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1824

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J.H. 1825

CHRISTIAN TRUTH,

EXPLAINED IN

FAMILIAR LETTERS

ON THE

TENETS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AND

ON OTHER SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH RELIGION;

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND,

AND WRITTEN AT HIS REQUEST,

BY

THE REV. C. POWLETT.



WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT?

MATT. XIV. 31.

London.

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ADDRESS TO THE READER.

WHEN I received the earnest request of my friend, to give such a statement of the Christian Doctrines, as might make them so clear to his mind, that he could embrace them with thorough conviction and satisfaction, I knew this could not be done in a small compass. I considered, also, that if a well-disposed man, like him, could harbour a doubt on any of the Tenets of the Church of England, others,

not so intelligent, and not so serious, would still less understand the grounds on which the Doctrines are founded, and still less comprehend the NECESSITY of FAITH. I, therefore, resolved to exert the humble faculties which God has given me, and publish to the world the following Letters. Heartily do I hope that they may, by God's blessing, have a good effect on many minds, and may redound to his honor and glory. Some apology may, perhaps, be deemed necessary for introducing in this new publication, several quotations which were inserted in a former

one, and a few arguments which have been before adduced. I can only say, that, when writing on the same subject, and with similar views, I found it difficult to avoid some partial repetition. As to the various quotations introduced, every considerate writer on religion, even if he be of high note and dignity, is desirous of strengthening his own arguments, and confirming the truth of his own assertions, by calling in the concurrent testimony of other able and eminent writers: how much more, then, is it necessary for a private individual to shew, that he

does not presumptuously lean on his own opinion, but that, added to his examination of the Bible itself, he has properly availed himself of the opinions of other writers, dignified equally by their talents and their station. Were the whole of this work a compilation, the Compiler need not be ashamed of his office, if his selection of passages be judicious, and those so well connected together, as to produce one beneficial whole. It is a source of much more heart-felt comfort to publish that which may be considered as conducing to throw the least gleam of light on any part of the Chris-

tian faith, than to aim at dazzling the public by the most glittering and splendid images. Clergymen especially, if they make literary fame their prime object, may justly be said to “preach themselves,”* (*i. e.* to wish to gratify their own vanity,) and not to preach “Christ Jesus the Lord.” How many quotations are here introduced from the most distinguished authors, whose entire works the great majority of the middling and higher classes have never read, and, from various causes, are never likely to read! if then, as Cowper observes, in

* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

the first book of his immortal
“Task,”

“ I admire

(None more admires the painter's magic skill)
Who shews me that which I shall never see,
And throws Italian light on English walls.”

Some thanks may be due to one,
who introduces his readers even to
a slight acquaintance with such ce-
lebrated writers, who have thrown
religious light on minds, which
were before ignorant and darken-
ed. Those, who have seen the
Author's former publication, may
recollect how prominently the cha-
racter and works of the late Dr.
Horne, Bishop of Norwich, were
brought forward. When they see,

in the present work, so many quotations from the same lamented prelate, the Author may possibly be accused of acting contrary to a precept of Horace,* and being led away by too high an admiration of that distinguished writer. My feelings, I acknowledge, are indeed most warmly excited. I well remember his cheerful and pure character; I have been delighted, as well as edified, by his inimitable delivery of his discourses; but to those, who have never had these advantages, I would wish to instil a sense of his awakening style of writing, and that their minds

* " Nil admirari." Epist. VI. Book 1.

may, like my own, experience an impression from his apparently more than earthly language, which I consider it as so capable of imparting. However my feelings may urge me to express my gratitude to the memory of the Bishop, for having inspired me more than any other writer, or preacher, to a zealous attention to the greatest of all subjects, I am not blind to the merit of innumerable sermon writers, and much less to the powerful discourses of a Horsley, numerous volumes of Bampton, Boyle, and Hulsean, lecture sermons will, in a doctrinal point of view, be ever duly esteemed by

the learned; and many of the authors of them have, most deservedly, been raised to the highest station in the Church; but the difference between such sermons, though highly valuable, and *some* of those of Bishop Horne is this: the former are necessarily didactic, and consisting of proof, close reasoning, and argument: in such sermons brilliant language and images would, generally speaking, be out of place, and would not correspond with, or promote their object; whereas, in particular sermons of Bishop Horne, as noticed in the Appendix to my former volume, the sublimity of his con-

ceptions, and of the language in which they are expressed, is most striking. But Longinus will best explain my meaning. "Generally speaking, (he says,) it is wholly in our power to resist or yield to *persuasion*, but *the sublime*, endued with strength irresistible, triumphs over every hearer."* Instead of being deterred by the observation of a favorite lyric, but heathen, poet, made in the commencement of one of his confessedly prosaic epistles, I am rather inclined to be guided by the rule

* Longinus de Sublimitate, Sect. 1. "ἔγχε το μεν πιθανον ὡς τα πολλά ἐφ'ἡμῖν. ταῦτα δὲ, δυνασείην καὶ βίαν ἄμαχον προσφέροντα, παντὸς ἐκάνω τῷ ακρωμένῳ καθίσταται."

established by apostolical authority, and to think that "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."* Whilst I recollect Bishop Horne's peculiarly impressive mode of rousing the slumberers of the world, whilst my mind is fully impregnated with his most cogent arguments on all the great points of Christian faith, I neither wish that I had quoted less, nor dread any censure for having quoted too copiously. Without further preface I now submit the following pages to the public. As my former volume was received with infinitely more favor than,

* Gal. iv. 18.

from the unaspiring nature of the work, I had any reason to expect, I shall be satisfied if the present undertaking should not be considered as derogating from that portion of credit, which was kindly granted to the first, and should be received by the public with equal candor and approbation.

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CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY AND GENERAL.

Religion of the Heart.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SO many years have elapsed since our acquaintance commenced, and our intercourse has been of that peculiar nature, that we have not only had a general insight into the character of each other, but we have really, as if we had windows in our bosom, seen into the interior of the heart. I cannot, therefore, but feel it a compliment paid to my heart, still more than to my understanding, that you should have requested me to express my opinions on that religion, which, at the same time that it is the religion of truth, is, in its very essence, a religion of feeling.

B

With pleasure do I acknowledge that I know you to be a man of amiable qualities, and desirous of judging right on the most important of all subjects; that you are inclined to the performance of those duties which your country, but still more your Creator, requires, of attendance on the services of your church, but you are zealously anxious to be, not only nominally, but really, and from full conviction, a Christian.

It need hardly be observed, how great is the multitude who adopt the religion of their country, without ever troubling themselves to investigate its tenets, or examine the grounds on which the grand truths depend.

This submission to established doctrine is, in some degree, laudable, as it marks a tractable and amiable disposition, and is greatly preferable to haughty rejection, and sullen scepticism; but still, it is only submission, and not conviction. Such unenquiring Christians are walking

accidentally in the right path, but, as they cannot be certain that they have not mistaken the road, every passing traveller may induce them, by misrepresentation, to change their course, and to wander in the paths of error.

Those who have not had the advantages of a liberal education, cannot possibly search *deeply* into the evidences of Christianity; they can learn only the plain principles expounded to them by the ministers of the church, and be convinced that these principles are set forth according to the authority of the inspired scriptures, and then their belief arises from deference to the word of God, and not to the traditions of men. Such men require only to be convinced that God has declared and revealed particular truths, and then they give an unqualified assent to those truths, although they may be beyond, and above their comprehension, because, they know that the word of God *must* be true, and therefore,

they walk by faith and not by sight; this is the plain meaning of our Saviour's declaration, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." But when we consider the case of those, whose instruction has been such, as to enable them to reach a considerable eminence in literature and general knowledge, and who apply the powers which they have acquired to researches of different kinds, but all of them of a secular and temporal nature, it can never be considered as justifiable, in persons blessed with such advantages, to neglect applying their minds to the knowledge of religion. When we are expressly enjoined by Christ to "Search the scriptures," no rational person will approve of those who are inclined to search into every thing else rather than into the truths of divine revelation, and who are so absorbed by temporal matters, that they never attempt to discern any thing that is of a spiritual

nature. Whence then arises this neglect? repeatedly has the answer been given, that it arises from their not rightly feeling the importance of the great subject, that they aim at obtaining benefit and profit by attention to worldly pursuits, and to them they therefore apply the whole of their powers, whilst their mind's-eye is never open to the future world, nor are they capable of following the example of the ancient Patriarchs, who "endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

The natural consequence of uninvestigated truth, must be indecision and indifference. Is it possible for any one to enter a church, and not see these displayed in every part of it? no doubt, many of the persons to whom I allude, never enter the sacred walls; but in every congregation, we may see numbers, who come to the church without the smallest feeling of devotion; who walk in with the same aspect, and the same carelessness, as they would approach a coffee-house,

or a private room, and who conduct themselves, during the period of the holy service, and even whilst the prayers are read, which ought to be offered up to our Creator with an humble and contrite heart, in a lounging, negligent, and offensively indecorous manner. Whatever may be the motive which brings such persons to the church, it can be only a worldly one; it is impossible for them to feel that their steps are guided to the house of God by a proper sense of devotion, and by a desire of acting to his honor and glory.

Wanderings of mind and occasional distractions of thought may, and will, occur to the most serious Christian; but these will not only be short, but will be lamented by him as a human infirmity, and he will ever return with increased humility, and renewed devotion, to the duty of prayer. His posture will ever be that of one who is sensible that he is in the court of the Lord; he will ever be

found, when offering up his prayers, in that attitude of body, which alone can designate the inclination of the mind, *on his knees*. No one, capable of reflection, can doubt the infinite importance, as it affects the community, of churches being regularly open to the population of a country, and the benefits of public devotion are incalculable; but still, with respect to each individual, separately considered, the real benefit to him must depend upon his own feelings, on his attention, or inattention, to the church-service, and his conduct in the sacred edifice. He will either be a worshipper, acceptable in the sight of God, or a cold and negligent formalist; who, if he should join in the public prayers, can only be said to "honor God with his lips, while his heart is far from him." Although our Saviour has most graciously declared, that, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" yet, it can hardly be

supposed, if those, who are collected together, feel no sense of their boundless obligation to that Saviour, or offer up their prayers in a cold and lifeless manner, that Christ can witness the assembly with favor and approbation, or that his promise will be extended to *them*. "Give me your heart," is not only the precept expressed by Solomon, but it is this which God positively demands from all mankind. *He* is to be the first object, and worldly considerations are not to be preferred to him. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto thee."

Stocks and stones are not the only idols. A too inordinate pursuit of earthly objects, with an indifference to heavenly ones, forms a species of idolatry equally displeasing to that God, who is emphatically styled by himself, "A jealous God." Religion then, is the first object of every rational being. The cause

of our redemption from our fallen state, and the conditions on which that redemption will be available to our immortal happiness, surely demand the utmost efforts of our understanding, and are the subjects of the most serious and important nature for our study.

We are told by St. Luke, in his account of the Acts of the Apostles, that "the Bereans were more noble than the people of Thessalonica," and the reason which he gives is this, "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so." It is earnestly to be wished, that all the nobles of this Christian land, as well as their inferiors in station, would follow the example of the Bereans, and learn the most dignified and most proper manner in which they can employ their minds. The profligate and the dissolute, the thoughtless and the trifling, may (if they are once brought to the pursuit) learn the errors

of their former opinions, or rather their total want of any opinion on the subject.* The conversion of such, however, will be slow and difficult, as their minds must acquire a new turn, and be influenced by the grace of God's Holy Spirit, before they can fully comprehend

* To encourage persons to study the scriptures, who, though they would shrink from the name of infidel, yet can hardly deem themselves believers on conviction, who doubt because they have not examined, I will mention the following fact. A living character, of great eminence for talents and acquirements, was for many years, like several others, (Lytelton and West for instance,) who afterwards, by a due research, were convinced of their error, and declared infidel. It happened that he was engaged, with an association of learned men, in the compilation of the Encyclopædia Britannica. On their meeting to arrange the articles to be undertaken by each, his colleagues, knowing his professed infidelity, proposed to him, without an idea that he would accept the office, that he should draw up the article on the Evidences of Revelation. Instead, however, of the decisive rejection, which they expected, he replied, "That he had no wish to shut his eyes to the light, if he could find any, and that he would do the best he could with it." The result was his *deep* conviction of the *truth* of Christianity.

“the mystery of godliness.” Be it recollected, that even the chosen disciples of our Lord had no accurate conception of all which he had told them, till, just before the close of his sacred ministry, it is said, “then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures.” But to those who possess a teachable disposition, and a mind spiritually inclined, nothing can be more plain and clear, nothing more easy, nothing more indisputable, nothing more consoling than the truths of revealed religion. It may here naturally be asked, “if the truths of Christianity are (as you assert) so plain and clear, how does it happen that there are so many various sects, why is there such a difference of opinion?” The first reply I would make is, that in this, as in other cases which are not fully investigated and thoroughly understood, “Quot homines, tot sententiæ,” until you can bring all men to a similarity of temper, of disposition, and

of understanding, differences of opinion on minute points cannot fail to occur: but the causes of dissent are endless, such as weakness, prejudice, pride, presumption, a love of singularity, a sullen opposition to supposed authority; to all which causes numerous others might be added. But the position which I maintain, is this; that whoever will, with singleness of heart, (if there is no deficiency of understanding,) apply his mind to a serious investigation of the revealed word of God, will (by the aid of his Holy Spirit) see clearly what are pointed out as objects of faith, although he neither can nor will be weak enough to attempt to pry into the "secret things of God," and will not turn away with impious pride from the study of the sacred volume, because "God's ways are not as our ways," and because in his mysteries he is consistent with the incomprehensibility of his own invisible existence, and "his ways are past finding

out." Religion without doctrines is, in fact, nothing more than morality without religion; what is religion but a Divine manifestation of peculiar truths, which human reason could not have discovered unless it had pleased God to reveal them? These are what we call the doctrines of Christianity.

As I propose, for the sake of clearness, to separate the great objects for our faith, and the doctrines of the Church of England, and to explain them in different distinct letters, I shall cease from assertions that are merely general and preparatory. After perusing those Letters, I trust you will see that the proof of their truth is evident and irresistible. I presume not that it is in my power to offer any new arguments; indeed I should consider the adoption of any novel doctrine as a mark of presumption rather than a recommendation of the work. I should suspect my novelty to be an error, and might justly be charged with a con-

temptible vanity, (that fertile source of division and dissent,) than be approved as a lover of truth.* Instead of aiming at originality of explanation, I shall endeavour to recall to my mind those ar-

* If doubts arise respecting the coincidence or interpretation of any parts of scripture, they should be discussed by the light which the primitive church affords. It should be a recommendation of a religious opinion, that it wants novelty; that it is not the offspring of modern discovery: for we may be assured that there is but one scheme of salvation, but one gospel of truth, and that this scheme was fully received, that this gospel was correctly understood by those inspired men, to whom the establishment and care of the church was first committed. Venerable antiquity, therefore, is a characteristic of religious truth. In every case the oldest opinion in the Christian church is the best. Had this principle been adhered to, the existence of the Holy Trinity, the interest of all men in the mediation of Christ, the divine origin and distinct orders of the Christian priesthood, and the final administration of a retribution to every man according to his deeds, would never have been called in question; but the human mind is never at rest. It has been prone from the beginning to leave the ways and word of God, and to seek out for itself "many inventions."

Bishop Dehon's Sermons, Vol. II. page 106.

guments, which proceeded from the pens of the most distinguished writers, to place them in a clear light, to bring their different brilliant rays into one strong focus. Convinced, as I am myself, I trust I shall be able to convince you. The cavils of futile objectors will then have little or no effect, they have repeatedly mixed up the "ridiculum" with the "acre," they have had recourse to the sneers of levity, to wilful misinterpretation, nay more, to alterations and to garbling of the sacred text; but the student in divinity well knows that even their boldest attacks have been successfully resisted, that their most daring assertions have been refuted and repelled by the shield of truth, and the "whole armour of God." Yet the enemy will never suffer us to be at rest, much less to sleep at our posts; new opponents perpetually arise, and call for new defenders:* as in common war-

* For instance—Mr. Belsham has recently published four octavo volumes, entitled "The Epistles of

fare, troops of a different species are necessary for different objects and services, so, in the divine contest, a different mode of writing, and different qualifications are requisite, to oppose the various attacks of our antagonists. Where an attempt to display learning, (though a false attempt) and an appearance of deep research are exhibited by our opponents, learning, real and deep, must be brought against them; the heavy and powerful

Paul the Apostle translated, with an Exposition and Notes." The exposition is wilder, and more absurd (if possible) than his former writings. Dr. Priestley had before presumptuously declared, that he saw no reason why he should believe any doctrine, merely because it was an opinion held by an apostle; and he frequently said, that he did not believe in the inspiration of the Evangelists and Apostles as writers. Mr. Belsham repeats the same assertion in still more offensive terms.—It is useless to point out objects to the blind, who resolve all, which they know not how to contradict, into figure, metaphor, or allegory. Such men always pass by the obvious meaning, and are led away to endeavour to discover something suited to their own prejudices, and something far more mysterious than the plain sense naturally suggests.

might of an Horsley, and of many living giants in literature, are then called into requisition, to overthrow pretended knowledge, and to prevent the less informed members of the community from being awed by this ignis fatuus, and being deceived and bewildered by such perverse and erroneous assertions.

I recollect that, some years ago, when a set of infidel sneerers were sending forth contemptible libels against Christianity, and repeating the blasphemous jargon of Voltaire, this strong and emphatic observation was made by our late lamented Sovereign, "Why does not Johnson mount his dray-horse, and ride over them, and crush these fellows?" Where, however, blasphemous sneers and profane ridicule (detestable though they are) are published, without any attempt to display deep learning, they may be successfully opposed by less powerful attacks; for these reasons I consider that more familiar and less learned dissertations, if

clear and explanatory of the great points of our religion, may be extensively useful, although the writers of them cannot expect the same degree of worldly honor as the more profound and learned polemic. To those readers who are not capable of digesting, what may be called "strong meats," the lighter food may be in the highest degree beneficial, and utility ought ever to be the object of all writers on religious subjects, whatever may be the form which their compositions may assume.

With an earnest hope that the contents of the following Letters may prove useful to those readers, who had not before bestowed sufficient attention on the grand and gracious designs of our Creator, I will no further prolong this introductory Address.

LETTER II.

On the Trinity.

BEFORE a building is commenced, it is necessary to lay a deep, firm, and strong foundation. The grand doctrine of the "Trinity in Unity," which will occupy this Letter, depends solely on the authority of the sacred Scriptures, as it evidently is a tenet which could never have been invented or adopted by human reason, and can arise only from Divine revelation; on that rock it stands. I shall therefore, first, make a few observations on the authenticity and Divine inspiration of the Bible. The observations shall be short, for two reasons; one is, because I am confident that you entertain no doubt on that fundamental point; and secondly, because it would be useless to present any arguments to

prove the truth of Christianity to you, or to any others, -who did not acknowledge the truth of St. Paul's assertion, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." A rejector of this fact must be a rejector of religion altogether: through the Bible alone is God's will revealed to us; through that, (as far as He saw fit, and as far as is suitable to the comprehension of man in our present state of limited faculties,) is his nature declared. All that we know of God can only be derived from his own gracious communication; every thing, without it, is merely vague conjecture, and we, like the Athenians of old, should otherwise only ignorantly worship an "unknown God." Our ignorance can only be dispelled by the Scripture itself, as St. Paul declared to the Athenians. The authenticity of the Scriptures is no longer a matter of dispute. The antiquity of the Old Testament is also an acknowledged point; indeed, it is the oldest book in the world;

and, on the real history of the Pentateuch have been founded the various Heathen fables; and the shadowy representations of the Asiatics plainly shew the substantial volume from which they are derived. The pains which were taken to preserve the sacred writings, and the multiplication of the copies, form another proof that the original Scriptures have been handed down to us in a genuine form. The malice of enemies also guarded against material alterations; and though the Creator did not so authoritatively interpose, as to prevent trifling errors of transcribers; yet, undoubtedly, such errors were prevented as might essentially impair the truth of the history, and the design of the doctrines. Various other proofs have been repeatedly brought forward, which, from the internal evidence of the Bible, and every reasonable mode of arguing, would sufficiently shew, that this book is of an infinitely superior nature to any other that has ever appeared.

But two great proofs exist, which render every minor degree of evidence, if not futile, at least unnecessary: these are, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the testimony which Christ himself gives, and his Apostles after him, to the importance, the authenticity, and Divine nature of the Old Testament. The objects, on account of which the different references are made, and which they are called upon to establish, are of a superhuman and Divine nature: to what purpose then should references be made to a book void of Divine inspiration? How could any book, merely written by man, without any aid or direction of God, be a convincing proof of the truth of things entirely of a spiritual nature, and which far transcended the unassisted powers of human reason? I will refer you to the last most instructive, most affecting, and most glorious farewell speech which our Saviour delivered to the chosen eleven, as related at the end of the 24th chapter

of St. Luke, 44th verse, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, whilst I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." As our Saviour himself has, on this last solemn occasion, referred to these books of the Old Testament, (as indeed he had done to almost all the others before,) his reference not only stamps the authenticity of the books, but proves indelibly to every thinking mind, that all of the books, more or less, were prophetic of *him*. Of prophecy I do not at present mean to speak, but hasten to the proof of the grand point which forms the subject of this Letter, to that sure, but incomprehensible, Doctrine of "the Trinity in Unity." So many prophecies have been already so literally fulfilled, that the sneers of the scoffer are set in positive defiance; and the fulfilment of

the rest is daily and gradually proceeding, till, in the fulness of time, all will become light. I cannot better commence my proof of the great and fundamental Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, than by quoting the command given by our Saviour to his Disciples before he ascended into Heaven,* “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Is it not astonishing that any, who read this last injunction given by our blessed Lord to his Disciples, should hesitate to believe in the Doctrine of what we call the Trinity? Unto what were we all baptized, if not in the name (not *names* observe!) of the Three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Whoever denies the Divinity of all these Three Persons, I consider to have renounced his

* Matthew xxviii. 19.

baptism, and all the benefits of it, and he ought to be baptized again in some new form.*

I have heard some persons recommend, that no minister should either preach or write on the subject of the Trinity, because it is a subject he cannot fully explain.† What is this but saying, that we profess a belief in a doctrine which we ought not to avow? Might not such

* St. Basil, in his writings against the Heretic Eunomius, uses this argument to prove the Divinity of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, that we are baptized in the name of them as well as of the Father, and consequently are to believe in them: for that baptism supposes faith in that Deity, in whose name the baptism takes place; and applying this to the case of one that learns the faith of the Christians, shews that he must be taught to believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, (viz. that each of these Persons is God,) or else ought not to be baptized with those words; and that, consequently, Eunomius and his followers, did in effect renounce their baptism by renouncing this faith.

† A living prelate has justly observed, "The subject is indeed sublime, but not on that account to be avoided."

worldly-wise arguers equally recommend, that we should never speak of the Deity, or mention the name of God, because we cannot fully explain his exalted and incomprehensible nature? You will not, I am sure, presume yourself to be competent to explain the nature of the Invisible and Almighty Creator, and yet you will not, for a moment, hesitate to declare your belief in the God who made you, and all mankind. Why then must we be silent on the subject of the Trinity, because we cannot explain the *manner* of the *union*, and the *distinction* of the Three Persons; that is, *how* they are Three, and *how* they are One? it is the *fact* that we have to do with, and not the *mode*. The *Fact* is revealed, the *Mode* is *not*; it is a matter for our faith, and not for our sight. You feel, as all mankind feel, that you have a soul within you that gives life to your body; and that, when that soul shall quit this mortal frame, the body will become a mere mass of lifeless

clay. Can you, or any man of the first science, explain the manner of this union of soul and body? yet, I imagine, no one would endeavour to persuade you that you are not alive, and that you have not a soul within you, because you cannot explain the manner of their union. But man also is a triple compound, a mass of corruptible matter forms the body. The living principle, which is the soul, whatever it is, animates, and gives this body the power of motion, as it does to all the living beings of creation. This moving body has, moreover, added to it, an intelligent, noble, and reasoning power, or spirit, derived to it from the Holy Spirit himself, by which power, denied to other animals, God has exalted man above them. He breathed into him the breath of life, and in his own image God created him, and man became a living spirit. He, therefore, is a triple compound, of body, soul, and spirit: but who can disclose the mode of their

connexion? How is this union effected? It is as inexplicable by man as the most abstruse mystery revealed in the Bible; it is above our comprehension, but not contrary to it; we know that it is so, though we know not how. The fact is, that, if the belief in the Trinity is rejected, no man can explain the system of God's operations, as they are set forth in the Bible. The difficulty is increased instead of being diminished. Admit the Trinity to be the doctrine revealed, and every thing becomes as clear on the grand subject, as it could be expected to be in our present state. In this state, it is not intended that we should, "by searching, find out God," that is, that we should be able to explain the nature of the Deity; it was not intended that we should "find out the Almighty to perfection."

Another absurd objection of the wise men of the world is, that the word "*Trinity*" is not to be found in the whole Bible. I do not recollect that the word

“Morality” is to be found in the Gospels; and yet, I believe, you will not deny that they contain the most perfect system of morality that ever was given to the world. The word “Sacrament” is not to be found in the Bible; are we to renounce the two ceremonies of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, on that account? Names are given arbitrarily, but the *name* of a thing, is not *THE* thing, it is only the sign by which we express the thing signified.

It is dreadful, to every religious and reflecting mind, to hear with what indifference the grand essential truths of our religion are treated, what pains are taken to garble the Scriptures, and, while some place the whole of our salvation upon faith, setting aside all considerations of moral conduct, others rely, solely, on their own ineffectual merits, and treat all modes of faith as equally indifferent, and deem religion to be totally unnecessary: but our Saviour says, “Ye believe in

God, believe also in me." If, then, he were not divine, what is the meaning of *believing* in him? we might admire his pure and spotless character, but belief, or faith, can be only applied to Divinity; and, consequently, ours is the only true faith, because we believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Before I proceed farther on this momentous subject, I most earnestly exhort you to lay aside that false and foolish pride of human reason, which presumes

* Since writing the above, I have read the observations made by the late Mr. Wall, which precisely correspond with my own argument. He thus remarks, when we say, "I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, &c." we do, by the phrase of believing in him, mean, believing in him as in God properly so called; and so we understand likewise the form of baptism in his name, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And so did the ancients. Gregory Nazienzen, speaking of the Holy Spirit, and how we are baptized in his name, says, "If he be a creature, how do we believe in him? for it is one thing to believe in any one, and another to believe something concerning him; for the one is peculiar to God, the other common to any thing."

to scoff at every thing that is mysterious and incomprehensible. I entreat you rather to put your confidence in God, and whatever he is pleased to reveal, though it far exceed your comprehension, to receive it with implicit faith, and pious humility.

Having commenced with the last solemn command of our Lord, I will point out why I consider *that alone* to comprehend a full proof of the Trinity in Unity. When our Saviour, who had been himself baptized as an example to others, was leaving the world, and giving a final direction as to the manner by which men were to be adopted as his Disciples, and to be made Christians, his words ought surely to be taken according to their most striking and emphatical meaning. It is asserted by some persons, that the expression of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, does not relate to persons; that the Son of God means no more than "a child of God," as ascribed to a mere

religious and believing mortal, and that the Holy Ghost only implies the influence, or an attribute of the Deity. Now, let me ask you, whether it is probable that Christ should command us to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, if these Three did not constitute the great Jehovah, in whose *name* we were to be baptized? Would not this command open the way to confusion and misapprehension, and tend to lead mankind into error, unless the plain and simple truth is found in the Trinity in Unity? Is it possible that the name of the Son, (if not divine and co-equal with the Father,) and the name of a mere unpersonal attribute, should be joined with that of the Father on this solemn occasion? Can any one discover any probable cause for naming the Three on any other ground? Can it in any other way be accounted for? The expression of name* clearly points out the union of the

* το ονομα, not τα ονοματα.

Three, however exceeding our comprehension and power of explanation. The well-known and disputed text, in the 5th chapter of the 1st Epistle of St. John, and the 7th verse, would (if it were universally allowed to be genuine) nearly set the matter at rest. "For there are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One." The One is expressed in the neuter gender.* Although this text is considered by many of the first biblical scholars, to be an interpolation, and acknowledged so by several of the chief luminaries of our Church, and is so allowed, by the present Bishops of Winchester and Peterborough: I cannot help entertaining a doubt, whether the concession is not more than the Socinians

* Signifying one nature, or one-essence.

Gregory Nazienzen says, "Every one of the Persons of the Trinity has an unity with the other no less than that which he has with himself, by reason of the identity of essence and power."

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have a right to expect from the ministers of the Church of England. That the verse is genuine, was the declared opinion of the late eminent Bishop Horsley, and is the opinion of the present learned Bishop of St. David's, as a recent publication of his Lordship will prove.

There are only two modes of judging of the genuineness of a disputed passage, by external and by internal evidence. One eminent living prelate observes, that "No internal evidence can prove a passage to be genuine, when external evidence is decidedly against it." Another equally eminent living prelate, very confidently reverses this assertion, and shews that "No external evidence can prove a passage to be spurious, when the internal evidence is decidedly for it." In the present case, the external evidence is *not decidedly* against the passage; for whoever will search into that evidence, will see, that learned commentators are by no means agreed on that point; and some

shew, that the external evidence is in favor of the genuineness of the verse, as well as the internal. The internal evidence is *decidedly* in favor of the verse being genuine.

On that, therefore, I found my doubts of the interpolation of this verse. I argue from the context of the preceding and following verses. I maintain, that there is an evident chasm (if this verse is rejected,) which makes the passage nugatory and unmeaning, and destroys the connexion between the former and the subsequent verses. Consider the whole passage together. ("This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One. And there are Three that bear witness on Earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and

the Blood: and these Three agree* in One.") Then, omit the middle one of the three verses, and I ask, how can you explain the connexion between the first and the third verses? Without pretending to have searched the various manuscripts, and editions, to discover why the verse has been deemed an interpolation by many, and by others as genuine, It appears to me not improbable, that it may have been accidentally omitted, at a distant period, by a transcriber, and that the omission being observed, it was then inserted in the margin. This copy being seen in this form, it might afterwards have been considered as a *marginal addition*, instead of a *restoration* of the *original* text; for the opposition, or rather the comparison, of the Three that bear witness on *Earth* with the Three that bear record in *Heaven*, seems clear and plain, but otherwise there appears no

* Or rather are in one, ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΕΝ ΕΙΣΙ.

reason for the insertion of the third verse. This comparison may be imagined to present a faint analogy between the union and distinction of the Three in Heaven with the three things on Earth, which are combined in one human being, viz. the breath of life, the water in the pericardium, and the blood: but I restrain myself from proceeding further, even by analogy, or presuming to glance at a shadowy explanation of that "mystery of godliness" which, as it pervades every part of the Scriptures, I am bound faithfully to believe, and humbly to adore. Well may I say, that the grand fundamental doctrine pervades the whole of the sacred volume; for if there is not a plurality, as well as an union, in the Great Jehovah, several expressions in the first chapter of Genesis cannot well be accounted for, and similar expressions occur throughout most of the other books of the Old Testament, and almost in every chapter of the New. The Sun of

Righteousness indeed does not shine, like the sun in the firmament, with equal clearness to minds of all descriptions; its rays are blunted when directed against the mind of the carnal and natural man; but it shines with all its glorious splendor on minds capable of "discerning things spiritually." As the sun in the Heavens is not seen by those who are unfortunately born blind; so does the Sun of Righteousness shine in vain to those, who resolve to close the eyes of their minds against every doctrine of Divine Revelation, that is of a mysterious and incomprehensible nature. To such the moral part alone of the Gospel is of any benefit or utility; the divine and doctrinal part is by them rejected: but be it recollected with trembling, that "if now the Gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost."

In defiance of positive proof Socinians have presumed to assert, that the belief in the Doctrine of "the Trinity in Unity"

is comparatively of a modern date, and that for many centuries after the times of the Apostles, no such doctrine was supposed to be found in the Scriptures: but a reference to the writings of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, will abundantly refute the falsehood and boldness of such an assertion. Innumerable writers of eminence have, by quotation and argument, fully proved that the belief in the Trinity is the "ancient faith." I will name only a *few* of those who, within the last fifty years, have fully and clearly demonstrated this fact. Bishops Horsley, Porteus, Huntingford, Magee, Randolph, and the sublime, and every thing but inspired, Bishop Horne; his pious and learned chaplain, Mr. Jones, of Nayland; Archdeacons Nares and Daubeney; Doctors Hales and Lawrence, and Mr. Rennell. I will, lastly, mention a recent pamphlet* by my meritorious friend, Mr.

* Scripture compared with itself, in proof of the Catholic Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and (by neces-

Vaillant; I call him meritorious, not for the excellence of his private character, nor for the talents displayed in his official one, but that, amidst his professional duties, he has diligently studied the Holy Scriptures, not only to his own heartfelt conviction and satisfaction, but has, in a most clear and simple manner, published the unanswerable grounds of that conviction to the world. The malicious declaration of the ignorant and the uncandid is hardly worth notice, that the clergy write in support of their tenets from worldly and interested motives; we reject, with feelings more of pity than disdain, such intemperate and injudicious calumnies: No, Sirs, we *may*; though we ought not, when out of our churches, be silent; but the very nature

sary induction and consequence) of the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and of the Divinity of our blessed Saviour equal to the Father in the Unity of the Godhead: in a Letter to a Friend: by John Vaillant, Esq. M.A. late of Christ Church, Oxon, Barrister at Law. Sold by Rivingtons.

of our studies must impress upon our minds a most awful fear of that Creator, unto whom all hearts are open, and we *dare* not "touch the ark of God" in so unhallowed a manner; we *dare* not utter or write a sentiment on sacred subjects, which does not proceed from humble, but firm conviction. Still it is peculiarly pleasing to see a layman voluntarily writing on the grand doctrine, in defiance of those who love to "sit in the seat of the scornful;" to see a layman, whose publication will prove "he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." I hope and trust, therefore, that "his leaf will not wither; and that whatsoever he doeth, it will prosper."

Innumerable are the texts which have been collected and compared together by the different writers, whose names I have specified, and by hundreds of others, from the apostolical times to the present, which either allude to, or clearly point out, the Doctrine of the Trinity; but, as

Mr. Vaillant's pamphlet consists of only sixty-two small octavo pages, and he has introduced brief arguments on his selected texts, I refer to his work rather than reproduce the proofs there substantiated: it will be seen that he has, towards the end, given an index of all the texts cited, and that he has added a new and most useful index of texts in the Old Testament, which are either cited, or referred to, or unquestionably alluded to, in the New. This list exceeds three hundred, a circumstance which will surprise the ignorant and the careless reader of the Scriptures; and which surprised the author himself till he made (as he tells us) the diligent research.

The text which I brought forward at the commencement of this Letter, viz. the form of our Baptism, ought to preclude the necessity of producing any other; but when aided and enforced by numerous other striking passages in Scripture, they together, form an overwhelm-

ing mass of evidence, which seems to leave infidelity unjustifiable: but it is not on any particular texts upon which the doctrine is founded; it is founded on the whole tenor of Scripture taken together, and a comprehensive view of the declared scheme of God's providential operations. By this, which is the only rational process, the Primitive Christians collected their ideas respecting the Trinity. That the early Christian writers did maintain this doctrine, no one can possibly doubt, who will take the pains to examine their writings, or even the writings of the divines I have already alluded to, who have proved the "antiquity of the faith." Bishop Stillingfleet says, "Where the sense of Scripture appears doubtful, and disputes have been raised about it, inquire into the sense of the Christian church in the first ages, as the best interpreter of Scripture."

The Socinians are fond of denying that the faith is ancient, and hope their as-

sertion will be taken for granted by the generality, without the pains of investigating the truth. For they cannot but be aware that those writers, who lived nearest to the apostolical times, must necessarily be more competent than we are to interpret the true meaning of Scripture, when many of them had opportunities of collecting the sentiments of the Apostles themselves, some by personal intercourse, and others by not very remote tradition. If, then, it could be proved (which is directly contrary to the fact) that the earliest writers never attributed the divine nature to the Son and the Holy Ghost, we might pause before we considered our interpretation to be true. Still, as I have before hinted, (did we reject the Doctrine of the Trinity,) there would be infinitely more difficulty in understanding the Bible.* It is very

* "It appears how conscious the Socinians are, that all antiquity is against them. There is no set of men in the world who use such endeavors, and some

easy for the trifling and thoughtless to say, that they cannot conceive why they should be called upon to believe a doctrine which is confessedly inexplicable; and if the great principle which pervades the Bible is founded on the Doctrine of the Trinity, it is useless for them to read the Bible, as they certainly should not understand it. I have no doubt there are persons capable of making such a vague assertion as this: they are satisfied to pass through the world without considering by whom it was made, or who directs and controls every thing in it: but to what will this tend, as I do not believe that even the madmen of revolu-

very unfair ones, to bring all the ancient Christians and their writings into disrepute; and by their own modern, self-important, and false criticisms upon the text of Scripture, often give the sense of it such a turn as to make our religion a very different thing from that which has been all along the religion of Christians: if they can gain this point, they make a great step to overthrow the Doctrine of the Trinity by their own proud and carnal reasoning."

Wall, *On Infant Baptism*, Vol. II. page 113.

tionary France had any confidence in the truth of the doctrine which they promulgated, "That death was an eternal sleep?" If there is a man on earth (which I do not believe) who rejects all idea of a Supreme Being, with such an one it is needless to argue. Such an one must neither look at the firmament nor the Heavens, for "*they* declare the glory of God." If again there are any (as I fear there are) who reject divine revelation, what will their natural religion, as they call it, point out to them? Will they find no difficulties, when they allow themselves time to reflect on the great Creator? will they find no difficulty in contemplating the nature of the Deity? A great heathen writer says, that "it is not easy to discover the nature of the gods, nor lawful to inquire."* The truth is, that

* "It is utterly impossible for the Socinians ever to get over the testimony of the Scriptures; if they were abolished, and other records of the church with them, I freely grant that we should not naturally have any

it is not in the power of man to form of himself an accurate idea of God's essential nature and eternal existence; he must receive all that he knows from God's

notion of a Trinity, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one Godhead, nor should we ever have thought of being baptized in such a name, nor have known of 'The Word,' which was God, being made flesh. These mysteries, we grant, would have been unintelligible. But then there would have been another inconvenience in that way of knowing God which they propose, viz. in entertaining only such notions of him as we can form by natural reason and clear ideas; for some few persons of more refined intellectuals, would conceive him to be a spiritual being, far above the properties of body and matter; others, that could form no notion of a Spirit, would say, 'This is unintelligible mystery, we must have a God that has a body, or else we shall think him to be nothing.' The experience of all ages of the world shews that what I say is no fancy, but matter of fact. God give us all the modesty and humility to think that his mode of existing may well be such as we cannot comprehend, any more than a worm can comprehend what reason, or speech, or a soul is, and quietly acquiesce in that account which he has been pleased to give of his own nature, and of what we are to believe concerning him, and to take it according to the plain meaning of those, whom he has inspired to write it, and to judge ourselves, as we are incapable of explaining the manner

own revelation; all our purer wisdom on the subject of the Deity arises from the Christian revelation, as perfecting that revelation which was vouchsafed to the Jews, and which was only preparatory to that of the Gospel: through both revelations the Doctrine of a Trinity in Unity may be traced. Let us now examine this fact.—At the very opening of the Bible, we find a word, implying plurality,* introduced as the title of the Almighty. The writer of the Pentateuch *might* have used a word of *singular* import (as he does elsewhere), and thus have precluded all ambiguity, but he uses this word of plural import no less than thirty times,

of it, and much more incapable of any ability of trying and examining the truth of it by our natural ideas of the things themselves. This last is presumptuous, and one should think an improbable attempt of those who own the divine inspiration of the Scripture.”

Wall, Vol. I. page 151.

* Elohim. Vide Bishop of Hereford's "Thoughts on the Trinity," and "Allex's Judgment of the Jewish Church against Unitarians."

at the beginning of his history and in its primary chapters, and thereby admits ambiguity. When we consider that the cause why the Jews were selected by the Almighty to be his peculiarly chosen people, was "the *faith* of Abraham" that ought to excite reflection in those who are afraid of believing too much; but when we also consider that the express purpose of their being chosen was to preserve the knowledge of the One True God, the great Jehovah, amidst a world wholly given to idolatry, and that all their laws and ordinances tended to that sole object; the use of the plural Elohim is a very striking circumstance: it appears extraordinary, that Moses, when he is describing the creation of the universe, should, in order to express his conception of the Deity, introduce a term which implies plurality, and frequently connecting it with verbs and persons singular. Extraordinary also is it, that, as in the decalogue when first delivered, so also on a

subsequent repetition of their laws (in Deuteronomy), after a solemn address, demanding their attention, he should speak of the Deity in any words, which could possibly convey an idea of plurality: yet such an idea has been conveyed in the very declaration, which is intended to assert the Unity of Godhead. The plural is used in that very precept which prohibits the worship of any god but one, "I Jehovah am thy Gods, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." "Be not unto thee other gods beside me:" observe, these words are the exact literal translation of the Hebrew; and in every subsequent part of the decalogue, when God is mentioned, the plural word is introduced: in the second commandment, "For I Jehovah am thy Gods;" in the third, "Take not the name of Jehovah thy Gods in vain;" in the fourth, "The Sabbath of Jehovah thy Gods;" in the fifth, "The land which Jehovah thy Gods

is giving thee." The passage in the first chapter of Genesis, which Moses represents as the expression of the Creator, is surely well worthy our notice, "Let us make man in our image, &c.;" the expression* is most striking, as implying plurality in the Godhead; and indeed it is positively declared that, by the Logos, the Son, the world was created: if we did not know it to be a fact, we should hardly suppose the explanation which Socinians have given of this remarkable expression to be possible; but they have actually asserted, that this expression is

* Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, speaking of this passage, says, ἕκ αὐτῶν δὲ τινὶ εἶρηκε "Ποιησωμεν" ἀλλ' ἡ τῶ ἐαυτοῦ Λογῶν, καὶ τῆ ἐαυτοῦ Σοφίᾳ.

"It was to no other *person*," (that is, as Bishop Horsley observes, the proper force of ἕκ αὐτῶν τινὶ, haud alii cuipiam.) "It was to no other person that he said 'Let us make,' than to his own word, and to his own wisdom."

In this assertion, Theophilus means, that God spake to persons of no less dignity than the Son and the Holy Ghost.—Vide a proof of this in Dr. Kennicott's Dissertation on the Tree of Life.

borrowed from the dignified manner adopted by kings, in speaking in the plural number. What! the great God of Heaven borrow an expression from kings of the earth, who are only his vicegerents in their station, and, as mortals, are mere dust under his feet? Such an insinuation is too absurd, and too presumptuous, to merit an answer. Be it also considered, that this expression was declared to be uttered by the Almighty, before man was created, and consequently, before any king existed; if they will not allow the expression to mark a plurality and union in the Godhead, they must acknowledge it to be unaccountable. Numerous other instances might be produced, of a similarity of expression, which so far favors the Doctrine of the Trinity, that, if the Doctrine be denied, it is impossible to give a satisfactory reason why such expressions should have been used. But what will they say to the various indisputable Prophecies respecting the

coming of the Messiah, and the Divine dignity ascribed to him when he should come? Let us now consider some of these predictions. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" did this imply that the Messiah was to be no more than man? every spiritually inclined mind will perceive, that this predicted the supernatural manner in which Christ would *come in* the flesh. He is also said "to be made of a woman." Is not every man made of a woman? Do not all men come in the flesh? Did it require the voice of a prophet to announce the coming of a mere mortal Messiah? common sense points out the impossibility of such an interpretation. It evidently and incontrovertibly points out that he was, before he came *in* the flesh, (not *of* the flesh—as the Unitarians have construed the text, and thus garbled and perverted the Scripture,) he was Divine; it is expressly said, that he emp-

ties* himself, that is, humbled himself from his exalted nature, and took upon him the form of a servant, and came in the likeness of man: if he were no more than man, how could he come except in the likeness of men? the expression would have been totally unmeaning. The great evangelical Prophet Isaiah says, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel;" and again, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth,

* ΕΚΕΝΩΣΕΥ.

even for ever; the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." Will any one presume to say, that these glorious and sublime expressions of the Prophet have no reference to any thing more than a common natural birth, and the coming of a mere mortal? Turn then to the description given by St. Luke of the miraculous and supernatural birth. Look at the astonished shepherds, who were terrified by the extraordinary glory of the Lord (the Shechinah) shining round about them. Listen to the voice of the angel bringing them good tidings of great joy, "For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Listen to the acclamations of a multitude of the heavenly host, who suddenly came to the angel, and sang together this animating hymn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." As soon as the angels had returned into Heaven, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem "to

see what had come to pass which the Lord had made known unto them ;” and, after witnessing the truth of the fact, the shepherds returned to their own country, “ glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told unto them.” Let such presumptuous disputers read this accomplishment of Isaiah’s prophecy with humble and devout attention, and I would then say to them, “ Be not faithless, but believing, for this is the Lord’s doing, and therefore so marvellous in our eyes.” Rather would I admonish them to partake of the exultation of the aged and dying Simeon, and of Anna the prophetess. The case of Simeon is peculiarly striking, as related in this chapter by the Evangelist, “ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon ; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel ; and the Holy Ghost was upon him ; and it was revealed unto him by

the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ; and he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have *seen* thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people, Israel:" and Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him; and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this child is set for the falling and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Mary did not yet comprehend that she was blessed by being the chosen in-

strument, through whom Christ was to come in the flesh, nor had she a clear conception of the divine nature of the Holy Infant, but she pondered and kept all these things in her heart. Let us consider the strength of the testimony of Simeon : he being a just and devout man, believing in the truth of prophecy, especially that in the 40th chapter of Isaiah, respecting the promised consolation of Israel, was favored by the divine assurance of the Holy Spirit, that before his death he should *see* the Lord's Christ : is it not clear then that he was convinced that this child, so supernaturally born, was the promised Messiah and Saviour ? " Mine eyes have *seen* thy salvation : " the following and concluding words of the address of Simeon to the virgin mother, are strikingly descriptive of the Messiah's character, and the consequences of his coming. It may be asked, how do the Socinians answer or refute the strong arguments of Christ's divinity, so evident

in the two first chapters of St. Luke? nothing more easy: they take the liberty of expunging every word of them: certainly the Ebionites and Marcion exceeded the modern Socinians in presumption, for they thought proper to reject three of the Gospels, and mutilated the original copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew. By such methods as these any thing may be either proved or disproved. The truth of all history, whether sacred or profane, may be rendered questionable: but, though such mutilators may resolve to close their own eyes so as not to see the light of revelation, that light will shine glorious and unextinguishable to the consolation of all pious and spiritual readers to the end of the world: it will be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people, Israel." In the improved version of the Bible,* as

* Vide Nares on the New Version, and Dr. Magee, Archbishop of Dublin's admirable work on Atonement and Sacrifice.

it is most curiously called, by the Socinian editors, they have misconstrued numerous passages, and have added, omitted, or altered, as best suited their own false interpretation. Have such garblers no reason to dread the awful denunciation in the book of Revelation? "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book, and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life." The various other predictions by Isaiah and the other Prophets, have been so minutely fulfilled, as far as the age of the world has advanced, that they seem (according to the beautiful and energetic language of Bishop Horne) to have been "penned as it were with a sun-beam." For an examination of these I refer to the summary drawn up by Mr. Vaillant, and will here only add our Saviour's testimony to the truth and authenticity of them: when

he says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, for they are they which testify of me." "For, had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me: but, if ye believe not his writings, how will ye believe my words?" To pass over numerous passages in the Gospels of St. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, wherein our Saviour expressly points out, and declares his own divinity, and which (if I may dare to make use of such an expression) would be presumptuous were he less than divine; and which would be perfectly inconsistent, on any other supposition, with the peculiarly humble character of the blessed Jesus, I shall proceed to the Gospel of St. John.

It is well known, and has been repeatedly shewn and proved, that this Gospel was written after the other three, and in some measure to supply their omissions. It had also a still higher object. There

had arisen certain sects, who, in opposition to the generally received Catholic faith, had denied our Lord's divinity.* The Evangelist, therefore, at once commences with a declaration, that the Word, or the Logos, or Christ, was in the beginning (before the world was made) *with* God, and that *he was God*, and that all things were created by him. The vain and idle attempt to represent the Logos as a mere attribute of the Deity, calling it reason, refutes itself. Let any one substitute this expression for that of the Word, and the whole passage becomes unintelligible: besides, St. John does not say, that the Word was *in* God, but *with*

* Griesbach (in one of his prefaces) says, "There are so many arguments for the true Deity of Christ, that I see not how it can be called in question, if the Divine authority of the Scripture be but granted, and just rules of interpretation acknowledged. The exordium of St. John's Gospel, in particular, is so perspicuous, and above all exception, that it never can be overturned by the daring attacks of interpreters and critics."

God ; he does not say that the Word was divine,* or belonging to God, but absolutely † God. Again, when speaking of John the Baptist, the predicted forerunner of Christ, he says, He ‡ was not that Light which was to come into the world ; which expression, incontestibly proves, that the Evangelist had been before speaking of a *person*, and not of an *attribute*. In the 11th verse, St. John adds, “ *He † came unto his own, &c.*” which is intelligible, if applied to a person, but is complete nonsense, if applied to an attribute. Can an attribute be said to be the only-begotten of God, as Christ is styled in the 14th verse ? Be it also observed, that in the 19th chapter, and 13th verse of the book of Revelation, St. John styles Christ Jesus, the Word of God. But Socinus being totally unable to make out his wild interpretation from Scripture, has had recourse to a fable of

* Not θεος,

† but θεος.

‡ εκεινος.

his own invention ; he said, that *the man* Christ Jesus was the person meant by St. John, and that he was, in the early part of his life, taken up into Heaven ; which, Socinus affirms, was what St. John meant by saying, he was *with* God. Now, where did he learn this ? Certainly not from Scripture ; and we may, therefore, justly deem it an evasion of the real question, and a creature of his own perverse and fanciful imagination.

I will no longer introduce general observations, however strongly they may prove the weakness of the statements of the Socinians, and the invalidity of their objections to that " Faith, once delivered to the saints," or first christians. I will suppose that you have taken in your hand Mr. Vaillant's collection of texts relative to the Doctrine of the " Trinity,"* that you have read the observations made

* My friend, Mr. Vaillant, has supplied me with the following note, taken from those additions which

by him (as they have been made by several other learned men) on the different texts quoted. These will sufficiently shew, that the Doctrine pervades the

he has prepared for his tract, if Messrs. Rivingtons, to whom he gave it, should ask for another edition.

There are many instances of the plural number being used in the Hebrew Bible when the Godhead is spoken of, though our version has translated them in the singular; as, Prov. ix. 10. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy Ones (קדשים) is understanding;" so Prov. xxx. 3. "Nor know the Holy Ones (קדשים)." Ps. cxlix. 2. "Let Israel rejoice in his Makers (בעשע): the sons of Zion be joyful in their King." Eccles. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creators (בוראיך) in the days of thy youth." Eccles. v. 8. "And there be Higher Ones (גבהים עליהם) than they;" clearly speaking of God, higher than the Highest. Malachi i. 6. "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if I then be a Father (it is Jehovah who speaks) where is mine honor? and if I be Masters (אדונים) where is my fear?" Joshua, chap. xxiv. 19, told the Israelites, "Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is a God, who are Holy Ones; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive." קדשים is the word here joined with אלהים, the plural form of the name of God. As this name is in Deut. iv. 7. joined with the plural קרבים, "who are nigh ones:" so Job v. 1. "To which of the Holy Ones

whole of the Bible, although the proof rests not (as I have before observed) on any particular text or texts, but is conspicuously evident, from the whole tenor of Scripture taken together. I will con-

(מְקִדְשִׁים) wilt thou turn?" Daniel also, in chap. vii. 18, 22, 25, and 27. four distinct times, calls the One God, "the most High Ones" (עֲלִיּוֹנִין).—It is the Chaldaic plural. These are but a few of the many instances which may be collected. Besides, this Elohim (אֱלֹהִים), which is the plural form of noun, is sometimes joined to a verb in the singular number, as in Gen. i. 1; sometimes to a verb in the plural, as in Gen. xx. 13. Where the noun is plural, sometimes there is a pronoun in the singular number, and sometimes the noun is with a plural participle; as in Ps. lviii. 12. Jehovah of Gods speaks in the plural number in Gen. iii. 22; and the awful name, Jehovah (יְהוָה), which seems a singular noun, is joined with two plural verbs in Gen. xi. 6, 7. And in Isa. vi. 8. the prophet declares that he heard the voice of Jehovah, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us (לָנוּ)?" Surely these, and similar expressions, cannot have been fortuitously introduced. And, no doubt, they fortified the rabbis of the Jewish church in their belief, that the exclamation of the seraphim in the third verse of that chapter, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," indicated a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of Jehovah.

clude this letter, with drawing an argumentative summary of the whole question.

After the various texts throughout both the Old and New Testament, which have been brought in evidence of the Divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, which I cannot see how they can be answered or controverted, I might here rest the cause; but in this summary of the arguments, I will briefly introduce a statement of some of the circumstances of the life of the blessed Jesus, and of the "gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." I may truly add to the declaration said to be made by Abraham to Dives, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets;" that, if men will not attend to the positive declarations of Christ himself, "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

First. His Incarnation, or supernatural Birth. St. Matthew in his first chapter pronounces that birth to be the fulfilment of the prophecy uttered by

Isaiah, in his 7th chapter, that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, that is, "God with us." The miraculous movement of the Star in the East, which directed the Wise Men, or Eastern Sages, or Magi, to the spot of our Saviour's birth; who said, we have seen *his* star in the East, and are come to worship him.

The coming of John the Baptist, according to the Prophets, as the harbinger of Christ. Although our Saviour himself said, that John was "more than a prophet, for this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee; verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." "This is Elias which was for to come." Yet this same John declared that he was only the precursor of Christ, of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose the

latchet, and when he was called upon to baptize Jesus in the river Jordan, what did this "more than prophet" say, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? but on Christ persisting in his command, he did baptize him. What followed? hear the Evangelist! "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight out of the water, and lo, the Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him, and lo a voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Could John the Baptist have entertained such exalted notions of this apparently "Carpenter's Son," and at the same time have deemed Christ a mere man, the son of Joseph, instead of supernaturally the son of Mary only? Could he have held such an humiliating notion of the great Messiah, when he speaks of him thus, "One mightier than I cometh, he shall baptize you with the

Holy Ghost, and with fire?" These last words, in the plainest manner, foretell the future descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, in the shape of cloven tongues, like as of fire, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

Of Christ's temptation I shall speak fully in the Letter on Atonement.

We now come to his heavenly sermon on the mount. This, it may be said by determined objectors, is no proof, however beautiful its language, however pure its doctrine, that the speaker was divine. I beg leave to differ in opinion, and am not afraid of being contradicted, when I say, on this occasion, "never man spake like this man." Of his various miraculous acts I almost disdain offering to infidelity a proof of their superhuman commission; but shall make a few observations on some of them as I proceed: if those observations will not prove the Divine Nature of him who performed them, the miracles themselves must be ascribed to

deception, to magical operations, or (which is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the only sin that can never be forgiven) to the influence and power of evil spirits.

I will first observe, that the chief inducement for the performance of a miracle towards any one, who asked for supernatural assistance, was the faith of the petitioner. For instance, Christ uses these expressions, "Be it unto thee according as thou hast believed." "Thy faith hath made thee whole," &c. &c. Consider the faith of the leper, (Matthew, chapter 8,) "Lord, if thou ~~wilt~~ thou canst make me clean." He answers, "I will, (or I am willing *θελω*) be thou clean: and immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Lest there should be a comparison made between the power by which Moses and others in the Old Testament performed miracles, and the power by which Christ performed his, I will, before I proceed

with further observations on his miracles, make the following remarks.

All miraculous acts performed previous to the coming of Christ, were performed by direction, and a delegated power from the great Jehovah. All was done to manifest the Creator's power and glory. Although, on some occasions, Christ, speaking in his human and official capacity, ascribes superiority to the Father; yet, on innumerable occasions, he speaks with self-derived divine authority, and performs his miracles to manifest *his own* glory.

I will now remark on the miracle of expelling the devils from the persons who were possessed by them in the country of the Gergesenes: here occurs another dispute of the worldly-wise, respecting the Dæmoniacs. Such assert, that this affliction was nothing more than that malady which is now called lunacy. I allow that a dæmoniac may be called a lunatic, but

a lunatic is not necessarily a dæmoniac. I believe the time is past since dæmons were allowed to possess mortal frames, yet, their power of temptation is, unhappily, in too many instances, so great, that we may almost consider the cool-blooded murderer, as actually possessed by a dæmon. In our Saviour's time, the dæmoniacal possession I consider as positively certain ; we must otherwise read this miracle, as well as others similar to it, as a fabulous and figurative narrative, which never can be allowed. I consider the declaration of these infernal spirits, calling "Jesus the Son of God," as another proof of his Divine Nature, and acknowledgment of his Divine Power. On healing the paralytic, he declares, that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins. Then follows his bestowing on his twelve disciples the power of working miracles, of instantaneously healing the sick and casting out devils. When they executed this power, they did not ascribe it to

their own individual efficacy, but they always declared, they performed the miracles in the name and through the power of Christ. When the Pharisees, who strained at gnats and swallowed camels, who were formalists without sincerity, complained to Christ of his disciples having committed what they deemed a breach of the Sabbath, he reproves their blindness, and introduces these remarkable expressions, which, if his Nature were not Divine, he could never have uttered. "But I say unto you, that in this place is one *greater* than the temple." "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day." Towards the conclusion of the 12th chapter of St. Matthew, he refuses to gratify the curiosity of the Pharisees, who required a sign (*i. e.* a miracle) from him, and here expressly declares Jonas to have been a typical sign of himself and of his resurrection. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of

Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." When Jesus had sent away his disciples in a ship, and they afterwards saw him walking on the sea to the vessel, and he appeased the storm; it is mentioned, that "they worshipped him, saying, of a truth thou art the Son of God." When he healed the daughter of the woman of Canaan, who was grievously vexed with a devil, the reason he gives for consenting, in consequence of the mother's importunity, is, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." When Christ asked his disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" Observe Simon Peter's answer, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Will any one deny that this was a positive declaration of the Divinity of Christ? Next, still more, observe Christ's reply to this declaration. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in Heaven." Let me ask,

whether that Jesus, who represents himself as "meek and lowly in heart," would have accepted of this high appellation, and much less have pronounced a blessing on him who gave him so exalted and divine a title, unless he were conscious that his original nature were more than human. The next remarkable occurrence was the Transfiguration of Christ, on which occasion a voice was heard again from Heaven, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Let me observe, that this glorious Transfiguration represents what will be the state of our bodies when we are risen from the dead; when the particles of our dust shall be collected together and *clothed upon* (*επιεμφυτοι*), with a glorious covering, when its essence shall penetrate the once mortal and corrupt mass, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." I will notice only one more of the numerous miracles per-

formed by Christ, that of raising Lazarus from the grave, after he had been dead four days, and his body was in a state of corruption. The account given by the Evangelist is one of the most affecting and most convincing passages in the Gospel history: it enforced belief even on the Pharisees, but still they would not allow the Divine Nature of Christ, they would not act according to their conviction, though they were forced to acknowledge it; but rather than admit Jesus to be their expected Messiah, foretold by all their prophets, "they took counsel to put him to death." I need not dwell on the pathetic description of his Passion; Resurrection, and glorious Ascension; no one but an infidel scoffer, possessing a heart of stone, can read the narrative of his Saviour's sufferings, without admiration, sympathy, and pious gratitude.

Of the title of "Son of God."

It is asserted by the Unitarians, that the title of "Son of God" does not esta-

blish the Divinity of Christ, as good Christians are sometimes so styled; and, in the 38th chapter of Job, the angels are so denominated. Let us see whether that argument can stand.

I will now state the principal occasions on which that title was ascribed to Christ.

1st. In the Salutation, or Annunciation, of the Angel to Mary, he says; "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, that Holy thing (*το ἅγιον*) which shall be born of thee, shall be called "the Son of God." Is not the very reason why he is to be called "the Son of God" here pointed out, viz. because his birth was to be supernatural, and no man was to be his father? This title was, therefore, in its full sense, peculiarly and solely ascribable to Christ. Had the conception of the Virgin not been miraculous, there would then have been no reason for the especial ascription

of this title. 2ndly. As I have observed before, this title was announced by a voice from Heaven, both at his Baptism and his Transfiguration. When we read of his receiving such heavenly attestation of his high dignity, well may we join with St. Paul in asking, "Unto which of the angels said God at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" In addition to this testimony proclaimed from Heaven, we have testimony from the shades below: even Satan and his impious host were compelled to acknowledge the great truth of Christ's Divinity and power. This was proved at the time of the impotent temptation, in the miracle already noticed, performed in the land of the Gergesenes. Again, in the 4th chapter of St. Luke it is written, "And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and he cried with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth; art thou come

to destroy us? I *know* thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God: and devils also came out of many, crying and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God." Consider the overpowering effect of these collective evidences: will not these prove this appellation to be appropriate to Christ in a manner that it cannot be to any other person? If even "devils believe and tremble," surely men should pause, should hesitate, should tremble, before they dare to deny the Divinity of Christ. In addition to these testimonies from Heaven above and the realms beneath, innumerable are the occasions mentioned in the Gospels, on which Christ assumed to himself this title, and indeed founded his mission upon it. His *own words* ought to decide and determine the matter, even without any other testimony. In the 5th chapter of St. John, when the Jews hypocritically complained of his healing a cripple on the Sabbath-day, they sought to kill him, not only because

by this beneficent act he had broken the Sabbath, but that he had said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." What more positive proof can be given than this, that the Jews considered him to claim equality with the Father? Surely Jesus, if he did not mean to assume this title in its highest sense, would have undeceived them. Another time, the Jews took up stones to stone him, and on Jesus enquiring the cause, they answered, "For blasphemy, because that thou being a man, makest thyself God." On another occasion, when he had opened the eyes of one that was born blind, the blessed Jesus met the man after he had been turned out of the synagogue, and said to the man whom he had healed, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" he answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" and Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him, and *he it is* that talketh with thee. And the man said, Lord, I believe, and

he worshipped him." Can any perverse metaphysician deny this plain, positive, and express evidence, and this adoration of the Divine Jesus? Would this spotless, this meek and humble Saviour, have accepted this adoration, if it had not been his just right? Would he not have pointed out the error of this man, and taken this opportunity of renouncing the high title, and directing him to the worship *only* of the Father in Heaven, had not his divine inequality been unquestionable? I lament that any man should tread on such dangerous ground, who endeavour to rob the Son of God of his rights, and strive to degrade the Eternal Son of the Father to the rank of a mere mortal, a poor being like ourselves. I have already alluded to the opinion expressed by the Apostle Peter, of Christ's Divinity, and our Saviour's memorable reply, in which he plainly declares, that human discernment was unequal to the discovery of it, and it could only be

revealed to him by God himself: such also is the fact at this present hour. Those, who are wise in their own conceits, and have proud and carnal minds, do not receive or know the truth of these things of the Spirit of God, because they can only be spiritually discerned: this is the only cause that can be given why the Socinians (or Unitarians, as they choose to call themselves,) are blind to this great and evident truth. St. Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, says, "Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power." This expression plainly proves that the Apostle considered it not as a mere title applicable to others as well as to Jesus, but possessing full authority as he had come in all the power of the Highest. St. Peter, on a remarkable occasion, (sixth chapter of St. John,) says, "We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." When the High Priest adjured him to tell whether he was

“the Christ, the Son of God?” or “art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” to which, when our Lord assented, the High Priest rent his clothes, declaring that he had spoken blasphemy. Would the High Priest have pronounced this to be blasphemy, and that the assertor of it was worthy of death, if the assuming this title had not been deemed an especial claim to Divinity? nay, more, it was for the support of this just and indisputable claim that Christ laid down his life, and suffered on the cross. The Apostle John, at the conclusion of his Gospel, says, that the account which he had given, was for the especial purpose that ye might believe that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

After such repeated texts and proofs I need not add more on this great point: for all, who are not involved in the Unitarian cloud of error, all who possess candid and unprejudiced minds, will,

with the fullest confidence, conclude that the blessed Jesus is, in its highest and most complete sense of the word, "the Son of God."

Of the pre-existence of Christ before the creation of the world.

A few texts—

Seventeenth chapter, fifth verse of St. John. Christ says, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Again he says, "I came down from Heaven." "I proceeded forth and came from God." "Before Abraham was I am." "No man hath ascended up to Heaven but he that came down from Heaven." I have already noticed the false and visionary reply of Socinus to this plain text. Again, "What if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" which ascension his Disciples actually did witness.

That the worlds were created by Christ.

I shall produce only two positive texts.

“ All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” “ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power,” &c. &c.

Whoever reads the Socinian glosses, and the strange manner in which they explain away the direct meaning of these texts, because they must, consistent with their other declarations, deny the pre-existence of Christ, and his creation of the worlds, will not be surprised at St. Paul’s applicable expression, “ Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”

If the Unitarian statement can stand

for a moment against the testimony of Scripture, if even in the judgment of common sense it were not perfectly untenable, and if it could bear investigation, then the Christian religion is overthrown. If Christ be not divine, farewell to the hopes of all true believers, their consolation in his atonement is gone for ever. All Christ's gracious promises, which tend so much to promote repentance and amendment of life; and with which the mind conscious of guilt looked for a mediation between the sinner and an offended God, are no more. The strict law of God, who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," stands arrayed in all its terrors before the guilty sinner. To what redemption can he look? He might well say to these Unitarian philosophers and metaphysicians, I had hoped for pardon to my sins through the merits of my blessed Saviour; I was taught by the Apostles that God had appointed the Redeemer as a propitiation

for my sins, and indeed that the Son of God himself had declared that "he came to give his life a ransom for many:" but you, Socinians, tell me this is all a mistake, this is all spoken in figure or allegory; if that be the case, my comfort is gone, my hope is no more. Do not talk to me of the virtues of human nature, do not talk to me even of repentance, which must ever be imperfect. Man repents one day, and sins the next, and requires therefore a renewal of repentance: how shall any flesh be justified by the deeds of the moral law, any more than by those of the ceremonial? Can any mortal be sufficiently weak, or sufficiently presumptuous, to think that Heaven must be the reward of such a variable course of conduct? When I consider that the rejection of our Lord's Divinity is neither more nor less than the rejection of Christianity altogether, (for that is the fact,) and when I consider the despair which it must create in the human mind, it is

astonishing that any, who read and acknowledge the Bible, should endeavour to support so comfortless and so nugatory a doctrine. If such persons rejected the Bible; if they acted upon the principles of their favorite natural religion, and would not admit of divine revelation; however mistaken, however we might deem them deluded infidels, still their mode of reasoning might be accounted for; but these strange arguers allow the mission of Christ, and yet will not allow that there is a Divine Spirit, to whom we are to look up to assist our infirmities, and to pour into our hearts right desires, nor a gracious and Divine Redeemer, in whose merits we may place our trust. Although we are all accountable creatures, and that a day is coming when we must all give an account of every thought, word, and action; and we must all be conscious of our manifold errors; yet the Socinians tell us there is nothing to stand between us and an incensed God; who

is to forget his justice, and act only on mercy. God be thanked, we believe that he has revealed to us a better hope, and true Christians repose their fullest trust, that through faith in the merits and atonement of their blessed Redeemer, joined to their sincere repentance, they shall be received into the kingdom of Heaven. To those who assert that the belief or disbelief in the Doctrine of the Trinity, is a matter of no moment, that it is merely a speculative opinion, like the quadrature of the circle, or any other questionable point, I most earnestly deny the worldly and mistaken assertion: it is not a mere point of curiosity or speculation, it is an object which includes in its consequences all the great hopes of human nature; together with the Divinity of the blessed Jesus, most stand or fall all the peculiar and truly momentous doctrines of his Gospel. Every thing of the utmost importance in Christianity is founded on his Divine nature. Bishop

Horne says, that it is sometimes urged, "that there can be no merit or demerit in believing or disbelieving; that a man cannot believe as he pleases, but only as the evidence appears to him. How argues the Apostle on this topic?" "What, if some did not believe, shall their unbelief make the Word of God of none effect? God forbid! Let God be true." God will be true, "though every man is a liar." If God has given, as he certainly has given, good and sufficient evidence, it is at any man's peril that he rejects it; and he rejects it not for insufficiency in the evidence, but from some hidden corruption in his heart, which ought to be first cast out before he sat down to judge. "Say no more than that the Doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of curiosity and amusement only: our religion is founded upon it." I will conclude with suggesting to those, who still can possibly entertain a doubt on this matter, the following considerations.

If the Doctrine of the Trinity be not that "Faith which was once delivered to the saints," and for which St. Jude directs us "earnestly to contend," let those who, as St. Jude says, "deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," consider the following consequences.

- There must be an evident inconsistency in the several parts of Scripture; which is impossible.

- Christ must be a mere man, and indeed some have blasphemously ventured to represent him as peccable.

- The Doctrine of the Atonement must at once be given up; for no human being could have made a sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world.

- There could be no accountable meaning in the form of our baptism, which form was directed by Christ himself.

- Nor can there be any mode of accounting for the usual form of benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of

the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."*

Innumerable indeed are the Scriptural expressions which, if the Doctrine of the Trinity be admitted, become clear and obvious, but otherwise are perfectly inexplicable.

It has been a question frequently proposed by the "Wisdom of this world," Are we compelled to believe such parts of Revelation as we cannot comprehend or account for? Indisputably; but not from any compulsion, or law of man, but from the command and Word of God. Whoever denies the necessity of belief, is ignorant of the meaning and essence of faith. Such interpret faith to mean credulity, or superstition; but the real meaning of faith is confidence in "the truth" as well as in the power of God. It is "the evidence of things not seen." St. Paul adds, "For without faith it is *impossible to please God.*"

* 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

If people will believe nothing but what they see, they can have no religion; for the whole of religion relates to that which is invisible. "For," St. Paul says, "we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why does he yet hope for?" When speaking of that chief and admirable example of real faith in God, as displayed by Abraham on various occasions, who, in his old age, relied on God's promise of a son to him, St. Paul says, "*against hope* he believed in hope;" Bishop Sherlock observes, that there is no more merit in believing things credible, than there is in seeing things visible. Butler, in his admirable work, "*The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed,*" says, "Let reason be kept to, and if any part of the Scripture-Account of redemption of the world by Christ can be shewn to be really contrary to it, let the Scripture, in the name of God, be given up. But let not such poor creatures as we go on objecting to

an infinite scheme, because we do not see the necessity and usefulness of all its parts, and call this reasoning."

It is surprising that any should consider human reason to be omniscient, and deify it, as the revolutionary maniacs did in France. If they do not deem it to be omniscient, why do they expect to be able to explain the "secret things which belong unto the Lord our God," and not give credit to "those things which are revealed to us, and to our children, for ever?" When the great points of religion are the subject of inquiry; when that "sacred mystery, hid from ages," the wonder of the universe, and which even "angels themselves do not comprehend, but desire to look into," and, after all their inquiries, are content to reverence, and adore at an awful distance; when this is brought before the mind for discussion, with what caution ought a mere creature to decide on a matter so abstruse, difficult, and sublime.

Man should gladly implore that Divine Illumination from above, which is *promised* in Scripture to the *pious* and the *humble*. When those who have been not only pious and humble, but also men of transcendent talents, have, for nearly eighteen hundred years, acknowledged the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty have worshipped the Unity; when the great majority of Christians have avowed this faith, surely the disputers of this world might rationally pause, before they presumed to deny the truth of this sacred mystery. They must consider it a very extraordinary fact, that such an immense majority of Christians, including the most learned and the most acute that the world ever saw, should have maintained the Doctrine of the Trinity, if it be not the Doctrine of God's Revelation. They cannot avoid being struck with the recollection, that many of these were so fully and deeply convinced, in the midst of perse-

cutions, and at the approach of a violent death, that this was the sure "testimony of God," that they shrunk not from any terror or suffering; animated by "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Again, at the time of the happy Reformation, when the whole collected body of Reformers sifted most minutely into every doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church; when they examined and re-examined every part of Christianity; is it not wonderful that they (without one exception,) should retain the Doctrine of the Trinity in their Creeds, their Articles, and their Liturgy? These men devoted the whole of their lives to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and these, with their dying lips, recommended most earnestly this faith to their surviving friends.—What then is the natural conclusion, but that the deeper is the research, the more serious and more diligent is the investigation, the stronger will be the conviction. If the Trinity be not the true doctrine, the

facts which I have mentioned are more wonderful than any well-attested circumstance in Universal History, more wonderful even than the miracles recorded in Scripture.

Let every believer humbly implore the grace of the Holy Spirit, to keep him stedfast in this faith; for * “this is the true God, and eternal life.”

* 1 John v. 20.

LETTER III.

On the Atonement.

THE second of the two grand Doctrines, on which depends the whole of the Christian system, is the Atonement. Without a conviction of the truth of both, first, that the Trinity in Unity is revealed throughout the Bible, as constituting the Nature of the Deity; and, secondly, that the whole system of Providence appears equally evident to have been willed and graciously design'd, that an adequate Atonement should be made for the sins of fallen man; we must return to what is called Natural Religion; we must at once abolish Revelation; we must presume that we "know God," without any necessity that the great Jehovah should reveal his peculiar nature (though not the mode of it) to us; and we must also presume,

that men are so perfect as to require no Satisfaction or Atonement for their sins ; or, at least, that they are so little removed from perfection, that no doubt can be entertained that they will, on repentance alone for any past sins, obtain salvation from the mercy of a gracious God, without any sacrifice being required to satisfy his justice. Neither of these great truths could have been discovered by man ; they could be known by the Word of God alone : that Word God permitted, and inspired the writers of the sacred Bible to declare. We may ask those who deny that these truths are revealed in the Bible, what then does the Bible contain and reveal ? Some say the Old Testament declares, that there is a God who formed the world, and every thing in it ; and that the New Testament proves the resurrection of the body, and that for this purpose solely, Christ suffered and rose again from the dead. No doubt the refutation of Atheism, and of Annihilation, are im-

portant objects; but is this all which the Bible reveals? May God "open the understandings" of those who make such assertions, as Christ opened the understandings of his Disciples, "that they might understand the Scriptures!" It is not at all to be wondered at, that those who reject the Doctrine of the "Trinity in Unity," should also reject the Doctrine of the "Atonement." When we duly and studiously "search the Scriptures," it must evidently appear, that both the doctrines must be true, or neither. They mutually depend on each other: it is a matter, therefore, of the utmost importance to the faith of man, to his consolation in this life, and to all his highest hopes of happiness in a future, that this grand truth should be fully investigated, and satisfactorily proved. Let it first be considered, that the Bible consists of two parts; that the Old Testament is only preparatory; that it is a passage to lead us to the New: or, (in the words of St.

Paul,) "the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

But before I commence my statement, I will first speak of a fact much too little considered, that of the "fallen angels," and the existence of our malevolent tempter. I am aware that many, who are not apt to read with attention the whole of the sacred volume, and who seem to know nothing of the rebellion of the angels but from the illustrious work of Milton, conceive that the whole is a poetic fiction. It is true, that our great poet has, by the usual poetical license, introduced imaginary speeches and circumstances, as also prose-historians (Livy for instance) have done; but these unauthentic speeches do not invalidate the real history; the fictitious parts are founded on truth and reality. Such cursory half-readers say, that Moses does not notice the rebellion and the fall of the angels. It would have been more extraordinary if he had. The account which Moses has given of the

creation, and of the transactions which occurred in the course of hundreds of years, is peculiarly concise, and numerous circumstances are omitted, which we can only collect from collateral matter. Besides, here it is to be observed, that Moses commences with the creation of this world; whereas the rebellion in Heaven preceded the creation of man. Were any one to write the History of England, commencing with the landing of Julius Cæsar, and if, in some other works, accounts were given of the transactions of the original natives long before the invasion of the Romans, would any one assert that those transactions never occurred, because the historian, who commences at a later period, takes no notice of them? I am clear in my own mind, that this fact of the fallen angels was omitted, as being generally understood at the time, and unnecessary to be introduced. To what but a reference to this fact could Moses say, "Now the serpent was more subtle than

any beast of the field ;” and various other expressions relative to the serpent : but, above all, the glorious prophetic promise of bruising the serpent’s head ? Will any one suppose that this relates to the serpent as a mere beast of the field ? Will any one deny, that by this are signified the wiles of the tempter, or Satan, under the form of a serpent ? Let no one mistake this point, or consider it in a light or trivial manner. Leaving this introduction of the subject in the Book of Genesis, let us proceed to the New Testament. The first great fact that must strike us, is Satan’s temptation of Christ in his human nature. This circumstance alone must be sufficient to decide the point. I will next mention Christ’s remarkable expression, “ I saw Satan like lightning fall from Heaven :” on this passage I shall presently make a particular observation. I will next select the second chapter of the second Epistle General of St. Peter, and fourth verse, “ For if God spared not the

angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," &c. Next look to the sixth verse of the Epistle of St. Jude, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Next, *vide* Revelations, twelfth chapter and seventh verse, "And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." In this sublime Book of the Revelations are some other passages, in which the Devil is either mentioned by name, or alluded to. I will now

introduce a few comments on these several passages, and then point out the importance of a right understanding of this fact.

First, with respect to the temptation of our Saviour. Will any one presume to assert, that this narrative of the Evangelist, is figurative, or allegorical? Will they deny this temptation to have really occurred, and to have proceeded from Satan himself? If there be such opponents to the plain statement of the Gospel, it is needless for any believing Christian to attempt to controvert their denial of a positive fact. We next come to the expression of Christ, "I saw Satan as lighting fall from Heaven." An objection has been made to these words of our Saviour, implying (as in our English Translation they certainly do imply), our Saviour asserting, that he was present in Heaven at the time of the expulsion of the rebellious angels. But was he not present on that occasion, and on every other that

ever occurred in Heaven? None but a Socinian will deny this. The objection to this interpretation arises from the word "fall" being in the original language in the future tense; * and therefore the passage is interpreted by some of our learned and truly pious commentators, to allude to the future triumph of the Gospel over the powers of darkness. Now respecting tenses in the original, these excellent commentators would allow, that the word "saw" was equally in the past tense in the Greek † as in the English; had it been in the present tense, it could then have had no reference to the recurrence before the Creation. But here, setting the past tense in the verb, against the future in the participle, I would translate the passage thus, "I saw Satan as lightning *about to* fall from Heaven." What expression is more common than to say of any person, who was known to have

* πεισύντα.

† εθεώρων.

actually gone on an expedition, "I was present at the time, and saw him when he was about to set out." No doubt Christ did witness the fall of the angels, and he also foresaw the future triumph of the Gospel; but when we consider what occasioned his observation, I rather adhere to my own opinion. The seventy said to him, "Lord, even the Devils are subject unto us through thy name." Jesus then replied in the words alluded to, which I beg leave to interpret in the following manner: "Why do you wonder that they are subject to you, who are my Disciples, and act under my authority? Although originally they were made superior to you, yet they were always subject to the power of my Father; and I was, as one of the Trinity, witness to their overthrow, and total defeat; and by my Divine Power, they are compelled to submit to you, who perform miracles only in my name." The texts taken from the Epistle of St. Peter, and from that of St. Jude,

declare the fact of the rebellion of the angels in plain terms, which cannot be mistaken ; nor be any more ascribed to figure, or allegory, than the account given by St. Matthew of the Temptation of Christ. The prophetic nature of the Book of Revelations, directs us to apply a future interpretation to the words of the passage quoted ; but still it has a positive reference to the event which occurred in Heaven : we may therefore, allowably, interpret it in the following manner : “ As at the time when there was rebellion in Heaven, Michael, and the host of obedient angels, conquered and expelled the rebellious host, headed by Satan ; so will Christianity ultimately triumph, and expel Infidelity, and all false religions from the earth.”

If there is any one who doubts of the truth of the “ War in Heaven,” or considers its authenticity to be immaterial, he can have reflected but little on the state of man, and must have a very imperfect

idea of the importance and necessity of redemption. Let such an one be told, that it is the foundation of the whole system of Providence respecting this world.* After the rebellion of Satan and his host, and the expulsion of those angels from

* Satan is styled the prince of this world, John xii. 31; and even the God of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Who claimed superior jurisdiction over his kingdom, Luke iv. 6. The prince of devils, Matthew xii. 29. and xxv. 41; and also called the principalities, and powers, and rulers of this world, Ephes. vi. 12. The power of darkness, Luke xxii. 53. Who for his pride and rebellion was cast out of Heaven with his angels, Isaiah xiv. 12—14; Luke x. 18; Ephes. ii. 2; Rev. xii. 7; and shall be finally cast into Hell at the end of the world and general judgment, Rev. xx. 10. Matt. viii. 29; with his angels and wicked men, Matt. xxv. 41.

Of the real and personal existence of "the tempter," (says Dr. Hales, Vol. II. page 11,) as he is emphatically styled, by way of bad eminence, when he tempted Christ himself, Matt. iv. 3; not the slightest doubt can be entertained by any one who "searches the Scriptures," and perhaps one of the "depths of Satan," or his deepest devices, (Rev. ii. 24,) is to deny or ridicule the idea of his own existence, and to represent it as *allegorical, visionary, or imaginary*, in order to throw an unsuspecting world off their guard, and "sift them as wheat," Luke xxii. 31, or shake their

Heaven, it pleased the great Jehovah to create the worlds, to people them with beings, on whom happiness and immortality were bestowed, on the sole condition of their obedience to his will. But by his Divine prescience, he foresaw that the wiles of the ejected tempter would

faith. The motive that instigated the tempter was envy at the happiness of our first parents.* "Through envy of the Devil came sin into the world, and they that hold of his side do find it," Wisdom ii. 24. That the fall of man was considered as a real historical fact by the sacred writers of both the Old and New Testament is evident. The seduction of Eve is noticed; "Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die," Eccles. xxv. 24; and Adam's hiding himself, "If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom" (or lurking place,) Job xxxi. 33; "Adam was formed first, then Eve; but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression," 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14; and the faithful are warned to take heed from her example, "I fear, that, as the *serpent beguiled Eve*, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity [of the faith] concerning Christ by false Apostles," 2 Cor. i. 3.

* Note a fine description of this in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book IV.

partly succeed in persuading our first parents to swerve from that obedience; he, therefore, formed and preordained, before the foundation of the world, a gracious purpose of shewing pardon to fallen man. The gift was the free and merciful design of God even before the crime was committed, and that mysterious scheme of redemption is developed throughout the Bible, from the commencement of the Old Testament to the close of the New, and will not have its final consummation till the end of this earthly world, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God shall be all in all. I shall not stop here to answer the various cavils and objections to the great Doctrine of "the Atonement," why God should require so great a sacrifice as the death of the Son, and how that sacrifice is effectual to the salvation of man. If human reason and human wisdom were equal to the Divine, no difficulty of comprehension could

occur, but the justice, as well as the mercy, of the operations of Providence, would instantly and gloriously appear. Had man continued in his original state of innocency, no pardon would have been requisite; but, since sin or disobedience entered, a God, whom the Scripture describes to be "of purer eyes than to behold any iniquity," could hardly, even in the feeble view of human reason, be expected to grant unconditional pardon.

Man has no means of judging of his Maker but according to that Maker's word; we cannot attempt to make calculations between the proportions of his justice and his mercy. We must rest assured, that both must be possessed by God in the utmost perfection, and both must be exercised by him in a manner which our limited powers can neither perceive nor penetrate. Even in human affairs, it is often manifestly unjust to judge of any man by one single and separate action, how presumptuous then

must it be, for a finite creature to decide on the propriety and justice of the actions of the Infinite and Almighty Creator! He, whose sight pervades all space, whose knowledge extends to all eternity, acts on a settled predetermined plan, each link of which (though imperceptible to us) depends upon another, and all operate together, in an inconceivable manner, to the accomplishment of his grand and merciful providential operations. On whatever Divine subject we treat, of one circumstance we ought never to lose sight, that faith, or confidence in God, and obedience to his will, are the primary duties which are demanded of man. None but those of a truly rebellious and Satanic spirit, will deem this to be the law of an arbitrary tyrant: an earthly sovereign, who possesses the same weakness, and the same passions, with his subjects, has no right to be despotic, and rule by his sole and absolute will: but a God of all goodness,

as well as of all power, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, may surely demand (as he does demand) our entire and implicit obedience. Let us now then consider, what are the chief proofs that the death of Christ was an expiatory sacrifice, and that he voluntarily offered himself up to atone for the sins of mankind. These proofs can be collected solely from the Bible. The Atonement is proved, both by verbal prophecy and prophecy by action: by the early and Divine institution of animal sacrifice, as typical of the great sacrifice, which was, "in the fulness of time," to be offered up; it is proved, by the whole tenor of the Scriptures: but finally, and especially, ought we to receive the great and consoling truth with faith and gratitude, from the repeated declarations which Christ himself made, that he was about to offer himself up for that gracious purpose. It might have been imagined that none, on whom the light of

Christianity has shone, would have disregarded the positive declaration of the blessed Jesus; but what will not the weakness, the vanity, the pride of man reject? Well might our Saviour (as I observed in the Second Letter) say to the Jews, after stating that Moses wrote prophetically of him, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" It is evident, from a careful perusal of the Scriptures, that God made known his will in a gradual manner; he appears to have considered the world as divided into ages, like the ages of mankind; into infancy, childhood, manhood, and full age: he appears to have divulged his will only in a faint and shadowy manner, to the early inhabitants of the world, as if their minds were not constituted and prepared to receive clearer and fuller information. This will plainly appear, from examining and tracing the language of prophecy, from the Book of Genesis to that of Malachi; from considering

also the various types, by action, throughout the Old Testament, especially those of the brazen serpent and of Jonah, neither of which at the time was rightly understood by the Jews. Many institutions in that particular code of laws imposed upon the Jewish nation, not only tended at the time by their peculiarity, their multiplicity, and their strictness to separate the chosen people of God from the idolatrous nations around them; but were precisely of a typical nature, shadowing out the great sacrifice, which their own blindness would afterwards occasion of their predicted, but rejected, Messiah. The first intimation given of a future Saviour, is declared by God, immediately after the fall, in his address to the tempter under the form of a serpent,* "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head." This declaration was brief and obscure to our first parents;

* Genesis iii. 15.

but Christians, who have known the accomplishment of the promise, can now clearly perceive the force of the words. We know that an especial meaning was intended by the words "seed of the woman," that it referred to the future, supernatural birth of the Messiah, who was not to be composed of any seed of man. Christ, in other parts of Scripture, is described as "born of a woman," which has evidently the same meaning: in the Book of Revelation he is described as "the desire of women," that is, (as Mr. Faber has shewn,) the object of which women desired to be the mother, and that it has no reference to the enjoining of celibacy, or the forbidding to marry. That Mr. Faber's interpretation is the true one, may be inferred from the exclamation of Eve on the birth of Cain, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Although the prophetic words were too obscure for Eve to comprehend the full extent of them, yet they inspired a hope

of some deliverer to arise, and this hope occasioned her joyful exclamation at the birth of Cain; the same hope was afterwards earnestly entertained by succeeding women. The next declaration of the Almighty, on this grand and consoling subject, was made to Abraham. His faith not only procured the selection of his descendants to be the chosen people of God, the peculium of the Most High, but called forth that gracious promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Whoever can fail to apply these words as declaratory of the salvation of mankind by a Messiah to be born of the seed of Abraham, will have no small difficulty in explaining how the promise has been accomplished. What benefit could any merely human being confer on all the nations of the earth, many of which would never hear of any benefit, and could not possibly receive any in a worldly point of view: but to us the case is clear, that it refer-

red to the blessing of the promised and heavenly Canaan to all the world, by the sacrifice of the blood of Christ, even to nations which never heard of his name, and on whom the light of the Gospel had never shone, but who would have perished in their sins had not that precious blood been shed. St. Paul positively declares in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, and eighth verse, that the blessing of the Gospel was prophetically announced to Abraham long before the institution of the Levitical law, "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all nations be blessed.'"

Having observed that all the institutions in the Old Testament were only preparatory to those in the New, we will now proceed to consider the Divine Institution of Sacrifice, which, above all others, will appear not to be commanded solely for

any present purpose, or for its own sake, but to be typical of, and preparatory to, the Great Sacrifice of the blood of Christ. Notwithstanding numerous doubts expressed, and numerous objections which have been made, to the Institution of Sacrifice having taken place immediately after the fall of man, and even before the expulsion from Paradise, it will appear evident to every one who reflects on the matter, that this was, and must have been, the case. The silence of the writer of the Pentateuch, in the first chapters of Genesis, on the positive institution, may be easily accounted for: his narrative is peculiarly concise; he barely mentions that the Sabbath was hallowed, but does not speak of any injunction to man to observe the Sabbath. Yet it will occur to a thinking mind, that the Great Jehovah probably employed six days* in his work of creation, (which he had the

* Whatever time may be meant by the term "day," the argument remains unaltered.

power of perfecting equally in one,) for the especial purpose of marking the seventh day to be kept holy, and devoted to his honor and service. The institutions of the Sabbath and of sacrifice, as delivered afterwards by Moses, were only a declaratory renewal of the original Institutions, and the fourth commandment commences (observe) with the emphatical word, "Remember." Let reason only be called in to this inquiry: are not our first parents said to be clothed with skins? "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." There could be only three causes of these skins being obtained for this purpose; first, they might be skins of animals, which had been slain for food, for the skin of an animal that had died a natural death, would have been useless; or secondly, the animals might be slain entirely for the sake of using their skins; or, thirdly, they might be skins of animals that had been offered up in sacrifice.

The first could not be the cause of the animals being slain, because it is manifest by the word of Scripture, that animal food was not permitted to man till after the flood: the second could not be the cause, because the clothing could have been formed out of the wool and hair of the animals, and other materials, without the necessity of slaying them. Man could have no right to take away the life of any animal without the express permission or injunction from the Creator. The third cause, therefore, was the sole and the true one. He, who alone had the power of life and death over the creatures which he had made, enjoined the rite of sacrifice. Does man presume to ask why? Let the Scripture answer him: because, without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins; this was the law of God; who shall dare to question the propriety of the law, or dive into the reasons of it? So it is. That the sacrifice of animals was typical of the

sacrifice of the Great Redeemer, cannot be doubted, if we investigate the course of Scripture, and this investigation will shew the cause why animal sacrifice was enjoined. Let me repeat the question; What does the Bible contain? Independently of the account of the Creation and of the Flood, of the History of the Kingdoms of Judah and of Israel, as set forth in the Old Testament, and independently of the account of the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, and the sending of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, as related in the New, it contains an account of the Divine Will and Operations of Providence, from the Time of the Fall, in effecting the gracious Redemption of Man by a voluntary sacrificed Saviour. These are the contents, this is the great subject of the Sacred Volume. The first proof of the early institution of sacrifice, arises from the offerings made by Cain and Abel; and the different reception of those offerings

by God. Some explanations of the cause of this have been given, which are trifling and futile, and which, we may imagine, would never have been expressed, had due attention been applied to the language of this chapter, and to the declaration of St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews. In the fourth chapter of Genesis it is said, "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, and the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering, he had not respect: and Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell; and the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and, if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." It has been observed by many learned commentators, that most pro-

bably the mode by which God marked his acceptance of the sacrifice (whether it was an Holocaust or not) was by fire descending from the Shechinah. This idea may receive confirmation from the contest between the Prophet Elijah and the Prophets of Baal, as related in the eighteenth chapter of the first Book of Kings; where it is said, "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice." It has also been observed, that the original word, translated "Sin" in our Bibles, means a sin-offering, and the Greek word* in the Septuagint version, does not always mean "Sin," but frequently "an offering for the expiation of sin:" according to this interpretation, it is considered by many learned men, that we are to understand by "Sin lieth at the door," that "an animal, ready for sacrifice, lieth, or coucheth at your door,"

* *αμαρτια*, vide 2 Cor. v. 21. "He hath made him to be sin for us," (evidently a sin-offering,) "who knew no sin."

as if God had said, "Why are you displeased that I have not accepted your offering? had you offered up an animal for an expiation, according to my injunction, your offering would have been accepted equally with that of your brother; but as you have not obeyed my injunction, but have chosen to offer a tribute according to your own will, and not according to mine, go and offer up an animal which you may easily procure, as it lieth near your place of abode, and that sacrifice, with shedding of blood, I will accept." That this supposed paraphrase is not fanciful, but, that it is the real interpretation of the meaning of God's remonstrance with Cain, will appear from St. Paul's words in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, "By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice* than Cain, by which he ob-

* *πλεονα θυσιαν*, a fuller sacrifice, *i. e.* a sin-offering as well as the first fruits for a thanksgiving.

From Dr. Hales:—Minhah, offering of first fruits,

tained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." What other meaning can there be of the words "by faith" than this? that Abel had that well grounded faith in the promises of God, of

contrasted with Zabah, "the animal sacrifice," Psalm xlix. 7. Hatah, "the sin-offering," Ezek. xlv. 29. And both the oblations of the first fruits, and the sacrifice of a lamb, were required at the yearly sacrifice of the Passover, Levit. xxiii. 10—13. And also in the daily sacrifice, under the service of the tabernacle, in the Wilderness, Exod. xxiv. 38—42; of the first temple, 2 Kings xvi. 15; and of the second temple, Ezra iii. 3; and Nehemiah x. 33, which subsisted till "the daily service was abrogated."† Daniel ix. 27, by Christ our *Passover*, who was sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7. "Once for all," (εφ'απαξ,) Heb. ix. 26.

The sacrifice of Cain, therefore, was imperfect or incomplete; he brought, indeed, an oblation of his first fruits, as an offering of thanksgiving for God's temporal bounties, Deut. xxvi. 2—11; he was not, therefore, devoid of religious sentiment; but he did not bring an animal sacrifice, or a sin-offering; either, because he

† Dr. Kennicott, speaking of the abrogation of the daily sacrifice, says, "like the moon, which having no intrinsic brightness, shines only by a light borrowed from a nobler body; and disappears at the rising of the sun, as being no longer of service to mankind."

the coming of a future deliverer, and he also had a pious conviction connected with, and springing from, that faith, that he was bound in duty to obedience to God's will, and strictly to follow the injunction of his Maker, by offering an animal in sacrifice. This was the sole cause of his offering being accepted, and

did not count himself a sinner, and so had no need of it; or because he wanted *Faith*, and disbelieved the use and efficacy of this instituted mode of Atonement, or perhaps upon both accounts conjointly. Whereas Abel not only brought a *Minhah* (as expressly asserted in the latter clause, and therefore to be understood in the former) in token of thanksgiving; but also by *Faith* a sin offering also, confessing himself a sinner, which therefore St. Paul styles *πλειονα θυσιαν*, "a fuller sacrifice," or more complete and excellent than Cain's, and speaks of it in the plural number *δωροισι*, Gifts." Heb. xi. 4. When it is said that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and his oblation," it was because it was accompanied by the "sin offering;" whereas "unto Cain and his oblation he had not respect," because it was defective in the form, and rebellious in the spirit, with which it was offered. This was "the error of Cain," (Jude 11.) a renunciation of "the benefits of the instituted mode of Atonement for sin," and a "going about to establish his own righteousness, like the self-sufficient Jews, Rom. x. 3.

by this he obtained witness that he was righteous, *i. e.* right in his religious duties and implicit obedience to his Creator. St. Paul adds, "and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh." He does indeed speak in the plainest manner, shewing that the sacrifice of blood was the only outward sacrifice that God had enjoined, and consequently the only one which he would accept as expiatory of sin: but, plain as this is to those who are spiritually minded, and implicitly attend to the Divine will and revelation, the carnally minded, who are guided solely by worldly reasoning and philosophical argument, instead of following the rule of Scripture, of "the law and of the testimony," are blind to the evident fact; though seeing they do not perceive, neither do they understand, "having their understanding (that is, their spiritual understanding,) darkened. Such was Cain: he, with his worldly wisdom, conceived that one species of sacrifice ought to be equally acceptable to God as

another, and it is plain, did not listen to the remonstrance of his Maker, nor afterwards sacrificed an animal. We may therefore suppose that, as in other cases, he was forsaken by God; and the wiles of the tempter urged him first to jealousy of his brother, and afterwards to murder. Cain's reasoning with himself was precisely similar to that of Naaman the Syrian, as related in the fifth chapter of the second Book of Kings. When an easy mode of cure was pointed out for his leprosy, he refused to adopt it, arguing, that the water of one river was equally purifying with that of another; so indeed it might be naturally, if his leprosy was to be cured by frequent and repeated ablutions, but not if the disease were to be relieved instantaneously by one ablution: his cure was to be effected in a miraculous and supernatural manner, and could therefore be effected only in the precise manner enjoined. The offering of animal sacrifice not only pervades the whole of the Old

Testament, but it was represented as customary in pagan* countries, and has been universally observed: to what can this be attributed but to an original Divine institution, though the origin of the institution was unknown to those who made the offering, and many corruptions arose, especially that mistaken one of human sacrifices. Ignorance presumed to imagine, that if the blood of an animal were acceptable in sacrifice to the Creator, the blood of a human being must be still more so, and this false and presumptuous notion has occasioned numerous cruelties and superstitions in the disciples of Moloch, Baal, and of others, as indeed is still the

* Vide Iliad, Book IX. Line 495.

Καὶ μὲν τὰς θύεσσι καὶ εὐχολῆς ἀγανῆσι,
 Λοιβῆτε, κνισσητε παρατρῶπῶδ' ἀνθρώποι.
 Λιτόσμενοι, ὅτε κέν τις ὑπέρβηη καὶ ἀμάρηη.

The gods, (the only great and only wise,)
 Are mov'd by off'rings, vows, and sacrifice;
 Offending man their high compassion wins,
 And daily pray'rs atone for daily sins.

POPE'S ILIAD.

case amongst the Brahmins of the East, whose horrid customs are too well known to require any account to be given of them here. But whenever Man swerves, whether in moral conduct, or in external rites from the direct injunction of the Almighty, error is the certain consequence.

It is not consistent with the nature of this work to notice all the various passages in the Old Testament, applicable to this subject, or prophetic of the coming of the Messiah, and the office which he was to perform: a few, however, shall be selected, which I have not before mentioned; some, because they are so clear and so expressive, that nothing but the wilful blindness of infidelity can fail to perceive their force; others which, though not at first sight so clear, are proved to be prophetic by the quotation of these passages by the Evangelists, by our Saviour himself, and by his Apostles after him: there can be no

doubt, that in the course of time, as the world advances, many other passages will be discovered to have had a prophetic meaning, which has not been mentioned, and probably not discovered by any of the most pious and studious examiners of Scripture. The direction to "search the Scriptures," does not apply to a single, diligent perusal, but that it should be the principal object through life; and the more frequent that search is made, new lights will spring up to confirm the truth, and to give a clearer idea, though still imperfect, of "the mystery of godliness." * There is still full employ-

* The great Erasmus has observed, "I can speak from experience, that there is little benefit to be derived from the Scriptures, if they be read cursorily or carelessly; but if a man exercise himself therein constantly and conscientiously, he shall find such an efficacy in them as is not to be found in any other book whatsoever," again, in another place, he says, "The pure philosophy of Christ cannot be derived from any source so successfully, as from the books of the Gospels and the apostolic epistles, in which, if a man philosophise with a pious spirit, *praying* rather than *arguing*, he

ment for the united talents of the most learned and the most enlightened scholars and divines, not only of the present age, but of ages yet unborn, for the mystery of the Gospel cannot be fully unfolded till the "*time of the end.*" In Deuteronomy, chapter eighteen, and eighteenth verse, it is said, "I will raise them up a prophet from amongst their brethren, like unto thee; (that is Moses) and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

Now the Jews themselves referred this prophecy to the Messiah, though they would not see the exact completion of it, when Christ came. Did he not perform miracles equal to, if not greater than those of Moses? Did he not say (in his

will find that there is nothing conducive to the happiness of man, and the performance of any duty of human life, which is not, in some of these writings, laid down, discussed, and determined in a complete and satisfactory manner."

human capacity) it is not I that speak, but what my Father commands me, that I speak? What Moses was to the Jews, Christ was to be to all the world. Great as Moses was, he was merely the type and shadow of the great Prophet that was to arise.

Job xix. 25. and following verses.

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, and I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” This glorious prophecy is most judiciously selected, as the second clause in the opening of our noble and sublime burial service; and highly calculated it is, to excite the most elevated ideas and hopes of our future resurrection. “I *know* that my Redeemer liveth.” From whence could this positive knowledge arise to Job, or to him whoever was the writer of this book, but

from Divine inspiration? and what idea could Job have of any Redeemer but from the same high source? Where was that Redeemer living ages before his appearance on earth; and taking upon himself the humiliating nature of Man, but as Divine in the Heavens? What, but revelation could have assured Job, that though he himself was to see corruption, and become food for worms, yet that he afterwards, in the same flesh, in the same body, however glorified, should rise again and see God?

Is not here a striking prophecy, intimating the redemption of mankind by the Atonement made by the offering up of the Messiah? Isaiah vii. 14. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Turn to the first chapter of St. Matthew for the account of the birth of Jesus Christ, where this prophecy is especially

referred to; and in the first chapter of St. Luke, the miraculous and supernatural birth of Jesus, from a Virgin Mother, is more particularly described; consider the meaning of the word "Immanuel," "God with us;" and St. Luke says, that this holy Child shall be emphatically styled "The Son of God," This proof of the Divine Nature of Christ is necessary to the establishment of the Doctrine of the Atonement: as we cannot conceive that one who was *merely* a human being, and consequently peccable, could be a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. The final sacrifice of Christ was to resemble the temporary sacrifices by which his grand and last sacrifice was shadowed out, he was to be "a Lamb without spot." He is also styled by St. John, in the Revelation, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:" because all other sacrifices were merely preparatory to this one great and all-sufficient sacrifice, and were in-

stituted by Jehovah for that purpose immediately after the fall of man.

Isaiah liii. This grand and pathetic chapter is, as it were, a prophetic epitome of the whole life of Christ, as no one can doubt, who will compare the several circumstances of that life as related by the Evangelists, with the striking expressions of this chapter; but I shall here select only such passages as, beyond confutation, point out the sacrifice of Christ as an Atonement for the sins of mankind.

Fourth verse, "surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, &c."

Fifth and sixth. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed."

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Eighth, at the end. "For the transgression of my people was he stricken."

My first observation shall be, that both the ancient and modern Jews; to this day, allow this chapter to relate to the promised Messiah, although they would not admit that Jesus was the Messiah expected. The verses selected here can have no appropriate meaning whatever, if the plain truth, which they declare, is denied. If assent be not given to the declaration, that the sufferer was wounded, bruised, and stricken, on account of our transgressions, it must be blasphemously inferred, that the spotless and blessed Jesus was executed as a punishment due to his own sins. Although the Jews, who are still blindly expecting a Messiah yet to come, considered Christ as an impostor, and accused him of treason and blasphemy, and for those crimes deemed him deserving of his agonizing death, it is astonishing that any of the present day,

who presume to call themselves Christians, should deny the great sacrifice which was offered up; should deny that Christ died as an Atonement for the sins of mankind.

We will here cease from observations contained in the Old Testament, and shall only select those from the New, and from our Saviour's own mouth, which will most forcibly prove the truth of the Atonement.

The exquisite language in the four Gospels, must charm every one who is not equally dead to the comprehension of sublime and pathetic composition, as well as blind to the truth; if the Gospel be not yet understood, it is indeed "hid to those who are lost." One material reason why so little is said of the Atonement in the Gospels, is evident, for the Disciples themselves did not understand the great object for which he came into the world, nor even that he was on the third day to rise from the dead, although

he had both figuratively, and in direct plain words expressed it. But after his Resurrection, and immediately before his Ascension, (as I shall more fully notice presently,) he opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures.

St. John, chap. iii. verse 13 to the end of verse 18. "And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is

condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

In the first part of this speech of our Saviour to his Disciples, he states, his having come down from Heaven, and then, that, though in his human appearance and character, he was with them, still he was in Heaven, which manifests his Omnipresence, and consequently, his Divinity. He then alludes to the great Type, or Prophecy, by action, of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, on which, whoever looked were healed from their infirmities. He then adds, "Even so *must* the Son of Man, &c." Is it not clear that the healing occasioned by the looking at the Brazen Serpent, was a miraculous mode of cure, and was a type of the great remedy for the worst of maladies, sin, which was to be produced by the lifting up of Christ upon the cross? That this was the prescribed and indispensable mode of Redemption, is plain,

from the words, "Even so must, &c." and he then explains the purpose of his death, that those who believe in him should obtain everlasting life. This, he says, proves the great love of God to mankind, that he sent his only-begotten Son to be sacrificed for this purpose. What can be the meaning of the words, "that the world, through him, might be saved," if salvation were not to be obtained by all faithful, true, and repentant believers, in consequence of the Atonement made by the shedding of his innocent blood? However much his pure, his superior and heavenly Doctrine, which, as a moral teacher he inculcated, has effected towards ameliorating the conduct and condition of mankind, it has not, and could not have, in our depraved and corrupted state, so universal an influence as to secure salvation. Of this, the consciences of even the best men in their own case, and a slight view of the state of the world, will abundantly testify;

but even if it could have had so powerful an effect, as to banish all future commission of sin, there would still remain that original corruption, inherited from our first disobedient parents, for which, nothing but the sacrifice of Christ could have made a sufficient Atonement.

St. John has declared, that "Jesus Christ the Righteous, is our advocate with the Father, and he is the propitiation for our sins." We, ministers of the Church of England, with equal gratitude and propriety, address the Father in Heaven, (in the prayer of Consecration, at the Communion,) as having given his only Son Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our Redemption, who has made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world.

An extraordinary observation has been made by some blind opposers of this great truth, that the death of Christ was

not voluntary, and ought not, therefore, to be deemed a sacrifice. The futility of this assertion will appear from the following consideration. Let it be always kept in mind, that our Lord, while on this earth, united together in his person the two natures, the human and the Divine. In his human nature, he had all the feelings common to man, excepting that he had none of man's gross passions, and was absolutely free from all sin.

His tenderness and compassion were exhibited on many occasions, but I need mention only one, that, previous to his performing that incontestable miracle of raising his friend Lazarus from the dead. St. John describes him, when he saw the sisters of Lazarus and others weeping, as joining his tears with theirs, "Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, behold how he loved him."

Our Lord had also an equal sense of pain, and fear of suffering, as other men; therefore, knowing that the hour

approached when he should be betrayed by Judas, and then crucified by the Jews, he was in such an agony in the garden on the Mount of Olives, that his sweat distilled from his body like drops of blood; and he prayed most earnestly that the bitter cup of suffering might pass from him; and he repeated his prayer three times; but concluded it (as all prayers ought to be concluded) with these duly submissive words; "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." As soon, however, as he was convinced that there could be no alteration in the design for which he took upon himself our flesh, that it was necessary for the purposes of the Divine Will, that his blood must be shed, that no other mode could be accepted by the Father, which could atone for the sins of mankind, His firmness was equal to his previous agony. When Judas came to betray him, and the Jews to seize him, then observe, not only the dignity of his conduct, (for

dignity has been shewn by several martyrs,) but mark his words in the following texts :

St. John x. 15. "I lay down my life for the sheep." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

But especially observe his conduct and words when Peter, in his zeal for his Master, drew his sword and cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant, Malchus. Our Lord, after healing the ear by his Divine Power, says to Peter, "Put up thy sword again into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?"

Can there be a more decisive proof of his voluntarily sacrificing himself than this expression of the blessed Jesus, that legions of angels would be sent to his deliverance, if he required them? but then the will of God (as stated in the Old Testament) could not be fulfilled: the Redemption of Mankind could not otherwise be effected, and therefore his crucifixion must be submitted to. Again, remark his glorious answer when Pilate asked him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Can any thing be more clear than, that resistance would not be made, because his kingdom was to be in Heaven: if earthly power were his object, he would make use of earthly means, as we know the impostor Mahomet did to enforce the receiving of his apostate Koran.

I have reserved, for the full completion of the evidence which Christ himself gave to the prophecies of the Old Testament, and especially to the necessity of the Atonement, the following observations on the last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. I have purposely omitted many other testimonies which Christ bore to the prophetic writings, and some of them most cogent and unanswerable, and shall close with the 24th chapter of St. Luke, which comprehends almost every essential point in the Divine Revelation of the Christian system. Let the chapter be laid before you, and then attend to the course of it. It commences with stating, that the women who had attended him from Galilee, came to the tomb early in the morning of the third day after his death, with preparations to embalm his body, but found the tomb empty. Their surprise at this, (for recollect, that neither they, nor even his Disciples, understood Christ's decla-

ration, that he should rise from the dead on that day,) may be easily imagined: in the midst of their perplexity, two angels stood before them; their presence, as might be expected, produced great awe, and they bowed down their faces to the earth. But what did the angels say to them? "Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, 'the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' And they remembered his words." Then these pious women, the names of some of whom are mentioned, went and told all these things to the eleven Disciples, and to all the rest: but their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not; next occurs in the chapter, the account of two Disciples, though not two of the eleven, who were afterwards Apostles, going to Emmaus. As they

were talking on the extraordinary events which had lately taken place at Jerusalem, Jesus came and talked with them: but it is said, "their eyes were holden that they should not know him;" that is, were holden by God's will and design; or that they did not know him, because they had no idea that he, whom they knew had been crucified, could possibly be alive: he enquired into the cause of their visible sadness, requested to learn the subject of their earnest discourse. On their recounting the different circumstances, the absence of the body from the tomb, and also expressing their disappointment at his death, whom they hoped would have been the Deliverer of Israel, a great and triumphant king, that he would not only deliver them from the Roman yoke, but that he would make Judea the greatest kingdom upon earth in worldly grandeur; and that he, as a mighty king and conqueror, would reign over them in Judea;

Jesus then addressed them in these awakening expressions, "O, slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory?" and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. But how different was our Saviour's reply to their expectations! Have you not sense enough to understand the real meaning of all that the Prophets have spoken? Have they not told you, that it was necessary, for the Redemption of mankind, that I, the Messiah, should have suffered as I have done, before I entered again into the kingdom of Heaven? and he then shewed to them the various passages throughout the whole of the Old Testament in which his Sacrifice was foretold and pointed out. When they reached Emmaus, they first invited, and then constrained him to go in and remain with

them : as they were sitting at supper with him, he then brake bread in the same manner as he had done at the Last Supper before his Death ; by this, their eyes were opened, and they knew him. The purpose of his having spoken to them was now answered, by his Divine Power he vanished out of their sight. After he was gone, the two astonished and convinced Disciples said to each other, " Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked to us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? and they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the Eleven gathered together." When they reached the Eleven who were assembled together in a room with doors shut for fear of the other Jews, these chosen Disciples (afterwards Apostles) said to them, " The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon," that is, unto Simon Peter. The Lord had favored this zealous, though on one occasion, waver-

ing Disciple, with an especial appearance after his Resurrection: the two from Emmaus then gave an account of their interview with Christ, "and they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you.' But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, 'Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and blood as ye see me have;' and when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet;" he then condescended to call for something to eat, and ate before them, to prove the fact of his identity. And he said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you whilst I was yet with you, that all things must

be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Then opened he their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name amongst all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are witnesses of these things; and behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lift up his hands and blessed them: and it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into Heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen."

Immediately after the Disciples had finished their account, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them; but they were terrified, as if he were a spectre; and he then convinced them that it was actually himself who was risen from the dead, and addressed them; and reminded them of all he had said previous to his crucifixion, concerning the objects for which he had taken upon himself human flesh, and by his Divine power he removed the veil of human ignorance, and made them clearly see, how exactly he had fulfilled all that the Prophets had spoken; that it was necessary for that fulfilment, that Christ should have been crucified, and that he should rise again on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins, should be preached in his name, amongst all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are witnesses of these things; and behold, I send upon you the promise of my Father, that is, that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter,

should descend upon them. If you turn to the conclusion of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, parallel with this account, you will see that St. John expresses that "some doubted." I consider this as one of the great proofs of the truth of the Gospels: no fabricator of a story would have admitted that any one had doubted; it is plain that the Disciples who were present, (for Thomas was not with them,) did not doubt, as is clear from their subsequent conduct: but some of the Jews who were with them did, at that time, doubt in opposition to their very senses. St. Matthew adds, the particulars of the injunction of baptizing all nations in the name of the blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and he promises that his Divine influence shall attend them to the end of the world.

After these declarations, made by our Saviour himself so immediately before his Ascension, it is scarcely necessary

to proceed to the other parts of the New Testament, for proof of the great Doctrine of the Atonement. Still, however, it may be useful to shew, that, after the promised descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles had taken place, they, being no longer timid or despairing, but bold, confident, and inspired, they declared the truth with zeal and firmness, despising persecution, and even death. That they affirmed the necessity and truth of the Atonement throughout their different Epistles. St. Luke's elegantly written account of the Acts of the Apostles, is merely a continuation of his Gospel, and relates to the transactions which took place during thirty years after the Ascension of Christ. Having so peremptorily spoken of the Sacrifice of the Blood of Christ in his Gospel, he rarely notices it in this work on the Acts of the Apostles.

The two chief things which he makes known are, the Descent of the Holy

Ghost upon the Apostles according to the promise; and the miraculous Conversion of St. Paul.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Chap. iv. verse 25. "Who was delivered for our offences."

Chap. v. verse 6. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Verse. 8, &c. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the *Atonement*."

The whole chapter is one continued chain of argument and proof of the *Atonement*.

Chap. viii. verse 32. "He that spared

not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," &c.

First Epistle to the Corinthians. Chap. vi. verse 20. "For ye are bought with a price."

Chap. xv. verse 3. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Chap. v. verse 14. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."

Verse 18. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."
"He had made him to be sin for us,

who knew no sin; in that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Epistle to the Galatians. Chap. i. verse 4. "Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God."

Chap. iii. verse 13. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Epistle to the Ephesians. Chap. i. verse 7. "Jesus Christ, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Chap. ii. verse 13. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Epistle to the Philippians. Chap. ii. verse 6. "Christ Jesus 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, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Epistle to the Colossians. Chap. i. verse 12. "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have *redemption* through *his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins."

First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Chap. i. verse 10. "And to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

Chap. v. verse 9. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain

* Literally "emptied himself," i. e. of his Divine glory, *κενωσας*.

salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us.”

First Epistle to Timothy. Chap. i. verse 15. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”

Chap. ii. verse 6. “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

Second Epistle to Timothy. Chap. i. verse 9. “God, who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”

Epistle to Titus. Chap. ii. verse 13. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and

our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.”

Epistle to the Hebrews. Chap. i. verse 1. “ God, 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 Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Chap. ii. verse 9. “ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

Verse 14. “ Christ also himself took

part of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy the devil."

Chap. vii. verse 26. "For 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 sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

Chap. ix. verse 12. Christ by his own blood entered in once unto the holy place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

Verse 22. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

Verse 26. "And now Christ once in the end of the world hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Verse 28. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them who look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Chap. x. verse 10. "By the will of God we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once."

First Epistle General of St. Peter, Chap. i. verse 18. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, &c. but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

Chap. ii. verse 20. "For what glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your

sins, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also *suffered for us*, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed."

Chap. iii. verse 18. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God,) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

First Epistle General of St. John. Chap. i. verse 7. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Chap. ii. verse 1. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Chap. iii. verse 16. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

Chap. iv. verse 9. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that he might live through him;" "and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

The Revelation. This sublime book being almost wholly prophetic, does not admit of much allusion to doctrinal matters, but at its very commencement in the salutation to the seven churches, John says,

Chap. i. verse 5. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Although numerous texts and chapters have been passed over, which bear witness to the great consoling truth of Christ being our Redeemer and Saviour, yet sufficient texts have been quoted to convince all but those who "will not see." That the Doctrine of the Atonement is the Doctrine of the Church of England is evident, but the question is not what is the Doctrine of our Church, and which pervades all the parts of our excellent Liturgy, but whether the same does not pervade the whole body of the Scriptures, as expressed prophetically in the Old Testament, as exemplified and declared by Christ himself in the Gospels, and afterwards confirmed by his Apostles in their Epistles. It may be asked by ob-

jectors, what motive can any one have to deny this Doctrine, which is in its very nature so consolatory, but a persuasion that it is not to be found in the Bible? We do not take upon us the onus of accounting for the motives of objectors, or the operations of their minds. The Scriptures point out various motives for persons "causing divisions," but they are all resolvable into the vanity of human reason, and the misapplication of it. As to the Doctrine being consolatory, there can be no real consolation in it, if the Doctrine be not true. Jones's observation in his "Essay on the Church," which has been often quoted, is an applicable answer to the disbelief of Unitarians. "We know nothing of this world, if we think all men are friends to their own spiritual interests. Many will rather have recourse to their own imaginations, and, when pride has got possession of them, they are above being directed. Some accept the terms proposed, they

believe in the promises of God, and are saved. Of the rest, some do not see how they can be saved in this manner, and others spend their lives in vanity, and never think whether they can or cannot." When it is asserted by the Unitarians, that Christ came into the world solely to prove the truth of the Resurrection from the Dead, and that his sufferings had no object whatever but as a preparation for his Resurrection, the great hope of mankind, and the whole system of the operations of Providence, are at once destroyed. No one could hesitate to say that, were there no Atonement for the sins of mankind, annihilation would be preferable to immortality. "What!" may be exclaimed, "cannot a sincere repentance meet with acceptance from a God of infinite mercy?" the Scriptures will tell you, No, not repentance alone; repentance is only one condition of pardon, but it cannot avail without the Atonement made by the shedding of the

blood of Christ. *That*, through the grace of God, is the sole cause of our salvation. "There is no other name under Heaven given to man, whereby we may be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance cannot render null the sin that we have committed. The sin committed by us must appear against us; as well as that taint of original sin inherited by us from our first parents. It is evident, from the declarations of Scripture, that we are unable of ourselves, that we have no power to purify ourselves so as to be fit to meet that God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Had not, therefore, Christ died for us, and rose again for our justification, we should have been "yet in our sins;" we should have been given up to the justice of God without hope of mercy. Well does the Apostle add, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are" indeed "most miserable." The Apostle here, no doubt, alludes to the persecution of

himself and of others at the time in which he is writing; but the words are applicable to all mankind. If we have no hope in that Redemption purchased for us by the blood of Christ, what expectation of pardon and acceptance can even the best entertain in the future and immortal state? imperfect as we all are, there being none who do good, *i. e.* absolutely without any mixture of error, we are not fit to appear in the presence of the Deity, unless our imperfections and sins have been atoned for, and ourselves washed from those sins by the blood of Christ. The Death of Christ being called a Sacrifice for sin, we are told by these enlightened objectors, is called so only figuratively with allusion to the ancient sacrifices. What! is the substance to depend upon the shadow, and not the shadow on the substance? is the whole design of the Scripture to be reversed? are all those circumstances, and institutions, which were merely

typical and preparatory, to be considered as substantial, and the life and death of the Messiah to be reduced to an empty shade? Why do not Christians now then offer up bulls and goats as sacrifices? St. Paul shall give the answer; read the whole of those two striking chapters, the tenth and eleventh, of his Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Doctrine of Atonement is so clearly set forth, that not all the ingenuity and abilities of man can rationally controvert it.

I will conclude with St. Paul's affectionate address to his countrymen, after he had fully explained to them the great truth, "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated to us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,

and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.”

May you, my friend, may all those who are still wilfully blind, as well as the worldly, who have hitherto not attended to this important subject, embrace with joy and gratitude, with faith and repentance, this gracious and free Redemption. If this be rejected, there remains “no more remission of sins.”

“How then shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”

LETTER IV.

On Regeneration.

WHAT is Regeneration?

It might have been imagined, that any one having received a liberal education, would reply to this question without doubt or difficulty.

And such would be the case, if all possessed singleness of heart, an understanding spiritually inclined, and capable of comprehending the whole tenor of Scripture. A perverted interpretation of this Doctrine has arisen from persons more inclined to a quibbling about words and terms, and feeling a vanity in disputing about the plainest expressions, or, in one word, delighting in logomachy.

Such love to "minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith," and disregard the injunction of

St. Paul to Timothy, "Charge some that they teach no other Doctrine." That there is another Doctrine taught than that which is taught by the Church of England, is too well known by the confused mass of controversy that has issued from a certain description of the clergy. Those who deny the great Doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, will be naturally expected to deny the minor spiritual Doctrines; for, if the two great Doctrines be not true, the minor ones fall to the ground; and their opinions being fundamentally erroneous, can excite no surprise; but those, who not only acknowledge these great truths, but have actually given their assent to *all* the Doctrines of the Church of England, can, in no rational or honorable way, account for their secession from any part of those Doctrines: it cannot, therefore, but be a circumstance to be lamented, that all "are not Israel who are of Israel:" they enlist under the banners of the Church,

accept the emoluments, and then contradict the assent which they had before given, and endeavour to undermine that Christian citadel, which they were bound by their solemn oaths to defend.* That

* As the clergy, to whose works I allude, are those who have denied the propriety of that interpretation which the Church of England affixes to Regeneration, I wish, in pure Christian charity, merely to *defend* our Doctrine, and to shew to them, that they are guilty of no small error in endeavouring to create a schism in that Church to which they professedly belong.

I respect both the abilities and the private character of many of these clergy, whom I well know; but I cannot approve, or respect, their conduct in raising objections without any rational grounds, and contributing to unsettle the faith of those who are but little acquainted with scriptural truths. As, however, Mr. Wall has expressed my feelings in better language than I might possibly adopt, I beg to draw the attention of those who deny that Regeneration constantly accompanies Baptism, when rightly administered and rightly received, (for that is the position of the Church of England,) to the following quotation from the work of Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Vol. II. page 407.

“False doctrine on fundamental points (such as the Trinity and the Atonement) put a bar to our com-

regeneration takes place at our Baptism, and at no other period, is the Doctrine of the Church of England : no one can deny that, who reads our baptismal Services,

union with those who teach them ; but, if they be not such, we have a plain direction and order from St. Paul, to bear with one another, to receive one another to communion, notwithstanding differences in them, and not to judge or despise one another for them. He (*i. e.* St. Paul) has a discourse purposely on this subject ; it begins with the fourteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, to the end of that chapter, and ending at the eighth verse of the next. He instances a man holding contrary sides in the disputes which troubled the Church at that time ; he both begins and ends that discourse with a positive command, that they *receive one another* notwithstanding them ; and he plainly means, (as whoever reads the whole place will observe,) to commune with them as brethren, and to live in peace and quietness with one another ; which last they were to do even with the Heathens their neighbours. He orders those of them that were positive and sure that their opinion was right, to content themselves with that *full persuasion of their own mind*, and to take it for granted, that they are not bound to bring all the rest over to their opinion, nor yet to forsake their communion, if they will not so be brought. (Verse 22.) “ Hast thou faith ? (Faith here signifies that *full persuasion of mind* mentioned before

our admirable Collects, and indeed every part of the Liturgy where the subject is introduced. That it is the true Doctrine I shall now clearly, I hope, shew. The

at versè 5,) have it to thyself *before God.*" He would have them to be so modest as to think, at the same time, that others, as good as they, might yet continue of the other opinion. He shews, in the fifth and sixth verses of the fifteenth chapter, "that they may, notwithstanding these differences, *with one mind and one mouth glorify God.*" "Since in the main matters they were all of a mind." "The kingdom of God (he says) is not meat and drink, but righteousness," &c. and this is applicable to any opinions that are not of the foundation, *i. e.* fundamental. The kingdom of God, or substance of religion, does not consist in such things; and, as St. Paul says, "For meat destroy not the work of God." We may say of such opinions, Do not, for such things destroy the unity which Christ has made so essential to his Church. But it is otherwise of the fundamental Articles of our Faith, for in *them* the kingdom of God *does* consist. If any practise idolatry, or the worship of any but the true God, or do deny the Divinity of Christ, or his death for our sins, or the necessity of repentance and a good life, or the belief of a Resurrection and Judgment to come; the Apostle would never have bid us receive such, or hold communion with them. But there are, besides those who hold

meaning of "Regeneration" all agree to be a "new birth," or "being born again." The term "Regeneration" occurs in only two places in the New Testament; in St.

such doctrines pernicious to the foundation, abundance of Christians that hold the same faith in all fundamental points, who do yet live in divisions and separations, renouncing and disowning one another's communion.

"Now this is, on the other side, the most contrary to the nature and design of Christianity of any thing that could be devised, for Christ, as he is but one head, never designed to have more than one body." "But this mode of proceeding in consequence of minor and partial opinions, 'makes Christ's Church a rope of sand;' it perpetuates for ever those strifes and janglings about opinions which, in one communion, would quickly cease," but this separating plan is that which the ancient Christians call "the *setting up altar against altar*." "It remains, therefore, that there is no other way to answer the design of Christ, than that Christians of the same faith should hold communion, and receive one another, notwithstanding their various differences in minor opinions. And if any one object against his joining with the Established Church where he lives, that he is of one opinion, and they of another in any thing; he need only call to mind, that this is the very case that St. Paul was here speaking of, when he bids them *receive one another* notwithstanding their

Matthew, it evidently means our revival on the day of judgment, and therefore has no reference to the present question. In St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, I maintain

various differences on minor points. They whom he addresses were likewise of different opinions, and it was on occasion of such differences that he gives them this command of not separating on account of them." To these observations of Mr. Wall, I will add, that however any error in opinion is to be lamented, yet division is much worse than any error on any minor points. Could it possibly be necessary for such seceders, (for I cannot call those persons Dissenters, who still profess to be members of the Church of England,) to lie in wait ready to attack the writings of the heads of that Church to which they belong, when those prelates have faithfully expounded our tenets according to our Articles and Liturgy? Do they not, in fact, attack the very Articles to which they have declared their assent? What volumes of controversy have they poured forth, not to edify, but to distract! That these volumes were perfectly uncalled for, that they arose solely from a vain desire of some discrimination and distinction, will appear from the following statement, with which a biographer closes the life of one of the chief leaders of the secession. These are his words. He (*i.e.* the deceased writer) never scruples to unite together those truths of Divine Revelation, which, to many, appear as if they must exclude one another. He teaches,

that it refers to our new birth at our Baptism, and to no other. A misinterpretation of our Saviour's remarkable answer given to the enquiries of Nicodemus, has occasioned this perverse controversy. St. John iii. 3. "Jesus answered and said unto him, ' Verily,

FIRST.

The total inability of fallen man, unrenewed by Divine grace, to render any acceptable obedience to God.

But on the other hand,

He never, for a moment, suffers himself to be entangled in the reasonings of those who would, on this ground, call in question the obligations of the Divine law, or forbear to press upon all men the commands and exhortations which the Sacred Scriptures do certainly address to them.

SECONDLY.

That no man can come to Christ except "the Father draw him."

Yet he feels no hesitation in connecting with this the assurance,

"Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out," or the inexcusable guilt of those who "will not come."

verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus saith unto him, 'How can a man be born when he is old; can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily, I say unto

THIRDLY.

He believed that God knew whom he had chosen, and that none would eventually obtain eternal life but those, whom the Father, by his own purpose and grace, had "given unto Christ."

Yet he unequivocally teaches,

That Christ died for all men, and that none fail of being saved by him, except by their own fault.

FOURTHLY.

He asserts, with unwavering confidence and zeal, that our justification is altogether free, of grace, through faith, for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ alone, and in no degree for our own workings and deservings.

Yet he equally maintains,

That he who doeth righteousness, is righteous, seeing all true faith must and will prove itself by its fruits, and insists that we are still under the law as a rule, though delivered from it as a covenant.

thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born

FIFTHLY.

He held that all true believers in Christ would be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, and will certainly persevere unto the end.

But still we must not draw back, but strive to make our election sure.

Whoever will analyse these two statements of the opinion of the same man, will see how little occasion there was to issue an inundation of controversy about mere words and terms, which could answer no purpose but that of confusion. In the five statements above made, in what does the Doctrine differ from that which is avowed by the Church of England? To shew there is no difference as to the first statement, I will only quote a few expressions in our Collects.

Second Sunday in Lent. "Almighty God, who seest that we have *no power* of ourselves to help ourselves," &c.

Easter Day. "We humbly beseech thee that, as, by thy *special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires,*" &c.

Fifth after Easter. "O Lord, *from whom all good*

of the Spirit is Spirit. 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

things do come, grant to us, thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same through our Lord Jesus Christ."

First after Trinity. "O God, the strength of all them, who put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers, because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, *we can do no good thing without thee*, grant us the help of thy grace," &c.

Ninth after Trinity. "Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit, to think and do always such things as be rightful, that we, who *cannot do any good thing without thee*, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Nineteenth after Trinity. "O God, forasmuch as without thee *we are not able to please thee*, mercifully grant that *thy Holy Spirit* may in all things *direct and rule our hearts*, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Many more similar expressions might be added, but our tenth Article expressly declares, that we are not able to do good works acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'” I will give a paraphrase of the above verses, according to the meaning which was attached to them in the earliest times of the establishment of Christianity, and is now attached to

The second statement may be answered in the same manner as the first.

The statement is made from our Saviour's words, in the sixth chapter of St. John, “No man can come unto me, unless the Father, which hath sent me, draw him:” but Christ afterwards adds, “Every man, therefore, that *hath heard*, and *hath learned*, of the Father, cometh unto me.” This shews, that by the word “draw,” compulsion is not meant. The humble may hope, by their prayers, that God will draw them more and more to right faith and right conduct. The hardened, whilst he remains hardened and prays not for spiritual grace, God certainly will not draw.

The third statement requires no other observation than has been already made on the second.

The fourth and fifth statements will plainly appear unnecessary, as the eleventh and twelfth of our Articles assert the very same doctrine.

As Regeneration, or the New Birth, is not noticed in the above statements, I will now enter on that subject, and prove the objections of the seceders to be equally vain, trifling, and unnecessary.

them by the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England. A man is naturally born unreconciled to God, and subject to the Divine wrath, without hope of pardon, in consequence of the corrupt nature which he brings with him into the world, and the pollution of that original sin which he inherits from Adam; consequently, it is necessary that he should have a new birth; that is, a spiritual birth, or he cannot *see* the kingdom of God; that is, he can have no right comprehension of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, which cannot be discerned by man in his first carnal state, till he has been spiritualized by Baptism. In reply to Nicodemus's question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" &c. Jesus then more strongly and emphatically, and with a repetition of the solemn asseveration, "Verily, verily," replies, "except a man be baptized with water, and the Holy Spirit gives that power to the water inwardly to purify the

mind, as water outwardly purifies the body, he will not be fit, and he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born only of the flesh, must partake of the impurity of that flesh, and be excluded from any title to the favour of God ; but that which has a new and a spiritual birth, according to my institution, is washed from the corruption of his original nature, and is admitted by his Maker into a new covenant, and allowed to be a *candidate* for pardon, from which previously to his Baptism he was excluded. Do you wonder at this effect of the Holy Spirit? Do you expect to comprehend this, and all the other ways of God, with your limited faculties? You feel the effect of the wind, and you hear the sound of it, but you can give very little account of the causes of it, nor whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is the spiritual, or the new, or the second birth, far beyond any worldly explanation. It is one of the mysteries

of the Divine Will. It is sufficient for you to know, that this is the mode which God has most beneficently appointed, by which he, (wherever the Gospel is known,) who comes to this Baptism, and has a full belief in the efficacy of it, will be admitted to be free from original sin and the corruption of his nature, and thus undergoes a new kind of creation, or becomes a new creature, otherwise, as St. John the Baptist declares at the conclusion of this chapter, "the wrath of God abideth on him."

Baptism, then, is the new birth, and Baptism only. The objectors to this Doctrine somewhere assert, that we rely on the *opus operatum*, or that the sprinkling of water is sufficient to ensure our salvation. Where will they find such an assertion in our Articles or Liturgy? We only assert, that we are admitted by this sacrament to *commence* the Christian warfare. The wrath of God, in consequence of the grace of his Holy Spirit, is removed,

and no longer abideth on the baptized person; we are washed from our original corruption, and are (at the time of Baptism, if attended with faith) become purified. Now, if the disputers on this point deny that we are born again at Baptism, do not they unspiritualize the ceremony, do not they degrade it to a mere *opus operatum*? Do not they deny what we assert, that the Holy Spirit never fails to give effect to the ceremony, when it is rightly administered and rightly received? How is it possible it should be otherwise? Were Baptism an institution of man, superstition, or enthusiasm, might attribute an influence to the ceremony which did not belong to it, and they had no right to expect; but when all allow the institution to be Divine, must not the inward and spiritual grace always accompany the outward and visible sign? We consider it, as the Scripture directs us to consider it, as the means of grace which leadeth to the *hope* (not the cer-

tainty) of glory. In obedience to Christ, and in perfect faith and reliance on his word and promises, we come to his holy Baptism, not doubting that he will graciously receive the persons so baptized. None but an idiot will assert, that any mere *opus operatum* can be acceptable in the sight of God; it can only be acceptable to him when our motives for performing it are faith and obedience to his will. The offerers of animal sacrifice were pleasing to God, because they acted in submission to his Divine injunction: but when a new covenant was to commence, and animal sacrifice formed no longer a part of the Divine institutions, the Almighty declared his displeasure at the continuance of them. If the objectors, to whom I have alluded, were not born again at their Baptism, they have either been born again at some subsequent time, or they *must* be born again before the period of their deaths. They would find it difficult to point out the precise period, or precise

mode of their Regeneration, which would be generally applicable to all who have any hopes of being accepted by God. These objectors may as well expect (according to the question of Nicodemus) to enter a second time into their mother's womb, and be a second time naturally born, as to expect that they should have a second *spiritual* birth, after they have once experienced that new birth in Baptism. I consider one cause of their manifest error, is their confounding Regeneration with reformation and repentance; and another cause is, their determination not to see, that as we were *dead* at our natural birth, to all hope of the favor of God from the corruption of original sin, we become born again by Baptism, and entitled by that purifying spiritual washing, called by St. Paul, "The laver of Regeneration," to look up again to that favor: our "justification is by faith;" that is, in our humble reliance on the promises of God, and in consequence of that reliance coming to his Holy Baptism; but

our salvation arises from our performing the *conditions* of humbly endeavouring to do our duty, of repentance for Sin, of which even the best are guilty, but looking upon the Atonement offered by the blood of Christ as the sole *cause* of our salvation. I will endeavour to illustrate the Doctrine inculcated by the Scriptures by two statements of a worldly nature, which may make the gracious design of the Deity more plain to general readers. In common life, an infant may be born heir to a great estate, intended to descend to him and his heirs for ever, but not so unalterably fixed that the father may not have the power for just reasons to disinherit him: it may happen, that this heir becomes so unfilial and so disobedient, that the father does disinherit him; the father afterwards relenting, promises to receive his son again into favor, on his performing some stipulated act, but at the same time cautions him that, although he consents to receive him

again as a son, his *inheritance* will depend on the course of his general conduct being proper, moral, obedient, or else *at last* the inheritance would be forfeited. Now Adam was created by God upright, and was, if he were obedient to his Maker, designed for immortality; that was, the first and original covenant. Immortal life was his inheritance, and would have been the inheritance of all his posterity, had he not by disobedience forfeited that inheritance; to pass over the history of mankind as handed down through the Old Testament, and the covenant made with Abraham, we will at once come to the last covenant, that of the Gospel: by this, God graciously admits mankind so far into favor that, on the performance of a stipulated act, accompanied with faith in the Divine promises, they are again placed in a *possible* condition of recovering immortal life and happiness. Baptism is that stipulated act which, if received with humble and sincere faith,

makes us once more *candidates* for the kingdom of Heaven, and we are again allowed to be considered as children of God: by this, we become justified in hoping for final and immortal bliss, but unless we are sanctified also by the Holy Spirit, and our lives guided by the implored influence of the Divine Sanctifier, our Baptism does not, and cannot, *insure* our eternal salvation. In endeavouring to illustrate the operations of the Almighty by any worldly transactions, the parallel must always be very imperfect: there must ever be an unbounded difference between frail and finite agents, and the omniscient and omnipotent Creator: in the present case, God foreknew the disobedience of Adam, and his mercy provided a remedy before the world was made.

The other illustration may possibly be deemed more adapted to the great subject, as our Christian course is frequently represented under the figure of a warfare:

“fight the good fight of faith,” &c. And Christ is styled by St. Paul, “the Captain of our salvation,” in conformity with which our church directs us (when we mark the baptized child with the sign of the cross) to say, that we do so “in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end ;” we are also directed to pray in the subsequent petition to God, “that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.” In common life, a person, though born a *subject*, is not the *soldier* of his prince, till he has received a commission from his sovereign ; he then becomes capable of receiving all the advantages attached to his profession, and may, by valiant and proper conduct, obtain the highest honors which it is in the power of his sovereign to bestow.

Yet his commission does not *insure* him the reward of these honors ; they will only be conferred on those who do their duty.

Now Baptism is our commission ; by that, we are admitted by God to be soldiers under Christ, the Captain of our salvation, and enjoined not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but manfully to fight under his banner, and to continue his faithful soldiers and servants unto our life's end. Is it not clear, that we do not rely on the mere ceremony of Baptism, the *opus operatum*, for the *insurance* of our salvation ? We were, before our Baptism, buried in trespasses and sins ; we were before, precluded from the hope of immortal happiness by the sentence passed on our first parents ; but by this ceremony, graciously instituted by the Deity for raising us from the death of sin to the birth of righteousness, we are permitted to enter into the service of Christ ; and if " the rest of our life be," (as far as

human frailty will allow,) "according to this beginning," we shall then, most certainly, by faith in the Atonement made by Christ for our deficiencies, obtain the reward of entering into the kingdom of Heaven. Another mode of confounding the simplicity and clearness of the Doctrine is, by applying to infant Baptism some circumstances which can attach only to adult-baptism, such as actual faith and repentance.

In one respect, both the infant and the adult (if the latter comes to the ceremony sincerely penitent for actual sins committed by him, and faith in the sacred nature and effect of Baptism) are equal. They are both regenerated and washed from the contamination of *original sin*. The infant, because he could not have committed actual sin, could require only a release from the pollution of human nature; the adult requires pardon for his own sins, as well as for the transgression of Adam.

But, as in the Church of England, Baptism is rarely administered to any but infants, we will take no farther notice of the Baptists, or Antipædo-baptists, or Anabaptists, but leave these open, and therefore honest Dissenters, to their own customs, however erroneous; but we will tell those who profess to belong to our Church, and yet deny that Regeneration always attends the ceremony of Baptism, when rightly administered, and that it never takes place at any subsequent period, that they argue without a shadow of reason, and mistake reformation, or renovation, for Regeneration. I shall, for the last time, observe, that *all* infants baptized in the Church in proper form and order, are Regenerated, because the parents and sponsors who present them at the font, do so from a conviction, that a sacred efficacy, or the influence of the Holy Spirit will attend the ceremony, for which the minister and sponsors jointly offer up their prayers: as to the future life of the

baptized infant, if he does not perform the promises made for him at his Baptism, and which the sponsors undertook for him, that the child should perform, he then becomes subject to the wrath of God for his own *actual* sins, but still he has been regenerated, and purified from the taint of original sin. An adult (though it is hardly *now* worth while alluding to such in the Church of England) is, by faith and repentance, released both from actual and original sin; but as he is of an age capable of reflection, if he comes to the font without repentance, and without faith, he comes under hypocritical pretences, and he is no more regenerated by the ceremony of Baptism, than if a glass of water were thrown in his face in the public street. A man, or an infant, must be born again, not only of water, but of the Spirit, or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. For this reason an adult, who places no confidence in the agency of the Holy Spirit

at the time of his Baptism, is not regenerated or born again; but we may reasonably presume, that no adult would come thus to a ceremony, which would be empty and useless, and act in mockery of his Saviour and Redeemer. Christ has joined together in the ceremony the water and the Spirit; what God therefore has joined together let no man put asunder. It is impossible that any thing but a love of forming a sectarian and a pharisaical party, should have induced some writers of real abilities, but choosing to adopt some of the most unscriptural of Calvin's tenets, to pervert the plain Doctrine of Regeneration. They exclaim, "Do you imagine all baptized infants and adults will be sure of obtaining salvation?" When they ask the question, they know that we do not maintain any such thing; but they are determined not to see the difference between actual sin committed and unrepented of, and without change from vicious conduct to

the contrary, and the pollution of original sin. It is from the latter that infants are regenerated, and adults both from original and actual sin committed previous to their Baptism; if they come to it by faith and repentance: but any may, by want of conduct, want of faith, and want of repentance, lose the advantage granted at the time of Baptism, and, like Simon Magus, may, in consequence of that wilful and unrepented conduct, "have no lot or part in the matter."

The denial of Regeneration being confined to Baptism, opens a field for the wildest vagaries that poor weak human nature ever exhibited. I need only refer to the History of Methodism, where may be seen an account of the "Agonies of the New Birth," which some have professed themselves to have experienced, and which could only have proceeded from the brains of the most pitiable maniacs.

I will here introduce a few opinions out of the numerous passages which might be mentioned, as expressed on the subject of Regeneration and Baptism by the ancient Fathers in their writings, (as collected by Mr. Wall,) and then conclude with a recapitulation of the whole argument.

Justin Martyr, who wrote within forty years after the time of the Apostles, declares plainly, that Baptism was substituted for Circumcision; consequently, whatever was the object or the effect of the one, a similar object and effect must be attached to the other. Now Circumcision was the sign of admission to Judaism, as directed by Jehovah; so Baptism is the sign of our admission into the privileges of Christianity. But as it is pronounced by St. Paul, that "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the

heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." So Baptism, which is a sign of an infant's Regeneration from original sin, will not avail to his salvation, unless he afterwards performs the promises then made, and lives worthy of the privileges to which he was then admitted. Justin Martyr also proves that the word "Regeneration" was used to denote Baptism, as our word "christening" denotes it. The "Fathers" at that time understood that rule of our Saviour, "Except a man be regenerated, or born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Of water Baptism, and concluded from it, that without Baptism no person could come to Heaven, and so did all the writers (without exception) who wrote within four hundred years after the Apostles. Whereas some moderns use the word "Regeneration," or new birth, for repentance and conversion, whether it be accompanied with

Baptism at that time or not; but the ancients did not *so* interpret the word. I have already stated that St. Paul uses it for Baptism in his Epistle to Titus: the washing of Regeneration is there the washing of Baptism.*

Gregory Nazianzen, when he endeavours to deter a baptized person from falling back into sinful courses, tells him "there is *not another* Regeneration to be had, though it be sought with ever so much crying and tears;" and he yet grants, in the very next words, that there *is* repentance after Baptism, but shews a difference between that and the free forgiveness given in Baptism.† St. Austin

* Mr. Wall (vide his work on Infant Baptism) observes, that Christ's expression of "Except one be born of water, &c." *must* mean Baptism; and if it be not so understood, it is difficult to give an account how a person is born of water any more than born of wood.

† Notwithstanding the present discussion does not relate to the propriety or impropriety of baptizing infants, but solely to the question, what is the effect

says, "an infant never loses the grace of Christ, which he has once received, but by his own sinful deeds. If when he

of Baptism, whether of adults or infants, yet I will here quote one of the admonitions, or directions, of Gregory Nazianzen, "Hast thou an infant child? Let not wickedness have the advantage of time, but let him be sanctified from his infancy, let him be dedicated from his cradle to the Spirit; give to him the Trinity, that great and excellent preservative."

It was evidently on account of the baptismal form being in the name of the blessed Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that Socinus endeavoured to do away with Baptism altogether, because this form, directed by Christ himself, pointed out the truth of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which he chose to reject; and yet his followers, who oppose the declaration of Christ, and deny the Doctrine, presume to call themselves Christians; yet those, who lived as many of these writers did, in an age so nigh the time of the Apostles, may be supposed to be better informed respecting Christian ordinances, than those who have lived in periods much farther removed from those times. These quotations have been introduced to prove, that our eminent Reformers, and compilers of our clear and excellent Services and Liturgy, did not introduce any novel doctrine. The novelty has been reserved for those who endeavour to explain away the spiritual grace of Baptism, and misinterpret its real meaning.

grows up, he proves vicious, he then will begin to have sins of his own."

St. Ambrose says, "There is no Regeneration without water."

When Irenæus speaks of infants being regenerated, he says, "It is plain that they are not capable of being regenerated in any other sense than that of Baptism, I mean the outward act of Baptism, accompanied with that grace and mercy of God, whereby he admits them into covenant, though without any sense of theirs."

These few quotations are sufficient to shew what were the sentiments of the early Christian writers. Although no *implicit* deference is to be paid to any uninspired writers, or commentators, and we are to take the Scriptures only for our guide.

Having stated the Doctrine of Regeneration in a dilated manner, and set it in different points of view, according to the interpretation of the early Christians, of the Church of England, and (I am fully

confident) according to the light set forth by Christ and his Apostles, I will now, in drawing to a conclusion, distinctly wind up the argument. I will then leave the case to the decision of all those who are both rationally and spiritually Christians, who have no sectarian and pharisaical pride to indulge, but who, from comparing the tenets of the Church of England with the plain language of Scripture, are willing, with unprejudiced understandings, to discern what is the important truth.

Be it recollected, that in the time of Abraham, all male children were, by the Divine command, circumcised; and in the time of Moses, the whole body of the Jews, men, women, and children, were baptized. When Circumcision and Sacrifice were abolished, our Saviour reserved the form of Baptism, and ordained that to be the initiatory seal, or sign, of the new covenant under the Gospel, to all who should be his Disciples, and who

were, by a right reception of this ceremony, so far reinstated in the favor and sight of God, that nothing but want of future faith and future good conduct, would prevent their finally entering into the kingdom of Heaven. Thus Baptism was substituted for Circumcision, as the indispensable mode of admission to Christianity, and his own all-sufficient sacrifice rendered animal sacrifice, vain and futile. St. Paul calls Baptism the Circumcision of Christ; and, with respect to the Jewish Baptism of proselytes, who were baptized unto Moses, it is worthy observation, that they called such an one's Baptism his New Birth, or Regeneration, or being born again. The ancient Christians, also, very commonly called Baptism by the name of sanctification. Adult Baptism very rarely occurs in the Church of England. I have already stated, that an adult coming to the ceremony without any faith in its efficacy, and without repentance for sins which he has com-

mitted from his birth to that period, cannot, in common sense, be supposed to be regenerated by that ceremony. The reasons for his being rejected from being a partaker of the New Birth, are plain and evident: he comes to the font insincerely and hypocritically, and it is impossible to suppose that God will bestow any especial and spiritual benefit on an unbelieving hypocrite. Such an adult, therefore, is not regenerate, because he is baptized *only* with water, and *not* with the Spirit. Christ declared *both* to be necessary, and the Church of England never separates the outward and visible sign from the inward and spiritual grace. If the latter does not accompany the former, it is then indeed a mere *opus operatum*, and *not a Sacrament*. Setting, therefore, aside the case of the Baptism of adults, in the statement I shall now finally make, I shall consider the effect of Baptism on infants. The effect then is retrospective; it refers to *original sin*, from

the corruption of which the baptized infant, when the ceremony is rightly administered, is *always* purified, and receives at that period the pardon of God, and is restored to his favor. He is born again to a new covenant, that of the Gospel: but according to that covenant, he must have a firm faith in all the Doctrines of the Christian religion; he must endeavour sincerely to obey the commands of Christ as his king, as well as rely on his merits and sacrifice alone for his eternal salvation.

As the infant was “by nature born in sin, and a child of wrath,” and has been made, by Baptism, “a child of grace,” yet this privilege may be forfeited; the grace of God may have been bestowed in vain. I will conclude, then, by offering up to Almighty God ^{for} myself, and for every baptized person ⁱⁿ the world, the following prayer, in the words of our collect for Christmas Day.

O Almighty God, grant that we, *being*

regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be a continuation of the prayer or a commentary. It contains some recognizable words such as "Amen", "God", "Spirit", and "Christ".]

LETTER V.

*On Predestination, Election, and
Reprobation.*

I BELIEVE there is no doctrine which is less understood by the great majority of mankind, than that of Predestination. I write not in opposition to certain sectarians, who misinterpret and misrepresent it; these Letters are written for the world in general, and to shew to that world that there is no doctrine really maintained by the Church of England, which is not consonant with the Scriptures. Our Articles are founded on Sacred Writ alone, and not on the interpretation of any human being whatever.

The seventeenth Article on Predestination and Election will be considered and explained in this Letter. The hor-

rible* doctrine of Calvin, that the great mass of mankind are unalterably doomed, by a Divine decree, to eternal punishment, and a few destined by the Divine Will to salvation. I shall merely notice, as the dreadful assertion has been so often proved groundless by the wisest of men, and has been so recently and so completely refuted by the present Bishop of Winchester, that my expression of abhorrence at such a statement is little required:† it shall be my endeavour to

* Calvin himself calls it "decretum horribile."

† Archbishop Tillotson observes, "Nothing can be admitted to be a revelation from God, which plainly contradicts his essential perfection, and, consequently, if any one pretends Divine revelation for this Doctrine, that God hath, from all eternity, absolutely decreed the eternal ruin of the greatest part of mankind, without any respect to the sins and demerits of men, I am as certain that this Doctrine cannot be of God; as I am sure that God is good and just; because this grates upon the notion that mankind have of goodness and justice," "for every man has greater assurance that God is good and just, than he can have of any subtle speculations about Predestination and the decrees of God."

prove, that St. Paul's Predestination is not Calvin's Predestination, but that the Apostle's Doctrine is entirely consistent with the idea which any humble and devout Christian would form of the designs of God; that it manifests, in the clearest manner, the united purity of his mercy and of his justice; that it is a brief exposition of the gracious operations of the Deity, for the salvation of fallen man.

I will first observe, that Predestination is not fate. There is, indeed, a grand system pre-ordained by the Almighty, and what that plan or system is, the Scriptures, if searched diligently, and studied devoutly, will clearly point out, as it pervades the whole Bible; but to ascribe any single circumstance which occurs to any individual as arising from fate, is a mark of a mind of a vulgar conception, as well as a want of knowledge of Divine revelation.

If we are told, that not a sparrow shall

fall to the ground without God knowing it, and that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, how much more must we consider that all the ways and actions of man are known to him. Nothing happens, or can happen, without his knowledge, nothing without his permission. Be it, however, carefully observed, that the permission of God is a very different thing from his absolute will. His positive decrees have a *general* view consistent with the grand system above alluded to; for even, where a nation appears to be peculiarly favored or punished, the favor or the punishment, even of a nation, does not arise from an arbitrary and peculiar choice in that case, but may be always traced to the original grand and general design of Providence; as an especial instance, the Jews were not chosen by God on account of their own merits, for their history proves that they were "a stiff-necked," and frequently an ungrateful people; they were

chosen from the Almighty's gracious approbation of the signal faith of Abraham; because it is ordained in God's *general decree*, that faith is the most acceptable offering which the creature can make to his Creator.

The private acts of individuals are permitted, but not willed: they are permitted, because we are free agents; that is, God does not interpose his sovereign power to prevent improper actions, but he leaves mankind to take *the decreed consequences* of such actions. To argue that God wills evil to be done, is to make him the author of evil, which no one can possibly assert, or could deny, if they did, that such assertion is direct blasphemy.

Among numerous proofs which might be given, that there are no absolute, arbitrary, and irreversible decrees respecting either nations or individuals, I will refer to only a few passages in Scripture. We will first take the eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah,

Verse 8. "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

Verses 9 and 10. "And at what instant shall I speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom; to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."

God, through the mouth of the Prophet, here plainly declares to the Israelites, that, though he had pronounced an intended punishment for their transgressions, they might still, by a timely repentance, turn away his anger from them. Could this declaration have possibly been made, if their fate had been irreversibly decreed, their destruction absolutely predestined? The two next verses expressly declare, that any favourable promise concerning a people, is a conditional promise, and that the fulfil-

ment of it will depend on their faithful obedience. The promise to bless a nation is upon the condition that they do not evil, and obey the voice of their God: but if they comply not with the condition, if they obey not his voice, they then forfeit every claim to the blessing that was intended.

We, secondly, select the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth verses of the fourteenth chapter of Numbers. "Because all those men, which have seen my glory and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the Wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened unto my voice, surely they shall not see the land; which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them, who provoked me, see it. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it." Here it is evident, that

because the people were disbelieving and disobedient, they were punished; the two *individuals*, Caleb and Joshua, (as the chapter will shew,) were rewarded for their confidence in God. We, thirdly, select the third chapter of Jonah. We are here told that the prophet had been sent to make known the intended destruction of Nineveh, but we also learn, that the people of Nineveh, struck and alarmed by the prophecy, sincerely repented of their former evil; and in verse ten, we read that "God saw their works; that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not." Is this to be supposed to militate against the immutability of God? undoubtedly not. God never resolved to reward or to punish, but according to obedience or disobedience; this *original* decree is immutable: but Calvinists never discriminate between the great law of God, which is always just, and an arbi-

trary decision on the lot of nations and individuals.

Let us, then, now examine the great plan, which the Almighty was pleased to ordain before the formation of the worlds, as it is set forth in the Scriptures. It is necessary that I should commence this statement, with a repetition of "the Rebellion of the Angels," on which I have fully spoken in my Letter on "the Atonement." It appears, then, that when Satan and his host rebelled against the power and supremacy of the Most High, and were expelled from Heaven to the bottomless pit, God resolved to create worlds, to be peopled with new beings in a state lower than that of the Angels. He placed in them human beings, to be wholly dependent upon him, and to be wholly obedient to his will; on this condition, he decreed that they should live in uninterrupted peace, and blessed with immortality. He decreed to give them a law, but at the same time

gave them free-will, that is, an option of obeying that law or not. By obedience, they were to preserve their happiness and immortality; by disobedience they would bring upon themselves degradation and death. But by his attribute of omniscience, God knew, or foresaw, that the wiles of Satan, the chief of the rebellious host, would so far succeed in his enmity to God, and envy and hatred to newly created man, as to tempt the first pair to an act of disobedience, and thus produce the temporary ruin of the race of man, and effect the corruption of human nature. Although, according to the Almighty's own decree of making this world a state of trial, he could not, consistently with that decree, so interpose as to prevent the partial success of the tempter, yet he provided, before the creation of man, the remedy for this calamity. He pre-ordained that his Divine Son should take upon himself our flesh, and in that flesh should suffer on the cross,

and offer himself as a Satisfaction and Atonement, for the sins of the whole world; and that all who believe in Christ, who are thankful for the sacrifice he has made for them, and endeavour to obey God's commands, and come to the throne of grace with faith and repentance, should obtain remission of their sins, and at the last great day of judgment, should be accepted with favor, and admitted into his heavenly kingdom. This is the plain outline of that gracious scheme of universal Redemption offered to fallen man. This is the Predestination of God. All the minor circumstances and individual acts of men, or even of nations, are wholly dependant on this, and no act whatever of man, is compulsory, predestinated, fated, or such as that man might not have avoided by the aid of that Holy Spirit, who always assists those who devoutly implore that assistance. All the evils which are so visible and prevalent in the world, arise not from God's Predesti-

nation, but from the transgression of his moral laws, and an infraction of his pre-ordained and indispensable rules. God ordains, that certain evils shall attend certain transgressions; but that is not compelling the transgressors to disobey him, and commit those errors: had they avoided the sin, they would have avoided the punishment. St. James says, "From whence come wars and fightings from among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, which war in your members? Providence does not interpose his power to prevent such wars, which naturally arise from the evil passions of mankind; but God generally turns the course of these evils to some beneficial purpose, such as to be the scourges on sinful nations to produce amendment, and sometimes for still greater purposes not at the moment discernable.

The merciful and gracious Predestination of God, is to offer, on certain conditions, universal Redemption to man-

kind; and the only reason why any one will not be saved is, because he does not comply with the conditions, and because he counteracts the preordained system of the moral laws of his Creator, and refuses to acknowledge his Divine Redeemer; in short, because he possesses neither Christian faith, nor Christian morals. The cross of Christ is the great object to which all must look. The monogram is held up to all, as well as when it floated in the air to the gladdened eyes of Constantine. "Sub hoc signo vinces."

A modern poet, when speaking of the unshrinking and magnanimous conduct of this great country, in the unprecedented contest with a late ambitious and antichristian power, alluding to our invincible navy, thus expressed himself;

"The red cross floated o'er the waves unfurl'd,
Offering Redemption to a groaning world."*

* Only one objection can be made to these nervous lines, and the best the poet ever wrote. I consider that certain expressions should be confined only to

In this manner is the Christian cross held out to all mankind, but that cross must be taken up and borne with faith, resolution, humility, and gratitude. Well might the world groan, had not this gracious Redemption been offered, and salvation placed in the power of those who, in pious hope and religious confidence, look forward to the fulfilment of the promises of God. Another of our poets has said, "Whatever is, is right." It appears very plain to me, that the metre of this verse prevented Mr. Pope speaking the real truth, "Whatever is *will be* right;" for the latter fact no one will deny. Whatever evils may disturb the course of private prosperity, or public welfare, they may be traced to the folly or vices of mankind; but a time will come when all will appear right, and all

sacred subjects: for redemption, deliverance would have been a better expression; and our hero, the Duke of Wellington, may be called the preserver, but not the *saviour* of his country.

the great attributes of the Deity, such as his wisdom, justice, and mercy, will be gloriously developed in the sight of men and angels, and all presumptuous and profane objectors be put to silence. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Can any one then believe that it can be right for the Judge of all the earth to doom irreversibly (however humble, believing, and contrite be their character) the greater mass of individuals to eternal punishment, and select a few from his arbitrary will, (notwithstanding the most atrocious and unrepented conduct,) for eternal salvation? Could such a Doctrine be incontrovertibly proved to be plainly revealed in Scripture, it would be our duty to bow in humble silence and despair; but the day spring from on high hath visited us, and opened a brighter scene. What is the meaning of the word Gospel, *Ευαγγέλιον*, is it not good tidings? Can the wretched doctrine of Calvin be good tidings? But we have heard the

words of the angel, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all* people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." To that Saviour we will look with pious faith, and humble obedience, feeling the fullest confidence that those who endeavour to do their duty, and trust in him, "God will in no wise cast out."*

* To those, who are desirous of being wise "above that which is written," who are not satisfied with believing in revealed mysteries, but are eager to scrutinize with their weak, but too curious eye, into the mode of God's nature and decrees, who employ metaphysics and philosophy to investigate truths, which are far out of the reach of both, I recommend to follow the example of the great Johnson, and join with him in the following prayer.

Dr. Johnson's Prayer against inquisitive and perplexing thoughts.

"O Lord, my Maker and Protector, who hast graciously sent me into this world to work out my salvation, enable me to drive from me all such unquiet and perplexing thoughts, as may mislead or hinder me in the practice of those duties which thou hast required. When I behold the works of thy hands, and consider the course of thy providence, give me grace

Reflections on the seventeenth Article, and a brief statement of its real Doctrine.

The great seed-bed of Calvinistic error, as to Predestination, is St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. This error has arisen from selecting and misinterpreting particular passages ; but above all, from not considering the object which the Apostle had in view when he wrote the Epistle. St. Paul, previously to his miraculous conversion, had not only all the feelings and prejudices of a Jew, but, from the fervor of his disposition, was more bitter than others against the promulgation of

always to remember, that thy thoughts are not my thoughts, nor thy ways my ways ; and whilst it shall please thee to continue me in this world, where much is to be done, and little to be known, teach me, by thy Holy Spirit, to withdraw my mind from unprofitable and dangerous inquiries, from difficulties vainly curious, and doubts impossible to be solved. Let me rejoice in the light which thou hast imparted, let me serve thee with active zeal and humble confidence, and wait with patient expectation for the time in which the soul, which thou receivest, shall be satisfied with knowledge. Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake."

the new Doctrine of Christianity. As soon as the conviction of the truth of Christ's mission was thus supernaturally forced upon his mind, the same fervor which before possessed him respecting the efficacy of the Mosaic law, and the privileges of his nation, impelled him to display uncommon zeal in the propagation of Christian truth. His whole soul seems to be impressed with an ardent desire of making amends for his involuntary error, and exceeding all others in exertion to promote the truth of the Christian covenant, because (as he says in his Epistle to the Galatians) he had persecuted the Church of God. His warm-hearted affection for his countrymen was such, that he earnestly desired to convince them of their error, in considering themselves as exclusively entitled to the favor of God; he admonished them, that the law of Moses was not intended to be perpetually observed, that the moral part only was to remain for universal adoption. He as-

sured them, that by the new covenant of the Gospel, Redemption and Salvation were extended to the whole universe, to the Jew first, and afterwards to the Gentile.

That the Jew could not be justified by the works of the law, nor because they were of the seed of Abraham, but that those Jews, who rejected the new covenant of the Gospel, would be necessarily rejected by God. That there was no justification for them, or others, but by faith in Christ; that, besides the original corruption of human nature, from which the Jew was not exempt, no performance, either of the levitical or the moral law, could be so perfect, as to enable any one to stand justified in the sight of God. That they must be justified by coming to the ceremony of Baptism, with full faith in the promises of God; this was the only justification, the justification by faith. That now the converted Jews, and the whole body of the Gentiles, were

become the elect people of God; that there was no respect of persons with him, but that those who possessed a sincere faith in the Atonement of Christ, would benefit by that Atonement, as this was predestinated to be the general blessing offered to all faithful believers. That *all* were *called* to share in this blessing, but that it was *predestinated* that none should obtain it, but those who agreed to, and acted up to the stipulated conditions.

These, then, are the great objects which St. Paul meant to declare, and to establish in this Epistle.

That the law of Moses was ineffectual of itself alone to justification and salvation.

That these were effected only by an acceptance of, and adherence to, the Gospel Covenant.

That the Jews had no exclusive claim to the favor of God unless they accepted this Covenant. And, finally, that the Gentiles, that is, all true Christians, had

a complete right and title to all the blessings promised by the Gospel Covenant.

Having now shewn (I hope clearly) that Predestination refers only to the *general* and gracious purpose of God, to offer to *all* Redemption on stipulated conditions; having shewn that the Election does not arbitrarily refer to the state of individuals in a future life, I will proceed to analyze our seventeenth Article, and explain it according to reason and Scripture.

Seventeenth Article of Religion.

A paraphrase and explanation of the Doctrine as set forth in this Article.*

To grant eternal life and salvation to man, was the predestinated, or pre-ordained, purpose of God, before the creation of the world. He always decreed (though his councils, unless declared by himself

* It is requested, that the original words of the Article may be placed before the reader at the same time with the paraphrase.

in the Scripture, must be secret to us,) to deliver from eternal punishment those who embrace Christianity, and act according to its precepts, and who for that reason become "chosen vessels," (as St. Paul was,) and to bring them through their faith in Christ, and in his all-sufficient Atonement, to everlasting salvation. Wherefore those who are thus called by God to so inestimable a blessing, and who, through grace, obey the call in consequence of their humble but firm faith, and the aid of the Holy Spirit influencing their minds according to the purposes of God, they receive his free gift of justification; they are adopted and admitted to be considered as the children of God, they are made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, as far as the weakness of human nature will allow, and by repentance for any accidental error, and humble hope in Christ, they at length, by God's mercy,

attain to everlasting felicity. As the godly consideration of the predestined and gracious purpose of God, and of our Election in Christ, is an unspeakable comfort to sincere Christians, who feel conscious that their prayers for the aid of the Holy Spirit are heard, and that he influences them (though in a manner not distinguishable from the ordinary operations of the mind,) to mortify the works of the flesh, and that he draws their minds from carnal to spiritual, from earthly to heavenly things. He (the Holy Spirit) thus confirms their faith in eternal salvation, which they will enjoy through the precious blood of Christ, and kindles an ardent gratitude for this inestimable benefit. So for sceptical persons, who attend solely to the things of this world, and are so carnally minded, that they avoid thinking of spiritual and heavenly things, nor try to understand them, and are never influenced by the Holy Spirit, because they never implore his aid, are in

a perilous situation; and whenever the great subject of God's purpose, that the unbelieving and the profligate should suffer the penalty for their obstinate infidelity and unrepented conduct, is forced upon their minds, they are driven to the depth of despair, or rush headlong (because void of all hope of salvation) into sin and profligacy. Yet be it observed, that we must interpret the promises and declarations of God, as they are generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture; *i. e.* we must take the whole tenor of Scripture together, and not argue from particular and insulated texts; and we must, in our conduct, follow the precepts of our Maker, as they are clearly and expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

Election and Reprobation.

These terms comprehend the same Doctrine precisely as the Calvinistic interpretation of "Predestination." I have already alluded to the well-known cause of the Jews being chosen to be the elect

people of God. No one will deny that this was a national election, and not an election of individuals. The old covenant was a general covenant to the Jews as *a people*, and so is the new covenant of the Gospel to all the world. They were both conditional. An individual Jew was not acceptable in the sight of the great Jehovah, because he was circumcised as a sign of his admission to Judaism, unless the circumcision of the heart attended the circumcision of the body. As Bishop Horne observes, in his most convincing Sermon on "the case of the Jews," that the descendants of Abraham would not be accounted his seed or children, unless they did the works of Abraham; and the same argument will hold good in the covenant of the Gospel. A baptized person, though born again by that sign, or ceremony, from the death of original sin, will not secure to himself salvation, unless the heart be right towards God, and he proves in his life,

that he is desirous of acting in such a manner as is consistent with the duties of a Christian. The Gentiles are now admitted to the same privileges with the Jews, but those privileges may be granted in vain to sinful and unrepentant individuals. It is a curious circumstance, that some arguers for the positive and arbitrary election of individuals to salvation, are so far aware of their error, that they deny their belief in arbitrary Reprobation. Now, how does this matter stand? is this distinction possible? In common life, if two candidates contend for an office, to which only one can be chosen, whichever is elected, surely the other will be considered as rejected: but in this case the rejected one may still have such merit, that on a future occasion he may deserve Election, and may be elected. But how different is the Calvinistic Doctrine of Election and Reprobation! According to that, individuals are irreversibly destined either to hap-

piness or misery for ever. There can be no gleam of future hope to the reprobated, nothing but "a fearful looking for, of" eternal "judgment." Let us turn away then from this "darkness that may be felt." Be this black and dismal cloud of error for ever dispelled from the world. May the bright beams of heavenly mercy, which shine equally on the just and on the unjust, illumine our Christian Sion. Finally, when we elevate our voice in songs of praise and thanksgiving to our Saviour, let us acknowledge the blessed cause of our unbounded gratitude, and say, in the language of our sublime Te Deum, "For thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to **ALL BELIEVERS.**"

LETTER VI.

On Indifference to Religion, and on the Duty of Christians, whether Clergy or Laity, not only to declare their own Conviction, but to contend, by Argument, against those who are Unbelievers of any of the great revealed Truths of Christianity.

HAVING now stated the grounds on which the scriptural Doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement are founded, and both from the learned works which I have consulted, and a diligent examination of the Bible, I trust I may add, proved; having also shewn the rational interpretation, as I conceive, of Regeneration and Predestination, I shall proceed, by adding two Letters of a more general nature. In the present one I mean to shew, that it is chiefly owing to ignorance of the subject, and consequently to an

unfortunate indifference, that so many look upon the great and important truths of Christianity as if they were only a worldly and temporal concern, that they have full liberty to neglect them altogether, or interpret the Gospel not according to the revealed word of God, but as their own whimsical caprices, or weak reason lead them at the moment. If all religion is to be rejected, and the world is to proceed without its guidance, and temporal policy alone is to be deemed effectual, the Bible cannot be considered to be the book of truth, much less to proceed from the inspiration of God. But if religion be allowed to prevail at all, it must pre-eminently prevail; it cannot be secondary. Its importance demands that it should predominate over all worldly considerations, in proportion as God is beyond all measure superior to his creatures, and as our brief and mortal state cannot be compared with a boundless eternity. Those, whose minds are not

adequately impressed with the sacred nature of religion, are apt to look upon the different opinions and different modes of faith, in the same light as they regard different modes and forms of earthly government: as one is favourable to a republican form, another to an aristocratical, a third to monarchy, so they deem every mode of faith (for faith is the essence of religion) as a mere matter of opinion, and that an acknowledgment of a Supreme Being and Creator, is all that is necessary. Had not God been pleased to inspire the writers of the Bible to make known his will, his nature, and the worship he demands, man would then have been left to be guided by his natural sense of right and wrong, and to be ruled solely by the political laws of his country. But is this the case? Did God create man after his own image, and breathe into him the breath of life, of immortal life, and leave him then to worship stocks and stones, or worship nothing? we know he did not.

We degrade our nature, as well as dishonor our Maker, if we reject revealed religion. The prime and especial mark of our superiority over the beasts that perish, is our knowledge of God. Well knowing the motive which is illiberally attributed to every clergyman who writes in defence of an Established Church, I shall speak of it but briefly. I consider it as a sacred citadel, not only politically set up, but as absolutely necessary to preserve the spirit of religion in the country. It is a beacon, to which the truly wise will look up with respect, and on which both they and the poorer and the less educated will depend for their best hope and consolation. It is a citadel of refuge from worldly troubles and agitations: the bulwarks which are placed around it are merely of a defensive nature; its first principle is toleration, so consistent with the mild doctrines of its blessed founder, and in a minor degree arising from the freedom of our happy constitution. Re-

flecting minds are well aware of the blessings which arise from a Church Establishment. The jealous, the thoughtless, and the indifferent, look with an eagle-eye at its imperfections, and aggravate them by their misapprehensions and misstatements. The Establishment, though wise and necessary, is human, and consequently imperfect. But, though the serious and the good see the errors as to worldly regulations, errors which it is more easy to see than to amend, yet they look upon them only as spots upon the disk of the sun. Others magnify the spots to such an extent, as if they totally obscured the Church's glorious and beneficial influence. This conduct, however to be lamented, would not be so unhappily prejudicial, if it did not tend to mix up in confusion the Divine Doctrines held by that Church, with the unavoidable errors of some parts of its political formation. Worldly combatants attack the Doctrines openly, while they secretly mean

to undermine the foundations of the citadel, and overthrow the Church. They, in fact, dare to strike at God, when they seem only to attack the errors of man. I have done with this part of my subject, but request those, who are dissatisfied with the present state of this kingdom as to religion and government, to look back to the earlier periods of our history, to reflect, both on the political tyranny of the rulers in those times, and still more to reflect on the blind bigotry and inhuman barbarities of the Roman Catholics.* If, then, they are not ready to fall on their knees, and return thanks to God for their having been born in this later period, they little merit the blessings which they enjoy. When knowledge has been so much increased, and the world has been so much enlightened by that beneficial diffusion, there is no fear of bigotry ever again, in countries

* Vide the recently published "Book of the Church."

where Christianity is in any form professed, raising its serpent-head in all its horrors. Mild concession is the best mode of lessening, if it cannot banish, error; and opponents will ever be more ready to listen to argument, when there are no partial and exclusive circumstances of which they can complain. The great enemy of religion is indifference. Let us but see a wish to be right, a desire of understanding the truth, then there is a field open, on which argument can be displayed, and by an impartial comparison of one part of the Scripture with the other, and a duly humble spirit of mind, the revealed purpose of God may be known; but, if no research is made, if no reflection is exercised on the grand and material subject, a Socinian, a Jew, a Quaker, a Roman Catholic, or even a Mahometan, may be held in equal estimation, and be equally approved; and the only and best name that can be given to a man who professes this kind

of indifference, is that of Deist. But as all, who acknowledge the truth of Scripture, must be assured that the only name by which we can be saved, is that of the Lord Jesus Christ, the contention, as to the right faith, is drawn into a narrower compass: wishing rather conciliation than offence, I shall speak neither of Quakers, nor Roman Catholics. Experience proves, that in both are to be found good subjects and good men, and fully equal in moral conduct and good intentions with the members of the Established Church, who differ from them in opinion: such, also, I allow to be the case with Socinians; but here is not a variation of opinion on minor points, here is a total overthrow of the whole system of the Bible: however, therefore, the hand of charity ought to be held out to them as fellow-men and members of society; it would be a palpable dereliction of our religious duties, if we neglected to controvert their errors; it is

the positive duty of Christians, who, in pious faith, adore the Holy Trinity, and place their hopes of salvation in the gracious Atonement made by our blessed Saviour on the cross, to contend earnestly for these great truths, to prove that they are incontrovertible, and not to allow the cup of salvation to be dashed from the lips of the humble and uninstructed classes of our brethren, by subtle sophistry, and perverse and false interpretation. With respect to the clergy, it is allowed a more imperative duty upon them, to exert whatever abilities they may possess in writing, in preaching, and in private explanation; but it must be highly praise-worthy in the laity, who feel convinced, that belief in these great truths is necessary to the salvation of mankind, to declare that belief openly, to make known to those who have less opportunity of study and inquiry, that these truths are no novelties, that the voice of Scripture declares that "they were

from the beginning." Novelties in arts and sciences are usually improvements, but in religion the case is totally different. It is well known to many persons, that some of our present judges have published anonymously several religious pamphlets: of one* of them I can speak from experience that, by the distribution of it, essential benefit has been produced. This fact must be consoling to the community in a general point of view, as well as in a religious one. A conscientious and firm sense of the truth of Christianity ever affording the highest motive for right conduct, the people may expect from such judges that justice will be impartially dispensed, and justice tempered by mercy. What respect does every true believer feel for the memory of a Lyttelton, a West, a Jenyns, and various other laymen, whose works,

* An earnest Exhortation to a frequent Reception of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by a Layman.

though the authors are in the grave, still conduce to the benefit and blessing of society! Living authors, among the laity, I will not name, their works are well known to have contributed to attract the attention of those, who had been previously little disposed to apply their minds to the subject, and have tended to check the licentiousness of free-thinking, and the levity of modern morals. Our Saviour himself has made a strong distinction between two different descriptions of persons, whom he calls "Children of this world," and "Children of light." As *he* has made this distinction, it must be one that is right and just: but the jealousy of "the children of this world" is awakened by this expression, and such are too apt to interpret those, who are really meant by our Saviour's denomination of "children of light," to be such as consider themselves to be righteous, and others to be worthless, and worthy of human censure and Divine wrath: from

this misconception, they denominate those who are fully impressed with faith in Christ by (what they intend as a sneer and a reproach) the name of "saints." The wise will never be led away by mere names on either side. I heartily wish every distinctive name, as to the religion of Christ, whether meant in praise or blame, were laid aside, except the one great name of CHRISTIAN. It is hardly necessary to observe, that the real distinction meant by the blessed Jesus, was between persons who only pursue worldly objects, and never think of religion, and those who deem worldly objects as worthy only of a secondary consideration, and make religion, or faith in Christ, the primary object of their lives, and in fact consider it as "the one thing needful." If the "children of light," by which is solely meant those whose humble minds are led and illuminated by the light of the Gospel, are vain of this belief, and "despise others;" surely the parable of

the Pharisee and the Publican will point out, that so far from their being approved of by their Divine Master, they are rather the children of presumption and self-righteousness, of darkness rather than light, and, in one word, are Pharisees. Taking then the words of our Saviour in their simple and true sense, I exhort the laity, who are "children of light," to endeavour to open that light, and diffuse it, as far as human endeavours can do, on "the children of this world." Whoever regards his own salvation must, if he is sincere, wish for the salvation of his fellow-creatures. Selfishness is incompatible with true religion. As the angels said to Lot, "Hast thou here any besides? Sons in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in this city, bring them out of this place." This will ever be the wish of those who are earnest respecting religion; they will exert their endeavours to bring their servants, their relations,

their children, out of error. But, as the blessed Gospel directs us to look upon all mankind as our brethren, shall no exertion be made to bring our brothers to a right understanding of the truth? Shall we shut ourselves up in privacy, convert our houses into monasteries, and think nothing of the world without, but leave the people to blunder on in the high ways and hedges of destruction? Shall we take no pains to persuade the ignorant that religion is not priestcraft; shall we suffer the wolves of blasphemy to devour the sheep, instead of guarding them, and guiding them, to their Divine Shepherd, and placing them in his sheepfold? It has been my lot to be placed in a situation where I have witnessed the benefits of lay exertion, and from my experience in that situation, I am convinced that there is no just cause for despair of the apparently most depraved and hardened. Some one has observed, "The rock must be struck" before it can be expected to

pour forth water, the water of life. Howard struck the rock, and his name will endure to the last hour of the world, and we may confidently hope his reward will be more than an earthly one. Honor is due also to the name of Fry! Every member of the Established Church, whose "heart is right towards God," will exult in such beneficent and truly Christian actions. He must have a very confined mind who can feel envy or jealousy of such exalted piety, because he considers, as I do, the tenets of her sect to be erroneous. What would this world be, if, instead of persons, differing in opinion, attacking with malignant feelings, their dissenting brethren, we only lamented their errors, but cherished an indispensable regard towards them as fellow-christians! I declare this sentiment not from indifference to the tenets of the Church of England; on the contrary, I have been charged (in consequence of some expressions in a former publication) with too rigid an adherence

to those tenets. Can there be too strong an adherence to the Doctrines, which we have avowed, and to which we have declared our assent and consent? But it is said, what right have any to talk of orthodoxy, what right have any to assert that the tenets of the Church of England are the only right ones? To this I will answer in plain and direct terms. In the first place, whoever does not *think* them to be right ought not to hold the ministerial office. I *do* think them right for the following reasons. There is no other persuasion which I could not confute, and which has not been confuted. Our tenets have never yet been *proved* to be false, and my opinion is, they never will, nor can be. Still the Protestant ground is open to argument, no door is shut against investigation. We pronounce no such doctrine as infallibility. We know what church lays claim to that character, and ascribes it to their mere mortal and peccable head. A writer in the last century,

in his letter to Pope Clement, observes, "The only difference (I quote from memory) between your church and ours, I find to be this; that you cannot err, and we never do; therefore, we have all the benefit of infallibility without the absurdity of pretending to it." I have digressed from my object, but I mean this Letter to be general and desultory. I return to declaring the duty of contending for the faith. The parable itself, in which our Saviour made use of the expressions of "children of this world," and the "children of light," will forcibly point out this duty. What does the blessed Jesus mean to enforce in this parable, but the necessity of *exertion*? He asserts, that worldly people are more ~~wise~~ wise than religious ones, but why? because they spare no pains, no diligence, to effect their objects; they will rise up early, and lie down late, and eat the bread of carefulness; but the children of light are satisfied with their faith only,

are dormant, and inert. Is not this rebuke from the highest authority, sufficient to command exertion? The enemy of the Christian faith is ever watchful, ever at his post, ever looking for opportunities to make a breach in our fortifications, and ought we to sleep, ought Christians to act as if they thought the citadel were not worth the pains of defending, as if it were a matter of indifference whether faith or infidelity prevailed, whether God or Mammon? If zealous Christians are either to distrust their own powers and capacity, and therefore argue, that it is not necessary for them to write, to preach, or to act; if each man is to sit down, as the great Athenian orator observed, "himself hoping to do nothing, but that his neighbour would do every thing for him,"* the enemy must necessarily prevail. When blasphemy, of the most

* Και παυσασθη, αυτος μεν υδεν εκασος ποιησειν επιζων, τον δε πλησιον πανθ υπερ αυτου πραξειν.

First Philippic of Demosthenes.

daring and odious nature, is disseminated, both covertly and openly, when its poison is designedly poured into the cup of the ignorant poor, to whom especially the Gospel was intended to be preached, is no hand to be lifted up to prevent the venom reaching their lips? We have seen, with amazement, the disseminators of such vulgar and execrable ribaldry countenanced, fostered, and supported by men of high rank, who personally are characters of excellence in their moral and religious sentiments, but who did not distinguish between religion and politics, and who deemed a punishment of blasphemy to be an attack upon the freedom of man, and an arbitrary exercise of power. Is there no difference between opposing the tenets of a church, and a satanic attack upon the very word of God? It may be argued, that, if we leave the blasphemers without any attempt to suppress or punish them, they will either sink into oblivion, or desist from vending

their empoisoned works. The experiment has been tried, and time given for repentance, and a change of their system: but have they changed? have they repented? On the contrary, the black flood has continued to pour in torrents; it is true, we cannot prevent the malevolence of the tempter from continuing in operation on mankind, but we are expressly told to "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Ought we not then to resist his imps and his agents? Is such resistance to be deemed persecution, and a denial of the right of private judgment? How manifestly erroneous is such an idea! it is perfectly confounding the two totally different things, power and right: every one has the *power* of vilifying his sovereign, and insulting his God; but no one has the *right* to do so. Every man in this country may, without impediment, entertain his own peculiar opinions as to religion, and even his open declarations are permitted: but an Atheist belongs to no sect, but the

sect of the devil. As long as the serpent remains coiled up in his den, and only hisses without darting his sting, and without pouring forth his poison, even he may remain unmolested by human laws, till the day of his final doom. Few will deny the propriety and necessity of punishing treason against an earthly monarch, and shall treason against the Almighty King of Heaven pass with impunity? If you argue that, because God declares "vengeance is mine," we should not pursue the Atheist by human laws, but leave him to his Divine Judge, I would agree with you, if he were a silent Atheist; but it is not a question as to the individual, it is a public question. The more numerous part of the community are endangered by the tongue and the writings of the blasphemer; our laws do not act with a spirit of vengeance on the wretched criminal, but are enforced to protect the ignorant from the contagion; their minds being nearly of the

nature of a *tabula rasa*, are open to any impression, and are led to the mistaken notion, that to defy the laws of God and man is the mark of a hero, and not of a villain. The punishment of death on the murderer is by all admitted to be just: if capital punishment is inflicted on him who "kills the body, and after that has no more that he can do," are the laws to sleep, and not endeavour to restrain those whose every effort is made to "kill the soul," whose joy it appears to instil sentiments which, if imbibed, must infallibly "cast both body and soul into hell?" For what purpose is any government established? St. Peter will tell you, that "the Lord has appointed it for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." I may also add, it is for the protection of the helpless and the innocent against daring violence of every kind, and nothing can be more daring or detrimental than the dissemination of infidelity and blasphemy. This prepares

the train for anarchy, this contains "fire under deceitful ashes;" but, unless that secret fire is extinguished, it is calculated, and indisputably intended, to reduce every beneficial institution, and the whole fabric of the Constitution in Church and State, to revolutionary dust and ashes. Paley, with great truth, asserts, that "nothing has so great an effect to prevent the formation and growth of religious sentiments in young minds, as levity and ridicule on religious subjects, or upon subjects connected with religion. The practice of it is highly to be blamed, and productive of great mischief: those who use it must be totally destitute of religious feeling and respect for their Maker. If those who hear it have that concern for religion which they ought to have, they will be inwardly shocked and offended by the levity with which they hear it treated; if they have not, it will prove that they never looked upon religion with that awe and veneration, which are due to it, and

which it is so highly calculated to excite." If such be the effect of idle, but mischievous levity, how much more detestable is the openly profane blasphemer, who hurls the bolt of blasphemy against God himself!

Imperatively then are true believers called upon to obey the injunction of St. Jude, and "to contend earnestly for our common salvation, or for the faith once delivered to the saints." That faith the Church of England holds to be a belief in "the Trinity in Unity;" therefore, either the Socinians degrade and dishonor the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, or the Christian Church has been guilty of idolatry from the very days of the Apostles. In the name of the Holy Trinity we were baptized: we must either consider our Baptism to have been nugatory, or our defence of that Doctrine is imperative. Bishop Horne says, "Ignorance and malice have sometimes pronounced faith to be want of sense; but,

surely, there is as little sense in withholding assent when it ought to be given, as in giving it when it ought to be withholden.* The chief object I have in view is, to shew the error of the Socinians. I leave all other sects, for the present, to their various shades of opinion. This is the grand error of the present day. This it is which abolishes the truth of revelation; this sets up a religion of its own, according to its own worldly conceptions; a religion without any influence of the Holy Spirit, without any Mediator, Redeemer, or Intercessor; a religion which might have been imagined and believed without any Divine revelation whatever: in short, it is the wisdom of man opposed to the revealed wisdom of God.

To controvert the unscriptural doctrines of the Socinians, every sincere and zealous Christian, whether layman or

* Vide Fourteenth Discourse, Vol. V.

minister, should join their efforts. But I will now speak in the very words of Bishop Horne: "Firmness and intrepidity become the warrior in the day of battle; an appearance of timidity and irresolution will give the enemy occasion to say, that we are not sincere, that we distrust the goodness of the cause, in which we are engaged. The spectators of the combat will easily be led to think so, and fall off to the adverse party. Of two contrary opinions, men may be at liberty to profess either; but both are not therefore true; in a matter of so much moment, neutrality must be criminal. 'Why halt ye?' says the Prophet; in other words, 'Use your judgment; choose your side; and adhere to it, till you see good reason to the contrary.' 'It is easy to foretell the issue of a conflict, if all be activity on one part, and indolence on the other.'

"The Socinian tenets are so flattering to human pride, so congenial to human

prejudices, that they are calculated to mislead worldly persons, who set their minds to disbelieve and despise mysteries. These tenets, too, are propagated with so much industry, management, and confidence, that they ought to be confuted and withstood." They have been so in the fullest manner, by Bishop Horseley, by Archbishop Magee, and by many others. Still is it necessary to continue the conflict of argument, for "though confuted, they can argue still." "It is a matter of the greatest consequence to mankind, that the Socinian errors should again and again be made manifest by every mode of writing. Benefit must ever arise from temperate discussion. Truth always has been, and will be, a gainer by it. Discussion forces attention, and prevents indifference, the enemy of all others most to be dreaded. It is not, however, in professed Socinian works only that their errors are inculcated. The enemy lies in ambush in the

pages of a review, in a biographical or historical work, in a poem, a tale, or a fable. Whoever takes up a work of this kind, not expecting Socinianism to lurk within its pages, is taken off his guard, and, if he is not deeply impressed with the truth of his faith, and with the importance of his continuing stedfast in it, he finds his reverence for the Doctrines of Christianity *filched* from him, rises, to his great surprise, half an infidel, and is not sure whether he has a soul, a Saviour, or a God." "Every possible mode, therefore, through other indirect channels, as well as by direct religious treatises, should be adopted by Christian writers to meet the enemy in every field, where he can possibly be found. Instruction should be administered in such a manner, and through such vehicles, as are most likely to suit the taste of the age. Every man should exert his abilities, however humble, in the service of his Maker and Redeemer. Among

the people, our opponents well know that execution is done not by deep and large treatises, but by small pamphlets, written down to the apprehensions of the vulgar, diligently circulated, and sold at a low price." These are the sentiments of Bishop Horne, who passed his whole valuable life in writing for the cause of religion, for the benefit of mankind, and to the honor and glory of his God. Such should be the feelings and sentiments of every conscientious and firm believer. The Bishop then reminds the clergy, that we undertake, at our ordination, "to be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word, and both privately and openly to *call upon*, and *encourage others* to do the same." He then adds, "The faith is a precious deposit committed to our charge: no care, no pains can be too great to preserve it to our people, and deliver it down to our successors in the ministry,

pure and unadulterated. Neither violence nor fraud should be suffered to rob us of the inestimable treasure. God and his Church expect, and require, that we fulfil honorably this engagement, so solemnly formed in the presence of both." After such an authority as this, I am surely justified in making this duty the principal subject of this Letter; but I also wish to exhort the laity, though not bound by the same solemn engagement as the clergy are, to give their assistance towards diffusing the knowledge of the ancient Christian faith, as it was once delivered. But there is one mode of promoting a right understanding of the truth more effectual perhaps, and beneficial than all others, I mean a *personal* attention to the different charity schools. Every one must be aware, that the more general diffusion of knowledge in these latter days, has enabled the lower orders of mankind to become acquainted with the objections urged against doctrines

laid down by our Church, as essential and fundamental. Those objections have been made in various ways to catch the populace, by sneers, by ridicule, by misinterpretation, false translation, and by wilfully false assertion; to these have been added, the most daring profaneness, and the most horrid blasphemy. These must be met by plain and familiar explanatory publications. But the best preventative measure is rightly to prepare the minds of the children of the schools. The country has been aroused to see the duty of extending general and national education to the children of the poor. The necessity has been acknowledged of contributing to the early training of the poor to habits of industry, and an understanding of the plain truths of Christianity. This is the corner-stone which, if it is well laid will support the great arch of society. Prejudice long held out against it, and the objections made would not be wholly unreasonable, if the schools are left to mere

formal routine, and people are satisfied with bestowing their money, without ever giving any personal attention: in almost the general opinion, there ought to be no choice about the education of the poor; it is an indispensable service which their superiors owe to God. Then, "fiat justitia," no evil consequences can arise but from the neglect of the community. Contributions will purchase the ground for the purpose it is true, but, unless that ground is properly tilled and prepared, the seed may as well be thrown upon a rock. Much is done by providing a school, books, and a master; but these are only preparatory tools. The master is wholly occupied in a stated form of instruction, from which he has no time to deviate, even if he has abilities sufficient to explain the meaning of what he teaches; he is a teacher of words, and not an instiller of religious sentiments and right ideas. Books alone, and repetitions of them, however frequent, will not avail. Not

only the words of our excellent Catechism, but all the *printed* explanations of it, are retained by children only by rote. This must necessarily first be done, but by this the memory alone is exercised, the understanding remains uninformed. They never comprehend the meaning of the words which they utter with their lips. Their understanding must be enlightened, and their hearts impressed by the most familiar and plain explanations, given them by voluntary and kind visitors. Questions (not printed in their books) must be asked, and no impatience shewn by these visitors, when they find (as they certainly will) how difficult it is to make them rightly apprehend, even the plainest parts of Christian doctrine. Of this fact the clergy, whose duty it is to examine candidates for confirmation, have repeated conviction. By explanation given in every varied form, by repeated questioning on such points as to the inexperienced might appear absolutely

unnecessary, is the knowledge of the plainest and most essential doctrines to be instilled. If in every parish there were a kind of tacit agreement among the better informed families, to assist the efforts of the minister, by their personal attendance at the schools, the benefit would, I am persuaded, be incalculable. It would tend to urge the masters to diligence, and would inspire the children with emulation, when they saw themselves noticed and regarded by their superiors. They would give their minds in a more attentive manner to such instructors, than they do to the unimpressive lessons of the parish-master. In one case their attention and their inclination would be excited by pleasure and gratitude, in the other they would be dragged to their task by discipline and compulsion. But this is not all, what opportunities would be given to visitors, who are at the same time kind and conscientious, and who place themselves in the situation of pa-

rents to those poor children, because their own parents have been too little instructed to be able to act that part themselves, of making impressions on their tender minds, which may be beneficial through life, and lead them to happiness in eternity! Encouragement might be given by trifling rewards for merit, by soothing attentions to their temporary wants. These will open their hearts, and render them more willing to receive, and more desirous of understanding spiritual instruction; teach them not only to read the Scriptures and the Liturgy, but earnestly inculcate, that idleness is not happiness, and licentiousness is not liberty; teach them that true liberty consists in restraining rather than in indulging our passions, that "the service of God," if cheerfully undertaken, is the only "perfect freedom." Point out to them the words of the Psalmist, "and I will walk at liberty," not because I defy the laws of man, and neglect my duty to God,

but the Psalmist adds, "because I *keep thy commandments.*" These are the modes of assisting the efforts of the clergy and the labour of the teachers, so as incalculably to increase the benefit, and to prevent the good, which ought naturally to arise from education, from being converted into evil; to meet the miserable ribaldry that is disseminated, place in their hands, in addition to the small scriptural pamphlets distributed by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, such other small pamphlets, as "The Tales of the cheap Repository," "The Cottager's Monthly Visitor," and *talk* to them of the subjects which they contain. Their minds will be relieved by the change from the regular routine of instruction. Amusement will produce attention; by such means may be checked the increase of juvenile depravity, if the corrupted are beyond the reach of amendment. The temple of Satan, which has so long disgusted the eye of every well-disposed

person, who has passed through the city, may be elosed. If the subject of these latter pages should be deemed inconsiderable, and the observations made upon it be deemed trite and trifling, I deny that any thing is trifling which is calculated to do good. No one can expect that education is to effect miracles; no one can hope that in every instance good effects will arise from the instruction of the poor; no one will assert, that they always arise from the education of the rich; it was, however, proved some time ago, that not one of those unhappy children, who were convicted of crimes, had ever attended the parish schools. This circumstance is at least consolatory, and ought to encourage the manifestation of that zeal which I am recommending. Be it, then, the inclination, as it certainly is the duty, of all the well-disposed among the laity, to promote, by personal attendance as well as by pecuniary contributions, the instruction of all

around them, to be the instruments, under the blessing of God, of pouring the light of the Gospel into the darkened minds of their poorer brethren, as well as into those of their own children. Let them bear their parts towards the fulfilling the prophecy, which gloriously declares, that "many shall go to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." If parents hope for a blessing on their own children, let them confer the best of blessings on the children of the poor. Let all who value the peace and happiness of the rising generation, and of society in general, promote the instruction of their fellow-creatures. Let them open the Bible to the ignorant, and cause the praises of God to issue from the mouths of "babes and sucklings" in the persons of the poor. I will conclude the subject by adding the beautiful words of Bishop Horne: "Grateful surely must it be, to angels as well as men, to behold those children behaving with reverence

and devotion in the house of God, who might otherwise have been committing acts of violence and fraud without; to hear the praises of the world's Creator and Redeemer proceeding from mouths, which might have been pouring forth a torrent of blasphemy and obscenity; to find a love of their duty and their business implanted in hearts, where a love of idleness and of mischief might have taken up its abode for ever." "To see children, therefore, wandering in darkness, ignorant of God and of Christ, reprobate to every good work, and every notion of good, and to continue idle spectators of such a scene, without making those exertions which it is in our power to make, this can never be right in any of us, clergy or laity; but must contribute much to the weight of that charge, which shall one day be brought against us: On the contrary, to succour those who are thus distressed for want of spiritual aid, to preserve little children in

a state of innocence, or reclaim them from one of error and vice, by leading them in the ways of truth and holiness: these are imperial works, and worthy the immediate Disciples of our Lord.”

Every institution of every kind, whether political or religious, requires continual attention and superintendence. A plan, however well formed and arranged, will fail of producing the effects originally designed, if it be not diligently watched and attended to. Indolence and supineness will rust the wheels of the best machine, and impede its necessary movements. We have, happily, a rest from warlike activity; let us make use of that opportunity, to increase the blessings of peace by personally promoting the national education, and by checking the spirit of ignorant infidelity; strenuous exertions in these great causes will contribute, more than any other methods, to industry and good order, to the prosperity and happiness of the country.

LETTER VII.

Concluding and General Letter.

“**RELIGION,**” says Bishop Horne, “came down from Heaven, and was designed to carry us thither.”* How has it come down to us, but through the Bible, which is the Word of God? In this sacred volume has his gracious purpose been declared, which he predestined before all worlds.

The same Bishop, with his usual piety and sublime simplicity, observes, “When God speaks, it is but reasonable that man should hear.”† The great error of worldly men is to separate faith from practice, our duty to God from our duty to our neighbour. It is considered by them, if they ever consider at all, that we have

* Volume IV. Sermon 16.

† Volume II. Sermon 1.

nothing to do with doctrines ; that conduct and sincerity constitute the whole duty of man. There can hardly be imagined a greater mistake. Atheism would certainly be a greater error, but I do not believe that there is a real Atheist in existence. An unbounded profligacy would also be a greater error, but I hope I may discredit that this is to be often found in its full meaning. Setting aside, therefore, such extreme cases as these, I would recommend the worldly to consider the purpose for which we were created. From the first moment that man was formed, a law or test was given ; obedience to the will of God would have rendered Paradise and the life of man eternal. Disobedience produced all the evils which have been experienced from that hour, and will continue till the final day. At that first period, when only one man was in existence, there was no society which the conduct of Adam could offend : it was God alone to whom he owed any

duty, and that, unhappily, he did not perform. It is clear then, that our duty to God preceded our duty to society, and it ought now to take the lead, and be the primary motive of every action. Our faith in God is indispensable; he has been pleased to reveal to us the nature of his being, and his gracious design of man's redemption; and these it is our first duty to believe, and to be grateful for that revelation, and for his boundless mercy.

* "When God, with so stupendous a preparation of prophecies and miracles, has published his word, can it be a matter of indifference whether we believe it or not? Can any man in his senses possibly think it such? Surely not. The Lord of Heaven and earth is not with impunity to be insulted and trifled with in this manner. He that believeth not the record which God hath given of his Son, as the beloved Disciple has justly observed,

* Horne's Sermons, Volume IV. Sermon 1.

‘makes God a liar.’ What is it that distinguishes a Christian from a Jew, a Turk, or a Heathen? It is his faith, his knowledge of Christ and the Gospel, his belief in all that has been revealed. When he no longer retains this belief, he ceases to be a Christian, he ceases to have any share or interest in Christ; he becomes an apostate from his religion.” The fact is, both faith and practice are necessary. But faith is the primary duty, it is that without which the practice of all other duties is vain. This appears throughout both Testaments; witness the faith of Abraham and that of Noah; and the blessings which Jehovah conferred upon them for that very virtue. How often does Christ pronounce “thy faith hath saved thee,” “thy faith hath made thee whole?” What was the answer given by the Apostle to the jailor, who asked, “What shall I do to be saved?” “*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*” It would be impossible that this

positive truth could be misunderstood, if it were even slightly attended to. But as Archdeacon Paley, in his peculiarly plain and clear language, says, that * "there are many who never suffer any thing of the kind to enter into their thoughts. There are grown men and women, nay, even middle aged persons, who have not thought seriously about religion an hour, nor a quarter of an hour, in the whole course of their lives. This great object of human solicitude affects not them in any manner whatever:" they find mysterious circumstances and doctrines revealed, which though indisputably true as to fact, yet are difficult to our comprehension, and far above human explanation: others see various evils occur in the world, for which they cannot account, (nor is it necessary they should,) and are driven by these manifold disorders into doubt and scepticism. But be it told to these unhappy sceptics,

* Sermon 1.

that the greatest evil that can happen to themselves or others, is the evil of infidelity. This life has often been compared to a journey. As then the traveller, who has a great and distant object which he is anxious finally to reach, pursues his road amidst rain and sunshine, disregarding the briars, the brambles, and other impediments, pleased, but not detained, by the flowers, the shrubs, and occasional beautiful scenery on his way, he strives, with firm resolution, to proceed to his destined mark, the hope of which cheers his spirits, and renders him almost forgetful of the unavoidable fatigue. Thus does the Christian, looking forward with lively hope to the blessed end of his pilgrimage, proceed without complaining of the evils which he is sure to see, and the impediments he is sure to meet with; enlivened, but not fascinated, by frequent comforts and innocent pleasures, till he reaches the end of his journey, and enters into "the joy of his Lord."

We know that the vast mountains of the earth have no more effect in counter-acting its general rotundity, than the little protuberances on the surface of an orange prevent the roundness of its appearance; so to an eye, that was capable of comprehending the whole of the great system of the Almighty, no defects nor inequalities would appear in the great circle of eternity. A fly crawling on a pillar, feels occasionally trifling impediments from the roughness of the material, but to the eye of taste, which embraces the whole structure, the perfection of its architecture is apparent and striking. What are all the wisest of the earth but insects creeping on the great column of Providence!

Some persons are induced to think, that were Christianity so pre-eminent in excellence, and indeed the only true religion, its effects would be greater, and the universality of its acceptance would have been sooner effected; whereas, a vast

portion of the world has not yet been visited by its heavenly beams.

Objectors on this ground can have paid little attention to the nature of prophecy, nor to the usual mode of the proceedings of God. They must be blind to the proved fact of numerous prophecies being actually and already fulfilled, or they could not doubt that the great prophecy will, in God's good time, be also fulfilled,* "When the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

With respect to the mode of God's proceedings, it is always gradual. Prophecy was declared first obscurely, and by degrees in a clearer manner; knowledge and civilization have, at one period, prevailed in one part of the world, and then gradually spread, by means unforeseen by man, by the operation (under Divine Providence) of natural causes,

* Isaiah xi. 9.

and apparently accidental circumstances, to some other country, which before was sunk in ignorance and error. Trace the march of science from Egypt to Greece, and thence to Rome. What was the state of this our favored island at the time of the landing of Julius Cæsar? How little better, if at all so, than many of the savage people of the present day! Religion proceeded by the same gradual steps as knowledge, and frequently attended in her train. A little reflection only is necessary to shew the probability of the two great blessings of knowledge and religion, spreading to the different unenlightened portions of the globe. In the mean time, let not the people of any country presume to boast of the peculiar privileges granted to it, but rather be careful not to forfeit those privileges, lest the grace of God may be showered upon them in vain; let them be assured that those, who seem hitherto to have been

less favored than themselves,* “are still in the hands of an all-gracious God, who will not exact the tale of bricks where he has not thought proper to furnish straw.” “The blessing of Redemption, of which they never heard, may still be bestowed upon them. Without the death of Christ no flesh could have been saved: but who can say to how many, and in what different ways, the merits of that death may be applied?” Yet no one who has right feelings as a Christian, but must wish for the universality of the true religion, and that all “the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God.”

Whoever reflects on the variety of human opinions, in different parts of the world, on the objects of religious worship, and the strange perversions of human intellect, may at first be staggered, and may almost doubt to which any positive preference ought to be given; but this feeling can be only momentary to those

* Horne, Vol. IV. Sermon 1.

whom the "day-spring from on high" hath visited, and who have made a proper use of that advantage by a diligent examination of the sacred writings. In savage countries, where the Bible is unknown, no wonder can arise at any wild notion, which the ignorant natives may entertain, nor can we be surprised at their worship of the sun and moon, who have never heard of the great Divine Being, by whom they were created. Still, I would observe, that any worship, however erroneous, (and some is always to be found amongst the wildest people,) is a proof that religion is congenial with the very nature of man. The religion of the Hindoos, abounding with the grossest idolatry, and enforcing the most agonizing rites, on a slight review of it, must excite equal horror and astonishment; but there is every reason to believe, from the various accounts of Europeans, who have been resident in India, that even the stubborn prejudices of the Hindoos are diminishing,

and, however great are the obstacles to their conversion to Christianity, especially from the nature of their different castes, some hope, though distant, may be entertained, that in those lands where the sword of our warriors has spread desolation, and obtained extensive conquest, the milder sword of the Spirit, wielded by our countrymen, will ultimately make ample amends for the ravages occasioned by the sword of war, and will confer, on the unenlightened natives of India, the blessings of a true faith, will abolish their cruel rites, and extirpate their senseless idolatry. Even greater probability is there of a still more speedy dissolution of that extraordinary system of faith, introduced by the impostor Mahomet, and so widely spread in various parts of the world: as that is partly founded on a perversion of Christianity, the transition to the real Doctrines will be easier, and Mahomet and his Koran, and sensual Paradise, will pass away like a vision of

the night! A long time has the crescent been in its wane, and its utter extinction is plainly pointed out in the sure word of prophecy; but "the time is not yet." Innumerable may be the contests, and some years may elapse before the cross of Christ may float over the mosques of Constantinople. The annihilation of the Roman Catholic Faith is also clearly foretold; but, as it is still upheld by the policy of powerful states, the mode and time of that annihilation none but an inspired prophet could foretel. But, as the grand Doctrines, revealed by God, are acknowledged by them, and their errors all arise from obscuring the Divine Word by the "traditions of men," true Protestants and candid Christians earnestly hope, that their eyes may be opened to those errors; that they will see the absurdity of their Pope's pretension to infallibility; but above all, that they will see that their Doctrine of Transubstantiation is not (like other revealed mysteries)

above our reason, but positively contrary to reason, and contrary to the very emblematical nature of a Sacrament, that the worship of saints and of the Virgin Mary, is gross idolatry, and consequently the most heinous offence in the sight of their Maker. As to the other sectaries in our country, every rightly-judging member of the Church of England will feel towards them as Christians ought to feel. They will lament the errors under which they labor; but no man has a right to blame, much less to oppress another for any difference of opinion. Although their various errors are as clearly demonstrable as a proposition in geometry, they must assent voluntarily to that demonstration, or not at all. In this free and enlightened country, a compulsory system would be as little thought of as the establishment of the frightful and execrable Court of Inquisition. Can any one wonder that in a world, where the will of man is free, and human understanding is so various,

so weak, and so inexplicable, that all have not the same comprehension of Divine truths, or agree in the same explication of revealed Doctrines? The tenets of Roman Catholics, of Socinians, of Anabaptists, of Quakers, and of Independents, can occasion little surprise to those who consider the extraordinary delusions of the followers of Emmanuel Swedenburgh, of Johanna Southcote, of Richard Brothers, and the raving enthusiasm of those who are styled Ranters. The proper effect of such reflections ought to be the deepest humility. When we see such consequences arising from the infirmity of human nature, of which we all partake, ought not our pride to be lowered? No one, who is anxious to think and act rightly, will fail to use the utmost diligence in studying the Sacred Scriptures, and endeavouring to understand what God has been pleased to direct for our practice, and reveal for our faith, he will "prove all things" before he "holds

fast to that which is good." If the subject were not so serious it would be enough to make the truly religious smile to hear the "wisdom of this world" exclaim, Why has God permitted evil to exist at all? Why has he not made creatures so unalterably perfect, as to be incapable of any wrong action or wrong thinking? Why has he not revealed religion in such plain and indisputable terms, that no difference of opinion could possibly exist. The complete answer to these queries can best, and can alone, be given by the Bible itself; but, before we have recourse to that unerring guide, we may rebut the questions of worldly wisdom by proposing other questions equally rational, and precisely consonant with its own presumptuous mode of inquiry, when it will be plainly evident how extreme is the absurdity of any human being, presuming to question the wisdom of his Maker, or imagining that he could have directed the formation of the world, or governed it,

when made, in a better manner than the great Almighty and omniscient Creator. Such self-sufficient querists might, with equal justice, ask, Why, instead of going through the stages of infancy, childhood, manhood, and old age, all men do not enter the world, as Adam did, in full vigor from the hand of their Creator? Why are wars permitted, plagues, pestilences, and innumerable evils? Why was not the world created sooner? Why were more than four thousand years suffered to elapse before the great Redeemer, the Son of God, appeared in the flesh? Numerous other equally weak and equally presumptuous questions might be proposed, to all of which the answers (by the aid of the Word of God, and partly by the mere force of human reason and common sense) may be confidently, but humbly returned. It cannot be necessary to fill this Letter with replies to all these cavils and objections, as the absurdity of the greater part of them is fully equal to

the presumption. But to the first string of queries I would reply, that, from the perusal of the first chapters of Genesis, it may be clearly seen that the world was designed as a place of trial, and that man had the free will and power given to choose right or wrong; that a test was given to our first parents as a trial to them, "Obey and live, transgress and die." The tempter, however, who had himself rebelled against his God in Heaven, succeeded in marring the beauty of his work on earth, and our first parents fell from their obedience and died. Could not God have prevented this? Undoubtedly, but not consistently with his design of forming a world as a place of trial, and of granting free will to man. The exercise of his over-ruling power would have been in direct opposition to his own design. Sin and evil were brought into the world by our first parents yielding to the temptation of Satan, in defiance of the command of their Creator. God per-

mitted, that is, did not prevent their sin. Man, not God, introduced evil and death. If religion had been revealed in such a manner, that all the parts of it were level to the most common understanding, there would have been no room left for faith. But any one must set an extraordinary high value on human reason, if they imagine that man could possibly, in his present state, comprehend the whole of Divine Revelation. It may, therefore, positively be replied, that religion *could not* be revealed in such terms as to exclude all difference of opinion, and so *compel* belief and obedience. We could no more penetrate into the secrets of Heaven with our present faculties, than we could take our flight into the regions of space without the use of wings. To the first of the second string of questions, viz. Why are not men born into the world in full vigor as Adam was? If the word *necessity* may, with propriety, be applied to any work of God, with whom

nothing is impossible, I would reply, it seems a necessary circumstance that the *first* man should appear at once in his vigor. But had such been the continued mode of peopling the world; the greatest virtues which man can exhibit, the greatest blessings which man can enjoy, would never have been known. Those fond ties which bind a happy family together, and make them independent and regardless of the vagaries of the world, those endearments between parents and children, which pour sweetness into the otherwise insipid, if not bitter, cup of life, would have been lost. For the blessing of mankind God granted the sacred tie of pure and spotless marriage, and poured into the hearts of parents that instinctive delight, which they never fail to receive from rightly educated and well disposed children. Ask the parents, who look with the eyes of fondest affection on a beloved child, whether, when compared with every worldly allurements, this feel-

ing is not predominant and transcendent ? That these joys are not universally felt is too evident ; but this difference is not caused by our Maker ; it is caused by the pollution of the world, and by an evil heart. To the virtuous and the good, these endearments produce an ever-flowing stream of joy to the last hour of their existence. "These are thy works, Parent of good !" The whole design of Providence is that of mercy : all his operations are formed with a view to make us rationally happy here, and perfectly and eternally so hereafter. . As to the time of the creation of the world, and the time of the coming of Christ, presumption itself will hardly expect an answer. On the same principle, on which the test was given, to our first parents, have the only two revelations vouchsafed to mankind, the Jewish and the Christian, been founded, viz. a reliance on the truth of God's word, and an implicit obedience to his will. Human reason is intended to be ex-

exercised in religious matters, but still with humility and subjection to the word and will of God. That reason is never called upon to adopt for truth whatever is directly *contrary* to it, but it is in several respects expected, and commanded, to assent to revealed truths, which are *above* the comprehension of human reason, and this is the province of faith. This is the test to distinguish between carnal and worldly wisdom, and that which is heavenly and spiritual. I maintain, that were there no mysteries in religion, the Revelation would have less appearance of being of Divine origin, because it would be less consistent with the nature of the Deity, which is itself beyond our comprehension. I will not dwell upon that trite position, that there is scarcely any thing which we know thoroughly as to its causes, that the philosopher is baffled in almost every step he treads, in attempting to investigate the origin, and

the mode of operation, in even the most common things.

The observation has been so frequently made, and the truth of it is so evident, that I need not add one word more upon the subject. But let me ask, whether the resurrection of the human body (had not the proof of it been declared, and practically proved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ) would not have been as inconceivable by man as any other great mystery, which has been revealed? Could any man conceive it to be probable that a body, reduced to dust, the particles of which have been immersed, perhaps in the boundless deep, or dispersed by the winds, should be reunited, and that the breath which has fled away, should again be called back to its former mansion! Such an idea could never have occurred to the human mind, in a sufficiently forcible manner, to produce conviction of the truth, without the aid of

revelation. I acknowledge that some enlightened heathens, who felt that there was something within them, that aspired to objects beyond our present existence, expressed such a hope, but their hope was faint, and a matter of mere conjecture. But, since the Resurrection of our Saviour, even the Socinian, who denies the truth of the other great Doctrines of Revelation, acknowledges his conviction of the truth of this: and there are few, if any, to be found of that Sadducean kind, as to deny the Doctrine of a Resurrection, or admit of neither Angel nor Spirit. Without revelation there can be no true religion. Man can form no other idea of the Deity than that which he has been pleased to reveal, nor can he know in what manner he is acceptably to be worshipped. We hear, and read often, of natural religion; and an excellent work is well known on "The Religion of Nature," but still, it is an illogical and improper term. A savage forms to himself a notion

of some being, whose nature he can little comprehend, and he "worships he knows not what," but this can hardly be called religion: even the best notions concerning a Superior Being, can only be imperfect without revelation. Men may form to themselves a comprehensive notion of absolute perfection, and unbounded attributes in the Deity, but yet the idea is only vague and inconclusive; and a finite creature can as little embrace an idea of eternity, as he can that of the Deity. Numerous are the beings who pass through the world, without reflecting that religion is, not only a material object to them, but that it is the first, or (in the language of Scripture) it is "the one thing needful." Their usual style of expression is, if they are ever forced to speak on the subject, "We do not require to be taught our duty by priests, we know right from wrong as well as they can tell us, but we know that God is a God of mercy, and we have no doubt he will see our errors

(whatever they may be) with compassion and due allowances." To this, the first reply is, that priests do not proclaim their own opinions; but conscientiously make known the will of God, as it is pointed out in the sacred Scriptures. To the second observation, the same priests would reply, that, though God is a God of mercy, he is also a God of justice; and they would refer these mistaken men of the world, to those Scriptures which they have never studied, and would urge them to that diligent perusal, which would convince them of the error of their ways. This is not the language of methodistical enthusiasm, it is the language of rational Christians. Whoever lives "without God" in this world, can have no well-grounded expectation of entering into his kingdom in the next. A man may be, in general, what is called a good character, but there is a material difference in conduct that arises from mere worldly motives, and that which proceeds solely, or chiefly, from

the motive of "doing every thing to the glory of God." Were annihilation, after this life is ended, to be really the lot of man, could this melancholy doctrine for a moment be conceived; still, it would evidently be the interest of every one to act in such a manner, as might claim a right to the approbation of their fellow-creatures. There may be no principle therefore, but selfish interest in those who act solely from worldly motives; they can only be considered as "pleasers of men," and have no title (because he is not their prime object) to be called "pleasers of God." The reflections, which I introduce in this Letter, are meant to designate the precise and material difference between those who banish all idea of religion, who never suffer it to enter their thoughts, who neither do understand, or attempt to understand, the meaning of it; and those who, in a quiet, unenthusiastic, but in a firm, warm, and steady manner, take the Bible as the guide of their faith,

and the director of their practice. The latter, will occasionally, and (such is human frailty) will frequently, fall into error, but their constant object will be, to mix zeal with discretion, and they will ever lament, when their conduct is not consistent with their intentions and their professions. The great Doctrines which have been considered in the preceding Letters, the proof of the truth of which has been treated of in as plain and clear a manner as my capacity would allow, form the religion of a real member of the Church of England. It has been endeavoured to be shewn, that the tenets are totally founded on the declarations made in the revealed Word of God, and that, if they are not the true Doctrines, the truth has never yet been discovered. I feel, however, perfectly confident, that the truth is clearly proved, and that our Church exhibits Christianity in the purest form, and in that respect, surpasses every other religious system existing upon earth. I

cannot imagine, that a doubt could exist on the subject, were the matter universally searched and examined by minds desirous of knowing the truth. Doubt does, and can arise only from cold indifference and wilful ignorance, or from the prejudices of persons happening to be born, and to reside in countries, where Christianity is altogether disavowed, or its Doctrines materially perverted. When so large a part of the globe is still unblest with the bright beams of the Christian Faith; when again we consider, in how large a part of Europe Christianity itself is deteriorated and obscured by false interpretations, and the "Traditions of men," a caviller may, with some appearance of reason, exclaim, "What is the Church of England, that she presumes that she is right, and all others wrong?" If ever there was a church free from presumption, it is our own. Presumption can be justly attributed only to that church, who stigmatises those, who dissent from her erroneous

doctrines, by the opprobrious name of heretics, and excludes, as far as her weak power can exclude, all such heretics from the pale of salvation. We rely solely on scriptural truth, and not on human assertion. I have, upon another occasion, observed, that there cannot be two true and real religions. Truth can belong only to one. If our exposition of God's revealed word be erroneous, let it not merely be contradicted, but let the errors be proved, which the most subtle and the most malignant have not been able to do. It cannot but be the intention of God, that his word should be rightly understood, although, therefore, it is our duty to "hold fast the form of sound words;" that is, to attend seriously to the Bible, and to form our tenets upon that alone; it can neither be a mark of wisdom, nor can it be our duty to hold fast any doctrines, when they are once proved fully and satisfactorily to be unsound and erroneous. With

the fullest confidence that, if we are not absolutely right in our interpretations of Sacred Writ, we are infinitely nearer the truth than any who object to our tenets—we hold out the hand of charity to men of all persuasions. It is for them to consider the nature of schism, and how far they are guilty of it. We do not presume, like the Church of Rome, to declare any as shut out from the favor of God. We oppose them with argument, and not with force. We war only against open profaneness and blasphemy. We consider that the only Master of mankind is in Heaven, and that we are all equally his servants. We do not “judge another man’s servant,” to the one Great Master we must all “stand or fall.” This is not presumption, this is not bigotry, it is only a well-grounded confidence in the truth of our faith, which has been repeatedly “tried in the balance,” and has never “been found wanting.”

That there ultimately will be but one faith, and one religion, universally prevalent, even human reason would lead us to expect; still that reason would hardly be convinced, when it considers the state of the world, and the innumerable obstacles to that desirable union of all the nations upon earth. But Divine Revelation has set the matter beyond all doubt, and has positively declared, that we shall one day form "one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord." One of our worldly philosophers might ask, as Nicodemus did, How can these things be? The only answer to be given is, "I know not *how* these things can be brought to pass, but I know they *will* be, because the Scripture declares it." Let us now consider what events must take place before this blessed prediction is fulfilled.

The descendants of the ten tribes, which for so many centuries have been lost and dispersed, must be gathered

together, and rejoin their brethren the Jews; the general conversion of the Jews must be effected;* the extirpation of Mahometanism, and of the Roman Ca-

* When mentioning the conversion of the Jews, I cannot avoid subjoining in a note, some extracts from the recently published work of Dr. Richardson, who, as a physician, accompanied the Earl of Belmore on his travels; and I am certain, that every truly Christian heart will sympathize with Dr. R. in the sentiments which he expressed during his visit to Jerusalem, and will be rather thankful for the insertion of such highly proper feelings, and so beautifully expressed, than be inclined to complain of the length of this note. Dr. Richardson's Travels, Vol. II. p. 252.

“ The Mount of Olives still retains a languishing verdure, and nourishes a few of those trees, from which it derives its name; but all round about Jerusalem the general aspect is blighted and barren; the grass is withered, the bare rock looks through the scanty sward, and the grain itself, like the staring progeny of famine, seems to doubt whether to come to maturity, or die in the ear. The vine that was brought from Egypt, is cut off from the midst of the land; the vineyards are wasted, the hedges are taken away, and the graves of the ancient dead are open and tenantless. How is the gold become dim, and every thing that was pleasant to the eye withdrawn. Jerusalem has heard the voice of David and Solomon;

tholic superstition, must be accomplished; the opening the knowledge of Divine Revelation to the wild, uncivilized inhabitants of many various regions of the

of Prophets and Apostles; those of all other countries became dumb, and cast down their crowns as unworthy to stand in their presence. Once she was rich in every blessing, victorious over all her enemies, and resting in peace, with every man sitting under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, with none to disturb or make him afraid. Jerusalem was the brightest of all the cities of the East, and fortified above all other towns; so strong, that the Roman conqueror thereof, and the master of the whole world besides, exclaimed, on entering the City of David, and looking up at the towers which the Jews had abandoned: 'Surely we had God for our assistance in this war, for what could human hands or human machines do against these towers?' It is no other than God who has expelled the Jews from their fortifications; their temple was the richest in the whole world; their religion was the purest; and their God was the Lord of Hosts. Never was there a people favored like this people; but they set at nought the counsel of their God, trusted in their wall, and walked in the imagination of their own hearts. Their city was given up to the spoiler; the glory departed from Israel, and the sceptre from Judah; the day of vengeance arrived, and the rebellious sons of Jacob are scattered and peeled, and driven under every wind of heaven, without a nation

globe, to the idolatrous worshippers of the East, to the yet imperfectly-known Africans, to the numerous inhabitants of China, to the islanders of the South and

or a country to call their own: unamalgamated, persecuted, plundered, and reviled, like the ruins of a blighted tower, whose fragments remain to shew the power that smote it, and to call aloud to heaven and earth to repair. What a tremendous lesson for the kings and people of the earth to learn wisdom, and, in the midst of their prosperity, to recognize the hand from which their comforts flow! It is impossible for the Christian traveller to look upon Jerusalem with the same feelings with which he would set himself to contemplate the ruins of Thebes, of Athens, or of Rome, or of any other city which the world ever saw. There is, in all the doings of the Jews, their virtues and their vices, their wisdom and their folly, a height and a depth, a breadth and a length, that angels cannot fathom; their whole history is a history of miracles, the precepts of their sacred books are the most profound, and the best adapted to every situation in which man can be placed; they moderate him in prosperity, sustain him in adversity, guide him in health, console him in sickness, support him at the close of life, travel on with him through death, live with him throughout the endless ages of eternity, and Jerusalem lends her name to the eternal mansions, which man is admitted to enjoy through the Atonement of Christ Jesus, who was born of a descendant of Judah."

other seas. Are not these stupendous works, and can man presume to dive into futurity, and point out the mode of God's operations beyond what the Scriptures

Page 263. "It was delightful to mix with them in their devotions, and to see performed, before your eyes, that ceremonial worship, by the descendants of that very people, to whom it was delivered by the voice of God. I should look at the ceremonies of Pagan temples as a matter of little more than idle curiosity, but the ceremonies of the Jews dip into the heart. This is the most ancient form of worship in existence; this is the manner in which the God of Heaven was worshipped by Abraham and his descendants, when all the other nations in the world were sitting in darkness, or falling down to stocks or stones. To the Jews were committed the oracles of God. This is the manner in which Moses and Elias, Daniel and Solomon, worshipped the God of their fathers. This worship was instituted by God himself, and in Jerusalem, the chosen and appointed city; and on the rock of Sion, God's holy hill, to sing a psalm of David in company with the outcast race of Judah, winds to ecstasy the heart. The vital history of the Christian faith passes over the memory, and you feel as if you joined your voice with those chosen spirits, who spoke through inspiration, and told the will of God to man. The time will come when the descendants of his ancient people shall join the song of Moses to the song of the Lamb, and, singing Ho-

intimate? The *certainty* of the *fact* is all that we are concerned with, the mode of effecting it is beyond our utmost powers. Various events, and circumstances

sannah to the Son of David, confess his power to save. I never see the fine venerable aspect of a Jew, but I feel for him as an elder brother. I have an affection for him that far transcends my feelings for a Greek, or for a Roman, who have left the world little more than mere childish rhythms and sprinklings of a groundless morality, compared with that pure and lofty thought that pervades the sacred volume. I have a desire to converse with him, to know the commusings of a heart formed by the ancient word of inspiration, unanointed and unannealed by the consummating afflictions of Christianity. I would rather pity than persecute him for refusing the Gospel. The thunders of Sinai once rung in his ears; need we wonder that they have sunk deep into his heart? The rock must be struck before the water will gush out. The coal must be warmed before it can be fanned into a flame. The fort must be taken by gradual approaches. Sickness must be abolished by little and little. They are a hard-working and industrious people; the world has never been oppressed by their poor; the obstinacy with which they cling to their institutions, shews the stuff that is in them. Plundered and expatriated for the long period of eighteen hundred years, they have earned their bread from under the feet of those to whom the writings of their fathers reveal the will of

of modern times, seem clearly to point out, that we are living in the latter days; and some ingenious conjectures and calculations have been made as to the time

heaven, and from which we derive the soundest rules of life, and the gladdening hopes of a future existence. One would say that the son of Judah was a gem, whom every Christian would be anxious to polish and refine; by how much it is more blessed to give than to receive. They have given to all, but, saving the buffetings of tyranny and adversity, what have they received from the world? The elements of Christianity are incorporated in their institutions; when they consider and know them, they will see that the religion of Jesus is but the consummation of their own. Let us treat them like fellow-creatures; we owe them every thing, and they have not more of the original contamination of human nature than we ourselves."

Page 266. "The sight of a poor Jew in Jerusalem has in it something peculiarly affecting. The heart of this wonderful people, in whatever clime they roam, still turns to it as the city of their promised rest: they take pleasure in her ruins, and would lick the very dust for her sake. Jerusalem is the centre, around which the exiled sons of Judah build, in airy dreams, the mansions of their future greatness. In whatever part of the world he may live, the heart's desire of the Jew, when gathered to his fathers, is to be buried in Jerusalem. Thither they return from

of the general conversion to the true faith; but still they are only conjectures. Some of them have calculated that time as likely to take place within the present century, and have, from Scripture, explained the grounds of their calculations. These writers, however, do not presume that they are capable of ascertaining the precise time of the accomplishment of the prophecy, or they would seem to act in direct opposition to the declaration of our Saviour: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, &c." Undoubtedly, when we consider how much is to be effected, and how little, (comparatively) has been done in the past

Spain and Portugal, from Egypt and Barbary, and from other countries, among which they have been scattered; and when, after all their longings, and all their struggles up the steeps of life, we see them poor, and blind, and naked, in the streets of their once happy Zion, he must have a cold heart that can remain untouched by their sufferings, without uttering a prayer that the light of a reconciled countenance would shine on the darkness of Judah, and the day-star of Bethlehem arise in their hearts."

revolving ages, the time specified by the calculators, to whom I have alluded, appears to be short indeed, and very inadequate to so great a work. But what is time with regard to the Almighty? to Him, who can grasp eternity, a thousand years are as one day, or one hour. The fact seems to be little considered, though it is a fact, that, when this life ceases, there will be no such thing as time in the other world. The past, the present, and the future, will be lost and absorbed in one great *now*. As to the shortness of the time calculated upon, that, however improbable it may appear to human comprehension, which cannot devise any adequate means to effect so wonderful a change within so short a space, no one will ever venture to pronounce it to be impossible: none but an atheist would deny that it could be effected by God as easily in one year as in ten thousand. He, who could in an instant bestow the

gift of tongues on men uneducated and illiterate, for the gracious purpose of more expeditiously extending the knowledge of the Gospel, could, with equal facility and equally instantaneously, extend and impress that knowledge on every being in the universe: indeed, the Scriptures plainly point out by the expression of "the sign of the Son of man," or the Shechinah, that, in addition to the usual influence of Divine Providence over all human affairs, there will be a supernatural interposition at the period of the general conversion of mankind. With respect to the part that human agency will take in bringing about the great event, the most partial and uncertain conjectures only can be formed. Various efforts are undoubtedly made towards converting the Jews, the Hindoos, and others, who are still blind to the truths of Christianity; but the operation, though constantly progressive, is

slow and difficult. These are means professedly aiming at a certain and defined object, and may God prosper the laudable undertaking: but, generally speaking, God is pleased to direct human means so as to effect his grand objects without any intention of the agents themselves, or without their having the least comprehension of the events, which their actions and policy, merely of a worldly nature, are calculated to produce. The blind conduct of the Jews towards the Messiah, fulfilled their own prophecies, and contributed to that sacrifice, which effected the redemption of mankind. God was pleased to over-rule the wickedness and lust of our Henry VIII, and to direct them to be the means of our happy Reformation. Providentially, also, there existed at that time a Luther, who, under the same Divine direction, and without any very laudable motives of his own, as some

historians have represented, exerted his powerful and fiery talents to expose the errors of the papal church ; and the more gentle Melancthon contributed his effectual aid towards the restoration of the pure and primitive Doctrines of Christianity. Who, then, can say what turn the course of human policy may take, from what causes desolating wars may proceed, or how, in the midst of their destruction of individuals, they may produce consequences of the most beneficial nature to the universe in general ? From the darkness of worldly policy may burst out rays of divine light to bless those, who were before the children of ignorance and error. On the consideration of this grand subject we may exclaim, in the almost inspired language of a late most amiable prelate, “ Blessed times ! delightful prospect ! we see it, but not now ; we behold it, but perhaps not near ; we live, and, probably, like the

ancient patriarchs, we may die, not having received the promises. But a generation to be born shall receive them, and shall praise the Lord, who thus, at different periods, hath shut up all in unbelief that he may finally have mercy upon all. Happy in the mean season shall we be, if, while we are preparing ourselves, we may, in any the least degree, by our prayers and by our endeavours, contribute towards the preparation of our elder brethren, the once beloved and highly-favored seed of Abraham, for the approach of that awful and important day, when their and our Messiah, who once came in humility to abase the proud, shall return in glory to exalt the humble."

From the contemplation of such a great, important, and final winding up of the operations of Providence, the mind is little inclined to turn to any less-considerable subjects. I will, therefore, not

add a single observation more, but close this Letter, that I may not weaken the impression, which the prelate's awakening and sublime language is calculated to make, on every mind capable of being affected by exalted and fervent piety.

THE END.

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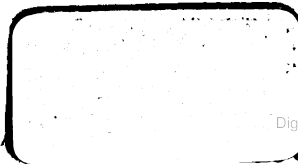
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