jerusalem of old, considered as the place of the Divine residence; the house where Jehovah dwelt. And he of whom it is said, with this allusion, that believers are HIS *temple,* must be God. It is no valid objection to this, that when it is said "your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost," it is added, "*which ye have of God.*" For according to the view which we take of the scheme of redemption, we not only consider Jesus Christ, although a Divine person in our nature, as the gift of God's love, but also the *in-dwelling,* as it has been termed, of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, as the fruit of the Saviour's mediation and an expression of the satisfaction of the Godhead in his finished work.

3.—1 Cor. ii. 9, 11. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?

Even so, the things of God knoweth no man (or no one) but the Spirit of God."

In these verses, we affirm, the attribute of *omniscience* is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. They furnish evidence both of his Personality, and of his Divinity. Of his *Personality*—from the *nature* of those properties and acts which are imputed to him: he possesses understanding and knowledge, and communicates this knowledge to others. Of his *Divinity*—from the description and extent of this knowledge. God's ways and judgments are frequently declared to be *unsearchable*, and *past finding out*: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"*—"Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?"† Even in the verses before us, observe how the apostle first affirms the undiscoverable nature of those truths of which he speaks—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:"—and having thus declared the impenetrable secrecy of the Divine counsels, he immediately adds: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God." Surely, he who has a full and intimate acquaintance with all Divine counsels, with what is pronounced unsearchable by any created intelligence, must

* Rom. xi. 33, 34. † Isaiah xl. 13, 14.

possess the perfection of Deity. It has been alleged, however, in opposition to this conclusion, that the Spirit of God is here compared to the spirit of man; and that the spirit of man is not a person. To this objection it is sufficient for my present purpose to reply: "The spirit of a man is his rational soul, endued with knowledge and understanding. This is an individual intelligent substance, capable of subsistence in a separate condition. Grant the Spirit of God to be so far a person; and all the pretences of his adversaries fall to the ground."* It has been further objected, that "the spirit of a man which is in him," means simply *the man himself*; and that therefore "the Spirit of God" means no more than *God himself*. But how much more natural, on this supposition, would it have been, to have said, directly and at once, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save *the man himself?* Even so, the things of God knoweth no one, save *God himself.*" Why must we so often impute to the New Testament writers language so unnatural and affected; and especially in cases where the simpler expressions would not only be equally correct in themselves, but free, at the same time, of any tendency to mislead? But this is not all. Besides the strangeness of the phraseology on this hypothesis, the context, it may be observed, completely precludes any such interpretation. In verse 12th, the verse immediately following those which have been quoted, the apostle adds: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world"—(we might ask, by the way, is this phrase, too, to be understood as meaning *the world itself?*) "We have not received the spirit of the world," that is the evil spirit, "but *the Spirit which is of* (or *from*) *God*:"† which is a designation of the Holy Spirit, evidently taken from the promise of Christ to his disciples

* Owen on the Spirit, vol. I. page 112.

† Το πνευμα το εκ του Θεου.

before his departure from them : "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth :"—"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which *proceedeth from the Father*, he shall testify of me."* It is somewhat singular, that as the apostle opposes the Spirit of God to the spirit of the world, Jesus also makes a similar distinction : "even the Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive*, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

4.—The Psalmist acknowledges the *omnipresence* and *omniscience* of the Spirit of God, when he says, in the sublime language of the 139th psalm, "Whither shall I go from thy presence ? or whither shall I flee from THY SPIRIT ?" The apostle assigns to him an office, which, without these attributes, it is impossible that he can effectually execute : "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."† He is also represented as having dictated to the Prophets their predictions of future events ; which implies the possession of Divine *prescience*. In proposing the election of a new apostle, in the room of Judas Iscariot, Peter commenced his address to the hundred and twenty disciples, with these words : "Men and brethren, This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, *which the Holy Ghost*, by the mouth of David, *spake before*, concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus."‡ The fact of which this is only a particular instance, is by the same apostle stated in a universal form, and in the most

* John xiv. 16. xv. 26. † Rom. viii. 26, 27. ‡ Acts i. 16.

explicit and conclusive terms :—"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation ;"—(more properly "that no prophecy of the Scripture is of *its own*, or of *self*-interpretation")*—"for the prophecy came not in old time *by the will of man*, but holy men of God spake as they were moved *by the Holy Ghost*.

5.—The Divine *power* and *sovereignty* of the Holy Spirit are strikingly declared in a passage quoted on a former part of this subject, which ascribes to him the uncontrolled and almighty distribution of the whole variety of of miraculous gifts :—1 Cor. xii. 11. "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." That the SPIRIT does not, in these words, mean *the gifts communicated*, but the *Divine Author* of these gifts, is as plain as the most explicit and discriminating language can make it. By what form of speech shall we distinguish an agent from his work, if they are not distinguished here? The same distinction, between the power itself and the bestower of the power, is established by other passages. Thus when Christ says to his apostles, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ;" or, "Ye shall receive power, the Holy Ghost coming upon you ;"† the *power* (by which is evidently meant all those supernatural endowments which they were to receive, to qualify them for their work)—is distinguished from *the Holy Spirit himself;* of whose coming and influence it is represented as the effect : and a similar observation might be made as to the language of Paul, when he speaks of "those things which Christ had wrought," by himself and others. "through mighty signs and wonders, through *the power of the Spirit of God*."‡ The *power* of the Holy Spirit might also be proved, from various other works which are

* See Note L. † Acts i. 8. ‡ Rom. xv. 18, 19.

ascribed to him, besides those that have now been mentioned. Jesus speaks of himself as casting out demons *by the Spirit of God.** In his resurrection he is said to have been "*quickened by the Spirit,*" the same Spirit by which, as inspiring Noah, he preached to the antediluvian world.† And respecting the resurrection of his people, the apostle says:—"If the Spirit of him, who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, *by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*"‡

6.—Eternal Existence is ascribed by the apostle Paul, in express terms, to the Holy Spirit. Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, *through the eternal Spirit,* offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"

On this expression, "*the eternal Spirit,*" the Improved Version of the New Testament has the following singular note:—"The phrase, 'everlasting spirit,' is very unusual; but, if admitted as genuine, it must signify, that Christ offered himself by Divine appointment!"—"*If admitted as genuine!*" There is not much of ingenuous candour, in retaining a phrase in the text, and throwing out an *inuendo* in the note, that is fitted to bring it into suspicion. It *is* admitted as genuine, on the very authority which the Editors hold in the highest repute, and profess to follow as their critical standard: nor have they themselves seen reason in the present instance, to dissent from that authority. "The phrase is *very unusual;* but, if admitted as genuine, *it must signify,* that Christ offered himself *by Divine appointment!*" Now, there is one question, which naturally suggests itself here:—Does assigning to the phrase "*through the eternal Spirit*" the signification of

* Matth. xii. 28. † 1 Peter iii. 18—20. ‡ Rom. viii. 11.

"*by Divine appointment*" render it *less unusual*—less dissimilar to the ordinary phraseology of Scripture—or *more so?*—Not *less*, certainly. If the phrase itself be unusual, much more singular and anomalous is the interpretation affixed to it. Yet this, we are told, "it *must* signify!" How strange is this assertion!—made in the face of all those passages, both in the Old Testament, and in the New, in which the Holy Spirit is represented as resting upon the Messiah, and as given to him without measure!—The surest commentary on Christ's "offering himself to God, *through the eternal Spirit*," is to be found in the words of Jehovah by the prophet Isaiah;—"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth:—*I have put my Spirit upon him;* he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.—He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."*

7.—I have already considered the argument from the words of my text; and shall now close this series of proofs, by shortly noticing one or two passages of a parallel description:—Rev. i. 4, 5. "Grace be unto you and peace, from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from *the seven Spirits which are before his throne;* and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."—2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and *the communion of the Holy Spirit* be with you all! Amen!" In the former of these passages, "*the seven Spirits of God*" is evidently an emblematical expression for the Holy Spirit, significant of the fulness and sufficiency of his influences for the supply of the *seven churches* (and, by obviously intended inference, of *all* his churches) with all needful grace. On the expression in the latter passage, "*the communion of*

* Isaiah xlii. 1, 4.

the Holy Spirit," it has been said :—"This clause may imply a wish, that those Christians might continue to partake in miraculous gifts and powers. But we have observed, that sometimes by the Spirit, or Holy Spirit, may be understood any good things conducive to men's real happiness. In this place, therefore, we may suppose to be hereby meant, a participation of, and communion in, all the blessings of the gospel, and all other needful good things."* An opportunity will occur, in a future Discourse, of illustrating the true meaning of the phrase in question, "*the communion of the Holy Spirit.*" I only remark at present, on what singularly slender foundations men of the highest eminence do sometimes build their conclusions. Thus slender, certainly, is the ground on which it is affirmed, "that sometimes by the Spirit, or Holy Spirit, may be understood *any good things conducive to human happiness.*" In Matth. vii. 11, our Lord is related to have said—"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good things unto your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give *good things* unto them that ask him?"—In Luke xi. 13, his words are, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give *the Holy Spirit* to them that ask him?"—In these two passages the ground of inference is indeed the same : but in the former, the inference itself is general ; in the latter it is particular. "*Good things,*" in the former, is to be understood universally, of *all* that is good ; for the premises clearly bear this extent of conclusion :—in the latter, a *particular good* is selected, and the conclusion, although it might have been universal, is limited to that good. To conclude, from the reasoning being of the same kind, that "*good things*" in the one, and

* Lardner's First Postscript to his Letter on the Logos. Works, Vol. XI. page 160.

"*the Holy Spirit*" in the other, are phrases of synonymous import, and consequently, that the Holy Spirit may be understood, as we please, of *any thing whatever that can conduce to human happiness*, may be very convenient, as affording a latitude of interpretation, serviceable on other occasions; but the conclusion is such as cannot be justified on any principle of sound criticism. It should be recollected, that the two Evangelists are not reporting the same Discourse; but two similar Discourses, delivered at different times. When a speaker, then, on two distant occasions, happens to use the same argument, but in the one instance gives it its full scope of inference, while in the other, for whatever reason, his conclusion is purposely limited; are we, because the premises are the same, to identify the conclusions, and insist upon interpreting the terms of the particular one, as of equal extent with those of the universal? Yet such is the principle of interpretation, on which the eminent critic referred to, concludes that "by the Holy Spirit is meant," in Luke xi. 13, "any good thing conducive to our real happiness;"* and, by consequence, that when Paul, in the passage under consideration, wishes believers "the communion of the *Holy Ghost*, we may suppose to be hereby meant a participation of, and communion in, all the blessings of the gospel, and all other needful good things." I shall leave it to yourselves to judge, whether this is sufficient ground for setting aside the evidence of the Personality and Deity of the Holy

* "Luke xi. 13. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' which is parallel with Matth. vii. 11. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good things unto them that ask him?' Whereby we may perceive that by *the Holy Spirit* is meant, any good thing, conducive to our real happiness." Lardner's First Postscript to his Letter on the Logos—Works, Vol. XI. page 145.

Spirit, contained in this passage, and whether such passages do not contain prayers for blessings from the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, each of whom is virtually addressed, and each acknowledged as able to bless.

When such passages as our text, and the two on which I have now been commenting, are considered, it becomes more than probable, that in the threefold benediction, enjoined by Jehovah himself, to be pronounced on the people of Israel, by the priests under the law, there was a tacit reference to the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead: —"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee; the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!"*—and also, that the same glorious doctrine is recognised in the solemn and impressive language of angelic adoration; "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! The whole earth is full of his glory."†

Those, who are at all acquainted with the subject I have now been discussing, will perceive, that it is far from having been exhausted. Enough however, has, I trust, been said, to establish the general point which it has been my object to prove—that the SPIRIT OF GOD, so often spoken of in the Scriptures, is a DIVINE PERSON. Additional confirmation will be given to this important doctrine, from the part which he is represented as performing, in the great scheme of human redemption, which will be illustrated in the next Discourse.

Even from what has already been said, I cannot but anticipate your concurrence with me, when I say, that the man, who can persuade himself that all those things, which, we have seen, are affirmed respecting the Spirit of God, are to be understood of a power, or influence, an abstract quality, or a mode of operation, whatever astonishment and contempt he may profess to feel for the weak creduli-

* Numb. vi. 24—26. † Isaiah vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8.

ty, as he esteems it, of the simple believer in the mysteries of the orthodox faith, is himself vastly more credulous than, perhaps, he is aware, or, at any rate, than he would be disposed to acknowledge. Were I to enumerate the principles, which (if they would be consistent with themselves) they ought to hold, who profess to believe the Bible to be the word of God, and yet deny the doctrines of the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, and the Personality, and Deity, and influence of the Holy Spirit, they would be found to imply a measure of credulity. not inferior to that which they profess to scorn.

While I am thus firmly convinced, that the Scriptures are incapable of any fair and consistent explanation, without the admission of the doctrine of the Trinity, I entertain strong doubts about the correctness of the notion, commonly received, of what is called the *eternal procession* of the Son from the Father, and of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, *in the essence of Deity*. This, I have long been disposed to think, is entering into the *mode* of the Divine subsistence, further than the Scriptures authorize us to do. All that we are taught in them, on the subject of *procession*, appears to be,—that, while the three persons have existed from eternity, equal, and mutually independent, in the Divine unity, in a manner which it is vain for us to attempt to comprehend ;—it has pleased this one Jehovah,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—in revealing to mankind the scheme of redeeming mercy, to inform us, that, while each acts his part voluntarily, (the three persons being one in counsel by the same necessity which unites them in essence) yet the Son is to be considered as sent by the Father, and the Spirit as sent by the Father and the Son :—the Father *representing* the Godhead, in the constitution of the plan, as it has been disclosed to us.*

* John viii. 32. xv. 26.—I intended, at one time, to have introduc-

The usual doxology of the English Church, I conclude with remarking, seems, from all that has been said, to be in perfect consonance with the decisions of the word of God, and with the spirit of that worship which it prescribes and exemplifies. In this short, but solemn ascription of praise, let us, with one heart and one soul, unite: "*Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be!* AMEN!"

ed a separate Discourse on the true meaning of the Title *Son of God* as given to Jesus Christ. As difference of opinion, however, exists, on this subject, among those who agree in holding the essential article of his supreme Divinity, I afterwards relinquished the intention. When my object was to defend a vital doctrine of Christianity against those who *oppose* it, I thought it better to shun any dispute with those who *maintain* it, about the mere import of a name.

DISCOURSE X.

ON THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ROMANS viii. 9.

"NOW IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS."

THE influences of the Spirit of God, whose Personality and Divinity it was the object of the last Discourse to establish, are usually divided into two kinds, *common*, and *extraordinary*.

He was the author of inspiration in the Old Testament prophets;—for "the prophecy came not, in old time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* It was he, too, that inspired the apostles and prophets of the New Testament church; imparting to them a complete and infallible knowledge of those parts of the Divine will, which it was the gracious purpose of God to communicate to mankind. And he was also the immediate author of all those "spiritual gifts," those miraculous endowments, in all their rich variety, which were bestowed on so many of the disciples of Christ, in primitive times. "To one was given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit;

* 2 Peter i. 21.

to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues:—all these wrought that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally, as he would."*

It is not of these that the apostle speaks in our text. For neither, on the one hand, were these essential to a man's being Christ's; nor, on the other, did they certainly prove to be his the person who possessed them. "Many," says Christ himself, "shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."† Balaam, the son of Bosor, who "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and who taught Balak how to seduce the Israelites into sin, possessed, at times at least, the spirit of prophecy. To Judas, "the son of perdition," we have no reason to doubt, "the devils were subject through the name of Jesus," as well as to the other eleven apostles. Nor does Paul make a *mere* supposition, which could never be realized in fact, when he speaks of a man's possessing these supernatural gifts, even in the most eminent degree, and yet being destitute of that *love*, which is the most essential and comprehensive principle of the Christian character: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing."‡ That such, then, was, in various in-

* 1 Cor. xii. 7—11. † Matth. vii. 22, 23.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.

stances, the fact, that persons did possess miraculous gifts, who were destitute of the grace of God, and of spiritual life, there can hardly, I should think, be a doubt. Of the difficulty which the fact seems to involve, the simplest ground of explanation, perhaps, lies in the obvious distinction between *the witness*, and *the testimony which he delivers*. The character of the witness may be reprobate, while his testimony is important truth. Now, miracles were attestations, on the part of God, not of the moral excellence of the prophet who delivered his message, but of the truth of the message itself: evidences, not of character, but of commission. And whatever incongruity there may appear to us, in the particular case of which I now speak, between the instrument employed, and the nature of his work; yet we are at no loss to conceive, on the ground of the distinction stated, how God should set his seal to the testimony, while the witness himself, who delivered it, was disapproved, and rejected.

While the "Spirit of Christ," in our text, cannot, for the reasons which have been assigned, signify miraculous powers; neither, I would further observe, can it be understood as meaning (according to a sense in which we sometimes use the word *spirit*) the *disposition*, or *mind* of Christ; those holy tempers of soul which he possessed and exemplified. Such holy tempers are elsewhere denominated "the *fruits of the Spirit*:* and the sense in which the word *Spirit* is used, both in the preceding and subsequent context, completely precludes any such interpretation.†

It is of the ordinary gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, as the true and unequivocal evidences of a man's belonging to Christ, that I purpose, from this text, to treat:

* Gal. v. 22.

† See the Context, from the beginning of the chapter to the 16th verse.

—a subject, certainly, which, to every one who duly considers the weight and solemnity of the declaration which the text contains, must appear of preeminent importance.

The text would naturally lead me to an illustration of the three following topics :—how believers may be said to *have*, or to possess, the Spirit of Christ ;—the various influences of this Spirit, and the experienced and visible effects thence resulting, as the evidence of such possession ;—and the necessity of the possession of the Spirit, thus indicated, as a proof of their belonging to Christ.

In the present discourse, however, it is my intention to confine myself to the first operation of the Spirit ;—that operation by which he "opens the heart" to the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus, and commences the Divine life in the soul :—his agency in what the Scriptures warrant us to denominate *regeneration*. All his subsequent influence is only a continued exercise of the same power, by which he prepares and takes possession of his temple. By selecting, in the first instance, a single point, as the subject of proof, the argument will, I think, possess a greater measure of compactness and unity. And it must, at the same time, be obvious to every one, that if this leading point is ascertained, the general question is settled: If, from Scripture, and other legitimate sources of evidence, we can establish the reality, and the necessity, of the direct energy of the Holy Spirit, in producing, by the faith of the gospel, the *commencement* of the Divine life ; there will be little difficulty in procuring assent to the inference that the same energy must maintain and carry it on to perfection. The satisfactory establishment of this one point will clear the way for the remainder of the discussion, will divest it, in some measure, of its argumentative form, and impart to it more of the nature of illustration.

When considered in reference to the commencement of the Divine life in the soul, the declaration, "If any man

have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," may be understood as expressing the same important truth, which our Lord himself so emphatically declared to Nicodemus: —"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

It is my intention, with the supplicated aid of that Spirit, whose work I have undertaken to defend, to *state what appears to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, with regard to the necessity of Divine influence in regeneration,* and to *vindicate the doctrine from some leading objections.*

In the one Godhead, although subsisting in three persons, there has been, from eternity, *infinite knowledge,* and consequently perfect and invariable *unity of mind and counsel.* We are not to imagine any sort of distinction to exist, such as admits of the communication, from one to another, of any quality which was not possessed before. As to *knowledge,* for example, it belongs alike, in infinite perfection, to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as one God; and has so belonged from eternity, without the possibility either of increase or of diminution. It cannot, in strict propriety, be said, respecting any thought, or intention, that it ever *entered* the Divine mind:—for *entrance* supposes a period preceding, when it was not there. Nor was any thought, or intention, ever present to the Father, that was not equally present to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. The thoughts of one are the thoughts of all;—the designs of one the designs of all;—underived—uncommunicated;—the thoughts and designs of THE GODHEAD.

In the scheme of our redemption, however, as was hinted towards the conclusion of the preceding Discourse, the three persons in this one Godhead are represented as performing, each his appropriate part of that glorious work, in the eternal design of which they were necessari-

* John iii. 3, 5, 6.

ly one. The Father may be considered, in the Scripture exhibition of it, as *representing the Godhead* :—so that when *He* is said to be glorified by the work of the Son, it is *the Godhead* that is glorified ; "glory to God in the highest," as resulting from the voluntary mediation of Christ, being glory to the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is the peculiar work of the Son, by his appearance in our nature and substitution in our room, to render it consistent with *the Divine glory*, that is, with the glory of the Godhead, to pardon and to bless the guilty children of men. The displeasure of the Father against sin, to which sinners stand exposed, is the displeasure of the Godhead ;—and the reconciliation of the Father is the reconciliation of the Godhead. And this may serve to account for the fact, that in Scripture many things, especially as to the bestowment of the blessings of salvation, are represented, indiscriminately, as done alike by the Father, by the Son, and by the Holy Spirit.

The ordinary distinction, however, pervades the account which is given in the Scriptures of this wonderful scheme. The Father appears, as sending, or commissioning the Son :—the Son, as coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, and finishing his work of atonement on the cross :—and, the Father having declared his approbation of this finished work—his acceptance of this atoning sacrifice, by raising the man Christ Jesus from the grave, and exalting him to glory ;—then comes the appropriate work of the Spirit, who is sent by the Father, in the name, and for the sake of the Son, with the express view of giving effect, in the souls of men, to the work of salvation, which the Son had finished ;—or, which is much the same thing, by the Son himself, in the exercise of that power, with which, as Mediator, he is invested.

The person and work of Christ are the grand subjects of the gospel testimony :—that testimony being just the

declaration of what he is, and of what he hath done, and of the Divine satisfaction in his work; accompanied with a proclamation of free pardon, and a promise of eternal life, to all, who, renouncing their proud rebellion, and submitting at mercy, will receive these blessings as "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The great work of the Holy Spirit is to *bear testimony to Christ.* He did so by all those supernatural powers, of which he was the author, "in the beginning of the gospel;"—and he did so then, and continues to do so now, by his gracious influence on the minds of men. The work of Christ and the work of the Spirit are mutually necessary to each other's efficacy, and are thus both alike indispensable to the salvation of the sinner. Without the work of Christ, the Spirit would want the *means* or *instrument* of his operation; and without the work of the Spirit, these means would remain inefficacious and fruitless. Without the work of Christ, there would not have been, for any sinner, a foundation of hope towards God; —without the work of the Spirit, no sinner would have been induced to build on this foundation. Christ has opened the way of access to God;—the Spirit brings sinners to God, in the way which Christ has opened.

I had occasion formerly to notice the double design of the gospel—the restoration of men to the *favour* of God, and, at the same time, to his *image;—forgiveness of sin,* and *renovation of heart.* Both of these blessings, which, when understood in their full extent, comprehend the whole of salvation, are inseparably connected with the faith of the gospel testimony.—Of the former of these blessings—*justification from the guilt of sin*—the truth believed, or rather Jesus Christ, who is the subject of that truth, is the *ground;*—while the belief of that truth, or faith in Jesus Christ, is the *medium* of interest. As to the latter blessing, the *renovation of the heart,* or *sanctifica-*

tion ; the same truth is the means by which this blessed effect is produced: and the knowledge and belief of this truth are essential to its renewing influence; for it cannot be supposed to have any truly gracious or saving efficacy, except as it is understood and believed.

Here then, commences the work of the Spirit:—here is his first operation:—the *spiritual illumination of the understanding, in order to the conversion of the heart.*

Let me illustrate this part of my subject, from the words of the apostle in 1 Cor. ii. 14. "For 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."

The "*natural,*" or *animal,* or *sensual man,** cannot here mean merely the *sensualist,*—the man who immerses himself in the gratifications of animal appetite; as opposed, either to the sober man, or to the man who devotes himself to the cultivation of his mind, in the pursuits of science and philosophy. For, *in the first place,* it stands opposed to the "spiritual man," and therefore must be considered as comprehending all who are *not spiritual,* in the sense in which this appellation is generally used by this apostle. And no one, who is even superficially acquainted with his phraseology, can fail to know, that he designs to express by it much more than either *sober,* or *intellectual,* in opposition to *sensual,* in the ordinary gross acceptation of that epithet.—*2dly,* The matter of fact is, that what is said in this verse applies with equal, if not superior, emphasis, to the "wise and prudent" of this world,—to the men of science and philosophy,—than even to the sensualist. From the former has proceeded a greater portion of pointed, and scornful, and bitter derision, against what the apostle here denominates "the things of the Spirit of God," than from the latter. It has

* ψυχικος ανθρωπος.

been by such men, generally speaking, above all others, that these things have been disdained, and vilified, and pronounced *foolishness*.—3*dly*, Notice the agreement of this observation, with what the apostle had said before, in this very epistle, respecting those who "*sought after wisdom*:"—"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. For 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 unto us, who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."* Have we not, in these words, an express declaration, by the writer himself, to what description of men he especially referred, when he said, as in the text on which I am now commenting, "The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for *they are foolishness unto him?*"—that he meant the philosopher at least as much as the sensualist?—that, in short, he meant all those, who remained under the influence of such principles only as exist in the animal and rational nature of man, independently of the renewing operation of the grace or Spirit of God?

By "the things of the Spirit of God," we must understand *the truths of the gospel*: those doctrines which were "revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.—Respecting these it is here affirmed, that "the

* 1 Cor. i. 18—24.

natural man *receiveth them not ;"*—that they are *foolishness* to him ; that he *cannot know them."*

To the right understanding of the passage, and of the true nature of that operation of the Spirit of which it affirms the necessity, it is of great consequence to ascertain the proper meaning of the last of these expressions—*neither can he* KNOW *them."* What is the nature of this knowledge ?—Now to this question the passage itself furnishes an immediate and satisfactory answer. To *"know them,"* is, obviously, to know them *in such a way that they no longer appear foolishness :*—and this implies nothing less, than discerning them to be, what they really are, *"the wisdom of God ;"*—nothing less than a perception of their *truth, excellence,* and *glory.* While they appeared foolishness, they were *not received :*—whenever they are thus known, thus discerned, they *are* received. In the order of nature, the discernment must precede the reception ;—yet between the one and the other there is no imaginable interval of time. The reception might rather be said to *accompany* the discernment, than to follow it ;—to be almost, indeed, involved in its very nature.

Now it is to this *spiritual discernment* of the things of God, in their truth, and excellence, and glory, that the enlightening influence of the Divine Spirit is declared to be necessary. There is a kind of knowledge, which any natural man *may* possess without the Spirit of God ;–nay, which every natural man, who hears the gospel, *must* possess, *in order to his accounting it foolishness ;*—a kind of knowledge, without which he cannot, in the nature of things, be guilty of *disbelieving, rejecting, scorning,* or *hating* it. All these exercises of mind imply *knowledge ;* they suppose the capacity of understanding *the meaning* of the several propositions, which are included in the gospel testimony. These propositions are expressed in terms abundantly plain, and which any man of ordinary intel-

lect is perfectly capable of comprehending. No man, for instance, is at a loss to know what we *mean*, when we tell him, that he has broken the law of God ;—that he is consequently condemned by the sentence of that law ;—that this sentence he can himself do nothing to avert ;—that if he escapes and is pardoned, it cannot be on the ground of any works of righteousness on his part, but by an act of free and sovereign mercy on the part of God, through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ, in whom he must believe, in order to his being thus saved from merited destruction. All this is readily enough understood ; and in proportion as it is understood, it is hated by the carnal mind. Indeed the difference between discerning the truth and excellence of a proposition, and merely understanding its meaning, is sufficiently obvious. It cannot be the latter of these two kinds of knowledge that is intended in the verse :—because, if no man could possess *this* knowledge without spiritual illumination, no man, unless spiritually enlightened, could be guilty of unbelief, or hatred of the truth. It must, therefore, mean such knowledge as has been described ;—a perception, not merely of the *meaning* of gospel truths, but of their wisdom, and excellence, their consistency, beauty, and suitableness.

This, then, is what the apostle means by *spiritual discernment* :—and it is most clearly and emphatically affirmed to be the effect of the illuminating influence of the Spirit of God :—"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.*" This spiritual discernment, as has been already noticed, is immediately followed by the *reception* of the truth ; which is the same thing as the *faith* of the gospel. And, accordingly, the faith of the gospel, in exact conformity with the representation which has now

been given, is ascribed, in the plainest terms, to *divine influence*. "No man can come to me," said Jesus himself, "except the Father who hath sent me draw him. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me:" and afterwards, in the same conversation with the Jews:—"Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father."*—"By grace are ye saved through faith;" says the apostle to the Ephesians, "and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;" and again, to the Philippians; "Being confident of this very thing, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"—"For unto you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."†

These passages teach us, that the commencement of the "good work," as the apostle terms it, takes place at the time, when the sinner, by illumination from above, *discerns* and *receives* the truth. It is then that he is *born again*. And, with the same plainness and decision, his *regeneration*, is described as the work of God;—the work of the Holy Spirit;—and, at the same time, as effected *by means* of the truth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven:"—"After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost:"—"To as many as received him, to them gave he power (right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of

* John vi. 44, 45, 65. † Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 6, 29.

man, but of God :"—"Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures :"—"Being born, again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever :—and this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you."*

This circumstance may readily account for the fact, that regeneration is sometimes ascribed to *God*, and the *Spirit of God*, and at other times to *the truth*. Such passages are perfectly consistent with each other. They intimate the necessity, in order to the effect being produced, of the concurrence of the truth and the influence of the Spirit: of the truth as the *means*, and the Spirit as the *agent*. The one class of passages do not mean, that the truth produces the effect without the Spirit; nor the other, that the Spirit produces it without the truth. It is quite natural to expect, in such a case, that the effect should sometimes be traced to the efficient agent; and at other times, to the necessary and invariable means of that agent's operation.

It is by no means intended to affirm, that the word of God, by itself, unaccompanied with the influence of the Spirit, produces *no effects whatever*. There *are* effects which may be, and often are, produced by *natural knowledge*; that is, by the mere acquaintance with the *meaning*, and with some particulars of the *evidence*, of what is testified :—such effects, for instance, as alarm of conscience, and the perturbations of foreboding fear—as in the case of Felix :†—partial reformation of conduct, accompanied with delusive self-complacency—as in the case of Herod ;‡ and the external semblance of some of the Christian virtues—as in the case of multitudes, who, with

* John iii. 5. Titus iii. 5. John i. 12, 13. James i. 18. 1 Peter i. 23, 25.

† Acts xxiv. 24—26. ‡ Mark vi. 20.

melancholy inconsistency, make it evident, by other parts of their conduct, that they are destitute of the "power of godliness." But the spiritual illumination of which I have before spoken, is accompanied with, or rather includes in it, the production of what may be termed a *spiritual taste;* a *sense* of the beauty and excellence of the object of knowledge revealed in the gospel. The sinner, when spiritually enlightened, discerns wisdom—heavenly wisdom, in what before he accounted foolishness;—consummate propriety in what formerly offended and disgusted him;—and that Saviour to be "fairer than the children of men," "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," who before appeared in his eyes, as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, no beauty, why he should be desired." This change of sentiments and feelings, we affirm, is represented in the Scriptures, as the effect of Divine influence; ... the influence of the Spirit of God.

The passages before quoted might be considered as sufficiently decisive on this point. I would further remark, however, that it is strongly confirmed by those figures, which are employed to represent the nature and magnitude of the change which takes place, when a sinner "receives the love of the truth that he may be saved." This change is represented as a *new birth*, a *resurrection from the dead*, a *new creation*. Of the first of these I have already quoted examples. Of the second and third the following are instances:—"And (that ye may know) what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe: according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead:"—"And you (hath he quickened) who were dead in trespasses and sins:"—"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 to-

gether with Christ:"—"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, to which God hath before ordained us, that we should walk in them:"—"Wherefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."*

It is very evident, that such figures as these must express a change, not external, superficial, and partial, but internal, radical, and total:—a change of mind, of heart, and of life;—of views, of principles, and of conduct. And it is also not less evident, that, as the things in nature to which the change is compared, require Divine energy for their accomplishment, so must the change itself. This, indeed, in several of the passages quoted, is most pointedly affirmed.

The whole of such language proceeds on the supposition of the deep and radical corruption of the human heart; that corruption which, although it assumes a vast variety of aspects, being modified, in its influence on the characters of men, by an inconceivable diversity of circumstances, is yet, in its general nature, the same, and operates universally in opposition to that truth, which abases to the dust the pride of man, and which "crucifies the flesh, with its affections and lusts."

Into any illustration or proof of this important doctrine, it cannot be expected that I should at present enter. The apostle Paul, it may in general be observed, has, in the seventh verse of this chapter, summed up, in one expression, all the varieties of human corruption:—"*The carnal mind is* ENMITY AGAINST GOD." The whole context shows, that by the carnal mind, or mind of the flesh, he means the mind of man previously to his being "*renewed in the spirit of his mind.*" In the first verse of the chapter, "those, who are *in Christ Jesus,*" are characterized

* Ephes. i. 19, 20. ii. 1, 4, 5, 10. 2 Cor. v. 17.

as "walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" and as this is what distinguishes them from others, all others must be considered as "walking after the flesh," and "minding the things of the flesh." This is the distinction which pervades the whole passage;—the distinction between the *renewed* and the *unrenewed*,—those who *have*, and those who *have not* the Spirit of Christ,—those who *are after the Spirit*, and those who *are after the flesh*. Of the "lusts of the flesh and of the mind," which corrupt nature is prone to gratify, there is a prodigious diversity; and from this diversity arises the variety that appears in the external characters of ungodly and worldly men. But the apostle, without entering into this variety, divides mankind at once into two classes, determines every one to be "after the flesh," who is *not* "after the Spirit;"—and all who are after the flesh to be under the prevailing dominion of "*enmity against God.*" This enmity is the sum of man's depravity; the fountain of all the polluted streams of human character; the germ of the poison-tree; the great principle and concentrated essence of all evil.

From this view of human corruption arises an obvious, but cogent argument, for the necessity of Divine influence, to change the heart:—I mean, the *contradiction*, which seems to be involved in the supposition of *self-change*. How can a principle of evil *convert itself* into a principle of good? How can enmity ever change itself into love? How can hatred of God, of its own accord, choose to love God?—Is not this to suppose a principle operating in diametrical opposition to its proper nature, and invariable tendency?

In answer to this it may be said, that certain views and considerations are presented to the mind, which are, in their nature, fitted to subdue enmity, and to inspire love:

—and that this is quite sufficient to account for the change in question.

Let us examine this a little.

The principle upon which the answer proceeds, obviously is, that the enmity, of which I have been speaking, has its source in *ignorance;* and that it requires only a just exhibition of the perfections of the Divine character, to make the Being, who possesses these perfections, the object of love. And so in general, those persons, against whom chiefly I now reason, are accustomed to express themselves. The soundness of the principle, however, is more than questionable. Observe respecting it,

1st, When the apostle speaks of "*enmity against God,*" he must mean, if he means any thing that is evil, enmity against *his true character.* If it were otherwise, if the enmity arose from *false* views of God, and required only the correction of these to make it give place to love, it would not be enmity against God at all. It would be enmity against that which God *is not.* It would, therefore, in fact, be of the nature of *love to God.* For hatred of what God *is not,* is negative or hypothetical love to what God *is ;*—a just exhibition of the Divine character to the mind being all that is requisite to call it into exercise in a direct and positive state. This, certainly, was not what Paul meant to express. Such, assuredly, were not his views of the tendencies and likings of human nature.

2dly, On this supposition, the only guilt would lie in the *ignorance* by which the enmity had been occasioned. But *simple ignorance,* that is, ignorance considered in *itself,* as a deficiency purely intellectual, unconnected with the state of the will and of the heart, and uninfluenced by it, cannot be justly conceived to involve in it any guilt at all. It has nothing in it of the nature of moral turpitude. Ig-

norance is criminal, only in as far as it is *voluntary*, and connected with *disposition*.

3*dly*, In exact accordance with these remarks, is the fact, that, in the Scriptures, ignorance is so far from being represented as the origin and cause of the enmity, that the case is reversed; the enmity being pointedly declared to be the cause of the ignorance. The gross darkness, and idolatrous superstition of the heathen world, are traced immediately to this source by the inspired apostle of the Gentiles:—"*They did not like*," says he, "*to retain God in their knowledge*."* And in another place he speaks of them as "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, *through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness* (more properly *hardness* or *callousness*†) *of their hearts*."‡ That, which is the case with reference to God himself, is the case also with regard to his gospel;—which, indeed, is the clearest and fullest manifestation of his true character:—"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that men *loved darkness rather than light*, because their deeds were evil:"—"Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye *cannot hear* (that is, *cannot bear*) *my word*."—"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye, therefore, hear them not, *because ye are not of God*."§ In these and other passages, *aversion of heart* is clearly represented as the *source of ignorance*. From which it inevitably follows, that something else than *mere* knowledge, that is, than a mere apprehension of the *meaning* of gospel doctrines, is necessary to its removal. I have accordingly observed already, that the spiritual illumination, for the necessity of which I contend, includes in it the production of a *spiritual taste*, by which the excellencies of the character and truth of God are discerned and

* Rom. i. 28. † πωρωσιν. ‡ Eph. iv. 18
§ John iii. 19. viii. 43, 47.

relished: and that this constitutes the difference between *natural* and *spiritual knowledge*. The eye of the man who possesses taste and sensibility, does not, as a mere optical instrument, admit the landscape more fully, or more correctly, than that of him who is entirely destitute of these qualities. But the latter is blind to the beauties and sublimities of the scene. He perceives them not. He feels them not. While the former catches every feature of the sublime and the beautiful, and is fixed in admiration and delight. Somewhat akin to this is the difference which exists, between him who merely knows that, according to the Scriptures, God is possessed of certain attributes, and that these Scriptures contain particular doctrines, and the man who, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, discerns, by a kind of new and spiritual sense, the glory and the loveliness of these attributes, the truth, and excellence, and fitness of these doctrines.

4*thly*, This distinction is fully sufficient to account for what seems to be clearly affirmed in Scripture—that *all*, who are enlightened of God, do actually receive the truth in the love of it; that *all, who know, believe*. That such is the fact, the following words of Christ himself, before referred to, are sufficient to determine: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. *Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*"* On the same principle, we can at once perceive the reason, why *knowledge* is at times used as if it were synonymous with *faith*: for *spiritual knowledge*, being a discernment of the *truth* and *excellence* of gospel doctrine, might very safely and properly be considered as *implying*, because it is of necessity accompanied by, *faith* and *approbation*. *Perceiving a proposition to be true*, if it be not precisely a convertible expression for *belief* or *faith*, is yet so inseparably accom-

* John vi. 45.

panied by it, that we cannot for a moment imagine the one to exist without the other: and the same is obviously the case, with the *perception of excellence*, and the sentiment of *approbation*.

It may, perhaps be objected to the view I am now giving of the necessity of the inward energy of the Holy Spirit to the conversion of the sinner, that it is *disparaging to the word of God*, implying, as it does, its inadequacy, by its own independent operation, for the accomplishment of this effect.

This objection has sometimes been urged by persons who hold very different views of the foundation of hope revealed in the gospel, from those whose sentiments I have chiefly in view in these discourses. The following observations may suffice to evince its fallacy:

In the first place: We cannot justly be considered as disparaging the word of God, when we give it, in this matter, *the place which it assigns to itself*. If the Scriptures represent the gospel as a *means* or *instrument*, we do not underrate its value or its power, when we view it, and speak of it in this light.

2dly, The word is not disparaged when, as an instrument, it is acknowledged to be eminently *fitted for its end*. That cannot be considered as disparaged, which is represented as fully answering the purpose *for which it is intended*. It is wrong, indeed, in point of accuracy of expression, to speak of the word of God as *a dead letter*. For "the word of God is *quick (living)* and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* Yet there is no inconsistency in saying, that this view of the Divine word assumes, or supposes, the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit. The word

* Heb. iv. 12.

of God is "the sword of the Spirit." And we no more derogate from the excellence and efficacy of the word, when we affirm that it cannot *pierce*, and *divide*, and *lay open*, except as used by the power of the Spirit, than we should detract from the excellence of the best tempered sabre, by saying, that it can do no execution, unless wielded by the prowess of the warrior.

3dly, The disparagement attaches, not to the word of God, but to the nature of man. That *enmity* of which I formerly spoke, has, on many occasions, shown itself to be capable of resisting the most convincing arguments, the most affecting considerations, and the best adapted means. Certainly no considerations can be conceived more powerfully persuasive, none more admirably fitted for subduing to submission, and to grateful affection, the rebellious heart of man, than the exhibition given in the gospel, of the love and grace of the Godhead, in the mediation of Jesus Christ. This is, in every view, inconceivably more touching, and melting, and overpowering to the heart, than the views of the gospel (if according to these views it merited the name) which are held by our Unitarian opponents. And when we admit that even this will not, of itself, unaccompanied by Divine energy, overcome the obduracy of the will and affections of unregenerate men, we throw no disparaging reflection on the gospel of God; but we freely acknowledge, that it bears hard (alas! that it should be so justly hard!) on the nature which we possess in our fallen state.

In connexion with this part of my subject, may be noticed the sentiment of those, who, while they admit that God is the author of the change which takes place in regeneration, deny that he effects it by any direct inward influence; affirming that he only places men in circumstances which tend to produce the change; bringing them under the outward ministration of the gospel, and at the

same time arranging incidents in providence, in such a manner as to aid and ensure its efficacy. The remarks which have just been made with regard to the word of God, as a means or instrument, are, it is obvious, applicable, in all their force, to the arrangements of his providence. It is at once admitted, that God, in infinite wisdom, *does* thus arrange providential occurrences, and all outward means, for the accomplishment of his gracious design. But there is a wide difference between the admission of this, and granting the sufficiency of these means to work out the effect by their own unassisted influence.

The idea of the Spirit of God converting the sinner *without means*, and particularly *without the word*, is an idea to which the Scriptures give no countenance;—an idea, which opens a wide door to all the extravagances of wild enthusiasm. We have, I apprehend, sufficient warrant in the Bible, for refusing to acknowledge any man as a subject of the regenerating power of the Spirit, however high his pretensions to Divine communications may be, who is ignorant of the great truths made known in the gospel. But to every candid mind it must be evident, that the expressions of Scripture, which have been already quoted, imply much more, on the part of God, than the mere exhibition of means, and arrangement of circumstances. And that more than this is necessary to the production of the effect, while it is clearly declared in these expressions, is abundantly confirmed by many striking facts in the history and experience of mankind. To ancient Israel God gave his "lively oracles:" and every motive that could awaken their fears, or interest their desires—every motive contained in the promises and the threatenings, the favours and the judgments of God—was employed, with reiterated and increasing vehemence, to impress his truth upon their minds, and give it a permanent influence in their hearts: yet they continued a "stubborn

and rebellious generation;" to whom Moses said, with melancholy truth, after all the kindness they had experienced, and all the discipline they had endured—and in the midst of the most propitious external circumstances;—"The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, unto this day." Still more striking is the fact, at the period when the Messiah himself made his appearance among them. He set before them the clearest and most abundant evidences of his Divine mission. He accompanied these with an uninterrupted display of the most unwearied benevolence, and of every other possible excellence of character. No expectation could be more reasonable than that of the husbandman in the parable, "They will reverence my Son." Yet what was the mournful fact? "When the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on the inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him."* Instead of yielding to evidence, the irritation and violence of the Jews against the truth increased, in exact proportion as the proofs of it were multiplied;—a circumstance for which it is not difficult, on the ordinary principles of human nature, satisfactorily to account. When any doctrine is the object of dislike, the struggle between the conviction, which undeniable evidence forces upon the judgment, and the rooted aversion which still remains in the heart, must of necessity become, in such circumstances, always the more violent. In the case of the Jews, the expressions and acts of rage and madness frequently indicated the fearful tempest of conflicting sentiments and passions, which, from this cause, was agitating and tormenting their bosoms. Nor, although accompanied with some peculiarities, is the case of the Jews, in the general principle of it, by any means a solitary one.

* Matth. xxi. 38, 39.

It is, I believe, the case of by far the greater number of those, who reject the gospel among ourselves. "The light still shineth in darkness, and the darkness admitteth it not."

Further.—It is a matter of fact in daily observation, that circumstances which appear, in every respect the most favourable that could be desired, frequently fail of any salutary effect, to the great disappointment and grief of those, who are anxious about the result in behalf of their friends;—while, in other instances, circumstances much less promising are attended with converting efficacy. It is also as frequently observable, that the very same circumstances, as far as human discernment can discover, prove effectual in the conviction and conversion of one, while another remains entirely unaffected by them, or is even hardened in infidelity and sin.

Such facts, which are without number, immediately suggest certain inquiries:—What is the cause of this remarkable diversity of effect? Does it proceed from better previous dispositions in one than in another? or (which in effect, indeed, is much the same) from the better improvement, on the part of one than of another, of that grace, which is supposed to be common to all?

In reply to these questions, I would simply observe, that every theory, which militates against a leading and characteristic feature of the gospel, must be a false theory. Now, throughout the Scriptures, the scheme of salvation is uniformly represented as having been purposely so constituted as to "*hide pride from man.*" The language of the gospel is, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord:"—"Where is boasting? It is excluded." The whole plan, then, in all its parts, must, in this respect, be consistent with itself. The design of abasing human pride, and precluding self-glorying, must be answered throughout. It is not enough that "boasting" be "ex-

cluded" in one quarter, while ground is retained for it in another. It is not enough, for example, that this exclusion be recognised only in the *foundation of hope*, or *meritorious ground of acceptance*. Any hypothesis which, while it professes to do this, places, at the same time, *in the sinner himself*, who has been led to build on this foundation, and has been "renewed in the spirit of his mind," the *reason of the difference* between him and others, militates directly against this characteristic feature of the gospel. For in order to the effectual exclusion of boasting, it is just as necessary that the *cause of difference* should not be in us, as that the *ground of hope* should not be in us. It alters not the case to say, "I still owe the difference to grace; because, without communicated grace, the difference could never have existed." For, if this grace is imparted to me, *in common with others*, who fail to improve it; then the difference between them and me is not owing to the grace, (for with respect to it we are supposed on a level) but evidently to my superior improvement of the grace. And *in the disposition so to improve it, I have "whereof to glory."*

But the whole of this doctrine, it may now be said, proceeds upon the supposition of man's inability of himself to believe the gospel, and turn unto God. And such inability, it may be alleged, cannot exist, because it destroys human accountableness.

This objection is founded in a double mistake:—

In the first place:—It is founded in a mistake as to the *nature* of the inability in question. This inability—(the observation is trite, but ought never to be forgotten)—is entirely of a *moral* kind. It does not at all consist in any want of *natural powers and capacities*:—for, were there a want of these, certainly men would not be "*without excuse.*" It consists in *aversion of heart*; in *disinclination* to what is truly good; in *dislike* to "the things of the

Spirit of God." Our Lord confirms, what reason irresistably dictates, that men could not be responsible, as sinners and unbelievers, if they wanted natural faculties, and capacities for knowledge—when, in reply to the self-confident question of the Pharisees, "Are we blind also?" he assures them, "*If ye were blind, ye should have no sin*: but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth:"*—and when, speaking of the hatred and rejection, which he had experienced from his countrymen in general, he says to his disciples, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not done among them the works, which no other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen, and hated both me and my Father."† The latter of these two passages teaches us besides, that to render men "without excuse," there must not only be the possession of natural powers and capacities, but also *opportunities of knowledge*, and *adequate means of conviction*. In the case to which our Lord refers, all these were enjoyed:—and the unbelief of the Jews, in the midst of their high advantages, he traces at once to the state of their hearts—to their *hatred* of himself and of his Father. His language to them on another occasion proceeds on the same principle:—"Ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life. I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you:"‡—and it is also distinctly recognised in his words to Nicodemus, formerly quoted:—"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that 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 reproved."§ "This kind of inability is evidently wilful and vicious, and therefore culpable and

* John ix. 41. † John xv. 22, 24.
‡ John v. 40, 42. § John iii. 19, 20.

inexcusable. Every man's conscience, upon the least reflection, must tell him so; and if ever he come to be duly sensible of it, and humbled on that account, he will be so far from excusing himself on the score of such inability, that he will confess it as his guilt, take the blame entirely to himself, justify God and his holy law, and implore the influences of his Holy Spirit, to create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him."*—Indeed, to vindicate men on the plea of inability of *this* description, is to excuse them on account of that which, instead of being an alleviation of their criminality, itself constitutes the very essence of all their guilt.

2*dly*, Supposing the inability of man to be of this description, and to be, consequently, neither excusable in itself, nor any excuse for unbelief and rejection of the gospel; the difference produced by the grace of the Spirit of God, when he makes any one a partaker of salvation, *leaves the case of others unaltered.* The objection proceeds on the supposition, that there exists some kind of *claim*, on the part of the guilty, for the exercise of Divine clemency. But such a supposition is, on no account, and in no degree, admissible. Persons, who persist in rebellion, do not surely become more excusable than they were before, because other rebels have been induced to lay down their arms. If they were without excuse when *all* were rebels, their crime is neither altered in its nature, nor mitigated in its enormity, by the submission of *some*;—even although that submission has been the effect of distinguishing clemency on the part of their sovereign, extended to such as had no more title to it than themselves;—that is, to such as had, like them, *no title to it at all.* Where *no claim* exists in any, all may be left to suffer, or all may be included in an act of mercy, or sovereign clemency may

* Dissertation on the Influences of the Holy Spirit, by Archibald M'Lean. Works, Vol. II. page 110, 111.

freely select its objects. In the last of these cases, the favour that is shown to some is an injury to none. The criminal, who deserves to die, deserves not his punishment the less, that another criminal is pardoned. This is a subject, however, on the full illustration of which it is impossible at present to enter; although I have deemed it necessary thus to state my conviction respecting it; because it is essentially connected with those views, which seem to be so clearly taught in the Scriptures, with regard to the sovereignty—the unshackled and unlimited freedom—of the grace of God, in the dispensation of those Divine influences, which are indispensable to the salvation of men.

I must conclude this discussion by observing, that the hidden, unseen, mysterious nature of spiritual influence, ought not to be urged as any argument against its reality. On this and some other subjects, we are instructed, simply to infer the operation of the cause from the existence of the effects. *How* these effects are produced—the particular *manner* of the Holy Spirit's operation—we do not understand; and we are expressly admonished of the vanity of attempting to understand it:—"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* We do not see the wind itself;—but we see and feel its effects. So it is, as to every one that is born of the Spirit. His operation is secret and unperceived. It is sometimes sudden and sometimes gradual. But the reality of his influence must, in every case, be determined, by its palpable results, in the character of the person, who is the professed or apparent subject of it. The effects of the wind are in proportion to the degree of force with which it blows.

* John iii. 7, 8.

"Breathe but an air of heaven," and we perceive its influence, in the stirring of the foliage, and in its grateful and refreshing coolness to our bodily frame. Let the tempest, again, rise;—we hear its dreary howlings, and we witness its mighty power, in frightful desolations, on land and on sea. But in either case, the agent is invisible. It is only by its effects, that we can discover even the direction in which it moves. "Whence it cometh, and whither it goeth," we cannot tell.—"So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Let the effects, as they are described in the Scripture, be distinctly manifest:—and from these we may infer the certainty of his previous operation.

Permit me to press, with earnestness, upon your attention, the unspeakable importance of that saving change of which I have been endeavouring to show that the Holy Spirit is the Author. Let not the declaration of the Saviour, delivered with so much emphasis, be considered by any of you, merely as an article of your professed creed, but as a matter of fact, infinitely important and interesting to all who hear me, and no less important and interesting to myself:—"*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.*" The question is not, Do you believe the doctrine of the necessity of regeneration?—do you hold it as an article of your speculative creed?—But, have you undergone the change of which the necessity is thus declared?—Have *you* been "born again?" Multitudes have *regeneration* in their professed creed, whose hearts are strangers to the change which the word expresses. I wish to impress you with the *importance* of the question, whether *you* have been the subjects of this change, to prepare you for the subsequent part of this subject, which will exhibit a more detailed view of its nature; that is, of what is implied in "*having the Spirit of Christ;*" from which the impossibility stated in the

text will be manifest, of any man's *being Christ's*, who is destitute of this Spirit.

Meantime, one of our chief encouragements, in continuing to proclaim the gospel of salvation arises from the assurance given us by "the God of all grace" himself, that it shall not prove to *all* who hear it, "the savour of death, unto death."—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For, as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and return not thither, but water the earth, and make it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

There are certain most benignant and animating declarations, made by the blessed God in his word,—declarations conceived in terms so striking, that were there no other passages in the Bible, in proof of the doctrine of Divine influence in the conversion and sanctification of men, they would, of themselves, be sufficient to determine the point. While I repeat these declarations, as a concluding evidence of the truth I have been endeavouring to establish—may God, in infinite mercy, by the energy of his Holy Spirit, fulfil them, in the happy experience of all present!—"This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah,

* Isaiah lv. 6—11.

After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."* "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the hard and stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."†

O that the Divine energy of the Spirit of grace may, by the fulfilment of these "exceeding great and precious promises," make it manifest, that the weapons of our warfare, which are not carnal, are MIGHTY THROUGH GOD to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ!"‡

* Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. † Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. ‡ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5

DISCOURSE XI.

ON THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ROMANS viii. 9.

"NOW IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS."

I ENDEAVOURED, in last Discourse, to show, that by "*the Spirit of Christ,*" in this solemn asseveration of the apostle, we are not to understand his *miraculous communications*;—because this would not only confine the saying to the first age of the church, but, even with regard to it, would render it manifestly untrue:—and, on the other hand, that it could not signify the *mind* or *disposition* of Christ—those holy tempers of soul which he possessed and exemplified;—because not only were these elsewhere represented as the "fruits of the Spirit," but the language of the context would by no means admit of such an interpretation.

I proposed, therefore, to treat, from this text, of the ordinary gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, as the true and unequivocal evidences of a person's belonging to Christ.

In last Discourse, I confined myself to one point—the necessity of the Spirit's influence to the accomplishment of that saving change, which is represented in Scrip-

ture under the striking figures of a new birth, a resurrection from death, a new creation. I was induced to do so, not merely for the sake of giving compactness and unity to the argument, but by a conviction, that, if this one point were satisfactorily established, little difficulty would remain in admitting his continued agency, in the subsequent progress of the Divine life in the soul.

I shall not attempt any recapitulation of the train of reasoning then pursued; but shall proceed immediately to the remaining part of my subject.

I must begin, by pressing more particularly on your attention, what was adverted to in the conclusion of the former Discourse—the unspeakable importance of those inquiries respecting our Christian profession, our present state, and our future prospects, which are instantly and forcibly suggested by the language of the text:—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—"He is *none of his!*" Think what this means. He is not one of those, who are "*in Christ Jesus;*" not a genuine friend and follower of the Redeemer; not a subject of his grace, an object of his love, a partaker of his salvation:—but one, who wants the characteristic mark of discipleship,—the "seal in his forehead;" and who, instead of being acknowledged, received, and blessed, shall be disowned, and banished, and cursed, at the great day!—To be *his*, on the contrary, we are taught by the context, is to have an interest in his righteousness, and thus to be freed from condemnation:—it is to be spiritually minded, which even now is life and peace:—it is to have the good hope of a resurrection to immortal life:—it is to be a child of God, a partaker of his paternal love, and an heir of that glory, with which the heaviest sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared.* These opposite considerations impart to this subject a degree of importance, such

* See verses 1, 6, 11, 14—18.

as ought to secure from all the most serious attention, and the deepest concern.

In exact consistency with the views thus suggested by the immediate context, the Holy Spirit is, in other places, represented as the pledge, the assurance, or earnest, of "glory, and honour, and immortality." Thus, in a subsequent verse of this very chapter:—"And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the *first-fruits of the Spirit*, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* By the "*first-fruits of the Spirit*," are not meant here, I apprehend, the first, or earliest communications of the Spirit; but rather, the Spirit as the first-fruits, or earnest, of what is at the same time specified as the great object of Christian hope and desire—"the adoption—the redemption of our body." This is the simplest view of the meaning of the phrase; and it agrees not only with its connexion in the chapter, but with the usual language of the New Testament on the same subject. A passage precisely parallel occurs, Eph. i. 13, 14.—"In whom also, when ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise; which is *the earnest of our inheritance*, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The "redemption of the purchased possession" is the redemption of the people of God from the grave; the same event which the passage before us represents as the object of their longing expectation:—and of this event, and the subsequent everlasting possession of the heavenly "inheritance," the Holy Spirit is, in both passages, declared to be the earnest, or the first-fruits. In like manner, Paul says to the Corinthians: "Now he who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given *the earnest of the Spirit* in our hearts:"—and again: "Now he that

* Verse 23.

hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us *the earnest of the Spirit.*"*

Two inquiries, then, present themselves on this part of the subject:—What is meant by "*having* the Spirit of Christ?"—and, What is the legitimate, scriptural evidence of the possession?

In answer to the first of these inquiries, it may be observed, that our "*having* the Spirit of Christ" is obviously of equivalent import, with his "*dwelling in us.*" The simple comparison of the preceding clause of the verse with the latter, which forms our text, is sufficient to show this: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of God *dwell in you:* now if any man *have not* the Spirit of Christ"—(the same Spirit, observe, called the *Spirit of God* in the one clause, and the *Spirit of Christ* in the other)—"if any man have not the Spirit of Christ," (that is, *dwelling in him*) "he is none of his." Similar expressions are not uncommon in the New Testament. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God *dwelleth in you*?"† "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, *which is in you*, which ye have of God?"‡ —"I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may *abide with you* forever: even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him: for he *dwelleth with you*, and *shall be in you.*"§

Such expressions (especially those last quoted, from the lips of Jesus himself) serve to throw a clear and simple light on an apostolic phrase, to which I had occasion formerly to refer, in proof of the Divinity and Personality of the Spirit—"*the communion of the Holy Ghost.*"‖—The idea expressed by the word *communion*, or *fellow-*

* 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. v. 5. † 1 Cor. iii. 16. ‡ vi. 19
§ John xiv. 16, 17. ‖ 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

ship, accords precisely with that conveyed by our Saviour's words—"that he may *abide with you*,"—"he *dwelleth with you*,"—"he *shall be in you*." The apostle wishes, in behalf of the Corinthian believers, the fulfilment of this gracious promise of their Lord. It is the same word that is used,* when Christians are described as having fellowship with the Father, and with the Son: "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have *fellowship* with us: and truly our *fellowship* is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."† And in using this language, John seems evidently to have had in mind the words of his Master, as recorded by himself, in the same Discourse with those formerly quoted in reference to the Holy Spirit, and in immediate connexion with them: "Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*."‡

If our "having the Spirit of Christ," then, or his "dwelling in us," is the evidence of our being his, and the want of his Spirit, consequently, the evidence of the contrary; the second question before stated, immediately presses upon our notice: "What is *the evidence of our having this Spirit?*—what are the conclusive indications of his presence?—how are we to know that he dwelleth in us?"

On this part of our inquiry, it may be proper, first of all, to observe, that, what our Lord says to Nicodemus, respecting the invisible secrecy of spiritual influence, is just as applicable to the subsequent as to the first operations of the Divine Agent.—The residence of the Holy Spirit in the soul is not to be ascertained by any thing of the nature of direct and sensible impulse;—as if his operations were to be felt within, like mechanical impressions.

* κοινωνια. † 1 John i. 3. ‡ John xiv. 23.

Some notion of this kind, although not, perhaps, distinctly avowed, has often given rise to much enthusiasm. The Spirit is compared to *fire*, on account of the *powerful* and *purifying* nature of that energy which he exerts on the mind and heart. But it would be a false conclusion, to infer from this comparison, that his energy must be sensibly felt, in the same way as the heat of fire is perceived when it affects the body. From the language of some on this particular subject, one would be apt to suspect, if it were not previously known to be otherwise, that they imagine some kind of *materiality*, both in the agent himself, and in the mind that is the subject of his influence.

Neither is the evidence of the *in-dwelling* of the Spirit to be sought for in sudden and violent emotions, the occasional starts, and transient transports of feeling. These are of a nature too unsteady and fluctuating, and, from the influence of constitutional temperament, and various other natural causes, too subject to mistake and delusion, to form a satisfactory proof, in a matter of such unspeakable importance.

To the question, then, What is the proper evidence of any man's "having the Spirit of Christ?" I would answer in general—*The effects produced by his influence on the character of all in whom he dwells.*

Were I to pursue this subject at full length, I should be led to an illustration of all the principles which form the Christian character, in the whole of their extensive and diversified operation;—these, according to the Scriptures, being all the result of Divine influence. The view of the subject to be presented in this Discourse, must, of necessity, be more brief and general.

"When the Comforter is come," said Jesus to his disciples, "whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *he shall testify of me*:"—"He shall *glorify me*;

for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you."* The first and great *work* of the Spirit then, is to *testify of Christ*;—to *show the truth concerning him to the mind*: and the great general *design*, and *tendency*, and *effect*, of all his operations, is, to *glorify him*. For, even supposing that the words now quoted had reference to the *inspiration* of his apostles, still it is an obvious conclusion from them, that the same truth which he revealed by inspiration, and attested by his miraculous energy, is the truth, the excellence and glory of which (as we endeavoured to show in last Discourse) he opens the understanding to discern. I wish this leading observation, respecting the nature and principal design of the Spirit's operation, to be kept in mind; because it forms a kind of general principle, throughout the subsequent illustrations.

Since "the vision and the prophecy" were closed, in the isle of Patmos, the Spirit of God has imparted *no new revelations*. The volume of inspiration was then completed; and the heavy displeasure of God denounced against any one who should ever presume either to add to, or to take away from its contents. Every pretension, therefore, to communications from the Spirit, possessing the same authority with the inspired records, is to be treated as either pitiable delusion, or detestable imposture.

It is now the work of this Divine Agent, not to make new discoveries of the mind of God, but to impart spiritual discernment of what is already revealed; particularly concerning the person, character, and work of the Redeemer. And the very first effect of his illuminating influence, is, to bring the sinner, who is the subject of his gracious operation, under a deep and abasing sense of his guilt and unworthiness, to humble and simple reliance on free mercy, through the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel. The very first attitude in which such a sin-

* John xv. 26. xvi. 14.

ner presents himself to our view, is—" standing afar off," not presuming " even to lift up his eyes to heaven, but smiting on his breast, and saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Justification by free grace, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, I apprehend to be the very first principle of the gospel;—a principle, therefore, respecting which we dare not speak in qualified or undecided terms. And if this be indeed so fundamental a principle, it will necessarily follow that dependence, for justification, on the free grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, must be one of the first and most essential features of the Christian character. If the first apparent effect of the Spirit's converting energy is to *bring* the sinner to this dependence; it is also one of the permanent effects of his continued influence, that *the mind is kept in this state*;— kept " looking unto Jesus;" confiding in his atoning sacrifice, as the only ground of acceptance in the sight of God; persisting to renounce,—as forming no part of the meritorious foundation of hope,—all that is felt, or said, or done, *after* conversion; just as, *at* conversion, all was, in this view, renounced, that had been felt, or said, or done, *before* it.

Some of you, possibly, may be disposed to think, that this is an effect, to the production of which Divine influence is not at all necessary. I know none, on the contrary, to which it is more so. In the pride of our fallen nature, there is a violent antipathy against this doctrine of justification by free grace; and a powerful and unceasing propensity to the opposite: and the same influence that is necessary to subdue this pride at first, and effectually to bring the mind to " submit itself unto the righteousness which is of God by faith," continues equally necessary, to maintain the same humble temper of the soul.

We have already seen that the Spirit of Christ seeks the glory of Christ. But the disposition to confide, either

entirely or in part, on any thing else than his obedience and sacrifice;—to ascribe the whole glory of our salvation to ourselves, or to divide it with the Saviour;—is a disposition that robs him, in the mind of the person, who cherishes it, of his peculiar honour, and which cannot be the production of that Spirit, of whom Jesus said, "He shall glorify me." Examine yourselves, then, by *this* test, whether you "have the Spirit of Christ." Has Christ the glory in your hearts, which is his due?—the undivided glory of your salvation?—is the foundation of your hope what the Spirit has testified concerning Christ in the Scriptures?—Surely you cannot be considered as "having the Spirit of Christ," if you are not joining issue, if I may so express myself, with this Spirit, in *glorifying Christ*;—if you are not resting your hopes on that foundation which the Spirit has revealed, in the "*testimony of Jesus.*"

The Holy Spirit maintains the state of mind of which I have just made mention, *by the law*, and *by the cross.*—Those views which he imparts of the purity, spirituality, extent, and reasonableness, of God's law, produce a deeper and deeper conviction of sin:—while the cross, contemplated with the eye of a spiritually enlightened understanding, at once concurs with the law in impressing on the heart a growing sense of the "exceeding sinfulness" of transgression, and, at the same time, by the amazing grace displayed in the expiation made by the sacrifice of the Son of God, disposes the believer, under the impulse of humble and fervent gratitude, cheerfully to exclude all boasting, and to say with the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!"*

This is the ground-work of all the subsequent opera-

* Gal. vi. 14.

tions of the Spirit of Christ. He rears on this foundation the whole superstructure of holiness.

We saw formerly that while, in regeneration, he is the Agent, the truth as it is in Jesus is the means by which he effects his gracious purpose. I now add, that the truth is also the means by which he maintains, carries forward, and completes, the good work which he has thus begun.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," said Jesus to the Jews, "he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life; and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."*—From a state of condemnation to death, he passes into a state of acceptance, pardon, and life:—and at the same time that, by an act of free justification, he thus passes from death unto life in a forensic sense, or in the eye of law; he passes also from a state of spiritual death, of death in trespasses and sins, into a state of new and spiritual life. Then commences his *sanctification*. Those new principles of character are then implanted, which afterwards, with progressive influence, develop themselves, in all the various and excellent fruits of a holy life.

The great distinction between what he now becomes and what he formerly was, does not consist in entire deliverance from the power of sin; but in the opposition, or, as the apostle terms it, the warfare, which now has place in his soul, between the predominant influence of those holy affections and desires which belong to "the new man," and the principles of that corrupt nature—"the old man,"—of which he continues to partake, and of which he feels and laments the operation: "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."†—This it is, I apprehend, which constitutes

* John v. 24. † Rom. vii. 22, 23.

the essential difference between the renewed and the unrenewed man. This is the characteristic distinction. For by "the *law of his mind*," of which the apostle speaks, he evidently intends something entirely different from the mere decisions of judgment, or dictates of conscience, against evil, and in favour of good. Natural men—men who are living "according to the course of this world," and in whom there appear no symptoms indicative of spiritual life—unless their consciences have become "seared as with a hot iron," know abundantly well what *these* are. They are no strangers in their bosoms. They are their very tormentors. Much secret misery do they occasion to them, and many a desperate struggle. But alas! their struggles are not directed against the sin of which conscience accuses them, but against the admonitions of the inward accuser itself. These they strive, by every means in their power, to suppress, and to silence; all the inclinations, all the *likings*, of their hearts, still continuing on the side of sin. There can hardly be conceived two things more essentially distinct, than the constrained approbation of the judgment, and "*delight in the law of God* after the inward man." This *delight* is seated in the affections of the heart. It implies that the predominant inclination and desire of the renewed soul is to good; while all that is contrary to it is the subject of regret and lamentation, of vigilant opposition, and of prayer for deliverance:—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

By what influence, I now inquire, is the power and vigour of this "*law of the mind*" maintained, in its contention against sin? The inquiry is answered by Paul, in Gal. v. 17. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the

* Rom. vii. 21.

one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

These words are commonly understood as expressing the same sentiment, which is stated more at large in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans:—*that the desires of the new nature are prevented from being carried into full effect by the remaining corruption of the old.* This is, no doubt, a truth;—but I question whether it be the truth, which the words were intended to convey. The connexion of this sentiment with the scope of the apostle's reasonings and admonitions is not, by any means, obvious. In the verse immediately preceding, he says:—"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." To *walk in the Spirit* is to live according to the dictates of the Spirit in the holy Scriptures;—and to live under the constant and abiding influence of the Spirit, enlightening and purifying, strengthening, directing and comforting the soul. In proportion as they thus "walked in the Spirit," they would not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Then follow the words under consideration; which may be understood either, *in the first place*, as *assigning a reason*, why, if they walked in the Spirit, the lust of the flesh would not, of course be fulfilled:—or, *secondly*, as *holding out encouragement* to them to walk in the Spirit, as he had just exhorted them, that they might not fulfil the lust of the flesh. The verse might be literally translated:—"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other;—*that ye may not do those things which ye might desire*," that is, which ye might incline to do. This translation of the latter clause of the verse is, *in the first place*, more close and literal than the other.* *In the second place*, it agrees

* The whole verse in the original stands thus:—Η γαρ σαρξ επιθυμει κατα του πνευματος· το δε πνευμα κατα της σαρκος· ταυτα δε αντικειται αλληλοις, ινα μη ἁ αν θελητε, ταυτα ποιητε.

quite as well with the preceding part of the verse. The ordinary view makes the end of the verse an inference from *the flesh lusting against the Spirit.* *This* view, on the contrary, makes it expressive of the consequence, or rather the *purpose*, of *the Spirit's lusting against the flesh.* So far, therefore, as respects the connexion with the former part of the verse, the one of these views is as natural and reasonable as the other. *In the third place*, the latter view agrees better than the former with the scope of the context. For any attentive reader may perceive, that by the illative particle "*for*," the apostle intended to introduce, as before noticed, either *a reason* of what he had, in the preceding verse, *affirmed*, or *an encouragement* to what he had there *enjoined.* The general sentiment expressed, according to this translation is, *that it is by the influence of the Holy Spirit, that the desires of the flesh, or of corrupt nature, are kept in restraint, and prevented from being carried into full operation.* His influence is in opposition to corruption. The two are "contrary the one to the other," as sin and holiness, as hell and heaven. It is by the Spirit that the dominion of the old nature is first broken: and it is by the Spirit dwelling in us, that its evil principles are ever after kept under control, and in proper subordination to those higher and better principles, which are the produce of his own operation.

The *continued* influence of the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of believers, is evidently implied in the representations formerly referred to, of his "*abiding with them*," and "*dwelling in them.*" Indeed his abiding energy in their souls, is one of the Divine promises in the New Covenant. A "*new heart*" and a "*new Spirit*" are evidently blessings not of transient, but of permanent duration. And, in conformity with this, the persons, who were to be thus "renewed in the spirit of their mind," were

thenceforward to "walk in God's statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them," under the power and guidance of that Spirit, which he promises to "put within them."* Their subsequent life of holy obedience was to be supported and regulated by his unceasing influence. The same thing is also strongly implied in the words of God by Jeremiah: "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."†

I proceed to observe, that in many parts of Scripture, *general progress in holiness* is most explicitly ascribed to *Divine influence.* "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are *sanctified*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *by the Spirit of our God*:"‡ —"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit*, and belief of the truth:"§—"Being confident of this very thing, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*:"‖—"Wherefore, my beloved—work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for *it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*"¶

Of general holiness, I have formerly had occasion to

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. † Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 11. In this verse, "*washing*" seems to be used as a general term, inclusive both of *justification*, which is *washing* from the *guilt* of sin, and of *sanctification*, which is washing from its *pollution.* The former is "in the name of the Lord Jesus;" and the latter "by the Spirit of our God."

§ 2 Thess. ii. 13. ‖ Phil. i. 6. ¶ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

remark, the two great inward principles are, the *fear* and the *love* of God:—and both these, wherever they exist in the heart, are the product of Divine influence. As to the *fear* of God, this is most explicitly affirmed, in a passage quoted a little ago, where God says, "I will give them one heart, and one way, *that they may fear me* forever;—*I will put my fear in their hearts*, that they shall not depart from me."* With regard to the *love* of God, the same thing is declared, with equal precision, in the Divine promise to Israel: "The Lord thy God will *circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*, that thou mayest live."† And as this love is the great principle and spring of all obedience to the Divine will, and may, in this respect, be viewed as "the fulfilling of the law;" this "circumcision of the heart" may be considered as equivalent to the promise, "I will write my laws in their inward parts, and put them in their hearts."‡

Another great principle of the new nature,—of the character of the renewed man, is *love to the brethren*;—that is, love to them, as the disciples of Christ,—for Christ's sake;—not as *men* merely, but as *good men*;—the "excellent of the earth,"—born again,—children of God,—members of the household of faith. This love Jesus himself specially enjoined, as his new commandment, and as a distinguishing badge,—a characteristic mark, of his genuine disciples: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."§—This love the apostle Paul includes in his enumeration of the "fruits of the Spirit;"‖ and to the brethren at Thessalonica he says: "Ye yourselves are *taught of God to*

* Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. † Deut. xxx. 6.
‡ Jer. xxxi. 33. § John xiii. 34, 35. ‖ Gal. v. 22.

love one another."* That this *teaching* is not mere outward instruction, or information of duty, but implies a Divine influence upon the heart, is evident from the manner in which he elsewhere prays for its increase: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."† The apostle John, in like manner, pronounces this love to be a principle of the new nature, produced and cherished by the same Divine energy, which effects the regeneration of the sinner: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."‡

This leads me to observe, more generally, that *all* the holy tempers, dispositions, and affections, of the renewed soul, in all their variety, towards God, and towards men, as well as all the personal virtues, when practised from right motives, are represented as the "fruit of the Spirit," or the product of Divine influence: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (or fidelity,) meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts."§ Every thing, in short, that is different from "the works of the flesh,"—different, that is, from the thoughts and desires, the words and actions of corrupt nature,—we are, in the Scriptures, taught to consider as resulting from the holy agency of the Spirit of God:—so that wherever we find the prevalent exercise of gracious and heavenly affections, we may at once affirm, that they are neither indigenous, nor self-produced, but implanted by his sacred energy.

* 1 Thess. iv. 9.
† 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.
‡ 1 John iv. 7.
§ Gal. v. 22—24.

I must now further remark, keeping in view the general observation with which I set out,—that all these effects, which constitute, by their combination, the "beauty of holiness," are produced, in their progressive advancement, *by means of the truth*, or *word of God*. "Being born again," says the apostle Peter, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever:"—"He that is born of God," says John, "doth not commit (or practise) sin: for *his seed remaineth in him;* and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."* The *seed*, in both these passages, is the same—the incorruptible seed of the word of God. And the same word which, according to the one passage, is the means, or principle, of regeneration, continues, according to the other, by its residence in the heart, the great preventive of sin, and the principle of progressive sanctification. The *Gospel*, or "testimony of Jesus," is especially intended; for "this is the word," adds the apostle Peter, "which by the gospel is preached unto you." At the same time, the word of God in general, in all its variety and plenitude of instruction, contributes to the same blessed effect. The Scriptures of the Old Testament are denominated by an inspired apostle (and certainly we may extend the appellation to those of the New)—"*the* HOLY *Scriptures*."† Such they are in their nature. "The words of Jehovah are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."‡ And the more diligently a Christian studies their contents, under the teaching of the Spirit of truth, the more completely will his soul become *imbued* with the purity which pervades them. Christian holiness has its origin in the spiritual discernment of Divine truth, the light of moral purity springing from the light of knowledge; and it is commensurate, in its progress, with

* 1 Pet. i. 23, compared with 1 John iii. 9. † 2 Tim. iii. 15.
‡ Psalm xii. 6.

the progress of such knowledge. It is, in no instance, an unaccountable effect, which cannot be traced to a cause, or which continues to exist unconnected with the operation of means. It has its foundation, all along, in enlightened principle. "Sanctify them," said Jesus, in his intercessory prayer for his disciples, "Sanctify them *through thy truth:* thy word is truth."* It is the man "whose *delight is in the law of the Lord,* and who *meditates in his law day and night,*" that shall be "like the tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth fruit in its season, and whose leaf never fades."†

Besides the word of God, the Spirit operates, in promoting holiness, by means of the various ordinances of Christian fellowship; and also, in a special manner, by means of prayer. The former, indeed, might be considered as deriving their efficacy from the word of God; for they are just various means, appointed by Divine wisdom and goodness, of exhibiting, illustrating, and impressing, the truths and promises of that word. And with regard to the latter, it may be observed, that it is at once the expression of holy affections and desires, and an instituted means, or instrument, of their increase. It brings down from above the necessary supplies of spiritual influence; and is itself, at the same time, prompted, directed, and animated by the Holy Spirit. He is accordingly denominated, "the Spirit of grace and of supplication:"‡—and the apostle Paul says concerning him: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."§

* John xvii. 17. † Psalm i. 2, 3. ‡ Zech. xii. 10.
§ Rom. viii. 26, 27.

Another important part of the work of the Spirit consists in *maintaining the inward peace, and comfort, and joy*, of believers in Christ.

THE GOSPEL means, as all of you are aware, *the good tidings*. Now it is of the very nature of good tidings, that when understood and believed, they inspire the heart with *joy*.—Of "the joy of God's salvation" the Holy Spirit is the original author, by imparting those views of the truth, as a revelation of free mercy to the guilty and the lost, by which it is at first produced in the soul. In the very same way does he continue to maintain it. The same remarks are applicable to this joy, which were made respecting Christian holiness. It is not a mere senseless unaccountable *lightness of heart*. It is not a joy, for which no reasonable cause can be assigned. It is a rational joy;—imparted in a way perfectly consistent with the nature of man as a reasonable being, whose affections are moved and supported by views presented to his mind, such as are fitted to excite and maintain them.

The Holy Spirit is called "*the Comforter*:"—and he fulfils the function which this appellation implies, by "taking of the things of Christ, and *showing them to the mind*."*—It is by the Spirit that we are enabled to view God as a Father in Christ, and to enjoy the pure and exquisite delight, which the thought of this relation is fitted to inspire:—"Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage, again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father:"†—"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."‡—It is by the Spirit that a sense of Divine love—even of the favour of God, which is "better than life,"—is produced and maintained in the soul:—"Hope maketh not ashamed; because the

* Compare John xiv. 16, with verse 26, and with xv. 11.

† Rom. viii. 15. ‡ Gal. iv. 6.

love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* The churches are described as "walking *in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.*"† —The Thessalonians received the gospel, when preached to them by Paul and his fellow-labourers, "with *joy of the Holy Ghost.*"‡ The kingdom of heaven is characterized as "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and *joy in the Holy Ghost.*"§—Paul prays for the Christians at Rome, that "the God of hope might fill them with all joy and peace *in believing*, that they might abound in hope *through the power of the Holy Ghost.*"‖—And for the Ephesians, "that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, might grant unto them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might *by his Spirit*, in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that, being rooted and grounded in love, they might be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the depth and height, and breadth and length, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that they might be filled with all the fulness of God."¶

This joy *ought to be* permanent. It is not only described as the believer's *privilege*, but enjoined upon him as his *duty*. Without it, he will give to men a false and discouraging, instead of a just and inviting, view of the nature of the gospel. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord:"—Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice:"—"Rejoice evermore."** Nothing is commanded for which there is not assigned a good and sufficient reason. It is impossible for us to rejoice, unless on account of something, brought before our minds, that is fitted to give pleasure. Now the causes of spiritual joy are always

* Rom. v. 5. † Acts ix. 31. ‡ 1 Thess. i. 6.
§ Rom. xiv. 17. ‖ Rom. xv. 13. ¶ Eph. iii. 14—19.
** Phil. ii. 1, 4. 6. 4 Thess. v. 16.

the same: and they are all summed up in the expression. "*Rejoice* IN THE LORD." This is a source of joy, always full, and always pure. Unlike the sources of earthly pleasure, which alternately dry up and overflow—this is a perennial fountain;—"a spring of water,"—of 'living water,'—"whose waters fail not." And while the reasons of joy remain unchanged, being all centered in Him, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;"—the *Holy Spirit*, whose influence is necessary to maintain this joy, is freely and faithfully promised "*to them that ask him.*" "And I say unto you," (they are the words of Jesus himself, "the faithful witness")—"I say unto you, Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him?"*

Where this joy, then, is awanting or deficient, its deficiency or its absence must arise, I should apprehend, from one or other of three causes. *In the first place*—constitutional distemper, in body, or in mind, or by reciprocal influence, in both:—in which case, the patient stands in need of the counsel and aid of the physician, as much as of the minister of the gospel, and the Christian friend;—and very frequently the exertions of all the three fail of the desired success. *Secondly*—erroneous or defective views of Divine truth:—either, for example, a want of sufficiently clear and simple conceptions of the nature of the gospel—of the unbounded riches, and absolute free-

* Luke xi. 9—13.

dom, of the grace which it reveals, and of the simplicity of that faith by which sinners obtain an interest in its blessings;—or a want of extensive and properly digested knowledge, confusion of ideas, contracted, partial, and inconsistent views of the scheme of redemption, and of the general system of revealed doctrine, by which a man is necessarily exposed to be "soon shaken in mind," and consequently to perpetual fluctuation of feeling:—Or, *thirdly*—departure from God, either in open, or in secret sin; backsliding in *life*, or at least in *heart*; for there may be a great deal of the latter, where, in the sight of fellow-creatures, there is very little of the former. The "joy of God's salvation" is a *holy* joy; not to be found in the ways of sin; not to be experienced in "an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God."

If we are destitute of Christian comfort and joy, it is, I think, of essential importance to have the conviction deeply impressed upon our minds, that *the cause is in ourselves*, —*entirely* in ourselves. It is not God that withdraws from us; but we that withdraw from God. When we *have* withdrawn, indeed, and by our backsliding deprived ourselves of the "joy of the Lord," and of the light of his countenance," he may make us to feel our folly and our sin, by refraining for a time from restoring it. But still, let us remember that the cause is in us; and that, in every instance in which the effect does not arise from bodily or mental disorder, the cause is, in its nature, criminal. The manner in which some have spoken and written respecting the want of religious comfort, as arising from the *sovereign hiding of God's countenance*, while I am satisfied that it is not, at least in general, their intention, to deny that there is a cause, and that that cause is sin in us, has yet frequently appeared to me too much calculated to produce and to foster an impression of a different kind; —to lead us, when in this situation, or when we see oth-

ers in it, to look upon ourselves, or on our fellow-professors, rather as *tried* in the course of Divine providence, than as decidedly "*sinning against our own souls*;"—and thus, in either case, to *pity*, rather than to *condemn*.* Nay, sometimes, (such is the deceitfulness of the human heart) persons get hold of the notion, which has, perhaps, been suggested to them by the inconsiderate compassion of a well-meaning, but mistaken friend, that their doubts and apprehensions are favourable symptoms of their spiritual state; and under the influence of a lurking, unavowed impression of this nature, they cherish the melancholy, repel the consolations of the gospel, are proof against "the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely;"—and, while they exhaust upon themselves the whole vocabulary of reproachful epithets, their very complaints of themselves are dictated by secret self-satisfaction, and are contributing to its increase. In dealing with cases of this description, we ought surely to be on our guard against any principle, which tends to give ease to the mind in a state of unbelief and departure from God; which identifies dejection and despair with the afflictive visitations of Providence; and which thus enables such persons, with plausible self-deception, to maintain their good opinion of themselves and of their state, by finding the cause of their doubts in the sovereignty of God, rather than in their own sin.

As to men, who talk about *religious melancholy*,—a phrase of current use in the gay and thoughtless world, they "understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They are naturally fond of the association which the expression implies; because it furnishes a plausible and ready apology, for their unaffected horror at whatever wears, in the remotest degree, the aspect of *enthusiasm*,—the term by which they indiscriminately designate all true piety and serious religion. But, in truth,

* See note N.

the phrase involves a contradiction. It is like speaking of the darkness of noon-day. There is no melancholy in religion ;—nor is there any religion in melancholy :—and, where disease is not the cause of dejection, it is, in every instance, not religion, but the want, or the deficiency of religion, to which the evil is justly to be ascribed.

To the whole of this doctrine of Divine influence, it has been objected, that its tendency is, by leading us to depend on supernatural aid, to slacken all exertion of our own powers.

That the doctrine is capable of being so perverted and abused, by ignorance, enthusiasm, or sloth, it is not necessary to deny. But whenever it is rightly understood, not only does the objection vanish, but the very contrary appears to be the truth. It is quite enough to remind the objector, that the Spirit of God operates *by means ;* and that these means it is *our* duty and our business, sedulously and perseveringly to use. Our dependence on Divine influence does not lessen our dependence on the employment of means :—for, in order to the production of the effect, the means are as essential as the influence. Were we left to our own unassisted efforts, a consciousness of our insufficiency, confirmed by daily experience, might well fill us with despair of success. And such despair tends, more than any thing besides, to paralize the nerves of active exertion. On the contrary, when we are assured of Divine aid, we feel encouraged to use the appointed means with alacrity and diligence ; because we are supported and animated by the promise of present success, and the blessed hope of a happy issue. It is on this principle, accordingly, that the apostle Paul founds his exhortation to spiritual activity : " Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence ; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling : for it is God that

worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* This language clearly shows that in the mind of the apostle the objection had no validity:—for the very consideration, which the objector supposes must slacken exertion, he, on the contrary, brings forward as a powerful stimulus to duty.

If it be so, that the operation of the Spirit accompanies, and is proportioned to, our use of the means of spiritual improvement; it must be chiefly, I should think, by the neglect of these means, that we incur the guilt of "*quenching the Spirit*:"† and more especially when to the neglect of means we add the positive practice of any thing that has an opposite tendency. "*Quench not* the Spirit," may be considered as the counterpart to another exhortation, addressed by the same apostle to Timothy, on a similar subject:—"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou *stir up* the gift of God, which is in thee by the laying on of my hands."‡ In the original language, these words contain an allusion to the stirring up of a fire,§ to make it burn with greater brightness and heat; just as in the other exhortation there is an allusion to the extinguishing of a fire,‖ by failing to supply it with fuel,¶ or by the application of water, or any other quenching material. Although the latter of these exhortations refers to the miraculous gifts bestowed on the young evangelist by the imposition of the apostle's hands, there ap-

* Phil. ii. 12, 13. † 1 Thess. v. 19. ‡ 2 Tim. i. 6.

§ αναζωπυρειν. ‖ σβεννυτε.

¶ That the word is applicable to this kind of *indirect* quenching, —*suffering to go out*,—one instance may suffice to show. The foolish virgins in the parable say to the wise: "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are *gone out*:" ὁτι αἱ λαμπαδες ἡμων ΣΒΕΝΝΥΝΤΑΙ: where the meaning is, not that they had actually *quenched* them, or *put them out*, but that they had *allowed them*, through carelessness,—through want of oil and trimming,—*to expire*. Matth. xxv. 8.

pears to be no propriety in limiting to such gifts the application of the former. Instead of "quenching the Spirit," it is our duty, and will prove our highest interest, to cherish all his motions in our souls, and earnestly to seek, that all the various means of spiritual advancement which we use may be used under the impression of our dependence on his blessing, and may be seconded and rendered effectual by his holy energy.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of purity, and peace, and love. Every thought of the mind, every emotion of the heart, every word, and every action, that is in any respect contrary to these attributes, is represented as displeasing and grieving to this Divine Agent:—and against all such conduct we are admonished, by considerations of gratitude for the important benefits which we derive from Him;—benefits connected not only with our present security and happiness, but with our eternal salvation:—"Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath.

and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."*

Examine, then, by the various tests of his presence and operation, which I have thus, from the Scriptures, endeavoured to lay before you,—whether *you* "have the Spirit of Christ." Had it not been my object to prove, from the testimony of the word of God, the *reality* of his inward influences, as well as to point out their *nature* and *effects*,—I might, perhaps, have led you, for self-examination, to a shorter process. This Holy Spirit is represented, both in the Old and in the New Testament, as poured out, without measure, on "the man Christ Jesus." Now, the influence of this Spirit is the same in *kind*, although not in degree, in his followers as in himself,—in the members, as in the Head. He, therefore, who "has the *Spirit* of Christ," will exhibit conformity to the *character* of Christ. —Is there, then, any resemblance between you and the Saviour? Are you like him, in piety and devotion,—in regard for the authority, and zeal for the glory of God?—Are you like him, in disinterested love and active benevolence to men?—to their bodies,—and still more to their souls? Are you like him, in purity, sincerity, temperance, patience, self-denial, meekness, and humility?—and in the various other graces and virtues which adorned his perfect character? Do you love to contemplate and study that character, as the pattern which you are desirous to resemble? Is the dissimilitude which you discover upon the comparison, a ground of self-condemnation, and of unfeigned grief? And is it your daily and earnest prayer to

* Eph. iv. 20—32. v. 1, 2.

God, that by his Spirit he would promote the resemblance, enabling you to "walk even as he walked?" Do you evince the sincerity of this prayer by "striving against sin," sedulously shunning every temptation, "keeping your heart with all diligence," and in the uninterrupted use of the appointed means of spiritual progress, "following holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord?" —These are fruits of the Spirit of Christ; and, in proportion to the degree in which they exist, evidences of your being his. They are evidences of a practical and unequivocal nature. Enthusiasts may pretend to such inward consciousness of the Spirit's operation, as they can distinguish from the ordinary feelings of the mind as certainly as the prophets were assured of their inspiration. Pretensions of this sort have often brought great discredit on the doctrine we have now been considering. Let *us* rather judge ourselves, as the Scriptures seem to direct us, by those holy effects in the character, which are there described as the result of his enlightening and purifying influence. As the Spirit deals with men agreeably to the principles of their rational nature, it is reasonable to expect, that the *mode* of his inward operation should, in many cases, be hardly distinguishable from the natural progress, and various workings, of the human mind. But mark the *effects*;—opposite as they are to the pride and vanity, the impurity and worldliness, of the human heart, and to all the endless variety of its corruption;—and in these behold the proper and satisfactory indications of his holy agency.

I am much inclined to be of opinion, that one thing, which has tended in some degree to darken and perplex the subject of Divine influence, has been, the imputing to the agency of the Spirit certain feelings and states of mind, and certain descriptions of conduct, *in natural men*, for which his agency does not seem necessary to account.—

For example:—Is the influence of the Spirit at all necessary, to account for that knowledge of the meaning of the different propositions contained in the gospel testimony, which is possessed by many, who have no spiritual understanding of its truth and excellence?—Is such Divine influence necessary, to account for the alarm of conscience which made the Roman Governor tremble before his prisoner, when he "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come?"—or for the pleasure and the partial reformation of Herod when he listened to the faithful admonitions of the Baptist?—or for the half-persuasion of Agrippa to become a Christian?—I should think it is not. All these, and many similar effects, may, without difficulty, be accounted for, by the operation of principles which are to be found, in all their force, in our fallen nature. I should be disposed to lay it down as a principle on this subject, that the agency of the Spirit ought not to be introduced in any case, in which the effects produced accord with principles in our unrenewed nature; that is, when they are not inconsistent with that nature, and consequently require nothing beyond that nature satisfactorily to account for them. I may be in a mistake; but I am not at present aware that there are any actions, or states of mind, ascribed in the Scriptures to unrenewed men, for which it is not possible to account on principles merely natural, without supposing the *direct agency* of the Spirit of God on the mind to have had any share in their production.

God says to Noah, with regard to the antediluvian world —"*My spirit shall not always strive with man.*"*—May not this expression be fairly interpreted as referring, not to any direct internal operation of the Spirit of God, but to his testifying to men their guilt and danger, warning, instructing, and expostulating, by the ministry of Noah, whom Peter designates "*a preacher of righteousness?*"

* Gen. vi. 3.

May not a similar interpretation be given of Stephen's address to the Jewish council:—"Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:* as your fathers did, so do ye." It seems evident from what he immediately adds, that their fathers, to whom he compares them, resisted the Holy Ghost, *speaking in the prophets*:—"which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them, who showed before of the coming of the Just One." Is it not, then, the same conduct of which he accuses the children?—"resisting the Holy Ghost," not in any direct inward operation on their minds—(for it is another and very different Spirit that "worketh in the children of disobedience")—but in all the convincing evidence arising from his miraculous gifts, and from other sources, that Christ and his apostles spoke under his influence.

With regard to the case of persons, who have seemed for a time to "*run well*," who have exhibited much of the external appearance of genuine conversion, but who have afterwards "gone back, and walked no more with Jesus," apostatizing from the truth, and from the ways of God;—whatever startling difficulties this case, in some of its more striking varieties, may present to *our* minds, who cannot "search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men," it does not appear to me that facts of this description by any means disprove the correctness of the view, which I am now giving. They only teach us, (and it is a most important lesson) that there may be a very considerable measure of outward appearance, deceiving to men, who can look no further, who have so partial and limited a view of the deceitfulness of the heart, and of the endless multiplicity of its delusive workings;—while there is, after all, a want of the inward reality;—while "*the heart is not right with God.*"

On this subject, however—the operation of the Spirit

on the minds of the unregenerate, I wish to be understood as speaking with diffidence; as I am aware that many excellent and judicious men entertain sentiments respecting it different from those which I have now stated."*

I cannot take my leave of this subject, without again entreating all present seriously to consider the solemn alternative stated in the text. We must "*have the Spirit of Christ*," else we are "*none of his*." I would beseech, with peculiar earnestness, such as deny the existence and influences of the Holy Spirit, to weigh what has been advanced with considerate attention, and humble candour. For, if "the Spirit of Christ" in our text really refers to the influences of that Divine person, whose Personality and Divinity I formerly endeavoured to establish;—it then becomes a question of no trifling interest, whether it be possible that *they* can "have the Spirit of Christ," who deny entirely the reality and necessity of his operations, and even his very existence; and consequently, *whether they can be truly his.*

I conclude by observing, that those prayers for Divine influences, which occur so frequently in the New Testament, are at once a proof of their reality, a testimony to their value, and an example of humble piety, which it well becomes us to imitate. Let us, then, appropriate, and make our own, the following supplications; presenting them to God for ourselves and for one another. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in

* Note O.

the saints,* and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand:"—"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and toward all, as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints:" —"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and (I pray God) your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:"—"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost:"—"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the

* εν τοις ἁγιοις—"in the saints"—Various have been the senses affixed to this phrase. Whitby says—"i. e. *how great is the inheritance he hath designed for the saints.*" M'Knight not only understands this to be the meaning, but *translates* the phrase, "*for the saints.*"—The Improved Version of the New Testament, "*among the saints.*" Locke understands it as signifying the glory of the saints in becoming God's people, the lot of his inheritance. Scott gives this view along with the more ordinary one, connecting them by an *or*, as if undecided which is preferable.—&c. &c. It has occurred to me, that the phrase might, with sufficient propriety, be rendered, "*in the holy places;*" which at once removes all difficulty and ambiguity.—The phrase εν τοις επουρανιοις occurs three times in this and the following chapter (ch. i. verses 3, and 20, and ch. ii. verse 6.) and is translated—I think correctly even in the first of its occurrences, but certainly in the two latter—"*in the heavenly places.*"—May not the "inheritance *in the holy places,*" then, mean the same thing with the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, *reserved in heaven.*" See in the Greek, Heb. ix. 8, 24, 25. x. 19.

inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, or think, according to the power that worketh in us; to Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end! Amen."*

* Eph. i. 15—20. 1 Thes. iii. 12, 13. v. 23. Rom. xv. 13. Eph. iii. 14—21.

DISCOURSE XII.

ON THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Acts xi. 26.

"AND THE DISCIPLES WERE CALLED CHRISTIANS FIRST IN ANTIOCH."

It has been a favourite employment among speculative grammarians, to trace the changes, produced by the lapse of time, on the signification of words. In not a few instances, these changes are so great, that it is a matter of considerable difficulty, to discover the relation between the present and what seems to have been the original import. That the best way to ascertain the correct meaning and proper use of any term in a language, is to trace it back, if possible, through all its intermediate variations, to its remotest derivation,—is a principle, the justness of which, as one of general application, while by some writers it has been assumed, and made the ground of many ingenious philological speculations, has been ably shown by others to be more than questionable.* But while it does not appear to be generally true, neither is it, by any means, uni-

* See the admirable Strictures of Mr. Stewart, in his Philosophical Essays, on the Philological Speculations of Horne Tooke.

versally false. There are some cases, in which it is a matter of the greatest consequence, to ascertain, either from etymology, or from the existing documents of ancient practice, the precise sense in which a particular term was originally used. This is of especial importance, in cases where that which was originally signified by the term continues in its nature and properties the same, and where, consequently, the deviations from its primary acceptation have been productive of deception and mistake :—and, in such cases, the degree of importance is proportionate to the nature of such mistake, and to the magnitude of the consequences which may have resulted from it.

The present application of these remarks, you will all immediately perceive.—There are few words which have, in their ordinary use, deviated more widely from their original application, than the term—CHRISTIAN. In its original use, it was descriptive of a comparatively small number of men, who were distinguished from the rest of the world by a singular and striking peculiarity of sentiments and character. In the use that is generally made of it *now*, it can hardly with truth be said that it is distinctive of principles and character at all ;—for it is applied indiscriminately to persons, whose principles and characters are diametrically opposite. Nay, to such a degree has it been generalized in its application, as to have become a term in geography, rather than in religion, marking out—not a distinct and defined variety of individual character,—but *birth*, and *local residence*, and *national boundaries*.—Great Britain is *a Christian country ;* and its inhabitants are, of course, Christians, because they are not, by profession, Pagans, or Mahometans.

Whatever advantages may have been considered as arising from civil establishments of Christianity, the serious and pious among their advocates have readily and strongly admitted, that *this*, at least, is one of their neces-

sary evils:—I mean, the indiscriminate application to *communities*, of those terms, which properly indicate *personal state and character*; and the incalculable measure of self-deception, of inconsiderate security, and delusive confidence, which has thence, by a fatal necessity resulted.

It has so happened, that, of a variety of appellations, originally used to denote the same class of individuals, *Christian* is the one that has been thus sadly perverted from its original and appropriate application. From this circumstance has arisen, the curious fact, that the name of *Christian* is taken, and reciprocally given to one another, by multitudes of persons, who never for a moment dream of any of the other terms being at all applicable to them. How many for example, would be highly provoked, should you refuse them the designation of *Christians*, who, were you to accost them by the appellation of *saints*, would either look at you, in astonishment, for an explanation of your meaning, or, perhaps, fire with the quickness of insulted pride. Yet the truth is, that *saints* and *Christians* are terms of the same import. No man is a Christian, who is not a saint; and if there be no saints now, at this distance from primitive times, neither are there any Christians. In confirmation of this remark, let us observe *who they were*, who, according to our text, first received, in Antioch, the denomination of *Christians*. They were *the disciples*:—"*the disciples* were called Christians first in Antioch."

While the followers of Jesus, before this time, received from their enemies the contemptuous appellations of *Nazarenes* and *Galileans*; they were known to one another by the various designations of *the believers*, *the brethren*, *the saints*, *the faithful*, *the disciples*. It has been matter of question, *by whom* the appellation of *Christians* was first conferred. Some, from the particular word used in the original language,* are of opinion that it was given by

* χρηματισαι.

Divine intimation, through Paul and Barnabas:—while others, I think with more probability, suppose, that, as the Gentiles were accustomed to distinguish philosophical sects by the names of their respective founders, they gave to the followers of Christ the title of *Christians*, in conformity with their usual practice.

It is of much more consequence for us to observe, as I have just hinted, who they were that were so denominated:—"*the disciples.*" Now, who were these disciples? The context itself, without going further, will inform us. They were persons, who had been converted by the power of the grace of Christ. Some of the preachers of the word, who had come to Antioch, we are informed in the 20th and 21st verses, "spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." They were persons in whom Barnabas (verse 23) "saw the grace of God," and whom he exhorted, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." These were, beyond all doubt, persons of the very same description with those addressed by such various appellations in the beginnings of the apostolic epistles. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called, saints:"—"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called, saints; with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"—"To the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:"—"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, who are at Colosse."* These were the persons who were originally denominated Christians; and whom this denomination, therefore, originally distinguished from others:—and if these various appellations and descriptions are inapplicable to us, so also must be the designation in question.

* Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 1. Col. i. 2.

It is of immense importance that we attend to the true and proper meaning of this appellation :—that is, to the meaning of it, as it is used in the Bible. For if our professed Christianity will not abide *this* test, what is it worth? If it will not abide this test, neither will it endure the scrutiny of the great day. According to the Scriptures, Christians are possessed of special privileges and peculiar hopes, to which he, who is not a Christian, has no legitimate title. These privileges and hopes are of inestimable value; and the value of them gives proportionate importance to the inquiry, whether we be Christians, in the Bible acceptation of the term. To be *called* Christians by fellow-men—to be addressed indiscriminately as Christians from the pulpit, is nothing :—it will not make you what you are called. The question is not, what you are *called*, but what you *are*;—the touchstone by which this must be determined is the word of God :—and on the answer to the inquiry depends, as to each of you, the happiness of eternity.

Let me now, therefore, proceed, to illustrate, from the Scriptures, a few of the leading and discriminating features of the Christian character.

There are, in Scripture, some general expressions and representations, alluded to in former Discourses, which most strikingly show, that the term *Christian* includes in it a vast deal more than is commonly apprehended, or at all thought of, by the great majority of those among whom it is in current use. A Christian is one, who has been "*born again*:"—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* He is *made alive from a state of death*:—"You, being dead in your sins—hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."† He is a *new creature*, formed anew by the power of God :—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new

* John iii. 3. † Col. ii. 13.

creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."* He is a *child of God*, an *heir of God*, and a *joint heir with Christ*:—"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. 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."† Such representations as these are fitted to excite "great searchings of heart" among multitudes who pass under the common national appellation of Christians. They clearly evince, that Christianity is something entirely of a personal nature; and that there must be a very wide difference indeed, between being a Christian, and merely being a member of a particular community, or having been either the subjects, or the observers, of any external rite.

The appellation, according to its obvious etymology, must signify some *relation* or other *to Christ*, sustained by the person who is called by it: and the simplest and most general idea we can attach to it is, that of a *follower*, or *adherent of Christ*.

But what is implied in being a genuine adherent or follower of Christ?

I answer: It implies being *a disciple of Christ, and a believer of his doctrine*:—being *a lover of Christ*;—*an obedient subject, and imitator of Christ*:—and *an expectant of Christ*, or *one who looks for his second coming*.

I. Being a Christian means, being A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST and a BELIEVER OF HIS DOCTRINE:—as an *Aris-*

* 2 Cor. v. 17. † Rom. viii. 14—18.

totelian meant a disciple of Aristotle, and a *Platonist*, of Plato.

The Christian is one who has learned his religion from Christ, who has embraced the great doctrines of his word, and who continues to sit at his feet, in the posture, and with the dispositions, of an humble disciple. *Disciples*, and *Believers*, are both of them appellations by which Christians are distinguished in the New Testament Scriptures. Of the former we have an instance in the text itself: "*the disciples* were called Christians first in Antioch." And various other instances of it occur. "Saul breathed out threatenings and slaughter against *the disciples of the Lord*:" when he was come to Jerusalem after his conversion, "he assayed to join himself *to the disciples*:" at Troas, on the first day of the week, "*the disciples* came together to break bread."* Through the preaching and miracles of the apostles, the historian elsewhere says, "*believers* were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women:" and Paul, in writing to Timothy, exhorts him to be "an example *to the believers*, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.†

In speaking of the Divinity of Christ, in an early Discourse of this series, I had occasion to show the importance of that doctrine, in various respects; among the rest, from its intimate relation to other truths. "It is an integral part," I observed, "of a system of truths, which stand or fall along with it. It is connected, for example, in the closest manner, with the purpose of Christ's appearance upon earth, and the great design of his sufferings and death; that is, with the vitally important doctrine of *atonement: this* doctrine, again, is inseparably connected with the corruption of human nature, and the universal guilt of mankind; from which it is that the necessity of such atone-

* Acts ix. 1, 26. xx. 7. † Acts v. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

ment arises: this, in its turn, essentially affects the question, respecting the true ground of a sinner's acceptance with God; the necessity of the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit; the principle and motive of all acceptable obedience; and other points, of similar consequence. It is very obvious," I then proceeded to notice, "that two systems, of which the sentiments, on subjects such as these, are in direct opposition, cannot, with any propriety, be confounded under one common name. That both should be Christianity is impossible; else Christianity is a term which distinguishes nothing. Viewing the matter abstractly, and without affirming, for the present, what is truth and what is error, this, I think, I may with confidence affirm, that to call schemes so opposite in all their great leading articles by a common appellation, is more absurd, than it would be to confound together those two irreconcilable theories of astronomy, of which the one places the earth, and the other the sun, in the centre of the planetary system. They are, in truth, *essentially different religions.* For if opposite views as to the *object of worship*, the *ground of hope for eternity*, the *rule of faith and duty*, and the *principles and motives of true obedience*;—if these do not constitute different religions, we may, without much difficulty, discover some principle of union and identity among all religions whatever; we may realize the doctrine of Pope's Universal Prayer; and extend the right hand of fellowship to the worshippers at the Mosque, and to the votaries of Brama."*

These sentiments, after mature deliberation, I have seen no reason either to retract or to qualify. Some doctrines there certainly must be that are *essential* to Christianity: and if those referred to are not such doctrines, I am at a

* Discourse II. pages 30, 31. Between the delivery of that Discourse, and of the concluding one, there was an interval of nine months.

loss to conceive what articles can be considered as entitled to this appellation.

To be a disciple of Christ, and a believer, must surely imply something more precise and definite, than the mere conviction *that the Bible is the word of God.* Even on *this* ground, indeed, some of you may, perhaps, be disposed to think, (remembering the statement formerly given of the vague and qualified, and partial views, respecting the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, held and avowed by those, whose sentiments I have been chiefly engaged in controverting)—even on *this* ground, some of you may be inclined to think, there is room for hesitation, whether the appellation of *Christian* properly belongs to them. But, supposing the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures distinctly admitted, still it is not the belief of this that constitutes any one a Christian—but the belief of *what these Scriptures reveal,* and of those truths in particular which, from their nature, and from the place which they hold in these Scriptures, it was evidently their chief purpose to make known. Let me illustrate this by a parallel instance. Suppose a man were to tell us he was a *follower of Newton,* or, (to take a term of the same kind with that in our text) a *Newtonian;* should we reckon him entitled to this assumed appellation, merely on the ground of his believing the fact, that Sir Isaac was the author of the different works which are ascribed to him; if we discovered, on examination, that he questioned and denied all the leading principles of philosophy, which these works were written to promulgate, and to establish? We are at no loss, for our reply to this question. And is there, then, let me ask, any just principle, on which we can, without the very same impropriety and contradiction, denominate that man *a Christian,* who, while he professes to believe the Bible to be the word of God, impugns and reprobates

all the most important doctrines which that word contains? For my own part, I can see none.

It is not the belief *that Christianity is a religion from God*, that constitutes a Christian; but the faith of *Christianity itself*. This is a distinction, I conceive, too little attended to. Many a time, after perusing treatises containing evidences of the Divine authority of the Christian religion, has the inquiry forcibly impressed itself on my mind, "Of what advantage is all this to the writer, if, after all, he has left the question *unanswered*, or *wrongly* answered—*what the Christian religion is?*"—The outworks of Christianity have been often most ably and successfully defended, while that, which all these outworks have been reared by providence to protect, and from the value of which, consequently, they derive their importance, has been either entirely overlooked, or most erroneously exhibited.

I would further, on the same principle, observe, that the faith which constitutes a person a Christian, is more than the simple belief of *the Divine mission of Jesus Christ*;—to which it is exclusively confined by some of our opponents. For what can avail, believing that Jesus was a messenger from God, if we deny the great purpose for which he was sent, and the leading doctrines which he was commissioned, himself or by his apostles, to teach to mankind?—The same observation applies to the belief of his being *the Christ*, without scriptural ideas being attached to the appellation, of his person, and character, and work:* and also to the belief of *the facts* recorded by the sacred historians, as to his sufferings and death, and resurrection, while the *end* for which he suffered, and died, and rose again, is openly and scornfully disavowed.

The depravity and guilt of mankind;—the Divinity, voluntary substitution, and atonement, of Jesus Christ;—

* See note P.

justification by free grace, through faith, and not by works of righteousness, which we have done ;—and the necessity and freeness of the Holy Spirit's influences, for the conversion and final salvation of sinners :—these appear to be doctrines, which constitute the very essence of Christianity ; and to call by the same appellation doctrines precisely the reverse, is to impose upon ourselves by a mere name ; for our so calling them cannot alter the nature of things, nor in the slightest degree abate the real magnitude of the difference between them.

Men may call these mere matters of opinion ; and they may think and speak very lightly of what they are pleased so to denominate. But the Scriptures themselves speak a very different language. If there is one truth within the compass of revelation that is declared with greater frequency, or with greater decidedness, than another, it is the *necessity* of the *belief of the Gospel*, in all whom Divine Providence blesses with the hearing of it, in order to the possession of that salvation which it proclaims. This being the plain and unvarying testimony of the Bible, no question can well be conceived of greater consequence, than the question, "*What is the Gospel?*" For if the faith of this gospel be essential to *salvation*, it cannot but be essential to a man's *being a Christian*.

So far as I know my own heart, these observations are not dictated, even in the remotest degree, by any feelings of party-spirit. Most gladly and cordially should I embrace as fellow Christians, all whom the word of God will allow me to consider as bearing that character. But I deem it of the last importance that my hearers should be fully aware of the nature and extent of the difference between us and our opponents. To the common charge of the want of charity, I plead, *Not guilty*. Charity can never preclude the exercise of judgment. The judgment of *charity* is the judgment of *love*. And surely there is no

true love, in allowing others to think that we consider their errors immaterial, and their state secure, when in reality we view these errors as affecting the only foundation of hope for eternity, and the condition of those, who hold them, as consequently full of danger. I know that I shall be pitied for the weakness and enthusiasm of this sentiment: but this shall not lessen my affection for the persons of my opponents, nor abate the earnestness of my desire, that "God may give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth." I do not wish my charity either to keep within, or to go beyond, the charity of the Bible. I would neither, on the one hand, be guilty of disowning any whom Christ has received;—nor would I, on the other, by making less of principles and sentiments than the Bible does, and by confounding things that essentially differ, bring upon myself the woe denounced by the God of truth, against those, who "call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."*

I find an inspired apostle treating the doctrine of justification by free grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, as so decidedly belonging to the essence of the gospel, that he "testifies," in the most solemn and faithful manner, to all who presumed to expect justification by the law—to all, who would have mixed obedience to the law of Moses with the mediation of Christ, as the ground of their acceptance with God—that "*Christ was become of no effect to them;*"—that they were "*fallen from grace;*"—and, in the most pointed and emphatical terms, declaring such doctrine "*another gospel*"—(and yet "*not another,*" for it was unworthy of the name)—and pronouncing his deliberate *anathema* against man or angel that should dare to preach it.† Surely then, we are not left to doubt, whe-

* Isaiah v. 20.

† Gal. v. 2—4. i. 6—9.

ther this apostle would have owned, as fellow Christians, those who divest the Redeemer of his Divine dignity, reject and ridicule the very idea of atonement by his death, and, as if in direct defiance of the apostolic testimony, roundly aver that "all hopes founded on any thing else than a good moral life are merely imaginary: that *other foundation than this can no man lay!*" borrowing the very words of inspiration to contradict the inspired record.*

When I speak of a Christian as *a believer in Christ*, I mean that he is one who has been deeply convinced of his guilt, as a sinner; of the righteousness of the sentence of condemnation, which has been pronounced against him; of the truth of the Scripture testimony concerning Jesus Christ, as a Divine and all-sufficient Saviour, who hath "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and of the entire suitableness of the free salvation revealed through his atonement, to his own state, as a guilty and justly condemned creature;—and who, under an impressive consciousness that he has in himself nothing worthy to form any part of the ground of his acceptance, humbly relies on the mercy of God, through the work and merits of this Saviour alone. I have studied my Bible to no purpose, if this be not the very first principle of the Christian character.

I conclude the illustration of this particular by remarking, that, as a disciple of Christ, the Christian *continues* to the end to act the part of an humble learner; sitting at the feet of Jesus, his Divine teacher; and, sensible of the insufficiency of natural light, receiving his instructions with gratitude and gladness of heart, and with the docile meekness of a little child:—by which means he "grows in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

* See Fuller's Calv. and Soc. Systems compared, 3d ed. p. 168.

This advancement in knowledge does not at all imply an incessant variation of sentiment. There are some truths, which he reads in the Scriptures, written as with pencils of light:—and knowing and feeling how opposite these are to certain feelings of pride and corruption in his heart, it is his constant prayer, that he may be established in the faith of them, and his mind preserved from the influence of these blinding and perverting principles of his fallen nature. But, without any change of sentiment with regard to these fundamental truths, it is very evident that he may progressively attain clearer and more comprehensive views of them, in their individual excellence, and in their glorious harmony. The earliest glimmering of the dawn is the same in its nature, with the brightness of the risen sun;—it is LIGHT:—but it is light which increases in splendour, till it reaches its meridian effulgence. The knowledge possessed in heaven, is knowledge without error, and therefore without change: yet even this, we have reason to believe, is knowledge that shall brighten and expand forever.

II. The Christian is a LOVER OF CHRIST.

I mention this, as a distinct particular, because it is much insisted on in the New Testament, and in such terms as clearly show it to be an essential and distinguishing characteristic.

I have more than once, in former Discourses, adverted to this topic; yet I cannot omit it here, without presenting a very defective portrait indeed, of the character which it is my object to delineate. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!" is an expression of apostolical affection for *all Christians;* none being, in Paul's estimation, worthy of the name, who were not animated by sincere and fervent love to the Redeemer. So far from owning as Christians those who were destitute of this sacred principle, and including them in his

apostolical benediction, he loads them with a heavy curse —a curse dictated by the Spirit of God: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha."* His language on this subject is in full harmony with that of his Divine master: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yea and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple."† These words, I need hardly remark, were intended to express, not how little we should love our relatives, but how much we should love Christ. So far from implying that our affection to the former ought to be weak, they derive all their spirit and energy from the very assumption that it is, and ought to be, strong and fervent. The lesson which they impress upon our minds is—that powerful as are these attachments of our nature to kindred, and to life, they must never be allowed to stand in competition with our regard to the Redeemer. The words were originally addressed, with the faithfulness which invariably marked the Saviour's conduct, to "great multitudes, who went after him;" who would no doubt be confounded by the dignity and singularity of the declaration, so completely without a parallel, or even a remote resemblance, in the conduct of the most eminent among the ancient prophets. He addresses the same words, my friends, to you;—to all who, by bearing his name, profess to "go after him." Mark, then, his words. They are most decisive:—"*he cannot be my disciple!*" There is no sophistry so subtle as to elude this simple and peremptory assurance. A *Christian*, it surely warrants us to affirm, no one can possibly be, who is not a *lover of Christ*.

Paul prays, in behalf of the Ephesians, "that Christ might *dwell in their hearts* by faith:"—that is, that he

* Eph. vi. 24, with 1 Cor. xvi. 22. † Luke xiv. 26.

might be the object of their fervent and abiding attachment. *Dwelling in the heart* is a phrase elsewhere used by him to express the warmth and constancy of his affection for others. "*I have you in my heart,*" says he to the Christians at Philippi; and to those in Corinth, "I speak not this to condemn you; for I have said before, that *ye are in our hearts,* to die and live with you."*

It is very obvious, that this love to Christ cannot be genuine, unless it regard its object according to scriptural views of his person, character, and work. If it does not, it is not properly love to Christ, but love to a creature of our own fancy: for such is Christ, when we have stript him of what really belongs to him—of what constitutes the very ground of his claims upon our affection—and invested him with qualities to our own mind. In this view, genuine love to Christ is a necessary effect of faith in him. What the Scriptures testify respecting *what he is,* and *what he hath done,* cannot be understood and believed, without inspiring the heart with this love.

Closely associated with love to the Saviour is the duty of *avowing our attachment;*—of openly declaring our adherence to his cause.

(My remarks here, and in a great part of what follows in this Discourse, are not at all peculiarly directed against those whose leading errors it has been the principal object of these lectures to expose. It is my desire, that I may be enabled to exhibit a faithful and searching testimony, to all descriptions of persons who bear the name of Christ.)

On the subject just noticed, we have very decisive language used by our Lord himself:—"Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."† "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me,

* Phil. i. 7. 2 Cor. vii. 3. † Matth. x. 32, 33.

and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in that of his Father, and of the angels."* It seems to be in allusion to these pointed declarations of the necessity of an open profession of Christ's name, that the apostle Paul says, when speaking of the gospel testimony:—"The word is very 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 thy 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."† Now, surely we do not affirm too much, when we say, that he cannot be a true Christian, of whom Christ will at last be ashamed.

The appellation of *Christian*, for the reasons formerly assigned, is not *now*, as it was at first, any disparagement. But are you ashamed, permit me to ask you—are you ashamed to be known as a believer, and abettor, of the mortifying and obnoxious doctrines of the cross—those doctrines which the men of this world esteem foolishness? When such a thing is asserted or insinuated, do you feel disposed to blush, and to hide your head?—I do not mean from timidity and self-diffidence, but from the secret consciousness of shame?—Does this tempt you to shift and prevaricate—to hesitate, and qualify, and varnish, as if you were sensible there was a degree of weakness, and want of spirit, in admitting the charge, and avowing the sentiments imputed to you? Do you feel ashamed of the world's scorn, and of its various epithets of contemptuous reproach—a *saint*, an *enthusiast*, a *fanatic*, a *methodist*, a *well-meaning but weak-minded man?* Or, on the other hand, while you do not court and invite reproach, do you count it your honour when it comes upon you?—a partici-

* Luke ix. 26. † Rom. x. 8—10.

pation in the sufferings of a worthy master, and deriving glory from the excellence of the cause in which it is endured? Remember what is said of the apostles, when they had been publicly reprimanded, and beaten, and charged to desist from preaching Christ: "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name!"* A portion of the same noble spirit is possessed by every one who truly loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

In opposition to the necessity of such open profession to the Christian character, some may possibly be disposed to adduce the case of Joseph of Arimathea, of whom it is recorded that he was "a disciple of Jesus," but "secretly, for fear of the Jews." It ought, however, to be recollected, that, while we approve of Joseph's discipleship, we are under no obligation to vindicate its secrecy. The question is not, What was his conduct, but whether this conduct was right. I apprehend that, for the time it lasted, the concealment of his convictions was the effect of temptation, and was Joseph's sin. But he afterwards redeemed his character from the charge of timid and temporizing policy, by coming forward, and avowing himself, at a time when the motive of avowal could not possibly be mistaken or suspected;—even at that critical and trying season, when those, who before had been the open friends of Christ had forsaken him, and fled. He, who had been a disciple "*secretly*, from *fear*," went in *boldly* unto Pilate, and "craved the body of Jesus;" and, in company with Nicodemus (a character of a somewhat similar description) paid the last funeral honours to him, who was "despised and rejected of men." Peculiar circumstances of temptation, it is admitted, may sometimes seduce a genuine disciple to unworthy concealment. But this will never be the *character*—never the constant practice, of

* Acts v. 41.

any man, who deserves to bear the name of the Redeemer. The language of Jesus himself, formerly quoted—"Whoso shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels,"—is strong and decisive; and I fear to qualify it, lest I should deceive myself, or deceive others. To such as act this dastardly part, he might well say, with all the emphasis of indignant expostulation, "Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" Of one thing at least I am confident, that he who is disposed to make it a matter of inquiry with himself—"With *how much secrecy*, with *how little distinction from the world*, may I be a follower of Christ?"—has strong reason to suspect the sincerity of his attachment. You would care very little, I presume, for that man's friendship, who should make to yourselves in private the warmest protestations of regard, while he made it his anxious study to shun you in public, and to conceal from the world the existence of any intimate connexion.

Connected with this readiness to "confess Christ," to say before men, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus,"—is the disposition to give to him, and to his truth and cause, the decided preference above every thing else in the world. Observe the language of the Lord himself:—"So also, whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple:"*—and consider, that you may examine yourselves by the comparison, how this temper of mind was exemplified by the apostle of the Gentiles: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but

* Luke xiv. 33.

that which is by the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."* Have *you*, my hearers, drunk into this spirit? Are your sentiments and feelings in unison with these? Whether has Christ or the world the chief place in the affections and desires of your hearts? What sacrifices have *you* made for the Redeemer? Have you ever made any? Are you willing to make any? Have you ever denied yourselves any earthly gratification, any enjoyment which the world is accustomed to pursue, from regard to his authority, from attachment to his cause, to maintain the consistency of your profession of his name, or to give you the means of diffusing his truth and advancing his glory?—Jesus says, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, cannot be my disciple." Do you know at all by experience, what is meant by "bearing the cross?"—or what Paul intends by "the *offence* of the cross?" Or, have you rather met the world half-way?—and by timid compromise, and temporizing conformity, succeeded to your wish, in retaining an interest in its good graces; and in making your religion, with self-applauded prudence, admirably to comport with the approving smiles of fashion, of infidelity, and of wealth, and with the security and advancement of your worldly interests?—Examine your hearts on this point, as in the sight of God. Have you ever seriously thought, or thought at all, of what Jesus means, when he affirms the necessity of a man's "*forsaking all that he hath*," in order to his being a true disciple of his? Is your attachment to the Saviour really such, that there is nothing in this world which you would not part with—nay, that you would

* Phil. iii. 7—11.

willingly sacrifice all that pertains to this world together —rather than renounce his name, and forfeit an interest in his love and in his blessing?—Were Christ to put to each of you the searching question addressed by him to Simon Peter—"*Lovest thou me?*"—could you, without your heart giving the lie to your lips—without the blush of conscious falsehood suffusing your cheek, reply, as he did, "Lord, thou knowest all things;—thou knowest that I love thee?"

III. The true Christian is a SUBJECT and IMITATOR OF CHRIST.

I class these two together, because they are, in the nature of the thing, inseparable. The precepts of Christ were so embodied in his example, that he who obeys imitates, and he who imitates obeys. Conformity to his *example* is conformity to his *will*.

"Ye call me Master and Lord," said Jesus to his disciples, "and ye say well; for so I am." In this character he claims obedience. The relation implies authority on his part, and subjection on ours. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord," said he at another time, "and do not the things which I say?" Such conduct is inconsistent, ungrateful, perfidious; most dishonouring to the Redeemer, and ruinous, in the end, to the traitor who is guilty of it:—"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man, which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that, without a foundation, built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."*

* Luke vi. 47—49.

We may be confidently assured, that no man has any interest in Christ as a Saviour, who is not subject to him as a Lord;—who does not practically evince his desire to yield unreserved and impartial obedience to his precepts; "esteeming all his commandments concerning all things to be right, and hating every false way." The very first question of the renewed mind, alive to the claims of gratitude for redeeming and quickening grace, is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Of this willing obedience, the *love* illustrated under last particular, is the inward principle, and impelling spring. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died; and that he died for all, that we who live should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again."* This language of an inspired apostle, accords with that of the Lord himself: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:—If a man love me, he will keep my words:—He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings."† Let a man's professed creed, then, be ever so pure—if he does not add to the profession of faith the fruits of practical godliness, he is not *a Christian*;—for, in truth, he is not a believer of what he professes.

Some men are, by profession, staunch and thorough Calvinists; rigid sticklers for every iota of the system;—and can "reason high" on the most abstruse and difficult articles of doctrinal theology:—yet, if you look to their characters, you can discover nothing like the genuine influence of Divine truth. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation," and of which they say so many fine things, has not taught them, to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this

* 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. † John xiv. 15, 21—24.

present world."* Their whole deportment, on the contrary, shows them to be "men of the world," unrenewed in the spirit of their minds. These are mere theological speculators, who have paid some attention to divinity, as a kind of abstract science, or, in consequence of early education, have grown up in some acquaintance with the doctrines of a system;—but who know nothing whatever of the heart-searching, and heart-changing power of the word of God: talking believers, but practical infidels. Let it not, for a moment, be imagined, that our attachment to doctrine is of such a nature, as to induce us to acknowledge as Christians persons of this description, merely because they profess a creed, of which we reckon the leading articles to be scriptural. God forbid that we should thus contribute to aid their self-deception! Such men, let them say what they will, are "without God, without Christ, and without hope." They are "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity." Their pretended faith is without works, and is "dead, being alone." They "have a form of Godliness, but are destitute of its power."—"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." They betray the Son of man with a kiss; and he will say to them at last, "Depart from me; I know you not, all ye workers of iniquity." These, indeed, are the very worst of characters;—false friends;—traitors in the camp;—whose profession of attachment is inconceivably more dishonouring to the Saviour, and more deeply injurious to his cause, than avowed and virulent infidelity. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*"†

I have, on former occasions, endeavoured to show, that

* Titus ii. 11—13. † 2 Tim. ii. 19.

it was not the main design of Christ's coming into the world, to set before us, by his conduct in it, a perfect example. It is, however, an important truth, that in connexion with the fulfilment of that great work of propitiation which, as Mediator between God and men, he came to execute, he *did* "leave us an example, that we should follow his steps." And "he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked."*

I touched on this subject in last Discourse, when, in illustrating the import of the expression "*having the Spirit of Christ*," I showed that the possession of the same Spirit will be manifested by similarity of character. If we are *Christians indeed*, we must *resemble Christ*. We must resemble him, first of all, in piety towards God. This will display its sacred influence, in the choice of God himself as the portion of our inheritance, and of our cup—"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee: my flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever:" in desire after communion with him, in the closet, in the family, and in the sanctuary: in supreme regard to his authority, as the rule of all our conduct, in opposition to the "will of the flesh," and to the "doctrines and commandments of men:" in keeping our eye simply and uniformly directed to his glory, as the great end at which all his creatures ought habitually to aim: in practical zeal for his cause and honour in the world: and in humble and cheerful submission to his will, under all the trying appointments of his providence. We must resemble him also in personal sobriety and purity, in all the various departments of these virtues; and in spirituality of mind, and holy superiority to the vanities of time. We must be like him, too, in the practice of all the social virtues,—justice and integrity, sincerity and truth, humil-

* 1 John ii. 6.

ity, meekness, long-suffering, and forgiveness,—the various affections and corresponding duties, arising from the different relations of life,—and universal benevolence to mankind, evinced in beneficent, disinterested, and self-denying exertions to promote their welfare; their welfare both in body and in soul; their temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests.

There is one feature of character, which, on this part of the subject, claims to be particularly specified.—I mean *love to the brethren*, love to the disciples of Christ, *as such*; not on account of any relation of consanguinity which individuals among them may bear to ourselves, nor on account of any thing which is common to them with other men, but "*because they belong to Christ.*" In the language of prophecy, the Messiah is represented as saying: "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints which are upon the earth, and to the excellent, *in whom is all my delight.*"* We must, in this, be of one heart with him; having *our* delight in those, who are, in his estimation, the excellent of the earth. This peculiar love to the members of the household of faith, is ever represented in the New Testament, as one grand criterion of a genuine profession of Christianity: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of Christ because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

* Psalm xvi. 2, 3.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."* Is this, then, the state of your affections? Are "the saints that are on the earth" your chief friends? And do you love them, and delight in doing them good, for the sake of their blessed Master? even of Him who will say, at last, respecting all the labours of love, performed for his sake to those whom, with affectionate condescension, he honours with the name of *brethren*, "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.†

Examine your profession of Christianity by this, and by the other practical tests that have been laid before you.—There may be, and very often is, a great deal of external virtue where there is no genuine inward principle; the shadow, without the substance; the inanimate body, without the breath, and the living soul. But on the other hand, where there *is not* the outward practice of virtue, and (to use a term less familiar in the world, but which means virtue sanctified by piety,—without which, indeed, virtue is a mere name)—where there is not the external performance of the duties of *holiness;* all profession is worse than vain: it is a provoking insult, and an impious mockery, of that Divine Master whose name is so falsely or so thoughtlessly assumed.

It is true, that the Christian is deeply conscious to himself of much failure, and of universal deficiency. Yet the grand features of resemblance are marked and visible: he is sincerely and earnestly desirous of increasing conform-

* John xiii. 34, 35. 1 John iii. 14—19. † Matth. xxv. 40.

ity: he studies the perfect example with growing delight: and "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord."*

IV. The Christian is an EXPECTANT OF CHRIST; ONE WHO LOOKS FOR HIS SECOND APPEARANCE. He is distinguished by his *hopes*, as well as by his principles, and by his character.

The hope of the Christian divides itself into three parts: his hope *during life*, his hope *at death*, and his hope *at the second coming of Christ*. To this last period Christian hope is most frequently represented as looking forward,—because the expectation of that event is naturally considered as including all that shall intervene before it. The saints of God, under the ancient dispensation, were distinguished by their hope of the coming of the promised Messiah in the fulness of time. And as the hope of his *first* coming characterized his people *then*, so does the hope of his *second* coming characterize them *now*.

That he *will come*, to raise the dead, and to judge the world, to bless his faithful people with complete salvation, and to execute on his enemies the vengeance due to their impenitent rebellion, the Scriptures do most plainly and abundantly testify. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so; I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also:"—"And when he had spoken these things, as 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

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven:"—"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 first rise;—then we, who 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."*

And while the certainty of the event is thus clearly affirmed, it is no less evident, that the hope of the event, and the influence of that hope, are distinctive marks of a *Christian*;—of one who is such, not in name only, but in heart. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many; and *to them that look for him* shall he appear the second time, without a sin-offering, unto salvation:"—"Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and *to wait for his Son from heaven*, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come:"—"*Looking for* that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ:"—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that *love his appearing*.†

The temper of mind which these various expressions describe is exemplified in a very impressive and edifying manner, in the conclusion of the Bible:—"He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen.

* John xiv. 1—3. Acts i. 9—11. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

† Heb. ix. 27, 28. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. Titus ii. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

Even so come Lord Jesus!"* The spirit breathed in this holy aspiration, is to be found, although in very unequal degrees, in every faithful follower of the Redeemer. There is included in it, *in the first place*, a firm belief that he *will* come:—that, as certainly as the word of God was verified by his coming the first time, it shall also be verified by his second appearance. And this confidence, resting on the faithful declaration of the God of truth, and maintained by all the accumulated evidence which proves the Bible to be his word—stands unshaken by the profane taunts of the ungodly scoffer, who says still, as he said in the days of old, "Where is the promise of his coming?"† *Secondly*, Glad anticipation of the event: because it shall be a time of unprecedented honour to their Lord and Redeemer; who shall then be "glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;" and, instead of hanging on the cross, in ignominy and pain, "despised and rejected of men," shall occupy, amidst surrounding millions, the throne of universal judgment:—and because it shall be the time of complete salvation and triumph to his redeemed people; of the personal glory and blessedness of each, and of the social happiness of all. *Thirdly*, Habitual preparation for its approach. "None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."‡ The Christian lives with an eye to his final account. He tries his conduct, not by the standard of present interest or advantage, of any kind, but by the light in which it shall appear when he shall stand at the tribunal of Christ. He endeavours habitually to act

* Rev. xxii. 20. † 2 Peter iii. 1—10. ‡ Rom. xiv. 7—9.

according to the spirit of the apostolic exhortations—"Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ:"—"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."* *Fourthly*, Patient expectation of it. The Christian is subject to many and various distresses, some of them "common to men," and others peculiar to the children of God. He is "in heaviness through manifold trials." But, in the hope of the glory that shall be revealed, he "possesses his soul in patience." As "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain," so waits the believer for the salvation of God; "stablishing his heart, because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."† He "rejoices in hope," and is therefore "patient in tribulation:"‡—not murmuring, and fretting, and weary of the world, on account of its trials, but "resting in the Lord, and waiting patiently for him;" happily assured, that his "light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."§

This hope, from its very nature, possesses a sanctifying influence:—"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. And *every man that hath this hope in him* (that is *in Christ*‖) *purifieth himself even as he is*

* 1 Peter i. 13. 2 Peter iii. 14. † James v. 7, 8.

‡ Rom. xii. 12. § 2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

‖ "*In him.*"—The expression is commonly interpreted as if it referred to the believer's having this hope *in himself*, that is residing in his mind and heart. The phrase in the original, however, is επ' αυτω, which expresses not the exercise of hope in the heart of him who possesses it, but the ground on which his hope rests.

pure."* It cannot fail to be so, from the nature of the thing. That which we *hope for* we *desire*;—and that which we *desire*, we *pursue*. Likeness to Christ, and the felicity thence resulting, cannot be the object of *hope*, without being the object of *desire*; nor can it be the object of *desire*, without being the object of *present pursuit*. So that *every one* who really has *this* hope in Christ—that is, whose hope has not only Christ for its foundation, but complete conformity to Christ in the perfection of holiness for its object—will infallibly, "purify himself even as he is pure." To the man who does not thus purify himself, holy conformity to Christ cannot be the object of hope; for if it were, he would *like it*, as no man can be said to *hope* for what he does not *like*;—and if he liked it, he would show this by now seeking after its attainment. The object of such a man's hope, if he has formed in his mind any definite notion of it at all, must be something essentially different.

The *ground* of this hope, which has just been alluded to, is no less distinctive of the Christian than the hope itself. In looking forward to the *second* coming of his Lord, his hope of acceptance and of eternal life, rests on that work which he finished at his *first* coming;—on the atonement made by the blood of his cross. Convinced that there is only one spot on the face of this earth, from which a guilty creature, whose mind is properly impressed with the holiness of God and the evil of sin, can view the solemnities of an approaching judgment without dismay; the Christian transports himself in imagination to the heights of Calvary;—takes his station there at the foot of the cross;—and, with one arm embracing the sacred wood, and the other uplifted towards heaven, surveys, with steady eye, the overwhelming scene.——The heavens open—not in tranquil serenity, as when, on the banks of

* 1 John iii. 2, 3.

the Jordan, the Spirit of peace alighted on the Redeemer, to consecrate him to his office—but rending, and rolling away, with a mighty noise:—he beholds the decending Judge, revealed in effulgent glory, and "all his holy angels with him," "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands:"—he hears "the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God," "louder than a thousand thunders:"—he sees the great white throne erected;—the millions of the dead starting to life, and gathering before the dread tribunal—while "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne the heavens and the earth flee away, and no place is found for them;"—"the judgment set, and the books opened;"—the whole race of mankind assembled, on the right hand, and on the left—all waiting their respective dooms, with joyful hope, and trembling apprehension! With the eye of prophetic faith, he beholds all this—and with deep solemnity of spirit he anticipates his own appearance at the bar of judgment. Conscious of unworthiness and guilt, and impressed with holy awe in contemplating the purity and the majesty of the Judge, and the inconceivable magnitude of the results of that "great and dreadful day of the Lord,"—he prays, with humble fervour—"God be merciful to me a sinner!"—"If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, who, O Lord, should stand?"—"Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no flesh living can be justified." But his supplications are not the language of despair. He has hope—"good hope through grace." Did he look only to the throne, indeed—only to the judgment-seat, with all its attendant solemnities, his heart would fail him;—but, looking alternately to the Throne and to the Cross, the view of the one takes away the terrors of the other. He who occupies the throne of judgment, is the same who "bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree." The SAVIOUR is the JUDGE. The remembrance of this

reassures his spirit, and animates him with the confidence of hope: "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared:"—"Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, who retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy:"—"Lo this is my God; I have waited for him, and he will save me: this is the Lord; I have waited for him, I will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

"Not in mine innocence I trust,
"I bow before thee in the dust,
"And through my Saviour's blood alone,
"I look for mercy at thy throne."

I have thus endeavoured, by the light of the Divine word, to present a sketch of the principal features in the character of a CHRISTIAN. It has been my aim, to fix the standard, neither too high, nor too low: not too high, lest I should dishearten the timid; not too low, lest I should encourage the presumptuous. Some may, perhaps, be disposed to "bless themselves in their hearts," and to thank God that it does not belong to *me* to fix the standard, or to draw the lines of distinction. To such I have only to say, as I have said on former occasions, "To the Law, and to the Testimony: if I speak not according to this word, there is no light in me."

Even among those who bear, in a satisfactory measure, the character which has been described, there are still, notwithstanding this happy resemblance to one another, various party distinctions. Alas! that there should be so many! O that it were the desire and the study of all, to attain, by the grace of God, to higher and higher degrees of that knowledge, and of those holy virtues, which all possess in common, and by which all are distinguished from the world; and, instead of glorying in the name of

their respective parties, rather to glory in the common, but infinitely more excellent and honourable appellation of CHRISTIAN! that, instead of saying "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," all would fervently unite in saying, "I am of Christ." An increased manifestation of the lovely excellences of the Christian character will promote Christian love,—a virtue, of which the strength must necessarily be proportioned to the number and degree of the amiable qualities discernible in its object: mutual love will inspire mutual candour: and mutual candour will diminish differences, and facilitate union. But even amidst remaining diversities of sentiment among those who hold the great essential articles of the Christian faith, let there be (why should there not?) *union of heart.* It is by this kind of union chiefly, rather than by unity of sentiment, that the spirit and influence of the gospel are most strikingly exhibited, and that the Saviour's intercessory prayer is fulfilled, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them also who shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* Indeed, as the force of any moving power is best ascertained, and most strikingly displayed, by the resistance which it overcomes, so is the uniting energy of the great truths of the gospel the more conspicuously and impressively seen, when it conquers those obstacles to unity of affection which arise from the separating influence of smaller matters. So that if Christians, "holding the Head," although conscientiously differing on some points of minor importance, were, in their intercourse with one another, to show that the power of the momentous truths in the faith of which they are agreed, is decidedly predominant, that they feel themselves one in Christ

* John xvii. 20, 21.

Jesus, and that, although they find it expedient and more conducive to edification to be separate in church communion, they, nevertheless, "love as brethren,"—the effect would be even more powerful on the minds of the world, than if there existed a perfect unity of sentiment. The world would say, as of old, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" and, "taking knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus," would behold, in its effects, the Divine authority of his doctrine, and "believe that the Father had sent him."

What a happy world would this be, were Christians what they ought to be, and all men Christians! And let us rejoice: the period is approaching,—by the signs of the times rapidly approaching,—when the prevalence of true Christianity shall be as extensive as the world: when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!" We seem already to hear "voices in heaven,"—voices of triumphant gladness, "saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."*—"The New Jerusalem is descending from God out of heaven," in all its loveliness and glory. Soon shall

> "One song employ all nations, and all cry
> "Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!
> "The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
> "Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
> "From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
> "Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
> "Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

Every one, who deserves the name of Christian, is "feelingly alive" to whatever concerns the glory of God his Saviour, and the salvation of his fellow-men, by which that glory is principally advanced:—and to all, who partake this holy sensibility, there cannot be a prospect more

* Rev. xi. 15.

full of animating delight than this. He, who can witness without lively emotion the diffusion of God's *saving health*, and the conversion to Christ of sinners of every kindred, and tribe, and tongue, and nation, has good cause to doubt whether he possesses a spark of that sacred fire which glowed in the bosoms of the early Christians. He wants the characteristic affections of a child of God. He wants the spirit of heaven—is not of one mind with its blessed inhabitants;—for "there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

This additional mark of a genuine Christian is one which merited more than the incidental notice which I have just taken of it. I know few things, indeed, which afford a more correct standard, by which to estimate the state of religion in the heart of any one of its professors, than the degree of interest which he feels and manifests, about the spread of the gospel, and the success attending it in its progress. Can *he*, think you, have felt the misery of his own guilty and lost condition, who feels little or no concern about the spiritual degradation and wretchedness of his fellow-sinners? Can he have felt the incalculable preciousness of his own soul, who is indifferent and uninterested about the salvation of the souls of others? Can he have felt his infinite obligations to "the Lord that bought him, whose heart is a stranger to any concern about the Redeemer's glory,—a stranger to the desire that he may "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," and to that kindred joy which springs up in the renewed mind, when this desire is gratified?

In this world, Christians are mingled, in human society, with hypocrites, unbelievers, and wicked men. The tares and the wheat grow together until the harvest. But the time is coming, my friends, when there shall be a universal development of character, and a complete and eternal separation of the precious and the vile. The

" multitude which no one can number, collected out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands, singing with a loud voice, Salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb!" In that vast assembly, there shall be no mixture of character,—no discordance of sentiment or of feeling. The Divine Redeemer, having " gathered out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity," shall receive his people to himself, that where he is there they may be also;"—and all shall be sincerity,—all love, and peace, and purity, and joy! " Who are these who are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before his throne, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters:—and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

I have thus finished my intended series of Discourses. My sole object has been, to vindicate and establish important Scriptural truth. I have not amused you with idle and unprofitable speculations;—but have endeavoured to set before you in their true light, doctrines most intimately connected with the glory of God, and the eternal interests of men. If it shall be found that these objects, in their nature inseparable, have been, in the smallest degree, promoted:—that the faith of God's people has been strengthened,—or the minds of the wavering settled; that,

* Rev. vii. 13—17.

in any one instance, the gainsayer has been convinced, or the careless sinner awakened, and "turned from the error of his way;"—I shall consider my reward as obtained, and my labour as infinitely more than compensated.

"Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy,—to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever! AMEN!"*

* Jude, verses 24. 25.

NOTES

REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING DISCOURSES.

Note A. page 9.

These remarks might be extended further. The argument is, in some parts of it, not only recondite, and unobvious to superficial observers, but discernible only by the aid of such enlarged philosophical knowledge, as in many states of society does not exist. The proof is not, on this account, the less conclusive. But, amidst the science which we ourselves possess, we are ever in danger of forgetting, when we are reasoning on such subjects, the ignorance of other places, and of preceding times; and of heedlessly considering an argument as common to mankind, which depends on knowledge that is in the possession of comparatively very few. This observation may be illustrated by the following extract from Dr. Paley, in which he argues the unity of Deity from the simplicity and uniformity of astronomical laws:——"Of the unity of Deity, the proof is, the *uniformity* of plan observable in the universe. The universe itself is a system: each part either depending upon other parts, or being connected with other parts by some common law of motion, or by the presence of some common substance. One principle of gravitation causes a stone to drop towards the earth, and the moon to wheel round it. One law of attraction carries all the planets about the sun. This philosophers demonstrate. There are also other points of agreement among them, which may be considered as marks of the identity of their origin, and of their common Author. In all are found the conveniency and stability derived from gravitation. They all experience the vi-

cissitudes of days and nights, and changes of season. They all, at least Jupiter, Mars, and Venus, have the same advantages from their atmosphere as we have. In all the planets the axes of rotation are permanent. Nothing is more probable, than that the same attracting influence, acting according to the same rule, reaches to the fixed stars: but if this be only probable, another thing is certain, viz. that the same element of light does. The light from a fixed star affects our eyes in the same manner, is refracted and reflected according to the same laws, as the light of a candle. The velocity of the light is also the same as the velocity of the light of the sun reflected from the satellites of Jupiter. The heat of the sun, in kind, differs nothing from the heat of a coal fire," &c. Paley's Nat. Theol. chap. xxv. The reasoning in this passage, like the reasoning in general of the same interesting work, is logical and conclusive. But it must strike every reader, that the principal facts on which it rests belong to an advanced period of philosophical discovery; that the argument, in truth, could not have been constructed as it is, before the time of Sir Isaac Newton. It is one advantage, and none of the least, arising from the progressive advancement of the science of nature, that it throws the light of illustration and evidence on subjects which ought to be of all others the most interesting to the human mind. Yet, if arguments like that above quoted were necessary to ascertain from nature the great doctrine of the Divine unity, we could hardly wonder at the prevailing ignorance of this doctrine among the mass of mankind. And more than this—infidel philosophers, it may be remarked, have no cause to triumph in such reasonings, as if they were fair criteria of the length to which the light of nature, on these subjects, is capable of carrying the human mind. They are the reasonings of a man, possessing and believing Divine revelation; previously satisfied from *this* source, of the truth of those views of Deity which he is engaged in demonstrating from *another*. There is a most material difference between a person in this situation, whose object is to point out the conformity between the decisions of revelation and the dictates of reason, and the man who is left to grope his way by the light of reason alone. To those, indeed, who candidly consider the use made, by philosophers who were destitute of revelation, of that portion of science which they *did* possess, it will, perhaps, be matter of more than doubt, as I confess it is with myself, whether, supposing the progress of science the same as it has been, but the light of revelation still withheld, such reasonings as those of Dr. Paley and others, would ever have come to be framed. In whatever degree we may

be indebted to Christianity for the *discovery* of the facts on which these reasonings are chiefly founded—(and when I consider the influence which the progress of Christian truth has uniformly had in promoting the advancement of learning, and of improvement of every kind, I am disposed to think the obligation is not small)—I am fully satisfied that we owe, in a great degree, to this cause, the *right application* of the facts, when discovered, to points of religious truth. The striking fact, that the progress of science, apart from revelation, produced, in those nations where it was most remarkable, no improvement in religious knowledge and worship, gives no inconsiderable weight to the doubts which I have just expressed.

NOTE B. page 59.

It is quite enough for my present purpose, that "THE WORD" is ascertained to be, in this passage of John's gospel, *a Title given to Christ*. The questions as to the *origin* and *import* of the title have no immediate connexion with my argument. I may shortly observe, however, that as there is no sufficient evidence of the Evangelists having been acquainted with the writings either of Philo the Jew, or of Plato the Heathen philosopher; so there is no necessity for the supposition that this phraseology was borrowed from any such source. On the contrary: as the phrase "*the Word of Jehovah*" is ascertained to have been common among the Jewish people, and to have been used by their writers, when they quote passages from the Old Testament Scriptures, in which the Name of *Jehovah* occurs, as an equivalent for that name: (Lardner's Hist. of Apostles and Evangelists, in Bishop Watson's Theol. Tracts, Vol. II. p. 166. Text and Note.) and as the Jews, consequently were accustomed to speak of the *word of the Lord* under epithets of a *personal* nature ascribing to it personal and even Divine characters:—the probability is, that, as not only Plato, but Zeno, and other Greek philosophers, had intercourse with the Jews, and borrowed from them various notions, which they mixed up, in a corrupted form, into a heterogeneous compound with their own philosophy;—the probability, I say, is, that this is the true origin of such phraseology, in the writings of Plato and of the Stoics. Perhaps it is going to the opposite extreme from those who think the Evangelists borrowed from Plato, to interpret the phrase, *the word of Jehovah*, in various occurrences of it in the Old Testament Scriptures, as meaning the *second person of the Trinity:* The instances adduced in support of this idea are such as these—Gen. xv. 1, 4, 5,

compared with verses 7, 8, 9, 13. 1 Sam. iii. 7, 21. Psalm. cvii. 20, &c. &c.—Parkhurst's Gr. Lex. on the word Λογος, §. 16. I would not, at the same time, be understood as entirely rejecting this opinion. Different considerations, not destitute of plausibility, have been urged in support of it.

As to the reason why the appellation Λογος is given to the second person of the Trinity (or rather, let me say for the present, given to Jesus Christ) it would be a mispending of the reader's time, to consider minutely the different translations which have been proposed, with the reasonings in support of each. I am satisfied, that our received translation is the most natural, and the best supported by parallel passages of Scripture;—and that the most satisfactory reason which can be assigned for the application of the title *Word*, and *Word of God* to Christ, is his being *the medium of Divine communications to men.* God makes himself, his will, his purposes, known to us *by him*, as men do theirs to one another by *words* or *speech*. See Matth. xi. 27. and John i. 18.

Note C. page 64.

When this Discourse was delivered, 1 Tim. iii. 16. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, *God was manifest in the flesh*,"—was introduced in this place, and the following observations made upon the passage.

"In this text, we have an instance of such criticism as I formerly alluded to; which could not be easily made intelligible to a mixed audience, as it depends on the similarity between certain letters of the Greek alphabet, and on the mode of writing in ancient manuscripts.

"The rendering adopted in the 'Improved Version' is—"He who was manifested in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit, &c.

"On this I have only to remark,

"1*st*, That, on the ground of evidence *purely critical*, that is, apart from all considerations of connexion and sense, the utmost that can be alleged against the received translation is, that it is *doubtful.*

"*2dly*, From the nature of the case, the probability seems quite as great, of the corruption of the original reading from the received version to the other, as from the other to it. I think I might say with truth, considerably greater: since it is much easier to suppose the *omission* of certain marks and lines, in and over particular letters, in the course of transcribing, than it is to suppose the *insertion* of such marks where they originally had no place. I mention this, because

the general principle appears an obvious one; and because the application of it to the case in question will be perceived by at least some of my present hearers.

"3*dly*, Connected with these remarks is the circumstance, that this text, as it here stands, is in perfect harmony with those already quoted, and others of a similar description.

"4*hly*, Even the phrase "He who was manifested in the flesh" seems of itself strongly to convey the idea of previous existence. The designation is certainly a very singular one, when considered as used respecting a mere human prophet—a descendant of Adam by ordinary generation:—"He who was manifested in the flesh."—The expression, in such an application of it, is, I am confident, without a single parallel.

"5*thly*, If we take away the "manifestation in the flesh" from being a part, and even the leading part, of the mystery of godliness, it will not be easy to show wherein the greatness—the peculiar and incontrovertible greatness of this mystery, so emphatically affirmed by the apostle really consists."

I was induced to omit this passage in the printed Discourse, not by a decided conviction that these remarks were destitute of force:—but because I was desirous of having it to say, that I had built no part of my argument on any passage which eminent critics had pronounced of doubtful authority. See Discourse V. pages 145—147.

Griesbach, in his second edition, gives the preference to ὃς, inserting it in the text, and throwing Θεος into the margin.

The following Extract from the Eclectic Review, Vol. V. pages 246—248. Art. New Versions of the New Testament—will at once show the various readings, with the authorities in support of each, and explain the allusion made in one of the above observations to the mode of writing in ancient MSS.

"The second remarkable text, to which we have alluded, is 1 Tim. iii. 16. where the question is, whether we ought to read Θεος, ὃς or ὁ.

"1. Θεος is the reading of almost all the Greek MSS. in small letters, i. e. those whose antiquity does not reach higher than the tenth century. *Versions:* the Slavonic and the Arabic of the Polyglott. *Fathers:* Chrysostom, Theodoret, John of Damascus, Œcumenius, and Theophylact: one or two others of the Greek fathers have been adduced, but liable to strong doubt.

"2. Ὃς is the reading of the Alexandrine,* the Ephrem, the Augi-

* "It is well known that it has been a matter of very anxious dispute, whether OC or $\overline{\Theta}$C (the contraction in all the most ancient MSS. for Θεος) is the *original*

ensis, and the Bœrnerianus. The Vatican, the Sangermanensis, and the Coislinianus, are mutilated at this place. These are all the existing Uncial MSS. of the Epistles of Paul, except the Passionei, which has not been sufficiently examined, and whose evidence, therefore, on this point, is not before the public. It is also found in the Parisinus 14, and the Upsaliensis, both small letter MSS. of the eleventh or twelfth century. *Versions:* the Coptic of Sais reads ὁς. Both the Syriac, the Ethiopic, the Armenian, and the Arabic of Erpenius, have the pronominal prefix; so that it is impossible to be determined whether they read ὁς *who*, or ὁ *which*. *Fathers:* as far as can be ascertained, the *Greek* fathers (with the exception mentioned above) appear to have read ὁς or ὁ. Of the *Latins*, *qui* (ὁς) appears only in Jerome on Is. liii. 1. and the Acts of the II. Council of Constantinople.

"3. Ὁ is found in only one Greek MS. but that an Uncial one, the Clermont. *Versions:* the old Latin, and the Vulgate. *Fathers:* all the Latins, and some of the Greeks.

"On this statement it is to be observed; (1.) That Θεος is found only in the more recent Manuscripts, the offspring of the latest of the three ancient recensions, the Byzantine: and it is supported by no evidence from the Fathers earlier than the close of the fourth century, nor from the Versions earlier than the ninth. (2.) That the greatest weight of external evidence is in favour of ὁς. (3.) That ὁ is the more smooth and easy reading, and agrees with the immediate antecedent μυστηριον. It was, therefore, most probably substituted by some, who, not adverting to the remote antecedent, fancied the construction of ὁς ungrammatical. (4.) That if $\overline{\Theta C}$ were the original

reading of the Alexandrine. It is confessed, on all hands, that the two cross strokes which *now* appear in the MS. are the addition of a modern pen. The question is, Were they added without any authority in the MS. itself? Or, with the honest intention of preserving from irrecoverable loss a point and a cross stroke, which had proceeded from the first hand, but were in a state of evanescence? All the aids of eye-sight, sunshine, and microscopes, have been employed to discover the vestiges of the primeval point and cross stroke: but no decisive result has been obtained. Some diligent inspectors thought they could perceive the faint remains: others, as diligent and eagle-eyed, protested that they could not discover any such traces: and even the same observer has at one time fancied he saw them, and at another time has been unable to recover the vision. See Wetstein, Berriman, Owen in Bowyer's Conj. and particularly Woide's valuable preface with the notes of Spohn. Our own opinion is, that the scale turns in favour of OC. The vellum at this passage is said to be now so much rubbed and worn by repeated examination, that no future inspection can be of much avail towards determining the point at issue."

reading, it is to the last degree difficult to conceive that it could have degenerated into OC, and that so important a word as $\overline{\Theta C}$ should not have been made prominent by the Fathers of the first three centuries. But, to any one versed in the appearance of Uncial manuscripts, it will appear easy and probable that $\overline{\Theta C}$ should have grown out of OC.

"The learned and unbiassed reader must form his own judgment: we confess that ours is in favour of ὁς. But we object strongly to the rendering in the Improved Version, "He who was manifested in the flesh was justified by the Spirit," &c. The editors have followed Abp. Newcome in supposing that ὁς may be put elliptically for ὁυτος ὁς. This supposition, we apprehend, is quite unauthorized and erroneous. Ὁς is frequently put for ὁυτος and αυτος. It also not unusually supplies the place of the partitive ὁστις; but in that case, we think, it is always followed by a particle, as τε, γε, δη, αν, γαρ; as in the passages adduced in the Archbishop's note for sanctioning this construction, and which consequently are irrelevant. Till some better support is adduced for this assumed ellipsis, we must reject it as false Greek. In the place before us, ὁς is undoubtedly a relative; and its natural and proper antecedent has been pointed out by the learned Professor Cramer, distinguished thus:

—ἡτις εστιν εκκλησια ΘΕΟΥ ζωντος (στυλος και εδραιωμα της αληθειας, και ὁμολογουμενως μεγα, εστι το της ευσεβειας μυστηριον) ὁς εφανερωθη κ. τ. λ.

—"Which is the church of the living God (the pillar and support of the truth, and confessedly great, is the mystery of godliness) who was manifested," &c.

The only observation I would make on the above extract, relates to the affirmation that the use of ὁς for ὁυτος ὁς (he who) is quite unauthorized and erroneous. This is surely too unqualified. The Editors of the Improved Version refer to three passages. The first two, viz. Mark iv. 25, and Luke viii. 18, may be considered as one, being parallels; and in both of them, the ὁς is either, according to the Reviewer's remark, equivalent to ὁστις, or may be understood as having its antecedent expressed in αυτῳ and αυτου, which immediately follow; each branch of the sentence being susceptible of a transposed arrangement. In the third passage, however, Rom. viii. 32. Ὁς γε του ἰδιου υἱου ουκ εφεισατο, &c., the ὁς, although accompanied with the particle γε, can hardly be interpreted as equivalent to the partitive ὁστις, for it is applied to *God*, who is necessarily *one:* yet no antecedent is *expressed.* Observing that Mr. Nares refers to a writer on this subject, signing himself Primitivus, in the Monthly Theological Repository for May 1809, I have consulted the paper, and find the following

passages adduced, in evidence of the same use of ὅς, in addition to Rom. viii. 32, which stands first. I shall simply refer to them, and leave the question to the determination of the reader: Mark xiii. 37. Mark xiv. 8. John i. 45. iii. 34. iv. 18. Rom. vii. 15. viii. 24. xv. 21. (a strong passage) 1 Cor. x. 20. xv. 36. 2 Cor. xi. 17.—Mark ix. 40, compared with Luke xi. 23. Rom. ii. 21, 22, 23. 1 Cor. xi. 27, with 29.—1 John ii. 5, compared with 1 John iii. 21.—1 John iv. 6.

Note D. page 68.

On this text the Reader may be referred to Middleton on the Greek Article, pages 455—464. Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version of the New Testament, pp. 163—172. The following is the Note of the learned Reviewer of the Improved Version, in the Eclectic Review, Vol. V, pages 331, 332.

"Rom. ix. 5. 'whose are the fathers, and of whom, by natural descent, Christ *came*. God who is over all be blessed forever.' Thus, by putting a full point after σαρκα, and regarding the remaining words as a devout apostrophe, the editors of the I. V. follow Enjedin and other Socinians, in order to silence this signal testimony to the Deity of the Messiah. Locke proposed to insert the full stop after παντων. But to both these expedients there lies the solid objection, that *they violate the usage of Greek construction;* and in a point of idiom too, so interwoven with the texture of the language, in all its forms and dialects, as to have been preserved unaltered, notwithstanding the Hebraisms and other deviations from classic purity which characterize the New Testament. See this fact satisfactorily proved in Dr. Middleton on the Greek Article, pp. 458—460.

"Feeling, it may be, some want of confidence in the former resource, Whitby, Taylor, Wakefield, and the present editors, have expressed a strong inclination to the conjecture of Jonas Schlictingius, that, instead of ὁ ὢν, we should read ὢν ὁ, as the last step of the climax. But who does not perceive that the conjectural criticism of an interested party, in his own cause, and in defiance of positive evidence, is little better than subornation of testimony in a court of law? The conjecture is also inadmissible on three other grounds. First, it would convey a sense contrary to the apostle's direct assertion and avowed argument in a preceding part of this epistle; see ch. iii. 29. Secondly, it would be false Greek. (See both these arguments in Dr. Middleton, p. 456.) Lastly, the conjecture is in itself exceedingly violent and improbable; for the *spiritus asper* was not so fallen into

neglect in the time of St. Paul as that we can safely assume its omission; and if we admit that ὡν ὁ was the original reading, it would have been so different in appearance from the pretended corruption, that we can scarcely conceive that no vestiges of such a reading should remain, at least in the most ancient versions. The comparison would have stood thus :—

" Existing Text, ΚΑΡΚΑΟωΝΕΠΙ.

" Conjecture, ΚΑΡΚΑΗωΝΟΕΠΙ.

" Our serious conviction is, that the received reading is confirmed, *invictissimis argumentis*, to be the true one; and that an impartial man, who understood Greek, but knew nothing of our polemical theology, would inevitably translate the passage in the common manner; " of whom is the Christ, with regard to his human nature, who is over all, God blessed forever."

In addition to the considerations stated in this extract, against the conjectural alteration of ὁ ων into ὡν ὁ, there is another, which I do not find adverted to by any of the writers above referred to, but which appears to me very decisive. It arises from the situation of the conjunction και, in the fifth verse, where the disputed words lie. In it and the verse preceding there is evidently an enumeration of articles, which constituted the peculiar honour of the Israelitish people. Οἱ τινες εισιν Ισραηλιται, ὡν ἡ υἱοθεσια, και ἡ δοξα, και αἱ διαθηκαι, και ἡ νομοθεσια, και ἡ λατρεια, και αἱ επαγγελιαι· Ὡν οἱ πατερες, ΚΑΙ ἐξ ὡν ὁ Χριστος το κατα σαρκα, ὁ ων επι παντων Θεος ευλογητος εις τους αἰωνας, αμην. Nothing can be more evident, than that the και here brings us to the *closing particular in the enumeration*, the *last article in the series*. Were the conjectural reading the true one, the fifth verse must have stood thus—ὡν οἱ πατερες, ἐξ ὡν ὁ Χριστος, το κατα σαρκα, ΚΑΙ ὡν ὁ επι παντων Θεος, &c.

Note E. page 72.

On the texts here referred to, and others of a similar description, see Middleton on the Greek Article, pages 525—533, 568—572, 621—626. Granville Sharpe on the Greek Article, pages 20—24, 50—53. Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version, pages 221—230, and the Eclectic Review, vol. IV. pages 771, 772; and vol. V. page 336.

Mr. Sharpe gives the following translations of 2 Pet. i. 1, from old English editions of the Bible :—" In the righteousness that cometh of *oure God and Saviour* Jesu Christ." (Fol. Edit. 1549.) " Through

the righteousness of *our God and Saviour*, Jesus Christ." (12mo. Ed. 1595.) "By the righteousness of *our God and Savioar*, Jesus Christ." (4to. edit. 1599.) "The righteousness of Jesus Christ, *our God and Saviour*." (Margin of the Fol. edit. 1611.) Sharpe on the Greek Article, pages 21, 22. "The Rev. Mr. Crutwell has remarked (in his useful edition of the English Bible with Bishop Wilson's Notes) that the words rendered in our present version, viz. "*of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*," were rendered "*of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*" in the versions of Wickliffe, Coverdale, Matthews, Cranmer, in the Bishops (Bible,) (the) Geneva, (the) Rhemish (Bible) and by Doddridge, Wesley, Scattergood, and Purver; which is altogether a noble testimony of both ancient and modern times against the Socinian impiety." Ibid. page 53.

"To the above mentioned English translators may be added the name of *Tindel*, the author of the first printed English Version of the N. Test. who has given the very same rendering." Middleton on the Greek Article, page 625.

Of this principle respecting the use of the Article, it is, no doubt, very possible to make erroneous and overstrained applications. In the two passages, however, introduced in the text, as well as in several others, the effect of it is clear and decisive: and nothing can well be conceived more shamefully disingenuous than the following expressions of Mr. Belsham on this subject —"Indeed, it is an indignity to the human understanding to maintain, that a doctrine which, if true, would shine conspicuously in every page of the N. Test. should depend for its evidence on the critical use of the Greek Article, by the plain and unlettered writers of the N. Test.; together with what would be equally necessary, the immaculate correctness of transcribers. If this is the state to which the controversy is reduced, it would be better to give up the point at once. A doctrine of such magnitude as the proper deity of Christ, must have clearer and more substantial evidence, or none at all." Belsham's Calm Inquiry, page 230. Note. —"The controversy *reduced to this!*" No. No. Mr. B. knew full well how far this was from being the fact. Such language is a mere *ruse de guerre*, to diminish, in the minds of the ignorant, the real state of the enemy's force. On reading this note of Mr. B. one would be apt to think that his adversaries had been driven from post to post, stormed triumphantly out of every successive fortress—till they had, at length, baffled and dispirited, taken their last shelter behind this feeble bastion of the Greek Article. While the matter of fact is, that these adversaries retain the firm possession of a whole line of impreg-

nable stations, against which "no weapon that has yet been formed has prospered." These adversaries have also shown, that, without the slightest apprehension of the stability of their cause, they can retire from disputed ground, when they are sensible that it cannot be retained with honour, or even when they perceive that the validity of their right of possession is, in any degree, questionable: they do not feel themselves at all dependent on the retention of such ground, for their strength, and for their triumph. They do most cordially agree with Mr. Belsham, when he says elsewhere, "that profound learning, and acute metaphysical subtlety, are by no means necessary to settle the important question concerning the person of Christ. The inquiry is into a plain matter of fact, which is to be determined, like any other fact, by its specific evidence, the evidence of plain, unequivocal testimony; for judging of which no other qualifications are requisite than a sound understanding, and an honest mind." Belsham's Calm Inquiry, Introd. page 5.

Note F. page 103.

I shall, in this note, submit to the reader a few remarks on the two verses immediately subsequent to those which are discussed in the text.

John i. 4, 5. "*In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*"

The language of the fourth verse—"*In him was life; and the life was the light of men,*" has been variously understood by interpreters. Whitby makes the "*life,*" to mean, "that life eternal which he revealed to the world, 2 Tim. i. 10; to which he taught the way, chap. xiv. 6; which he promised to believers, chap. x. 28; which he purchased for them, chap. vi. 51, 53, 54; which he is appointed to give them, chap. xvii. 2; and to which he will raise them up, chap. v. 29: as having life in himself, verse 26." This interpretation appears to lead him immediately into the inconsistency of making this life the revealer of itself. "Hence it follows," says he, after further illustrating the above interpretation, "that this life must be the light of men, by giving them the knowledge of this life, and of the way leading to it," &c.; which, with all deference to a critic so deservedly eminent, seems to amount just to this:—that the "light of men" is so called, because it reveals this "life," and yet this "life" is the "light of men."—"The life which the evangelist here speaks of," says Dr.

Macknight, "is the human life;" for he adds, "*and the life was the light of men.*" The human life that was in the *Word* was "the light of men: the Word, by becoming flesh, enlightened men in the knowledge of God. Hence Jesus called himself *the light of the world*, (John viii. 12.) his doctrine being to the understanding what "light is to the eye." The principal objections to this view are, that it produces too sudden a transition from the Word as "in the beginning with God," and as the divine Creator of all things, to the Word made flesh: and that it does what seems to be by no means necessary, restricts the meaning of his being the light of men, to the period of his manifestation in the human nature. Doddridge, following some of the ancient fathers, takes from the end of the preceding verse the two last words, in the Greek (ὁ γεγονεν), and connects them with verse 4th. "*That which was in him was life; and the life was the light of men,*" which he thus paraphrases: "*That* fulness of power, wisdom, and benignity, *which was in him*; *was* the fountain of *life* to the whole creation: *and* it is in particular, our concern to remember, that *the life*, which *was* in him, was *the light of men*, as all the light of reason and revelation was the effect of his energy on the mind." The alteration in the construction is not, however, insisted upon; and, indeed, the very language of the paraphrase, shows it to be unnecessary: for after changing the expression "*in him was life*" into "*that which was in him was life*," the learned critic goes on in his paraphrase as if he had kept the former:—"*the life which was in him* was the light of men." Interpretations, different in some respects from all of these, are given by others.

Without dwelling upon these; I would remark, that the language in question applies by far most naturally to THE WORD, *prior to his incarnation*, or at least not in a sense confined to the period of his incarnation. The evangelist does not seem, at the third verse, to have finished what he had to say respecting the Word in the state in which he existed previously to his being "made flesh." After representing him as *God*, and as *with God*, and as the *Almighty Creator*, without whose power *not one creature* was formed; he adds in verse 4th, an expression which may, with great propriety, be understood as affirming him to be the *self-existent* Jehovah, who *has life in himself*, and is the great fountain of life to all other beings; so that there is no life in the universe that is not derived from him. We know how often Jehovah is distinguished in Scripture by the appellation of "*the living God;*" we know that this very name, by which he made himself known of old, the name JEHOVAH is derived from his self-existence,

and that it is, therefore, peculiarly his own, in distinction from all Idols, and pretenders to deity. When it is here, then, said of THE WORD, "*in him was life*," the expression may be considered as equivalent to "*the living one*;" an appellation by which he denominated himself to John, the writer of this gospel history, when he made his glorious appearance to him in the isle of Patmos—"Fear not; I am the first and the last, and (or even) THE LIVING ONE: and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore," &c. Rev. i. 17, 18. The Greek words are, Εγω ειμι ὁ πρωτος, και ὁ εσχατος, και ὁ ζων· και εγενομην νεκρος, &c.

It is a great help to the right understanding of any passage, to compare it with the language of the same writer, on the same subject, in other places. There is a remarkable correspondence between the expressions now before us, and those in 1 John i. 1, 2. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of THE WORD OF LIFE: (*for THE LIFE was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal LIFE, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us*," &c.)

Jesus Christ is here denominated, in the end of the first verse, "*the Word of Life*:"—a sudden transition is then made to another, and shorter appellation, in the beginning of verse 2d; "*the Life* was manifested:"—and of this Life, this Eternal Life, it is affirmed, that it was "*with the Father*" before it was manifested to us. Now, between this phraseology, and that before us, there is a striking coincidence. The last of the above expressions—"that Eternal Life *which was with the Father*," answers to what is here said of the Word, that he (or it) "was in the beginning *with God*:"—"the *Word of Life*," or *the Living Word*, is equivalent in meaning to the phrase, "*in him (or in it) was life*;"—and in both cases there appears to be the same kind of sudden transition; the life which had been represented as belonging to the Word, being immediately converted into an appellation for the Word himself. In the one case we have,—"*That which we have heard and seen*, &c. *of THE WORD OF LIFE; (for THE LIFE was manifested*," &c.:)—in the other,—*IN THE WORD WAS LIFE; and THE LIFE was the Light of men*." As in the former case, then, THE LIFE spoken of in the second verse, as manifested to men, is the same as THE WORD OF LIFE, or *the living Word*, in verse 1st; so, in the latter case, "*THE LIFE which was the Light of men*," is the same as "*THE WORD, in whom was life*."

"*The life was the light of men*." Light, here, refers particularly to

knowledge:—and we might justly consider it as comprehending every species of knowledge, there being no kind of it which has not proceeded from the ETERNAL WORD. It seems here, however, to mean, especially, the knowledge of *divine truth*: and the sentiment expressed is, that he who is "THE LIFE" has all along been in this respect particularly, "*the light of men.*" He is called so in a sense similar to that in which he is denominated "the Word of God:" as being the immediate author of divine communications to men;—imparting to them the light of saving truth. He has had from the beginning the management of the whole scheme of redemption, in all the stages of its progressive development; and has thus been the great dispenser of spiritual light to men. The apostle Peter speaks of the Old Testament prophets, as having delivered their predictions under the inspiration of "*the Spirit of Christ*:"—and from this the inference appears to be fair and natural, that if *prophetic light* came from him, *all* the light of truth, in whatever way communicated, proceeded from him also. I would not, by any means, be understood as *excluding* from the Evangelist's meaning, the period of his appearance on earth; because *then* he became "the light of men," in a more remarkable manner, and in a much higher degree, than ever before:—but I cannot, on the other hand, *confine* the meaning to this period; seeing there has never been a time, at which the designation of "the light of men" has not been justly applicable to the LIVING WORD.

Upon the same principle, I consider the fifth verse as expressing what has always been true; and not as referring exclusively, to the reception which Jesus, "the light of the world," met with when he sojourned here below. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

"*It shineth in darkness.*" The darkness here, I imagine, is not the darkness of one dispensation, or state of things, compared with another; but more generally, the darkness of human ignorance and depravity. In this darkness, the light has always shone. The light imparted to the Jews shone, indeed, amidst the surrounding darkness of heathenism; but it shone also amidst the darkness of the Jews themselves; for they were by nature *darkness*—ignorant, depraved, and miserable—as well as the Gentiles. And the light "shineth in darkness" still; and must continue to shine in darkness, while it shines in this fallen and degenerate world.

It has likewise been always true, that "the darkness *admitted* it not." So the phrase is rendered by Dr. Campbell, consistently, I should think, with its true meaning, in its present connexion. I see

no good reason for confining this to the reception given to Christ when on earth; although that was certainly a most affecting instance, and illustration, of the general fact. The words are equally true of the aversion of mankind in general to the light of truth, *before* his coming, *during* his residence on earth, and *since* his exaltation to the right hand of God.—"The light *shineth*," *(present time, φαινει)* it *continues* to shine, "in darkness;"—"and the darkness admitted it not;" *(aorist*, or indefinite time past, *ου κατελαβεν)* it *has not, at any time, admitted it.* It has always been, and still is, true, of mankind in general, that they have "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds have been evil." O that all were impressed with the conviction, that if they persist in shutting their eyes against the light of life, and in choosing the darkness of error and sin, it will, in the end, be to their everlasting condemnation.

Note G. page 112.

Mr. Belsham, in the following passage, admirably expresses the difficulty with which his system is loaded, from what is said in the Scriptures respecting Christ's *judging the world;* and at the same time shows how strongly this difficulty was felt by him:—"From these declarations, it is concluded that Jesus is appointed to appear in person to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to award to every individual of the human race his final sentence of reward or punishment. This is an office of such transcendent dignity and importance, and requires powers so far superior to any thing we can conceive to belong to a mere human being, however meritorious and exalted, that to many it appears utterly incredible that such an office should be assigned to one who was himself at one time a peccable and fallible man, and, as such, liable to appear at the tribunal of eternal justice. The righteous Judge of the whole earth, the unerring arbiter of the destinies of all the innumerable generations of mankind, must surely be a personage of rank far superior to any who shall then be summoned to his tribunal. This argument has appeared so forcible to some persons of much learning and reflection, that this consideration alone has prevented them from acceding to the Unitarian hypothesis, though they have acknowledged that particular texts might admit of a satisfactory explication upon Unitarian principles. That this is a great difficulty cannot be denied; but possibly it may be alleviated by attention to the following considerations." Would to God that Mr. B. instead of seeking to alleviate this difficulty, had at once ad-

mitted it to be insuperable, and acknowledged the appointed Judge to be *Divine!* But instead of this how does he proceed. He first takes for granted that when the apostle speaks of God's judging the world by that MAN whom he hath ordained, he affirms the *mere* humanity of Jesus; and then infers that, whatever our prejudices may suggest to the contrary, it is, in fact, not inconsistent with Divine wisdom, nor with the reason and order of things, that *a human being* —(i. e. a *mere man*)—should be appointed to the office of universal Judge!!—"Jesus and his apostles, he says, do not appear to have felt any difficulty in the appointment of a human being to the office of universal Judge."—True—and the obvious reason is, that the human being of whom they speak, possessed, at the same time a higher nature than the human. There is no accounting for it otherwise. For the supposition of a *mere man like ourselves* executing the office of universal Judge, is one so monstrous, so contradictory to every idea we can form of what is *fit*, and *reasonable*, and *possible*, as to require for its admission, a larger portion of credulity than that which Mr. B. and his friends affect to despise. The difficulty is not removed by the supposition of any powers, however enlarged, in whatever way acquired, whether gradually, or by communication for the purpose, if they are still powers, as they must be, limited by the capacity of a being *merely human*. I should even apply the same remark to the most exalted of created natures. Divest the Judge of his Divine Majesty; and you render it impossible to feel, in anticipating our appearance before him, that trembling awe which the thought of the future judgment ought always to inspire. We do not feel as if satisfied with his decisions. The necessity of instant, unquestioning submission, under which the mind sinks in the contemplation of a Divine Judge, ceases to impress it. We begin immediately to think of possible errors, and of appeal to higher authority.

NOTE H. page 116.

The note of the Improved Version on the words of Thomas to Christ, is very remarkable, on account of the reference which it contains to the authority of *Beza*, in favour of their being an exclamation. On this reference Mr. Nares observes as follows:—"It is exceedingly true that Beza, says it is an exclamation, and therefore he corrects the Vulgate, and renders it in the vocative, 'Domine mi, et Deus mi;' but, observing that the context expressly says they were spoken *αυτω, to him*, that is to *Christ*, he says, 'hæc igitur verba quæ

sequuntur non sunt tantùm admirantis Thomæ, ut *hunc locum eludebant Nestoriani*, sed ipsum illum Jesum ut verum Deum ac Dominum suum compellantis. Male, igitur, vulgate interpretatur hunc locum recto casu, *Dominus meus et Deus meus:* nec alius est locus in his libris expressior, de Christo, ut vero Deo, invocando.'—This is what I find in Beza, concerning this exclamation. It was, he says, *non tantum*, not merely an exclamation, but an actual address of Thomas *to Jesus*, calling him both his *Lord* and his *God;* an indisputable precedent for the invoking of Christ, *ut Deus verus*, as the true God. 'I shall venture,' adds Mr. Nares, 'to lay it down as a rule, for all readers of this New Version, to examine the references.'" Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version, page 197.

Note I. page 253.

The expressions in which the apostle Paul has been thought to disclaim inspiration on the particular point of which he treats at the time, occur chiefly in the seventh chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. I propose in this note briefly to examine them.

The first remark that naturally occurs to the mind, with regard to the sentiment in question, is, that it is quite *unaccountable;* and that, therefore, it is *a priori* very *improbable* that it should be true. The general inspiration of Paul is frequently affirmed by himself: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 16. xiv. 37: and it is asserted by Peter, when he classes Paul's writings with "*the other Scriptures*," 2 Peter iii. 15, 16. This inspiration was a fulfilment of the promise made to the apostles by their Master—"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into *all truth*," &c. John xvi. 13. Indeed the inspiration of Paul cannot be denied by any who believe the New Testament to be the word of God.

How strange, then the supposition, that in giving directions to the people of God, this inspiration should, on his arriving at the subject treated of in 1 Cor. vii. being all at once withdrawn!—nay, withdrawn and restored, and withdrawn and restored again—alternately coming and going, on the same subject, within the compass of a single chapter!—Or, again, that the apostle should not himself be sure whether he was writing by inspiration or not!—as some of his expressions might, to a superficial reader, seem to indicate.

This improbability, great in itself, is strengthened by the consideration that the apostle is writing on subjects, respecting which *special inquiry had been made to him, as an apostle of Christ, by a Christian*

Church. This being the case, surely the gracious Head of the church would not leave them without an answer *from himself*—would not leave them ignorant of *his own will;* when it was this they were desirous to know from his apostle, that they might conform their conduct to it. Are the matters treated of in this chapter of so trivial a nature, as to be unworthy of being settled by inspiration? Far from it. They are matters of *very high importance;* certainly of far superior moment to many other things (relative for instance to external order) for which the Holy Spirit has given minute directions.

Besides, on the supposition of Paul's disclaiming inspiration in the expressions in question—it is impossible to fix to what extent these expressions, when so understood, are to be considered as applying in the context:—what we are to deem the will of Christ, and what the mere private opinion of a fellow man. It has, as I have hinted in the text, been used as an argument for the *general* inspiration of Paul's epistles, that he himself thus specifies the exceptions, marking its suspension, on particular occasions. No doubt this would be a proof of his faithfulness and integrity. But the difficulties and evils attending this interpretation, far more than counterbalance any value possessed by this argument.

Let us examine a little the expressions themselves, and try their real import.

Verse 6. "But I speak this by permission, not of commandment."

The obvious meaning of this is, not that he spoke what he refers to as a thing he was *permitted* to say, but not *commanded* to say:—for this, in fact, would amount to nothing. Because *permission* to say any thing, either of doctrine or of precept, necessarily supposes what *is* said to be *the mind of the Lord*, or *of the Spirit;*—he could not be *permitted* to say what was contrary to that mind. The meaning is, that what he said was matter of *permission, as to the persons whom he addressed*, and not of *command*, or *positive injunction.* "I say this *in the way of permission*, not of *commandment.*"—(Compare, for an expression of the same description, 2 Cor. viii. 8.)—He refers to the general subject, as stated in verse 1. "It is good for a man not to marry;"—and informs them, that he had *no positive command* to to give them on this matter, either to marry or to remain single; but a *permission* to do the one or the other, according to personal and relative circumstances.

Verse 10. "*And unto the married, I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*" compared with verse 12. "*But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath*

a wife, that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away," &c.

The *commands* of Christ and his apostles are in one view, and that the most important, *the same.* Luke x. 16. 1 John iv. 6. 1 Thess. iv. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 37. Yet there is a distinction between sayings delivered by Jesus himself personally, when he was upon earth, and sayings delivered in his name by his apostles. Paul enjoins the elders of the church at Ephesus, Acts xx. 35, to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." This, delivered as a truth by the Spirit through Paul, would have had the same authority as it derived from having been uttered by Christ himself in person. Yet the circumstance of its having been so uttered is evidently introduced with the intention of giving it additional persuasive influence.

This seems to be the distinction in the passage under consideration: "I command, yet not I only, although an inspired apostle, but the Lord himself gives commandment as to this." See Matth. v. 32, and Luke xvi. 18. It is a pretty strong confirmation of this view, that in the case mentioned in verse 10, it is the fact that a command actually *was* given by Jesus personally; whereas, in the case stated in verse 12, there was *none.* Besides, as was already hinted, how can we suppose that, in a matter confessedly of great moment, which had perplexed and agitated the minds of the believers at Corinth, they should be left with nothing more than the private opinion and advice of an individual, which they might or might not adopt, just as they saw reason to concur with, or to differ from him, in judgment. This could not settle their minds, or fix their practice. We must surely consider him as speaking in the character of one who "*had the Spirit of Christ,*" chap. ii. 16, and as delivering a precept *in addition* to what *the Lord* had himself enjoined, when on earth. And accordingly, it is *in continuation of the same subject*, that he uses the *authoritative language* of verse 17, "*so ordain I, in all churches;*" language peculiarly *apostolical;*—evidently the language of one *having authority*—the authority of his Divine Master.

Verse 25. "*Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*"

"I have no commandment of the Lord." He does not mean that he had received no commandment from the Lord, to enjoin upon them; but that this was a case, in which, as in the one beforementioned, there was no commandment of the Lord on record. I think

the language in the latter part of the verse strongly corroborates this view: "I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be *faithful.*" *Faithfulness* has reference to a trust or commission. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Acts xx. 27. On the present occasion, he gives *a judgment*, or *sentence*, (γνωμην δι δίδωμι) as one who had obtained mercy to be *faithful*—that is, to his apostolic commission; the nature of which faithfulness is described in one of the passages just referred to as consisting in "not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God." The very mention of *faithfulness*, and not of wisdom, experience, prudence, or sagacity, appears to show that what he does deliver he delivers *in his apostolic capacity.*

Verse 26. "*I suppose, therefore, that this is good for the present distress,*" &c.

The word, rendered "*I suppose*," has for its primary signification, *I establish by law, I enact*,—(νομιζω, propriè *lege sancio, leges fero*, a νομος, *lex*. Schleusner.) Its more extended signification is, *I judge, I reckon, I account*, &c. &c. It does not imply the *uncertainty* which we attach to our word, *suppose*. It expresses here *decided judgment*, the judgment of an apostle, of one who "had the mind of Christ."

Verse 40. "*But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*"

The observations made on verse 25, apply to the former part of this verse. The latter part, so far from being favourable to the opinion that Paul in this chapter disclaims inspiration, is, in my mind, most decisive against it.

1. We surely must not for a moment suppose, that the apostle did not know, or was not sure, whether he was inspired or not. This was a matter which could not possibly be doubtful. Such a supposition is pregnant with absurdity in itself, and leads to the fatal consequence of completely and universally unsettling our confidence in inspiration. If these writers could be uncertain of their inspiration at one time, they might be mistaken in deeming themselves inspired at another: so that no evidence of their general inspiration could ever give us the assurance of its universality, even in what they themselves thought to be of Divine authority, or impart full confidence to our minds as to any thing at all which they had delivered.

2. Besides; for what end does the apostle introduce this at all? When he says "*and I think also that I have the Spirit of God*," he surely intended to give *authority* and *weight* to what he had been saying. If it has not *this* meaning, it will be difficult to say what it means. If therefore we believe that Paul *really had* the Spirit of

God at all, we must conclude that the judgment which he here pronounces is the judgment of the Spirit. For it would obviously have been nothing to his purpose, to introduce his "having the Spirit of God" on *other* subjects, if it had indeed been the case that he was giving only his private, uninspired, unauthoritative opinion on *this*. The very circumstance, then, of his thus referring at all to his inspiration, clearly shows, that it was more than his mere personal opinion and advice that he intended to express.

3. The verb, translated "*I think*," does not, by any means, of itself, imply suspicion or doubt; but as naturally means *thinking with confidence,—conviction,—knowledge.* (See Schleusner's and Parkhurst's Lexicons, on the verb δοκεω.) Compare John v. 39.

4. The language of the apostle is a gentle, modest way of expressing a fact, of which he was fully confident. And in this view, it is worthy of remark, it derives peculiar beauty from the circumstance of his apostolic inspiration having been called in question at Corinth, by the false teachers and their adherents. It is as if he had said:—"Whatever some may say, or may insinuate, *I think* I have the Spirit of God: *I think* I surely gave you sufficient evidence of this—did I not? Have you any reason to refuse my authority? I tender you these directions *in love:* and *I think*, from 'the signs of an apostle which were wrought among you,' I may also consider myself as authorized to '*enjoin* upon you that which is convenient.'"

As for 1 Cor. xi. 17, the only other passage in Paul's writings which has been thought to countenance the sentiment of his sometimes disclaiming inspiration, I need not dwell upon it. A number of the general observations already made, apply to it in all their force: and the expression, "*after the Lord*" ("That which I speak, I speak it not *after the Lord*, but as it were foolishly in this confidence of boasting,")—evidently refers not to the *authority* of the Lord, but to his *example.* The "glorying," to which the apostle was "compelled" by necessitating circumstances, he avows his consciousness, was hardly, at least in appearance, accordant with the example of him who "sought not his own glory." If Paul means more than this—if he means to disclaim inspiration, when does his inspiration recommence? at what particular place does he begin again to speak by the Spirit of God?

Upon the whole, I am not satisfied, that there are any passages of his writings in which this apostle can be fairly considered as disclaiming inspiration.

Note K. page 174.

Some time in the course of last year, the Glasgow Religious Tract Society published, in a small pamphlet, certain Extracts from the Strictures on the improved Version of the New Testament contained in the notes to the third Edition of Dr. Magee's work on Atonement and Sacrifice. To these Extracts a reply was soon after circulated, written "by a Calm Inquirer after Revealed Truth." "This *Calm* Inquirer" was generally understood to be Mr. Belsham, partly from current report, and partly from the designation assumed by the writer, and the singular congruity between the designation and the style in which he writes, so remarkable for that gentle *calmness*, that mild and modest sweetness, that total absence of every thing like bitterness and violence, by which Mr. Belsham's compositions are so well known to be characterized.

I introduce this Reply here, for the sake of pointing out one instance in it of most *evasive sophistry;* not because it is the only one, but because it relates to the subject here commented on, the authenticity of the two first chapters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Dr. Magee had pointed out the glaring inconsistency of the Editors of the Improved Version, in rejecting, on the alleged authority of the Ebionites, the two first chapters of Matthew, while yet they retained the three other gospels and Paul's Epistles, although the whole of these were rejected by these same Ebionites. Now, how does the author of the Reply vindicate himself and friends, from this charge of obvious and flagrant inconsistency? Let him speak for himself. "But, (says the learned Professor,) will you not upon the same authority, reject the remaining gospels and Paul's Epistles? I answer, *No.* What! (says the Professor,) are the Ebionite witnesses pronounced on one side of the leaf, not credible, and on the other, witnesses of such repute as to be relied upon in opposition to all Manuscripts and Versions in the whole world? I answer, *Yes;* because in the one case I see reason to concur with them, and in the other to differ from them: and I believe that I have good grounds for the discrimination." What, then, are these grounds? The question whether Matthew wrote these two chapters—whether they formed part of the original Record—is a question *purely critical.* On *this* ground, however, the respondent was well aware, the authority of his friends, the Ebionites, could not weigh a feather in the scale—for it was not so much as noticed by critics of the highest eminence. He therefore very slily, (for we can hardly conceive it to have been an oversight,) shifts his ground

entirely, and rests his concurrence with the Ebionites in this instance, on what every one will readily believe to be its true foundation—the *mysterious*, and consequently *obnoxious nature of the contents of the chapters themselves!!* "We should make fine work of ancient history," continues he, "if this Dublin Professor's principle is to be admitted, believe *all* or *none*, without discrimination. Livy relates, that Hannibal crossed the Alps, and beat the Romans at the battle of Cannæ; and I believe him. The same Livy tells that an ox spoke; but I believe him not. What! (says one educated in the school of our Dublin Professor,) is Livy pronounced on one side of the leaf to be credible, and on the other incredible? Is a witness to be brought up and turned down at pleasure? Is he good and bad, as may serve the purpose? If such reasoning satisfies the learned gentleman; if he cannot be content to believe the battle of Cannæ, without believing likewise that the ox spoke, he has my free consent to believe as much as he pleases. Only, let him permit *us* on this side of the water, to exercise a little common sense in judging of a report, and to discriminate what is worthy of belief from what appears to be incredible, in the works of the same author."

Apart altogether from the levity and impiety of the comparison contained in this paragraph, who does not perceive its evasive sophistry?—There is sophistry not only in the *shifting of ground*, already noticed, but in *the very comparison itself.* The two questions, "Are the contents of these chapters worthy of belief?" and—"Were these chapters written by the historian?" are perfectly distinct from each other. Yet by this writer they are completely confounded together. From its being recorded in Livy's history *that an ox spoke*, he never thinks of inferring *that this passage was not written by Livy himself.* No. He only says, "Livy relates, that Hannibal crossed the Alps, and beat the Romans at Cannæ; and *I believe him.* The same Livy relates that an ox spoke; but *I believe him not.*"—Very well. We have no objection to his saying, provided he does not insist that *our* faith shall be regulated by *his*, "The Evangelist Matthew relates, that Jesus of Nazareth died on a cross; and I believe him. The same Evangelist Matthew relates that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin; but I believe him not."—Let this writer by all means, "exercise a little common sense in judging of a report, and discriminate what is worthy of belief, from what appears to be incredible *in the works of the same author.*" But let him not, wherever he finds any thing, which he may be pleased to deem incredible, unwarrantably and presumptuously conclude that *it forms no part of what the author*

wrote!—What then is the acknowledged amount of all the parade about the authority of the Ebionites and of Marcion, against these chapters of Matthew, and Luke? It is nothing at all. By the confession of this writer, it resolves itself into neither more nor less than this:—"*These chapters cannot be genuine; for, in our opinion, they contain what is not credible!*"—i. e. in other words, they contain what is mysterious, and what does not comport with their system.

Note I. page 253.

Το ειναι ισα Θεω——. "ΙΣΟΣ, vel Ισος, η, ον. 1. *æqualis, par*, scilicet *quantitate, numero, magnitudine*, etc.——————2. *idem, æqualis et similis natura.* John v. 18. ισον εαυτον ποιων τω Θεω, æqualem se faciens Deo. Act. xi. 17. την ισην δωρεαν εδωκεν, iisdem donis instruxit. Vulgatus: *eandem gratiam dedit.* Philip. ii. 6. ουχ αρπαγμον ηγησατο το ειναι ισα Θεω, non rapinam duxit Dei personam sustinere, seu æqualem natura et majestate Deo esse, i. q. εν μορφη Θεου υπαρχειν, ubi ισα non, ut quibusdam videtur, positum est pro κατ' ισα μερη seu εν ισοις μερεσι, h. e. ισως συν Θεω, sed pro accusativo masc. singularis ισον. Conf. Alex. Job. v. 14. x. 10. xv. 16. *Hippocrat.* Jurejurand. c. i. p. 42. ομνυμι ηγησασθαι μεν τον διδαξοντα με την τεχνην ταυτην ισα (h. e. ισον) γενετησιν εμοισιν. *Homer.* Odyss. ο'. 519. τον νυν ισα θεω Ιθακησιοι εισορωσι. *Ælian.* V. H. viii. 38. Conf. *Glassii* Philol. Sacr. p. 65. ed. *Dathii.*"—Schleusner.

As the adjective ισος expresses the idea of *equality*, it is natural to suppose that ισα, the neuter plural of the adjective used adverbially, should partake of the same signification, and denote more than mere *similarity* or *resemblance*. Parkhurst says "Ισα, neut. plur. used adverbially, *As*, occ. Phil. ii. 6. το ειναι ισα Θεω, *To be as God.*" He then quotes from Doddridge—"So ισα Θεω is most exactly rendered, agreeable to the force of ισα in many places of the LXX, which Whitby has collected in his note on this place. The proper Greek phrase for *equal to God* is ισον τω Θεω, which is used John v. 18."—But although in the instances adduced by Whitby, ισα may be considered correctly rendered by *as*, it does not follow that it conveys no more than the idea of *similarity*. Even in cases in which it would have been quite sufficient for the writer's or translator's purpose to have expressed the idea of similarity, it would be very unfair to conclude from this that similarity is all that he has actually expressed. Our words very often convey more than what is *absolutely necessary* for the occasion. To take an example or two from the occurrences of ισα in the LXX.

Job v. 14. "They grope in the noon-day, ισα νυκτι, *as in the night.*" It might have been quite enough to have said "in *like* manner as in the night." ὡς νυκτι—but somewhat more is actually said, "in the *same* manner as in the night"—*equally as* in the night.——Job xi. 12. "Man is born, ισα ονῳ ερημιτῃ, *like* a wild ass's colt." The idea actually expressed is more than mere *resemblance*: "Man is born *on an equality with* the wild ass's colt."——Job x. 10. "Thou hast curdled me, ισα τυρῳ, *like* cheese," or *as* cheese. What is really expressed, however, is "in the *same* manner as cheese."—The same general remark might be applied to the other passages quoted by Whitby, viz. Job xiii. 12, 20. xv. 16. xxiv. 20. xxvii. 16. xxviii. 2. xxix. 14. xl. 15. Isaiah li. 23.

In all the quotations adduced by Parkhurst from profane authors, ισα, although properly enough translated *as*, clearly includes the idea of *equality*. Thus

Ὡς ῥα νοθος μεν ην, τυκα δ' ετρεφε δια Θεανω,
ΙΣΑ φιλοισι τεκεσσι, χαριζομενη ποσεϊ ῳ.

"Whom, though a bastard, the generous Theano brought up carefully *as* her own children—(i. e. *on an equal footing with* her own children)—to please her husband."

Iliad, B. V. l. 70, 71.

Τον νυν ΙΣΑ ΘΕΩ Ιθακησιοι εισοροωσι.

Odyss. B. XV. l. 519.

——τιμην δε λελογχασιν ΙΣΑ ΘΕΟΙΣΙΝ.

Odyss. B. XI. l. 303.

Πριν μεν γαρ σε ζωον ετιομεν ΙΣΑ ΘΕΟΙΣΙΝ.

Ib. l. 483.

On these instances I need not dwell. It seems evident, that in every one of them, it is not the idea of *resemblance* merely, but that of *equality* and *sameness* that is intended to be expressed.

NOTE L. page 288.

On 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*"

In the text I have rendered the words "no prophecy is—ιδιας επι-

λυσεως—of *its own* or of *self*-interpretation." In a course of Lectures on the Epistles of Peter delivered ten years ago, I was led to adopt this view of the passage, as I did not feel satisfied with any of the different explanations usually given; not at the time aware of the view being as old as the Vulgate translation of the Bible. The following *extract* from a paper in which it was communicated to the Editor of the Missionary Magazine, in reply to a query by a correspondent, will illustrate a little the grounds on which it was preferred to other explanations.

"In verse 20, the apostle gives them a particular rule or advice for their direction in the study of the prophecies. "Knowing this *first*, as a matter of prime importance toward the understanding and right interpretation of the prophetic word, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." Our translators have needlessly inserted the word *any*, which has led many to suppose various *kinds* of private interpretation which the apostle meant to disapprove and warn against. The word, translated *interpretation*, is by some rendered *invention*. This seems objectionable for the following reasons: 1. It is an unusual acceptation of the word (επιλυσις), the proper meaning of which is *untying* or *solution*. 2. It makes the following verse, (which contains, according to this explanation, the same truth,) a reason for itself. 3. It is supposing the apostle to be giving, not a direction for the understanding of the prophecies, but an *inducement* to the study of them, arising from their divine original which is not peculiar to them, but common to every other part of Scripture; whereas it seems to be more consistent with the scope of the passage, as connected with verse 19, to consider him as laying down a rule of interpretation. The rule or direction appears to be this:—that "no prophecy of Scripture is (ιδιας επιλυσεως) of *its own*, i. e. of the prophet's own interpretation." We are not to look to the prophets for an interpretation of their own predictions. If we would rightly understand their meaning, we must examine them in connexion with the events by which they have been fulfilled. The reason is plain, verse 21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The prophets did not fully understand their own predictions, 1 Peter i. 10—12. In vain therefore, surely, must we expect to form accurate ideas of their meaning and reference, if we examine them *by themselves*. It is plain from the whole context, that the apostle has particularly in view the predictions relative to the Messias, which form the chief part of Old Testament prophecy. Now

let it be remarked, that the conduct of the Jews respecting these very prophecies, clearly shows that the direction here given is one of no small importance. The Jews, before the coming of Christ, "searched the Scriptures;" they affixed ideas of their own to the prophecies respecting the Messiah; and so firmly rivetted were these ideas in their minds, that in spite of the minute and striking accomplishment of prophecy in Jesus of Nazareth, they rejected, with impious disdain, his divinely authenticated claims. See John v. 39, 40, 45—47. In searching the Scriptures they did right; but in taking up such determined views of unfulfilled predictions, the event showed they were wrong. From the Acts of the Apostles, it is evident, that the manner of their preaching to the Jews corresponded perfectly with this idea. Their great object was to convince them, from their own Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.

"The prophets and the apostles wrote under the influence of the same divine Spirit, and the grand subject of their testimony is the same. Acts xxvi. 22, 23. 1 Peter i. 10—12. The result of the whole then seems to be, that the full revelation of the Christ, in the history of Jesus contained in the New Testament, which is the preaching of the apostles embodied and rendered permanent, forms the proper *key* to the prophecies of the Old, without which we cannot unlock them ourselves, or lay open their contents intelligibly to others. By giving heed to the prophecies in connexion with their glorious fulfilment, we shall "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour," and gain increasing stores of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," "the sum and substance of the word, the sinner's all in all." The proper manner of applying this key might be the subject of separate consideration." Miss. Mag. for May 1804. Vol. IX. pages 217, 218.

It was with great satisfaction that I some time ago found the translation of verse 20th, on which this interpretation of the passage is founded, sanctioned by the high critical authority of the late Bishop Horsley, in the first of his admirable series of Sermons on Prophecy, founded on this text:—"It must be confessed," says he, "that all this obscurity and incoherence appears in the first face of the passage, as it is expressed in our English Bibles. The truth is, that the English word *private* doth but very darkly, if at all, convey to the understanding of the English reader the original word to which it is meant that it should answer. The original word denotes that peculiar appropriation of the thing with which it is joined to something else previously mentioned, which is expressed in English by the word

own subjoined to the pronouns of possession: *our own* power; *his own* blood; a prophet of *their own.* In all these places, the Greek word which is rendered by the words *our own, his own, their own,* is that same word which in this text is rendered by the word *private.* The precise meaning of the original, therefore, may be thus expressed—"Not any prophecy of Scripture is of *self-interpretation.*" This compound word, *self-interpretation,* contains the exact and full meaning of the two Greek words which our translators have rendered by "private interpretation," and with which no two separate words can be found in our language exactly to correspond. The meaning is just the same as might be thus expressed: "Not any prophecy of Scripture is its own interpreter." It is in this sense that the passage is rendered in the French Bible of the church of Geneva; and what is of much importance to observe, it is so rendered in the Latin translation called the Vulgate, which the church of Rome upholds as the unerring standard of the sacred text." Horsley's Sermons, Vol. II. pages 12, 13.

Note N. page 349.

Such passages as the following, of which many might be quoted from different writers, seem to be liable to the objection which is here stated:

"Though the Lord, on purpose to display his wisdom and sovereignty, to try the graces of his people, to mortify their pride, and to teach them the necessity of adventuring, as sinners, to trust simply in Christ, for all the grace of the promise, withholds for a time sensible comfort from them; yet, for the most part, he doth it in order to *chasten* them, for their sins against him, as their God and Father." Colquhoun's Treatise on Spiritual Comfort, page 76.

"Believers may hence see that *they have no reason to be offended* at the ways of godliness, on account of any trouble, how grievous soever it may be, which they sometimes endure in those ways. They have no sufficient reason 'to be weary, or faint in their minds.' Their gracious God and Father proposeth to himself the best of all ends in afflicting them; namely, their sanctification, in subordination to his own glory: and they may rest assured, that they shall at no time be afflicted with any degree, either of inward or of outward trouble, but what infinite wisdom sees necessary for attaining these ends. The kind, degree, and continuance, of their troubles, are all fixed by the immutable decree of their heavenly Father, who loveth

them; whose wisdom could not have devised less, and whose love could not have appointed more affliction for them, than is requisite for the purposes of his glory in their salvation. They have therefore no reason to be displeased with any afflictive dispensation; or to think the worse of his ways of grace and providence, because of any of their sufferings." Ibid. pages 237, 238.

"If such be our case, and if, after a diligent scrutiny, we are able to discover nothing more than those ordinary imperfections with which the life of the very best Christians is chequered; if we cannot detect any *particular* cause of that gloom which overhangs our spirits: let us not, in such circumstances, be like unto men without hope. We may depend upon it, that we are exposed to this trial for the wisest and most merciful purposes. *All things will* finally *work together for good to those that love God.* Perhaps it may be necessary for our spiritual welfare, that our faith should be proved, that our self-confidence should be abated, and that we should be made to see that man, even in his best estate, is altogether vanity. The careless and the inconsiderate are ignorant even of the very existence of this internal distress. Those that God loveth are the persons whom he more particularly chasteneth. If David was so frequently constrained to *mourn by reason of affliction*, and to exclaim, in the bitterness of his heart, "*Lord, why casteth thou off my soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me?*" can we reasonably expect to be made perfect without suffering? Our blessed Saviour himself was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;' and such also his disciples must frequently be. His tender care, however, has not left us without a provision against the day of evil tidings. '*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*' This promise he was afterwards pleased to explain more at large, and to point out to us that gracious personage through whose agency we may expect to receive the balm of consolation: '*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless.*'" Faber's Practical Treatise on the ordinary operations of the Spirit, pages 167—169.

I intended some remarks on these passages. But the subject is such, that I cannot, I find, enter upon it, without involving myself in too detailed a discussion. There are some very judicious observa-

tions upon it in the Review of Mr. Faber's Treatise, in the Christian Observer for August, 1813. Vol. XII. pages 530, 531.

Note O. page 357.

"It has likewise been generally allowed by orthodox Divines, that there are *other influences of the Spirit on the mind which do not always terminate in sanctification.* To 'resist the Holy Ghost' seems to mean something more than merely to reject the word of inspiration: and to quench the Spirit is not exclusively the sin of believers, when on some occasions they stifle his holy suggestions. He strives with, and powerfully stirs up the minds of many who are not born again: new principles are not implanted, but natural powers are excited; conscience is influenced in part to perform its office, notwithstanding the opposition of the carnal heart; and convincing views are given of many important truths. The Spirit concurs with an address to one man's *fear*, and even a Felix trembles before a prisoner in chains: another's *hopes* are addressed, and he hears gladly, and does many things, though he will not divorce Herodias: or convincing arguments are applied with energy to an intelligent worldling; and he is 'almost persuaded to be a Christian.' Such characters often take up a profession of the gospel, and continue for a time, or even persist to the end in an unfruitful form of godliness: and men of this description, who have been eminent for their talents, when the Spirit has finally ceased to strive with them, have been the principal heresiarchs in every age; while the bulk of heretical societies have been constituted of inferior persons of the same stamp," &c. Scott's Essays on the most Important Subjects in Religion, Essay XIV. pages 237, 238, 3d edit. I cannot help, as I have said, entertaining great doubts of the propriety of ascribing to the agency of the Holy Spirit the different workings of the unrenewed mind which are here mentioned. Is any direct influence of the Spirit necessary, for instance, to account for the accusations of natural conscience, and the selfish dread of punishment thence arising? If it be not necessary, why suppose it? Every *unnecessary* supposition, on a subject of this nature, it appears to me, must be a *pernicious* supposition; because it tends to confound things that differ, to destroy the distinction between that which is natural and that which is spiritual, and thus at once to afford ground of plausible objection to the adversary of the doctrine, to lead the thoughtless and inconsiderate into error, and to confuse and perplex our own minds in "examining ourselves whether we be in the faith,"

whether we "have the Spirit of Christ." That the Holy Spirit makes use of natural conscience as an instrument of conversion, directing and enforcing its dictates for this end, by opening the mind to just and impressive views of the nature and evil of sin, I have no doubt. But to say, that the trembling apprehensions of an ungodly man, who continues hardened in sin, are to be ascribed to the agency of the Spirit,—that, to account for the alarm of Felix, when forced to anticipate the judgment to come, we must suppose this Divine agent "concurring with the apostle's address to his fears;"—this seems to be seeking an additional cause, when the one which already exists, the natural sense of right and wrong, along with the natural love of happiness and aversion to suffering, is of itself quite adequate to the production of the effect. If we are to identify the operation of natural conscience with the influence of the Divine Spirit, then, indeed, we must admit the doctrine of his immediate inward operation on the minds of the unregenerate. And in the following passage from Mr. Faber these *are* identified, in a manner I cannot but think calculated to produce great confusion of ideas on this subject:—"The aid of the Holy Spirit is freely offered unto all; nor does that blessed Person cease to *strive* even with the most profligate, till they have obstinately rejected the counsel of God against themselves. *The still small voice of conscience, which is in effect the voice of God, long continues to admonish them;* and the extreme difficulty which they find in silencing it, sufficiently shows how unwilling the Almighty is, that *any* should perish." Faber's Treatise on the Operations of the Spirit, Preface, page xiv.

There are some other parts of Mr. Faber's Treatise, connected with the particular subject of this note, on which it was my intention, with becoming deference to a writer so deservedly eminent, to have hazarded a few strictures: particularly the Note pages 42—45, with the part of the text to which it refers; and the description in chapter III. of "two different classes of men, whose understandings are enlightened, while their hearts remain unaffected." But for the reason mentioned in the former Note, and the undue length to which these Notes have already extended, I find I must forbear.

Note P. page 369.

It is obvious that every thing here depends on the meaning of terms. A man may profess the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, while he attaches his own sense to the words:—a sense utterly anti-

scriptural, or grossly deficient. A scriptural belief that Jesus is the Christ, supposes a scriptural knowledge of the person, and character, and work of the Christ. It is very true that, while Jesus abode on earth, his disciples, although they believed in him as the Christ, the Son of God, and confessed him in that character, were in great darkness with regard to the nature of that work, which he had come to accomplish. They owned him as "*having the words of eternal life*," John vi. 67—69, and therefore must have expected more from their adherence to him than mere temporal honours, although the expectation of these was, through mistake and prejudice, too predominant in their minds. They looked for secular advantages; but they looked also for something higher: and perhaps this double expectation might go far to account for the apparent confusion and contradiction in their manner of speaking at different times. While they hoped for eternal life, they as yet knew not well *how* that blessing was to be obtained for them by their Lord. In the midst of darkness and prejudice, however, they were upright, sincere and teachable. They "*continued in his word*," and thus showed themselves to be "his disciples indeed:"—and in due time his declaration was fulfilled in their happy experience,—"*Ye shall know the truth*, and the truth shall make you free." John viii. 31, 32.——It is very obvious, that their situation *then* was very different from what *ours* is *now*; and, indeed, from what their own was very soon after, when, upon Christ's ascension, they received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not surely to the partial and mistaken notions of the apostles during the personal ministry of their Master, that we are to look for instruction as to what we must believe concerning Christ, but to the views which they held and taught, after their illumination on the day of Pentecost. However much we may wonder at their previous ignorance, when we consider the plainness of the prophecies respecting the sufferings and atoning death of the Messiah, along with the typical import of the law; yet the state of their minds during this period of ignorance is not to be considered as the standard of our faith. Atonement by the death of Christ, and acceptance with God on the ground of that atonement, may belong to the essence of the gospel, although they did not at that time understand it. Peter, during Christ's life-time, when his Master foretold his approaching death, said, "That be far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee!" Matth. xvi. 22. The same Peter afterwards speaks of the death of his Master in a very different strain indeed:—"Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree:"—"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the un-

just, that he might bring us unto God:"—"Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter ii. 24. iii. 18. i. 18, 19.—It is not surely from Peter in his state of prejudice, and darkness, and perplexity, but from Peter, when his Lord had verified to him the promise, "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into *all truth*,"—that we are called to learn the true nature of the gospel.—Mr. Fuller touches on this point, with his usual judgment and discrimination, in his Comp. View of the Calv. and Soc. Systems, Letter X. on Charity, pages 198—204, third edition.

FINIS.